

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

SUBJECT: HEARINGS TO EXAMINE THE ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, AND CIVILIAN
PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

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APRIL 24, 2013

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES SENATE

Today the 690,000 Total Force Airmen of your Air Force are a highly trained, experienced and battle tested force, standing as vanguards of freedom around the world. Despite the last two decades of sustained conflict, the men and women of your Air Force are as dedicated, innovative and hard working as ever before. The Air Force does not take lightly its primary role of training and equipping the highest quality Airmen the President, Congress, Combatant Commanders and ultimately our Nation can call upon as needed.

Airmen are the backbone of our Air Force. Throughout our Service history and ingrained in our culture, is a spirit of innovation where Airmen are enabled and expected to find novel solutions to ensure domination in our multi-dimensional battlefield of air, space and cyber space. In order for Airmen to continue to fulfill their expected roles as innovative leaders and warriors, the Air Force must remain focused on recruiting, training, developing, supporting and retaining a world-class, all-volunteer Force. Maintaining an all-volunteer Air Force is a significant undertaking and requires a continuous and deliberate investment of time and national resources.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL BUDGETS

The Air Force is committed to maintaining and sustaining the appropriate size and force mix to meet mission requirements with acceptable personnel tempo and associated stress on the force. Total Force Military changes in end strength are based on Strategic Guidance, the Air Force operating budget, and an operational assessment to align manpower resources to critical missions. Fiscal realities require the Air Force to face tough choices, trading size to protect a high quality and ready force while balancing overall risk to military capabilities. The Air Force will focus on reinforcing military end strength in high priority areas, such as Cyber, Intelligence, F-35, KC-46, and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) programs.

The Air Force's total military end strength forecast for FY14 will be reduced by 2,640 from 506,040 to 503,400, which represents an approximate 0.5 percent reduction from FY13 levels. This will result in an Active Duty (AD) military end strength reduction from 329,460 to 327,600. Our Air Force Reserve (AFR) military end strength will decrease by 480 to 70,400, and Air National Guard (ANG) military end strength will decrease by 300 to 105,400. The FY14 budget includes a total budget authority request of \$29.2 billion for AD, ANG and AFR military personnel. Included in this budget is a 1 percent military base pay increase, a 4.2 percent increase in the housing allowance and a 3.4 percent increase in subsistence allowance. In addition, the civilian personnel budget requested for FY14 is \$11.4 billion for a programmed civilian strength of 186,026, and includes a 1 percent pay raise.

Programmed reductions were accomplished in base/management operating support and logistics/maintenance functional areas, as a result of declining defense budgets, and in an effort to make the best use of our resources, including military manpower. These reductions to our military end strength would place greater responsibilities on the remaining civilian and contractor work force.

Subsequently, OSD tasked the Services to analyze their civilian workforce requirements. Working with OSD, Air Force conducted a comprehensive, enterprise-wide review examining the full spectrum of operations – from base level to Headquarters activities in an effort to develop a wide range of initiatives to forge a leaner, more effective Air Force in support of defense guidance. As a result, civilian workforce reductions are planned which are commensurate with our programmed military reductions. The civilian workforce review also provided a means to shift resources in support of Cyber Command and source emerging

requirements such as enhanced transition programs compliant with the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act and the Veteran Employment Initiative (VEI).

MILITARY FORCE MANAGEMENT

By trading size for quality, the Air Force is postured to rapidly respond to a full range of contingencies and threats to national security interests. Our Force Management program is a tailored multi-year strategy focused on sizing and shaping the total force with the right balance of skills to meet current and emerging joint mission demands. The program ensures career field sustainability as we retain sufficient personnel inventory and experience to meet career field requirements. The Air Force's strategy over the past few years has been aggressive, allowing us to meet congressionally mandated end strength requirements and maintain a high quality force by leveraging voluntary programs first, offering incentive programs where needed, and implementing involuntary actions when required.

Our active duty officer and enlisted force experienced continued high retention rates in Fiscal Year 2012, just below the 20-year high of 2011. This continued trend required us to employ a variety of voluntary and involuntary force management programs to achieve the required losses to stay within our FY12 332,800 programmed end strength. Our force management initiatives brought the force within 0.1 percent of end-strength for Fiscal Year 2012, with the officer force 408 below and the enlisted force 545 above their targets.

Our force management efforts in FY12 positioned us well for FY13 but a FY13 NDAA mandated 3,340 end strength reduction and lingering high retention require the continued use of Force Management tools. The Air Force's voluntary programs in FY13 are similar to the officer and enlisted programs offered in FY12. For our officer force, we will rely solely on voluntary measures to achieve additional losses over normal attrition. Voluntary programs will include

time-in-grade, active duty service commitment, eight versus ten years of commissioned service waivers for certain year groups and overage career fields. We will also continue the PALACE CHASE program for eligible lieutenant colonels and below to retain experience levels in our Reserve component.

