

DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SUBJECT: HEARINGS TO EXAMINE THE ACTIVE, GUARD, RESERVE, AND CIVILIAN
PERSONNEL PROGRAMS IN REVIEW OF THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015 AND THE FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

STATEMENT OF:

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the Total Force Airmen of your Air Force are a highly trained, experienced and battle-tested force, standing as vanguards of freedom around the world. Despite the last two decades of sustained conflict, the men and women of your Air Force are as dedicated, innovative and hard working as ever before. Airmen are the backbone of our Air Force. Throughout our Service history and ingrained in our culture, is a spirit of innovation where Airmen are enabled and expected to find novel solutions to ensure our ability to operate in air, space and cyber space. In order for Airmen to continue to fulfill their expected roles as innovative leaders and warriors, the Air Force must remain focused on recruiting, training, developing, supporting and retaining a world-class, all-volunteer Force. Maintaining an all-volunteer Air Force is a significant undertaking and requires a continuous and deliberate investment of time and resources.

The Air Force continues to balance today's missions with tomorrow's requirements in a constrained budget environment. We are modernizing how we manage the force and our focus is on deliberately shaping and sizing the force to meet future mission needs, while also balancing the likelihood of decreased budgets for the foreseeable future. Our entire workforce (military, civilian and contractor) must be appropriately sized to support and execute our piece of the National Defense Strategy while concurrently considering fiscal realities.

The Department of Defense guidance for a leaner force and anticipated future needs will result in a smaller force, and based on the Department's guidance, the Air Force, like our sister services, must become smaller to live within our fiscal constraints. We must balance our force structure and end strength to preserve readiness and modernization requirements to meet the Air Force's contribution to defense strategy given a realistic spending forecast. Therefore, the Air

Force's Total Force will be reduced by as much as 25,000 military personnel over the next five years to meet budget requirements, along with corresponding aircraft inventory reductions.

CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

Our Airmen remain at the forefront of today's conflicts and other contingency operations around the globe, serving proudly alongside our joint partners. During Calendar Year 2013, Total Force Airmen filled over 90,000 deployment requirements to over 600 different locations supporting a host of named operations including such notable operations as Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), OEF-HOA (Horn of Africa), and Operation Noble Eagle (ONE). As a testament to our commitment to utilizing the Total Force, of the 90,000+ deployments, the Active component, Reserve component, and Guard component filled approximately 66,000, 7,500, and 16,500 of the requirements, respectively, with Air Force civilians filling over 700 deployment requirements. In addition, over 135,000 Airmen provided daily support to Combatant Commanders in their in-garrison missions such as nuclear deterrence, cyber defense, global mobility, and homeland defense.

Reductions in operations in Afghanistan will influence the Air Force's overall deployment requirements. However, we anticipate Combatant Commander requirements for manned and unmanned Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, Personnel Rescue and Recovery, Fighter/Attack, and Airlift assets will remain high while demand for the land component force requirements continues to fall specifically in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility. Additionally, CENTCOM and other Combatant Commanders have capability requirements each fiscal year that go unfilled due to lack of capacity in the joint force. The joint force will have to address and prioritize those requirements against the Service's requirement to provide a ready force as the drawdown continues.

MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL END STRENGTH

Budgetary constraints and changes in force structure will lead the Air Force into reducing Total Force end strength and implementing increased military Force Management programs and civilian workforce shaping programs in FY15. The Air Force's total military strength forecast for FY15 will be reduced from 503,400 to 483,000. Our Active Duty (AD) military end strength will be reduced 16,700, from 327,600 to 310,900. Our Air Force Reserve (AFR) military end strength will decrease by 3,300 to 67,100, and Air National Guard (ANG) military end strength will decrease by 400 to 105,000. Due to funding and force structure impacts, the Air Force's civilian strength forecast for FY15 will be reduced from 186,026 to 183,328.

MILITARY FORCE MANAGEMENT

The Air Force's Force Management (FM) program is a tailored multi-year effort comprised of many programs aimed at managing the long-term health of the force. Given the current environment, the Air Force must reduce the size and reshape the force to meet DoD strategic guidance for a leaner force. To do this, we plan to use a wide variety of FM tools which Congress has authorized with a focus on maximizing voluntary programs first, offering incentives where needed, and involuntary programs only when required. We also realize that as the Air Force becomes smaller, it is ever more important to retain our highest performing Airmen. Therefore, as we execute our FM programs and reduce overages, we will focus our programs to support retaining our best Airmen who possess the right balance of skills we need to meet the Air Force's current and future mission requirements.

In fiscal year 2013, our FM program strategy focused on offering traditional voluntary FM programs such as Active Duty Service Commitment (ADSC) and Time in Grade (TIG)

waivers, and offering transfers to the Air Reserve Component (ARC) via PALACE CHASE.

