

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SUBJECT: AIR FORCE MILITARY PERSONNEL

**STATEMENT OF: THE HONORABLE CRAIG DUEHRING
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, MANPOWER,
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS**

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD Y. NEWTON, III
DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, MANPOWER AND PERSONNEL
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

MARCH 17, 2009

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED
BY THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



BIOGRAPHY



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

CRAIG W. DUEHRING

Craig W. Due ring is the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Washington, D.C. A political appointee, Mr. Due ring heads a four-division department that deals at the policy level with Air Force manpower and Reserve affairs issues. He is responsible for providing overall supervision of manpower, military and civilian personnel, Reserve component affairs, and readiness support for the Department of the Air Force.

Mr. Due ring is a 28-year Air Force veteran, having been commissioned in 1968 through Officer Training School. He is a decorated combat pilot, completing more than 800 missions during the Vietnam War as a forward air controller, including a tour as one of the Raven FACs in northern Laos. Mr. Duehring has flown more than a dozen types of aircraft, amassing more than 1,200 hours in the A-10 Thunderbolt II. He retired as a colonel in 1996. His final military assignment was U.S. Air Attaché to Indonesia.



Mr. Duehring has served on the Bush-Cheney Transition Team and the Department of Defense Transition Team. He was the Executive Director of the Patrick Henry Center for Individual Liberty, a non-profit educational and charitable foundation, and he was endorsed as the Republican candidate for the Minnesota 2nd Congressional District in 1998. Prior to his current assignment, Mr. Duehring served six years as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs. He performed the duties of acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs in the absence of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, including an extended period during and following the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

EDUCATION

1967 Bachelor of Science degree in history and sociology, Minnesota State University, Mankato
1975 Master's degree in counseling and guidance, Troy State University, Montgomery, Ala.
1972 Squadron Officer School
1981 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
1982 Fellow, Haus Rissen International Institute for Politics and Economics, Hamburg, West Germany
1983 National Security Management Course, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.
1992 Department of State Foreign Service Institute, Washington, D.C.
2002 Fellow, National Security Studies, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, Johns-Hopkins Campus, Md.

CAREER CHRONOLOGY

1. 1968 - 1969, student, undergraduate pilot training, 3615th Flying Training Wing, Craig AFB, Ala.
2. 1969 - 1970, forward air controller, 22nd Tactical Air Support Squadron, 25th Infantry Division, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, Doc Hoa, Vietnam

3. 1970 - 1971, Raven forward air controller, Detachment 1, 56th Special Operations Wing, Udorn Royal Thai AFB, Thailand
4. 1971 - 1975, T-37 instructor pilot and flight commander, 43rd Flying Training Squadron, Craig AFB, Ala.
5. 1975 - 1978, base fuels management officer, 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
6. 1978 - 1981, Flight Commander, 92nd Tactical Fighter Squadron, and Chief of Training, 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, Royal Air Force Bentwaters, England
7. 1981 - 1984, action officer, Tactical Fighter Operations Division, Headquarters U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, West Germany
8. 1984 -1986, assistant operations officer, 510th Tactical Fighter Squadron, later, Director of Operations Training, 81st Tactical Fighter Wing, RAF Bentwaters, England
9. 1986 - 1989, American Community Commander, and Commander, 7502nd Munitions Support Squadron, Norvenich AB, West Germany
10. 1989 - 1990, assistant Deputy Commander for Operations, 406th Tactical Fighter Training Wing, Zaragoza AB, Spain
11. 1990 - 1991, Deputy Commander for Operations and Vice Commander, 406th Tactical Fighter Training Wing, Zaragoza AB, Spain
12. 1992 - 1993, student, Department of State Foreign Service Institute, Washington, D.C.
13. 1993 - 1995, U.S. Air Attaché to Indonesia
14. 2001 -2007, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, Washington, D.C.
15. 2007 - present, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Washington, D.C.

AWARDS AND HONORS

Silver Star
Defense Superior Service Medal
Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster
Meritorious Service Medal with three oak leaf clusters
Air Medal with 26 oak leaf clusters
Air Force Commendation Medal with oak leaf cluster
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross
Republic of Vietnam Staff Service Medal (First Class)

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

1987 Lance P. Sijan Award, senior officer category
2008 Exceptional Civilian Service Award

(Current as of September 2008)



BIOGRAPHY



LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD Y. NEWTON III

Lt. Gen. Dick Newton is the Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C. General Newton serves as the senior Air Force officer responsible for comprehensive plans and policies covering all life cycles of military and civilian personnel management, which includes military and civilian end strength management, education and training, compensation, resource allocation, and the worldwide USAF services program.

Born at Forbes Air Force Base, Kan., General Newton hails from an Air Force family and graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1978. His command assignments include the first B-2 squadron, a B-1B operations group and a B-52 wing. He served at Headquarters U.S. Air Force as a planner and then executive officer for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, and later as Deputy Director for Strategic Plans and Future Systems for the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel. His joint assignments include serving as the executive assistant to the Director, Strategic Plans and Policy (J5), with later assignment as Deputy Director for Information Operations, and Deputy Director for Global Operations in the Operations Directorate (J3) on the Joint Staff, followed by duty as the Director, Plans and Policy (J5), U.S. Strategic Command. Most recently he served as the Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements, Headquarters U.S. Air Force.



