

**Prepared Statement**

**of**

**The Honorable Clifford L. Stanley**

**Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness)**

**Before the**

**House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee**

**March 17, 2011**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Davis and members of this distinguished Subcommittee, thank you for inviting us to testify before you on the Military Personnel Overview.

It has been a year to the date since I appeared before this subcommittee as the new Under Secretary of Defense (USD) for Personnel and Readiness, and it has been a year of building a team. We now have Dr. Jonathan Woodson as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs in place to help address the many challenges in the Military Health System, as well as some other new key leaders within USD Personnel and Readiness. It has also been a year of changing the culture, working on our critical thinking, and striving to improve timeliness and the quality of products that better inform decision making across the Department and enhance relationships with the Congress. During this past year, I've focused on honoring, protecting and improving the lives of our Airmen, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and their families. This next year will show that while my focus has not changed, I've refined my priorities to better serve our Service members and their loved ones.

As the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness my focus is: *Total Force Readiness*, *Caring for Our People*, and creating a *Culture of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency*. I view *Total Force Readiness* as a mental, physical, emotional and spiritual state of preparedness and resilience. This involves enabling training, equipping and supporting the Total Force when they are deployed and ensuring that they and their families have the care and support they need and deserve at home. *Caring for Our Total Force and their families* are both a mission imperative and an ethical responsibility. Our Personnel and Readiness organization strives for the same sense of selfless service demonstrated by Service members and their families. To achieve a *Culture of Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency*, we need to prepare the force to manage risks, preserve assets and meet the challenges of a dynamic operational environment. We need to increase emphasis on agility, flexible force structures, responsive force-shaping policies, and integrated personnel management processes. We will continue to experience global competition for educated, skilled and an experienced workforce. Therefore, it is more imperative than ever for DoD to have the right personnel policies to attract, retain, train, educate and sustain the right talent.

To achieve our critical missions in support of the Warfighter, I am focused on several key priorities. My top priority is the future sustainment and enhancement of the Military Health System and Wounded Warrior Support to ensure quality health care for our Service members, their families and retirees. In addition to the specific initiatives included in the Department's FY 2012 budget, I believe we need to do a 'deeper dive' into healthcare reform, to include Wounded Warrior support. The four azimuths for this 'deep dive' into healthcare reform are to assure readiness; improve population health; enhance the patient experience of care; and responsibly manage the cost of care.

My second priority is to look at how we support our military families, with an emphasis on education – both for our children and spouses. Given the hardship and stress put on military families due to frequent moves, I believe it is imperative that military children and spouses have the best educational opportunities. The third priority focuses on our civilian workforce, to include civilian hiring, career and leadership development, support for our Civilian Expeditionary Workforce, and the transition to a more systematic approach to fully integrate civilians in Total Force planning and requirements. In 2010, the Department made positive and meaningful progress toward reforming its civilian hiring practices. Nevertheless, I continue to push hiring reform towards an aggressive reduction in the number of days it takes to hire a civilian employee. I am increasing our emphasis on a civilian competency development framework, enhanced leadership development programs, and senior executive talent management initiatives. Also, my efforts continue to effectively source expeditionary mission challenges with a ready, trained, and cleared civilian workforce. Finally, my overarching focus as the USD (P&R) is *Readiness and Relevance*. Each day I strive to work to ensure that we do all we can to gain and maintain readiness of the Force, while remaining the most relevant in everything we do to help our War fighters and their Families.

## ACTIVE COMPONENT

### *Recruiting*

For the second year in a row, all active Services not only met their numerical recruiting goals, but also exceeded their recruit quality targets—with highest marks since 1992. Previous years were marked by a growing economy, low unemployment, reluctance of influencers of youth (e.g., parents and teachers) to recommend military service, low propensity among youth to serve in the military, and increased recruiting goals of the Army and Marine Corps to support overseas contingency operations. Even in that demanding recruiting environment, the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) proved itself successful, with the Services meeting or exceeding recruiting goals since 2005.

In FY 2010, the Services exceeded their recruiting goal of 165,000 by 434, accessing 160,601 first-term enlistees and an additional 4,833 individuals with previous military service. Thus far this year, active duty recruiting efforts show continued success. Through January, all Services met or exceeded both quantity and recruit quality objectives for the active duty force. The Army recruited 21,485 new soldiers, with a 21,000 recruiting goal, for a 102% year-to-date accomplishment rate (Table 1). Notably, for the third year in a row, the Army is exceeding the DoD Benchmark of 90 percent of new recruits being High School Diploma Graduates, with 100% of Army recruits holding that credential year to date. Additionally, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force are each exceeding these benchmarks as well (Table 1.)

**Table 1. FY 2011 Active Duty Enlisted Recruiting Through January 2011**

<b>Active Duty Enlisted Recruiting Through January 2011</b>	Quantity			Quality	
	<b>Accessions</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Percent of Goal</b>	<b>% High School Diploma Graduate (HSDG); DoD Benchmark = 90 percent</b>	<b>% Scoring at / above 50th Percentile on Armed Forces Qualification Test; DoD Benchmark = 60 percent</b>
Army	21,485	21,000	<b>102%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>62%</b>
Navy	9,651	9,651	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>88%</b>
Marine Corps	8,526	8,504	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76%</b>
Air Force	9,550	9,550	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>
DoD Total	49,212	48,705	<b>101%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>77%</b>

While we have had, and continue to have, recruiting success, I do not take these recent successes for granted, nor do I assume the current favorable recruiting environment will continue. Already we are seeing growth in the economy and positive changes in the labor market, which historically present challenges to recruiting. There also are long-term trends that are disturbing. Although the overall youth population is large, only a relatively small proportion of American youth is qualified to enlist. It is an unfortunate fact that much of the contemporary youth population is currently ineligible to serve. Medical disqualification, with obesity a large contributing factor, removes about 35 percent, drug or alcohol abuse removes about 18 percent, and almost another 23 percent do not meet our enlistment standards for reasons including criminal misbehavior, low aptitude scores, or having more dependents than can reliably be accommodated in their early career.

Adding to these, other factors affecting recruiting efforts are that only about 75 percent of our young people graduate with a high school diploma; high numbers of youth going to college

directly from high school; and continuing concerns about overseas contingency operations with its associated high operations tempo.

It is important that we have a military that reflects the society it defends, both in the enlisted ranks and our commissioned officers. This is particularly important as less than 1 percent of the American public serves in uniform. To that end, we are pleased that some of our most prestigious colleges and universities are now re-thinking their previous positions with regard to ROTC programs. This will provide more opportunities for college students to think about seeking commissions in the U.S. military.

To meet these challenges, we continually review our recruiting programs to align funding and policies with current realities. Each of the Services has made significant adjustments to recruiting programs in light of our austere fiscal environment, and continues to look for additional cost savings -- but we must be cautious and resist the temptation to cut too deeply and too fast. Stable and adequate investments in recruiting resources are necessary to maintain our long term success. Although enlistment incentives can be adjusted quickly to meet market fluctuations and force management needs, history has shown that the time required to redeploy advertising/marketing campaigns and/or qualified recruiters is significant. I cannot emphasize this imperative too much. Additionally, the Department and the Services must retain the flexibility to manage their recruiting programs with the resources provided. Along with a core mission of providing essential market research to the Services, Joint Advertising, Market Research and Studies (JAMRS) also projects the Department-level message to influencers (parents, teachers, counselors, and coaches), a group that serves as a primary source of advice for enlistment age youth, a message that needs to continue. I feel that JAMRS is one of our most cost-effective recruiting programs.

The Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) has been a cornerstone of our active-duty military recruiting efforts since 1985, and a major contributor to the success of the All-Volunteer Force. We are now in the second year of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill, the most extensive restructuring of post-service education benefits since the introduction of the original World War II GI Bill. The Post-9/11 GI Bill appears to enhance our recruiting efforts even more. We hope that the

provision in the new program that allows career Service members to transfer their unused GI Bill benefits to immediate family members, long requested by both members and their families, will mitigate negative retention impacts. Early results look favorable, with over 180,000 career Service members already approved to share their earned educational benefits with their family members. We are monitoring the effects of this implementation very closely to gauge impact on retention, particularly first-term retention.

As usual, we appreciate this Committee's untiring support of our recruiting programs and look forward to working together to ensure future success.

### ***Military Decorations and Awards***

The Department continues to work in concert with the Services to appropriately recognize and laud the accomplishments, both valorous and non-valorous, of our Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen. In today's all volunteer force, appropriately recognizing the accomplishments of our Service members, while simultaneously maintaining the time-honored prestige of our most revered military decorations, is fundamental to maintaining esprit-de-corps and a motivated force.

The Department is committed to recognizing the valorous acts of our Service men and women. The President of the United States awarded the Medal of Honor to U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Salvatore Guinta last November for his conspicuous gallantry during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. The Department is diligently processing additional Medal of Honor nominations for the President's consideration, including nominations for other living Service members. Additionally, the Department recently completed its review of the Medal of Honor award process as requested by the House Armed Services Committee.

### ***Force Management***

Of the many possible futures that could come to pass in the next five years, the Department may find itself faced with force management challenges that are far greater than those we have experienced since 9-11. Ongoing operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, budgetary pressures, urgent equipment reset and modernization needs, economy-driven retention fluctuations, changing acquisition schedules, and the turmoil in the Middle East will each

contribute to the need for a force that is potentially far different from the one that exists today. Responsibly managing the required force reduction, while ensuring our warriors are properly transitioned to veteran status, is a responsibility taken very seriously and one which my organization is helping to facilitate. In this instance, more than most, the cliché is appropriate; the Department must ensure we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

As part of our ongoing efforts, the Department of Defense is examining different exit strategies to achieve the necessary force drawdown to realize the Secretary's and the Services' agreed upon budget reductions, while doing so with the full appreciation for the sacrifices of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines on behalf of our nation. Maintaining readiness while humanely reducing our force structure will be the major challenge in the years ahead.

The Department has proven itself adept at maintaining the all volunteer force through two major conflicts. There are significant incentives to bring in and retain the right force mix of personnel. The area where we could use your help is in creating a system of force management tools focused on a means to compassionately reduce the force as operations subside. These tools, some of which have previously expired in law, provide the necessary flexibilities to transition the Department from a fully engaged footing to one of more routine engagement around the globe. Drawdown programs and strategies provide targets to create a more balanced force and ensure we retain the right skills and talent to be a more productive and agile force able to meet emerging needs.

