

United States Air Force



Presentation

Before the House Appropriations Subcommittee
on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs

Quality of Life in the Military

Witness Statement of
CMSAF James A. Cody
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

February 25, 2015



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE JAMES A. CODY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public, and to those in all levels of government. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force. Chief Cody is the 17th chief master sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.

Chief Cody entered the Air Force in November 1984. He graduated from the air traffic control specialist course at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., in May 1985. His background includes various duties in air traffic control at the unit and major-command levels. Throughout his career, he has filled a myriad of roles including additional-duty First Sergeant and Directorate Superintendent. His assignments include bases in New Hampshire, California, Virginia and Florida. The chief also served overseas in Germany, South Korea, Turkey, and deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom.



Prior to assuming his current position, he served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph AFB, Texas.

EDUCATION

1987 Noncommissioned Officer Preparatory School, Kapaun AS, Germany

1989 Air Force Communications Command Noncommissioned Officer Leadership School, Keesler AFB, Miss.

Quality of Life in the Military

February 25, 2015

1993 Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
1995 USAFE Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Kapaun AS, Germany
1997 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy Correspondence Course
1998 Associate of Applied Science degree in airway science, Community College of the Air Force
2001 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
2005 Chief's Leadership Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
2005 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, San Diego, Calif.
2006 Gettysburg Leadership Experience, Gettysburg, Pa.
2008 Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education Correspondence Course
2008 AFSO 21 Executive Leadership Course, Disney Institute, Orlando, Fla.
2009 Keystone, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
2010 COMAFFOR Senior Staff Course, USAF Expeditionary Center, N.J.
2010 USAF Enterprise Management Seminar, Darden School of Business, University of Virginia, Charlottesville
2012 Bachelor of Science degree in business administration, Trident University International, Cypress, Calif.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. November 1984 - January 1985, Student, Basic Military Training, Lackland AFB, Texas
2. January 1985 - June 1985, Student, Technical Training School, Keesler AFB, Miss.
3. June 1985 - June 1988, Air Traffic Controller, 1964th Communications Group, Ramstein AB, Germany
4. June 1988 - January 1991, ATC Watch Supervisor, 1916th Communications Squadron, Pease AFB, N.H.
5. January 1991 - May 1993, ATC Watch Supervisor, 30th Operational Support Squadron, Vandenberg AFB, Calif.
6. May 1993 - May 1994, ATC Watch Supervisor, 51st OSS, Osan AB, South Korea
7. June 1994 - June 1996, Superintendent, Airfield Operations Training, 39th OSS, Incirlik AB, Turkey
8. June 1996 - March 2000, Superintendent, Airfield Operations, Readiness/Training, Headquarters Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.
9. March 2000 - May 2003, Chief Tower Controller, additional duty 1st Sgt, 6th OSS, MacDill AFB, Fla. (April 2002 - July 2002, Superintendent, Combat Airspace Management Cell, Joint Task Force-Southwest Asia, Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
10. June 2003 - July 2005, Superintendent, Directorate of Air and Space Operations and ATC Functional Manager, HQ ACC, Langley AFB, Va.
11. July 2005 - August 2007, Command Chief, 15th Expeditionary Mobility Task Force, Travis AFB, Calif.
12. August 2007 - July 2008, Command Chief, 6th Air Mobility Wing, MacDill AFB, Fla.
13. July 2008 - September 2010, Command Chief, 18th Air Force, Scott AFB, Ill.
14. September 2010 - January 2013, Command Chief, Headquarters Air Education and Training Command, Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas
15. January 2013 - present, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Legion of Merit
Meritorious Service Medal with seven oak leaf clusters
Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Force Achievement Medal with five oak leaf clusters
Outstanding Airman of the Year Ribbon

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

1994 39th Wing NCO of the Year

1995 John L. Levitow Award, NCO Academy

1995 USAFE ATC Training Achievement Award

1995 STEP promotion to Master Sergeant

1997 ACC Director of Air and Space Operations SNCO of the Year

2001 Distinguished Graduate, SNCO Academy

2001 AMC Air Traffic Control Enlisted Manager of the Year

2001 Tampa Bay Military Citizen of the Year

2001 Air Mobility Command SNCO of the Year

EFFECTIVE DATE OF PROMOTION

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force January 2013

(Current as of February 2014)

Introduction

Chairman Dent, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your continued support and interest in the quality of life in our military. It is always an honor to join my fellow service senior enlisted advisors as we represent the fine men and women who serve our great nation. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to represent America's Airmen and their families.