For our enlisted force, we will rely on a number of voluntary and involuntary measures to achieve additional losses over normal attrition. Voluntary programs include Limited Active Duty Service Commitment and Time in Grade waivers, as well as PALACE CHASE opportunities. Additional enlisted measures include Date of Separation Rollbacks, a very limited reduction in accessions, reduced opportunities for retraining after initial skills training failures, and Career Job Reservation constraints.

The AFR is also experiencing a reduction in end strength and while the cuts are smaller, they still require meticulous handling to maintain a strong force. Since AFR units are primarily filled by reservists who live relatively close to their base of assignment, force structure changes typically result in members separating from the AFR if they cannot find a position reasonably close to their residence. A number of authorities like Inactive Duty Training (IDT) travel pay and even Permanent Change of Station (PCS) entitlements, however, will help retain some of these well-trained and experienced assets in other vacant billets nation-wide. Authorities such as 180 days of Tricare and retention of the Montgomery GI Bill we help ease transition from the selected reserve for those members unable to be placed in a suitable position. In anticipation of future reductions, the ANG and AFR are also submitting legislation to request approval for the Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) and retention of education benefits for those members involuntarily discharged because they could not find a position. These additional

authorities will help shape the force while allowing a smooth landing for those who are forced to end their careers.

The objective of our FY14 Force Management strategy is to continue to maximize voluntary programs first in order to minimize the need for involuntary measures. Given the current fiscal challenges, we will continue to assess the need to pursue voluntary and involuntary force management actions to meet future authorized end strength levels.

CIVILIAN FORCE MANAGEMENT

The Air Force continues to perform strategic assessments to ensure our civilian workforce maintains mission critical competencies and to eliminate redundant functions in order to improve the effectiveness of the Air Force mission. The Air Force's civilian Strategic Human Capital Plan identified Cyber, Acquisition, Nuclear, and Engineering as critical occupational series necessary to meet current mission requirements and defense guidance. Our efforts are focused on ensuring these critical functions have the necessary talent to meet mission requirements, including heavy recruiting efforts to fill these highly technical specialties.

In 2010, the Defense Department began a comprehensive effort to increase efficiencies, reduce overhead costs, and eliminate redundant functions in order to improve the effectiveness of the DoD enterprise. In FY12, the Air Force voluntarily retired or separated approximately 3,500 civilian employees through three rounds of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) to achieve civilian reductions. In addition, the service received limited approval to implement Reduction In Force (RIF) actions on positions in the Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC), Air Education and Training Command (AETC) and Air Force Space Command (AFSPC). The RIFs resulted in 77 separations, 27 reassignments and

69 grade reduction actions (without reductions in pay) which mitigated the need for involuntary separations.

The Air Force requires latitude to continue voluntary separation programs, such as VERA and VSIP to allow civilian employees to retire or separate on a voluntary basis and avoid involuntary separations for FY13 and FY14. The Air Force will also require RIF authorities, including involuntary separations, as an option to balance the civilian workforce skills if reductions are not achieved through voluntary separation programs.

QUALITY TRAINED AND DEVELOPED FORCE

Our Chief of Staff clearly articulated in his recent vision statement that “Education and training are the foundation of our airpower advantage ...and... we must safeguard and reinforce that foundation” by ensuring we remain the most technically proficient, best-educated, and best-trained air force in the world. Developing the world’s best Airmen requires the best education and training. The developmental education pillar of our force development framework includes Professional Military Education (PME), Fellowships, Advanced Academic Degrees (AAD), Professional Continuing Education (PCE) and voluntary education. The training pillar includes initial skills training and retraining as well as skills and proficiency training such as Language, Region and Culture training.

Our enlisted PME and Officer developmental education programs provide an educational foundation through the delivery of carefully prescribed skill sets or institutional competencies. Our leadership doctrine defines these competencies and lays out a road map to develop our force to accomplish National Security and National Defense objectives. Reductions to developmental

education would have severe long-term effects to the professional and innovative capabilities of our Air Force.

The Air Force is striving to enhance the development, sustainment, and utilization of cross-culturally competent Airmen across the Total Force to lead and enhance partnerships in today's dynamic global environment. The ability to work collaboratively with stakeholders and support the Department of Defense (DoD) Security Cooperation mission of building international partnerships is critical in meeting complex and emergent threats and will require greater foreign-language, regional, and cultural skills.

Air Force Voluntary Education (Vol Ed) programs provide comprehensive opportunities for Airmen to pursue programs of higher education in order to meet Air Force goals of a highly trained and educated workforce. Vol Ed program funding is largely comprised of Military Tuition Assistance (MilTA) which is provided to service members to pursue accredited post-secondary programs. MilTA supports and affects approximately 105,000 military Airmen in an active duty status (of those, approximately 78,000 are junior Non-commissioned Officers (NCO)). It contributes to force readiness by assisting our Airmen in attaining a higher level of skill and management proficiency. This core group of young Airmen will one day become our Senior NCOs responsible for leading and developing other young Airmen as well as advising Air Force leaders. MilTA has historically cost more than budgeted, and we fund it in execution years to maintain the commitment to our Airmen. In the current fiscal environment, we must establish updated enrollment and compensation controls in the MilTA program to sustain the programmed budget.