DoD will need to maximize use of existing statutory authorities and potentially propose new authorities to surgically shape the force. Our current authorities do not provide the level of fidelity required to target career fields for early retirement or early discharge boards. This will be necessary to address future force shaping needs to meet dynamic changes in missions resulting from an ever-changing environment. Having a range of options to grow or reduce the force in specific skill areas is vital to the full spectrum of missions. The large standing armies of the past had an inherent ability to react to emerging threats by leveraging mass against new demands. This depth, which served to mitigate risk, will not be present in the future force. Reduced numbers equates to reduced redundancies. Accession, retention, and development



decisions will need to be targeted with unprecedented fidelity in a constrained budget environment.

The bottom line is that the Department must aggressively manage a precise, surgical drawdown of the force to ensure readiness is not impacted, our warriors and their families are protected, and the Military Departments and combatant commands are able to meet their missions in a hyper-dynamic global environment.

### ***Retention***

Throughout this force adjustment, retention will be critical. Even during peak operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department continues to be very successful in attaining enlisted retention goals. All Active Components met or exceeded their respective retention goals in every measurable category. The Services and the Department anticipate continued success in the upcoming year and are already meeting or exceeding the monthly goals for early FY 2011.

Despite the overall strength of enlisted retention over the last few years, there remain critical shortages in many low density / high demand skills and other “hard-to-retain” skills, such as explosive ordnance disposal specialists, linguists, intelligence and counterintelligence analysts, and pararescue operators, that justify the continuation and application of the statutory bonus authorities. The Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) and the Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB), as authorized by 37 U.S.C. 308 and 37 U.S.C. 355 respectively, are among the most effective as incentives to attract/retain qualified personnel in critical military specialties.

The Department’s process to manage bonuses is very well defined. A skill is critical if it meets one or more of the following: (a) technical skills requiring high training and/or replacement costs; (b) skills in high demand in the civilian sector; (c) challenging to recruit into; (d) crucial to combat readiness or capabilities; and (e) low density / high demand (those skills that are in high demand for current operations yet are low density due to less requirements during peacetime). All requests from the Services must have substantive justification that clearly outlines the need for the bonus for that skill, payment amount and method, and expected retention results. Designations do not exceed three years unless provided for by congressional

extension of the statutory bonus authority. The complementary authority of the CSRB is the Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB). The SRB is under the authority of the Service Secretaries and is not centrally managed by the Department. However, applications of the bonus authorities are reviewed at the Department level.

### ***Stop Loss***

The Army is the only Service with members currently extended under the Stop Loss authority. From a peak of 15,758 in 2005, the Army reduced the number of Soldiers affected by Stop Loss to approximately 577 at the end of Jan 2011. The Department is progressing as planned to completely end the use of the Stop Loss authority. Army units deploying after January 1, 2010, no longer used the Stop Loss authority. All Soldiers will be off of Stop Loss by the end of March 2011, except for a few receiving continued medical treatment prior to separation.

Two Stop Loss Special Pays have been enacted, which allow a payment of up to \$500 per month, for members whose service (retroactive to September 11, 2001) has been extended by use of the Stop Loss authority. These pays were appropriated and authorized by the Congress, and enacted by the President to recognize the significant sacrifices made by Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines since 9-11. The Department implemented both pays, active and retroactive, and appreciates the support of Congress to compensate members for the unique circumstances presented by the use of this policy, while still preserving our ability to react with discretionary authority as dictated by future circumstances. The Department estimated 145,000 individuals are eligible for the Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay Program and, as of March 4, 2011, we have paid approximately 81,000 personnel, totaling more than \$290 million. The Services and the Department used the additional time Congress provided to continue to engage in extensive and persistent outreach initiatives. Additional interviews were conducted with the military interested press and national media. The Army sent certified direct letters to remaining veterans that did not respond to previous notification efforts. We also reached out to recipients of Post 9/11 GI Bill education benefits through Veterans Benefit Administration (VBA) and Associate Organizations (Joint Hometown News, Guard and Reserve Public Affairs, and ROTC detachments). We will continue to seek media coverage opportunities to remind those eligible to

apply. Additionally, the extensions of the 2011 budget Continuing Resolution has allowed the Department to receive more than 16,000 additional claims from our brave servicemen and women. We thank you for your support in recognition of their sacrifices.

### ***End Strength Management***

Meeting end strength is a priority of the Department. The table below depicts the FY 2010 Active Duty authorizations (prescribed and actual) and FY 2011 authorized levels which the Department intends to achieve in order to meet all of its current mission requirements. The Secretary of Defense has authority granted under the terms of the President's National Emergency declaration to increase statutory strength levels prescribed by the National Defense Authorization Act if needed to meet a specific mission. The Services have implemented recruiting, retention, and force shaping policies and programs to achieve end strengths for FY 2011. These end strengths will provide the ground forces needed to meet the strategic demands, eliminate the need for the use of Stop Loss, and mitigate persistent capability shortfalls which will reduce stress and demands on Service members and families by increasing dwell time.

**Table 2. Active Component End Strength Summary**

Component	FY 2010 NDAA/SecDef Prescribed End Strength	FY 2010 Actual End Strength	FY 2011 NDAA End Strength
Army	562,400	566,045	569,400
Navy	328,800	328,303	328,700
Marine Corps	202,100	202,441	202,100
Air Force	331,700	334,196	332,200

### ***Women in Combat***

Another force management issue is Women in Combat. The Department is in the process of reviewing, in coordination with the Military Departments, the laws, policies, and regulations, including the collocation policies, which restrict the service of female members in the Armed Forces. The review is timely, in that the Military Leadership Diversity Commission's final report to the President and Congress, released earlier this month, included a recommendation

regarding the Department's combat assignment policy. Additionally, the review coincides with the Army's ongoing consideration of its policy that precludes collocating female Soldiers with units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat. Both will serve to help inform the Department's judgment on this issue and our response to the Congress.

The Department looks forward to providing Congress with the results of the extensive review of all gender-restrictive policies upon completion, as required. Of course, such a comprehensive and expansive review, of such a longstanding time-tested policy, especially during a period of ongoing combat operations, must be conducted deliberately and methodically, but without delay.

### ***Sexual Assault Prevention and Response***

The Department's position on sexual assault is clear: One sexual assault is one too many. The department-wide policy on sexual assault prevention has been in place since 2005. In just this past year alone, we have made significant strides to prevent and respond to this crime. But we know we must do more.

Since 2006, the rate of reported unwanted sexual contact has been reduced by one-third, dozens more investigators, field instructors, prosecutors and lab examiners have been hired; more and more victims are stepping forward to report assaults and the percentage of alleged sexual assault offenders facing court-martial proceedings has increased.

While efforts are beginning to pay off, there is still work to do to integrate and improve our efforts. Please know I take this issue very personally and am committed to addressing it swiftly and comprehensively. Preventing sexual assault within our military is a leadership responsibility, and we must all be held accountable for eliminating it from our ranks.

### ***Repeal Don't Ask, Don't Tell***

On 22 December 2010, the President signed the enactment of the repeal of 10 U.S.C. §654, "Policy concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces." Subsequently, the Secretary of Defense directed me to lead the implementation process for the Department.

As the Secretary testified, the Department is committed to executing this change in a purposeful and responsible manner. By organizing a DoD Repeal Implementation Team, we have been able to synchronize the implementation of all the Services' policy changes, education and training, and communication strategies. It is important that we implement this change in law at once across the Department. Directed by the Secretary of Defense's Terms of Reference, the Repeal Implementation Team has "operationalized" the Comprehensive Working Group's *Support Plan for Implementation* and signed policy changes on January 28, 2011, and delivered standardized training materials to all Services on February 4, 2011. The predominant form of training will be by commanders and leaders, but the Services will also use various forms of training including Mobile Training Teams, Chain Teaching, Computer-Based Training, Digitally Assisted Training, or combinations of these techniques. The Department has purposefully told the Services to take the time necessary to get this done right, but not one minute more. As a result, the Services are carefully executing a deliberate and thorough roll out of the necessary training. The timing for each will vary due to their size, operational schedules and the most efficient and effective methods to deliver the training. Of note is the fact that each of the Services has completed their review of policies and has begun delivering training.

Rest assured, we are committed to making this historic change in a timely manner that is consistent with standards of military readiness, effectiveness, unit cohesion, and recruiting and retention of the Armed Forces.

### ***Compensation***

The Department continues its strong commitment to provide a secure standard of living and quality of life to those who serve in uniform, while at the same time balancing the demands of an All Volunteer Force engaged in hostilities around the world. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines continue to express healthy satisfaction with the full pay and benefits the Military

Services provide. The generosity of current military pay and benefits has generated high retention across each of the Military Services. This has occurred despite the stresses and burdens associated with the high deployment tempo and partially because of the current, challenging economy. As a result, today's military compensation compares very well with that in the private sector.

Over the past decade, the Department and Congress together have faced a host of challenges in ensuring military compensation remains adequate to recruit and sustain America's all volunteer force. A little over a decade ago, the Department did not always meet its recruiting and retention goals. The success of our combined efforts in improving the competitiveness of military compensation over the past several years resulted in the current and sustained success across each of the Services in meeting or exceeding overall recruiting and retention goals.

To ensure tomorrow's military remains as ready and capable as it is today, we must not take for granted today's recruiting and retention successes. Yet, at the same time, the Department recognizes the intense fiscal pressures the country faces and the need to control rising personnel costs. The Department is committed to efficient spending of the appropriation authorized for personnel. Through a comprehensive, holistic approach, the Department intends to leverage its compensation tools to sustain recruiting and retention success while also restraining entitlement growth.

Ensuring tomorrow's high-quality military also requires the Department to advocate for maintaining military compensation at levels competitive with the private sector. Highlighting this commitment to our personnel, in the fiscal year 2012 budget the Department requested an increase in military basic pay for all Service members of 1.6 percent, which equals the earnings increase seen in the private sector as measured by the annual change in the Employment Cost Index.

In the search for budget cuts and efficiencies, many groups, such as the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, the Defense Business Board, the Government Accountability Office, and others have compared military and private sector compensation,

noted differences in the structure of compensation packages, and offered advice and suggested changes. We know the military is different from the private sector. Military compensation has evolved over time and is successfully recruiting and retaining today's military force. In the search for efficiencies, all areas, including compensation, need to be continually reexamined.

As you may already know, the President tasked the 11<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (11<sup>th</sup> QRMC) to review four areas: combat compensation; compensation and benefits for the National Guard and reserves; compensation for wounded warriors, caregivers and survivors; and incentive pays for critical career fields, specifically mental health professionals, linguist / translators, remotely piloted vehicle operators and special operations forces. Additionally, the QRMC is assessing where military compensation ranks compared to the private sector.