General Newton is a command pilot with over 2,900 flying hours in a variety of aircraft, including the B-2, B-1B, B-52 and T-38.

EDUCATION

- 1978 Bachelor of Science degree in history, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 1983 Master of Arts degree in management, Webster University, St. Louis, Mo.
- 1991 Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 1996 Master of Science degree in national security strategy, National War College, Washington, D.C.
- 2000 National Security Management Course, The Maxwell School, Syracuse University, N.Y.
- 2004 National Security Leaders Course, The Maxwell School, Syracuse University, N.Y.
- 2005 Executive Program for Russian and U.S. General Officers, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.
- 2006 Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
- 2008 Leadership at the Peak, Center for Creative Leadership, Colorado Springs, Colo.
- 2008 Pinnacle, Joint, Coalition and Interagency Studies, National Defense University, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, D.C.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. July 1978 - November 1979, student, undergraduate pilot training, Laughlin AFB, Texas
2. November 1979 - September 1983, T-38 instructor pilot and assistant wing executive officer, 47th

- Flying Training Wing, Laughlin AFB, Texas
3. September 1983 - October 1984, Air Staff training assignment, Washington, D.C.
 4. October 1984 - December 1987, B-52G aircraft commander, instructor pilot and flight examiner, 379th Bomb Wing, Wurtsmith AFB, Mich.
 5. December 1987 - May 1989, planner, Strategic Offensive Forces Division, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
 6. May 1989 - July 1990, assistant executive officer, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
 7. July 1990 - June 1991, student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell AFB, Ala.
 8. June 1991 - August 1993, B-1B aircraft commander, instructor pilot, flight commander and squadron operations officer, 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.
 9. August 1993 - August 1995, Commander, 393rd Bomb Squadron, Whiteman AFB, Mo.
 10. August 1995 - June 1996, student, National War College, Washington, D.C.
 11. June 1996 - July 1997, Chief, Initiatives Branch, Deputy Director for International Negotiations, Strategic Plans and Policy, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.
 12. July 1997 - July 1998, Chief, Long Range Policy Planning cell, then executive assistant to the Director, Strategic Plans and Policy, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.
 13. July 1998 - January 2000, Commander, 28th Operations Group, Ellsworth AFB, S.D.
 14. February 2000 - December 2001, Commander, 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB, N.D.
 15. December 2001 - August 2002, Deputy Director, Developing Aerospace Leaders Support Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
 16. August 2002 - August 2003, Deputy Director, Strategic Plans and Future Systems, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
 17. August 2003 - April 2004, Deputy Director for Information Operations, Operations Directorate, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.
 18. April 2004 - July 2005, Deputy Director for Global Operations, Operations Directorate, the Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.
 19. July 2005 - July 2006, Director, Plans and Policy (J5), U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt AFB, Neb.
 20. July 2006 - January 2008, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Requirements (A3/5), Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.
 21. January 2008 - present, Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Personnel (A1), Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, D.C.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Rating: Command pilot

Flight hours: More than 2,900

Aircraft flown: B-2, B-1B, B-52G and T-38

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters

Legion of Merit

Meritorious Service Medal with silver oak leaf cluster

Air Force Outstanding Unit Award with "V" device and three oak leaf clusters

Combat Readiness Medal

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Second Lieutenant May 31, 1978

First Lieutenant June 1, 1980

Captain June 1, 1982

Major March 1, 1988

Lieutenant Colonel March 1, 1992

Colonel Oct. 1, 1996

Brigadier General Aug. 1, 2003

Major General May 26, 2006

Lieutenant General Jan. 7, 2008

(Current as of January 2009)

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to discuss the Airmen who serve in the world's most respected Air Force. Our Airmen have been continuously deployed and globally engaged in combat missions for over eighteen straight years—since the first F-15 touched down in Saudi Arabia in August 1990. Today, Airmen are fully engaged in joint operations across the globe and stand prepared for rapid response to asymmetric as well as conventional conflicts.

While we remain committed to winning today's fight, and preparing for tomorrow's challenges, we've further refined our priorities. We are focusing on reinvigorating the Air Force nuclear enterprise; partnering with the joint and coalition team to win today's fight; developing and caring for Airmen and their families; modernizing our Air and Space inventories, organizations, and training; and, recapturing acquisition excellence. These priorities will shape the strategic landscape that currently foreshadows significant challenges to our organization, systems, concepts, and doctrine. We are at a historic turning point demanding an equally comprehensive evolution. The future strategic environment will be shaped by the interaction of globalization, economic disparities and competition for resources; diffusion of technology and information networks whose very nature allows unprecedented ability to harm, and potentially, paralyze advanced nations; and systemic upheavals impacting state and non-state actors, and thereby, international institutions and the world order.