Based on continued strong retention rates among officer and enlisted populations, we planned to offer a limited and targeted Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) in FY13, but were unable to secure funding to execute the program due to sequestration impacts which took effect during the middle of the fiscal year. There were several limited involuntary FM programs used in FY13, which included enlisted dates of separation rollbacks and constraints on the number of first term Airmen eligible for reenlistment; however, we did not convene any involuntary officer or enlisted FM boards in FY13. As a result, the Air Force began FY14 approximately 1,200 Airmen over budgeted end strength.

The Air Force would prefer to reduce the force over the FYDP through voluntary measures alone; however, based on continued high retention rates, anticipated force structure levels, and end strength reductions beginning in FY15, we will accelerate our FM programs starting in FY14. Doing so will enable us to fund the additional voluntary incentive programs (Voluntary Separation Pay (VSP) and TERA) needed to meet end strength.

Planned FY14 Military FM programs will include the use of ADSC waivers (officer and enlisted); TIG waivers (officer and enlisted); PALACE CHASE (officer and enlisted); TERA (officer and enlisted); Date of Separation Rollback (enlisted only); 8- vs 10-yr commissioned service for retirement (officer only); Voluntary Separation Pay VSP (officer and enlisted); and Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Board (ESERB) (officer only – Cols and Lt Cols in select AFSCs) to support meeting FY14 end strength mandates by the end of the fiscal year.

Projected FY15 Military end strength reductions will require a more aggressive approach in our FM programs, which will lead the Air Force to continue the use of FY14 FM programs in FY15, along with the addition of Quality Force Review Boards (enlisted); E-4 through E-9

Retention Boards (enlisted); Force Shaping Boards (officer); Reduction in Force Boards (RIF) (officer), and Enhanced Selective Early Retirement Boards (ESERB) (officer).

CIVILIAN FORCE MANAGEMENT

The Air Force implemented civilian FM programs following a concentrated effort in 2010 from the DoD to trim the civilian workforce by focusing on increasing efficiencies, reducing overhead costs and eliminating redundant functions, which led to the elimination of 16,500 Department of the Air Force civilian positions in FY12. Starting in FY12 the Air Force utilized a multitude of civilian force management programs which included a temporary hiring freeze, multiple rounds of Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP), as well as aggressive voluntary reassignments in an effort to decrease the number of surplus employees created by this reduction. At the start of FY13 ~1,000 surplus employees remained; however, by continuing the use of voluntary separation programs such as VERA and VSIP, management reassignment, attrition, and the flexibilities under RIF authorities in FY13, the Air Force voluntarily separated 603 employees, reassigned 324 employees to other positions and ultimately only separated 86 employees involuntarily.

The Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 (Pub L. 112-25) directed across the board cuts in defense spending. with the threat of long-term budget impacts from BCA through the FYDP, multiplied by the FY13 NDAA mandated “Savings to be Achieved in Civilian Personnel Workforce and Service Contractor Workforce of the Department of Defense” and the FY14 NDAA mandate to streamline the DoD management headquarters staffs beginning in FY15 through FY19, we have no choice other than to continue to shrink the size of our civilian workforce, forcing us to continue civilian FM programs in FY14 and beyond. The purpose of the civilian FM programs are to comply with mandatory funding targets directed by DoD and

rebalance the civilian workforce to ensure mission critical competencies and skills are in place to meet current and future mission requirements.

In FY14, as in past years, we will continue to offer VERA and VSIP to the maximum extent possible before we implement a RIF. The first round of VERA/VSIP in FY14 targeted residual FY13 surplus employees and employees impacted by the FY14 Civilian Workforce Review. In this round, the Civilian Personnel Sections (CPSs) conducted 9,330 VERA/VSIP surveys, of which 160 positions were approved with an effective separation date of February 28, 2014. Further rounds of VERA/VSIP are pending approval by Air Force leadership. A RIF will only be considered if necessary and as a last resort. At this time, the Air Force does not plan to furlough civilians.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE

Over the last couple of years, the Airman and Family Care Division has been largely focused on the re-designed Transition Assistance Program (TAP) to support Airmen as they transition to civilian life. In light of pending end strength reductions and increased FM programs, continued focused effort is necessary. 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 Airmen separating or retiring from the Air Force must complete TAP, which includes pre-separation counseling, attendance at a Department of Labor Employment Workshop (DoLEW), Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits briefings, and Capstone. Capstone is the documentation that validates career readiness standards have been met and that the service member is ready to transition to the private sector.

The FY 14 and 15 FM programs call for a significant reduction in Total Force Airmen. Those transitioning Airmen will be over and above the 32,000 to 35,000 Airmen our Airmen and Family Readiness Centers (A&FRCs) process through TAP each year (FY13 throughput was 33,422). Our A&FRC team is taking additional steps to help leadership at all levels of the Air Force to ensure all Airmen separating or retiring attend TAP as required. Some initiatives include increasing the frequency of courses at each installation, increasing the class size, coordinating with partnering agencies such as the VA and DoL to brief additional TAP courses as needed, providing the Air Force community (to include family members) with information about TAP (includes websites, commander messages, senior leader engagements, etc) and ensuring A&FRCs contact Airmen about signing up for TAP.