RETENTION, RECRUITMENT, BONUSES AND INCENTIVE PAYS

The Air Force continues to successfully attract, assess and retain innovative Airmen to maintain our status as the world's preeminent aerospace nation. The Service has consistently met its accession goals since 1999 and this positive trend continued through FY12. Our recruiting strategy is founded on a powerful organization and network of professional recruiters in communities across the country supported by a compelling, multi-layered, local, regional and national marketing campaign. In the recovering economy, the Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) is predicting challenging recruiting conditions from FY13 through FY16. We are projecting enlisted accession requirements will reduce by 2,661 to 26,376 for FY13 and then stabilize at 27,085 in FY14. The Air Force strategy to sustaining an All-Voluntary Force includes: Maintaining a Strong and Experienced Recruiter Force; Understanding the Recruiting Environment; leveraging the Power of Marketing; and leveraging Technology and Information Systems to Improve the Mission.

The AFRS' success is partially attributed to its advertising and marketing campaign that targets America's best and brightest youth across a broad slice with respect to race, gender, geography and socio-economic background. We are projecting a \$63 million advertising budget for FY14--\$6 million less than this year's budget. Air Force advertising and marketing strategies continue to attract quality recruits as validated by our recent success in recruiting 99.5 percent of our enlisted accessions (EA) as High School Graduates (HSG) while 98.4 percent of our EA scored in the top three mental categories (CAT I to IIIA) of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Our FY12 EA production quality outpaced the Department of Defense (DoD) standards of 90 percent HSG and 60 percent for CAT I to IIIA. The Initial Enlistment Bonus (IEB) program ensured AFRS recruited 100 percent of all critical skills accessions. We used the IEB program to target nine career fields for six-year enlistments with

the majority of these being Battlefield Airmen such as Combat Control and Pararescue. Our programed budget for IEB is \$14.5 million in FY14. We expect the FY14 IEB career fields will continue to focus primarily on Battlefield Airmen.

The Air Force Reserve (AFR) will continue to focus on filling geo-specific vacancies in critical skills needed to ensure wartime capability. In FY12, the AFR accessed 9,429 personnel against a goal of 9,229 obtaining 102 percent of their FY12 recruiting goal. The AFR is projecting to finish at 100.3 percent of their 8,900 FY13 recruiting goal and their FY14 goal is also expected to be approximately 8,900.

The Air National Guard (ANG) achieved 100.7 percent of their officer and enlisted goal in 2012. They are on pace to meet their 11,600 (10,500 enlisted/1,100 officer) goal for 2013. However, the ANG is experiencing a percentage of losses not seen since 1989, as well as multiple mission changes across the country as a result of the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act.

ANG Incentive Program is a national program designed to attract and retain quality personnel in critical enlisted and officer career fields, with additional focus on Health Professionals (HP) and Chaplains. Other targeted commissioned career fields include Engineering, Intelligence, Cyber and Battlefield Airmen. The enlisted accession and reenlistment bonuses focus on critical skills within Aircraft Maintenance, Intelligence, Civil Engineering, Medical and Battlefield Airmen. This effort includes a Local Program designed to assist units in recruiting and retaining personnel in critical enlisted and officer career fields, by wing and geographically separated unit.

The ANG's FY13 Incentive Program Budget is \$88.5 million for Recruiting and Retention and includes HP Bonus, HP and Chaplain Loan Repayment, Officer Accession and Affiliation, Enlistment, and Reenlistment Bonuses. Funding covers initial payments for new contracts and anniversary must-pays for prior year contracts. The FY14 Incentive Program budget of \$65.2 million continues to target all critical skills and professional officer specialties.

Overall, our active component officer force continued to experience strong retention in 2012 with an average career length (ACL) of 14.8 years of service, a value just slightly below the all-time high of 15.9 in 2010—the highest since tracking began in 1993. Despite high retention trends, however, there are pockets of concern for our stressed career fields. Currently, 11 out of 96 officer career fields, six pilot and combat systems officer career fields and five Special Operations Forces (SOF) and non-rated career fields, are stressed with high operational demand, low manning and insufficient retention. To stem attrition, we are excluding all stressed career fields when possible from targeted voluntary and involuntary Force Management programs in FY13 and FY14. Where necessary, we will add accessions and retrainees to stressed career fields to increase overall inventory and bring undermanned year-groups closer to required levels. Additionally, we offer Aviator Retention Bonuses and Critical Skills Retention Bonuses (CSRB) to specific skills and year groups in our stressed career fields to include Combat Rescue, Special Tactics, and Contracting officers.

Enlisted force retention rates remained high for the third year in a row; however, retention is still problematic for certain skills and year groups. Currently, 13 out of 329 enlisted career fields, specifically Battlefield Airmen, Intelligence, and Career Enlisted Aviator career fields, are stressed with high operational demand, low manning and insufficient retention. The Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) continues to be the most effective, responsive and

measurable tool for retention, encouraging Airmen to stay and/or retrain into career fields with high demand requirements. Additionally, CSRB remains a vital tool to retain Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCO) in certain high-demand specialties experiencing manning shortfalls, and high operational demand.

