

**COMMISSION ON THE NATIONAL GUARD  
AND RESERVES**

**HEARING ON NATIONAL GUARD  
AND RESERVE ISSUES**

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**LA MANSION DEL RIO  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

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ARNOLD PUNARO: Okay, I think we've got everybody, so we will officially get started. (Sounds gavel.) The commission will come to order.

Welcome to the fourth set of public hearings of the independent Commission on the National Guard and Reserves and the first of our outside-the-Washington-beltway field hearings. It's clearly a pleasure to be here in San Antonio.

As established by the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2005, the commission is chartered to identify and recommend changes in law and policy to ensure that the National Guard and Reserves are tasked, organized, trained, equipped, and compensated and supported to best meet the national security requirements of our nation now and in the future.

Towards that end, the commission is seeking the views and inputs of a wide variety of stakeholders: federal government officials, state and local government leaders, employers, service members, their families and the organizations that represent them. We are seeking information through a multi-pronged approach, including formal hearings such as this one, field visits like the trip this week the commission has taken to Fort Hood and tomorrow to Lackland Air Force Base, focus groups, roundtable discussions, formal data requests, and numerous interviews. And it won't surprise any of our witnesses that the members of this commission recognize that all wisdom does not reside in Washington, D.C., and thus we're here in San Antonio this week because of the large multi-service presence in this area, both active and reserve. In addition to a number of major military bases, there is an extensive military medical presence, which is one of the key issues for the Guard and Reserve, both now and in the future.

And given the proximity to the border, San Antonio adds another dimension to the commission's exploration of homeland security issues, which is another one of our statutory charters.

At Ford Hood and Lackland, commissioners have the opportunity to visit units that have deployed or are deploying to Afghanistan and Iraq or that have played an important role in the Katrina rescue effort. In addition, here in San Antonio there's a tremendous community support structure, families and businesses, and it just is a great microcosm of all the issues that the Guard and Reserve commission is charged by law to examine.

Finally, I should note that the Reserve Officers Association is having their official convention here later this week. We're not here because of ROA but they are major stakeholder for the commission and they have provided very useful input for our deliberations.

Before today's hearing the commission has focused on the roles and missions of the reserve component, which is a centerpiece of our statutory tasking, and on the closely related issue of appropriate and optimal roles of the National Guard and Reserves in both homeland security and homeland defense. The commission has explored in some detail the changing role of the guard and reserve from a strategic to a more operational force and the implications of that change.

I should tell our military leaders here today that the implications of that change, one of which we seem to have found, is there are definitely some fraying at the edges, or perhaps you would call it leading edge indicators of problems in key areas as equipment, personnel and training. So it pretty much covers the waterfront. And you can argue about how frayed it is or what the leading-edge indicators really mean, but I can tell you, from the previous hearings, from the discussions with the focus groups, from the visit to the unit, I'm not telling these leaders anything they don't know because they're out there talking to the same people every day. You know, rosy scenario is not the color palette that we're going to be dealing with on these issues. So we've also heard from a number of the governors, and as you know, the governors have very strong views about what's going on and the appropriate role of the reserve component.

So, with a fuller understanding of the big picture as a backdrop, future hearings will address specific topic areas in the commission's charter such as readiness training and equipment, and of course our most valuable asset, our people. Last March one of our panels, we had the four service vice chiefs of staff who were asked to provide a broad, service-wide perspective on some of these issues, so this morning, however, we want to delve further into issues of importance to each of the individual reserve components, and for that we're very fortunate to have the reserve leadership here today.

Our witnesses for this panel are Lieutenant General Jack Stultz, the chief of the Army Reserve; Vice Admiral John Cotton, chief of the Navy Reserve; Lieutenant General Jack Bergman, commander, Marine Forces Reserve; Lieutenant General John A. Bradley, chief of the Air Force Reserve; Lieutenant General Craig R. McKinley, director, Air National Guard; and Rear Admiral John C. Acton, deputy commander for Mobilization and Reserve Affairs in the Senior Reserve, officer in the U.S. Coast Guard.

Our colleague, Lieutenant General Clyde Vaughn, the director of the Army National Guard, is unable to be here because of minor health issues, and we all know him well. In behalf of all the commissioners, we wish him a full and speedy recovery, and that's certainly the report we received. And he didn't escape; we look forward to having his testimony at a future date.

The chief of the Coast Guard Reserve was also recently transferred to a new assignment and so is ably represented here today by John Acton.

I also want to thank the reserve component chiefs for their support of the commission, including providing staff expertise to the commission, and to note the outstanding work of several of our recently departed staff members, including Brian

Smith from the Navy reserve, who's moving on to a very important leadership assignment in the Navy reserve; Cate Payne, from the Marine Corps reserve, and Max Jakeman, from the Army reserve, who are both retiring, and after retirement, Cate will be coming back and joining the commission staff.

I also want to thank the news media that's here this morning – C-SPAN, the Pentagon Channel, and the other media – for their presence here today to cover these hearings. The commission believes its charter is a vital one, and we very much appreciate your interest and appreciate your bringing to the American public the testimony of these key leaders. We have a website, [cngr.gov](http://cngr.gov), where people can get a lot more information.

So, again, we thank our witnesses for being here today, for your distinguished service to the nation. We of course share your pride in the magnificent job that our reserve component members have performed and are performing today both here at home and overseas, and we count on you to share your considerable expertise and address with candor the issues before the commission.

I just would mention for the record, as a statutory commission chartered by and reporting to the Congress, you enjoy the same privilege of providing your professional military judgments that you enjoy when you testify before the Congress, and just put that in the record. So the testimony you provide us will assist us in our work and lay the preparation for any further hearings.

So, without objection, your prepared statements will be placed in the record and we may also be submitting some questions to you for the record, and would appreciate your reply to that.

So with that, we'll start with the testimony of Lieutenant General Stultz.

LT. GEN. JACK STULTZ: Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the commission, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about the Army reserve. First and foremost, let me say I think I'm the newest kid on the block here. Let me also say I'm a field soldier. I have spent my 32 years in the active and Army reserve in a field of soldiers, so this is my first tour in the Pentagon.

What I'm saying by that is in some areas I may not be the most cogent in some of the policies and procedures and all that you may have questions on, but I can sure tell you about what it's like on the other end of the sphere with the soldiers, and what they're going through, and how some of these things affect their lives and their families' lives because I've been there with them, and I've deployed with them on numerous occasions and served with them in combat.

Today we've got 196,299 Army reserve soldiers, either in selective reserve or on contract to attend basic training to join the Army reserve. Twenty-three-thousand of those soldiers are currently deployed overseas in 17 countries, serving our nation. Ten

thousand Army reserve soldiers, in addition to that 23,000, are currently mobilized serving here in the United States. Those are your drill sergeants at your basic training centers, those are your doctors and nurses and your hospitals that are treating wounded warriors, those are your garrison support units that are providing the base ops for Fort Hood, for Fort Carson, for the mobilization centers at Fort Dix and Fort McCoy. Those are a lot of the individual augmentees that are serving on the Department of the Army staff, Joint Staff, and various COCOM staffs throughout the country and across this nation.

Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, 157,000 Army reserve soldiers had been mobilized and deployed in support of this nation; 131 of those soldiers have given the ultimate sacrifice and we've lost them. One of those soldiers, Sergeant Matt Maupin, still remains the only soldier missing in action from OIF.

We have truly transformed from a strategic legacy force to an operational force in the Army reserve. The Army reserve is a – it's a community-based organization, just like our brethren services. And that is one of the things that we have to recognize, and in discussions that I have with senior leadership and members of Congress – to understand, it's one thing to be able to move a flag from Fort Campbell to Fort Hood and PCS a family for an active component organization, but I can't do that. My organizations are community-based. And so, if I move a flag from Columbia, South Carolina to Louisville, Kentucky, the soldiers stay in Columbia, South Carolina because that's where their families and their jobs reside.

So as we reform and reorganize and transform the Army reserve, we have to be very cautious and careful that we're stationing the right units in the right locations to provide career development for our soldiers so they have a career path, but also to provide the leadership development for those leaders that are going to lead those soldiers on the battlefield.

I've got to be able to develop an engineer brigade commander by having an engineer company and an engineer battalion in various assignments that I can grow that leader so that I've got confidence in him in the future.

Our force is what we call a skill-rich force of warrior-citizens. By "skill-rich" I mean the reserve components brings an added value to the military. We have civilian-acquired skills that add great value.

I'll give you an example. I was in Iraq and I had a lieutenant colonel by the name of Bob Pelletier (sp), who is a railroader in his civilian life – helped us stand up the Iraqi railroad and get it operating in the first days after Baghdad fell. We were running train operations from Garma, near Fallujah, all the way down to Umm Qasr, near the Kuwait border. And Bob was the driving force behind that because he knows how to do that. That's his civilian job.

I got an email from Bob two weeks ago. He's at Fort Hood, Texas right now, back on active duty. I said, what are you doing, Bob? He said, they had a train accident at Fort Hood, damaged some M-1s. They looked around and said, we don't have anybody in the Army that knows how to do railroad operations. Call Pellitier back. He did it in the Iraq force; bring him back again.

That's the kind of skill-rich skills that we bring to the active force. Our civil affairs units that go over into Iraq for reconstruction operations who have city planners, waterworks directors, fire chiefs, police chiefs – those kind of skills that the active Army doesn't retain, or doesn't develop.

So we are a skill-rich organization that brings added value to the military, but we're also warrior-citizens. And I stress that very strongly because my soldiers have to be warriors. They've got to be trained, equipped and prepared to go serve on the battlefield and survive, but they've also got to be citizens. They've got another life. I cannot make them make a choice, because if I force them to make a choice, they either become a warrior and they go back on active duty – and last year I put 1,300 more soldiers back on active duty than I got from active duty into the reserves – or they make a choice to be a citizen and pursue their civilian career that's paying the mortgage.

The challenge that we have right now, all of us sitting here at this table, is how do we accommodate that warrior citizen? How do we give him predictability and stability so he can have a civilian life, yet allow him to be a warrior that he wants to be because he's a patriot and he's dedicated to this country. That's what we're all about here is how do we accommodate, how do we reward those soldiers and their families to say, you can be a warrior but you can be a citizen also?

So I look forward to this commission. I thank you for what you're doing for us, for carrying a torch for us forward to Congress and others to say we are transforming the reserve to an operational force and we've got to change our policies from the old legacy policies to an operational force policy to accommodate them.

So I look forward to your questions. Thank you, sir.

MR. PUNARO: All right, thank you.

Admiral Cotton.

VICE ADM. JOHN COTTON: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you all today. We've said most our things in our statement. It's in the record. I would like to add a couple things to it.

The Navy reserve is more ready, responsive and relevant than it has been in years. It is forward deployed. Today we have over 24,000 navy reservist citizen sailors on some type of orders, globally deployed, fully integrated, providing operational support to the

fleet and the combatant commanders. That's about 34 percent of the force of just over 70,000 folks, including 16 flag officers.

I was in the Middle East last week and visited our commands in Kuwait, Bahrain and Djibouti, at Joint Task Force Horn of Africa. Everywhere we went the Navy reserve and other reserve components were fully integrated into every operational staff providing huge support in many capabilities that we didn't think the Navy would be ashore doing last year. But with corporation with our chiefs and our other services we're taking these citizen sailors and turning them into warriors ashore; such that this morning in central command there are more navy sailors ashore than there are out at sea. And this is a change in the way the Navy has operated, but this is what we're doing for the joint team.

Our forces are just over 70,000. We're slightly under strength for this year but we're on target in our three-year glide path. As you know the Navy and the Navy reserve have both been coming down in end strength. We're not concerned about where we are or what we're doing; we are recruiting the skill sets we need for the global war on terror and maintaining high standards as we do that.

You've heard mention of a CEG (ph), or how many people we have available to go forward, right now we have about 33,000 Navy reservists that have not deployed. Those are traditional reservists or selective reservists as we call them. And about 10,000 full-time support that have not deployed. So we're meeting our goals. We have folks that are ready to deploy anywhere, for any service, in any capability.

For the last two-and-a-half years we've had a program called ASAP – A-S-A-P – which is about how fast we've been executing.

We've aligned with the Navy; we've synchronized with the Navy. Every single program we have we have assessed with the Navy, and we've programmed fully with the Navy as a total force.

I look forward to your questions.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you, Admiral Cotton. General Bergman.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JACK BERGMAN: Good morning, Mr. Chairman, commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity to offer some opening verbal comments on top of the written statement.

So a quick recap, 98 percent of the Marine Corps reserve units over the last five years have been activated for at least a year, in some cases two. Approximately 70 percent of the individuals within the Marine Corps reserve have been activated at least once. The reason that number is lower than the unit total is because we refresh at about a 20 percent rate of new young men and women, both prior service and non-prior service, joining the Marine Corps reserve on an annual basis.

Currently we have about 7,300 Marines on active duty. The majority of those are in Iraq, Horn of Africa, a few in Afghanistan, and other places around the world. Very few of them have been mobilized here stateside; they all go forward. Currently a couple of battalions – one doing traditional infantry work, one doing more security MP type of work – are on duty in Iraq – numerous detachments, a civil affairs group and a large number of individuals on staff, both internal and external to the Marine Corps operations.

Please allow me to give an analogy to you today as to my view of the potential contribution that needs to be made sooner rather than later, especially by the commission through its efforts that can help us get to the future.

There's an aircraft production line currently ongoing within the United States military that has a very – as all aircraft do – classified nature. And when the folks who designed that production line fought through the requirements of being on time, efficient, effective with the production of that aircraft, they considered the fact that in any production of a product there is a requirement for environmental stability; in other words, the ability for those people actually making the aircraft to be able to work unimpeded, un-slowed down. And their need needed to be – because of the classified nature – an area in which people who did not have the classifications could perform those environmental tasks that allowed the other people to do the job.

So I would suggest to you that when we compare the two -- of the allowing the Guard and Reserve to do the job that they need to do. They need to have an environment that encompasses not only their military side of performing the job, but it covers the employer, the family, this ability to move on and off active duty, to be paid, to be promoted, to be trained, to go to the fight.

Now, the solution that this company came up with – they created a physical environment where above the floor, as we look down here, is where all of the aircraft production takes place, all the assembly. But below the floor is where all the environmental stuff takes place. So the contractor who is in charge of the heating and air conditioning when it goes down doesn't have to come up into this classified area and slow things down. They walk right underneath the tunnel, go underneath the floor, take care of all their business, and production goes on.

So, I would suggest to you that that under-the-floor environment is all of the kind of things – the pay, the training, the preparation that goes on beforehand, the policies that are in place – well, we might have a heating and air-conditioning system that was designed in the 1950s, we probably are ready to replace it in our home or least modify it so that the air flow meets our needs of today.

I would suggest to you then that where we can make our money for the near future and for the long term is the concentration on the environment that allows the Reserve and Guard to have the type of equipment, the type of training, but also the type of flow that allows them to become very important contributors at the pointy end of the spear very quickly when they are called to do it.

So I look forward to your questions. Thank you very much.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. General Bradley.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN A. BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the commission. It's a pleasure to be here with you and I look forward to having a good dialogue with you and we'll readily answer your written requests at a later time as well.

I think one of the – besides the outstanding airmen that we have in our Air Force reserve, one of the reasons for the success of our reserve components is that we've been given the proper equipment, the right budget authority. We've been held to the same readiness standards as the regular Air Force units have been held and we are measured by the same standards, inspected operationally by the, I mean – and are used as an operational force. That's why we're so successful, due to those items and the great airmen that we have.

We are a federal force that's a mirror image of the active Air Force organizationally. I think that is helpful as well as we fit into our Air Force today and in the future.

We have become an operational force over the years. We've proved our value and worth very much in the '90s through a number of contingency operations as the Air Force has been engaged in combat operations over Iraq since 1991. Combat has not stopped for the United States Air Force, and we in the reserve and in the Air National Guard have been a part of that. And we've established our credibility with the Air Force and they have moved missions into the Air Force reserve and Air National Guard that have helped our total Air Force accomplish its mission.

So we have become a vital and important part of the total Air Force. And they see, into the future, that they need to use us in practically every mission area in which the Air Force is engaged. We are a relevant force because of the credibility we have established with them.

And today I have many C-130 and C-130 maintenance and operations folks engaged in CENTAF, CENTCOM operations in the AOR. Our A-10s are at Bagram, Afghanistan today. One of the Air Force reserves A-10 squadrons were the very first American fighter squadron to fly combat missions from enemy territory in Iraq in March of 2003 – the very first squadron. And they did a very credible job with a great airplane, great equipment, great people. But our commitment to our Air Force to do these operational missions is enduring and we look forward to a great future.

Today, as we speak here this morning, one of my hurricane hunter airplanes is flying through tropical storm Beryl. And they flew yesterday, and they'll continue to fly, as they will throughout this hurricane season, in very difficult conditions to ensure that

there's the proper notification to the country – to the different parts of our country on the East Coast or later in the Gulf Coast area for possible natural disaster due to hurricanes. Those are dedicated professionals who are doing great work for us.

We have great airmen in our Air Force reserve. I'm very proud of them. I get to meet them often, and I'd like to thank them for the work that they do. They're doing more now than they've ever done in the past; we're going to ask them to do more in the future. We need the tools, and you all are helping us look at the tools and changes that we need to make sure that we have them available in the future.