RECRUITING

Accessions are the lifeblood for our force, which compels us to maintain a strong and experienced recruiter force capable of understanding and responding to the evolving recruiting environment we operate within. A successful recruiting program requires us to leverage a wide variety of recruiting tools in support of our recruiting force, such as the Initial Enlistment Bonus (IEB) program, a fully resourced advertising and marketing fund, and an improved information systems infrastructure to successfully inspire, engage, and recruit the brightest, most competitive and diverse men and women for service in America's Air Force. Air Force Recruiting Service (AFRS) has successfully met the All-Volunteer Force requirements for the past 14 years and is currently positioned to meet both FYs 14 and 15 recruiting requirements. However, under the current environment with the strong possibility of long-term, constrained budgets, we fear it may be impossible to properly resource recruiting efforts in the future which would strain our ability to meet future accession requirements as the economy improves.

The Air Force budget for recruiting includes funding for day-to-day operations, personnel costs, and advertising activities necessary to the successful accomplishment of the recruiting mission. Due to an increasingly limited resource environment, budgets for recruiting in recent years have experienced a steady decline in available funding. Advertising dollars in particular have been impacted, which has created inefficiencies and a constrained television advertising campaign. Specifically, budget actions, such as sequestration in FY13, slowed or completely shut down key advertising and marketing events, to include the Air Force Thunderbird Aerial Demonstration Team, and delayed our national television campaign for FY14, leading to missed “key spots” and diminished purchasing power. This not only resulted in the absence of Air Force awareness activities in entire markets, but it also strained relationships within key communities that recruiters have worked years to foster.

The AFRS depends on the IEB program to produce a sufficient recruit pool to access requirements for high-demand, low-density career fields such as Battlefield Airmen and linguists, and we have successfully utilized the program to recruit youth into career fields that have been historically hard to recruit and/or qualify for by awarding a monetary bonus as an incentive. The Air Force budget for its IEB program in FY15 is \$14.2M. Funding for IEB must continue, as without the IEB program, the ability to recruit the right requirements at the right time for these unique demands would be seriously jeopardized.

AFRS works closely with stakeholders to ensure recruiting funds are best utilized to carry out a recruiting campaign that meets accession requirements, but also support priorities and goals set forth in the Air Force Diversity Strategic Roadmap. These efforts are aimed at sustaining a robust strategic outreach program that creates opportunities for recruiting a high quality, diverse talent pool, reflective of the best of the nation we serve. The Air Force will accomplish this by

leveraging relationships with DoD and non-DoD entities to ensure recruitment practices are effectively reaching all segments of society, and assessing the effectiveness of current branding and recruitment practices for all demographics/markets to ascertain actionable steps to increase access and positioning.

RETENTION

The Air Force has continued to experience high retention trends over the past 10 years, with the officer and enlisted retention trend remaining very strong in FY13. Even with the upcoming reductions in end strength, there are still critical and emerging career fields that are experiencing poor retention, low manning and/or high operational demands (such as Battlefield Airmen and cyberspace specialties). Airmen associated with these skills are not targeted in the FY14 FM programs, and there are numerous efforts to increase career field health. These include, but are not limited to, Special and Incentive (S&I) and Bonus pays, protections from FM programs, and increases to accessions, retraining and promotions.

The FY14 budget for all S&I Pay is \$894.2 million, with recruiting and retention pays accounting for \$412.5 million. The remaining \$481.7 million of the total budget pays for health profession incentive pay, flying duty pay, hazardous duty pay and other special pays, such as Special Duty Assignment Pay (SDAP), Hostile Fire Pay, and Foreign Language Proficiency Bonus/Pay. The Air Force allocated \$232 million of the S&I Pay budget in FY14 for Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs); however, given a smaller future force, the Air Force chose to tailor the SRB program to better align with our FY14/15 FM Programs. In FY13, 55 career fields participated in the SRB program; however, in FY14, only 10 remain eligible, and those remaining are not eligible for voluntary or involuntary FM programs in FY14. These specialties include our Battlefield Airmen, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance, and Career

Enlisted Aviator career fields. Our FY14 Officer and Enlisted Critical Skills Retention Budget was \$11.8M, focusing on retention of Senior Non-Commissioned Officers and Mid-Career Officers in Special Operations; Battlefield Airmen, Intelligence, and Contracting specialties.

We expect the FY15 budget for all S&I Pay to remain consistent with FY14 budget levels and, although we have reduced the number of career fields participating in the SRB program, we intend to only slightly reduce our budget from \$232M to \$179M. This allows us to target our critical needs and transition to lump sum payments instead of multiple initial and anniversary payments, which will provide much greater fiscal oversight and efficiency as well as greater flexibility to target critical retention needs. This is essential to maintaining high quality Airmen in critical career fields as we come through extremely turbulent times due to end-strength reductions and an improving economy. SRB investments have shown to improve retention from one to eight percent per SRB increment, depending on the reenlistment zone. We continually review and monitor our S&I Pay programs for impact on recruiting and retention as well as linkage to FM programs and a constrained budget.