We know the support of this committee is absolutely vital to our continued success around the globe. We rely on your efforts, actions and legislation to protect and support our service member's and veteran's pay and benefits. We also appreciate the visits House members have made to support our Airmen in the field, and invite you to continue to travel to our installations to see first-hand the quality of our Airmen and families.

Force Management

The Air Force faced a significant challenge last year as we went through a period of force drawdown. Our Active Duty component saw a substantial decrease in end strength, dropping from 327,600 at the start of Fiscal Year 2014 to 312,980 at the start of Fiscal Year 2015. At the same time, global demands and geopolitical realities made clear the need to halt further force reduction initiatives. The Air Force decided to suspend any further involuntary separations in Fiscal Year 2015, and plans to have 315,000 personnel on Active Duty, 105,000 in the Air National Guard and 67,100 in the Air Force Reserve by the end of this fiscal year.

Although uncertainty remains, this new direction for 2015 has begun to ease some concerns expressed by our Airmen, while positioning us to focus on ensuring operational units maintain mission capability. When looking forward to Fiscal Year 2016, our budget submission

includes a plan and the requisite resources to further right-size our inventory for assigned missions and weapon system platforms in this fiscally constrained environment. The Air Force will address key capability gaps in the nuclear enterprise, cyber, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and force support, while matching manpower to force structure decisions. As a result, the Air Force will request an end-strength of 317,000 Active Duty, 105,500 Air National Guard and 69,200 Air Force Reserve Airmen for Fiscal Year 2016 and will access to sustain this larger size active force. In addition, as the Air Force addresses the identified key capability gaps, experienced personnel in these areas must be retained and placed in necessary locations. As we look forward to the year ahead, our commitment to our fellow Airmen and our country is unwavering and is proof positive that we are still the best Air Force in the world.

People First

A primary priority of our Air Force leadership is taking care of people. We are committed to providing the best support possible to build and maintain ready and resilient Airmen and families. Under constrained budgets, it is ever more challenging to maintain Airmen and family support programs at previously funded levels. However, in light of this challenge, Air Force restored Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) support in the Fiscal Year 2016 President's Budget request. This support will help ensure Airmen and their families stay resilient and mission ready. The Budget Control Act (BCA) will reverse the MWR support we have programmed and, if enacted, would result in reduced MWR activities and support programs for Airmen and their families, thus impairing resilience and readiness. Therefore, we request your support to ensure that sequestration does not occur in Fiscal Year 2016.

Building Resilient Airmen

Our construct for building resilient Airmen is Comprehensive Airmen Fitness (CAF). CAF's mission, vision and goals are designed to foster the welfare of people that directly and indirectly support the Air Force mission to fly, fight and win in air, space and cyberspace. CAF is a holistic approach to maintain and strengthen fitness in the mental, physical, social and spiritual domains. In practical application, CAF provides an integrated framework across functional education and training efforts, activities and programs. Through this approach, we look to provide a thriving and resilient Air Force community ready to meet current and future challenges, encompassing and sustaining a balanced, fit and ready force.

On January 27, 2015, Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas welcomed the first class of Airmen who will participate in the Basic Military Training (BMT) Capstone Week, a final week dedicated entirely to character development. We restructured our eight and a half week BMT program to provide our Airmen with an education that transcends conformity by delivering core life skill training. This training will be the initial and most crucial phase of developing resilient Airmen. Not only will this training prepare our Airmen for their first assignment, it will reinforce our core values of integrity, service and excellence and better prepare our newest Airmen to inculcate into our Air Force with essential social and life skills.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR)

Air Force leadership involvement at every level the past three years has led to fewer sexual assault incidents and more victims reporting the crime; however, we still have work to realize an Air Force free from sexual assault. The multi-functional Air Force Sexual Assault and Prevention Office remains under the direction of the Air Force Vice Chief of Staff and is refining

and developing education and training, policy, and programs designed to eliminate sexual assault from our Air Force. The Air Force has improved every aspect of our response system to ensure we provide the best possible care to our victims and appropriately prosecute those who commit this crime. We will be relentless in our efforts to create an environment free of sexual harassment and assault.