The Air Force undertook significant personnel reductions to free resources to reprogram towards recapitalizing and modernizing essential air, space, and cyber systems, congruent with our priorities. The impact on our warfighting Airmen has been significant. We were compelled to make some very tough decisions with respect to our people. Fewer platforms that require fewer operators and maintainers were part of the equation. We are continuing to take a hard look at all our processes and streamlining our organizations. However, we want to ensure that

we continue to attract, recruit and retain high caliber men and women who are the cornerstone of our Air Force, and that we properly shape the force to fulfill our priorities.

End Strength

As of the fiscal year (FY) 2009 President's Budget request, the current approved Air Force Total Force end strength is 316,600 Active Duty (AD) effective FY09 through FY13; 171,313 civilians effective FY09, ramping to 172,412 by FY13; 67,400 Reservists effective FY09, ramping to 67,700 by FY13; and 106,700 Guardsmen effective FY09 through FY13. Summer 2008, Secretary Gates announced halt of active military drawdown at 330,000. As of January 31, 2009, AD actual end strength is 329,651 (64,524 officers, 260,697 enlisted, and 4,430 cadets); civilian actuals 160,875; reserve actuals 65,842 (14,500 officers, 51,342 enlisted); and guard actuals 108,119 (14,168 officers, 93,951 enlisted).

Our forces support our traditional ongoing Air Force missions and new/emerging missions. These missions include Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (Reaper, Distributed Common Ground Systems, and MC-12); B-52/Nuclear Enterprise (Air Force Global Strike Command, HAF/A10, and Barksdale WSA); Cyber NAF; SOCOM; Aircraft Maintenance; OSD/Joint; and civilian administration for Squadron Commander's Support Staff.

Joint Expeditionary Tasking

Deployments for standard Air Force requirements or in support of Joint Operations are not part of the equation when projecting end strength. Regardless, the Air Force continues its role in combating the Overseas Contingency Operations even as requirements continue to grow. The Air Force provides critical capabilities as an integral part of the Joint team. A portion of the capabilities we deliver have, until very recently, been designated as "In-Lieu-Of" (ILO). However, the Department of Defense enacted several changes to Joint terminology that replaces most ILO designations with Non-Standard Solutions terms such as "AD HOC" and Joint Force/Capability Solution. These new terms refine the categorization method and more

accurately describe the nature of the respective tasks; the Air Force has emphasized our contribution to the fight and Joint team with a single term. The Joint Expeditionary Tasking (JET) properly characterizes our combat-focus mindset and our joint posture.

The Air Force is fully committed to winning today's fight with the innovative combat spirit our Airmen demonstrate on a daily basis regardless of the task. As of February 18, 2009, we have approximately 35,000 Active Duty, Guard and Reserve Airmen (Total Force) deployed in support of global operations, and 208,000 Total Force Airmen supporting daily combatant commander operations. 3,500 of those Airmen are specifically supporting JET missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and approximately 560 supporting JET missions in other countries.

In calendar year (CY) 2008, the Air Force received 4,917 JET requirements. Of these JET requirements a total of 610 or 12.4% could not be supported. Subsequently, those respective tasks were redirected to another Service, negotiated for a smaller requirement, or the in-place unit absorbed the workload. The majority of the unsupported tasks are composed of stressed or over taxed officer and enlisted career fields such as Security Forces, Combat Control, Operations Intelligence, and Air Field Operations.

Recruiting

In order to continue engaging current and emerging global threats, our recruiting mission goes beyond finding the right numbers. It includes ensuring the right quality and right skills are present in potential candidates so they can effectively perform and support the Air Force's diverse missions. One key component of our recruiting effort is a renewed commitment to diversity. We must focus on attracting and recruiting from all backgrounds so we capitalize on the talent available throughout America. Subsequently, this will represent a true demographic reflection of a changing American landscape. We are working on a game plan with our recruiting and accession sources to tap into our diverse eligible population. Today, only 27% of the American youth population between the ages of 17 and 24 are qualified for military service (Woods & Pooles, 2006). However, we will continue to apply rigorous selection criteria to those

approaching the Air Force in order to effectively match future Airmen skills and attributes with our essential combat requirements.

Our recruiting force continues to achieve the enlisted accession mission with integrity and excellence. In FY08, we met mission requirements for enlisted recruiting in all components (Active, Guard, and Reserve). In fact, the Air Force Reserve met recruiting goals for the eighth straight year, and the Air National Guard managed to exceed end strength for the first time in six years, ending the year 979 accessions over the established goal.

For FY09, the enlisted active-duty requirement is 31,980, and 11,827 new Airmen have accessed. There are 9,334 more signed and waiting to enter basic military training, for a current total of 66% of the annual enlisted Active Duty accessions goal. To date in FY09 we have achieved 100% of our active-duty accession goals and 100% and 120% of our Reserve and Guard accession goals, respectively.