COMPENSATION REFORM

With full Budgetary Control Act Sequestration-level cuts in effect in FY16 and beyond, the Air Force agrees we cannot afford to sustain the rate of growth in military compensation that we have experienced over the last decade and continue to maintain readiness and provide our Airmen with the finest training and equipment possible. However, as we balance quality personnel with readiness requirements, we must ensure a competitive compensation package to recruit and retain quality personnel for our future force. Thus, the Air Force, in conjunction with the Department, is working with the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization

Commission to review potential compensation system reforms and study the impact on the All-Volunteer Force.

Department-wide compensation reform is a very difficult task as the Department is very complex with differing force profiles and different recruiting and retention needs. The Air Force is a retention-based force requiring highly qualified, educated and technically experienced personnel, thus a more senior and experienced force is required to fulfill our mission. Therefore, we must assess the combined and compounding impact on recruiting and retention for the all-volunteer force, as well as impact on the retiree population before making significant changes. The Air Force concurs with the Department that there is sufficient information available to make recommendations on key areas of current compensation (other than retirement) to slow the growth of military pay and benefit costs, starting with the FY15 budget, in order to permit a balanced drawdown in defense spending. For major modifications to the compensation system, we recommend reviewing the Commission report first to ensure it supports the sustainment of a highly skilled and capable All-Volunteer force.

QUALITY TRAINED AND DEVELOPED FORCE

A properly trained and developed force is critical to the success of our Air Force; therefore, we took several measures to mitigate the challenge of resourcing Professional Military Education (PME) and functional developmental education requirements. Reductions to officer PME resulted in prioritizing and selecting joint, sister service, cyber, nuclear, and lab opportunities over some fellowships and international programs of study. Despite these reductions, the Air Force's top performing field grade officers will be provided in-residence education that ensures they possess the right knowledge to succeed at the operational and strategic levels and develop into our leaders of the future.

The Air Force has always valued the Military Tuition Assistance (MilTA) program as a force enabler affecting recruitment, retention, and readiness. Higher education is an important component in Airman development since it directly enhances critical thinking skills. Reduced budgets brought on by sequestration required the Air Force to conduct a top-to-bottom review of the MilTA program. In order to sustain this valuable program and ensure Airmen are receiving the right education at the right time, the Air Force instituted management controls for the use of MilTA. The first was to re-insert the supervisor into the approval process. This allowed supervisors the opportunity to get to know their Airmen's educational goals and provide mentoring. Additionally, Airmen who have not passed or are overdue for their Physical Fitness Test, have an Unfavorable Information File, or have a referral annual performance report are ineligible for MilTA until these issues are resolved. We believe these controls ensure Airmen are prepared to succeed in their degree program as well as continue their critical work in the defense of our great nation.

SUPPORT TO AIRMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

The Air Force remains committed to providing the best support possible to help build and maintain ready, resilient Airmen and families. Prolonged constrained budgets are becoming a challenge and our ability to maintain programs at levels funded at higher levels in previous years will not be possible. Unfortunately, fiscal realities are forcing us to make difficult decisions where some programs will be reduced or possibly cut. We fear the inability to sustain some programs may negatively affect future readiness and unit cohesion. However, despite these challenges, we continue to prioritize quality Airmen and family support programs directly tied to mission accomplishment. Our strategy will be to tailor programs and services to meet evolving

demographics and demands where appropriate and capitalize on community partnerships to advance efficiencies where feasible.

To help mitigate constrained budgets and impact of reduced funding, the Air Force prioritized its Services programs to place the focus on resourcing the most valued programs from an enterprise-wide, mission accomplishment perspective. Capturing our programs in a prioritized listing resulted in identifying our “core”, and “core of core” programs, to focus our limited resources where they are most needed. This priority listing receives top leadership attention and consideration as we navigate fiscal challenges.

Air Force Services continues to advocate funding all “core” programs that include: Child and Youth Care, Military Dining Facilities, Fitness Centers, A&FRC, Youth Programs, Libraries and Outdoor Recreation. When funding became even tighter, Air Force narrowed the “core” programs down to “core of core” programs (Fitness Centers, Military Dining Facilities, and Child and Youth Care). Programs such as community activity centers, skill centers, , bowling, and clubs, are ranked below the core activities and are the last to receive appropriated funding consideration.

Regardless of a program’s ranking, sequestration had a significant impact on MWR programs in FY13, and we experienced installation-level program closures and adjusted budgets based on available funding in an effort to focus our resources where they were needed most. As we look forward with a sharper focus on declining budgets and concern about our ability to maintain needed programs, we will continue to explore innovative means of providing timely and relevant support to our Airmen and families. We expect similar funding challenges in FYs 14 and 15, with possibly a continued impact on Airmen and Family programs.