This QRMC was given an unusually short period in which to conduct its review and develop recommendations. It has one year to complete the review (which began on May 11, 2010) and is required to preview its recommendations with the White House the month prior to completing the review. I am pleased to say that the QRMC is currently on track to complete its review on schedule.

Earlier this month, the research institutions supporting the QRMC provided their initial analyses to the QRMC. Based on that research, the QRMC has developed its initial findings and preliminary recommendations. These are currently being briefed to the senior leadership of the uniformed services. The final recommendations must be forwarded to the White House by April 11<sup>th</sup>.

It would be premature for me to discuss possible recommendations until they have been delivered to the White House. But I think I can safely say that the QRMC is finding that improvements could be made in how we compensate those sent into combat and how we compensate the guard and reserve that is more consistent with their current and future use. Once the recommendations have been delivered to the White House, the QRMC plans to brief the

committee's staff on its findings and recommendations, and will be available to answer any questions.

One area where we have noted success is in targeting special and incentive pays and bonuses. Unlike broad and expensive across-the-board basic pay increases, these pays provide us the flexibility to narrowly and efficiently target specific skills, occupational specialties, experience, and the quantity and quality of personnel filling those positions. At less than five percent of the military personnel budget, these efficient, targeted pays provide a significantly greater impact on the ability of the Department to meet its personnel needs. The amount spent on these pays has declined over the past few years. As we continue our search for efficiencies, we will continue to rely on the effective and efficient use of these pays.

Overall, the state of military compensation is healthy, and it contributes mightily to our success in achieving our recruiting and retention goals, after almost a decade at war. As we look forward, the Department continues to focus on restraining the growth of mandatory entitlements while leveraging cost-effective discretionary pays and bonuses. The Department is committed to carefully managing both the compensation tools and the resources provided by Congress and continuing to search for efficiencies throughout the compensation system.

### ***Travel Simplification and Transformation***

Although the Military Services and defense agencies attempt to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars while meeting their mission requirements, their efforts are complicated by layers of law, appellate decisions, and regulatory oversight pertaining to travel. Over a period of approximately 60 years, title 37 travel authorities have become overly detailed and prescriptive, seemingly covering almost every travel situation. An unintended consequence is that new legislation is required to address new travel situations, such as travel authorities for those caring for wounded warriors or for those accompanying service members to Yellow Ribbon events.

To simplify travel, we believe that the travel authorities that exist today should be considered for consolidation and reform. This will allow us to streamline travel and to look for ways to consolidate and replicate rule sets that garner efficiencies for the Department. Initiatives



such as elimination of receipts, simplifications of allowances, and others have the potential to provide the Department with efficiencies that will generate a savings without having the traveler bear the burden of the cost. Further, travel efficiencies can result from both a reduction of direct and indirect costs. Direct costs are the outlays for the conduct of travel, such as lodging and transportation. Indirect costs include outlays for managing the travel enterprise, such as the administrative costs of processing complex travel vouchers. With more flexible statutory authorities, the Department would be better able to leverage private sector practices. We are confident this will result in simplified travel rules for the traveler, reduced outlays for the Department, and increase mission flexibility for leaders.

This transformational endeavor is being overseen by the Defense Travel Management Office, the single focal point for commercial travel within DoD. The DTMO brings visibility and coherence at the enterprise level, and partners across the government and private sector to maintain an in-depth perspective of the travel industry and to determine the best practices and standards for DoD travel.

## RESERVE COMPONENT

### *Envisioning the Reserve Component as Part of the Operational Force*

During a decade of sustained engagement in combat operations, the Reserve Components (RC) of our Armed Forces have been transformed, from a strategic force of last resort to an operational reserve force that provides full-spectrum capability to the Nation in addition to its traditional role as a strategic reserve. Repeated combat deployments, as well as peacekeeping and humanitarian relief missions, have produced an operationally resilient force that fully expects to be employed on a periodic basis. This new force represents a ten-year investment in resourcing commitments and the personal sacrifice of service members and their families. That investment can reliably provide the Department of Defense with essential operational capabilities and strategic agility. Good stewardship demands that we continue to capitalize on this investment in order to maintain Guard and Reserve readiness, relieve stress on the Active Component, and provide force structure options in a resource constrained future. Representing the views of numerous stakeholders across the entire Department, the QDR-directed Comprehensive Review of the Future Role of the Reserve Component provides a foundation upon which to build a cohesive execution strategy that preserves current Total Force competencies, efficiently integrates multiple capabilities, and leverages Reserve Component value.

#### **1. Readiness Requirements**

The FY 2012 budget request supports the Ready Reserve totaling about 1.1 million members, and contributing 43% of the total military end strength at a cost effective level of 9% of the total base budget. To maintain the Guard and Reserve as an integral part of the Operational Force into the future and ensure these forces are ready and available when needed, we must: (1) program the training and use of the Reserve Components into Service base budgets; (2) continue to use supplemental funding to deploy the Reserve Component for contingencies; and (3) develop a national strategic communication plan that explains to the American people why the Guard and Reserve are important to the Nation and how the Department plans to use those forces in the future.

## 2. Continuum of Service, End Strength and Readiness Management

Meeting Reserve Component end strength objectives is a priority of the Department. The table below depicts the current prescribed and actual end strengths for the Reserve Components. The Department's Continuum of Service efforts have contributed to the six DOD Reserve Components remaining within the variance allowed for their Congressionally-mandated end strength objective. The Services have implemented recruiting, retention, and force shaping policies and programs to achieve end strengths for FY 2011. We appreciate the Congressional support of the FY 2011 end strength levels and the legislative initiatives that assist in recruiting and retaining Reserve Component service members. These end strengths will provide the Reserve Components the forces necessary to meet strategic demands while maintaining a dwell consistent with Departmental policy.

**Table 3. FY11 Reserve Component End Strength Objectives**

Service	Objective	Actual as of Jan 11
Army National Guard	358,200	363,995
Army Reserve	205,000	205,849
Navy Reserve	65,500	64,677
Marine Corps Reserve	39,600	39,949
Air National Guard	106,700	106,643
Air Force Reserve	71,200	70,359

Personnel and medical readiness continue to be a priority for the Department. Of the end strength figures outlined above, approximately 72,000 are in the training pipeline for the Reserve Components and are not immediately available for mobilization. Additionally, as of the first quarter of FY 2011, the RC has a Fully Medically Ready rate of 63%, which is below the DoD goal of 80%. The lower RC Medically Ready rate is due to a significant number of members who are deemed Not Medically Ready (17%) - disqualifying dental condition is the principal factor. However, DoD is diligently working to make medical and dental services more available to RC members, and as of Q1FY11, all Components have met or exceeded the Dental Readiness goal of 75%, which will have a positive impact on overall medical readiness.

### **3. Dwell, Stress on Force**

The RC provides an operational capability and strategic depth in support of the national defense strategy. It is imperative that predictability in the use of RC forces be maximized. On January 17, 2007 the Secretary of Defense established planning objectives for involuntary mobilization of Guard and Reserve units at 1 year mobilized to 5 years dwell time (1:5). Today's global demands require a number of selected Guard/Reserve units to be remobilized sooner than this standard. The intention is that such exceptions will be temporary and that we move to the broad application of 1:5 as soon as possible. Exceptions to policy began at the 1:4 threshold and for the past six months 10 percent of the members involuntarily mobilized have had less than a 1:4 dwell. This trend has consistently improved since the policy was established. This is due in part to widespread volunteerism and Service management of deployment cycles.

#### ***Training and Recruiting the Reserve Component as Part of the Operational Force***

The Regional Integrated Training Environment (RITE) Concept is a joint effort that identifies and matches Services' training requirements to a vast network of local training facilities and resources. The purpose of the RITE initiative is to help sustain the total force readiness posture and surge capability as determined by service rotational readiness models while reducing overhead training costs through innovative management of facilities, training assets, advance simulators and Joint Virtual Live and Constructive (JLVC) capability, pooled, shared equipment, and coordinated through a web-based scheduling/visibility program. As the concept matures, collaboration will expand with key internal and external DoD stakeholders.

#### ***Employing a Rotational Reserve as Part of the Operational Force***

Every day for the past nine years over 20,000 Reserve Component service members have served on active duty as volunteers. These individuals have the time and life style situation to serve more than the one weekend per month and two weeks per year that have long been considered standard for Guard and Reserve personnel. The Department should adopt methods to leverage this willingness to serve in order to fulfill the part-time and temporary demands of its Combatant Commands, major command headquarters, and the Defense agencies. One of several options to institutionalize differentiated service in the Reserve Component is for DoD to create Reserve Component units staffed by personnel willing to serve more frequently or for longer

periods of time in order to support such tasks as Theater Security Cooperation, Building Partner Capacity, HD, Defense Support to Civil Authorities, and the Services' institutional support missions. Service in these units would be voluntary; the member would join knowing full well the conditions of service. Realizing a differential service commitment would require the development of contracts or agreements that would commit willing Guard or Reserve members to serve in units requiring higher rates of mobilization or access. This type of differential service commitment has been in use successfully in high optempo units such as aviation for some time, but with the Reserve Component now playing a larger role in many ongoing mission areas, expanded utilization of differential service contracts would be beneficial. Such differentiation within the Reserve Component would provide an additional sourcing option for units, teams, and personnel for contingency operations or emergencies.

Future planning envisions an era of persistent conflict where some type of RC activation authority will be required to augment the AC to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of the Total Force. At present, we have sufficient authority to mobilize RC forces, however, as directed (by the Senate Armed Services Committee conference report S. Rept. 111-201, page 138) we have analyzed our access authorities to support long term utilization of the RC as part of the operational force. We foresee an authority gap when the nation is faced with persistent demands on the Total Force but does not have specific operational missions, a national emergency or war situation. This authority gap exists for some, but not all, of the full spectrum of military missions, including training, security force assistance and building partnership capacity, that our RC is specifically well suited to perform as a complementing part of the Total Force. We are reviewing potential changes to existing statute to close this authority gap to further increase dwell for the Active Component while maintaining RC readiness.

### ***Reintegrating & Continued Care of the Reserve Component as Part of the Operational Force***

#### **1. Resilience Training & Preparation**

Resiliency is at the core of the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) mission. Since its inception in 2008, there has been an ever increasing focus on resiliency building and training for the National Guard and Reserve forces. In response to growing awareness regarding

the connection between post-traumatic stress (PTS), substance abuse, criminal activity or suicide and “bounce back” ability, Reserve Component (RC) members and their Families are being offered training to enhance their resiliency skills. The RCs have incorporated resiliency skills into their training protocols which are available to activated service members. The objective of the YRRP is to ensure the readiness and well-being of National Guard and Reserve service members and their Families by providing dynamic events, information, services, referrals, and proactive outreach opportunities throughout the entire deployment cycle.

