

**RECORD VERSION**

**STATEMENT BY**

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**UNITED STATES ARMY**

**BEFORE THE**

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**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Chairman Coffman, Representative Speier, Distinguished Members of this Committee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on behalf of the United States Army.

The Army is people. Our Soldiers, Civilians, Retirees, Veterans, and Families are our greatest asset. We are the most formidable ground combat force on earth. Over the past 15 years of war, the Army has continuously provided trained and ready forces for combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, we have executed a wide array of combatant commander missions in Europe, the Pacific, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Homeland. Today the Army has more than 187,000 Soldiers assigned or allocated to meet combatant commander requirements. 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 currently stands at approximately 1.005M with the Active Component (AC) currently at approximately 465,000, the Army Reserve (USAR) at approximately 199,000, and the Army National Guard (ARNG) at approximately 341,000. The FY17 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) authorized a Total Army end strength increase of 28,000 to 1.018 million Soldiers (476,000 AC; 199,000 USAR; 343,000 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 FY16 recruiting mission of 62,500 Active Component recruits with more than 95% of them holding high school diplomas. The ARNG met their mission of 36,800 and for the first time in five years, the USAR met its mission of 25,900. This success is due partly to support from Congress for our accession programs across the Total Army. We are aggressively working to achieve the 6,000-Soldier growth in the Active Component accessions to achieve the FY17 NDAA's directed end strength increase. We are committed to holding quality high by using enlistment bonus incentives and expanding prior service enlistments to help reach our goal.

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 FY16 retention missions. The increase in end strength for FY17 has also led us to significantly increase the Army's retention mission at mid-year, and we have expanded retention incentives accordingly. We have also suspended personnel review boards that were being used to shape the drawdown. Each component is diligently working to accomplish their respective retention missions while maintaining standards.

The end strength increase of the Army's Active Component requires a civilian workforce to support Soldiers and their Families on installations and training bases. The Army's Generating Force is critical to Army readiness and that workforce is 60% Army Civilians. Currently, there are also 41,000 Army civilians supporting combatant commands worldwide. Since 2011, the Army has been drawing down the civilian workforce from a wartime high of 285,000 to approximately 242,000 (as of March 2017) to meet budget levels, military end strength reductions and legislative mandates associated with the military drawdown.

The Army is committed to manning a force that reflects the diversity of the nation. Through our outreach and marketing efforts, we are focused on increasing diversity of the force in underrepresented branches and military occupational specialties (MOS). We've made improvements in representing the diversity of America's talent in 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) experienced similar growth in female enrollments from 22% in the Class of 2017 to a projected 28% women in the Class of 2020. Further, 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 will be African American in 2020 vs. an average of 11% from 2012-2017. Through continued concerted efforts we are sustaining a high-quality All-Volunteer Force that reflects the diversity of America.

The Army is 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 the MOS. To date, the Army has accessed and transferred more than 450 women into the previously closed occupations. Last year we opened infantry and armor positions as well. Specifically in the officer ranks, two female Infantry captains are assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division. Forty-two female officers have successfully completed the Infantry or Armor Basic Officer Leader's Course and are arriving at assignments in the 1st Cavalry Division and the 82nd Airborne Division in support of the Army's Leaders First Strategy. Additionally, the Army has successfully transferred, trained and assigned female NCOs into both Infantry and Armor occupations. This approach sets conditions in operational units before newly trained junior enlisted Soldiers arrive this summer. The first integrated enlisted training courses for Infantry and Armor began in February/March 2017. Due to several years' effort to open other job types that have long been unavailable to female Soldiers, women currently serve in every infantry, armor and artillery battalion in every active Brigade Combat Team in the Army. Significantly, in March 2017, the first female officer was assigned to the 75th Ranger Regiment. As the Army continues long-term studies in support of gender integration and the Soldier 2020 campaign, lessons learned will enhance readiness and increase the diversity across our force using a standards-based approach.

Personal resiliency is fundamental to readiness. We currently have 25 Resilience/Performance Training Centers, with the 26th opening in Korea before the end of FY17. We have certified 36.5K Master Resiliency Trainers who are resident in company-level formations to train Soldiers on 16 resiliency skills. Our goal is to have a Master Resilience Trainer for every company in the Army to reinforce these skills. We continue to field the Commander's Risk Reduction Dashboard (CRRD), a tool to provide commanders an automated capability to gain visibility of Individual Soldier and Unit levels of resiliency. Fielding of CRRD Increment 1 to the entire active Army will be completed by July 2017, and we are conducting testing of Increment 2.

The Global Assessment Tool (GAT), a self-awareness tool for Soldiers to measure their personal resilience by assessing their own physical, psychological, social and spiritual readiness remains key to our efforts. In FY16, more than 717K Soldiers completed the GAT. The Army also has begun testing "Engage", a program that teaches soldiers to have professional discussions with their peers, subordinates and supervisors to positively influence personal readiness. "Engage" will teach Soldiers to connect with each other, building a culture of trust that can optimize individual Soldier performance, well-being, and overall unit readiness. "Engage" has been trained at various installations across all three components, with very positive feedback.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation diminish our readiness, therefore, prevention of sexual violence remains a top priority for the Army to ensure the readiness of the Force. The Sergeant Major of the Army, supported by our superb non-

commissioned officer corps, continues to lead our efforts on this this issue through the “Not in My Squad” program. This program reinforces engaged, values based leadership at the lowest levels in our Army.