The Air Force Recruiting Service has also had 100% success at filling every requirement for physically demanding and highly skilled "hard-to-fill" jobs since 2001. With Congressional assistance and our recruiter's hard work, we continue to meet all requirements for Combat Controller, Para rescue, Tactical Air Control Party, Explosive Ordinance Disposal, Security Forces, Linguist, and Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape instructor. Recruits who choose to enter these career fields are offered an initial enlistment bonus ranging from \$2,000 to \$13,000, depending on the job and term of enlistment. These fields are offering enlistment bonuses for FY09.

We have achieved mission goals in our line officer accession programs, but we continue to struggle with health professions officer programs. In FY08, the line officer active-duty requirement was 3,162 and we accessed 2,964 (94%) line specialties: Pilot, Combat Systems Officer, Air Battle Manager, and Technical/Non-technical. For FY09, the line officer active-duty requirement is 3,459 and 985 new officers have already assessed, so we are on track for 100%.

For FY08 health professions, we recruited 42 doctors (18.4% of requirement), 28 dentists (37.8%), 226 nurses (69.5%), 128 biomedical scientists (39.9%), and 36 medical administrators (102.9%). For FY09, we have currently recruited 15 doctors (12.7% of requirement), 14 dentists (66.7%), 136 nurses (49.5%), 65 biomedical scientists (19%), and 35 medical administrators (100%). Considerable challenges exist for attracting candidates from this lucrative civilian market. Therefore, we've implemented a long-term "grow our own" strategy by offering more medical school scholarships in student-based markets. In FY08, we filled 431 of 437 available scholarships (98.6%). For FY09, we have 449 available scholarships and 203 are already committed (45.2%). Since spring medical school acceptance letters have yet to be released from most institutions, we are on goal for this year.

Officer accessions remain a challenge for the Air National Guard, as the Guard competes for the same talent pool as the Regular Force and Air Force Reserve. Currently, the Guard has only reached 42.1% of the year to date goal. All of the components are having particular trouble in the Health Professions, Chaplains, Engineers, Intelligence and Mobility aviators. The Guard raised the recruiting numbers in the non-prior service market to account for the lag in prior service recruiting numbers. While the non-prior service market has proven to be a lucrative talent pool, we need to continue to focus on recruiting the prior service market as well. In 2008, through the use of In-Service Air National Guard recruiters strategically placed at active duty bases, the Air National Guard garnered approximately 1,140 confirmed accessions. This is a good news story because, rather than lose the talent to the private sector, the Active Component can transfer that experience to the Reserve and Guard.

Retention

We are on track toward meeting our priorities because we continue to invest in retaining the high caliber men and women that we recruited, trained and developed. While the FY08 overall Active Duty enlisted and Air Force Reserve enlisted and officer retention rates finished below annual goals, the Active Duty officer corps and the National Guard met or exceeded all

other aggregate retention goals. This positive trend has continued into FY09; as of the end of the 1st quarter, FY09 (December 2008) all components were meeting or exceeding goals. Although, the first quarter of FY09 shows overall Active Duty retention is trending slightly upward, some of our critical/stressed specialties continue to experience significant shortfalls and we continue to rely heavily on bonuses and quality of life initiatives to resolve these shortages.

Among the officer corps while retention is strong, a few pockets of concern exist among the Health Professions, Control & Recovery, and Contracting. An additional \$65 million in medical bonuses was approved for FY09 to target physicians, nurses, dentists, and biomedical specialists such as psychologists and social workers. A new Control & Recovery Critical Skills Retention Bonus (CSRB) has been approved. A similar CSRB package for contracting officers is currently in coordination.

The Air Force's ability to retain experienced healthcare personnel past their initial commitment has declined—compounding our recruiting challenges. The retention at the 10-year point is ~ 27% for physicians, ~40% for dentists, ~31% for nurses, ~33% for biomedical sciences officers and ~64% for administrators. The Air Force continues to develop both accession and retention incentives to ensure the right mix of health professionals.

Despite finishing below FY08 goals in September 2008, the year marked a turning point for enlisted retention which has since trended upward in all three zones. We are however, still slightly below goal in Zones A (17 months through six Years of Service, (YOS)) and C (ten YOS through 14 YOS). Even with this success at the aggregate level, some individual enlisted specialties in the active Air Force did not achieve their overall retention goal, including: Aerial Gunner, Mid East Crypto Linguist, Imagery Analysis, Operations Management, and Contracting. Our most critical warfighting skills require a special focus on retention to maintain combat capability due to critical manning and the demands of increased operations tempo placed on career fields including Para rescue, Combat Control, Tactical Air Control Party, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal. Budget support for retention programs is critical to effectively manage the

force and preserve needed warfighting capability. These programs are judiciously and effectively targeted to provide the most return-on-investment in both dollars and capability.

The Air Force Reserve continued to execute force structure changes in FY08 in the form of BRAC and internal DoD decisions prompting a reduction of over 7,000 positions. As a result, we again missed our standard officer and enlisted retention targets of 92% and 87% respectively but were still within acceptable limits for retention. Ironically, while we'd previously noticed a gradual decrease in First Term and Career Airmen reenlistments/extensions from FY05-07, in FY08 we saw a dramatic upswing for First Termers, 82% vs. 58% in FY07, and a modest gain for Career Airmen of 75% vs. 67% in FY07. Second Term reenlistments and extensions fell slightly for the third straight year from 58% in FY07 to 55% but this is perhaps the largest population of airmen affected by force shaping. We are currently evaluating our Air Reserve Component incentive programs and making appropriate adjustments to ensure we retain our best and brightest airmen.

The Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) continues to be our most effective monetary retention tool. We appreciate continued Congressional support for our efforts. The SRB funding budgeted for FY09 is sufficient to address current retention concerns and address grade/skill imbalances. The Air Force is now well-positioned (considering the \$88.8 million plus up in the SRB budget) to meet FY09 retention goals and ensure we retain the right Airmen, with the right skills, at the right time in order to meet our expeditionary requirements.

Our Airmen are committed to serving, including those experiencing high deployment rates. Combatant Commander (COCOM) requirements and the Overseas Contingency Operations levy a high demand for pilots, navigators, intelligence, control and recovery, contracting, civil engineers, and security forces officers as well as enlisted Airmen in aircrew, special operations, intelligence, vehicle operators, civil engineering, and security forces.

Despite an increased operations tempo and deployment rate the Air Force continues to achieve acceptable retention levels across the officer and enlisted force.

Finally, we understand that support to families is vital to Air Force retention. Working together with their spouses and families, Airmen make a decision to stay in the Air Force based on many factors, one of which is the quality of service they and their families receive. We have found that caring for families has a direct impact on mission readiness from available and affordable child care to dependent education support to spouse employment assistance. When families are taken care of Airmen are free from distractions and are better able to focus on the mission at hand. We are committed to ensure our Airmen can rest easy, knowing the Air Force is taking care of their family.

Stop-Loss

Our focused commitment on retaining the right Airmen in the right skills has enabled the Air Force to meet the warfighting commanders' needs without the use of Stop-Loss. The Air Force's last Stop-Loss implementation occurred during the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), from March 2003 through June 2003. The Air Force initially targeted 43 officer and 56 enlisted high-demand career fields, affecting 6,172 Active Duty officers, 4,858 Active Duty enlisted, 834 Guard/Reserve officers, and 3,030 Guard and Reserve enlisted members. Monthly reviews allowed us to release career fields no longer critical to OIF requirements, and the Air Force terminated all use of Stop-Loss June 23, 2003. Since that time, your support of our retention tools such as Selective Reenlistment and Critical Skill Retention Bonuses, Assignment Incentive Pay, Aviation Continuation Pay, and other key battlefield monetary incentives has allowed the Air Force to meet the demands of the Overseas Contingency Operations and avoid using Stop-Loss. While we cannot guarantee the Air Force will not be forced to execute Stop-Loss again, your continued support for our retention programs is essential.

Air Force Suicide Rates and Prevention Programs

We recognize the personal tragedy of any suicide attempt. While any discussion here will necessarily focus on statistics and measure effectiveness through quantifiable data, each case represents a unique scenario and personal crisis for one of our Airmen. Each incident further ripples through family, friends, co-workers and the community.

The Air Force has experienced a slight increase in the suicide rate for CY08 of 11.5 suicides per 100,000 people when compared to its ten-year average of 9.7 suicides per 100,000. Since the beginning of major combat operations in Iraq, the five-year average (CY03-08) for Air Force suicides is 11 per 100,000. These rates, though slightly increasing, are below the long-term averages (1950-2005) for the overall U.S. population of 13.7 per 100,000 and 22.2 per 100,000 for 20-44 year old U.S. males.¹

We have unfortunately experienced a small number of suicides thus far in 2009, consistent with identified suicide trends during the full reporting year of 2008. The Air Force experienced 38 suicides by Active Duty members in 2008, with some observable patterns. Thirty-six of the suicide victims were male (95%) while there were two female victims (5%). Officers accounted for four suicides (11%), while the other 34 were spread across the enlisted ranks. Over half of the victims were married (55%). For comparison, of the Active Duty Air Force population, nearly 20% are women, 20% are officers, and 60% are married. Another identifiable trend is the presence of firearms in 58% of the incidents. Medical record reviews of recent victims also indicate that a majority of victims had utilized some form of mental health services for issues ranging from alcohol abuse to marriage counseling. There does not appear to be a strong correlation between deployments and suicide, with only one Airman committing suicide while deployed in Afghanistan in 2007. From 2003 to 2008, 39 suicide victims had deployed in the previous 12 months but 150 victims had never deployed.

¹ Data provided by the Suicide Prevention Resource Center

In response to recent suicides, our Air Force Chief of Staff, General Norton Schwartz, communicated the importance of supporting Airmen in distress to all Air Force Major Command (MAJCOM) commanders. We have also re-invigorated the components of the Air Force Suicide Prevention Program with a renewed focus on the following areas:

- Male E1-E4s between the ages of 21 and 25 are at the highest risk for suicide.
- Relationship problems continue to be a key risk factor.
- Members who receive care from multiple clinics or agencies are at high risk for a poor hand-off.
- Airmen appear most at risk to commit suicide between Friday and Sunday, highlighting the need by leadership to stress weekend safety planning.
- Good communication between commanders, first sergeants and mental health providers and staff is critical for the success of this team effort.