Resilience training, one component of a comprehensive program, has been added to assist members of the Armed Forces with building mental and emotional resiliency to successfully meet the demands of the deployment cycle. YRRP staff members have attended Service and DoD-wide training events and are scheduled to attend additional sessions in 2011 to ensure the unique requirements of the National Guard and Reserve are incorporated into the resilience training approach.

As part of the YRRP, services and information that foster resiliency are provided at the pre-deployment, during deployment, and the 30, 60, 90 day post-deployment events. The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program implemented a Cadre of Speakers program, hiring facilitators who specialize in resilience training and who are available to YRRP event planners across the country. These facilitators also work with Military and Family Life Counselors and chaplains to provide critical support around resilience issues at YRRP events, ensuring individual assistance is available for each family or service member as required.

Additionally, other sessions and resources focus on marriage and children, substance abuse awareness, financial counseling, anger management, employment assistance and Department of Veterans Affairs’ information regarding benefits and medical care eligibility. To find an event or additional resources, a RC member, commander, planner, or family member can access information at <http://www.yellowribbon.mil/>.

## 2. Family Programs

In both the Active and Reserve components, service members and their families have made tremendous sacrifices for our nation and they continue to do so. Guard and Reserve families rely on their local leaders and communities for support. DoD and its partners in governmental and non-governmental organizations have worked to coordinate support systems and communicate available resources to our service members and their families. We all know that the work to strengthen and support military families is never complete and DoD continually strives to identify gaps in our support and to link appropriate community resources.

Throughout a service member's continuum of service, DoD strives to put in place a viable support system. A coordinated network of support with defined processes serves the needs of military families in geographic locations closest to where they reside. Additionally, as stated in the *Presidential Report on Strengthening Our Military Families*, there have been positive reviews from states successfully implementing a one-stop resource to handle state-wide military family issues using *Inter-Service Family Assistance Committees (ISFACs)*. These locally-based committees work to build community capacity and strengthen networks of support. DoD plans to build on these grassroots efforts to benefit geographically dispersed Active, Guard, or Reserve service members and families.

## 3. Employment Initiative Program (EIP)

One of the greatest challenges facing our nation right now is unemployment and underemployment, and these related problems are especially severe for those in the Guard and Reserve or for those leaving active military service. Whether they are soldiers, sailors, airmen, coast guardsmen or Marines completing active duty, or members of the Guard and Reserve returning from deployment, many of these great men and women return home to an uncertain future because of the tough job market.

The promise of a secure job provides service members and their Families with stability and peace of mind. In the December 2009 Status of Forces Survey of Reserve Component Members, service members across six of the seven Reserve Components (Coast Guard Reserves not included) self-reported a 12% unemployment rate, although the highest unemployment rate

across all components was 22 percent among junior enlisted troops in the rank of E1 - E4. As this data is self-reported, many of these younger troops are likely to be students. The total number of respondents was 20,238 (from an estimated population of 822k) RC service members.

In accordance with NDAA 2011 requirement to provide transitioning service members with employment information, the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs has focused resources on ensuring service members have a civilian job that provides stability in their civilian life and allows them the time and resources to contribute to our national defense by serving in the Guard and Reserve. During FY 10, the YRRP aligned with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and Family Programs. This was accomplished to create synergy and realize efficiencies for the service members and families served by YRRP, ESGR and Family Programs' missions. Since ESGR's creation in 1972, the focus has been on developing and promoting employer support for Guard and Reserve service. In FY 11, ESGR placed additional emphasis on the employment arena and now assists service members throughout the entire employment cycle. The current employment challenges led to the implementation of EIP.

The overall intent of EIP is to take full advantage of all ESGR, Yellow Ribbon, and Family Programs, in partnership with public and private entities, to enhance employment opportunities for service members and their families, especially focusing on those completing active duty tours and our Wounded Warriors. Of note, ESGR possesses a very strong network of over 4,700 volunteers located throughout the nation. EIP will leverage the volunteer network to meet the requirements of this mission.

At the national leadership level, DoD is working in a collaborative effort with Federal agencies - including the Department of Labor, Department of Veterans Affairs, Small Business Administration and the Office of Personnel Management - to create efficiencies, enhance the employment process and serve as an effective resource for service members and employers. In addition, ESGR has worked with specific associations to enhance the overall effectiveness of this program. One example is ESGR's work with the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). The more than 263,000 HR professionals of SHRM are instrumental in engaging with employers while determining meaningful employment opportunities for service members.



EIP has a high-tech and high-touch approach. The high-tech approach is comprised of the Employer Partnership of the Armed Forces website [www.employerpartnership.org](http://www.employerpartnership.org) which provides employers with the ability to post available jobs and allow service members to post resumes and make a job connection. The high-touch approach comes through a series of employment related events being conducted with YRRP Events and State specific job events. ESGR is positioned to meet the challenge of ensuring service members have quality civilian job opportunities. Pilot programs conducted in FY 10, consisting of job fairs, transition assistance and job training sessions, proved valuable in helping service members at the local level. This community-based approach will be a pivotal element in EIP as it continues to develop.

## **READINESS OF THE TOTAL FORCE**

Military readiness is not an abstract concept that can be reduced to colors on a chart - it involves a complex series of factors and indicators that must be evaluated and managed carefully. For example, our Services are achieving or exceeding their recruiting goals and have exceptional retention rates. In addition, the Force is combat experienced and proficient in a wide range of operations, including irregular warfare and stability operations. However, equipment readiness and training for conventional warfare have suffered during the same period. It is in this complicated environment that Personnel and Readiness works to maintain and sustain the Readiness of the Total Force through support to the Combatant Commanders, as well as the military Services.

### ***Readiness and Deployments***

Multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have increased the stress on our Service members and their families, and some would argue have reduced the readiness of the Department. However, our forces are combat experienced and proficient in a wide range of real world operations. They are no doubt the best trained and equipped force in the world. The All Volunteer Force is healthy, and our Services are achieving or exceeding their recruiting and retention goals with quality people. In short, our forces remain ready to execute the missions assigned to them by the President.

We have focused on preparing our ground combat forces for the operations they face in Iraq and Afghanistan. This means there is less focus on the type of training we have done in the past such as large scale ground maneuver warfare (i.e. tank on tank). We can and will rebalance this training when needed to make certain our forces are prepared to meet the needs of our Combatant Commanders in a complex and uncertain security environment.

We also carefully manage the dwell time of our forces across the Department, and have limited unit deployments and mobilizations to one year. We have also balanced the additional forces for Afghanistan against those coming available from the draw-down in Iraq. We have met the Operation New Dawn responsible drawdown plan goals. The Army had 25 Brigade Combat

Teams (BCTs) deployed to OIF and OEF in 2008, 21 BCTs deployed in 2010, and are projecting to have 50% fewer BCTs deployed in 2012 as compared to 2010. The Army projects the average unit boots on the ground to dwell ratio to improve to approximately 1:2 for Active component units and 1:4 for Reserve component units in 2012.

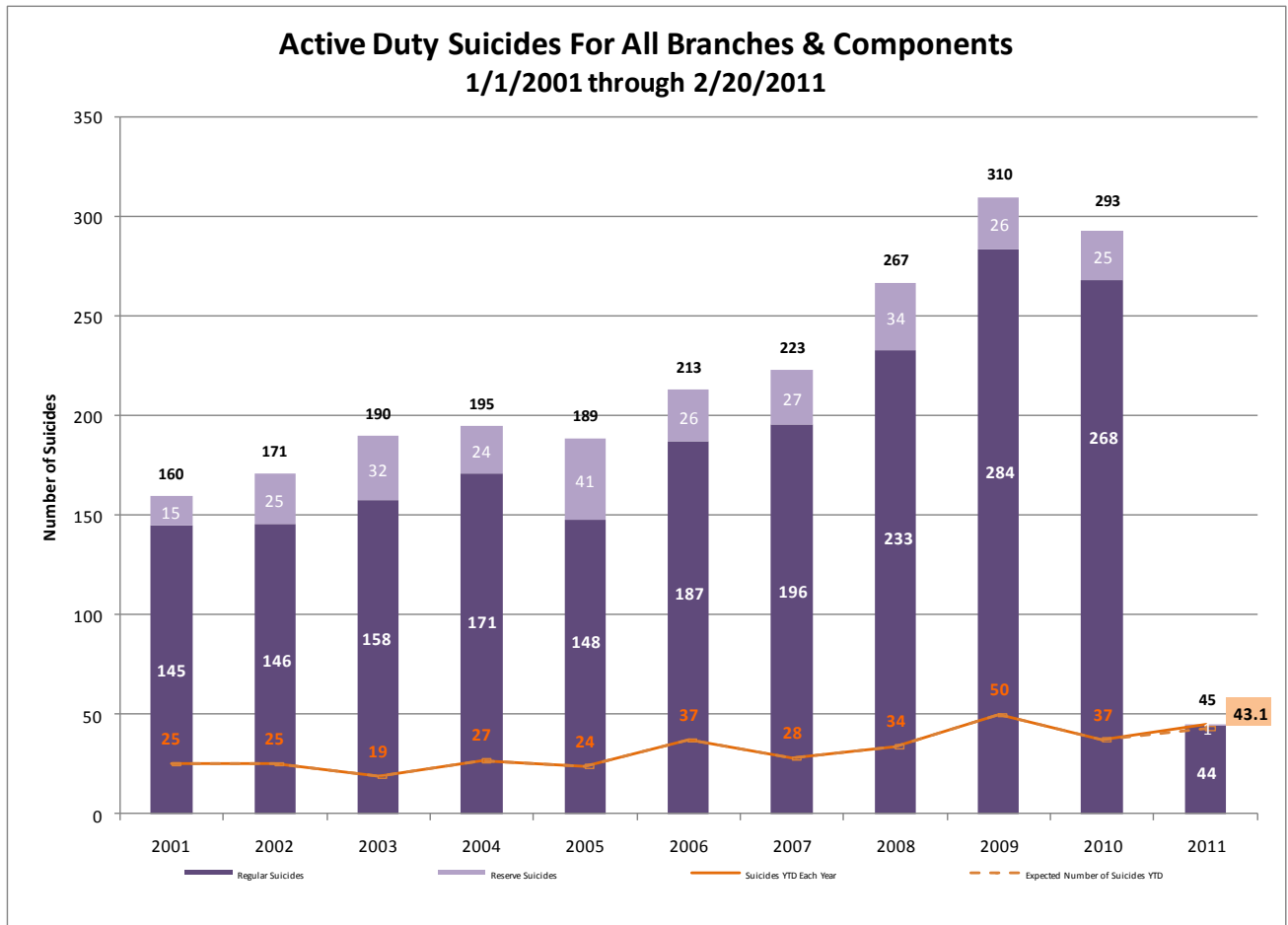
We are making excellent progress toward our dwell goal of two or more years at home for every year deployed with nearly 70% of the active force meeting or exceeding this goal.