The FY13 budget for all Special and Incentive Pay is \$926.5 million, with recruiting and retention pays accounting for \$420.4 million. The remaining \$506.1 million of the total budget pays for health profession incentive pay, flying duty pay, hazardous duty pay and other special pays, such as Special Duty Assignment Pay and Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus/Pay. The Air Force allocated \$232 million of the Special and Incentive Pay budget in FY13 for SRBs for 55 Air Force specialties, up slightly from 53 specialties at the end of FY12 but down considerably from 78 specialties at the beginning of FY12.

The FY14 budget for all Special and Incentive Pay is \$894.2 million, with recruiting and retention pays accounting for \$412.5 million. The remaining \$481.7 million of the total budget pays for health profession incentive pay, flying duty pay, hazardous duty pay and other special pays, such as Special Duty Assignment Pay and Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus/Pay. The Air Force allocated \$232 million of the Special and Incentive Pay budget in FY14 for SRBs and will continue to focus on Battlefield Airmen; Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance; and Career Enlisted Aviator career fields. SRB investments have shown to improve retention from one to eight percent per SRB increment, depending on the reenlistment zone.

OPERATIONAL RESERVE

The Air Force has successfully employed the Operational Reserve concept for more than two decades. During this timeframe, the three components (Active, Air Force Reserve and Air

National Guard) have become an increasingly integrated force fully capable of supporting combatant commander requirements as a single seamless team. Continued expansion of Total Force associations will further enhance the operational effectiveness of the forces provided to combatant commanders. Under this concept, the components routinely train together at home station, which allows individual members of all three components to develop effective working relationships and team cohesiveness prior to deploying. Additionally, they develop an understanding and appreciation of the strengths (and inherent limitations) of each component.

Looking to the future, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force have chartered the Total Force Task Force to take a holistic approach to provide strategic options on the appropriate Total Force capabilities mix to meet current and future Air Force requirements. Three Major Generals (one from each component) will be leading this effort. The task force will consider the strategic shifts driven by post-Afghanistan reconstitution and the new Defense Strategic Guidance. The expectation is for the task force to recommend policy, legislation, personnel, organizational, and force structure changes that would maximize the overall effectiveness of the Air Force's total force team in a budget-constrained environment.

Our Total Force Air Force will continue to be structured on a balanced foundation that relies on the strengths of each component, to provide and sustain the capabilities required in the years ahead. Total Force Task Force recommendations anchored on this principle will inform the Air Force Strategic Planning and Programming Process for Fiscal year 2015 and beyond.

The Secretary of Defense recently approved the Air Force policy and procedures for reserve involuntary mobilization authority under Title 10 USC §12304a and 12304b. The Air Force is prepared to implement § 12304a to involuntarily access the Air Force Reserve if needed

to respond to a major disaster or emergency within the United States. We are working closely with the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve to develop the plans and specific missions where it may be necessary to augment the active component for preplanned missions using § 12304b involuntary mobilization authority. We will apply this authority judiciously in order to ensure predictability for reserve component members to minimize the impact to their families and employers. Appropriate use of this authority is being considered as we develop the Air Force input to the Fiscal Year 2015 President's Budget.

SUPPORT TO AIRMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Air Force will continue to prioritize quality Airmen and family support programs to sustain the resiliency of our force. Our strategy to meet the Service's evolving demographics and demands is to tailor or eliminate services where appropriate and capitalize upon community resources to gain efficiencies where possible.

Our Airman and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRC) have made considerable progress implementing the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) requirements that will expand training and employment services for our active and reserve component members who transition from the military. The Air Force was compliant with the Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) To Hire Heroes Act of 2011 as mandated by law on 21 November 12 and is on schedule for compliance with the Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) Task Force goals by 1 October 13. In support of VEI, the Air Force was the first service to pilot the re-designed five-day TAP workshop and the Higher Education optional track at Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) and the first to pilot the Small Business Administration's Entrepreneurship track Outside the Continental United States (OCONUS) at Royal Air Force Mildenhall, United Kingdom. During FY13, all Air Force

installations will complete the rollout with the addition of three two-day tracks of Entrepreneurship, Technical Training, and Education and a Capstone ensuring that members are ready to make a successful civilian transition.

In FY12, Air Force Child Development Programs supported more than 61,000 children ages six weeks to twelve years, with over 4,600 of these children having special needs care requirements. We have continued to focus on increasing our care capacity in our Child Development Centers, adding 5,794 childcare spaces from FY05 to FY12. The Air Force also participated in piloting the first centralized web-based DoD request for childcare system, which will provide our families with easier access to DoD-wide childcare options.

We are concerned about the effect Sequestration will have on our Child and Youth Programs in FY13 due to potential Appropriated Fund (APF) civilian furloughs. The furlough of Child Care support staff could impact approximately 25 percent of our caregiving staff as well as our entire management and administrative team, who are charged with ensuring health and safety standards are maintained. To maintain these mandated standards, installations may be forced to reduce hours of operation or reduce class sizes, which may require single and dual working parents to adjust their work hours or find alternative care off base at a higher cost. Reduced staffing and construction project delays could also stall the opening of approximately 750 childcare spaces that are currently in different phases of construction. Due to limited off-base childcare options (particularly for infants and toddlers at many locations), the result may be growing on-base child care waiting lists at a time when community-based funding for such programs has simultaneously been cut.