We are giving renewed attention to the 11 initiatives in our Air Force Suicide Prevention Program with a leadership emphasis on help-seeking behaviors, stigma reduction, and managing personnel in distress. Our wingman concept develops a culture of looking out for fellow Airmen. We are also standardizing risk assessments and enhancing treatment of suicidal members while providing high-quality annual training on suicide risk factors to all Airmen.

Air Force Suicide Prevention Program

The Air Force has a long history of focusing on suicide prevention and is recognized as a key leader in this field. This program was initiated in 1996 with the purpose of reducing the number of lives lost to suicide and the program has achieved dramatic results. The pre-Air Force Suicide Prevention Program (AFSPP) suicide rate from 1987 to 1996 was 13.5 suicides per 100,000. The post-AFSPP suicide rate average from 1997 to 2008 is 9.8 suicides per 100,000, resulting in a 28% rate reduction. The AFSPP centers on effective education, detection and treatment for persons at risk. Since its inception, the AFSPP has heightened community awareness of suicide and suicide risk factors. Additionally, it has created a safety net that provides protection and adds support for those in trouble. The AFSPP is a nationally recognized benchmark program and was the first suicide prevention program to be listed on the

Substance Abuse and Mental Health National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices.

There is no easy solution to preventing suicides; it requires a total community effort using the full range of tools at our disposal. However, we have seen a marked difference through the AFSPP. Going forward, the Air Force is committed to continued emphasis on the proven AFSPP as the best approach to dealing with those at risk of suicide.

The AFSPP is a commander's program. Each of the 11 initiatives in the AFSPP represents a tool available to commanders. It is the responsibility of every base commander to ensure the 11 initiatives are fully implemented as we continue to develop effective tools to assist potential victims.

Air Force Suicide Prevention Program Initiatives

The Air Force Suicide Prevention Program consists of 11 specific policy and training initiatives which collectively comprise our approach to taking care of our Airmen in this critical area. These initiatives include:

- 1. Leadership Involvement.** Air Force leaders actively support the entire spectrum of suicide prevention initiatives in the Air Force community. Regular messages from the Air Force Chief of Staff, other senior leaders and base commanders motivate Airmen to fully engage in suicide prevention efforts.
- 2. Addressing Suicide Prevention Through Professional Military Education.** Suicide prevention education is included in all formal military training.
- 3. Guidelines for Commanders: Use of Mental Health Services.** Commanders receive training on how and when to use mental health services and their role in encouraging early help-seeking behavior.
- 4. Community Preventive Services.** Community prevention efforts carry more impact than treating individual patients one at a time. The Medical Expense and Performance

Reporting System (MEPRS) was updated to effectively track both direct patient care activities and prevention services.

5. **Community Education and Training.** Annual suicide prevention training is provided for all military and civilian employees in the Air Force.
6. **Investigative Interview Policy.** The period following an arrest or investigative interview is a high-risk time for suicide. Following any investigative interview, the investigator is required to hand-off the individual directly to the commander, first sergeant or supervisor. The unit representative is then responsible for assessing the individual's emotional state and contacting a mental health provider if any question about the possibility of suicide exists.
7. **Trauma Stress Response (formerly Critical Incident Stress Management).** Trauma Stress Response teams were established worldwide to respond to traumatic incidents such as terrorist attacks, serious accidents or suicide. These teams help personnel deal with their reactions to traumatic incidents.
8. **Integrated Delivery System (IDS) and Community Action Information Board (CAIB).** At the Air Force, MAJCOM, and base levels, the IDS and CAIB provide a forum for the cross-organizational review and resolution of individual, family, installation and community issues that impact the readiness of the force and the quality of life for Air Force members and their families. The IDS and CAIB help coordinate the activities of the various agencies at base level to achieve a synergistic impact on community problems.
9. **Limited Privilege Suicide Prevention Program.** Patients at risk for suicide are afforded increased confidentiality when seen by mental health providers as part of the Limited Privilege Suicide Prevention Program. Additionally, Limited Patient-Psychotherapist Privilege was established in 1999, limiting the release of patient information to legal authorities during UCMJ proceedings.

10. IDS Consultation Assessment Tool (formerly Behavioral Health Survey). The IDS Consultation Assessment Tool was released in December 2005. This tool, administered upon the request of the commander, allows commanders to assess unit strengths and identify areas of vulnerability. Commanders can use this tool in collaboration with IDS consultants to design interventions to support the health and welfare of their personnel.

11. Suicide Event Surveillance System. Information on all Air Force Active Duty suicides and suicide attempts are entered into a central database that tracks suicide events and facilitates the analysis of potential risk factors for suicide in Air Force personnel.

