

RECORD VERSION

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Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, distinguished members of this committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the men and women of the United States Army.

Our Army is the most formidable ground combat force on earth because of the courage and commitment of the Soldiers, Civilians, Veterans, and Family Members who serve our Nation. Our people are our greatest asset as we position the Total Army Force to meet security demands around the globe. It is imperative that we remain focused on responsible growth of the Army and world-class programs that provide continued care and resources for Soldiers and their Families.

The Army is globally engaged, supporting combatant command missions with approximately 178,000 Soldiers committed in 140 countries. The Army's forward presence and stationing builds partner capacity, assures our allies, and deters aggressors. The continued need for a ready force -- fully manned, trained, and equipped is evidenced daily by international events. Consistent, strategy-based funding is critical to the Army accomplishing its missions.

Manning the Army is one of the key components of readiness and is vital to the Army's ability to fight and win our Nation's wars. Our Total Army is comprised of the Active Component (AC), the Army Reserve (USAR), and the Army National Guard (ARNG). The FY18 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) authorized a Total Army end strength increase of 8,500 to 1,026,500 Soldiers (483,500 AC; 199,500 USAR; 343,500 ARNG). This increase will help us improve readiness and ensure the Army has fully manned formations in the coming years.

Today only one in four 17-24 year-olds in the U.S. is eligible to serve in the Army, and only one in eight has a propensity to enlist in the military, making Army accessions a challenging and resource-intensive activity. The Army achieved its FY17 recruiting mission of 68,500 Active Component recruits with more than 96% of them holding high school diplomas. The ARNG filled 85.5% of their mission goal of 40,000, and the USAR

filled 92.2% of their mission goal of 14,400. For FY18, the recruiting missions are 80K for the Active Component, 44.3K for the ARNG, and 15.6K for the USAR. We are aggressively working both accession and retention missions needed to achieve the 8,500 Soldier growth in end strength for the Total Army provided for in the FY18 NDAA. We are committed to holding quality high by using enlistment bonus incentives and expanding prior service enlistments to help reach our goal. We are also pursuing efforts to positively leverage our Soldier for Life population to assist in achieving our accessions mission and continue to maintain an all-volunteer force.

While the Army projects recruiting challenges for all components, maintaining recruit quality will continue to be a priority, and the Army won't sacrifice quality for numbers. The Army is committed to achieving the DoD Quality Benchmarks: greater than 90% Tier I High School Diploma Graduates (Total Army currently at 94.7%); greater than 60% Test Score Category I-III A (Total Army currently at 62%); and less than 4% Test Score Category IV (Total Army currently at 1.6%). The Army routinely exceeds the DoD Quality Benchmarks and is committed to sustaining that success. The Army is successfully using retention, recruiting, and reduced attrition to reach and maintain Congressionally mandated end strength levels without compromising quality and will continue to do so. The Army is screening and evaluating applicants using a more holistic assessment—to include non-cognitive and physical assessments—which allows a careful and thorough review of the merits of each individual applicant.

The Army must continue to retain the most talented Soldiers and non-commissioned officers with the experience and skills necessary to meet our future needs. The AC, USAR and ARNG each achieved their FY17 retention missions. The increase in end strength for FY18 has also led us to an increase in the Army's retention mission, and we have expanded retention incentives accordingly. Each component is diligently working to accomplish their respective retention missions while maintaining standards.

Our officer corps is strong and committed to the mission, and we continue to make improvements in the diversity of our officer corps. The United States Military Academy (USMA) increased the number of female cadets from 16% in the class of 2017 to 22% in the class of 2020. The Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) had similar growth in female admissions from 22% in the Class of 2017 to a projected 28% women in the Class of 2020. Additionally, the officer corps has had an increase in African American Accessions - 14% in USMA class of 2020 are African American versus 10% of the class of 2017, and projected 14% of ROTC commissions in 2020 will be African American versus an average of 11% from 2012-2017. The Army will maintain our emphasis on sustaining a high-quality All-Volunteer Force that reflects the diversity of America.

The Army strives to continuously improve efforts to assess and train the right Soldier for the right job. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command completed a physical demands study of Army specialties in 2016 and used it to develop an Occupational Physical Assessment Test (OPAT). Since January 2017, the OPAT has been used as a physical assessment screening tool for Officer and Enlisted Accessions. Passing the OPAT ensures new Soldiers, regardless of gender, can succeed in an assigned specialty and verifies their readiness for training, minimizing injuries. Longitudinal studies on OPAT are being conducted by the Army Research Institute to measure OPAT's effect on morale, cohesion, and readiness.