The Air Force is equally committed to supporting Child and Youth programs that are designed for the unique requirements of our ANG and AFR members. The Home Community

Care (HCC) Program continues to provide ANG and AFR members access to quality childcare services that are similar to those available to military assigned to or living on a military installation and provides free quality childcare during primary drill weekends. In 2012, HCC provided care for 7,632 children within 35 ANG and AFR units with 59 state licensed providers.

Recognizing our recent funding challenges and the evolving demographics and lifestyles of today's Airmen and families, we are reviewing all Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs through customer satisfaction surveys and business analysis. Our goal is to determine how best to provide family and MWR programs and base-level support services in today's budget-constrained environment. For instance, we are focusing our resources on those core programs (ex: Food, Fitness, Child and Youth Programs) which best support ready, resilient Airman and may be forced to make hard decisions to not fully support other programs (ex: Libraries, Outdoor Recreation). To support this initiative, we launched our Services Transformation Project (STP) in July 2011 to conduct an Air Force-wide program business assessment of base-level service and support, MWR programs. Major Commands (MAJCOM) and installations were provided STP business assessment results with proposals to keep, divest or repurpose programs. These assessments contributed to Wing Commander decisions to eliminate 22 programs at various installations. Additionally, a STP team visited eight test bases making recommendations to create Community Commons and Information Learning Centers among other recommendations that will combine MWR programs into a central location.

Airmen and family quality of life is also significantly enhanced by the contributions of our non-pay programs. The Army Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) provides merchandise at an average savings of 24 percent compared to similar retail stores and gave back \$223.9 million in dividend contributions to military communities in FY12. Additionally, the Defense

Commissary Agency (DeCA) operates as a nonprofit organization and can save a family of four an estimated \$4,500 a year.

COMPREHENSIVE AIRMAN AND FAMILY FITNESS

The Focus of Comprehensive Airman and Fitness (CAF) is building resilience among our Total Force Airmen and their families. While we have completed our mission in Iraq, Airmen are still in Afghanistan where they have been for more than 10 years and in the Middle East for over 20 years. Continued high operations tempo at home and abroad coupled with downsizing the force and budget cuts stress the need to deliberately increase our focus on building strong, resilient Airmen and families. Resilient Airmen are better equipped to withstand, recover and/or grow in the face of stressors and changing demands. Many of our programs are designed to continue to build resilient Airmen and families.

The planned way-ahead for 2013 through 2014 includes the development of a Virtual Wing-Man smart phone application, continued production of Master Resilience Trainers (MRT) and the rigorous analysis of scientific data collected to validate the effectiveness of the MRT training on First Term Airmen Center (FTAC) students.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

The Air Force remains steadfast in our commitment to prevent incidents of sexual assault, provide victim care where assault has occurred and hold accountable those who commit such acts, while protecting the due process rights of the accused. Our current and ongoing initiatives to achieve a zero tolerance environment are targeted toward prevention (dissuade, deter and detect) and response (victim care and responsibility).

In FY13, we stood up our first of several Integrated Product Team meetings, incorporating university experts and other subject matter experts, to assess our pre-command, senior enlisted and entry-level SAPR education and training curricula with the goal to make it more relevant, impactful and reality based. Increased emphasis on Investigations and Accountability included an Advanced Air Force Sexual Assault Investigations course and Special Victims' Counsel "Pilot" program to provide representation and advocacy throughout the investigation and prosecution processes by a specially trained Judge Advocate.

The Air Force also distributed a Wing Commander's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Guide, developed by subject matter experts and Wing Commanders and Command Chiefs. The guide includes statistics, facts and talking points to help installation leaders encourage healthy conversations with their Airmen. It was distributed to installation commanders, MAJCOM commanders, six Area of Responsibility (AOR) Commanders, and the ANG. DoD SAPRO recognized this guide for how well it was done.

In March 2013, HQ Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) published new policy guidance to improve the investigation of sexual assault offenses. One change directs Command-wide use of AFOSI's new Sexual Assault Investigative Plan Worksheet and Sufficiency Assessment Tool in drafting written investigative plans. The tool will help focus collaboration between agents and military justice attorneys, as it integrates legal sufficiency (Articles 120, 125 and 80 elements of proof) with investigative sufficiency (i.e. investigative activities apt to reveal information probative to the elements). Additionally, HQ AFOSI has equipped its field units with cutting-edge alternate light sources to greatly enhance agents' ability to detect the presence of forensic evidence at sexual assault crime scenes. The field was also

armed with new cyber tools that significantly improved agents' ability to identify and collect probative information from computers and cell phones.