In late 2014 the Air Force submitted a detailed report to the Department of Defense on the state of sexual assault prevention and response. The report was incorporated into a larger Department of Defense report submitted to the President in December 2014. This report incorporated the initial results of the RAND Corporation's Military Workplace Study. The results from the report confirm the Air Force is making progress to eliminate sexual assault, but that our work is far from finished, and we agree.

In 2014, 1 of 2.4 Airmen who experienced a sexual assault reported the incident, versus 1 of 5.4 in Fiscal Year 2012. The ratio is the result of a 71 percent increase in sexual assault reports and a 25 percent decrease in sexual assault incidents over the same period. Those numbers indicate more victims trust the Air Force to provide care; however, additional data gleaned from the RAND Military Workplace Study confirmed that retaliation remains a persistent problem.

The Air Force will not tolerate retaliation. Although detailed data on retaliation is not available, the Air Force has already taken steps to address retaliation in the 2015 sexual assault prevention and response annual training which deployed Air Force-wide in late January. Also, the Air Force will continue to review and revise as necessary all education modules on victim

empathy in enterprise leadership courses. The key to realizing an Air Force free from sexual assault is to prevent the crime altogether.

The next evolution in our SAPR program is to take a deep dive into prevention and stop the crime before it takes place. Prevention measures in place include updating all leadership training to ensure commanders understand their role in creating and sustaining a healthy environment where all Airmen thrive. It is followed-up with holding these same commanders – as well as all Airmen – accountable in their annual performance report for the climate they have created. We also provide bystander intervention training in all our accessions programs to teach Airmen how to recognize and successfully intervene in situations that could lead to a sexual assault or any other conduct that is contrary to our Core Values. In January, the Air Force hosted a five-day Sexual Assault Prevention Summit on Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. Eleven experts presented a wide range of topics focused on prevention. For the first time, the Air Force invited 150 Airmen to represent our total force. Airmen in the ranks of E-2 through O-6, with various backgrounds and duty locations, converted the information provided by the experts into actionable, relatable measures that can be deployed Air Force wide. On the final day of the Summit, each working group presented their recommendations to Air Force senior leadership. The recommendations will be further evaluated by Sexual Assault Prevention and Response office and incorporated into an updated prevention strategy and future education and training. The United States Air Force is the best in the world because of our Airmen, and we absolutely understand they are critical to realizing an Air Force free from sexual assault.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention remains a high priority for Air Force leadership at every level. Suicide is a national problem and our Air Force has not been immune. We cannot help but be influenced by what is a gradually increasing rate across the general U.S. population. As a result, we have purposefully taken a hard look at our prevention program and made two improvements to provide better support to our Airmen and families. First, we have decided to return to a more personalized form of suicide prevention training where supervisors and other leaders will guide small group discussions. This form of face-to-face training will allow for more direct discussion and interaction with Airmen on resilience and recognize those who may be at high risk. Secondly, building on the success of our Frontline Supervisor Training for our at-risk career fields, we are adding an annual refresher for them to keep their skills current and close at hand. Our suicide prevention training seeks to de-stigmatize and promote seeking help early and leverage our Wingman culture, where Airmen look out for one another. We believe involved leadership, concerned Wingmen and an environment that encourages seeking help early is key to combating suicide in the Air Force at a time when uncertainty and stress is high for our Airmen and families.

Recruiting and Retention

The Air Force has successfully met the All-Volunteer Force requirements for the past 15 years and is currently positioned to meet Fiscal Year 2015 requirements despite the challenges we face getting the right Airmen into the right jobs and at the right time. We are on track to meet Total Force enlisted accession goals for the Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard. For this fiscal year, over 10,000 of America's young men and women have completed or

are currently attending Air Force Basic Military Training (BMT), and there are approximately 8,000 additional recruits already contracted to attend BMT in Fiscal Year 2015 with an additional 5,400 needed to fully meet this year's goal of 23,414 recruits. This is despite numerous challenges, including eligibility pools that range between 20% - 30% of the U.S. population; currently 25% of the population is eligible to enlist. Yet, we have been able to mitigate these challenges to some degree. As a testament to our great recruiters, 19% of our new recruits have at least 15-semester hours of college. So through the great work of the Air Force Recruiting Service, we have been able to recruit the best and brightest our nation has to offer. However, we anticipate our recruiting challenges will continue to grow in the coming years.