One concern I've had is an idea of making our folks sign contracts for additional work, and I have some very serious concerns about that and the utility of it. It might help us predict things but it also will hurt our reservists with their employers, I think. I would love to explore that thought with you during the dialogue today if I could, but it is a big issue that I think deserves some study before anything like that is implemented.

But I thank you for your time today. I look forward to the questions and thank you for the great work you're doing for us.

MR. PUNARO: Joe McKinley.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOE MCKINLEY: Chairman Punaro, members of the commission, it's a distinct pleasure for me to represent the 106, 800 members of the Air National Guard.

I'm assisted today with my command chief, Dick Smith, from Ohio – my senior enlisted advisor who represents over 92,000 members of our Guard who are our backbone in our enlisted force.

As we sit here today I, along with the other reserve chiefs, can say that our members are serving in every theatre to include the continent of Antarctica.

We're defending the skies over North America, with over 85 percent of our fighters and tankers in the operation called Noble Eagle. Our air operation center at Tyndall Air Force Base is the command and control nub, with Admiral Keating at NORTHCOM, for this vital mission protecting the homeland.

Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, over 190,000 members of the Air National Guard have volunteered or been mobilized in support of the global war on terror. Recently an American aircraft equipped with an innovation championed by the Air National Guard and the Air Force reserve was responsible for the elimination of al-Zarqawi in Baqaba, Iraq.

Your Air National Guard is serving around the world proudly alongside its active component, and I echo General Bradley's comments about the great relationship we have with our component, the United States Air Force.

We have another mission, too, and that's supporting our states. And our Air National Guard was involved heavily with Hurricane Katrina last year. We flew more than 3,000 sorties, we evacuated over 11,000 people and we moved 11,000 tons of cargo.

I also agree that we're no longer a force that is strategic, but we're operational. And we thank you, the members of the commission, for looking at how best we can move into that newer environment in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The active component, the United States Air Force can no longer go it alone. Our secretary, Secretary Wynn (sp), and our chief of staff, General Mosley, has said that their three top priorities are to win the war on terror, to take care of airmen, and to recapitalize their force. We, along with the Air Force reserve, will support the Air Force in that recapitalization effort because many of the total force initiatives that will come from that recapitalization will benefit both the Air Force reserve and the Air National Guard.

I'm deeply pleased to look at the continuum of service. I think it's a term that I've recently been exposed to in the Pentagon in my new capacity. I would like to delve more into it in your questions today because I think it's vital for us to have a continuum of service fleshed out so that we all know how to do those things which will take care of our members into the future.

Again, I'm proud to be here today, sir. Thank you for the offer to speak to you. I look forward to your questions.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Admiral Acton.

REAR ADMIRAL JOHN C. ACTON: Morning, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the commission. It's a pleasure to appear before you here today. I'll have some abbreviated remarks. My full written statement has been submitted for your consideration.

In the mid-90s, following the successful mobilization of about 10 percent of our CELRES force for operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, we decided we can improve on how we do business to maximize readiness and value to the taxpayer through the integration of our reservists into the active component.

Most significantly we just established our reserve units integrating the bulk of our CELRES force directly into our active component units where they became full members of team Coast Guard. Not only did this help break down the traditional cultural barriers but it also eliminated dual administrative and command chains while ensuring reservists could train on and operate the same equipment as their active duty shipmates.

Our reserve force is an operational reserve in every sense of the word thanks to the success of our integration. Since September 2001, when we embarked on the largest

reserve mobilization since World War II, we've examined our systems of recruiting, training, mobilization and demobilizing reservists to identifying close-readiness (?) gaps.

More significantly we undertook a comprehensive review of the Coast Guard reserve that resulted in the adoption of a policy statement that embodies the three core strategic functions of the Coast Guard reserve: maritime homeland security, support to national defense, and disaster response and recovery. The individual competencies that we've identified required to support those core functions center on boat operations, contingency planning, expeditionary warfare, law enforcement, marine safety, and port security.

As Admiral Venuto noted when he testified before you in May, none of this represents a radical change for the Coast Guard reserve but rather an affirmation of the vital role that the operational reserve plays to the Coast Guard's ability to respond as a surge force.

One key component of our ready-surge force capability is the accessibility and availability of individuals for mobilization. As with members of the other reserve components, our folks are subject to involuntary mobilization under Title 10 for national security contingencies.

Unlike members of the other reserve components, however, Coast Guard reservists can also be involuntarily mobilized by the secretary under 14 USC 712 (?) for up to 60 days at a time for domestic contingencies including disasters and terrorist attacks. This unique authority provided under Title 14 has been used over a dozen times since the 1970s.

The Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2006, which was just signed into law last week, contains language that expands the secretary of homeland security's Title 14 recall authority to mobilize Coast Guard reservists to aid in prevention of an imminent serious natural or manmade disaster. The law also extends the limits on the period of recall to not more than 60 days in a four-month period and 120 days over a two-year period. This significantly enhances our ability to bring Coast Guard reservists online before a disaster strikes.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today, sir. And I look forward to your questions.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Appreciate everybody's testimony.

We are organized – the full commission – into subcommittees and each of the subcommittees has a number of members, the same way a congressional authorization committee is organized. In those areas they'll be focusing on the specific topics of their subcommittees in considerable detail.

I want to start with some broader questions. First of all I want to ask each of our witnesses, as you know the commission following the statute submitted our 90-day report to the Congress and the secretary of Defense on June 5<sup>th</sup> of this year, and in it we outlined kind of our work plan, some of the principles that would guide our deliberation and some of our initial findings.

And I want to ask each of our witnesses -- assuming you've had a chance to read it or be informed about it -- is there anything in that 90-day report with which you would take strong exception or you find is a fatal flaw in the way that we're organized or the principles we're using in our initial findings? I'm not looking for where you agree with the report, I'm looking to find out if in your military judgments there's something in there that causes you a severe problem.

Let's just start with General Stultz and just go in the order that you testified.

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. I have reviewed the report that you submitted and all, and at this point I don't have any issues with the direction you're going or what's --

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Admiral Cotton.

ADM COTTON: Sir, I thought you hit a lot of the good high points that we concur with. I would just like to add something; I think we're moving too slowly. I think we're not changing and shaping our forces for the threats that are out there today.

I think we still have a conscript mentality. I think we have a throw-away culture where we have someone who turns in a letter, wants to do something else, we don't track them into the IRR. We don't have smooth onramps to bring people back on. We don't have the same personnel systems between our services. We make it monstrously difficult for Joint Task Force to get skill sets to where they need them out forward.

One fact, that we did some research in the Navy and the recruiting, we determined that 72 percent of our nation's youth are ineligible for military service. We are all competing for 28 percent and they're not all high school graduates. And so once someone has signed up on our services we need to monitor them throughout their life spans. And this continuum of service, serving and reserving, is going to become very important even between our services with the skill sets, whether it's a railroad engineer or many other skill sets that we need for the future.

So, I would just say that it's a great outline and we need to change faster than the current timeline has us on.

MR. PUNARO: Let me explore -- follow-up. The 72 percent of the nation's youth are ineligible and that is -- why is it -- age, medical qualification, skill sets or what?

ADM COTTON: Yes, yes, yes. Physical fitness, drug use --

MR. PUNARO: What age group are you talking about? Eighteen to 25 or --

ADM COTTON: These are the ones we're all targeting. Exactly, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah.

ADM COTTON: We're all competing for the same skill sets. We're also all kind of trying to out bonus each other here --

MR. PUNARO: Right.

ADM COTTON: -- to attract them to our services. And so I think we just have to better appreciate those that we have in uniform, both active and reserve, and provide opportunities for them to serve in any capacity.

MR. PUNARO: But describing off bounds or ineligible as 72 percent of our population doesn't seem to me a recipe for success given the -- what the active component -- I would assume if it applies to the reserve component it applies to the active component.

ADM COTTON: Absolutely. We're all competing for the same folks. So that if we have someone we have to cherish their service and keep them somehow in one of the capacities.

MR. PUNARO: Well, the nation may have to look at how do you basically expand that or reduce the number that are ineligible and create a larger eligible pool as well. Okay, well with that, sir, Patty Lewis who heads our personnel subcommittee -- I'm sure she can spend a lot of time on that. So, I appreciate it.

General Bergman.

GEN BERGMAN: Mr. Chairman, I would be hard pressed to be more eloquent than Vice Admiral Cotton in all sincerity. I concur, especially with the speed at which we are all moving.

If you look at the amount of time we have on a daily basis I would suggest to you on that bell curve I spend about 10 percent of my time dealing with those who are currently in the fight. I spend about 80 percent of my time dealing with that three- to 10-year timeframe in front of us to shape everything that goes into that. And I spend the remaining 10 percent of my time, in all seriousness, contemplating how my grandsons, who are four and three, are going to be involved.

MR. PUNARO: So, General Bergman, if -- I don't want to put words in your mouth, but as I hear what you said, echoing what Admiral Cotton said -- and I think you're kind of reflecting what Major General Tommy Dychess (ph) said at a conference -- that we've moved to the operational force but the laws, rules, regulations, policies,

procedures, funding mechanisms, haven't changed to reflect that. And you're both saying it isn't.

So basically what you're saying is the Pentagon is not moving – in your professional military judgment – I believe what I hear you saying – and I'm not putting words in your mouth – is the Pentagon is not moving fast enough to make all these necessary changes. Is that correct?

GEN BERGMAN: In a word, yes.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. General Bradley.

GEN BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think that the work plan that you've laid out for the commission is very well done, and will get to the issues that the Congress considered when they established the commission in the bill that the President signed into law. So I think you have a good plan there; I have no issue with what you're doing.

I would tell you that I believe that in our U.S. Air Force we are moving very quickly to make a lot of adjustments. They are pushing us fast; in fact, our secretary and our chief of staff have engaged with General McKinley and me to do a number of things for the future of our Air Force called Total Force Integration. It used to be called Future Total Force. But we are on a very fast track to make a lot of adjustments into new mission areas and having reservists and guardsmen involved in all of those things and they are pushing to do it very quickly.

So I think things are moving quite fast for us. It doesn't mean there aren't some areas in which we could do some more good if we move more quickly as they were saying, but there's a lot of change going on due to a lot of things – base closure, cuts in personnel and so forth.

And these total force integration initiatives that are quite extensive – which we could explore with you at your desire – are moving us into – deeply into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, I think, very well.

Thanks, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. General McKinley.

GEN MCKINLEY: Mr. Chairman, I think the initial report was well done and crafted quite nicely – the work that you have laid out in front of you for the next several months or years.

I would also echo what my fellow chiefs are saying in that our Air National Guard and Air Force reserve have been at war really for 15 years – our pace, our tempo – we've been operational for that long and we've adapted to that.

I contend that maybe a reason why our nation is so well served today and not looking at future issues such as the draft or conscription is because all our reserve components have accepted this new role and are assisting our services and we're able to deflect that kind of talk on the hill about conscription because if we're in this war on terror for many, many years as we are told we will be and I believe we are, our reserve components have got to continue at this pace or other avenues are going to have to be explored.

Our Air Force has decided to cut 40 (thousand) to 50,000 active duty personal from its roles to recapitalize. This is a golden opportunity to take young men and women who volunteered to serve and let them reserve in all of these components up here, and I would love to have the opportunity to bring as many of those young men and women onboard as I can. So we're going to have some flexibility to do that, and I would welcome any questions you may have on that.

MR. PUNARO: Great.

GEN MCKINLEY: That's all I have, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Admiral Acton.

ADM ACTON: Sir, I have read the 90-day plan. I believe it is comprehensive; it covers all the major issues and it's a very good baseline document as a starting point for the commission's work.

I would offer two comments. One I echo vice Admiral Cotton's observation on the need for speed. Admittedly, as you well know, these are complicated, hard issues that are before the commission. We have made a lot of progress in the last couple of years in some of these areas, but five years after 9/11 I believe we should be further down the road than we are.

MR. PUNARO: Great, thank you.

ADM ACTON: One more comment, sir, if I may.

MR. PUNARO: I apologize.

ADM ACTON: I also believe that the way ahead is going to require deep and robust collaboration among all the reserve components to be able to leverage all of our national assets in a collaborative way for greater effectiveness.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. I think that's a point General McKinley made. I mean, I would agree.

As we see the active – and this goes to my next question which is sort of a strategic question on funding. I know Commissioner Dawson is really going to explore

the funding stuff in great detail, but one of the things we've always heard about the Guard and Reserve is that when you look at how much you invest in the Guard and Reserve, compared to how much it costs to maintain forces on active duty 365 days out of the year, the Guard and Reserve has always been considered – these are my words – a bargain for the taxpayer, a lot of bang for the buck in terms of what you get.

An infantry battalion, for example, in the Guard and Reserve typically costs about 30 percent of what you have to pay to have an infantry battalion on an active duty. And that infantry battalion can be called up to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan. And of course there are comparisons of what it costs – basically there has always been, you know, a real significant differential or delta between the cost of the Guard and Reserve and the active component.

And one of the reasons I think you're seeing the drawdown in the active component is the cost of the active duty military. And you can never pay our troops who serve in harm's way in the Guard and Reserve who are active enough for what they do for the country, but you also have finite limits to our fiscal situation.

The average cost of a full-time equivalent on active duty has grown in the last five years from some 60,000 to almost 160,000 – that dramatically. And a lot of it doesn't have to do with actually putting money in the pockets of the troops and their families; it has to do with overhead and infrastructure costs, fringe benefits costs, with civilian world healthcare costs, that the healthcare budgets in the Department of Defense – as Patty Lewis will examine – are just going through the roof. You have your accrual costs for retirement and other type benefits, things of those natures, and so it has surprised me when you kind of look at all that.

And by the way if you're downsizing the Navy and the Air Force, while that could be beneficial for the Naval reserve and the Air Guard and the Air Force reserve, I would suggest these fine highly trained military people who could serve with distinction in any reserve component. And one of the things I think we have to look at is a truly joint approach in these areas. I mean, you would hate to lose that talent because you're – they're making some cuts, I think I saw, in the Air Guard. You may not have as much head room -- or maybe in the Air Force reserve -- as you had before – kind of a longwinded way though to get at this funding issue.

It kind of surprised me to see in recent months some suggestions that somehow the Guard and Reserve has become as expensive as the active component. And let me give you the information that is coming to our attention; for example, there's some studies going on at OSD – and I think OSD Reserve Affairs where I have seen – and I don't know if you all have seen them – where they say, well, heck. It costs just as much money to have the Guard and Reserve on active duty as it does – and then they're not that much of a bargain for the taxpayer. I'm kind of giving you a short hand there, too.

The RAND Corporation has completed a study – it's like 5,500 pages long and you get a three-paragraph synopsis – it says, what a deal for these Guard and Reservists.

When they're call up they make a whole heck of a lot more money when they're mobilized then they ever made in civilian life, so we shouldn't worry about the fact that they're gone from three years from their job and their family doesn't see them. And they really were in the Guard and Reserve; they're civilians first, et cetera, so we shouldn't worry about paying compensation and benefits for the Guard and Reserve because they're making so much money when they're called up.

That's certainly not the way the RAND Corporation would describe that study but I'm trying to give you the shorthand. And then there have been some other studies.

And it's kind of surprised me because it has never been challenged before, that I am aware of, that the Guard and Reserve remains a bargain for the taxpayer. Perhaps the cost of the Guard and Reserve is creeping up a little bit, but I would suggest that if it's creeping up the differential of – I've just said the active duty costs have gone from 60,000 to 160,000.

So I guess my question to you is do you as a reserve component chief – and you are the equivalent in the business community of what we call a Sarbanes-Oxley officer; you're the guy that has to sign on the dotted line that your forces are organized, trained, equipped and ready and you certify the financial health of your corporation – do you still consider to be – the Guard and Reserve to be a bargain for the taxpayer? And have the costs of the Guard and Reserve now – and do you see if going up in the future – gone up so much that it's an even-steven situation? So why do we need the Guard and Reserve if it's just as expensive as the active component?

General Stultz.

GEN STULTZ: First, Mr. Chairman, I would say that the Guard and Reserve is a huge bargain for this country, and it's a huge bargain for this country in multiple ways.

One is I would have to examine the RAND corporation's figures to understand how they could say it would be equal cost with an active duty soldier, unless their comparing the soldiers that we have mobilized on active duty, which in fact probably do cost as much. But for that soldier who is serving the 39-days a year basically as a selected reservist where he is spending one weekend a month and 14-days in the summertime, there is no way that that soldier is costing as much for the active duty. But that soldier is prepared and ready to fight when the nation calls him.

The other piece though that is a great bargain for this nation is – I go back to that warrior citizen piece. When that warrior comes back he comes back as a better citizen. I'm providing education through MGIB, through tuition assistance, that I'm educating the civilian workforce that's out there that are my soldiers. I'm providing mature soldiers.

If I've got a trucker in Iraq that sends 10 days on the road carrying an M1 on the back of a HET going all the way up to Belat (ph) or even further up to Kirkuk and Mosul and coming back down, defending his truck, getting ambushed, whatever, and delivering

that cargo and coming back – tell me a trucking company like Scheider wouldn't value having that employee that is drug free, that's mature, that's a leader, that understands what responsibility is. That's a bargain that we don't measure that we give back to this country.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. Admiral Cotton.