Air Force Child and Youth Programs are a critical workforce issue for our Airmen. To support the mission, a collaborative effort between our child development centers (CDCs), family childcare homes, and school age programs met the full time childcare needs for over 57,000 children in 2013. Supporting the Total Force is a priority as our community-based programs served nearly 2,500 children whose families are not located near an active duty installation. In addition, we provided over 126,000 hours of weekend childcare for Air Force Reservists and Air National Guardsmen to attend their unit drills. Further, we provided over 37,000 hours of skilled care to our exceptional family members allowing parents a needed break from the stressors of caring for a child with special needs. In 2013, we also expanded our capability by implementing new childcare programs to assist wounded warriors, families of the fallen, and those with unique needs due to medical circumstances. These programs provide hourly care for parents in one of those situations. Care is typically provided in a Family Child Care home but can be offered in a CDC depending on availability.

Our Youth Programs continue to provide critical resiliency building opportunities for older youth across the Total Force. Resiliency building provides our youth the skills to cope with life challenges and to help recover following setbacks. The 2013 Air Force Teen Movement led by the Air Force Youth Programs Teen Council, offered installation-based programs targeted toward building community connections, increasing teen participation, providing support during PCS moves, and offering Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) experiences. While the final Teen Movement action reports are still being received, we are on track to exceed our goal of reaching over 3,500 teens with these targeted programs. Likewise, our Air Force youth camping program focused on building resilience, fostering leadership skills, and promoting healthy living behaviors benefitting over 35,000 youth of active,

guard and reserve members. New for 2013, our Youth Program members participated in the first ever Military Youth of the Year competition, an initiative in partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Showcasing the stellar achievements of military teens around the world, Air Force teens were awarded an astonishing five out of six regional winner awards garnering a combined total of more than \$70,000 in Military Youth of the Year scholarships. In addition, through another key partnership with the US Department of Agriculture's 4-H Youth Development Program, over 1,000 Air Force youth participated in the 2013 National Youth Science Day event, and we were able to reach 20,000 additional youth through partnership with 4-H county extension agents.

Looking at 2014, our goal is to ensure Air Force Child and Youth Programs are able to operate in a constrained fiscal environment without reducing the quality of services provided to our military families. Some of our installation childcare programs still experience waiting lists particularly in the younger age groups where community-based care is very expensive and in many cases not available outside the gate. Timely availability of childcare spaces remains key to allowing our programs to operate at their maximum capacity. To achieve this, we have identified these as “core” programs to be appropriately resourced so our Airmen can focus on the mission while knowing their youngest family members are being cared for in a safe environment.

The Air Force has also spent several years revamping the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) to support families with special needs. These improvements resulted in a 23 percent EFMP enrollment increase since 2010. Our work will continue to focus on EFMP to better support accommodations of children with special needs in our Child and Youth Programs. A further expansion to our EFMP respite childcare program will be afforded to Airmen at approximately 15 additional locations.

INTEGRATED DISABILITY EVALUATION SYSTEM (IDES)

The purpose of the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) is to maintain a fit and vital force. The Air Force utilizes the IDES to determine if Airmen who are ill, injured, or wounded are still fit for continued military service and quickly returns those who are. If a member is deemed unfit for continued service, the IDES process ensures service members receive a VA disability rating and are aware of their compensation benefits before they transition from military service. The Air Force continues to work on meeting OSD's goal of processing Airmen through IDES in 295 days. Currently, the Air Force active component is averaging 321 days processing time from referral for disability evaluation to the date of VA benefits decision or return to duty, and current milestone goal is for 90 percent of cases to meet DoD stage processing goals by Jun 2014.

In concert with DoD and VA, the Air Force has fielded and tested electronic, paperless case management solutions, working toward the eventuality of an enterprise-wide system with full interface capability with existing personnel data systems. Interim systems in use include Right Now Technology and Case File Transfer. These systems will allow the DoD Services and VA to significantly reduce case processing times. Through the Oct 2012 reorganization of Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) under the AFPC Directorate of Airman and Family Care, and the Sep 2013 consolidation of the PEB activity at JBSA-Randolph, the Air Force plans to continue to seek efficiencies in manpower allocation, standardization of training, and enhancement of PEB administration and adjudication by increasing not only AD support, but full-time Reserve and Guard support as well. Additionally, we hired a quality assurance specialist in 2013 to manage and report statistical findings to senior leadership and work internal and DoD technology solutions designed to further shrink IDES phase processing averages.

Through regular forums with Air Force leadership, other DoD Services and the VA, we plan to share resources and feedback to achieve our mutual goals.

In September 2013, the Air Force collocated the Informal PEB (IPEB) and Formal PEB (FPEB), allowing greater flexibility to respond to the changing mission needs between the two boards, enhancing consistency of training and optimizing FPEB Case Manager duties with their integration into a combined PEB Case Manager Staff. We instituted pre-PEB and post-PEB quality review measures including pre-screening to shorten timelines. Additionally, the Office of Airmen's Counsel representing all Airmen in the IDES appeal process relocated to join the FPEB creating a "one-stop-shop" of services for the service member and reducing TDY expenses from five days down to three days per hearing. Most recently, we activated a second FPEB and have been able to run up to eight hearings per day to expedite moving FPEB cases that are over their IDES phase goal. Concerning manpower, the Air Force has reallocated eight full time civilian positions within AFPC and garnered AFR support to meet PEB mission requirements. Moreover, we continue to leverage and test a robust suite of information technology to achieve seamless and paperless DoD-VA case file transfer and conduct formal hearing through VTC, saving both time and money.