## **Suicide Prevention**

Suicide prevention is a very important issue within the Readiness portfolio. The loss of even one life to suicide is heartbreaking; it degrades the readiness of the force and has a profound impact on both the unit and the family members left behind. Many factors contribute to the suicide rate. One factor relates to leadership. Each Service acknowledges the important role that leaders, both officer and NCO, play in building resiliency among those under their command. In 2010, there were 294 service members who committed suicide while on active duty, down from a total of 310 in 2009. While this is not a significant decrease, we have arrested the steady increases in overall active duty suicides that began in 2006. I believe this is due largely to our increasing emphasis on resilience across the Department highlighted by programs such as the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness. This program is designed to develop and institute a holistic fitness program for Soldiers, families, and Army civilians in order to enhance performance and build resilience. To date, the Army has trained 3,253 Master Resilience Trainers to facilitate this goal. The other Services are developing or enhancing similar programs and benchmarking off the Army's success.

There have been several studies and task force reports (DoD, Army and RAND) released over the past year each with multiple observations and recommendations. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness is currently leading a team of senior Officers and Executives from the Department in an effort to examine these reports and devise an implementation plan based on the recommendations that will enhance our suicide prevention efforts across the Department.

**Table 4. Total Suicides by Service/Component**



***Focus/Highlight RC and RC Suicide Prevention Strategy***

The Army National Guard reported 112 suicides in 2010 (145 total with Army Reserve added) which was up significantly from the previous year (80 total Army Guard/Reserve), which is a cause for concern. This already complex issue becomes even more complex when dealing with our Reserve Component because of their continuous transition from military to civilian life. Nevertheless, the Department is committed to addressing this issue in our Reserve Component. We currently have a Director of Psychological Health in each of our 54 states and territories who acts as the focal point for coordinating the psychological support for Guard members and their families. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) mandated that the Department expand suicide prevention and community healing and response training under the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. We have made some progress here and are in the process of reinvigorating this effort with input from a Reserve Component Stakeholder Group comprised of

all of the Reserve and National Guard Components, Reserve Affairs Yellow Ribbon representatives and members of the Defense Centers of Excellence. Additionally, we are examining “peer-to-peer” programs, such as New Jersey Vet2Vet, to see what role these types of programs can play in reducing suicides.

### ***The Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee (SPARRC)***

The Suicide Prevention and Risk Reduction Committee serves as a forum for inter-Service and Veterans Affairs partnership and coordination. Chaired by the Defense Centers of Excellence, its members include the Suicide Prevention Program Managers from all Services, representatives from the National Guard and Reserves, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other key governmental organizations. This organization has led the way in standardizing suicide reporting and data collection, forming key partnerships, growing the DoD/VA Suicide Prevention Conference into a nationally recognized event, and addressing several key suicide prevention issues. I plan to continue to mature this body, making it more inclusive and effective as a venue for collaboration across the Department of Defense and Veterans Affairs.

### ***Drug Demand Reduction Initiative***

Illegal and prescription drugs remain readily available to Department of Defense service members. The use of illegal drugs and the misuse of prescription drugs are both a symptom and problem that fuels the worsening of other conditions; such as deployment stress, suicides, and workplace safety resulting in degradation of unit readiness. Based on a recommendation of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we are taking a new systematic approach to counter an emerging drug abuse problem in the military. The Department's current demand reduction approach will be expanded to include prescription drug testing and integrated with the Readiness Office's suicide and accident reduction efforts. As part of this effort, we plan to further target applicant testing, improve random drug testing in CONUS and in theater, and expand testing to include commonly abused prescription drugs.

### ***Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC)***

The Military Leadership Diversity Commission, mandated by National Defense Authorization Act Fiscal Year 2009 and referred to as the MLDC, is scheduled to release its final

report directly to the President and the Congress in mid-March 2011. The draft final recommendations described on the MLDC public web site provide an insight into the content of the final report.

The draft report reflects over 12 months of work performed by 31 appointed commissioners in response to the MLDC Charter to conduct a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of policies that provide opportunities for the promotion and advancement of minority members of the Armed Forces, including those who are senior officers.

Specific recommendations define diversity as individual characteristics consistent with DoD core values; require diversity to become an institutional priority; make leading diverse groups a core competency; and call on Congress to mandate annual DoD diversity reports. Other key final recommendations address the following areas:

- Retention programs for women
- Activities that will expand the pool of qualified candidates
- Eliminating the “combat exclusion policy” for women
- Ensuring transparency throughout the promotion system
- Conducting senior-level annual accountability reviews, and
- Aligning organizational structures to ensure a focus on diversity.

My staff and I stand ready to accept the decision of the President and the Congress as relayed by the Secretary of Defense to address the findings and recommendations stated in the MLDC report.

### ***Language, Regional, and Cultural Capabilities***

The Department is continuing its work to ensure our Total Force is prepared for a full range of varying and complex missions that our current and future security environment requires which includes building expertise in foreign languages, regional and cultural skills. The FY 2011 budget focuses on sustaining gains achieved in previous years and continuing to build a solid infrastructure in which to meet future demands. Baseline funding of \$793 million in FY 2011 supports redirected language and culture instruction to achieve higher proficiencies for the Total Force in these skills. During the most recent programming cycle, the Department committed an additional \$36 million in FY 2011 to establish Language Training Detachments to provide and sustain commanders' needs for general purpose forces, support the Afghanistan/Pakistan Hands program, and expand the role of English language training for

partner nation personnel. Today, the Department is moving ahead on several fronts to develop strategic direction, create effective policies, and refine processes for generating language, regional, and cultural capabilities.

We recently published the Language, Regional and Cultural Strategic Plan that sets out our strategic direction in providing our warfighters with the capabilities needed to meet the diverse operational needs of the 21st Century. In January 2011, we convened a DoD Summit on Language and Culture. Nearly 300 leaders from across the DoD, other U.S. Government agencies, industry, and academia met to discuss and propose innovative solutions to the key challenges facing the Department and the greater Nation.

We also published counterinsurgency training guidance to require language and culture training for forces deploying to theater. The Department is tracking compliance with this training and tying language and cultural preparation of deployed forces to unit readiness reporting. This represents an enduring organizational change in how the Department views these capabilities. We are implementing a standardized requirements identification process. This process will identify the capabilities and capacity to ensure that the right mix of language and regional skills are developed to meet mission needs. In the past, demand signals were incomplete and did not always reach force providers.

The Department supports the efforts of our nation's educational system to produce more graduates with language and culture skills. It has established more robust language requirements for our Service Academies and established programs and incentives for our Reserve Officers' Training Corps. We are expanding the DoD Educational Activity foreign language program to provide a model for building foreign language skills pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade. These initiatives will ensure a strong return on investment. The results will be an increased capability in these skills which can be leveraged and expanded to meet needs in today's dynamic and complex world.

## **MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM**

### ***Health Budgets and Financial Policy***

The Defense Health Program (DHP) budget request reflects that we are operating in an environment where financial resources are limited, and that specific actions must be undertaken to better manage the rise of health care costs. In many respects, our challenges in this area are not unlike those experienced by other public and private organizations that are similarly experiencing escalating health care costs—driven by an aging population, a continued increase in expensive new medical technologies and pharmaceuticals, and increased utilization of services. In our circumstance, however, we must also be aware that the exponential growth in health costs can pose a long-term threat to competing defense priorities.

### ***DHP Future Health Care Costs TRICARE – MHS Costs***

In the budget proposed by the Department, we have included a number of specific initiatives that both ensure we continue to provide the finest health benefit in this country for our active and retired service members and their families, and also puts us on a long-term path to proper financial stewardship of the taxpayers' dollar. First, we are focused on internal efficiencies. From targeted reductions in non-patient care contractor support to greater optimization of our medical supply chain, we are pursuing a range of initiatives that offer real reductions in our budget. Second, we are pursuing a more equitable management of benefits across all health care programs. We are continuing to align civilian provider payment policies with Medicare, as Congress has long directed. Finally, for working age retirees, we are proposing minor changes to out-of-pocket costs that are exceptionally modest and remain well below the inflation-adjusted out-of-pocket costs enjoyed in 1995, when TRICARE Prime was first introduced. We have incorporated numerous safeguards – grandfathering in all current enrollees to unique programs; phasing-in new reimbursement methodologies for providers; and excepting certain beneficiaries (survivors and medically retired Service members) from any enrollment fee changes – in order to protect our most vulnerable beneficiaries.



### ***Health Affairs/TRICARE Management Activity Strategic Direction***

I am also encouraged by the long-term strategic direction of our medical program. The Office of Health Affairs has adopted a strategic construct – the Quadruple Aim – that captures the core mission requirements of this unique health system of ours: (1) Improved Readiness; (2) Improved Health; (3) Enhanced Patient Experience; and (4) Responsible Management of Cost. The Health Affairs leadership, together with the Service Surgeons General, has put into place a sophisticated set of strategic imperatives and quantifiable measures that help inform me and the Service Secretaries and Chiefs on our progress in meeting the most important goals for our Service members and families – that includes how we are performing in the areas of psychological health and traumatic brain injury, delivery of preventive health services, focus on outcomes and overall satisfaction with the delivery of health care, to name just a few.

### ***Mental Health Professionals***

The mental health workload has increased across the Military Health System (MHS) for both active duty service members and family members. Among the reasons for this increased workload are PTSD, TBI, earlier identification of mental health issues, increased suicides and suicide attempts, and reduced stigma of seeking mental health care. This workload has increased the need for mental health providers. Currently, throughout the MHS, there are a total of 7662 military, civilian, and contract employees (full time equivalents) providing mental health care. This reflects a shortage of 1025 which puts the MHS at 88 percent fill compared to requirements. We are pursuing efforts to assist the Services in recruiting and retaining these critical mental health provider positions. These efforts include using Direct Hire Authority and Expedited Hiring Authority that Congress provided the Department to help recruit providers. Additionally, we are implementing the Physician and Dentist Pay Plan (PDPP) which will ensure we can pay critical shortage specialties, such as psychiatrists, salaries competitive with the private sector.