The Army remains committed to giving all Soldiers who can meet the standards of a Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) the opportunity to serve in that MOS. In January 2017, the Army implemented MOS-based gender-neutral physical standards to start initial entry training, and to successfully be awarded a given MOS. To date, the Army has successfully accessed and transferred more than 600 women into the previously closed occupations of Infantry, Armor, and Field Artillery.

Since 2016, 74 female officers have successfully completed the Infantry or Armor Basic Officer Leader's Course and are arriving at assignments at Forts Hood and Bragg.

In 2018, gender-neutral assignments will expand to Forts Carson, Campbell, Bliss and Italy in support of the Army's Leaders First Strategy. Additionally, the Army has transferred, trained and assigned female NCOs into both Infantry and Armor specialties. This approach sets conditions in operational units before newly trained junior enlisted Soldiers arrive. The first integrated enlisted training courses for Infantry and Armor graduated in May/June 2017 and female Soldiers were assigned to Forts Hood and Bragg. Due to a multi-year effort to open other jobs that have long been unavailable to female Soldiers, as many as 500 women currently serve in every active Brigade Combat Team in the Army down to the company level. Of significance, 10 women have graduated Ranger School and one officer is assigned to the Ranger Regiment. As the Army continues long-term studies in support of gender integration and the Soldier 2020 campaign, lessons learned will continue to enhance readiness and increase the diversity across our force using a standards-based approach.

In order to employ and retain Soldiers and maintain a capable and effective ground combat force, the Army requires a civilian workforce with unique and critical skills to support Soldiers and their families. Civilians serve across the institutional Army and enable the Army to free up Soldiers for service in the operational Army. When placed in the context of the Total Army, Civilians comprise about 22% of the Army's total personnel (Soldiers of the Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve comprise the other categories). Since 2011, the Army has been drawing down the civilian workforce from a wartime high of 285,000 full time equivalents to 239,500 at the close of FY17. These reductions were implemented to meet budget levels, military end strength reductions, and legislative mandates associated with the military drawdown.

Given the need to recover and sustain readiness, and with the increasing of military end strength, the Army will need to right size the capabilities that our Civilians give us. While we continue to implement reforms and reduce the size of headquarters activities, we recognize that Department of Army (DA) Civilians are key enablers of our readiness and operational capabilities. As the Army looks to become more lethal,

enhance both its capability and capacity, and ensure critical support to the Soldier and their Families, our DA Department of Army Civilians are an integral partner and we must ensure our workforce is sized appropriately.

Every Soldier is a valued member of the Army team and is critical to readiness and mission accomplishment. Sustaining individual personal readiness is a necessary component of maintaining the readiness of the force. The Army is improving personal readiness and individual deployability by focusing on strengthening Soldiers, building protective factors, and fostering a culture of trust to ensure successful service and unit cohesion.

We have implemented a holistic and outcome-focused proactive prevention model which drives change through visibility, routine assessment, and targeted actions. The prevention model is tailored to fit the needs of our people in diverse and challenging environments and will improve personal readiness to enhance and sustain a resilient force. This paradigm shift to a proactive prevention strategy, as opposed to one that is reactive, empowers Soldiers and leaders at all levels to promote personal readiness.

We continue to provide commanders and leaders increased visibility of their readiness with the development of the Commander's Risk Reduction Dashboard (CRRD) with anticipated Initial Operating Capability by the end of 2018. This tool provides Commanders visibility of their Soldier and unit risk history, trends, and the impacts on Personal Readiness. We are developing a predictive analytical capability for integration into the Full Operational Capability system by the end of 2019 in order for Commanders to make proactive decisions and resource allocations, based upon probability of readiness.

We are fielding *Engage*, which is a means to enable bystander intervention and improve cohesion across the force. Research indicates that Soldiers lack the expertise to successfully and routinely execute professional confrontations. *Engage* encourages

engagements across a wide variety of situations and with peers, subordinates and supervisors to enhance communication and positively influence personal readiness.

We are also executing the “Not in My Squad” initiative, developed by the Sergeant Major of the Army that is focused on squad leaders. Research has determined that squad leaders have the greatest impact on units, the individual Soldier and the climate. “Not in My Squad” facilitates self-development and helps squad leaders understand and embrace their roles as leaders in their organization.