ADM COTTON: I think the reserve component is a huge bargain and I think the further we get into the global war on terror we're finding this out for one simple fact – I think General Bergman has said this before about his Marine Corps but it's about every one of our services – our soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, coast guardsmen, civilians, contractors, you name it, have either been over there, they're getting ready to go over there, or they're resting in between. Everyone of us is a TAR or a turn around ratio. And it all comes down to the individual skill sets. Probably our most stressed force in the Marine Corps special forces, several other very high-demand, low-density capabilities.

And so this turnaround ratio, how do you rest them in between? And we find out that resting them in reserve status is far more affordable for the taxpayer than it is maintaining active component resting. And so if we work this status, if we work the partnership, if you would, of the skill sets it's going to pay off in the long run.

One more point, sir. We tend to always look one year budget; we're very fiscally oriented -- one year. We need to look as taxpayers at lifecycle costs. The perfect soldier, sailor, airmen, marine, would be someone who completed 20 years of service on his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, with on ramps and off ramps throughout his career to get a full spectrum of service, not speed of heat to get 20 perfect years and then get out and get on the benefits system that we have right now. And we've created that system for ourselves.

So how do we share them throughout a career into civilian life, back again with those civilian skill sets? I think that's the challenge for us in the future to get the best turnaround ratio.

MR. PUNARO: Great. General Bergman.

GEN BERGMAN: Sir, I find the RAND studies conclusion on the increase pay that a mobilized reserve receives quite interesting. As a personal note, in about six months I will be eligible for the mandatory retirement with Northwest Airlines. As of today I have no clue if that retirement is going to exist. I won't make anymore comments on that. So I would suggest to you the security that reserves might have in their civilian career may or may not be there.

Having said that, the math that someone uses can lead you to different conclusions depending on the criteria used for measurement. I think it has been said different ways by all of us, in the long war if we don't modify the math that we're using to see what the cost of doing business is for the long war we're not going to get to where we need to be.

So, yes, the reserves are still a great bargain for this country, because quite honestly when they're done, whether it's after six months, six days, six years, a couple of decades, they return to that community where they still own that home, they are the spokesperson for the United States military in all those areas of the country that do not have a large or small active component military base located near them.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. General Bradley.

GEN BRADLEY: Mr. Chairman, yes, sir. We are a very good bang for the buck. A couple of points I would make. There is no doubt that the folks that I have in the C-130 business over in Iraq and other parts of CENTCOM (?) and my A-10s in Afghanistan right now, those folks that are over there, it probably costs as much to pay them for their active duty as for the regular Air Force folks that are there flying with them. No doubt about that. But when they come home that's when the big difference in the cost comes out.

I can remember a study that was done by a Major General Punaro a couple of years ago that laid out very effectively, I think, the differences in the costs and the economic benefits of a reserve component. I've heard some very senior officials say – and seen a report in the Wall Street Journal about 2.5 years ago about retirement of reservists and guardsmen and how expensive that was – saying that every enlisted retiree from the Reserve or the Guard and every – was about \$500,000 and it cost \$1 million for every retired officer from the reserve component. I think that was absolutely wrong, incorrect information, and I couldn't find any basis or fact as we studied that very thoroughly.

You would only have to ask the question this way: the Air Force does not maintain airplanes in its inventory that it doesn't need, other than those that Congress has not allowed us to retire that we need to retire but that's a different issue. (Laughter.)

But if you would take all of the airplanes that are in the Air National Guard and the Air Force reserve that contribute to our nation's effort and said, okay, it costs just as much to have them in the Guard and Reserve let's put them all in the active duty, there is not enough money in the budget to pay for the manpower and all the added cost to operate those airplanes in the active component.

So, it is a false argument to say that we're anywhere nearly as expensive as the active components. So we're a great bang for the buck I think.

MR. PUNARO: Let me explore with the indulgence of my fellow commissioners, and when we're done with the answer of this question I'm going to go to our next questioner, Commissioner Dawson.

But let me – because you make the point that, yes, when they're on active duty they cost the same as an active duty personnel, and they should because we ought to be

paid the same, but there is a big but there. They do not accrue in that status the military – and I'm asking you this as a question – the military is not spending \$4 billion a year on military family housing to house that Guard and Reserve, correct?

GEN BRADLEY: That is correct, sir. And I –

MR. PUNARO: And they're not paying into – that Guard or Reservist is never going to draw the same equivalent retirement at age 60 that an active duty person is going to draw with the same amount of service, correct?

GEN BRADLEY: No, sir; he is not.

MR. PUNARO: So they're not paying into the retired accrual fund for that?

GEN BRADLEY: No, sir.

MR. PUNARO: They're not paying – the Guard and Reserve personnel are not using the DoD dependant school system which runs \$2 billion a year, are they?

GEN BRADLEY: No, sir.

MR. PUNARO: They're not using the DoD childcare system which cost over a billion dollars a year, are they?

GEN BRADLEY: Not to a great extent.

MR. PUNARO: So basically they're not really using the huge amount of infrastructure that's provided, and correctly so in most cases for the active duty military. So when you talk about the fact that when they're fighting in a war, fighting side-by-side and doing every bit as a superb job as the active duty personnel, they ought to be paid the same thing –

GEN BRADLEY: Exactly.

MR. PUNARO: But what you don't have in terms of the cost when they're on active duty is that huge infrastructure costs that the nation has committed, you know, for people that are serving in the military. Is that correct?

GEN BRADLEY: Yes, sir; you're exactly right.

MR. PUNARO: All right. General McKinley.

GEN MCKINLEY: Mr. Chairman, I would answer your question with a question: what is the cost if we don't support our Guard and Reserve? I believe it would be a debate over conscription. It has been 35 years since we drafted a son in this country.

Many of you on that panel and us at this table were of draft age. We have not seen that in a generation.

So what is the cost? You're absolutely right; the apples-to-apples comparison is true. But in our Air Force we send our people over for 120-days ever 15 months. Our people feel that is a tempo we can support. Then when they come home they blend back into society as you state. So we are an efficient and effective part of our nation's military.

Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Admiral Acton.

ADM ACTON: Sir, I would agree that absolutely the reserves are a great bargain for the nation. I would say that in the case of the Coast Guard, we are very fortunate to have a very strong advocate for the reserve in our new commandant, Admiral Allen. I know of no one in the Coast Guard leadership who does not understand completely the value the reserve force brings to the table. From our perspective with our deepwater project going on, which is a multiyear, multibillion dollar effort to recapitalize all of our ships, cutters, planes and helicopters -- from our perspective it really just becomes a resource allocation effort.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you very much, and thank the indulgence of my fellow commissioners. Commissioner Dawson.

RHETT DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. MCKINNON: There you go.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. I'm going to direct my question to General Stultz if I may. The commission is charged by Congress with trying to assess the adequacy of funding provided for the National Guard and Reserve components. It doesn't define what adequacy of funding means, so I'm going to ask you to help us understand what a good definition of that would be. And if you want to call on your colleagues there to help you out that's fine, but let's just stick with you for a minute.

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. What I would say is, as I mentioned earlier, we are -- as all the other chiefs here have said, we are an operation force. If you're going to make the reserve components an operation force then they've got to be funding accordingly, and that means in several ways.

One in terms of training dollars. We are developing the Army Force Generation Model which for the active Army is one-in-three-year cycle -- deployed for one year, back home on dwell (?) time for two years. In the Army reserve we have adopted a one-in-five model, so we have deployed for one year, back here four years. Well, in that model you spend one year in your reset phase, you spend another year getting up tempo

in the training phase as you progress in steady states of readiness to where you're ready to deploy.

The model that we have now, funding for training where you provide 14 days of annual training every year for the annual training does not support that model because while 14 days may be adequate in years one and two of that dwell time I would submit to you in years three and four you need 21 to 29 days to be a much better collective training event that really certifies the readiness of that unit getting ready to deploy. So we've got to go back and re-look the funding for training for the reserve components to fit an operational force.

The second piece I would tell you in the equipping phase. We've got to get the equipping dollars that we need in the reserve components to provide the right equipment. If I'm going to progress a soldier through that ARFRGEN (ph) cycle I better be training him on the same piece of equipment he's going to operate in theatre when he's on the battlefield. Right now that is not the case. That's not the case in a couple of ways.

In one respect we have left equipment in theatre, stay-behind equipment over there – or theatre provided equipment which was the right thing to do because we don't want to have to pay for shipping equipment back and forth. But now we've got units and soldiers returning back to the States that have no equipment to train with, and we're trying to redistribute our equipment to give them some equipment. They need that equipment because they've got to start that training cycle to get ready.

But the other area I would tell you is I would tell you we have still legacy equipment in the reserve components that under the current readiness standards, unit status reports, are allowed to be counted as in lieu of. An M35A deuce and a half, 2-1/2-ton truck is allowed to count to say that serves the purpose as readiness. I would submit to you it doesn't because that soldier will never M35A2 in Iraq. We don't allow them in theatre. In fact when I download the pre-positioned equipment that came from Diego Garcia we downloaded a bunch of M35A2s that were in our pre-positioned force that we have since provided to the Iraqi army in foreign military sales because we didn't have the repair parts and facilities to maintain them. We're using the FMTVs that we now have in the force.

So that's the equipment our reserve components need back here to train on. We still have the old Cut-v (ph) Dodge vehicle in lieu of a Humvee. Again, I would submit to you that the soldier is not going to operate a Cut-v in theatre; he needs to be training on a Humvee. So in the equipping dollars we need equipment to replace equipment that's left or worn out in theatre, but we need equipment to replace equipment that's still here that is not suitable to train that soldier on.

So we've got to re-look our funding from a training standpoint, we've got to re-look it from an equipping standpoint, and then obviously a lot of personnel issues we have in funding the force to provide them the tuition assistance that we need. See, we've been given authorizations for retention and recruiting, such as increased enlistment bonuses.

Tuition assistance for our soldiers, which I mentioned earlier, puts a better educated soldier back into society but we didn't get the funding to go with it. I'm currently \$30 million in the hole for tuition assistance.

Now at one point I said to my soldiers I need to prioritize, and maybe I cannot give everybody the tuition assistance they need, and I'll prioritize and give it just to those who are required to get a bachelor's degree. And the soldiers came back to me and said you can't do that to me, sir. I've already planned my life on getting this degree and committed the tuition. And so I had to take and reallocate dollars from other places, such as training or equipping, to provide that tuition assistance that wasn't fully funded, even though I've got the benefit for them.

So I agree wholeheartedly with you. We have to re-look how we fund the force as an operational force now because that's what we made it.

MR. DAWSON: And as I understand your definition it means adequacy to be combat ready?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. As we're adopting this four year model – the forces we put on the battlefield right now are combat ready. We get them ready before they go. We equip them and train them. The forces that are back here in the states are not ready –

MR. DAWSON: Okay. Let me ask you –

GEN STULTZ: – because we don't have the dollars.

MR. DAWSON: Let me ask you a question about that because you raise one the elements of combat readiness to be personnel. Do you have enough money to pay everyone to come to drill today?

GEN STULTZ: Under the current funding I do. Yes, sir. Now, the question becomes – again, when I say I need additional training time for those soldiers to really get them combat ready and I'm only funded to provide them 14 days of annual training plus their drill pay, I need more time. I need 21 days or 29 days. I don't have the money to do that. So, I have the funding to pay them as a legacy force, one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer. I don't have the funding to pay them as an operational force.

MR. DAWSON: Okay. So help me understand. You stated that once they're activated and are deployed – I think what you said, they had to be deployed – they're combat ready but they're not so when they're back here in their units. What levels are you – I mean, there's a system for assigning readiness levels called the C-system or something.

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir.

MR. DAWSON: I'm not anywhere near an expert on that, C-1 through C-4, and they use these factors that you talked about, I guess in part, to access that. What level are you funded at to achieve a C-3 or a C-1 when you're looking at people back here in the states?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. The forces that we deploy forward in the theatre, our combat support-service support, are at C-2 or above. And that's where I'm saying they're combat ready, they're meeting the standards required by the theater. In most cases, they are C-1. The forces we have back here, for the most part – most of our forces are C-4. And in most cases it's a combination between personnel issues where they're short on personnel because we're constantly cross-leveling personnel out of units into other units to get them to the C-2, C-1 level to deploy, and in some cases it's equipment. But primarily it is personnel that's keeping our readiness levels low.

Now, you raise a good issue there because when you're saying are you funding to maintain the readiness back here. As I mentioned before, we're funded based on the old legacy system. The old legacy system that we had with the army reserve was a tiered readiness system. You had certain units that were never going to be above C-4. That was because of the way they were organized and they were called ALOs – Authorized Level of Organization. The ALO said you're authorized 200 people but we're only going to give you 100, and then you – when the war breaks out and you get mobilized we'll find 100 more people to come in and fill out the ranks.

We had our tiered readiness system that said certain units will never be expected to deploy until the second year of the war. So we're not going to worry about getting them ready. We don't have that system now. That's a legacy system. We have an operational system that says all units have to be ready to deploy on a regular basis, but we haven't changed the funding from the old tiered readiness to the new operational readiness.

MR. DAWSON: Let me understand that -- from a philosophical level, are you saying that you're still operating under the notion that you're going to be a strategic reserve, and that the readiness levels that would be associated with being an operational reserve hasn't really caught up to that change?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. That's exactly what I'm saying is we – our policies and our funding and our equipping has not caught up with the fact that the Army reserve is now an operational force, not the old legacy strategic force.

The other piece that we have really got to recognize there is in the future, the reserve components need to have a strategy of train, alert, deploy. The legacy strategy was alert, train, deploy, and we're living under that right now. That is where you see units that are sitting at Fort Hood for six to nine months trying to get trained up before they ever deploy. So when you take 12 months boots on the ground in Iraq, couple that with six to nine months back here training before they ever get ready to deploy, now you have got that soldier mobilized for almost two years.

What we are moving to is a system that says train, alert, deploy, which says that when you alert the soldier, there is a minimum amount of time before he deploys into theater so you get the maximum amount of time on the ground in theater. If you're going to have a train, alert, deploy strategy, then you better have the funding to do the training pre-mobilization, and we don't have that funding and equipping right now.

MR. DAWSON: Could I ask you for the record, and each of your colleagues for – and I want you to do this for the record because it may take you into classified area – to give me and the commission a ballpark estimate of what's your shortfall funding might be. And I would do that on a – I guess I would – a '07-and-beyond basis; I mean, trying to worry about what is going on this year is probably a day late and a dollar short. But if you could do that for the record, I would appreciate it.

MR. PUNARO: Rhett, are you looking to get their funding shortfall if they look at the realities of – they're an operational force.

MR. DAWSON: We are doing a gap analysis.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, so the gap analysis is the reality of the world we live in as opposed to the budget reality or the rules route – in other words, what would you need –

MR. DAWSON: I don't want to – you're doing good. Keep going. (Laughter.)

MR. PUNARO: What would you need, General Stultz and the other colleagues, that if the Pentagon was to make all of the changes that they need to make, and truly fund the Guard and Reserve at what it needs to be to be operational reserve, what is the gap in the current budget?

GEN STULTZ: What I would say is –

MR. PUNARO: (Off mike.)

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. Yeah. It would be – I think it would be much better for me to submit that in a written form so I could get much more accurate –

MR. DAWSON: Oh, yeah. No, that is what I was asking. I said for the records meeting.

GEN STULTZ: – data for you and everything.

MR. DAWSON: Later, take your time.

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. Yes, sir.

MR. DAWSON: Get it to us in a couple of weeks, that would be fine. I had –

MR. PUNARO: Keep going, Rhett.

MR. DAWSON: Now, I have got one more question for you, General Stultz, but if I – if there was one of your colleagues out there that didn't get a chance to say something in any response to the questions that I was asking, raise your hand and start talking, and otherwise I'll go on to ask him some more questions.

GEN BRADLEY: Sir, I would say that from my perspective inside our Air Force, we are adequately funded. General McKinley and I sit at the table when all of the decisions are made on developing the program proposal that the Air Force will submit to OSD. We are at the tables when the budget decisions are made, and we are adequately funded to maintain our readiness levels at C-1. And that doesn't mean we are always at C-1. There are personnel and training issues that work into that, but that is the way we are funded so that we can be responsive in part of the operational Air Force.

So I have never heard anybody in OSD ever say that they are totally adequately funded. Everybody always wants more. But I have got to tell you, we are able to do the job we are told to do or asked to do by our Air Force; we are adequately funded and equipped to do that.

MR. DAWSON: Good.

GEN BRADLEY: We could always do more or make improvements with more money, but we are adequately funded and we are at the table when the decisions are made.

MR. DAWSON: All right. General McKinley.

GEN MCKINLEY: And just to follow up, the evaluation standards that General Bradley referred to in his opening remarks means that we are evaluated by the inspector general of air mobility command and air combat command at the same level as our active-duty units, meaning we can go to war tonight, tomorrow at that same level without a train-up period.

MR. DAWSON: Okay, Admiral Cotton.

ADM COTTON: The Navy and the Navy reserve are fully integrated; we do our budgets together. There is always a wish list for more. I would like to add that there is no such thing as a Navy reserve piece of equipment or a Navy reserve requirement; it is only for a Navy operational mission, and there is a total-force strategy about the best sailor to perform that mission, and a sailor who is a reservist is a bargain, and the Navy realizes that, and that is how we fund our force.

I would like to say one more thing, what Jack said a second ago. This a huge paradigm for us; shift from the strategic to the tactical, if you would. We have to be

ready faster. We have to deploy faster than we ever have before. This is not report and get ready; this is are you ready.