To further enhance the AFSP program, we are focusing our prevention efforts on effective detection and treatment. The Air Force implemented computer-based training in 2007 as part of the Chief of Staff's Total Force Awareness Training initiative, and continues to monitor the impact of this training through ongoing research studies. The Air Force has also recently introduced a new tool for leadership known as the Frontline Supervisors Training. This half-day voluntary class enhances supervisor skills for assisting Airmen in distress.

Air Force Support Programs

In support of our AFSP initiatives, we have also developed other programs dedicated to recognizing and aiding Airmen at risk. Our Air Force Community and Family Readiness programs follow a community-based approach and build resilience and strength in Airmen and their families by equipping them with the skills to adapt to the demands of military life.

These programs provide early interventions to support Airmen and families at risk. They also help families cope with issues such as relocation and transition assistance and assist families with deployment and reintegration. Further, to support the unique situations that our Airmen and their families face as part of the military lifestyle, we offer Military Life Consultants. We have added Military Life Consultants to each base to provide coaching and education in a wide-variety of life skills including communication, anger management, conflict resolution, parenting, social issues, deployment stress and emotional well-being. Life skills sessions are

conducted in either a group setting or through individual consultations and are available to the total force. In addition, our community readiness consultants (CRCs) provide transition assistance, financial aid counseling, employment assistance, resume writing skills, and a variety of other services to our wounded Airmen and their families. CRCs focus on minimizing negative financial consequences by providing financial management services including methods to maximize lump sum payments and other monetary entitlements. Assistance includes helping families develop comparative spending plans based on projected future income, and insuring referral to agencies that may ease the financial burden facing family and/or member. These professionals also provide many of these same services to Airmen who are transitioning out of the Air Force.

One last avenue for assistance is Military OneSource. Through the Military OneSource program, the Air Force provides an information hotline that is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, and allows for immediate referrals into the mental health system. These programs provide the necessary support networks, education, skill-building services, and counseling to help Airmen at risk successfully adapt to their current environment.

Deployment and Psychological Health

The current environment for many of our Airmen is one of increased operational tempo and includes more frequent and longer deployments. With this heightened operations tempo, we remain mindful of the increased stresses and requirements placed on our Airmen and their families. The Air Force employs a variety of screening tools to monitor Airmen's health, increase awareness of psychological issues and provide for early intervention when required.

All Airmen are screened for mental health concerns upon accession and annually via the Preventive Health Assessment (PHA). Additionally, those that deploy complete a Post-Deployment Health Assessment (PDHA) at the time they leave theater and 90 to 180 days after returning from deployment complete the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment (PDHRA).

At an enterprise level, the PHDA identifies Airmen exposed to trauma in theater. The Air Force tracks symptoms from all Airmen exposed to trauma in theater to identify Air Force-wide trends. The PHA/PDHA/PDHRA process facilitates the identification and treatment of Airmen with significant trauma exposure history and/or traumatic stress symptoms. It also increases awareness by commanders and unit members who can refer Airmen to appropriate Military Treatment Facilities. Additionally, the PHA/PDHA/PDHRA screen also identifies depression, alcohol abuse, and family problems that are all warning signs of at-risk Airmen.

The PDHRA completion rate for Active Duty Airmen is 89%. Nearly half of the PDHRA participants screened positive for physical or emotional symptoms. Of these, 80% receive medical follow-up within 30 days. The PDHRA is a survey with a positive algorithm that is intentionally overly sensitive to act as an initial filter for possible medical assistance.

Landing Gear Program

Just as an aircraft's landing gear serve as the critical component during launch and recovery, we recognize that the time immediately surrounding departure and homecoming are critical phases of a deployment for Airmen. Our Landing Gear Program is centered on effective risk recognition and help-seeking for Airmen during these difficult times of adjustment. Landing Gear serves as a bridge to care designed to increase the recognition of Airmen suffering from traumatic stress symptoms and connect them with helping resources. It provides a standardized approach to the mental health requirements for pre-exposure preparation training for deploying Airmen and reintegration education for redeploying Airmen.

Twenty percent of Airmen in theater are exposed to traumatic events. Groups at the highest risk include security forces, explosive ordnance disposal crews, medics, Airmen imbedded with other service combat units, and those with multiple deployments or deployments greater than 180 days. This exposure to battlefield trauma places Airmen at risk for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health problems. While less than 2% of

deploying Airmen develop PTSD, the brief training developed for Landing Gear is effective at identifying those at risk and getting them the necessary help. Recent data suggests that prompt medical intervention greatly improves the outcomes for Airmen dealing with PTSD and related mental injuries.

Psychological Health Treatment and Management

The signature injury to our Airmen and troops in the current conflicts may be Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). We are training our medical professionals to recognize and effectively deal with TBI. Flight Nurse, Aeromedical Evacuation Technician and Critical Care Air Transport Team courses all now provide training on TBI. We are making significant progress in training first responders to injured warriors by updating our training objective this year to accomplish in-theater TBI assessment.

We have also made psychological health treatment more accessible to our Airmen. Since 2007, the Air Force has hired 97 contract mental health providers. Our standard of access for routine appointments is seven days. We have trained an additional 400 mental health providers on optimal PTSD treatment solutions to better deal with an increasing number of Airmen suffering from PTSD.