The Army and Department of Defense have focused on closing the gap between reporting rates and actual incidents. Sexual Assault reporting increased by approximately 60% from FY12 to FY14, and is now approaching a steady state based on FY15 and FY16 data (1,962 Soldier reports and 535 non-Soldier reports). Since FY14, reporting has remained relatively unchanged when compared by gender/age/rank. Prevalence for female service members who experienced unwanted sexual contact has been in decline since 2010. This steady state in reporting and decrease in prevalence is what was originally envisioned when the Army and DOD increased emphasis on help-seeking behavior and accountability.

Now that we have world-class response capabilities in place, we’re placing more focus on preventing these incidents from occurring. Civilian and DOD studies have shown that sexual harassment is often a precursor to sexual assault, with 30 percent of victims indicating they experienced such incidents prior to their assault. The Army is the only Military Service to formally include sexual harassment in its prevention program, and we believe more needs to be done on this front. Therefore, we are increasing our awareness, refining our training curriculum and placing greater emphasis on instructing members of the Army Team on prevention of sexual violence.

Additionally, we're continuing to train and develop a professional cadre of SHARP front-line warriors. The SHARP Academy, based at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, continues to enhance its ability to provide top-notch prevention and response education for Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Victim Advocates, Trainers and SHARP Program Managers. The SHARP Academy has graduated more than 900 full-time SHARP professionals since 2014 and is in the process of piloting a new SHARP Program Manager course.

Suicide remains a serious concern for our Army, and we remain committed to combating suicide with a holistic and comprehensive approach to suicide prevention. Key to this approach is focusing on strengthening Soldiers, building cohesive units and engaging strong supportive Families. Once alerted to situations that deviate from the normal behavior or standard, everyone concerned understands how to assist the person in need to access the required behavioral health care.

To improve personal readiness and resiliency, we are aggressively working to decrease the stigma associated with seeking behavioral health care. Behavioral health encounters for the Total Army grew from approximately 700K in FY03 to approximately 1.28M in FY16, indicating greater trust in the system. Over the past 13 years, Active duty Soldiers using behavioral health services increased from 5.7% to 15.9%. Reserve component increased from 2.5% to 6.9% in the same period. Active Duty Army Family members using behavioral health services in the direct and purchased care network also increased from approximately 300K encounters in FY03 to 1.3M by in FY16 (approximately 14% of Active Duty Army family members).



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, 98% 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. Embedding behavioral health personnel within combat units is a proven best practice – one that we've recently extended to include the Substance Use Disorder clinical care providers, by aligning services under the Army Medical Command.

The Army has reduced Total Force non-deployable personnel from 15% as of June 2016 to 11.5% March 2017. The current 11.5% non-deployable rate includes a new category introduced last summer to proactively manage expired medical and dental examinations. Excluding expired examinations, the Total Force rate would be 9% and the Active Component at 8%.

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 259 days and the Active Component is down to 216 days. The IDES population is steady state at approximately 13K. 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 helping them transition into the civilian world. We know that only 9% of enlisted Soldiers and 28% of officers stay in the service for 20 years, the point where they are eligible for retirement. Therefore, it is clear that we must focus on preparing our Soldiers for life after their service. Every year about 120K Soldiers transition from the Army and we must ensure they have a smooth transition to civilian life with quality employment.

The Army's Soldier for Life program has connected more than one thousand private and public organizations to transitioning Soldiers and spouses, resulting in more than 1.2 million jobs filled by Army veterans and Family Members. Further, according to the Department of Labor, Soldier for Life efforts assisted in reducing the Veteran unemployment rates to an eight-year low, closing FY16 with the lowest amount of unemployment compensation for ex-service members in 13 years.

VOW Act compliance across the Army in FY16 was over 85% -- the Active Component at 86%, ARNG at 85% and USAR at 76%. Army senior leaders have solidified policies and procedures for transitioning Soldiers and reiterated to Commanders that they are responsible for ensuring their Soldiers go to VOW Act-mandated briefings. Soldiers who transition successfully back into our communities become strong stewards in advocating for others to serve.

To build a Total Army of 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 able to get on the field and play his or her position. The Army is piloting a Talent Assessment Program that will identify our talent and match them to Army requirements. For example, at the Aviation Captain's Career Course at Ft. Rucker, Alabama, junior captains are participating in multiple assessments, which will collectively provide them with individually-tailored feedback on where their talents align with the requirements of the Army's various career specialties. The pilot program finishes this summer, 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 People's knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors to best fit the right person in the right job at the right time. To accomplish this, we must move from a personnel management system to a talent management system. We are actively pursuing the Integrated Personnel and Pay System – Army (IPPS-A). IPPS-A is a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) that for the first time, will allow the Army to manage the AC, USAR, and ARNG on one HR IT system. This will allow us to manage talents and match them to Army requirements. Finally, it will provide us an audit capability to ensure personnel and pay are compliant with the law. The initial implementation of IPPS-A will start with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard (PAARNG) in January 2018, with training of more than 15K of their Soldiers due to begin in September 2017.

At the end of the day, 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.