We have people reporting for duty within hours literally, and I think the expectation of our taxpayers is such that – and I think Secretary Rumsfeld said this well – we are now spending over 500 billion, half-a-trillion on defense. When we have a national disaster at home, who are the first responders? And it doesn't matter whether it's Guard or Reserve anymore; it's us. Whether it was Katrina, whether it's a tornado, whether it's an earthquake or whatever else, this is how quickly we have to respond with whatever we have.

And so I think that is the change that the Guard and Reserve has become a first responder for the away game as well as the home game, which means you have got to be ready all of the time.

MR. DAWSON: If you'll bear with me just – I had one more question for General Stultz, and it has to do with are there savings out there that could be achieved through amending the law or changing procedures or regulations. For example, it's come to my attention that the reserve component soldiers who are separated due to unsatisfactory participation or drop from their roles are not necessarily automatically in peril of losing their entitlement to veteran affairs benefits, VA benefits. Is that correct?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. That is a point that we – we have in the Army reserve tried to save money on both ends of the spectrum. We have instituted the delayed entry program for new soldiers that are enlisted to be in the Army reserve. Now, that has some downside to it, but it has some savings to it because what that says is when a soldier signs a contract to join the National Guard, he becomes a member of the National Guard that day. We start paying him the SGLI accrual and all of the other stuff that DFAS (ph) goes through.

When he enlists or joins the Army reserve, we don't begin paying him, we don't assess him for the selective reserve until he actually reports to basic training. So if there is a six-month delay, we save money in that timeframe. Now, the downside – we are still looking at this – and General Volner (ph) and I have talked this, there is up and good and bad there because I have the propensity to sometimes lose that soldier in that six months because he changes his mind and I don't have my arms around him.

And so I have got to weigh the difference between does it pay me to save the money of not having to pay the accruals until they occur immediately vice do I lose the soldier in attrit, and I have go back and recruit another soldier, which costs me more.

But on the other end of the spectrum, you are exactly right, sir. We have soldiers that become unsat participants because they stopped coming to drill or just refuse to start – or come to drill, yet we are still paying them veteran's benefits; we are still paying the SGLI accrual for those soldiers.

MR. DAWSON: And so you would – as I understand it, you would support –

GEN STULTZ: We would support to say amend the – I forget which title it is that that falls under to say when we deem that soldier to be unsat, stop paying those benefits.

MR. DAWSON: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, thank you. Commissioner Larry Eckles.

LARRY ECKLES: General Helmly, the former chief of the Army reserve, recently said of the Army mobilization process, it remains an early industrial-age monolithic process that is anything but smooth, anything but responsive. We have heard that the Army mobilization process does not adequately track the readiness of mobilized reservists. Delays often ensue due to repeated training, lost medical records, or a lack of access to training facilities and equipment.

My question to General Stultz -- what actions have been taken to reduce the uncertainty and strain mobilization has on reservists, their families, and employers?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. Let me address that in several phases because I live that.

I was in Kuwait in October of '02 when we were doing the buildup for the war. So I went through the process of doing a lot of the plan-ups for what we were going to need to prosecute the war in Iraq, and how we were going to call those forces forward.

So part of the problems we had with the mobilization process early on in the prosecution of this war is we had developed – and most of you there on the commission are I'm sure familiar with the – what is called TPF, the time phased force deployment model. And for both theaters of war, we had developed a time-phased deployment, which is – really looks at what size of force do we need to prosecute the war, active Reserve and Guard, and it's really dependent on what is the lift capability to get that force into theater. I mean, that drives how quick you call the force forward.

And so you have reserve component forces scattered throughout that TPF that says we are going to call these forward at D-plus-180 because that is when we will have the capability to get them into theater. We did not use the TPF to prosecute the war; we went through an RFF process, request for forces, which has become the model now that we use for satisfying requirements in theater. We had not adapted the mobilization process to an RFF process.

What we ended up doing early on is we call forward a lot of forces all at the same time where we didn't have the lift capability to move those forces. So you ended up with soldiers sitting at mobilization stations, sitting at home station waiting because the pipeline just couldn't handle it. And as we prosecuted the war starting March '03, then

we decided we didn't need those forces. You know, when we took down the SCUDs in Iraq, now we no longer need the chemical units.

And now you're telling soldiers who have been sitting at those MOB stations go home; we don't need you. We decided we didn't need as many military police units at that point in '03, and so we turned off some of those MP units, only to find out later on we still have a large number of insurgents that are interred and we have got to guard those, and now we need to turn those soldiers back on. That is what created the early turmoil.

Now, that is one portion. We have solved that because now with the RFF process and with looking out, as long as we can get the COCOMs (ph) – and this is a forces command and JIFCOM (ph) issue – to identify the requirements as far out as we need, then we can start sourcing units. And right now we are sourcing the '07, '09 for next year. That gives us enough time to alert those units and tell those units to get ready because you're going to be mobilized, and that gives us enough time for the soldiers to prepare for their family and their employer. So we are much better now at alerting soldiers and units far in advance so that they can prepare.

The other issue, though, that we still have to solve – and it gets back to what I said before about we have got to go to a strategy that says train, alert, deploy. And that says you get all of these standards accomplished before you mobilize the soldier. What happens now – the frustrating point we have now is you train – you mobilize the soldier, you send him to a mobilization station where he has to go through all of this mandatory training. This mandatory training is not standard across, so depending on where you go, it differs. And so a lot of the training that the soldier has done pre-mobilization, when they get to the MOB station, they say, no, that doesn't count; you have got to do it again.

The other piece we got at the mobilization station is once you finish that mandatory training, but you don't have the lift available yet, now you have got a gap of time. You need to keep training. Well, the mobilization stations aren't set up to do that training. I have experienced that in deployments that I went to Bosnia in '97 where we were at Fort Benning. I had a movement control battalion. We finished our mandatory training for Bosnia, which was landmines and crowd control, those things, and we still had two weeks. And we said, okay, now we need training in our mission, and the MOB stations said we're not prepared to train in movement control; we don't have the systems.

So what we have got to do to improve the system even better is get to that train, pre-MOB to the standards, and we are going to get the readiness both in medical, dental, and training so that when we mobilize the soldier, it's just a huge process of where he goes right through the MOB station based on we have lift available and ready, and you can get on a plane and go. We are much better than we were, much better because we are doing better with the RFF process. We are still working to improve the standardization, and we are trying to limit the number of installations where we are doing mobilization to places like Fort Dix, Fort McCoy, Camp Shelby. So we can control them to make sure they are standards. But we still have got a ways to go, sir.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you, General.

I guess I would pose some questions to the rest of your colleagues. How does your specific service provide mobilization notification to reservists, and is the notification system working in a timely and effective manner, and are you consistently meeting a 30-day notification of notification? Let's start with Admiral Cotton.

ADM COTTON: Yes, sir. I would agree with Jack, again, that we have gotten much better in the last year. The active component Navy is doing a lot more individual mobilization. So I think all of our procedures have gotten better, and we are aligning with the 30-day standard. That is what we shoot for.

The Navy created a Navy expeditionary combat command in January. It's going to be about 40,000 sailors. All of the combat service support, Navy coastal warfare, CBs, all of the things that the war fighters need, about half of that is reserve component. A subset of that, we call it the ECRC, expeditionary combat readiness command. We have also adopted a reserve component system called MRRS, medical readiness report system, which the Marine Corps has adopted, both AC and RC and CENTCOM has adopted as the standard.

The problem is all of our different medical standards, all of our different records need to be the same because we all end up at the same customer. And so we are aligning better at home for these basic readiness issues, medical, physical, administrative, and family readiness before we go. The Navy has also aligned its old Navy reserve readiness commands with the Navy regions so that all of these centers for help for the families all apply to both active and reserve components.

So we have gotten much better in the fifth year of a long war. The one takeaway from Desert Storm, Desert Shield, was a single pay in benefit system for all of us. And we are still not there. DIMHRS (?) has not delivered.

I personally think – I'll go on record as saying the Marine Corps total force system gets it done. We would like to make it the Department of Navy total system, which is laptops, paperless, anywhere you go you can swear somebody in. They are in the computer until the day they pass away, and you can change statuses with a keystroke. And this is the kind of system, agile, that we need amongst all of our services to serve the customer, which is the combatant commander.

With that lead in, General Bergman.

GEN BERGMAN: Sir, yes, we are by and large meeting the 30-day notification. Force-planning conferences that are literally ongoing at the joint level on down allow us to do the 90-percent planning. As we all know, there are always pop-ups that occur that sometimes get close, but what we have done is because we have, now five years into the global war on terror, been able to adjust our, if you will, activation business model for

both individuals and units to make sure that they have got the right amount of pre-deployment training time before going into theater. If we have to adjust their report date because of a short-fuse notice, all we do is extend a little bit out their time at which point they will go in the theater, not sacrificing any of the pre-deployment training. So where we are today and where need to be, we are right there at the 90-percent level.

MR. ECKLES: General Bradley?

GEN BRADLEY: Sir, the process I think is long enough, the approval process for mobilizations is typically long enough that we have very adequate notice to talk to our reservists. So I would say almost every person that is mobilized has well over 30-days notice. I won't say that every single person has always been, but it's – the approval process for mobilization is lengthy and we have adequate notice.

What we do typically in our Air Force reserve is we try to find volunteers for these particular duties, and we do that all of the time; we do it well, working through our functional experts at our headquarters. So we go out to our units and we find folks who would like to be mobilized, rather than those who would rather not, so that we can use volunteerism even in the mobilization context. So I think it works well and they have plenty of notice.

MR. MCKINLEY: Thank you. I would agree with that, and predecessors of mine, and General Bradley, one who was sitting on the panel there started a system in the Air Force, the Air National Guard and Air Force reserve by which volunteerism was encouraged. So of the 6,000 Air National Guard members who are mobilized today, over two-thirds of those are volunteers.

Where we do get into some trouble is some of our high-demand and low-supply units. Those are our one-of-a-kind units, things that have gone to the Guard and Reserve maybe during Cold War, strategic reserve days that are now in high demand and low density. Those units are being asked to do more and more, being remobilized, but where we have success is in volunteerism – that is our strength – and our service allows us to do that.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you. General Acton?

ADM ACTON: Sir, with the Coast Guard, we mobilize both individuals and we have port security units which are really reserve-centric that mobilize as well. For the reserves, we usually rely on volunteers for those instances where we have individual reservists assigned to Naval coastal warfare units. They followed the Navy's process for mobilization. In the case where we have our port security units mobilization, those are area commands. There are in different states of readiness, and there is a cue there that we follow to be able to deploy them.

As far as the 30-day notification, often the Coast Guard does not have that luxury. Katrina is a perfect example. So we rely on a ready force that can respond very quickly, and as I mentioned earlier, very heavily based on volunteer support.

The final comment I would make, sir, is that for the Coast Guard perspective, because we often have such a short timeline to get boots on the ground and people down on the range, we continue to work on the systems that we need to get in place to make that more seamless, and quicker.

MR. ECKLES: Okay, thank you. My next questions or set of questions deal with the demobilization process. Demobilizing service members and their families must acquaint themselves with a host of federal agencies such as DOD, VA, DOL, so forth, which are available to help with the readjustment, but not always in a coordinated and effective way.

They also struggle with medical and financial records management to receive accurate information about such issues as when their active duty pay and healthcare coverage will cease. It often takes time to readjust to the civilian workforce, and during this time dealing with missing pay or lapsed medical coverage is difficult. Furthermore transition assistance is not uniform among the reserve components.

My first question to all of you is what do you think would improve the process for your service members transitioning out of and back into civilian life. Let's start with the Army reserve.

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. A couple of points I would make here. One would be – and I had this conversation just recently with General Cody, the vice chief staff of the Army. In terms of the medical dental readiness in the demobilization process, we need to treat the soldier – and I don't mean this sound cold – just like we treat a piece of equipment. When we bring a piece of equipment back from theater and it's returned back to the return, it comes back to me in 10, 20 standards. It's the Army's responsibility to fix that piece of equipment before it comes back to me.

We don't use the same approach for the soldier. We bring the soldier back, and it's a process of getting him through the demobilization and returning him to the reserve components as quickly as we can. And point being is dental readiness. We don't have a policy or program that says we take care of dental needs at the demobilization site. Now, what we find is we have to get soldiers to a certain state of dental readiness before we deploy them, active and reserve. When they are deployed in theater, their dental readiness deteriorates. It's based on lack of dental care while in their desert, plus their diet; they are sucking down a lot of sodas over there.

When they come back, the active Army – when they go back into their reset, they find they have a lot of dental work to get soldiers back in – but the reserve, they return them to us, and now it's our responsibility at our expense to get those soldiers back to their readiness.

And this is the conversation I had, is we need to change that. We need to have a program that says maybe it doesn't occur at the de-MOB site because that soldier does want to come back to his family. But we need to look at demobilization as not just occurring at the de-MOB site; we need to look at demobilization as being a length of time that the soldier goes through a certain process when they come home and they land at Fort McCoy, and they go throughout processing. But that demobilization process continues when they get back home to their unit to your point.

You know, one of the policies we instituted was the soldier doesn't have to come back to his battle drill for the first 90 days after he returns. We disagree with that. What I would say is the soldier is expected to come back to his battle drill when he returns. I will give him a liberal excusal policy if he has vacation time, whatever. But I'm finding that I need to monitor those soldiers immediately; I need to lay hands on those soldiers because to your point, sir, they start incurring emotional, family, financial problems that we need to grab hold. This demobilization process is at least a six-month process.

MR. ECKLES: Okay, thank you. Admiral?

ADM COTTON: The Navy has a total-force perspective of mobilization, demobilization. We treat active and reserve sailors exactly the same. We're finding that it's not the long set of orders; it's the frequent shorter periods. We have – about a third of our force does the minimum, 39 days; another third does a 39 to a hundred days a year; another third does 100 to 365 days. So we find them in individual plug and play. Even some of the units that come on for a few months and go back, they have done it so often, it's just kind of greased right now in the fifth year of this war. So we have very few issues; we handle them as they pop up, but we have got much better at it.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you. General Bergman?

GEN BERGMAN: Sir, General Stultz articulated my biggest concern, post-traumatic stress syndrome, the 90-day policy that prohibits a unit commander from having a mandatory drill needs to be done away with. There is a saying that we recruit individuals but we retain families. And I would suggest to you that is more true today than it's ever been because there is a higher percentage of our young soldiers, sailors, Marine, airmen, and Coast Guardsmen who are married than ever before.

And especially during that post-demobilization time, when they are re-assimilating themselves into the civilian world, the opportunity that we have to provide the kind of over-watch for them is time missed if we don't take advantage of it.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you. General Bradley.

GEN BRADLEY: Sir, I would tell you the – I think the largest program we have is that there is great pressure to demobilize people as quickly as possible when they return from overseas. The area in which I have the most trouble I think, or which my

airmen have the most problem is those with medical problems. There is pressure to get them off the mobilization orders, and sometimes our system is not responding fast enough to make sure that when they're taken off mobilization status, that they are put on active duty until their medical problems are fully resolved.

We have had a number of difficulties with that. That is the biggest one that I have. Other than that, our demobilization I think works very well. But it's the medical area in which we have the most trouble, and that is working after our airmen when they do have medical problems.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you.

GEN MCKINLEY: Sir, the National Guard Bureau is dedicated to providing a seamless transition from active status to demobilized status. Lieutenant General Blum, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, has resourced that by appointing 54 states benefits advisors to our 50 states, territories in the District of Columbia, who are fulltime liaisons to try to make sure that he soldier and airmen who come back in the National Guard are well taken care of. And I'm sure General Blum and both General Von (sp) and myself will continue that as a high priority.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you.

ADM ACTON: Sir, at times in the past, demobilization process could feel like death by a thousand paper cuts, very painful, very drawn out. We have gotten much, much better at it, however, it's still somewhat cumbersome and complicated. I think that probably the nearest-term way to improve that is just to keep refining the systems and tools that we have to be able – enable a seamless transition between active and reserve duty.

MR. ECKLES: That is all of the questions I have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thanks. Commissioner Patty Lewis.

PATTY LEWIS: Good morning. The chairman said the color of the day is not going to be rosy, so if I ask you the standard recruiting and retention questions, I think you all could probably give me a fairly good picture of this year. But I'm very concerned about the available pool of resources, of personnel, and also concerned about resourcing those personnel.

Admiral Cotton, you had mentioned 28 percent of the population is available or meets acceptable standards for service in the military. How long do you feel that pool can sustain the ongoing needs of our military services given the high op tempo of Iraq and Afghanistan and other world contingencies? I mean, that just seems like such a limited pool, but – we may be good this year; we may be able to be okay next year, but is there some timeframe in the future that you have some concern over being able to get the resources you need?

ADM COTTON: I guess my point by saying that, ma'am, is that if we keep doing what we have always been doing as a conscript mentality, always going to the front door, hiring a high-school graduate, putting him through training, and they serve four to 14, 20 years, whatever else, and then start over again, my point was that whoever we have, we need to nurture them and keep them on the roles in some sort of Marine Corps total force system through age 60, and reuse their skill sets.

And our systems and rules aren't set up to recruit a 43-year old with the skill sets we need because they can't get a 20-year retirement. We are still stuck in this strategic Cold War model, a conscript system. We haven't adjusted to the realities of what we need today. So we are going to do workarounds if we need more folks. But fortunately warfare is changing, platforms are changing, the requirements for manpower, at least for the Navy and the Air Force is decreasing, and for the Army and the Marine Corps it's remaining static.