## MENTAL HEALTH STAFFING

	<u>Needs</u>	<u>Assigned</u>	<u>Shortage in Red font</u>	<u>% Filled</u>
<b><u>ARMY</u></b>				
Psychologist	1,393	1,205	(188)	86.5%
Psychiatrist	563	436	(127)	77.4%
Social Worker	1,772	1,486	(286)	83.9%
MH Nursuing (include NP)	489	426	(63)	87.1%
Other licensed MH Provider	103	24	(79)	23.3%
Tech/Counselor	703	818	115	116.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,023</b>	<b>4,395</b>	<b>(628)</b>	<b>87.5%</b>
<b><u>NAVY</u></b>				
Psychologist	361	307	(54)	85.0%
Psychiatrist	191	158	(33)	82.7%
Social Worker	242	205	(37)	84.7%
MH Nursuing (include NP)	160	151	(9)	94.4%
Other licensed MH Provider	58	50	(8)	86.2%
Tech/Counselor	651	536	(115)	82.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,407</b>	<b>(256)</b>	<b>84.6%</b>
<b><u>AIR FORCE</u></b>				
Psychologist	425	321	(104)	75.5%
Psychiatrist	164	150	(14)	91.5%
Social Worker	437	416	(21)	95.2%
MH Nursuing (include NP)	109	102	(7)	93.6%
Other licensed MH Provider	-	-	-	-
Tech/Counselor	866	871	5	100.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,001</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>(141)</b>	<b>93.0%</b>
<b><u>MHS -WIDE</u></b>				
Psychologist	2,179	1,833	(346)	84.1%
Psychiatrist	918	744	(174)	81.0%
Social Worker	2,451	2,107	(344)	86.0%
MH Nursuing (include NP)	758	679	(79)	89.6%
Other licensed MH Provider	161	74	(87)	46.0%
Tech/Counselor	2,220	2,225	5	100.2%
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>8,687</b>	<b>7,662</b>	<b>(1,025)</b>	<b>88.2%</b>

\* NOTE: These numbers include military (officers and enlisted), civilian, and contract employees (Full time equivalents).

These numbers do not include the 49, 807 mental health providers in the TRICARE network.

As of 31 December 2010

## **DOD/VA COLLABORATION**

In order to take better care of our Service members, in particular, our Veterans who have served in combat, it is imperative that DoD and VA have a close and collaborative working relationship. While our two organizations have different missions, our priority is the same -- taking care of those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

In this effort, DoD and VA work together through a governance body, created by Congress, to ensure that we are in constant communication and work in collaboration. The formal governance council structure put in place to oversee development of policy and support DoD/VA joint initiatives and resource sharing, including information sharing is the Joint Executive Council (JEC), which is co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary of VA and the DoD Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness. The JEC is the overarching council, linking the DoD/VA with two supporting councils: the Health Executive Council (HEC) and the Benefits Executive Council (BEC).

The Health Executive Council (HEC) is co-chaired by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs and the VA Under Secretary for Health and reports directly to the Joint Executive Council (JEC). The HEC meets bi-monthly and is responsible for implementing a coordinated health care resource sharing program. The HEC is chartered to oversee the development and implementation of health care related issues in the VA/DoD Joint Strategic Plan (JSP), oversee working groups and steering groups, identify opportunities to enhance mutually beneficial collaboration, and submit input to the JEC annual report on progress of the JSP for health issues. The HEC has charged 20 groups to focus on specific high-priority areas of national interest, achieving significant success in improving interagency cooperation.

Today, most healthcare information captured by the DoD and VA is done so electronically and deemed necessary for the continuity of care and benefits administration. Currently, this information is being shared only as viewable data, not computable. Although both Departments utilize electronic health records (EHRs) and have computer systems to

automate administrative and healthcare functions, there is not a widespread adoption of EHRs in the private sector among the many providers who deliver care to DoD and VA beneficiaries. Some information available in both DoD and VA EHRs is of utmost importance to the clinical communities treating and caring for DoD and VA beneficiaries. Interoperability of EHRs between the DoD and VA is the end-state goal of departmental healthcare information sharing. The purpose of EHR interoperability is to achieve a single logical (not physical) electronic health record view from the day an individual enters military service throughout their military career, and after they leave the military.

The Departments continue to identify opportunities to enhance DoD/VA electronic health data sharing. After a December 2010 review by the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS), DoD and VA formed six teams to create a collaborative approach to the EHR Way Ahead. The teams—Enterprise Architecture, Data Interoperability, Business Process, Systems Capabilities, Presentation Layer, and Missions Requirements/ Functions—cover high-level activities needed to plan, develop and deploy final recommended solutions. In-progress reviews of the joint EHR modernization collaboration effort have been held with the Deputy Secretaries of the two departments and team findings are being elevated to the DoD and VA Department Secretaries for discussion and consideration.

We believe this careful, collaborative approach will, in fact, enhance our decision-making process and lead to a solution that can be implemented in a more timely and coordinated manner. The EHR Way Ahead addresses specific challenges with the current EHR, including outdated legacy technologies; ongoing performance and data availability problems; and difficulty in using healthcare industry standards.

### ***World-Class Medical Care in the National Capital Region***

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) construction projects at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir will provide nearly three million square-feet of new world-class clinical and administrative space, cutting-edge technology, and Americans with Disability Act lodging to meet the rehabilitation needs of Wounded, Ill, and Injured service members. The new facilities will improve the infrastructure for casualty care and services and better align healthcare delivery

with the population centers of the National Capital Region (NCR) beneficiaries. The projects are on schedule to receive patients and clinical functions from Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) by September 15, 2011, while casualty care and patient safety remain the top priorities related to the move. The majority of the BRAC construction at both sites is complete and patient care is being provided in the new inpatient and outpatient pavilions at Bethesda. The Department is paying close attention to the timeliness and milestones necessary to achieve the final moves.

The BRAC projects are only part of the larger transformation of Military Medicine in the NCR. The NCR contains a mix of nearly 40 Army, Navy, and Air Force Medical Treatment Facilities (MTFs), has almost 550,000 eligible beneficiaries, and runs on an annual operating budget of almost \$1.5 Billion. Its most important patients are the casualties returning from the war and their families. The Department is taking the opportunity to substantially enhance and transform this multi-Service military healthcare market to provide effective and efficient world-class healthcare. The Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical (JTF CapMed) is a standing JTF that was established to oversee the rationalization and realignment of medical infrastructure to achieve greater effectiveness and cost efficiency through the integrated delivery of healthcare.

DoD's Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) for the NCR, provided to Congress, last year, outlined how JTF CapMed will implement an Integrated Healthcare Delivery System (IDS) to provide this world-class healthcare that is also cost effective. The Department has provided JTF CapMed with command and fiduciary authorities to manage MTFs in the NCR to develop best practices, enhance interoperability and patient safety, and combine shared services such as contracting, personnel, and consolidated information technology – ultimately improving the *patient and family experience*. An example of clinical transformation is in the direct care pharmacy system intended to facilitate prescriptions and refills no matter where in the NCR they are presented, provide refills to Six Sigma quality standards, and alleviate traffic concerns at NCR BRAC sites.

The Department has requested \$109M in the President's 2012 budget (\$762M between FY12 - FY16) to recapitalize medical facilities at Bethesda that the BRAC did not address and provide the new space required to convert to single patient rooms and expand support for the operating suites. These facility projects and the implementation of the NCR IDS are part of the Department's commitment to providing "world-class" healthcare in the NCR and fulfilling the requirements under section 2714 of the FY10 NDAA.

## **WOUNDED WARRIORS**

Taking care of our wounded, ill and injured Service members is one of the highest priorities of the Department, the Service Secretaries and the Service Chiefs. Reforming unnecessary bureaucratic processes is crucial to ensuring Service members receive, in a timely manner, the care and benefits to which they are entitled.

### ***Disability Evaluation System/Integrated Disability Evaluation System***

The genesis of the Disability Evaluation System (DES) is the Career Compensation Act of 1949. The DES was relatively unchanged until 2007. As a result of public concern and congressional interest, DoD and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) chartered the Wounded, Ill and Injured (WII) Senior Oversight Committee (SOC) in November 2007. Based on recommendations of several commissions and task forces, the SOC immediately recommended that a new DES Pilot be created. The SOC vision for the DES Pilot was to create a "Service Member Centric" seamless and transparent DES, administered jointly by the DoD and VA.

DoD and VA launched the DES Pilot at the three major military treatment facilities (Walter Reed, Bethesda, and Malcolm Grow) in the National Capital Region (NCR) on November 21, 2007. The DES Pilot successfully integrated the DoD and VA disability systems into a single, seamless process that delivers DoD and VA benefits to wounded, ill and injured Service members. DoD and VA found the integrated DES to be a faster, fairer, more efficient system and, as a result, the SOC Co-chairs (Deputy Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs) on July 30, 2010, directed worldwide implementation of the process beginning in October 2010 and to be completed at the end of September 2011. On December 31, 2010, the first Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) site became operational, which marked the end of the pilot, and the name was formally changed to the IDES.

The IDES, similar to the pilot, integrates DoD and VA DES processes in which the member receives a single set of physical disability examinations conducted according to VA

examination protocols, disability ratings prepared by VA, and simultaneous processing by both Departments to ensure the earliest possible delivery of disability benefits. Both Departments use the VA protocols for disability examination and the VA disability rating to make their respective determinations. DoD determines fitness for duty and compensates for unfitting conditions incurred in the line of duty (Title 10), while VA compensates for all disabilities incurred or aggravated during military service for which a disability rating of 10 percent or higher is awarded and thus establishes eligibility for other VA benefits and services (Title 38). The systems are integrated, not merged. The IDES requires the Departments to complete their disability determinations before DoD separates a Service member so that both Departments can provide disability benefits at the earliest point allowed under both titles. Service members who separate or retire (non-disability) may still apply to the VA for service-connected disability compensation.

In summary, the IDES features a Service member-centric design, simpler, faster and more consistent evaluations and compensation, single medical exam and disability rating, seamless transition to Veteran status, case management advocacy, and establishment of a Service member relationship with the VA prior to separation. It also provides increased transparency through better information flow to Service members and their family and a reduced gap between separation/retirement from Service to receipt of VA benefits. Active component members completed the program 40 percent faster than a sample of legacy DES cases. As of March 6, 2011, cumulative IDES enrollment is 19,382 Service members with 6,082 completing the program by medical separation, retirement, or return to duty and 12,818 remaining enrolled.