While we anticipate some of the same challenges mentioned, we are cognizant that as the economy grows, we could face even tougher competition for recruits, especially those with highly technical or unique skills and capabilities. Furthermore, as the discussion on significant changes to military compensation continues, we need to monitor our entering applicants and recruits for potential impacts. One thing appears certain: As we move forward, the competition for the best our nation has to offer will only become more difficult.

To help combat these difficulties in these unprecedented budgetary times, it is imperative we invest in programs that attract the highest quality applicants the Air Force requires to meet the myriad mission needs to include evolving career fields such as Cyber and High-Demand/Low-Density career fields like our critical Battlefield Airmen. Our ability to meet recruitment goals and sustain the quality enlisted corps we require depends on a comprehensive approach, one that keeps military service attractive to potential recruits. A centerpiece of that appeal is a focus of this subcommittee, our Air Force Quality of Life programs and initiatives,

which have been strained by budget pressures in recent years. We offer our recruits much more than a profession; we offer them the opportunity to be part of our Air Force family. Quality of life programs and the support we offer to our Airmen and their families are essential for us to remain competitive in the recruiting arena.

Quality of Service

We sincerely appreciate continued congressional support and funding for quality of service initiatives. We believe these to be an overwhelming factor in the decision Airmen and their families make to continue serving our nation. We place a great deal of importance on the sense of community in and around our bases. We focus on four main areas: health and wellness; Airmen and family support; education, development, and employment; and Airmen and family housing.

Health and Wellness:

Assistance to Severely Injured Service Members

The Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care office leads our effort to orchestrate a comprehensive, continuum of care that synergizes DoD and Veterans Affairs programs to meet the medical and non-medical care of wounded, ill and injured service members. Over the past year, our Air Force Wounded Warrior program has increased enrollment with improved outreach to Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve units. We have assigned Recovery Care Coordinators to two Air National Guard Bases and to our Air Force Reserve Command Headquarters. We continue to work with units to identify Guard and Reserve Airmen who have returned home from deployment and are just beginning to cope with the effects of post-traumatic stress. We strive to ensure affected Airmen know about the professional resources available to

help them when symptoms begin to appear. Bringing healing and focus to their lives is an ongoing priority and will be for years to come. Airmen are globally engaged every day; challenges for wounded warriors remain a constant.

Care of our Airmen is a holistic endeavor. While we are committed to providing world-class treatment for their wounds, illnesses or injuries, we are also dedicated to treating the whole person and, as an extension of the Airmen, their families and caregivers as well. Every wounded or severely injured or ill Airman faces an uncertain future. Through our Air Force programs we help each Airman identify a path to normalcy, whether that is through continuing their Air Force career or, if their circumstances so dictate, developing goals for a future beyond the uniform. Whatever their future aspirations may be – education, employment or just focusing on regaining their independence – we will help our Airmen design and implement a plan to make it happen. The involvement of our families and caregivers is pivotal to the Airman's success, so we include them and their needs, goals and wishes every step of the way.

We connect spouses to employment and educational opportunities as well as support resources for everything from marital counseling to financial support to housing assistance. We also have developed, as a collaborative effort with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the other Service Wounded Warrior programs, the Caregiver Peer Support Forums. These meetings, being introduced at all Air Force installations, provide caregivers an opportunity to share their experiences and challenges with others that best understand what they are going through. The forums are facilitated by Military Family Life counselors and allow the caregivers, in a private setting, to discuss things they may not feel comfortable discussing with their Airman or a medical provider. Through these forums, caregivers lean on one another for strength and

compassion as we continuously work to ensure our wounded, ill and injured are provided the best support possible.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

The rate of PTSD in Airmen, despite the sustained high operational tempo, has remained relatively low. Even at the height of our involvement in the Middle East, it has remained below 0.5 percent, and we are proud to note that our retention rate for individuals with PTSD is high: nearly 75 percent. I attribute this to the resilience of our Airmen, their training and effective treatments. Even though our overall rate has remained low, we had been seeing gradually increasing numbers of Airmen newly diagnosed with PTSD. Fortunately, in 2013 that trend began to reverse.