So I think there is a combination of a couple factors in play here: keeping the folks you have longer; reducing the amount of people in uniform for the places and the equipment that you don't need them; maybe more civilian substitution in some of the things we do. But these will be the workarounds with a lower number of people qualified to come serve.

MS. LEWIS: I agree that those are important workarounds, and we certainly need to move in those directions. But I'm still very concerned when we are sending people multiple times and having that threaten their continued affiliation with the services that we do have, a situation that may not be sustainable over time.

We have also talked a little bit this morning about funding and the readiness status, C-1 through C-4. And General Stultz, you said that when we send our troops in theater, certainly they are C-1 and C-2, but our troops that are remaining in CONUS are at the C-4 status, and that a lot of that, I heard this morning, is related to cross-leveling of personnel.

At what point are we not going to be able to have the units, C-1, C-2 resourced and ready when we need them? I mean, I see some point where we are going to break. Is that anywhere in the near future, and what additional resources do we need, and what actions do we need to take, what can we recommend to help you be more ready?

GEN STULTZ: Well, I think there are several factors that we have got to consider there. One is the op tempo at which we are having to pull these forward, and I mentioned the cross leveling.

I'll give you a prime example. I am remobilizing units now that I had with me when I was in theater in 2003. Now, I'm not remobilizing soldiers; I don't have the authority, but I'm remobilizing the units because the Army has – we have gone through the full cycle of those units.

So truck units, specifically – 217<sup>th</sup> trans right here from San Antonio, Texas, a heavy equipment transport unit – we are remobilizing right now. Two-hundred-and-ninety-nine-personnel unit carries 96 heavy-equipment transporters that carry the M-1 tanks. Sixty percent of the soldiers in that unit volunteered to go back for a second time. That is how things – making it.

Now, here is the dilemma, though. Now I have got to cross level 40 percent more to bring in there because the other soldiers in that unit said I can't go back the second time; I can't do that. So now I have got to bring soldiers from another unit that is in that readiness cycle that says either I'll volunteer to go back, or I'm available because I never was mobilized, and so now I am kind of breaking another unit over here that is trying to get ready to put soldiers in this unit to get it ready to go out the door.

The other dilemma I have got is now I have got soldiers in that 217<sup>th</sup> trans who have mobilized before, who are great heroes, that said I can't go back because of my civilian situation, or whatever, but I'm taking their flag away. Now I have got to find a place to put them.

So the churn that we have got on the force is creating a lot of turmoil, and that is what – it's not the soldiers who are not ready; the soldiers are ready; it's the unit that I'm putting together because I'm having to bring soldiers from various locations, bring them together as a unit, which now requires me to train them. They need to be cohesive as a unit before I put them into theater. So now I need some more training time up front before I can deploy them to get them ready.

Now, what is the answer? One is we have got to rebalance the force. Why am I having to remobilize the 217 HET companies – because I don't have enough HET companies in the force. In the past, as we have drawn the force, the total force, active, guard, and reserves, we have taken risks in our force structure. We have taken risks in a lot of the combat support, service support arena, the transportation logistics, and the military police, engineers, those kinds of forces, because we did not forecast this protracted war that we are in now.

And so what we're finding is while the force-generation model that we have built is around brigade combat teams, and knowing that we can put the right amount of combat power on the ground, below the lines, the combat support service support forces are still generating that this high-demand, low-density type units, civil affairs, military police, engineers, transportation, all, that we are just burning those units because we don't have enough in the force.

So the real answer really that we have got to look at as a total military – and this goes to joint, not just the Army – we have got to look at what joint capability do we need in the force. What joint transportation assets do we have? What joint medical assets do we have? What joint engineers – when you talk about the Red Horse and the Seabees, and the Army engineers.

Now you have got a total capability, so what does that total capability need to be and where does it need to reside, active versus reserve component, and get the force balanced right because as the force structure is now we can't get out of this because we just don't have enough units, and a theater – you know, General Abizaid and company over there say, hey, we need this support. We need this structure. We need this capability.

Luckily, as I mentioned with the 217<sup>th</sup> – and there is many 217<sup>th</sup>s out there, we have got a lot of heroes that are stepping up and saying I'll go back for a second tour. In some cases I'll go back for a third tour. But you're exactly right; how long can we depend on this?

And the other point I'll just add in here because we in the Army have looked at this issue that Admiral Cotton talked about, about the 20 percent available. We look at the 17- to 24-year-old males as our target population. And I won't go into all of the details of the percentage of how many aren't educationally, how many aren't morally, how many aren't physically, but basically out of 10 individuals, three meet the criteria to go in the Army. Now, out of those three, half of them are in college. So one-and-a-half out of 10 people are supplying 49 percent of our recruitment base right now that we are recruiting from. That is a concern -- is how long can we look to that force to be able to supply.

MS. LEWIS: Exactly.

GEN STULTZ: I think the solution, or one of the solutions is this continuum of service, of being able to recruit young soldiers like that into the active force, and then having the reserve components be the source of where they float back and forth, in and out of active service in a continuum. But it is an issue that we are concerned with. Because I'll tell you this, the colleges out there are competing for those. You look at the news this year. The FBI had an internship program where they were getting high schoolers as interns. Why are they doing that? It's those 17- to 24-year-olds that they want to hire in the FBI before we get them. We are all competing for that same group.

MS. LEWIS: Mr. Chairman, I know I'm close to the end of my time, but one more quick question. We talked a little earlier about the increasing manpower costs. And Dr. Chu (ph) testified before us earlier that he is concerned about sustaining the medical benefit for the active force over time, giving increasing healthcare costs. Can I get each of you just to comment on whether or not, when we're comparing costs of active and reserve forces, you feel it's a good investment of our dollars for our reserve forces to carry the full medical benefit in an inactive status?

GEN STULTZ: It is a difficult question to answer. Here is what I would propose. I go back – in my civilian life, I have worked 26 years with Proctor & Gamble, and they have dealt with me going in and out of active service on an ongoing basis. But one of the ways we looked at the benefit program at P&G, and a lot of corporations –

called flexible benefits. Here is a portfolio of benefits that are available. Now, you look at your situation and select which ones you think are most appropriate for you.

And so every year I would get a packet that says here is how much we have allocated in terms of dollars. Do you want to buy additional life insurance, do you want to buy childcare service, do you want to buy some legal insurance, do you want to have additional vision care or dental care, those types of benefits.

What I think we need to look at is a service – we mentioned earlier we are competing with each other, throwing dollars at soldiers or individuals out there to try to recruit them. Instead of maybe promising a huge enlistment or reenlistment bonus in terms of dollars, maybe we present a soldier with a portfolio. And maybe that portfolio says if you reenlist for six years, one of the options in healthcare, that we, instead of paying you \$15,000, we just buy healthcare for you. One of those options may be tuition assistance for your children, or your family.

We don't add costs to the system; what we do is we look at the way we provide that benefit to the soldier and say you choose what best fits your lifestyle. If you're starting out as a young soldier, you're probably looking at buying a new car, and so don't talk to me about a retirement plan; I want to buy a car. But if you're getting near your 20 years of service and you have got a child that is getting ready to go to college, maybe you're looking at how am I going to pay for that college, well, maybe the Army, the Army reserve provides that for you. And instead of paying you a huge sum of reenlistment money, we'll provide you tuition assistance, tax-exempt.

MS. LEWIS: General Cotton.

ADM COTTON: I would agree. Cafeteria benefits is the way corporate America is going. I think we need to change into the same thing. Spouses have benefits. I think the military could save some money in some families in we did something like this. I would like to say also I think it's about 50 million Americans don't have healthcare. Many of our young troops do not have healthcare. TRICARE Reserve Select is Huge. It is a big success story for those that go forward for 90 consecutive days in support of a contingency, then are eligible for one year of TRICARE Reserve Select, and they pay the premiums, either single or family.

I testified before why 90 days consecutive in support of a contingency. People who work here at home doing predictable periodic operational support are doing the same thing. I can do 120 days a year back home flying C-130s, training people, I should get the same sort of benefit as well. As far as giving blanket TRICARE to every reservist, I have testified before I'm against that. I think that it should be incentivized by service. When you go do the hard jobs, you can qualify for this, and when you're activated, you of course have the benefit for your family.

We should also look into one thing. And we started doing this a couple of years ago. Rather than bringing a whole family who often lives remote onto TRICARE

somewhere, why don't we as a department pay the employer the offset costs? And I think Dr. Chu did some study, and it came up in the \$400 range that we could afford to do something like this. Then you don't transition the whole family on to TRICARE, keep that cost low, and then keep it on the self-insured, or whatever corporate policy the employee might have. That might be a better way to go, ma'am.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you. General Bergman?

GEN BERGMAN: I think General Stultz and Admiral Cotton articulated it very well and completely. The only thing I would add would be very simply that if you have a healthy society, physically healthy society, you tend to have less medical costs. So however we incentivize our individuals and their families to maintain or start, if they haven't, a healthy lifestyle that will end lower the costs, we have every incentive as a department and as a society to see what we can explore in that arena.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you. General Bradley.

GEN BRADLEY: Ma'am, I think General Bergman hit it on the mark. Everywhere I go, my airmen tell me healthcare is very important to them.

There are solutions there I think that would be quite helpful to the department in general and to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen. Flipping back and forth between tri-care and other healthcare systems is difficult and disruptive, and the more you do it, the harder it gets, I think. So I think there are solutions out there that won't drive us deeper into debt, and it could be beneficial to the department and to our force that is working so hard for us.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you. General McKinley.

GEN MCKINLEY: Ma'am we recruit the member and we retain the family. I think the spouses would love to have the capability to say to their member you need to stay in the Guard and Reserve because we are getting a benefit from this, and I think that would be a big help. So however we parse this, healthcare is hugely important to Americans. It is important to all of us on this panel, and I think it's an incentive that in the right portfolio would make a lot of difference to our families.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you. Admiral Acton.

ADM ACTON: Ma'am, as you have heard, this is an important benefit to many of our members. We have also put on the table a number of options worthy of consideration: flex benefit concepts, pay the employer for offsets. However, in the case of the Coast Guard, our retention is at an all-time high. We are hitting our recruiting marks, and I don't know that this particular issue would move the needle for us one way or the other.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you all very much. And I'm sorry I went over, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you.

Commissioner Lewis, you are going to have your work cut out for you here because as we all know, there are a gazillion pay categories, virtually zero flexibility. The modern IT system that the department's betting the ranch on DIMHRS – the ice age moved faster than DIMHRS. So that isn't the answer. So we have got to kind of do the right thing here.

Okay, Commissioner Dan McKinnon.

DAN MCKINNON: It looks to me like this end of the table is pretty well organized. You have got your shipbuilding program. It probably should faster than what it's being built at, but you have got that. The Air Force seems to be in pretty good shape, although you're going to lose some airplanes here pretty soon, and probably have excess pilots.

I would like to focus down here just a little bit more, particularly with General Stultz and General Bergman. When you talk about the economics of what your shortfall is, I would like to ask you to provide a list of the shortfall equipment as well. So you can't make decisions without facts, and part of the facts is it's not just a bunch of dollar figures. What are you going to do with those dollars and why do you need those particular dollars more than any other particular dollars?

To hone in on the Navy for just a moment, Admiral, do you attract the IRR, all of the IRR fellows. Can you find them and convert them back to duty very easily?

ADM COTTON: Thank you for asking that question, sir. I think it's something that it's important for all of our services to think about. When we enlist, it's for four years, but it's really for eight years. And we don't create this expectation in any of our forces. Maybe the Marines do a little bit better than all of the rest of us. But in this other four years, you are supposed to be ready and be available for deployment. We all don't have the same IT systems. These days most people have a cell phone, most people have an e-mail address. We should be able to do this. We should probably track the IRR, maybe muster them; at least have an online muster; we're looking into that now. And also IRR could have some benefits to extend that past that four years, and come back and recall them and do that again.

We finding then we go to the IRR. We did this last year with about 4,000 sailors. Most of them showed up for the muster, and about half of them asked if they could come back on active duty. And so this is a wonderful pull of people to go back to, rather than like I have said many times already this morning, going back to the front door, looking for that perfect 18-year-old. Let's go back and mine some of these folks that at the four-

year point made a decision and maybe want to come back and serve. So we need to do that better amongst all of our services.

MR. MCKINNON: But you think the Navy is pretty organized on that then.

ADM COTTON: I would say we're not. I would say we could probably track half of our 50,000 folks, but we need to create that expectation a little bit better. Let's face it, some of the folks in the IRR know that if they are tracked, they might get called to go do some things for us. And so, again, we need to incentivize that behavior.

MR. MCKINNON: Of course you're kidding yourself if you think you have got them there and you don't have them there, too.

I heard a rumor that the Navy's shipbuilding budget is about half of what the Army's is. Is that correct?

ADM COTTON: I don't have the exact numbers. I will say as a taxpayer, there is a lot of alignment that can be done in acquisition amongst all of our services. You know, we have five different Air Forces and three different Navies. And if we acquired jointly with the same requirements, meeting the same specs and the same capabilities for the combatant commanders, we could probably do this better than we are currently doing this, sir.

MR. MCKINNON: Is that a yes or a no answer?

ADM COTTON: It's an I'll find out, sir, about the numbers.

MR. MCKINNON: General Stultz, you have got a tremendous responsibility with the Army and as the reserves. Now, there are some rumors going around that it might be a wise idea to combine the reserves into the National Guard. That would help on Title 32 and add additional force. What is your attitude on that?

GEN STULTZ: I don't agree with that. And let me explain. And I love my brethren within the National Guard. So it is not anything personal there. And I had a lot of great National Guard soldiers serving under me in Kuwait and Iraq that sacrificed their lives for our nation.

I think the thing you have to look at is when you start talking about the roles of the Guard and Reserve in the active force, where their focus areas are going to be, and their primary focus – the National Guard is the nation's guard. Homeland defense, homeland security really has to be their primary focus. With the Army reserve, we have really been more of an operational reserve for a longer time.

Because of our CSCSS roles, we have had multi-compo units – my headquarters that I commanded before I took this job down in Orlando, Florida, we were active reserve and AGR combined, and we were supporting both central command and Korea on an

ongoing basis. We deployed to Kuwait in December of '01. My headquarters is still there, has never left. The 335<sup>th</sup> signal command out of Atlanta deployed in '01 with us. They are still there. The 377 theater-sustainment command out of New Orleans deployed with us in '01, they are still there. Those headquarters has never left because we have been multi-compo operational reserve type units ongoing.

And part of that is because we didn't have to worry about some of the state missions that the National Guard has to be focused on and concerned with and also because of the structure of our force. Now, where we can do a better job together I think is integrating our capabilities to be able to respond both at home as well as abroad.

I will give you a good example that we have done just recently. You have seen in the news a lot of concern about the hurricane support for those states that are prone to hurricane or suspect to hurricane, and the National Guard being short of equipment based on the equipment shortages that already existed, plus equipment that has been left in theater. And so we went state by state for those eight states that are most susceptible, identified what shortfalls the National Guard have, and I made up that capability.

I have a contingency plan in place right now where I have repositioned two thousand pieces of equipment, engineer, medical transportation, whatever, at Fort Polk, Louisiana, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, other equipment concentration sites. I have identified Army reserve units that will fall in on that equipment, and we have conducted a couple of rehearsals with the Army National Guard, with NORTHCOM whatever, to say, okay, hurricane enters the Gulf. We are looking at Louisiana. We have identified Louisiana is short this equipment. I alert these units to be ready to fall in on that equipment and move to Louisiana on a moment's notice to support the National Guard down there. If the hurricane turns and comes across the state of Florida, we shift our focus and we go to Florida.

One of the things we have got to change, though, is how do I get access to my soldiers to do that. Right now the answer is what I did last year for Katrina. I supplied the Chinook helicopters and trucks for Katrina. I put them on annual training and just had them going that way because there is not a process for me to be able to mobilize those units for short durations and call them to active duty. I just don't have that access right now.

So I think the answer really is not necessarily trying to combine the Guard and Reserve because the Guard has a focus that they need to stay focused on; the Army reserve has a different focus in terms of being the Title 10 reserve to the active component. What we need to do is figure out how we are able to integrate better in terms of being able to call those forces forward as needed and have them work together. We do that in theater. We integrate the Guard and Reserve. We integrate – when I ran the ports of Kuwait, I had the Navy expeditionary support force, the Coast Guard port security units, the Air Force weather nets; all of those. We seem to be able to integrate very well in theater. We don't seem to be able to integrate very well back here.

MR. MCKINNON: You know, the – I think you have saved some overhead. At any rate, it would seem like to me if you did integrate them though – I appreciate what you had to say.

Let me just go in another area here because I think there is so much to learn here and so little time to learn it in. The Congress has been passing supplementals to the tune of over a hundred billion dollars. I think the Army is getting about 90 of that, \$90 billion. Now, they have changed – as I understand, they have changed the phrase from a supplemental to a tax budget amendment or some phrase like that, which sort of indicates that they are going to be doing away with it pretty soon. How is the Army going to get along and the reserves as well without that \$90 billion they are getting in supplemental?