The Air Force is also planning to reduce IDES Transition Phase processing time through data sharing applications, such as Electronic Case File Transfer, between Medical Treatment Facilities, the VA, and Air Force personnel offices. Additionally, PEB Liaison Officers update service member projected departure dates which are sent to Providence VA Medical Center to assist in timely individual case projections and closure. Further, the Air Force uses IDES service member survey reports to identify any shortfalls in processing and customer service.

Consolidated feedback undergoes quality assurance review and analysis during Air Force IDES conferences to identify and address any IDES process problems or issues.

Collectively, we expect these major improvement strategies and initiatives to continue the Air Force's improved IDES timeliness.

SUPPORTING TOTAL FORCE INTEGRATION

In an era of tighter budgets and unpredictability in national security platforms and mission sets, it makes imminent sense to get the most we possibly can out of the resources afforded to us. The past 13 years are a testament to the inherent flexibility of a 3-component force in meeting the demands on our Air Force. We must continue to leverage the flexibility of our Regular Air Force (RegAF), ANG, and AFR forces, utilizing full-time and part-time Airmen where and when it makes sense, and providing opportunities to allow our Airmen to serve in a way that works for them. That means identifying and eliminating barriers to a more efficient use of our people – and we are doing just that. We are integrating personnel management across the Total Force, eliminating unnecessary differences in rules and regulations, integrating management structures to a greater degree, and developing common platforms for pay and personnel services. The following initiatives are laying the foundation for greater integration of the total force, which will help the Air Force meet its requirements more efficiently going forward:

- Air Force Recruiting Information Support System – Total Force (AFRISS-TF), which will be the primary tool for all RegAF, ANG, and AFR recruiters worldwide to collect, process, manage, and analyze all potential enlisted and officer accession data (projected operability is in FY14);

- ARC2Mission efforts which will streamline and integrate all products required for the activation and deactivation of ARC members to speed orders generation and access to medical benefits and entitlements pre- and post-activation periods; and
- Career Intermission Pilot Program (CIPP), which is a one-time, temporary transition from active duty to the Individual Ready Reserve for officer and enlisted Airmen to meet personal or professional needs outside the service, providing a mechanism for return to active duty. The long-term intent of this program is to retain the valuable experience and training of top performing Airmen that might otherwise be lost by permanent separation. It provides an avenue to meet the changing needs of today's service members. This work-life flexibility initiative will enable the USAF to retain talent, which reduces cost and adverse impacts on the mission.

Other major programs and efforts include the: Integration of Air Force Multi-Component Force Support Squadrons (FSS); development and procurement of an Air Force Integrated Personnel and Pay System (AF-IPPS); and creation of an Enterprise-wide Total Force Service Center (TFSC).

INTEGRATION OF MULTI-COMPONENT FORCE SUPPORT SQUADRONS (FSS)

To better support our Total Force Airmen and Commanders, we continue to move forward with our “Multi-Component Force Support Squadron (FSS) Integration” initiative. The intent is to leverage the skills of highly experienced RegAF, ANG and AFR members, to achieve a more capable and efficient organization by maximizing the capabilities resident in each FSS, while still allowing for component uniqueness where warranted. This initiative has its roots in a

2010 Secretary of the Air Force memo (“Integration of Air Force Component Personnel Management Systems”, 15 Oct 10), directing Total Force personnel management integration.

Currently, on installations that have more than one component (Active, Guard, or Reserve), each component is serviced by its own FSS. For those installations, the intent is to establish a single customer-focused FSS supporting all Airmen and Commanders on that installation, while respecting the specific personnel management needs of all components. This is truly an integration effort to establish a single customer-focused FSS.

Because FSS Integration is a substantial initiative, we established prototypes at three installations (Peterson AFB, March ARB and Pease ANGB) as a proof of concept before implementing across the Total Force. Two prototypes recently achieved Initial Operational Capability and all three will reach Full Operational Capability by Nov 2014. These actions are consistent with the National Commission on the Structure of the Air Force’s recommendation to integrate the three components’ personnel management processes. Upon successful proof of concept, we will look to expand this initiative.

AIR FORCE INTEGRATED PERSONNEL AND PAY SYSTEM (AF-IPPS)

The Air Force continues to move forward with the AF-IPPS initiative, which is foundational to institutionalizing our 3-to-1 efforts by providing a common platform for Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve. This effort integrates personnel and pay systems across the Total Force to create a more efficient and effective Air Force. AF-IPPS is a web-based system that will allow our Airmen to have 24-hour access to their personnel and pay record from anywhere in the world.