The Air Force remains committed to helping our Airmen through improvements in early symptom recognition and effective treatments. We continue to screen our Airmen for PTSD symptoms at various points in the deployment cycle. We have also improved resilience training for our Airmen prior to each deployment. Airmen in career fields at higher risk for developing PTSD receive information on available resources and education and training on how to recognize symptoms. We also understand that the toll of more than 13 years of combat will take many years to realize. As such, we must remain vigilant for signs of PTSD in all Airmen. We continue to collaborate with the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs to advance research on prevention and treatment of combat related injuries.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic brain injury rates in the Air Force remain very low. However, we are expanding our efforts to ensure our Airmen seek medical care for mild traumatic brain injury, or

concussion, in any setting. The vast majority of TBI cases in the Air Force are from non-deployment related injury. We identify deployed individuals with continued TBI symptoms upon their return home through the Post Deployment Health Assessment and Reassessment, with referral as appropriate. The Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury and Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center continue to serve as valuable partners in facilitating a combined effort between all Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs and civilian subject matter experts to develop clinical practice guidelines for our primary care providers. The United States Air Force Academy is a participating site in the NCAA-DoD Grand Alliance, a large consortium of university and Service Academy athletic programs designed to advance concussion care research. Our efforts are closely coordinated with the other Services through our TBI Quad Service Working Group to make sure we incorporate the latest in TBI research into clinical practice. The National Intrepid Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury serves as a premier referral center for those deployment-related cases with more significant symptoms.

Airman and Family Readiness

Our Airman and Family Readiness Centers continue to create a positive connection between unit leadership and families. Recently, we extended our Comprehensive Airmen Fitness Resilience Skills training to include key spouses. Key spouses are family members who are trained volunteers that serve as an additional link between family members and military leadership. They enhance readiness, strengthen support to families and establish a sense of Air Force community, especially while separated during deployments.

Our military school liaisons and staff provide support to base leaders and families through advocacy with local, state and Department of Defense school administration and school boards. We continue to make steady progress supporting Air Force dependents in all facets of education through high school, including public, private, DoD Dependent Schools, home and virtual schools. All fifty States and the District of Columbia have passed legislation to adopt the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission Charter that ensures military children are not negatively impacted in school by their families' service to our nation. The Compact addresses key educational transition issues encountered by military families including enrollment, placement, attendance, eligibility and graduation by providing consistent policies in every school district and every state.

For the last couple of years, the Airman and Family Care Division has focused on the re-designed Transition Assistance Program (TAP) in support to Airmen – and spouses when space is available – transitioning to civilian life. The Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, and Veterans Employment Initiative (VEI) drove a host of new TAP requirements to expand training and employment services for Active Duty, Reserve, and Guard members who will transition from the military to the private sector. VOW/VEI mandated all separating or retiring Airmen complete TAP, which includes pre-separation counseling, attendance at a Department of Labor Employment Workshop (DoLEW), Veterans Affairs benefits briefings, and Capstone. Capstone is the documentation that validates career readiness standards has been met and that the service member is ready to transition to the private sector. The Air Force remains committed to providing support and assessing additional needs to ensure our members and families are ready for their civilian transition.

In the employment support arena, our Air Force centers are charged with supporting service members, wounded warriors, military spouses, retired members and DoD civilians with achieving short and long-term employment, education, training and career goals. Our Airmen have benefited from your support, as well as White House and OSD efforts to help military spouses achieve their career goals despite frequent relocation. We have been very successful in our partnership efforts with Spouse Education & Career Opportunities (SECO) to leverage employment and training opportunities for military spouses – over 70,000 DoD spouses have been hired to date and over three million jobs have been posted through the Military Spouse Employment Partnership.

Unemployment compensation for spouses of service members continues to be critical to Air Force families. Support for unemployment compensation acknowledges military spouses need reasonable time and resources necessary to find suitable employment or meet licensing or credentialing requirements every time they move. We look forward to all States properly compensating spouses that move because of their military obligation.

Morale, Welfare, Recreation and Food Service

In addition to the wide range of support our Airman and Family Care Program provides (financial planning, family readiness, support for exceptional family members, transition assistance and more), our Air Force MWR program provides quality of life programs like fitness centers, child and youth activities, outdoor recreation, libraries, community activity centers, and a host of recreational activities to our Air Force communities. These programs directly support resiliency and readiness of our Airmen and their families.