The Department of Defense is partnering closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs as we aggressively move toward IDES implementation at all 141 CONUS and OCONUS sites by 30 September 2011.

The impact of each stage of the IDES expansion and cumulative DES population is shown below:

- Stage I-West Coast & Southeast (October-December 2010) - (Completed) 58%
- Stage II-Rocky Mountain & Southwest Region (January-March 2011) - 73%



- Stage III-Midwest & Northeast (April - June 2011) - 90% Stage IV-Outside Continental United States (OCONUS)/CONUS (July - September) -- 100%

IDES constitutes a major improvement over the legacy DES and both DoD and VA are fully committed to the Worldwide expansion of IDES. The Department is, however, continuously exploring new ways to improve the current system. The Secretaries of Defense and Veterans Affairs are currently exploring several options to shorten the overall length of the disability evaluation process from its current goal of 295 calendar days. In addition, the departments are also looking closely at stages of the disability evaluation system that are outside of timeliness tolerances and developing options to bring these stages within goal. We are committed to working closely with Congress in exploring new initiatives that can further advance the efficiency and effectiveness of the disability evaluation process.

### ***Transition Initiatives***

To strengthen our Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and reinforce its value to Service members and their families, the Department, in collaboration, with our partners at the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Labor (DOL) is committed to moving TAP from a traditional event-driven approach to a modern, innovative lifecycle approach. We are shifting from an end of military life-cycle event to an outcome based model that will measure success not only on the number of Service members who use the TAP process, but also on the number of transitioning service members and their families who find the TAP process beneficial in assisting them with their life goals, military career progression, and/or new careers/meaningful employment outside of uniformed service. We will be implementing this strategic plan with focuses on information technology, strategic communications, and resources and performance management. The end-state for the TAP overhaul will be a population of Service members who have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to empower themselves to make informed career decisions, be competitive in the global work force and become positive contributors to their community as they transition from military to civilian life.

As part of this effort, we launched the DoD Career Decision Toolkit in August 2010. The Toolkit was developed in collaboration with the Military Services and our TAP partners at the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Labor to help simplify the learning curve for

transitioning Service members with the information, tools, and resources they need to succeed in the next phase of their lives. The toolkit uses the latest technology to consolidate the very best teaching materials from all the Service branches and provides thousands of on-demand resources to Service members. It is interactive, simple to use and portable. The toolkit includes:

- More than 3,000 on-demand information and planning resources
- Transition subjects such as career exploration, financial planning, resume creation, interviewing skills and compensation negotiation
- Tools that enable Service members to catalogue their military skills, training, and experience in ways that transfer to civilian sector
- Post-Service benefits and resources
- Resources that allow users to self-assess individual transition needs and plan personalized options

We are developing an “end-to-end” virtual TAP delivery vehicle delivery platform that will provide the back-bone of the transformed TAP program, integrating the Guard and reserve components, as well as expanding services available to family members.

DoD has also played a supporting role with the Office of Personnel Management on the initiative to increase hiring veterans in all federal agencies. This is now recognized as President Obama’s Veterans Employment Initiative that directs all Executive Agencies to increase veteran employment. TAP is one of the programs we will use to educate and inform Service members about federal Service career opportunities.

## **MILITARY FAMILY & COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

### ***Family Support – Joint Family Support Assistance Program***

On January 24<sup>th</sup> of this year at a ceremony held at the White House, the President, Mrs. Obama and Dr. Biden formally released the results of the Presidential Study Directive on Military Families endorsed by all the Cabinet Secretaries. This report was the result of an unprecedented level of intense collaboration between federal agencies at the direction of the President, taking a whole of government approach to address the needs of military members and families by leveraging the collective resources and expertise of the entire Cabinet.

The work reflected in the report was conducted by the Military Family Interagency Policy Committee (IPC), which included representatives from every cabinet agency, and identified and addressed the most pressing military family issues faced by Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen in the active, Guard and Reserve ranks, Veterans, and especially families of the fallen. The IPC identified four priority areas that the Cabinet agencies would rally together to address:

- The first: improving the well-being and psychological health of military families by expanding access to counseling, protecting families from abusive financial practices and reducing homelessness among our veterans.
- The second: ensuring that military children are receiving the support and education they need thrive, especially when a parent is deployed and when making the difficult transition between different communities and schools.
- The third: expanding career development and educational opportunities for military spouses, including opportunities for federal employment and working with the private sector to harness the incredible talents of spouses and veterans.
- And the fourth: increasing the availability and quality of child care for service members with children, including the many single parents serving the military.

The IPC has now entered the implementation phase of the report, efforts which are now well underway.

Again, while the Presidential Study Directive and the work of the IPC represent an unprecedented level of collaborative effort that recognizes the service and sacrifice of our

military members, veterans, and especially their families, supporting military families in the long term simply cannot be the work of government alone.

### ***Child Care***

The Department continues to build child capacity that supports Reserve Component families while the servicemember is deployed, geographically dispersed active duty military families, and servicemembers living in areas in the continental United States where on-installation military child care is unavailable. An initiative to expand the availability of quality child care programs is underway in 13 pilot states. These states were selected based on multiple factors such as residential/demographic information and locations where state's efforts to improve the quality of child care are in tandem with DoD. In addition, an analysis of state licensing and oversight standards for the pilot states will guide efforts to provide training and technical assistance to improve quality of child care. Central to the success of this strategy is the placement of a Child Care Liaison in each pilot state who will work to assist in developing state-specific strategies that recognize the unique challenges and assets of the state and local communities. This individual will be tasked with developing communication strategies among various state partners to reduce duplication of effort and ensure resources are effectively utilized.

### ***Youth Programs***

Military youth make tremendous sacrifices and they deserve high quality programs and services that meet their needs. The Department has been recognized for providing dynamic, innovative and successful youth programs to nearly 660,000 military children and youth between the ages of 6-18 years on a daily basis around the globe. We are proud of the vital programs and services offered for youth during out-of-school hours. Today, youth programs are available where military families live -- whether on military installations or in civilian communities. The programs are expanding by developing partnerships with other youth-serving organizations to augment the DoD programs; thereby offering a variety of additional resources to promote positive youth development. Military youth programs prepare youth to meet the challenges of military life, adolescence, and adulthood with programs and activities such as physical fitness and sports, arts and recreation, training in leadership, life skills and career/volunteer opportunities, mentoring, intervention and support services. DoD's enhanced youth

programming also supports character and leadership development, sound education choices, and healthy life skills.

### ***Family Readiness Programs***

The Department provides family readiness programs through a network of Family Centers at installations worldwide that seek to prepare military families to effectively navigate the challenges of daily living experienced in the unique context of military service. Family Centers provide information and referral; training; and counseling opportunities to educate families about the potential challenges they may face; equip them with the skills to competently function in the face of such challenges; and increase awareness of the supportive resources available to them. The focus is to assist families with deployment; relocation; spouse employment; family life education including parenting; personal financial management; volunteer opportunities; and non-medical counseling.

In Fiscal Year 2007, Congress mandated that the Department implement a Joint Family Support Assistance Program (JFSAP) to augment existing family programs and provide outreach and support to Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve military members and families who are geographically separated from military installations. Congress also mandated that the JFSAP coordinate family assistance programs and activities provided by Military OneSource, Military and Family Life Counselor Program, counselors, the Department of Defense, other Federal agencies, State and local agencies, and non-profit entities. In 2008, the Department implemented JFSAP teams at National Guard Joint Force Headquarters in all states and Territories to work with military and civilian resources to provide support and services to military families in the communities where they live.

### ***Family Advocacy Programs***

The DoD Family Advocacy Program (FAP) addresses physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect involving active component military personnel and family members who are victims and abusers. On each military installation with command-sponsored families, there is a FAP that provides services in prevention, identification, intervention and treatment of child abuse and neglect and domestic abuse. We evaluate the effectiveness of FAP through rates of

family maltreatment and outcome measures for prevention and treatment. Through nine years of high stresses on our families due to wartime deployments our rates of such family maltreatment have remained relatively stable but we continue to monitor this carefully because of the cumulative effects of such stresses. For two consecutive years 85 per cent of our new parents who have participated in the New Parent Support Program for at least 6 months have had no substantiated child abuse or neglect the following year, and 90 per cent of substantiated spouse abusers who completed FAP treatment have had no substantiated spouse abuse the following year, and we are working to develop additional outcome measures.

### ***Military OneSource***

Military OneSource offers free, convenient, 24/7/365 days access to confidential resource and referral support for Service members and their families to improve the quality of their lives and the effectiveness of military community support efforts. Military OneSource provides over 22,000 non-medical, short-term, solution focused counseling sessions per month delivered face to face, telephonically, and on line. The number of counseling sessions provided by Military OneSource has increased 930% since FY 05 with customer satisfaction consistently remaining well above 90%. Other Military OneSource services include relocation assistance, financial counseling, free tax filing services, document translation, child care and education resources, special needs consultation, elder care consultation, on-line library resources, and health coaching. Military OneSource Education and Career consultants assist almost 3,000 military spouses weekly with information regarding portable careers; education, training and licensing requirements; resume and interview preparation; and identifying employment resources. Additionally, we are increasing opportunities for military spouse careers through expansion of the Army Spouse Employment Partnership to Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force spouses. Additionally, Military OneSource serves as a conduit to the Wounded Warrior Resource Center.

### ***Wounded Warrior Resource Center***

The Wounded Warrior Resource Center (WWRC), accessed via Military One Source, provides immediate assistance to wounded, ill and injured Service members, their families, and caregivers with issues related to health care, facilities, or benefits. The WWRC works collaboratively with the Military Services' wounded warrior programs and the Department of

Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure callers are promptly provided a specific plan of action to address their concerns within 96 business hours of contacting the WWRC. In FY10, 2046 cases for wounded warriors were handled. The top three issues concerning callers were health care (38%), military benefits (20%), and VA (20%) benefits.

### ***Dependents' Education Programs***

The Department of Defense is committed to ensuring that all children of military families are provided an education that prepares them to be successful in their careers, leading contributors in their communities and productive citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) provides quality pre-kindergarten through 12th grade educational opportunities and services to eligible military dependents around the globe. DoDEA is committed to providing a rigorous college preparatory curriculum and is leading the nation in closing the achievement gap. DoDEA schools consistently score very highly on the National Assessment of Education Progress, otherwise known as the "Nation's Report Card".