The Air Force needs modernized Information Technology (IT) systems to support Total Force processes; our ability to manage military payroll becomes even more challenging every

year. Existing business processes are inefficient, error prone and costly to operate. Our payroll systems are decades old and built on obsolete technology. While our primary Military Personnel Data System is a Total Force system, we still rely on several other systems for managing ARC personnel. These component-unique systems reinforce differences in how the Air Force manages personnel, and causes delays in activating ARC members to active status and establishing their pay, benefits and entitlements. AF-IPPS will correct these problems, provide financial auditability, enable integration at base-level, across the personnel centers and eliminate the “split” between personnel and pay processes

CREATING AN ENTERPRISE-WIDE TOTAL FORCE SERVICE CENTER

The integration of the Total Force Service Center (TFSC) provides immediate efficiency to customer service operations. Two important processes have already been integrated, including duty history and former spouse determination and others should be integrated by 1 Sep 14. Utilizing existing technology, Air Reserve Personnel Center (ARPC) and Air Force Personnel Center (AFPC) are able to leverage the legacy Remedy platform to build Total Force self-service applications including evaluations, award, decorations, reenlistments, and extensions.

TFSC also provides Airmen access to personnel information, services, and tools via the Internet, e-mail, or telephone. Common software platforms are enabling greater integration between the two existing personnel centers and improve continuity of operations in case of a contingency. All should be available later in FY14.

CENTRALIZATION AND ELIMINATION OF DUPLICATE INFORMATION

TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

To better support our Total Force Airmen and Commanders, we continue to move forward with efforts to improve the value of our Information Technology (IT) Portfolio. We are

driving down costs by managing our IT systems through a shared services model, and transitioning our systems to Department of Defense enterprise data centers. In addition, we are also studying various capability areas of our Business Enterprise Architecture to determine where we have IT systems performing similar business processes. Once identified, we will work with business owners to reengineer processes and define IT requirements for Total Force solutions. The Air Force Recruiting Information Support System referenced previously is a good example of where we have had success with this strategy.

WOMEN IN SERVICE REVIEW

The Air Force is on track to execute the Women in Service Review high-level implementation plan by the 1 Jan 2016, and we do not anticipate any obstacles. Air Education and Training Command (AETC), in coordination with Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC), is currently reviewing a small number of closed Air Force career fields, including SOF-specific AFSCs, to validate occupationally specific, operationally relevant, gender-neutral physical performance tests and standards. The study was funded for \$1.2 million in May 2013, with an estimated completion date of July 2015. Currently there are seven occupations that remain closed to women (a total of 4,402 positions). The Air Force has not opened any closed AFSCs to women. The seven occupations remaining closed to women are: Special Tactics Officer, Special Operations Weather (officer), Special Operations Weather (enlisted), Combat Control, Combat Rescue Officer, Pararescue, and Tactical Air Control Party. The Air Force will open these AFSCs to women when mandates in the SecDef/CJCS guidance have been met, and occupational standards have been developed and validated.

DIVERSITY

Diversity and inclusion remain a top priority of Air Force senior leadership. The Air Force recognizes that a diverse force is a military necessity, and we continue on a strategic path to attract, recruit, develop and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce of highly qualified individuals who reflect the rich tapestry of the Nation we serve. To further these efforts, in March 2013, the Air Force published their Diversity Strategic Roadmap, which provides guidance to enhance the diversity and inclusion of the Total Force, as well as track progress and success toward reaching diversity goals. Additionally, the Secretary of the Air Force and Chief of Staff of the Air Force co-hosted the first-ever Diversity Focus Day to inform senior leaders on diversity efforts to provide senior leaders a snapshot of total force demographics and capture senior leader guidance on diversity and inclusion initiatives. These efforts made great strides in institutionalizing diversity and inclusion across the Air Force.

Results from the 2013 Internal Communication Assessment Group Diversity survey indicated 75 percent of Airmen agreed it is important for the Air Force to attract, recruit, develop and retain a qualified, diverse workforce as a way to maintain our edge as a superior military organization. Furthermore, 86 percent of Airmen surveyed believe the Air Force is doing a good or excellent job creating diversity within the Total Force.

Focus on Air Force outreach programs remains central to attracting and recruiting diverse talent. To that end, in partnership with OSD's Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO), the Air Force plans, coordinates and oversees national-level diversity outreach programs supporting our diversity goals and objectives. In 2013, the Air Force supported a number of national events including the Black Engineer of the Year Awards, Joint Women's Leadership Symposium and the Hispanic Engineer National Achievements Award

Corporation Conference. In addition to national-level diversity outreach events, the Air Force developed a program to encourage base-level Airmen, in partnership with local recruiters, to develop diversity outreach efforts in their local communities. In all these engagements, we continue to place emphasis on education, health, and mentoring in the STEM disciplines.

Finally, the Air Force continues to support the Military Leadership Diversity Commission (MLDC) report and provided Air Force input to OSD ODMEO's report to Congress on the status of MLDC recommendations. Of the 14 service-specific recommendations, the Air Force reported full implementation on 11 items, including adopting diversity as a core competency; tracking regional and cultural expertise in order to better manage personnel and mission-critical skill-sets; and implementing diversity strategic plans that address all stages of service member's life cycle.