GEN STULTZ: I think it is a concern for General Schoomaker, the chief of staff of the Army. He has just recently testified before Congress to that very point, that we have been living off supplementals because the supplementals are designed to pay for the war, but in a lot of cases it's not paying for the re-capitalization or refurbishment of equipment that is being worn basically in the wartime theater at a much higher accelerated rate. We are running the wheels off the trucks. But the money to refurbish and re-capitalize that equipment was in our base; it was not part of the supplemental. Yet, we have to get replace that equipment on a faster – a faster rate.

He also makes the point we started out the war \$50 billion in the whole as an Army, \$50 billion short based on drawdowns that had occurred over the previous administrations. And so we started out in a deficit in terms of equipment. And this was across the force. You know, people talk about the reserve components not being equipped properly for the war.

I'll tell you this, the second day of the ground war, I crossed into Iraq, and my down trace, my subordinate units were primarily active component units, theater logistical units out of Fort Eustis, Fort Bragg, Fort Sill, Fort Benning, Fort Hood. We didn't have night vision goggles because the Army was a legacy Army that said if you are theater logistics, you don't go forward on the battlefield. We didn't have ring mounts with 50-count machine guns to defend our convoys because the Army said in the legacy force, you don't go forward on the battlefield. Well, guess what, we all go forward on the battlefield, especially when it's an asymmetric battlefield.

And so part of this bill is we have to go to refit the Army to the new threat, to the new way we fight the war, and that is not going to be done on supplementals; you are right; that has got to come out of the base. So short answer, we have got to relook the base budget and say is the cost of the Army – what is the cost of the Army, not just the active Army, the cost of the Army, and is that being accounted for in the base because supplementals are not going to go on forever.

MR. MCKINNON: Let me just ask your professional opinion for a moment. If you're talking about all of these costs, there is obviously a lot of ways to DOD. What would be the top two or three items you would rearrange in DOD to save money?

(Pause.) I'm sure that every man here has some way that they would be able to figure out how to squeeze and be more efficient.

GEN STULTZ: I think what I mentioned earlier is we need to come at it from a joint-force capability. We need to stop – a mission. You mentioned earlier about who has the biggest budgets for ships. When I'm doing logistics over the shore operations in Kuwait, and I have got Navy LCUs and Army LCUs both operating side by side. When I got a theater support vessel, and he has got a high-speed support vessel, this catamaran we get from New Zealand, operating side by side, I don't need both of them there. But the Navy is there present and the Army is there present.

I think to me, one of the biggest cost savings we could realize is if we really went at the force and looked at joint capabilities that reside across the force instead of each one of the services trying to build their own stovepipe organization.

MR. MCKINNON: Incidentally, Admiral Cotton didn't want to answer, except for the record – is that rumor correct. Does the Army have a bigger shipbuilding budget than the Navy?

GEN. STULTZ: I don't, I don't – sir, I would really have to go back and research and get that to you. I know we have, for some of our theater support vessels, the acquisition for those, but I don't think they come anywhere close to what it costs to build a battleship, or an aircraft carrier.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, on the IRR, where is the Army at on that?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, sir. I'm glad you raised that point because I have some definite feelings on the IRR, having lived through that, of waiting for those IRR soldiers to show up and then realizing what actually showed up. And in a lot of cases, a lot of great individuals had volunteered, but in a lot of cases, the data was just incorrect. I think we ought to abolish the IRR system as it exists today.

I would like to see the Army go to more of a Marine Corps that model that says – you have got to do three things to make the IRR successful. Number one, when you enlist a soldier, when he signs that enlistment contract, that recruiter needs to tell him what his true length of service is. You have got so many years on active duty and then you are going to be in the inactive or individual-ready reserve. We haven't always done that. You know, the recruiter likes to say just sign up for four years or six years, whatever, and you're done – whatever, he doesn't tell him.

At the other end, when the soldier leaves active duty, we need to tell him you are not being discharged; you are being transferred to the individual-ready reserve. You still have a commitment to this nation that exists. So you need to make that clear so they understand it.

But the third thing I would do is carry it one step further. We need to develop an affiliation program. What I would like to have is when a soldier is leaving active-duty at Fort Campbell and he says where are you going to live; I'm going to South Carolina, I'm going to affiliate you with a unit in South Carolina. It may not match your MOS. You may be an engineer that may be a truck unit, but you are going to be affiliated.

Now, here is the requirement. That unit is going to have the responsibility to maintain contact with you as an individual reservist, and then once a year, as was mentioned, we're going to muster, and you are going to show up at that unit, and go through the readiness processing to make sure everything is up to date.

And then we would encourage the units to maintain ongoing dialogue with those soldiers that are affiliated with them that are in an inactive status, if you want to call it that, or an individual readiness status. And so you invite them to family-day activities. Give them a copy of the training schedule and say we are going to do weapons qualification in April. If you want to participate, let us know; I'll let you come in and fire a weapon.

I think what we would do there, because what we are seeing, as was mentioned earlier, we are seeing a lot of soldiers that were in the IRR who were saying, you know, I would like to come back onto a reserve status. I enjoy getting it back in the military. I just needed some time to get my life together when I got off active duty. But now that I am back into this, I kind of like it.

I think that continuum of service ought to allow a soldier to be affiliated with a unit and he says I need some time by myself; I need to just be an IRR soldier, affiliated, and once a year I come in and muster whatever. But at some point I would like to go back on to an active-reserve status. At the same time a soldier in that unit might say my job situation changed; I need a break. I need to drop back to the IRR status, but still be affiliated.

The other thing that would do for us is now when we mobilize that unit – and you're always going to have to have some cross levels in the unit. And some reserve components, unlike the active Army where can, as the active Army say we are going to stop PCSing anybody from first cab division at Fort Hood, so we would fill a unit up. I can't stop a soldier when he comes in and says I just got a job promotion and I am moving to California. I have got to let him go.

So you are always going to have those types of turnovers. If I had an IRR out there that is affiliated with that unit, now suddenly I have got to draw upon some probably volunteers that say I'll go with the unit when they need to go.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, just one real quick last question along that – we were over at Fort Hood, a group of us, yesterday I guess it was. And they talked about Reserves and Guard fellows showing up medically unfit or unfit for other reasons, so that maybe 5 percent – they said a brigade worth are sitting around and they have got the 25-

day period to make a decision whether they want to keep them or reject them for active duty. What could be done to ensure that these fellows show up ready, willing, and able to go, and not have to be fooling around with all of this medical stuff?

GEN STULTZ: I think there is two answer that I have got. One is for the active-reserve units, this AFGM model, this Army Force Generation model that I talked about, where you're in years one and – first of all, return me a soldier in 10, 20 standards. He comes back from deployment and he is medically and dentally fit. He goes into this rest phase, years one and two. I just monitor his fitness to make sure he is still continuing to keep his dental readiness and medical readiness.

When he gets to about year three or four, I am probably going to have to take on a hands-on approach. I am going to have to make sure he gets his medical check and he gets his dental check and he takes – we take action if he is not medically or dental fit because when he gets in that year three or four, in that phase, he is getting to deploy in about another year. And to your point, I can't wait for that point to say now he is not medically fit.

For the IRR soldiers, what I just about the affiliation, that would be how we solve that, because I think the majority of the problems we're seeing now, soldiers showing up, or soldiers we're bringing out of the IRR, we don't see them until they show up at Fort Hood. That is the first time we see them. And then we realize there is a lot of medical or dental problems with these soldiers, and we can't take them.

MR. MCKINNON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, thank you. The next questioner is Commissioner Rowley, and if any member of the panel or any of the commissioners need take a break, just take it on your own because we are going to keep going.

WADE ROWLEY: Okay, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to touch on some homeland security issues. In fact, this is such a monumental task. We are actually – Stanton Thompson, who couldn't be here, and I are co-chairing this because it's so big to try to get our arms around.

In the last – well, traditionally the National Guard is – both air and Army have pretty much taken the role of natural disaster response, things of that nature. But has come to light since Hurricane Katrina is some of the desires from some of the governors is identified in your testimony. There is a fairly large force out there – the reserve forces of all of the branches of service that the governors don't have access to until it's a federalized, an emergency, you of course know, directed to NORTHCOM.

I already kind of know the answer to this question, but some of the ways that are – the governors are wanting to maintain control and not have these disasters federalized. The questions – and like I say, I probably know the answer to this – would you – and this

question is for any of you – would you support limited legislation to allow the governors to activate Title 10 forces for a limited period of time, say 48 to 72 hours. And a second part to that question, if not, how do you see best fit – the best fit for the Title 10 forces in a manmade or a natural disaster in support of the National Guard?

GEN STULTZ: Well, I think I really need to think hard about this before I say the Army reserve would be under the call up of the governor. And the reason I say that – here is the problem that I see with that. One of the advantages the Army reserve has is the National Guards are state-bounded organizations.

And so when you start trying to change the mixture of the guard – when we start talking about trying to put CSCSS into the Guard, or build more capability in the Guard, it creates some challenges for them because if you're – my home state of Florida, 53<sup>rd</sup> infantry brigade, which has a very good career path from company to battalion to brigade level, and so you can grow your 11 bravos all up through that career path. When you start saying we want to change the mix and we want to make some of that engineer and some of that transportation, and some of that logistics, where do those soldiers go up? They have no career path. So I can understand when the Guard says, hey, we have got to be very careful about changing this structure because it has a very huge impact on our career path.

Now, I don't have that challenge. My organization headquarters that I had in Orlando, Florida, I had soldiers from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, all of which were part of that organization that grow up in that organization. And I control units that are in eight states that were under my command. So we cross those boundaries.

The point I'm making is if the governor of Florida has the capability to call up that unit he's actually calling up soldiers that may be in Mississippi, and the governor of Mississippi might say, hey, wait a minute; I need those over here in case the hurricane comes this way. So that's part of the challenge I see because they belong to that region.

Now, what I will say is what we're just talking about with this contingency operation. I think there is very much goodness in looking at what the capability is across a region, across all components, and saying how do we have access to call that as needed. I have no problem – I told the Guard guys this – of taking my truck units and sending them to Florida and having them work for Doug Burnett down there at the TAG (sp). That's okay. They're there. A lot of those are going to be residents of Florida anyway that have a vested interest in trying to take care of their own state.

So I think it's not as much of the ability to call them up from a governor's standpoint and control them as much as how do we, as a nation, get access to them and then provide them to the right source.

GEN MCKINLEY: Could I take a shot at that, sir, because I'm the lone guardsmen on the panel?

MR. ROWLEY: Sure. No, please do.

GEN MCKINLEY: I know General Blum and General Vaughn would love to take that question. For the record you may have asked General Blum the question, but I too come from Florida. I know Governor Bush and the adjutant general, General Burnette, are well satisfied with the relationship that they have in Florida to meet needs, and if there are needs they can't fill they use the state (compact?) with other states to bring in those soldiers or airmen that can help them.

You are describing a calamity of such nature, possibly, that requires all assets to be brought to the scene. And that's where Admiral Cotton made his comment today that the taxpayers of America don't really care what status a soldier, airmen, sailor, Marine or Coast Guardsmen is in, they want to be helped now. And those are the kinds of things that I think we have to think through.

But knowing the National Guard as I do, and the ability of it to draw on resources from around the country and from our fellow reserve components, I think we would feel satisfied that the system is well-serving at this point.

GEN BRADLEY: Sir, if I may, I would like to go on record about this as well. Obviously the governors contest that Title 32 forces that they have and that's good and proper, but to answer your question directly I would say no, sir, I don't think the governors should have the authority to task reserve component forces or Air Force reserve forces.

Now, there is a system in place. We've learned a lot of lessons after disaster last year, of course. And I think that we have a much more responsive system through the commander of NORTHCOM, Admiral Keating, that will employ reserve component forces or active forces very quickly when they are needed. So I don't think it's going to be a big problem to get them on scene. Governors can get the Guard there right away. The national or federal forces can be provided quickly.

I sent a lot of combat search and rescue folks to work Hurricane Katrina for the entire time. I sent aerial (spray?) people, I sent communicators, civil engineers, security forces personnel. I'm flying through hurricanes today; we do that. We're -- along with the Air National Guard, we fight forest fires all the time. Those things happen regularly.

I think we have a good system as it is and we don't need to make a change because I think the commander of Northern Command has the right authorities -- and the president is his boss and will tell him what he wants done. I think we have a very responsive system today.

ADM COTTON: Sir, I would say I would agree with General Bradley -- through Northern Command is the way to go. Before Katrina I reported to Admiral Keating that he has 70,000 plus Navy reservists ready for duty anywhere CONUS when they're home,

not supporting combatant commanders overseas. I also told him that we get very befuddled with Title 10, Title 14 Coast Guard, Title 32, and we really want to employ them all in Title 56 status, which is a combination of all those numbers. (Laughter.)

Now, we will go back and try to rewrite each of those statutes when we probably should just rip it up and start over with the realities of today, because I don't think we realize the nightmare of consequence management for WMD, consequence management for Avian Flu.

And Commissioner McKinnon asked what I would do to save money in this country – FEMA maps the country differently than the Army, different than the Air Force, different than the Navy, different than the Marine Corps, different than the FBI, different than any other organization. We are not organized at home to rapidly respond and I think some of the disasters we've had have demonstrated how slowly we respond to this because I don't think we map what we have regionally very well. We tend to default just to the state, and some capability might exist right over a state boundary. It might be the best thing to go next door but we don't do that very well.

So I think there's a lot of savings and a lot of response time to be saved if we look regionally the same way amongst all our services and in our agency working through Northern Command.

GEN. STULTZ (?): Sir, let me make one final comment. This is kind of a ham-and-egg situation, okay, and I'm sure we've all heard the story. In ham and eggs, the chicken is involved but the pig is committed. (Laughter.)

The point is that you could set up a scenario, a chain of events, where if the governor thought they had control, potentially if they needed it, over a unit that was local for them and all of a sudden that unit now is scheduled for deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan, you could accidentally put together a situation where someone else now thought they had a vote in the deployment of that unit.

So I guess I would agree with all my panel members here that it's probably not the best idea at this point.

MR. : Sir, one sentence re-attack please.

MR. ROWLEY: Go ahead.

MR. : Every one of my commanders out there has the authority to react to a life or death situation at any time and we do it.

MR. ROWLEY: Correct. Now, I thank you all for that. I appreciate your candor. That's the answer I expected. Mr. Chairman, that will pretty much conclude it for me.

MR. PUNARO: In the interest of time I won't follow up on that question because I think one of the things I think we all have to recognize – and I'm not suggesting any of you are not suggesting this – but I believe to the American taxpayer the protection of American lives and property here at home is just as important to the long-term security of this nation as putting a bayonet in the heart of a North Korean. And I think we got to look – put it all on the table at the same time.

Being able to go overseas and do what we do overseas is important, but it's just as important that the resources the tax payers provide to the Department of Defense and provide to all of you for your military forces – they're not just here to run around the globe; they're here to basically provide the long term security for this nation. And this nation here at home is more challenging, more threatened than it has ever been in the past.

So I think is – Admiral Cotton, I'm with you. Let's burn all the law books, and I think we've got to start over here in terms of these categories and these pay codes and it has got to be seamless. So I won't ask him to respond to that.

Commissioner Sherrard.

JAMES E. SHERRARD, III: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In a recent hearing we had the senior – your senior enlisted advisors command chiefs – other titles that you may have – raised a concern that for their junior and mid-grade enlisted in particular the cost of coming to inactive duty training was a major concern for the members.

And I guess what I would like to have each of you address, if you would, so that we could actually have it on the record, is what do you do for your members in terms of paying for quarters (or the like?) during inactive duty training. At one time I believe the Army reserve actually had a test program where they paid for travel and I don't think any of the rest of you have had anything like that.

But as the piece of the question would be to you – for you to rank your priority of needs as you see them from your position as high, medium or low in the necessity to pay or considering paying for travel for member to come to inactive duty training, particularly in light of the recent BRAC decisions and other things that are changing as I hear the Army reserve talking about that they cover five or six states.

Admiral Cotton, I know you literally go across the country. I know from having – had discussions with my colleagues in the Air Force, both the Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard they do that as well as Marine Corps. And the Coast Guard, I'm assuming, does the same.

So I would like each of you to address that if you might. What do you pay in terms of quarters and other things for your members for inactive duty training? And then would you or where do you place the priority needs, as I said, high medium or low in

terms of paying them travel or allowing travel pay to be paid for the member to come to inactive duty training?

GEN STULTZ: As you mentioned, we in the Army reserve have run a couple of test programs where we have tried that for the soldiers. The issue always comes back to lack of funding. I mean, that really is – it's what I mentioned where I looking for money to pay for tuition assistance and I've got to look somewhere else and I say, well, I can't afford this test anymore.

It is a very big concern of mine because, as you just mentioned, as two things happen, one, the BRAC where we are shutting 176 Army reserve centers. We're building 125 new armed forces reserve facilities, much nicer, much more modern, distance learning capabilities, in some cases overnight accommodations, billeting situation for soldiers. But it spreads the distances some of our soldiers have to travel.

The other factor that is occurring right now is transformation. We are transforming the Army reserve to the new modular force, and so in a lot of cases now we're standing up sustainment brigades or expeditionary support commands. We're maneuvering Hansmer (ph) brigades or different types of formations where now that soldier – what I mentioned earlier about career pathing – his next assigning for promotion may be a further distance away than what he thought he was going to be. So I've really got to do a careful job as I transform the army reserve to station units in geographies where it allows that soldier for a career path.