Resilient and ready Airmen are a direct correlation to healthy choices. While we have a robust sports and fitness program that meets most of our total force needs, we have expanded the program by initiating a 24-hour fitness access capability to allow Airman the ability to develop and execute a personal fitness routine around the clock, consistent with their schedules. Building upon this concept, our Fitness on Request kiosks are providing self-paced one-on-one instructional classes that are providing alternatives to treadmills and weight training. Expanding the capabilities of our fitness centers has proven to be great step in the right direction and has been well received at our bases.

Another Air Force initiative that promotes healthy choices, and has been well received at the 13 installations that have been converted, is our Food Transformation Initiative (FTI). FTI renders enhanced quality, variety and availability of food services. All indications suggest that the menus, recipes and standards that we have instituted in our dining facilities are well received by customers. With the expanded venues and fresher and healthier foods served in our college campus style cafeterias, our patronage and customers satisfaction rates have increased significantly. We are pressing forward with FTI implementation, with five additional installations transitioning this year, and continue to look for ways to foster healthy behaviors by providing healthy choices.

Further, Armed Forces Entertainment continues to boost morale for our armed services and families stationed around the world and deployed overseas. We are also partnering with the United Services Organization (USO) and civilian partners to facilitate visits to Air Force Global Strike Command bases such as F.E. Warren, Wyoming and Minot, North Dakota as well as selected remote and isolated Continental U.S. locations. Overall, Armed Forces Entertainment

conducted 102 entertainment tours in 2014, including tours with our USO and Navy Entertainment partners. The Office of the Secretary of Defense staff continuously teams with us as we assess what we need to ensure military members down range, on shipboard and overseas have the entertainment needed for positive alternatives and greater morale during downtime.

Child and Youth Development Programs

Air Force Child and Youth Programs go directly to the readiness of our Airmen. These programs facilitate balance between the competing demands of mission and family life by delivering a system of quality, available and affordable programs and services for eligible children and youth, from newborn to 18 years of age. Our child development programs maintain 100 percent national accreditation with the National Association of Early Childhood Education, ensuring only the highest and safest quality care for our youngest members. Our school age programs also maintain a 100 percent accreditation through the Council on Accreditation. This is a remarkable feat when compared to the less than 10 percent national accreditation rate of civilian child care programs, and further demonstrates our commitment to our youngest family members. In 2015, we are implementing a renewed focus on school readiness by providing training opportunities for our staff to expand their knowledge of scientific concepts, mathematics and literacy in young learners.

Our commitment, however, does not end there. We are also purposefully setting up our youth and teen family members for future success. Air Force youth programs forged the way with the help of the Air Force Teen Council and their Teen Movement projects in 2014. Teens practiced positive leadership and citizenship skills by collaborating with on base and community partners to make critical impacts in the lives of military youth and families. Our youth used their

energy and talents to enhance programs and further expanded activities for the greater military youth community. In 2015, we will focus on youth program evaluation in a joint effort with our partners in USDA/4-H. This effort, facilitated by Kansas State University's Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation, will take a deep dive into Air Force Installation Teen Programs, determining strengths and weaknesses, opportunities for improvement, and future program objectives that will ultimately contribute to the future success of our Air Force teens.

Airman Education Opportunities

Our Air Force men and women comprise the most educated enlisted force in the world. Every Airman begins his or her career as a student in the Community College of Air Force's (CCAF) associate of applied science degree program. Airmen receive CCAF credit upon completion of their technical training and are provided a great starting point to begin their pursuit of higher education. Since April 25, 1977, CCAF has awarded more than 451,000 degrees related to each member's career field. Currently, more than 19,500 enlisted Airmen have bachelors and masters degrees or higher and 47 have earned a doctorate or professional degree.

Once Airmen have earned their CCAF degrees, they can apply their educational credit toward a bachelor's degree through Air University's Associate-to-Baccalaureate program. This program has grown to encompass 58 civilian university partners offering 196 bachelor's degree programs. Since January 2014, over 7,924 Airmen have participated and 1,776 bachelor's degrees have been awarded through this program alone. Additionally, 46 of these graduates have become commissioned officers.

The Enlisted-to-Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) program is another avenue for enlisted professional development. In conjunction with other training and education programs,

resident AFIT-sponsored science, engineering and management graduate degree opportunities further develop non-commissioned officers' technical education and skills. Ultimately, this program provides enhanced combat capability for diverse career fields with positions requiring a higher level of education. This education experience is just one example of deliberately developing the enlisted force. This year, four enlisted members who met the high academic qualifications will begin a degree program with the prestigious AFIT. Three programs are taught by the Graduate School of Engineering and Management at AFIT and one is taught at the Naval Postgraduate School.