WOUNDED WARRIORS

The Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care office, located at the Air Staff, is the Air Force Lead in orchestrating a comprehensive effort that synergizes DoD and Veterans Affairs programs focused on medical and non-medical care of wounded, ill, and injured service members. This effort consists of three major working groups: Policy and Oversight, Comprehensive Plan, and Community of Practice. The innovative results of these groups include the development of a Lead Coordinator to facilitate care across the spectrum of care agencies involved, a single IT system to share data between Services and to the Veterans Administration without repetition or replication of data, and overarching policy guidance to synchronize the wounded warrior programs while allowing flexibility for each Service to work within their current construct, thus saving resources and eliminating the confusion inherent in changing programs. Members of the Air Staff, the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and

AFPC have provided Air Force standards of practice as benchmarks for the overall program and were lauded for being visionary in our approach to wounded warrior care.

The Air Force focuses on offering adaptive sports opportunities early in an Airman's recovery and/or rehabilitation, and they have proven to facilitate restoration of wellness and enhance members' ability to function in their personal and family lives. Our actions include regional sports camps to introduce our recovering Airmen and veterans to a variety of activities that help them recognize their own abilities despite their illness or injury. These camps are also, in some instances, the beginning of returning to a social setting and learning to accept and/or cope with their disability by interacting with others that have similar challenges. Recovering Airmen and veterans also compete for a place on our Warrior Games team and compete in Paralympics style competition against other Services and International wounded warrior teams. Our adaptive sports program is one of the most successful rehabilitation activities available to our recovering Airmen outside of physical and occupational therapy offered by the medical community.

In 2013, we doubled our Special Compensation with Assistance for Activities of Daily Living program recipients. This program provides additional financial support to caregivers, lessening the impact of lost wages and other expenses inherent in caring for a seriously injured or ill Airman. Throughout 2013, and continuing into the future, we will work with DoD and VA through the Inter-Agency Care Coordination Committee to establish a fluid care plan that will take our Airmen from the point of injury or illness, through their medical and non-medical care while in the Air Force, and seamlessly into the VA system, using a single-care plan and eventually an integrated care-management system. We have equipped our Recovery Care Coordinators with communications equipment, including cell phones and tablets, that allow them

to get out of their office and engage face-to-face with our Airmen and their families. The needs of our seriously ill or injured are similar to our combat wounded, therefore our programs are designed to support all in an equitable manner.

EVALUATIONS

All Airmen have a responsibility to contribute to a healthy unit or organizational climate. In order to maintain this environment, all feedback and evaluation forms have been modified to include “Organizational Climate,” when evaluating Airmen, and this must be discussed in all feedback sessions. Given their position and influence, commanders have an even greater responsibility to not only contribute, but to create and ensure a healthy organizational climate. The more it is incorporated into daily activities, the more it becomes a part of Air Force culture. Ultimately, a healthy unit or organizational climate is critical to the effectiveness of our Air Force at all levels.

COMPREHENSIVE AIRMAN FITNESS (CAF)

Our Air Force continues to make progress in teaching resilience skills to our Total Force and their families. Continued high operations tempo at home and abroad, coupled with downsizing the force and budget cuts, reinforce our need to increase the focus on building strong, resilient Airmen. The Air Force has successfully graduated 641 Master Resilience Trainers (MRTs). Each trainer learned to facilitate and train new members on core competency skills using the four domains of Comprehensive Airman Fitness (CAF); mental, physical, social and spiritual fitness. MRTs are teaching resilience skills at First Term Airmen Centers, Airmen Leadership Schools, and they are training Resilience Trainer Assistants (RTAs) to aid and assist units/squadrons with building resilience skills. A tailored CAF course has been created for Air

Force Key Spouses, and once trained, Key Spouses may serve as RTAs to assist commanders with their units, and further assist spouses with building CAF skills.

CAF is governed by the Air Force Community Action Information Board (CAIB), chaired by our Air Force Assistant Vice Chief of Staff. In Dec 2013 the CAIB directed an assessment of increasing the MRT ratios. As a result of the overwhelming positive feedback received from members who have received CAF training, we are targeting to train one MRT per squadron and exploring options to increase the amount of MRTs from the current ratio of 1 MRT per 1,000 Airmen to 1 per 200 Airmen. We believe as we build resilience skills, all Airmen will be better equipped to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands, and ultimately help sustain continuous mission success.

CONCLUSION

Our Airmen and their families continue to be the foundation of the success of our Air Force. The enduring contributions provided by the Air Force in joint operations are a direct result of the innovative spirit that reside in all our Airmen. Investments in our Air Force capabilities are inextricably linked to our Service's ability to recruit, train, develop, support and retain a world-class, all-volunteer Force. As we continue to meet budget challenges, it will be more important than ever to continue to size and shape the force within the fiscal constraints to ensure we meet operational demands, while analyzing inventories against current and future demands. We are confident, keeping faith with our commitment to train and equip the highest quality Airmen, that our Air Force will remain capable of overcoming any challenge or adversary.