To me the priority has to reside with our junior enlisted because those are the soldiers who bear the biggest burden, they get the least amount of pay, and so for me to expect a soldier to drive a long distance, spend a night at his own expense, he ends up costing him to be in the Army reserve rather than getting paid. As they progress up the rank scale obviously the officers and NCOs are willing to drive further because they're doing it to get higher rank for which they're getting high pay. So I'm not as concerned with them, unless there's extreme distances.

But I am concerned with our junior enlisted and I think it's something that we've got to look at and we've got to figure out how are we going to pay these. So it's just going to be a retention issue because, again – we changed this to what we call a value equation. The old value equation is something I dealt with at Procter & Gamble and that is what does a product cost me and what do I get?

Well, the old value equation we had we with the Army reserve is it costs you one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer time and here's what you get. Well, we've changed the equation with an operational force. Now it costs you deployment once every five years. It costs you more training time away from you family. So the soldiers saying, okay, now what do I get in return? One of those we ought to look at is being able to accommodate him so that it doesn't cost him to be in the Army reserve.

MR. SHERRARD: Do you provide him quarters?

GEN. STULTZ: At this time no, sir.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay.

GEN. STULTZ: We ran a test program and literally ran out of money.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay.

GEN. STULTZ: Yes, sir.

MR. SHERRARD: Admiral Cotton?

ADM. COTTON: The Navy reserve does provide quarters if you commute over 50 miles. We share the share issue with BRAC. We are closing 33 facilities, moving onto bases, combining. We also don't have reserve centers anymore. We're not in reserve; we're reserving. And we changed it to Navy Operational Support Centers, and the goal for those commanding officers of those buildings is to be alone on drill weekends. It's not a weekend culture anymore.

Our junior sailors want flexibility. They work different hours. They work several jobs. They want to be able to put their days together when they want to and combine that with the needs of the Navy, their supportive commands, and they might go for five, six, maybe all 39 straight days and get it done with for the year. So flexibility is key.

And then when they go to that supportive command we do provide money for their travel. Travel is not as expensive as it used to be, airline ticket or something else, so rather than have a parallel training system in the reserve world we go to the Navy and train alongside.

Our goal now is out of 39 days of availability we try to get our sailors 30 days at the supported command, because when the call comes they want them ready on arrival to go wherever we need to go. So that's the big change moving from strategic to tactical operation.

And providing these benefits is an important retention tool.

GEN BERGMAN (?): Sir, we – I guess it's within the Department of the Navy – we pay for quarters for those individuals who travel greater than 50 miles.

I would suggest to you that the joint federal travel regulation is the document that while it resides in the administration department of units should be proudly transferred to the sales prevention department, because of the fact that it's the document that people use today to say no as to why you can't.

If there's anything out there that needs a re-write more than the JFDR I would like to find it because right now it inhibits – prohibits – our ability to incentivize, especially senior enlisted and some senior officers, to travel great distances to take leadership billets that's going to allow those units who are in bad need of good solid leadership. And as we do that to be able to provide a career path that shows this diversity, this flexibility. We need to be able to utilize some of the now prohibited travel benefits to get these people to go take those jobs.

GEN BRADLEY (?): Sir, it's a great question. Of course, as you know, we don't pay travel to IDTs for some people but we do for others, because we fly airlift around a number of places where it has been hard to man units so that we can get people to it. So we are paying travel for some people and in others we're saying sorry. That's not quite fair.

Timely question – just yesterday ran into a couple of folks from Milwaukee – you mentioned base closure – that's going to dislodge a heck of a lot of folks in my force. We're shutting five wings, just one base, but we're shutting five wings – or six wings actually, including the base. That means we are moving reserve jobs a lot of places around the country and we're going to be starting over. It's going to be difficult.

So these folks from Milwaukee, yesterday, just asked me if I thought we might be able to do airlift from there to Pope Air Force Base where we're resetting our Fort Bragg Air/Army air field, where we're resetting that wing. And it's a good consideration. I'm not sure how good the recruiting will be there for a while and we may need to do that for quite some time. It is certainly helpful in a lot of areas where we do this.

But to answer the other part of your question, I would be very much in favor. It would be high on my priority list to pay travel for IDT. We are asking people to do so much more today than we used to do and it's time we changed that paradigm I think.

And the other – third part of your question, yes, sir, we pay housing all the time. We put them up on base or we put them in contract hotels or motels off base.

GEN MCKINLEY(?): Sir, as you know, we're community based. Many of our units have a 50 mile radius and that has worked well for us in the past, but as we look at transitioning from strategic operational this is a huge consideration.

I would like my staff to take it for the record because I guess we would have 54 different answers for you based on our states and territories. So I want to get the specifics for you, but we did pay housing for our units in Florida if you lived outside the 50 mile radius. We were concerned with our members safety driving home after a long drill weekend, had not had adequate rest having an accident on the way, so that's what we did locally.

But it's a wonderful question. I think it's a vital issue to our future and I'll get you the specifics for the Air National Guard.

ADM ACTON: Sir, concerning IDT berthing the Coast Guard has, for some number of years now, providing berthing if you live beyond the reasonable commuting distance of 50 miles. That is not a guarantee. That's on an as available basis, but it has worked out very well for us.

Concerning travel, the Coast Guard has a fairly ubiquitous presence in the United States. We do not have a lot of personnel, particularly enlisted personnel that have to go beyond the reasonable commuting distance; however, as we are engaging more and more with the combatant commanders we have some port security units that have critical commanding officer positions. We also have some leadership positions within the Naval Coastal Warfare community.

I also would support a way to find some sort of augmentation for travel for people filling select key leadership billets.

MR. SHERRARD: Thank you very much. I have just one follow up – I'm sorry, was there a comment?

ADM. COTTON: Just one more follow up if I could please, sir.

MR. SHERRARD: Yes, John.

ADM COTTON: The Navy recognized this a couple of years ago. We looked at the customer, what they wanted which was a (mandate?), didn't care what kind of orders you're on when you got there and had no clue how the budget was done. And we, the reserve components, make this extremely difficult for the customers. We have AT, ADT, ADST as another budget line, ADSW, IDT, IDTT – are you confused? Too many letters, we call this alphabet soup.

So, in the FY08 budget – we're discussing this now in the Pentagon – we've proposed there's two funding lines: AD and ID, drop the "T". Is there anything you want to use it for? And that AD will be a fully funded dollar with travel and per diem.

So if the customer needs your service, your capabilities, your skill set, you get one day to three years for that skills set with the laws that we currently have in place that will make it very much more streamline for all of us if we get that through.

MR. SHERRARD: As a second piece of this that I also – the question has been raised, and Commissioner McKinnon asked earlier about cost-savings issues – do you have inside your service components a – for lack of a better word – I'm going to call it a reserve service obligation whereby the member incurs a duty period for specific training they may have received, so that it's the return only investment that the American taxpayers made in each of your members and in each of us that have served in the past that you could in fact force the member to serve with you?

And if you have that I would like to know what it is, and if you don't have it would you be receptive for some type of capability where you could recall that member to get that return on that investment where you may have spent 39 weeks training someone and then they never show back up for the first drill?

ADM. COTTON: I think the – what we have currently are obviously our enlistment, reenlistment bonus where they're committed to – they get a cash bonus upfront and so they're committed to a certain amount of time or we recoup that money. Same thing with educational benefits that we pay to them and then if they don't follow through – to my knowledge that's about the length of it.

When it comes to the military training side where I've invested time in training that soldier through NLS training school or something like that, that does not incur him into any length of period of time. I mean, what incurs him to his length of service is his contract that he signed where enlistment or reenlistment – and also any kind of tuition assistance or any other monies that he has been given for his education, that he drops out of service and we're still paying that education, we're going to go back and recoup that.

MR. SHERRARD: Sir.

ADM COTTON: The Navy reserve is doing the same thing with bonuses. We would have to recoup if they did drop out. This is a big concern of the active component, if I spend a dollar and train someone.

The Navy reserve has started new accession training for all of our Navy reservists to include full boot camp and full Ace (ph) school to get an MOS, an NEC (?) for the global war on terror, like corpsmen or Seabees or something like that, and a six-year commitment for service. And it's our intention to get the six years of service out of that individual.

I think we have the ability to recall that person for non-performance. We have not done that much since the late '80s because we had plenty of folks and didn't have to do that, but I think we have sufficient authority to do that now. We've just chosen to not do it in the past. It might come to it where we do that in the future, and I think all of us might agree with that at some certain time we would have to do that.

GEN BERGMAN: Sir, there's no specific policy within the Marine Corps, the Marine Corps reserve to recoup least time invested; however, some of the new bonus programs that we're putting in place for the Marine Corps reserve will have – will allow us the capability to recoup our investment. Usually it would be in terms of dollars, not in terms of time.

GEN. BRADLEY: Sir, I'm going to have to do some research on some parts of this question.

On your question relative to some pieces of it for obligated service due to training, I don't know. The one example, one of our largest that I think I do know something about, is when we send someone to pilot training the active Air Force has a huge number of years of commitment that a person must serve following pilot training. Supposedly that applies to us but the lawyers have told me over the years that we can't enforce it. I think that's wrong. I would love to have the authority.

But in general to answer your question I think we should have an authority to require service for folks for whom we've provided training. They have an obligation to us. We're providing something to them that will help them in many ways and they have an obligation back to us to serve a specified period of time.

GEN. MCKINLEY: I, too, sir, would like to take it for the record to get you specific answers because, again, it probably depends. As General Bradley said our long service commitment to flight schools – I have seen cases in the Guard where a member moves out of state, has to leave that state Guard and is not picked by another Guard, thereby negating all the training we spent.

So would I like to have those authorities and statutes? I think I would at this point in history. I think we need it for the benefit of our service.

ADM. ACTON: Sir, I can get you specifics as a follow on as well. However, in general in the Coast Guard we don't have, for reservists, extended training opportunities that would require an obligation beyond a contractual obligation they have.

MR. SHERRARD: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Commissioner Don Stockton.

DONALD L. STOCKTON: Thank you all for your expert advice to this commission. We appreciate it very much. Your many years of experience in the field equips you to have expert advice to us.

I heard Admiral Cotton suggest that the Navy would benefit by using the Marine personnel system since we can't wait, perhaps, for DIMHRS to develop. Are there other services that would maybe think the same way?

GEN. STULTZ: I think from the Army side, I echo his sentiments that we are continuing to wait on DIMHRS. And I've been told that the Army reserve may be the first one to implant DIMHRS. My concern is we're going to be the only one on DIMHRS – (laughter) – so we're not going to be any better off. We've got to get ahead of it now and get one pay system across the Army where soldiers can flow back and forth without all the issues.

MR. STOCKTON: Any others?

GEN BERGMAN: What I would say, sir, is that I don't know enough about the Marine Corps system.

But anecdotally what I heard when I was in a different position several years ago, and we were in the beginning stages of mobilizing people after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, that many people were having great difficulty getting their pay. And we're ripping people away from their homes and families and bills that they owe and their civilian employer and they're not getting paid anymore, and we're taking weeks and weeks to get people paid when we've mobilized them and in many cases sent them overseas. That is wrong; particularly it's difficult for very young enlisted people who have bills to pay and no income and nothing maybe in savings to back it up. So there is something wrong with that.

Now, we worked hard to fix those problems as quickly as we could. I heard through, anecdotally at that time, that the Marine Corps has a system that – just boom – they just move right into it and it's not a difficult transition. I don't know why that is. I don't know that we can possibly get away from DIMHRS. I think we are too far down the road and it won't happen, but it's been a difficult system to get up and running. I think the Air Force is going to jump into it pretty quickly but I don't know how well it will work.

GEN BRADLEY (?): Of course General Blum's got the Army and the Air Force to look at and as chief of the bureau he'll make the decision for us. I believe he is committed to DIMHRS. I know our Air Force is committed to it. But whatever model works we need to move towards that and make sure that all our members get the pay and benefits they're entitled to.

MR. SHERRARD: I would like for all of you to think about when your – during your trips a field about the primary benefit issues that you hear from the reservists and the guardsmen. Are there any things – we've talked about a lot of things here today, healthcare, continuum of service, are there some things that we haven't – that hasn't come forward yet?

GEN STULTZ (?): I guess I can't really add a lot that hasn't come forward.

I think the biggest thing I hear from the soldiers out there in the field and from the families and from the employers is predictability, that they've got to be able to plan their life, their employment, around the – their commitment to the reserve components. And so predictability to me means one thing in terms of when am I going to have to mobilize and deploy, but predictability also means in terms of healthcare when am I going to have and not going to have healthcare coverage and those types of benefits.

So I think what we've got to put together in the future is a package for the Army reserve soldier and for the other reserve component soldiers that says here is the predictability in terms of when you can go to school and get a degree and not be expected to have to stop and serve your country. But also for your family, here's the predictability

in terms of you're going to have no interruption of healthcare as you go through this continuum, that you're going to be – as it was mentioned earlier – either to stay with your current healthcare program or to switch back and forth without any interruption or having to switch physicians and all the turmoil that's created.

ADM COTTON: Sir, I think TRICARE Reserves Select, I mentioned, is huge, tuition assistance is huge.

One more, and it is continuous service. And a specific example -- the ability for a woman at the 10 year point of service to move from the active component to a reserve status, to have a couple of children, and then to move back in to active component. This is something we don't do right now. Again, I said it before; 20 year career over 40 years, for us taxpayers, life cycle cost is going to be a lot better. This seems very attractive to a lot of people. They could take a little time off – two, three years, whatever else – and then come and pitch back in.

So that's something else that we would like – in the Navy we're working toward now.

GEN BERGMAN (?): Sir, people are in the reserves because they want to be in the reserve. We work for a company usually because we want to work for that company. We give, we receive something in return. You've heard it said several different ways; I'm just going to repeat it very quickly. Predictably as much as possible from a standpoint not only of that individual planning their life, their family being able to balance, their employer being able to balance.

And then portability, portability of healthcare benefits, portability of 401(k) type programs. We, in this society today – my family, we have five children between the ages of 36 and 28, and as I chat with them – good news is they're all earning their own paycheck – (laughter) – but as I chat with them about their career aspirations none of them conceive of being with the same company for a career – farthest thing from their mind.

So that portability aspect that they bring from their personal life, if we can provide a path, a visible path, for them that shows the key elements that they require for portability are there, the ability for us then to retain good folks – first recruit them, but then retain the best of the best for a career length of service – it increases our chances to have that.

GEN BRADLEY (?): Sir, I would say the healthcare, IDT travel are the big benefit issues. We have many authorities that are granted to us by the Congress through the appropriation authorization bills for which we do not get a corresponding appropriation. So we have authorities to pay bonus in some areas for which we have no money to do it. So those are – those things are difficult but the biggest issues to my folks out there I think would be healthcare and the travel for IDT.

GEN MCKINLEY: Sir, General Blum, General Vaughn and myself are committed to working with the states adjutant generals to make sure that we have the right benefits packages that are working for today's environment. That changes pretty much yearly.

I know the Air National Guard has its unique circumstances. The Air National Guard is facing challenges now that we didn't face 10 years ago. So we'll continue to look for those opportunities to take care of our soldiers and airmen.

And we appreciate your interest on the commission on this subject, and I'm sure that as time goes by we'll be able to pick up some issues that maybe – are very important to all our members such as healthcare, a continuum service that will pay great results.

ADM ACTON: Sir, I think our end goal should continue to be zero defects in mobilization and demobilization, and with everything that that implies – legislation, systems, processes – to make it's as seamless as possible for our reserve members. Essentially we're asking great Americans to mobilize, sacrifice and serve their country, and in too many instances we make it too complicated, too painful and too hard for them to do that easily.

MR. SHERRARD: Thank you. That concludes my questions.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Gordon Stump.

GORDON STUMP: Good afternoon. I'm the only thing standing between you and lunch so I'll be brief. (Laughter.)

MR. PUNARO: Not so fast.

MR. STUMP: The PDB-720 (sp) – and this is for General Bradley and then General McKinley – gave the Air Force a bill that starts in '08 and runs through the FYDP, and I believe its 40,000 reduction in the active duty, it's – 14,400 was the suggested number for the Air National Guard and 7,900 for the Air Force reserves. This is probably but into the POM that will have to be complied with.

My question is how are you going to comply with that and what, if anything, will you not do or how will it effect readiness with this bill that has been handed to the reserve components?

GEN BRADLEY: Commissioner Stump, a lot of facets to your questions. First of all, in my opening statement, I think this is great opportunity for all of our reserve chiefs and components to find some very well-trained patriotic Americans who, through no fault of their own, are being asked to leave the service. I would like to find some way to bring any of those members in that want to serve in the Air National Guard and give them the ability to do that.

The chief of the National Guard Bureau had us do a couple things on the Air National Guard side. One, he went to the secretary and the chief of staff of the Air Force and said we would prefer not to pay a bill with manpower at this time, and I want my director of the Air National Guard to find other ways, offsets to pay our bill. We know we have a recapitalization bill to pay, and we laid that in the '08 to '13 wedge. It's about \$1.8 billion over the FIDEP for us, and we will take greater risk in areas that are very dear to our hearts such as flying hours, depot-level repair, and military construction. Those are tough issues, but we believe we want to hang on to our people. We think they are the most precious commodity that we have and we want to be able to offer members who are leaving any of the components an opportunity to come serve with us.