The Air Force is assessing manpower requirements needed to execute FY12 and projected FY13 NDAA requirements. Our goal is to increase manpower in policy oversight, education and training and legal/investigation roles. We will comply with the requirements by establishing at least one full time Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Coordinator (SARC) and one full time Victim Advocate (VA) at each Air force host wing. Additionally, we are going a step further by placing additional SARCs or VAs at larger installations and those with higher risk populations (such as our training bases), while also providing a capacity for supporting expeditionary requirements. We have created standardized position descriptions for SARCs and VAs to facilitate hiring, and we are continuing efforts toward SARC and VA certification by 1 October 2013.

The Air Force SAPR office utilized the Unit Climate Assessment (UCA), a known commander's management tool, to proactively assess climate for Air Force individual units. Embedded in the Air Force Climate Assessment are six questions that illuminate four dimensions of the SAPR climate factors. These Air Force climate factors and results detailed areas for further work in 2013 and beyond, namely more information geared towards junior enlisted, civilians and lessening the barriers to reporting. Additionally, the UCA revealed that our Bystander Intervention training and reporting options are both understood and found to be highly viable tools. In 2013, we will launch a follow-on survey to the initial 2010 Gallup survey which established a baseline measurement of actual prevalence and incidence of sexual assault in the Air Force. This repeat measurement will be compared to our baseline data to assess the progress

of our SAPR program. As we move forward with our program, ongoing biannual measurement and tracking will allow the Air Force to continue monitoring changes and improvements.

HAZING

The Air Force has a zero tolerance policy for hazing, bullying, maltreatment and discrimination as it is contrary to the standards of conduct that we expect of all Airmen—entitling every Airman to dignity, respect, and equal opportunity. Guided by our core values of Integrity, Service and Excellence, the Air Force utilizes a comprehensive approach to prevent and/or respond to such allegations or observations. We believe that using a comprehensive, continual training approach throughout an Airman's career not only ensures that these concepts and preventative measures are delivered at the right time, but more importantly, become part of the Air Force culture and help to ensure good order and discipline. If an allegation of hazing is substantiated, it may be punishable by court-martial or nonjudicial punishment under several punitive Articles of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

INTEGRATION OF AIR FORCE COMPONENT PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

To better support our Airmen and families, we continue to move forward with our “3 to 1 Total Force Personnel Management” initiative. This effort integrates personnel management policies, processes and procedures across the Active, Reserve and Air National Guard components to create a more efficient and effective Air Force.

In May 2012, we successfully completed a high level review of all laws, regulations and policies to determine where barriers to integration existed. This review yielded 69 recommendations, spanning over two dozen human resource activities. We learned that few legal barriers exist to the integration of Air Force Human Resource policies, but there are many

opportunities for us to consolidate directives and instructions, while still allowing for component uniqueness where warranted. This will pave the way for significant process improvement, facilitate better collaboration and coordination across Air Force components, optimize war fighter support and improve service levels for our Airmen.

A few examples of change include the establishment of a Total Force Recruiting Council which is analyzing consolidated storefronts and conducting a Total Force review of schoolhouse curriculum; the implementation of enlisted performance reports for Traditional Guardsmen; process and training enhancements to remedy issues associated with transition between components; and the deployment of an electronic operating support system for our Total Force promotion and force development board processes. This will transition manual and cumbersome paper boards to a new technology that will garner significant efficiencies in the coming years.

Finally, the most significant outcome from this effort to date is the institution of a Total Force Human Resource Management governance structure which stood up on 1 April 2013. For the first time in our Air Force's history, we will have a unified Total Force forum where we can discuss challenges and shape shared solutions towards a common Total Force human capital strategy.

DIVERSITY

The Air Force recognizes a diverse force is a military necessity and we continue to focus efforts on advancing our strategic priorities of institutionalizing diversity, attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce of highly qualified total force individuals who reflect the rich tapestry of the nation we serve.

Over the past two years, we have made significant progress in our efforts to execute these priorities. First, in response to the Presidential Executive Order (13583) establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce, we recently updated our Diversity Strategic Roadmap. The Roadmap is an action plan that directly supports Air Force diversity objectives and is designed to move us forward in key areas essential for success and posture us to compete for a finite pool of candidates in a changing nation. Additionally, in July 2012, the Air Force published Air Force Instruction 36-7001, Diversity, which provides policy and oversight for Air Force Diversity and guidance for its implementation within the Air Force.

Outreach programs remain key to attracting and recruiting diverse talent. In partnership with the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, our sister services and Air Force total force stakeholders (active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilian service), the Air Force plans, coordinates and provides oversight to national-level diversity outreach programs supporting our priorities, goals and objectives. In FY12, our Global Diversity Division collaborated with the AFRS to conduct a targeted advertising campaign aimed at attracting high performing African American and Hispanic students who might qualify for U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) or Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) programs. In fact, the recruiting service devoted 20 percent of its FY12 marketing budget to initiatives targeting specific minority communities (African American and Hispanic) to locate high performing applicants and counter cultural biases against military service.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY

The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) continues to thrive as a world-class university, creating strong leaders of character that are prepared for today's strategic environment that includes a broad range of threats and an unpredictable set of challenges.