Of the approximately 1.2 million military dependent children, DoDEA educates approximately 86,000 in 195 schools in 12 foreign countries, seven states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. Where DoDEA schools in overseas locations are not an option, DoDEA also assists eligible military dependent students through a tuition reimbursement program.

DoDEA has a proud history of providing quality education for children of military families, the majority of which has been taught in traditional classrooms. As an organization dedicated to continually improving the education experience for our students DoDEA launched its Virtual High School in Fall 2010 with approximately 45 course offering as a supplemental program in a variety of curriculum areas. The DoDEA Virtual High School (DVHS) is serving approximately 891 students with enrollments totaling 940 thus far. Through the Virtual School Program, DoDEA has been able to accomplish the mission of addressing secondary education needs for students in transition, where courses are not offered in a local school setting or when student situations preclude enrollment via a local school such as due to medical illness, schedule conflicts or other challenges identified by the local schools.

Because the majority of children of military families are educated in public schools across our nation, DoDEA champions world-class education for military children in public schools by supporting military-connected local education agencies (LEAs). Through an expanded authority, set to expire in 2013, DoDEA shares its expertise, experience and resources to assist military children during transitions, to sharpen the expertise of teachers and administrators in meeting the needs of military children, and to provide assistance to LEAs on deployment support for military children.

DoDEA, through its Partnership Program, has provided grants to over sixty LEAs school districts, in over eight hundred schools and serving more than 540,000, of which the nearly 41 percent are from military families. We are providing grants to help improve schools, even some that did not make their respective states' adequate yearly progress. All grants focus on enhancing student learning opportunities, student achievement, and educator professional development at military-connected schools. Some grants also have a counseling component that focuses on easing the challenges that military students face due to transitions and deployments. The grant seeks to build capacity to improve school climate as well as social and academic results in schools serving military children.

The demands of extended wartime add to the ever-present challenges faced by military families. Research suggests that the children of deployed parents collectively experience more stress than their peers. While they are often described as a resilient group, the cumulative effects of multiple moves and significant parental absences can erode this resilience. The Department is working collaboratively with the Department of Education to improve the understanding of the challenges facing military children, and what is necessary to ensure that military-connected students receive an outstanding education from "cradle through career." This effort requires a focus on not only military-connected students, but on their families, their communities, their schools and their teachers.

Further, performance data that would allow us to identify and ultimately make recommendations to improve the educational outcomes for military children attending public schools is currently not available. Data collection and analysis are critically important to



directing educational resources to those schools who are most impacted by the enrollment of military children. As a result, I worked with the Department of Education in support of a new means of collecting and reporting performance data of military-connected children as part of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

DoD has extended the Military and Family Life Counselor (MFLC) program to support and augment military-connected schools. MFLCs provide non-medical support to faculty, staff, parents, and children for issues amenable to short-term problem resolution such as school adjustment issues, deployment and reunion adjustments, and parent-child communications. There are MFLCs serving in 255 military-connected public schools and 65 DoDEA schools. Since the end of 2009, DOD has provided children of active duty military with free, unlimited access to online tutoring, academic skills courses, and homework assistance in math, science, social studies, and English for kindergarten through 12th grade (K–12) students through Tutor.com. Professional tutors assist military dependent students with completing homework, studying for standardized tests, and writing papers. The program provided 162,570 sessions during fiscal year 2010.

Recognizing that supporting military children takes a school-wide effort, DoD offers professional development to help inform school staff of the academic challenges that these children face. These include training modules and sessions on special education, as well as “Students at the Center,” an interactive educational resource for military families, military leaders, and school leaders.

Finally, in an effort to ensure all of our students receive an education of the highest quality, I have directed two assessments on the effectiveness of DoD in meeting the educational needs of all military children and on the physical conditions of the public schools located on military installations. The first assessment will examine the effectiveness of DoD in meeting the educational needs of military families, layout the full scope of issues, and develop specific action plans for leveraging success and addressing deficiencies. We will pay particular attention to ensuring a world class preparatory instruction for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and foreign language programs. The second assessment will address the

physical condition of the 160 public schools located on our military installations in the United States.

### ***MWR Support to Troops in Combat***

Support is critical to helping troops communicate with family and friends, stay physically and mentally fit, and reduce stress and boredom. The Department funds over 1,000 free MWR Internet Cafes in Iraq and Afghanistan and 135 portable satellite units, known as Cheetahs, to support remote locations. Cheetahs run off Humvees and can be set up and taken down in 20 minutes. Other MWR support includes fitness, sports and recreation equipment, portable movie theaters, and large screen televisions with DVD and video projection players and professional entertainment. The Department shipped over 264,400 paperback books and 231,974 Playaways (self-contained digital audio books) in FY 2010. Playaways now surpass paperback books in popularity with troops citing ease of use, convenience, and ability to read at night without electricity. Included in the Playaway inventory were 17,678 Dari and Pashto basic language/Afghan culture and 5,535 Arabic language Playaways. The free DoD MWR Online Library offers free downloads of audio and e-books and access to up-to-date data bases offering recreation, education and career transition support. The ability of injured Service members to engage in recreation and sports is a very important component of rehabilitation and reintegration. Under a contract with Penn State University, MWR specialists are trained to work with medical personnel, wounded warrior units, community parks and recreation, and non-profits to ensure inclusive and adaptive sports and recreation are part of installation MWR and community recreation programs. The DoD Paralympics' Program continues to provide rehabilitation support and mentoring to injured Service members/veterans who have sustained various types of injuries. Paralympics' military events are conducted at four DoD and 14 VA Medical Treatment Facilities, 29 Army Warrior Transition Units, 7 Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Battalions/Detachments, and 3 Navy and 3 Air Force locations. As an adjunct, training is well underway for the second annual Warrior Games Competition in Colorado Springs in May.

### ***DoD-State Initiatives***

DOD continues to work with state governments to educate their policy makers on the life-challenges faced by Service members and their families and to ensure that state-level policies do not disadvantage military families due to their transient life style. States have

addressed several key quality of life issues, to include the impact of frequent school transitions experienced by military children, the loss of income by military spouses as a result of military moves, and the enforcement of the Congressionally-mandated DoD predatory lending regulation. The response from states has affirmed their commitment to supporting the well-being of the Nation's fighting force. For example, 35 states have approved the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, 38 states (plus DC) now provide eligibility for unemployment compensation to military spouses, and 32 states (plus DC) enforce the DoD predatory lending regulation. The Department is continuing this effort in the 2011 state legislative sessions with strong emphasis on support of military families through the issues listed above, plus provisions to protect military parents in child custody decisions and provisions that can expedite occupational licensure processes to allow military spouses to get to work faster in a new state. Additionally, the Department is partnering with the Uniform Law Commission and the PEW Trust on the States to inform State legislators of the new Uniform Military and Overseas Voters Act (UMOVA) which simplifies the absentee voting process by making it more uniform, convenient and efficient.

### ***Military Voting Update***

The Department "rolled out" three sets of online voting assistance tools in the 2010 election: an online registration tool, an online Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (back-up ballot) tool, and, in partnership with 17 States, an online absentee ballot delivery tool (up from only 8 states in 2008). In fact, 31 States had an online blank ballot delivery process in place for the 2010 election, and all states provided ballots electronically upon request, providing tens of thousands of ballots almost instantaneously. This gave the voter more time to return the voted ballot by mail. Online and print advertising was used to implement an intensive voter outreach campaign to increase awareness and use of the tools on the F-V-A-P.gov website which stresses direct-to-voter assistance. The FVAP.gov website usage almost doubled over the 2006 election cycle, and the back-up ballot wizard usage increased three-fold. The Department responded to the MOVE Act requirement to provide expedited return of ballots from overseas military voters with a seven-day return standard and the Military Postal System Agency (MPSA) and USPS went beyond those requirements by providing Express Mail return delivery for all overseas voted ballots it carried.

As mentioned in previous testimony, election data shows that when adjusted for age and gender differences, the military is registering and voting at a higher rate than the general population and analysis of the preliminary 2010 data shows this tendency is continuing. The part of the absentee voting process where the greatest voting failure has occurred in the past is in ballot return. We do not have data yet from the states to see if the first year of MOVE Act implementation has improved military ballot return success rates. I look forward to sharing the results when available.

### ***Special Needs: New Office***

The FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act, Section 563 (10 U.S.C., 1781c) required the Secretary to establish an Office of Community Support for Military Families with Special Needs (OSN); the Military Departments to expand coordination of assignment for military families with special needs for assignments to and within the United States, and to expand community support to military families with special needs. It also required an annual report on the gaps in services, ways to address the gaps and future legislation.

The OSN was officially established in September 2010 within the office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy that is committed to military families with special needs. The Office has nine staff who have experience and educational backgrounds in special education, early intervention, physical and occupational therapy and communications. The Office submitted the first annual report to Congress in 2010 and is currently preparing the second report due April 28, 2011.

### ***Voluntary Education Opportunities***

DoD is committed to making educational opportunities available to our service members and does this through 350 military education sites worldwide to include Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Sinai, Qatar and Kuwait. During FY2010, our Voluntary Education program helped fund 857,786 enrollments by 322,964 service members, which resulted in our service members earning 43,510 diplomas and 1,783 certifications/licensures. Service members are “blending” their course work, taking both traditional and on-line courses, with approximately 71% of service

members taking some courses on-line. Due to the growth in on-line enrollments and service members attending schools off our military installations, DoD has established a policy requiring all postsecondary institutions participating in the DoD Tuition Assistance (TA) program execute a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DoD which sets certain standards of conduct for all institutions, whether they are on- or off-base, traditional or on-line. DoD is also developing an automated tracking system to document all concerns and complaints by students, DoD personnel and schools. The system will track the complaint and record its resolution. DoD is also partnering with the Departments of Education and Veterans Affairs to address common issues concerning administration of federal education benefit programs as they relate to the three agencies involved and the benefits provided to Service members and veterans.

### ***Conclusion***

We are confronted with three fundamental and related challenges as we transition the end strength of our Forces and execute efficiencies within the Department and the Services. First, we must continue to attract and retain high quality, motivated individuals for Active and Reserve military service and we must maintain an enthusiastic and skilled civilian workforce. Second, we need to work together with this Congress in creating a system of force management tools focused on a means to compassionately reduce the force as operations subside. Third, we must constantly weigh sufficiency against the risks of an uncertain future. As we invest in our human capital, we must do so judiciously. While our future challenges may often seem without bounds, our resources are not. We are faced with hard choices, as a Department and as a Nation, of allocating our resources the best we can to win the war at hand while taking care of our most valuable asset – our men and women in uniform. I look forward to working with this Congress to meet these challenges over the coming year and beyond.