Engage and “Not in My Squad” are being executed at the 26 Ready and Resilient Performance Centers across all components of the Army. We have certified 32,000 Master Resiliency Trainers who are resident in company-level formations and train Soldiers on 16 resiliency skills that focus on sustaining personal readiness and optimizing human performance. The goal is to have a Master Resilience Trainer for every company in the Army to coach these skills.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation are not compatible with Army Values and they diminish our readiness, therefore, combatting all forms of sexual misconduct remains a top priority for the Army. The Army, along with the Department of Defense (DoD), continues to make significant progress towards eradicating sexual assault, while encouraging more Soldiers to report the crime. Since 2012, reporting has increased approximately 59% for the Total Army (1,572- reports in FY12 compared to 2,497 reports in FY16) while prevalence has decreased 6.4% for women and 36.8% for men within the active component. As we analyze FY17 data, indications are that we will see another increase in reports. The increase in reporting and decrease in prevalence are tracking in the right direction of our DoD and Army goals. Continued progress will come from commanders eliminating sexual violence from their formations; encouraging more victims to obtain the services and support they need to heal, recover, and resume productive careers; and holding offenders appropriately accountable.

The Army is also as dedicated to providing DA Civilians with a safe, effective mechanism to report sexual assault and to seek victim support/services. During the past year, the Army implemented a pilot program for DA Civilian Sexual Harassment and Response Prevention (SHARP) services. In addition to providing full access to sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates, the pilot enabled Civilians to opt for either the Restricted or the Unrestricted Reporting option. The pilot essentially provided DA Civilians reporting parity with their uniformed service member counterparts. From January through December 2017, approximately 34 Army Civilians utilized services provided through the pilot, with five opting to file Restricted Reports. Although the pilot ended 24 January 2018, the Army is examining ways to allow us to continue to provide SHARP services, including both reporting options, to our Civilian teammates.

Another way we've increased support to our DA Civilians is through the implementation of special victims' counsel program support to Army Civilians when the offender is a Soldier and the case falls under the jurisdiction of the military. We cannot fulfill our commitment to the American public without our dedicated Army Civilians. We owe it to our country to take care of our Civilian employees the way we take care of our Soldiers.

With healthier command climates where victims feel safe to report without fear of retaliatory behaviors, the Army is continuing to place increased emphasis on prevention. We are especially focused on teaching members of the Army team how to recognize and address inappropriate behaviors identified in the left spectrum of the sexual violence continuum of harm. These behaviors include offensive jokes, hazing, cyberbullying, and other actions that create an environment that tolerates sexual violence. Historically, civilian and DOD research/studies have shown a correlation between sexual harassment and sexual assault. This research is why the Army decided to combine the sexual harassment prevention and sexual assault prevention and response programs a decade ago. We're continuing to develop tools to help Command Teams, Soldiers, and DA Civilians place greater emphasis on prevention of sexual violence.

Although we're optimistic about the progress we've made in reducing sexual violence in the ranks, we understand there's more work to be done. We will not be satisfied until America's sons and daughters can serve in our Army—a multi-generational, ethnically diverse, gender-integrated Army--without fear of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or retaliation for reporting sexual offenses. Through the continued leadership of our command teams, the expertise of our SHARP professionals, and the commitment of our Soldiers and DA Civilians, we believe this standard is achievable.

The Army's goal is to sustain the personal readiness of our Soldiers and build unit cohesion; however, suicide remains one of our most serious challenges. We remain devoted to our task of more proactively identifying indicators and developing holistic approaches to prevention. Our comprehensive approach includes strengthening our Soldiers, Leaders, and Families; building protective factors; and fostering a Culture of Trust. Suicide prevention is a complex human endeavor that requires a network of human sensors, the skills to *Engage*, continuous assessment of behaviors, and a comprehensive assistance and treatment capability.

To improve personal readiness and resiliency, we are aggressively working to decrease the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care. Behavioral Health (BH) encounters for the Total Army grew from approximately 900K in FY07 to approximately 2.25M in FY17, indicating greater trust in the system. Soldiers required 67,000 fewer inpatient bed days for all types of BH conditions in 2016, as compared to 2012. This 41% decrease, is due in part to improvements in outpatient services, Intensive Outpatient Programs, and case management.

In addition to reducing the stigma associated with seeking help, the Army has provided more timely care, especially to those with the most significant behavioral health conditions. For example, according to the 2016 DHA Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set, 96% of all Soldiers hospitalized for a behavioral health condition receive a follow-up appointment in a clinic within seven days, which far exceeds the national average for civilian treatment. Embedding behavioral health

personnel within combat units is a proven best practice – we've recently extended this effort by embedding the substance use disorder providers within Embedded BH to provide more comprehensive care.

The Army has reduced Total Army non-deployable personnel from 15% in June 2016 to 11% in December 2017. The current 11% non-deployable population includes a new category introduced summer 2016 to proactively manage expired medical and dental examinations. Excluding this category, the Total Army rate would be 9% and the Regular Army 8%. Furthermore, DoD issued a new retention policy for non-deployable Service members on February 14, 2018. Under this policy, Service members, other than pregnant and post-partum Service members, who have been in a non-deployable status for 12 consecutive months will be processed for administrative or disability separation. Under the DoD policy, the Military Services have until October 1, 2018 to begin mandatory processing of non-deployable Service members for administrative or disability separation. The Army will make continued reductions to our non-deployable population a priority.