USAFA cadets have performed impressively over the past 12 months. The graduating class of 2013 has a Marshall Scholar and the US News and World report ranked USAFA's undergraduate management program #1 in the nation. The Academy's undergraduate engineering program is ranked #4 in the nation, civil and computer engineering programs are ranked #5 nationally, and USAFA has the #2 air and space engineering program for the 12th consecutive year.

Respect for human dignity and integrity are at the core of the USAFA's leadership development. The Academy continues to enhance sexual assault prevention and response programs by identifying new ways to advance a climate of dignity and respect, and to more completely integrate sexual assault, harassment and violence prevention into Academy life and learning. Additionally, the Academy continues to conduct Religious Respect Training which is receiving national attention as a benchmark program.

USAFA is committed to recruiting a diverse force and its numerous recruitment efforts and programs such as Summer Seminar, Diversity Visitation, and Admissions Forum have succeeded in many aspects and serve as the foundation for future efforts. The Summer Seminar Program targets high performing, diverse students who would be USAFA direct entry, USAFA Prep-School or Falcon Foundation candidates. The Diversity Visitation Program brings prospective minority cadets to the Academy for a four-day program, which includes academics, interaction with senior leaders, tours of the Prep School and airfield and attendance at a sporting event. The USAFA Admissions Forum Initiative conducts up to ten admissions events per year

in strategically selected locations across the country that have under-representation of target populations at the USAFA.

WOUNDED WARRIORS

The Air Force is dedicated to continuously improving the support to our combat and seriously wounded, ill and injured Airmen by leveraging prior Air Force investments including the Recovery Care and Coordinator Program (RCCs). In FY12 the Air Staff, Air Force Personnel Center and Office of Surgeon General jointly planned and reengineered the Air Force Recovery Coordination Process to integrate the medical and non-medical care of all Air Force wounded, Ill and Injured into one 7-phased Continuum of Care process. This initiative eliminated redundancies and minimized confusion for our recovering Airmen and their families. This effort produced a single centralized and coordinated line of command for operations and a decentralized execution process. In addition, a singular referral and identification process was implemented for determining eligibility for these specialized services and added to the combat ill and injured population, the management of care for all seriously ill and injured. This design approach relates to Airmen's perspective by better meeting their anticipated needs in advance and leading to improved sustained care. The Recovery Team now provides concentrated care while simultaneously providing services to all current ill and injured and results in a 30 percent reduced active case load ratio to the current 45/1 (40/1 is DoD standard). As a result, the AF now manages this population in an improved and inclusive process, which currently stands at 2,583 (498 ill; 1,299 psychological; 786 injured [including TBI]). Of this total population 1,048 are still on active duty and 1,535 have separated from the AF. In summary, the AF focuses its support of Airmen and their families through medical and non-medical programs on behalf of DoD and in coordination with the VA as follows:

- DoD Medical Support: Clinical Care & Case Management
- Line Non-Medical Support: Directorate of Airman & Family Care and Recovery Care Coordinators
- VA Support: Poly Trauma Centers, Case Management & Federal Recovery Coordinators

Air Force sponsored, along with other services, Adaptive Sports Camps to assist recovering Airmen to heal not only physical, but socially, emotionally and spiritually. Warrior Game participation has grown from 27 to more than 100 new athletes in FY12 and 50 participants have been selected for the 2013 Air Force Wounded Warrior Games team. In addition to Warrior Game participation, the Air Force purchased adaptive sports equipment now located in its fitness centers and established a dedicated adaptive sports staff under the new Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2) directorate to host advanced adaptive sports and recreation camps and clinics. As simply put by AF Staff Sgt. Larry Franklin, a program participant, “This program saved my life. Being part of a team again gives me a sense of pride and makes me feel like I’m a part of something.”

AIR FORCE YELLOW RIBBON PROGRAM

The Air Force Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) has promoted the well-being of Air National Guard and Air Reserve Airmen and their families. Driven by high tempo deployment cycles, these events have taken on an increased importance given the increased accumulated stress on our ARC Airmen and their families. The events, offered at key stages in the deployment cycle, have clearly addressed the need for the providing critical support information to family members and more importantly, given the multiple deployments,

supported the build-up of resilience skills to better cope with the significant stress on families caused by absence of their Airmen.

The value-added propositions of these events, which further allow for the development of inter-family support teams, cannot be overstated. Many of these ARC units are not in close proximity to Active Air Force Airmen and Family Care Centers, so the YRRP events serve as form of resilience support and training.

INTEGRATED DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM

The purpose of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) is to maintain a fit and vital force. Air Force uses the IDES to determine if Airmen who are wounded, ill, or injured are still fit for continued military service and quickly returns those who are. If they are deemed unfit for continued service, the IDES process ensures service members receive a Veteran's Affairs (VA) disability rating and are aware of their compensation and benefits before they transition from military service. We are aggressively working to meet OSD's goal to process Airmen through the IDES in 295 days. Currently, the Air Force active component is averaging 362 days processing time from referral for disability evaluation to the date of VA benefits decision or return to duty. Within the IDES, the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) phase performance is averaging 63 days, which is well below the IDES goal of 100 days. However, the Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) phase is averaging 141 days, which falls short of the IDES 120 day goal.