Finally, our opportunities to earn professional credentialing are designed to develop our Airmen. In October 2014, the Air Force launched the Air Force Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) program in support of the Veterans Opportunity Workforce and Veterans Employment Initiatives. The COOL program covers the expense for the enlisted force to take the credential exam for approximately 638 civilian credentials supporting 135 enlisted career fields.

We are convinced that these developmental opportunities provide the foundation for robust recruitment and retention, and solidify our Airmen's professional capabilities. Our focused efforts produce highly skilled and highly effective Airmen who are well prepared to contribute to our nation's defense and equipped for professional life after they've served our nation.

Housing

Quality unaccompanied and family housing ensures our Airmen and families have a strong supporting foundation. We are providing this through military construction and housing

privatization. In 2013, we completed privatizing more than 99 percent of housing at each of our Air Force installations in the continental United States, Alaska, and Hawaii for an end state of over 53,000 housing units at 63 installations. Housing privatization continues to transform our installations and create efficient, modern communities where our Air Force families choose to live. We have eliminated over 31,000 inadequate homes since the program started in 1998, with another 4,000 privatized homes to be replaced or renovated in the next two years. In this stringent fiscal environment, we continue to invest in sustaining and modernizing government-owned housing overseas. Approval of our requirement for \$160.5 million this year will upgrade housing infrastructure at Kadena Air Base, Japan, improve family housing units at Misawa and Yokota Air Bases, Japan, and construct a new housing management facility at Ramstein Air Base, Germany. Another \$328 million is programmed this year for leases, family housing operations and maintenance for government-owned homes, and for privatized housing oversight.

We are also deeply committed to providing quality dormitories for our unaccompanied Airmen. Our focus remains on providing an environment of care, development, and mentorship for our Airmen. Our dormitory campuses are not just a place to sleep; they are a place for young Airmen to adjust to military life and build a strong sense of community. As with family housing, we are making great strides in eliminating inadequate dormitories from our inventory of 804 dormitories. We have \$207.1 million in dormitory projects programmed over the next five years. This year if Congress supports the President's Budget request, we will invest \$62 million to build new dormitories at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska; Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota; and Altus Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

We thank you for your continued support that allows the Air Force to sustain investment in these areas in order to provide thriving housing and dormitory communities, and more importantly, to take care of our valued Airmen and families.

Military Construction (MILCON)

For several years, the Air Force has made the difficult choice to take risk in infrastructure in order to invest in modernization efforts. We continue to prioritize our program to cover our most critical MILCON requirements to enable core Air Force capabilities and take care of our people that make the mission possible. In this fiscal environment, we expect our MILCON program to focus on our most critical requirements.

Since 2000, and with the support of Congress, the Air Force has funded 124 military construction projects totaling \$834 million for child development centers and fitness centers. This represents a significant investment to improve readiness and the quality of life for our Airmen, but requirements still remain. We have \$16.8 million in projects programmed over the next five years to continue our efforts in these areas. Additionally, the Air Force programmed \$269.1 million in projects to recapitalize Basic Military Training infrastructure and \$24.6 million to improve dining facilities. Again, the continued support of this subcommittee is vital to the success of these MILCON programs supporting our Airmen and their families.

Conclusion

Chairman Dent, Ranking Member Bishop, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to represent our incredible Airmen and their families through this testimony. We understand our nation faces financial challenges and your budgetary work will be demanding. I am sure my counterparts will agree the Services share the demands of meeting the

challenges of today **and** tomorrow. Mission necessity and balancing a ready force for the “fight tonight” against the high-threat of the future will continue to be the Air Forces’ resource priority.

Our Airmen are doing amazing work around the world every single day. The contributions of Air Force families – permitting their service member’s service – cannot be overstated. These men, women and children take care of the home front while our Airmen are employing and enabling airpower around the world. Families stand strong while loved ones deploy to war zones in foreign countries as they have for more than a decade. Their faith and support is critical to our Airmen and enable the focus and dedication our complex missions require; what we ask of them must be reasonable and sustainable today and into the future.

Thank you again for your continued support for our brave Airmen and their supportive families.