The Army continues to reduce the time required for Soldiers to process through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES). Current processing times for the Reserve Components are down to 285 days and the Active Component is down to 236 days. Processing times were impacted during FY17 due to Information Technology (IT) migration activities involving our separate Medical Evaluation Board and Physical Evaluation Board case processing applications into a single disability case processing application for both stakeholders. Active Component IDES processing times have decreased by 14 days on average since October 2017 as our IT migration nears completion, and we will continue to strive towards achieving our informal Army goal of 210 days versus the DoD published goal of 295 days. The IDES population is steady state at approximately 12K. We will continue to evaluate how to efficiently and fairly evaluate injured Soldiers and either return them to duty or assist them in transitioning to civilian life.

In addition to taking care of Soldiers and their Families while they are in the Army, we are committed to ensuring their successful transition. We know that every year approximately 100K Soldiers transition from the Total Army via either retirement or separation. Our mandate here is clear -- we must continue to focus on preparing our Soldiers for transition to productive Veterans across our respective communities.

The Army's Soldier for Life program conducts strategic outreach and shapes education, employment, and health policies, programs and services to inspire citizens to serve and to create an environment where Soldiers transition to be productive Veterans of character, integrity, and service. The program has connected more than one thousand private and public organizations to transitioning Soldiers and spouses, resulting in increased educational and employment opportunities for Army Veterans and Family Members. Further, according to the Department of Labor, Soldier for Life efforts assisted in reducing the Veteran unemployment rates 3.7% for FY17, with the lowest amount of unemployment compensation for Veterans in 17 years.

For FY17, the Army's Veterans Opportunity to Work (VOW) Act compliance was over 88% -- the AC at 90%, ARNG at 86% and USAR at 79%. We as an Army continue to enhance our policies and procedures for transitioning Soldiers and have ensured Commanders understand that they must ensure their Soldiers attend VOW Act-mandated briefings. In the end, it is in the Army's and our Nation's best interest to ensure Soldiers transition successfully back into our communities better enabling them to become productive citizens as well as important ambassadors for the Army who can positively affect the propensity for others to serve.

To build a Total Army of professional Active, Reserve and National Guard forces, as well as Civilians, who are trained and ready to take on the challenges of the future, we must leverage and manage all available talent and ensure every individual is optimized to fight and win our nation's wars. The Army is piloting a Talent Assessment Program that will identify our talent and match them to Army requirements. For example, this past summer at the Aviation Captain's Career Course at Ft. Rucker,

Alabama, junior captains completed a battery of talent assessment instruments, which collectively provide them with individually-tailored feedback on where their talents align with the requirements of the Army's various career specialties. Likewise, junior captains at the Field Artillery Captain's Career Course are conducting a similar talent assessment now. The pilot program finishes this spring, and we plan to expand the assessment program to include additional career courses over the next two years.

Our goal is comprehensive visibility of all our Soldiers' knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors to best fit the right person in the right job at the right time. The Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) will transform the Army's legacy personnel system to a 21st century Talent Management system. To accomplish this, we must move from a personnel management system to a talent management system that will enable us to better manage Soldier talents and match them to Army requirements.

For the first time ever, IPPS-A will enable the Army to manage all 1.1 million Total Force Soldiers in a single, integrated personnel and pay system that will directly impact the readiness of the Total Force and improve the lives of our Soldiers. Finally, it will provide a full end to end audit capability to ensure Army personnel and pay transactions are compliant with the law. IPPS-A integrates software that creates distinct roles and permissions by individual positions, sets business processes, segregates duties, and generates system alerts when changes are made - we cannot do this with our current systems. IPPS-A enables the Army to modernize and transform our Human Resource processes and helps us to facilitate significant business process reengineering. The initial implementation of IPPS-A will start with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard in October 2018.

The Assignment Interactive Module 2.0 is a web-based information system that will further facilitate the Army's Talent Management efforts. This system promotes transparency of requirements for Soldiers and units; enables stakeholder interaction via

an intuitive marketplace; captures unique Soldier talents, unit and position data; and establishes a talent management link to IPPS-A.

The Army is people. The men and women who serve our Nation, both in uniform and out of uniform, along with their families, are our most important asset. As a Nation, we must ensure they have the required resources so they are ready when called upon to fight and win our Nation's wars. I thank all of you for your continued support of our All-Volunteer Army.