The Air Force is committed to improving IDES timeliness to better serve Airmen as they rehabilitate, reintegrate or transition from military service. We are diligently working various measures to improve the IDES timeliness. We have realigned manpower and made hiring a priority within the Air Force Personnel Center to assist the PEB. The Air Force has partnered

with OSD and the VA to enhance IDES information technology (IT) to create a seamless and integrated system to improve IDES timeliness. While DoD and VA develop an enterprise IT solution, the Air Force is exploring short-term IT solutions to expedite the transfer of IDES cases between the Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) and the Informal and Formal PEBs. In addition, we have improved communications between the VA, the Air Force Personnel Center, and the Air Force Surgeon General to ensure consistency of IDES tracked data. Finally, the Air Force rolled out its IDES pre-screening initiative to ensure the right Airmen are referred into the IDES. The IDES pre-screen process provides a centralized review at the Air Force Personnel Center's Medical Retention Standards Branch of potential IDES cases which may not meet retention standards. The intent of the pre-screening process is two-fold, to identify Airmen who may be returned to duty (RTD), instead of entering the IDES, thus preserving resources and reducing hardship on the Airman and the unit. Additionally, the process identifies Airmen, who need a complete Medical Evaluation Board, and refers them to the IDES, preserving readiness and a fit force. The pre-screening process does not alter any stage of the IDES, Airmen rights remain intact and the Air Force ensures due-diligence. As of 10 April 2013, the Informal PEB adjudicated 978 cases referred into the IDES by our Personnel Center's Medical Retention Standards shop as a result of pre-screening. Of those, only twenty seven were returned to duty by the Informal PEB, for a 2.7 percent RTD rate, far below the 15-20% RTD rate historically seen prior to pre-screening implementation. We expect these major improvement strategies to improve the Air Force IDES timeliness by Fall 2013.

On 13 June 2012, former Secretary of Defense, Leon Panetta, directed the Department to conduct a comprehensive review of mental health diagnoses for prior service members who completed a disability evaluation process from 11 Sep 2001 to 30 Apr 2012. The Office of the

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness is the delegated authority to establish the Special Review Panel as a collaborative undertaking of the DoD Physical Disability Board of Review (PDBR) and the Military Department Boards for Correction of Military Records. These reviews will include a re-evaluation of service member records whose mental health diagnoses were changed to their possible disadvantage during the disability evaluation process. The PDBR has coordinated with the Services and has defined the resources required for the timely completion of these important reviews.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Air Force leaders at all levels are committed to suicide prevention through our Wingman culture. We do not view suicide prevention as belonging to either personnel or medical communities, but to all members of the Air Force community, including commanders, supervisors, and peers. Suicide prevention is a Total Force responsibility. This is the premise upon which our Community Action Information Board (CAIB) was built and the cornerstone of the Air Force suicide prevention program as we established it in 1996. We believe evidence shows it is the necessary framework for effective intervention across the enterprise. Prevention starts with leadership involvement from the top down and across all spectrums of the Air Force.

In a Wingman culture, Airmen look out for fellow Airmen. We teach them to identify risk factors and warning signs for suicide, and to take appropriate action once these indicators are identified. We call it: Ask, Care, Escort (ACE). We have taken Air Force-wide training to a new level with required Frontline Supervisor Training for the highest risk career fields. We are increasing our mental health provider staffing across the Air Force by more than 300 professionals by 2016. All of our mental health providers are trained to use the Air Force Guide

to Managing Suicidal Behavior, a clinical guide for assessing, managing and treating suicidal ideation.

Within the Air Force, we have not seen a link between suicide and deployments, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or Traumatic Brain Injury. For our Total Force, the most frequently linked risk factors to suicide continue to be relationship problems, legal or administrative problems, work related issues, or a combination of these factors.

We are keenly focused on reducing stigma through positive commander messages and by expanding opportunities to access mental health resources such as embedding mental health providers in our primary care clinics. Although the 2012 Air Force Climate Survey found stigma is still an issue for many Airmen, we are encouraged that most reported they are willing to seek help, and 90 percent see leadership as genuinely interested in preventing suicide.

We continue to research how we can better identify those at risk for suicide to achieve the earliest possible intervention. One such study explores how Airmen's use of social media impacts their relationships, help-seeking, and emotional well-being. We are also conducting research that examines the role of life events and social stressors in the suicides of specific clusters of Airmen.

In addition, we continue to collaborate with the Defense Suicide Prevention Office, our sister Services, and the Department of Veterans Affairs to leverage the full extent of our internal resources, combining our experiences and best practices to improve our suicide prevention efforts.

CONCLUSION

Our Airmen and their families will always remain as the cornerstone to the success of the United States Air Force. The enduring contributions provided by Air Force airpower are a direct

result of the innovative spirit that resides in all our Airmen. Investments in our Air Force capabilities are inextricably linked to our Service's ability to recruit, train, develop, support and retain a world-class, all-volunteer Force. We are confident that our Air Force will continue to overcome any challenge or adversary if we, as a Service and a Nation, keep faith with our commitment to train and equip the highest quality Airmen.