Finally, we have made significant progress in decreasing the stigmas attached for Airmen seeking help with mental issues. Our mental health providers have been placed in primary care clinics to emphasize the similarities of treatment for mental and physical conditions. Air Force leaders advocate for help-seeking behavior in multiple forums and we are emphasizing a culture where seeking help is seen as a virtue rather than a failure.

Participation in DOD and Veterans Affairs (VA) Programs and Care for our Wounded Warriors and their Families

While we are making significant progress on suicide and mental health issues within the Air Force, we are fully committed to partnering with our Sister Services and interagency associates. Other military services have enjoyed successes with recent programs. The Air

Force collaborates with our Sister Service suicide prevention offices to share and adopt best practices. The Army has recently developed a series of interactive videos that we are exploring to determine adoption into our own suicide prevention efforts. The Air Force is completely engaged with the Defense Center of Excellence to address psychological health and TBI issues that are experienced across the Joint Force. We are fully committed to participating in the medical advances and ground-breaking work that occurs in this area.

Our Air Force Warrior and Survivor Care program provides immediate assistance and follow-on support to all seriously wounded Airmen and their families. Support starts with the assignment of a Family Liaison Officer when a wounded, ill, or injured Airman is medically evacuated from the area of responsibility; it continues until the Airman is returned to duty, or for a minimum of 5 years after medical retirement or separation. Our Wounded Warrior program staff provides regular follow-up and offers a wide variety of assistance and referral services to the over 380 Airmen enrolled in the program. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is by far the most prevalent wound of war among those who have been medically retired or separated as a result of their service in OIF and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), with nearly 70% of our separated war-wounded suffering from PTSD. We work closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs and other organizations to ensure our wounded are provided the support and services they need. We personally follow up with our wounded Airmen and their families to ensure they are aware of services available and to verify they are attending medical and counseling appointments with the Department of Veterans Affairs representatives. This follow-up is particularly important for those who suffer from PTSD, especially if their condition results in difficulty with cognition. We have also added Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs) to navigate our seriously wounded, ill, and injured Airmen through the non-clinical phases of their recovery. Serious injuries have a life-altering effect on our Airmen. The role of the RCC is to guide our Airmen through the recovery process and help them establish long-term goals for their careers, whether they continue in the Air Force or seek work in the civilian community.

We are increasing our staffing in both the Wounded Warrior and the Recovery Care Coordinator programs to provide additional Wounded Warrior counselors and RCCs. Our ratio of Wounded Warrior Counselors to wounded Airmen is far too high at approximately 1:70; the RCC program is in its infancy, with only two positions thus far funded for FY 09 through an OSD initiative that was mandated by Congress. The Recover Care Coordinator program has a chance to be one of the best tools for our wounded, ill, and injured Airmen once it is fully brought on line.

One of our priorities is to work closely with the VA to perform smooth transitions for returning OIF/OEF veterans and ensure their continued healthcare. Our goal is to keep wounded Airmen on active duty until we are assured that they have received all necessary follow up care, and should a combat wounded Airman want to reenlist, we will provide every opportunity for them to remain a part of the Air Force team. In fact, we have recently formalized policies that will afford our wounded Airmen opportunities for retention, priority retraining, and promotions. If Airmen are separated from active duty, they are covered by the TRICARE Transitional Health Care Program until their transition to VA is completed.

It is our solemn pledge that all combat wounded and other disabled veterans engaged in OIF/OEF will receive complete information and assistance in obtaining all services from the Air Force, DOD, the VA, and the Department of Labor to which they are entitled by virtue of their service to their country.

Conclusion

Today's Airmen are doing amazing things to meet the needs of the joint warfighter, execute the Air Force mission and keep the Air Force on a vector for success against potential future threats in an uncertain world. We are ready and engaged today, but we must continue to invest to ensure tomorrow's air, space, and cyberspace dominance. Our aim is to improve capability while maintaining the greatest combat-ready Air Force in the world. Through game-

changing capabilities in vigilance, reach and power, both on and above the globe, Airmen are “all in,” and delivering for the Joint team. Airmen are doing their part everyday to “*fly, fight, and win...* in air, space, and cyberspace.” We must do our part through managing end strength efficiently to maximize capability; recruiting and retaining the highest quality and diverse Airmen; maximizing the Continuum of Learning throughout the Airman life cycle; continuing to focus on Quality of Life programs for Airmen and their families; and continuing to recognize the serious threat that suicide represents to our Airmen and its tragic consequences for Airmen, their families, and our Air Force community.

The Air Force provides unique options to our Nation’s Joint Force commanders. The Air Force must safeguard our ability to: see anything on the face of the earth; range it; observe or hold it at risk; supply, rescue, support or destroy it; assess the effects; and exercise global command and control of all these activities. Our Airmen make this happen. Rising to the 21st Century challenge is not a choice--it is our responsibility!

We appreciate the work of this Subcommittee and Congress’ support to the men and women of our Air Force and I look forward to your questions.