Now, the second aspect of that is the surprise at which we had – I'll speak for myself – at the PBD-720 when it was laid in. I think one way for us and the Air National Guard to do a better job of advising our component earlier than a PBD laying on us is to be part of the inner workings of the Pentagon. And I'm trying to integrate my staff, and General Moseley has given me the opportunity with General Blum's concurrence, to integrate my strategic planners in the Pentagon with the Air Force strategic planners, and in the personnel divisions that make these things come to be. So hopefully in the future, I'll be in at the ground level; we'll be able to parse these out, and before those drop on us. In many cases, we won't have a choice; but in this particular case, we felt it important enough to draw the line on our end strength and to pay the bill another way.

GEN MCKINLEY: Sir, we were issued this bill. It's 7,744 – to be exact – positions. The Air Force – the regular Air Force – will cut 35,000 people. We are not going to cut 7,744 people. Let me explain briefly.

We took a very broad approach to this. We coordinated fully with all of the air staff functional bosses, with all of the Air Force major commands, to make sure that they understood everything we were doing here. I talked to the secretary and the chief a couple of times about our approach to this so that they would fully understand what we are doing, because this is controversial, cutting this many people and moving some categories of people.

We've been through a heck of a lot of change with base closure affecting about 8,000 reservists, moving their positions elsewhere, many hundreds or thousands of miles from where their current units are. So there are thousands of people in the unit world whose jobs will not be in Milwaukee or Portland or at Selfridge or many other places in the future. So we have affected a lot of folks in the unit world already. We are also, under PBD-720, I see, 130 wing. We are going to close a number of geographically separated units that aren't on bases and also we looked at what kinds of units are most used and needed today in predicting, and hopefully smartly, what are needed in the future and what are less needed. And so we cut some of those off the bottom. We are restructuring our medical force considerably because the Air Force surgeon general has said you have too much medical capability in the Air Force Reserve. I said, that's interesting. We've only built what you've told us in the past we needed, so we will

restructure it like you say we need to do it to provide the capability the Air Force wants. So we are doing that. So all of that is out of the unit world.

Now, another piece – a sizeable piece – of this 7,744 is going to be moving IMAs – individual mobilization augmentees – from what we call Category B to Category E. What that means is we will no longer spend reserve personnel appropriation money on those people, but they are not going away. They can still be used 365 days a year by the active component, if they want to use them on military personnel appropriation mandates. So they could be used as much as they have money for, much as they want them. So those positions are not being eliminated. But, we had that personnel bill to pay under the PBD. We weren't asked if we wanted to do it. We were issued the bill and we're going to pay it. And we brought it into the POM and we'll see whether the department fully accepts it. But we brought in a balanced POM following the rules that the secretary and the chief laid out for us.

All that being said, through base closure, through PBD-720, there is a lot of pain to spread around from the IMA world, from the unit world. It's over 14,000 people whose lives and jobs will be affected by this, so that's a lot of pain. And nobody likes any of it; nobody likes getting rid of 35,000 people out of the active component either, and closing bases is not enjoyable. But we have to do it. I do believe we have a bright future. Our Air Force secretary and chief have set us on a course for total force integration that I think is a fabulous thing for both the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. There are many opportunities out there for us to put manpower against for future missions that make me feel very good about our future. I believe, ten years from now, we're going to look back and say we did a lot of the right things. There was a lot of pain involved and people's careers were affected, but we are doing everything we can under base closure, under PBD-720 to try and take care of as many people as possible. I want to keep as many folks as I can. And if they can't serve with me, I want them to serve with Craig, or any of these other chiefs here, to continue to serve our nation so people can get to a retirement eligibility at some point.

The only other thing that I would ask – and I've tried to testify – I have testified to Congress and visited with many senators and congressmen and staffs about a transition assistance program that would help folks who have served fifteen or sixteen years or so and just cannot do it anymore because we've moved their job somewhere else, some small, reduced retirement annuity at age 60, such as we had the authority to do in the '90s.

We don't have that authority today. I'm not happy that the Air Force did not submit legislation to take care of the reservists and guardsmen in this regard. They did for the active, but not for the reserve. And I've gone over to try to get them to insert language this year. It might be something you all could look at, but it's a minor thing. A reserve transition assistance program like we had in the '90s for base closure or this PBD-720 business, so that somebody who has served our nation for a lot of years isn't going to get cut off with no retirement annuity as they reach age 60. So sorry for the long answer, but it's a complicated thing.

Now, I could have not cut any IMAs out of this program. I could have done this without going from B to E on some people, but the chief of staff of the Air Force does not want me to take down two F-16 wings, two A-10 wings, and four more C-130 wings to pay this bill. He doesn't want me to do that. There is a requirement out there for our units, and we are taking a big hit in our units already. So we spread it around. I have not had a single Air Force major command commander or vice commander tell me that he or she is unhappy with us with what we've done.

MR. STUMP: That's great. You're going to maintain the same mission capability that you have now with some risk is what it sounds like. One of the things that the commission is going to do at the end of our term is to recommend legislation to help out the reserve components. Now, in the total force integration that the Air Guard and the Air Force Reserve are going through now, it's a huge transition from airplanes to everything else, and especially in the Title-32, Title-10. Are there some obstacles to total force integration that you face that are legal obstacles that we as a commission could suggest for legislation to fix that?

GEN BRADLEY: A little bit of yes; a little bit of no. We've done this before. Our total force integration for the most part is going where we are integrating. We are using the reserve associate model that has been in being since 1968 in the airlift world. There will be active units associating with reserve. There will be guard units associating with active. Vice versa. Every direction you can imagine, we're doing it. That associate model is what the Air Force thinks is the right way to do it, so that's good.

There are some law changes that we could suggest that might be helpful. A big deal law change that I think we need to take on – and I know it's been addressed under Title-32 and there may be legislation today that's in the authorization bill that will fix this – but I would love for you all to please consider this as well to make sure that it is considered if it doesn't pass this year. We have been criticized by our own Air Force, by lawyers rather, for training active duty people with fulltime support folks, ATRs, Air Reserve technicians, whatever. I got an audit result last week from an A-10 unit at Barksdale Air Force Base, which I was a part of in 1973. It wasn't A-10s then, but we have been training a lot of people – active, guard, and reserve – in a training schoolhouse, formal training flying program there since 1973. We do C-130 training for the Air Force; we do F-16 training for the Air Force; we do pilot training for the Air Force. There is no one on Capitol Hill exercised about this. But there are lawyers in the Air Force who think we are violating the law by training active people with fulltime support folks, Air Reserve technicians and ATRs. I would love to have language to clarify that so we don't have problems. But an Air Force audit agency report came out last week that says you are violating Title-ten by training A-10 pilots for the active Air Force.

MR. STUMP: Great, I'm sure that's something that we as a commission can look at. One last request – we had a briefing from DOD on this continuum of service also, and this seems to be a theme that everybody thinks is a good idea and can buy into. And I'm sure each service has a different idea on what sort of legislation might be required to

enable this continuum of service. So it would be very helpful to the commission if each of you could give this some thought and make some recommendations on legislation changes that we could make to make the continuum of service work and something that we could present to Congress so that we could move forward with this one, because this seems to be a very non-controversial type program, but one that would be helpful to all of the services. And thank you very much for all of your participation. I really appreciate your –

MR. PUNARO: Okay, let me – we've been here awhile and we'll be done here in just a second. But let me close out with a quick question and then I want to give a little summary of what I think we've heard here this morning. But as I heard, and I'm going to address this to the two ground force commanders because they talked about it a little bit. My understanding, and it's certainly the testimony we've had before that our military has always felt that the concept of train-as-we-fight, organize, equip, and train as we fight, unit cohesion, unit leadership was a pretty fundamental premise of how we operate in the military where it's active, guard, and reserve. Is that still true today? General Stultz?

GEN STULTZ: Yes, very much so.

MR. PUNARO: General Bergman?

GEN BERGMAN: Absolutely.

MR. PUNARO: All right. Well let me then, if that was – I'm not surprised that was your answer because I thought that would be your answer because that's been a sine qua non of sort of what our military has been about, and I know it's true for all the other components. So when a number of the commissioners visited Fort Hood on Monday, and Lieutenant General O'Diorno (sp) was a terrific host. He was also a previous witness before our commission, and there's a lot of active there, but there was a Guard brigade training up for deployment to Iraq, as many have done. And it was a brigade that was formed with soldiers from 42 different states. Not, as General McKinley talked about – well, we have units and everybody lives in Florida, and we have units and everybody lives in Mississippi. And we wouldn't want the governors to kind of mix that up, because they might not make good decisions. But now here's a brigade that's going to Iraq – 42 different states. So I guarantee you that unit doesn't have unit cohesion because they haven't been trained together. They didn't have sufficient equipment for their training. You've alluded to that.

They also had equipment that couldn't be used in theater. For example, some of the helicopters – the peacetime training standards that are acceptable are not acceptable to the combatant commander in theater, so they aren't training on the kind of equipment they're going to be using when they get over there. And in talking to some of the troops who are going through a very extended training up period, you know, it definitely was a morale factor and definitely affected their propensity to re-enlist.

And of course, people when they deploy, we have an obligation to particularly the young troops – I mean, I can guarantee if you're coming from 42 different states, the NCOs, they don't know some of the troops and the young officers, they don't know some of the troops so it sounds to me like that sort of turns and flips on its head what you've just testified to was a fundamental of train as we fight. Would you agree with that?

GEN STULTZ: Absolutely. I think the answer to me – and I keep going back to this – is this force generation model that we're putting in place in the Army. And the force generation model says, look, you don't fund or you don't equip based on component. You fund and equip based on where they are in that model. And so, you build these packages just like we're saying. If we need eighteen brigade combat teams or fifteen brigade combat teams or ten, whatever it is, what mix of those are going to come from the active army? What are going to come from the National Guard, since they have the BCTs? And if they're in year four, a year before they're getting ready to deploy, they've got to be all trained, equipped to standard the way they're going to fight. Train as you're going to fight. If on the other hand, if you're back in year one of reset, you may not get as much because you're at that point where your people are going to school and getting their individual stuff. And that goes for the active as well as the reserve components. And so, to me, it's quit looking at it by component, and look at the total force and say, we're moving this total force through a continuum. And so where they are in that continuum dictates how they're equipped, how they're trained, how they're funded.

MR. PUNARO: Great, General Bergman, if what I've described at Fort Hood is accurate, would you agree that that flips on its head the fundamental of train as we fight?

GEN BERGMAN: If you plan to fight as Keystone cops, then maybe you've got a model.

MR. PUNARO: Right, so basically, you would say it does turn on its head the fundamental of train as we fight.

GEN BERGMAN: Sure, let me just offer one example and this is a recognized challenge that we have within the Marine Corps Reserve. We have nine infantry battalions. We have potentially well over 100 sites that could administrate the training of those infantry battalions. We have sent battalions into combat from the Marine Forces Reserve since the beginning of OIF. Fact of the matter is, the biggest challenge that we had then prior to OIF, and that we still have today is that an infantry battalion headquarters might be located in Detroit, Michigan, and one of its company headquarters is in Grand Rapids, another one is in Lansing, another one is Saginaw, or wherever it happens to be, Perrysburg, Ohio. And that's a close infantry battalion from where we're looking at. But the ability of that battalion commander to exercise the battalion's staff training is a tremendous challenge. At the company level, no problems. So as we look at unit cohesion, as we look at the ability to maintain a unit together for its war fighting capability, we have to be more rather than less creative when it comes to maintaining the integrity of the unit, both in the training and in the employment of them.

MR. PUNARO: Great. My sort of back of the envelope summary as I have tried to listen very carefully, and I'm not suggesting this is anybody's summary at the table or anybody's summary here at the commission staff other than mine – it was basically the Pentagon is not moving fast enough in terms of making the changes that we should make in terms of the fundamentals, and recognize that as we switch from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve that the Guard and Reserve still remain a bargain for the taxpayer, particularly if you look at the lifecycle costing and particularly as you consider as General McKinley pointed out what some possible alternatives if you didn't have it may be going back to conscription. That a mobilization approach based on a request for forces vice the time honored and planned-for time-phase deployment list. Certainly, we have not adjusted our mobilization policies, procedures, laws, rules, regulations, or practices to take into the fact that we're using the RF vice, the tip fit.

We don't have adequate funding for training and equipping particularly for the operational nature of what the reserve and guard is doing today vice the strategic reserve. The pool of personnel that we're all trying to draw from and compete for, not only in the military but in the universities and the academe, and the business community who also believes that the 18 to 24 year old population is a prime population, is much more limited – 28 percent as Admiral Cotton said – than would have been believed; that the 39 days and two weeks training that was the basis of training and organizing the strategic reserve certainly is not sufficient for an operational reserve or a basis to go from the future; that the current pay and compensation system is incredibly inflexible, and what we need is a lot more flexibility, best business practices, menu-based plans, and believing that our young soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen are really bright and they can figure a lot of this stuff out. They don't need some Air Force auditors telling them what makes the most sense. I probably suspect those auditors that looked at what you were doing down there training maybe the same ones that were running the joint travel regulations that General Bergman was concerned about.

And we certainly need to look at things in a holistic, joint approach rather than serve a stovepipe approach. In fact, there are some savings there. And that the old concept of flexible readiness where you could afford to have units that were at C-4 or C-5 and just flat aren't ready to go, because in World War III if the Soviet Union came across the full border, some units weren't needed for a year. But the fact is, we have threats here at home that we didn't have before and guard and reserve units are going to be required to operate here at home, they're still going to be the people that are there in the first 48 to 72 hours is critical in any kind of disaster situation. And as some testimony I heard was the WMD are pandemic. You're going to be bringing the whole force of the government's forces to bear. Flexible readiness is just not the answer for the future. We've got to have our units organized, trained, equipped, and ready at C-1 status.

Now, that's kind of my quick summary. If any of the commissioners feel like I may have last something out or if any eyewitnesses believe I've summarized something that you all didn't say, you can jump up and say I have it wrong. But I'm going to basically – looking at people kind of with the head nods this way and not hearing any

demurs, take that as a fairly accurate summary of the testimony, which has been extremely valuable, extremely helpful. We look forward, as we have had previous to this, to continuing an open and frank dialogue with you as the reserve component leaders. We look forward to getting the details of the information that you agreed to provide, particularly the details on the shortfalls and how we can address the shortfalls. And finally, again, if any way along the way, as I've said to many of you before, both on the record and in private, if there's something you hear we're looking at or doing that you think doesn't make a lot of sense to you, get on the phone, call us up, come visit with you and the door is always open. So we look forward to continuing the dialogue as we move forward.

So at this point, we'll subject recess until 2:00 PM. At that point, we'll hear from junior to mid-level enlisted representatives from each of the reserve components in the Coast Guard. So basically, we've gotten sort of the high level leadership view. We ant to kind of get the bird's eye view from the troops. So we'll recess until 2:00 PM in this same room.

(Break.)

MR. PUNARO: The commission will come to order. Good afternoon. Welcome to our afternoon session here in the second part of our first field hearing by the independent commission on the National Guard and Reserves. In order to meet our congressional mandate, the commission is seeking testimony from a broad range of senior civilian and military leaders, as well as prominent subject matter experts.

Equally important, however, we want to know the concerns of individual Reserve and Guard members themselves. On Monday, a group of commissioners visited Fort Hood and talked with National Guard troops to being mobilized to go to Afghanistan and back. On Thursday, commissioners will be at Lackland Air Force Base to talk with Air Force reserve and Air and National Guard personnel who flew numerous missions in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and the rescue efforts after Hurricane Katrina.

In July, in one of our hearings back in Washington, we received testimony from the reserve component senior enlisted advisors who visit frequently with service members and their families. They told us about concerns they have heard across a broad spectrum of issues.

For this afternoon's panel, we are going to hear from individual service members themselves. Each reserve component was asked to identify a junior to mid-grade enlisted drilling, selected reservist, who has been involuntarily mobilized since 9/11. And so the witnesses that we have here this afternoon are a small handful of over one-half million Guard and Reserve personnel who had been mobilized since 9/11 for operations as diverse as Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and things of that nature.

So in addition, though, the hearing from the individual witnesses here this afternoon, we are also conducting informal focus groups with service members in

conjunction with other commission activities to include family members and business personnel. The staff is in fact conducting a series of focus groups while here in San Antonio, and I know that several of our commissioners will be working on those in the future.

The commission intends to seek feedback from the troops and from their families and employers through a variety of mechanisms and in a variety of venues. And several people have asked me, Mr. Chairman, why are you hearing from this panel of enlisted personnel, and I say because we want to get the real facts, and that is why we invite – we have heard from the generals and we have heard from the politicians; now we want to find out what's really going on out in the field.

Most of the members of this commission have served in the military. We have been around a long time and we know that the troops are what count, that we wouldn't make it in this military if it wasn't for our enlisted personnel and our non-commissioned officers. And so we wanted to have an opportunity to hear from individuals like yourselves, that is not only served but who could tell us a little bit about what your colleagues are thinking and doing. So that will help us focus our recommendations from the future.

So for this afternoon's enlisted service panel members, I want to welcome Sergeant Allison Kitzerow – did I get that right – Kitzerow; Sergeant Christopher from the Army reserve – Sergeant Christopher McWilliams from the Army National Guard; Sergeant – Staff Sergeant Maria Sparks from the Air Force reserve; Master Sergeant Alphonzo Allen from the air national guard; construction mechanic Second Class Jose – is it Quiroz – Quiroz, thank you – Navy reserve; Corporal Adrian Garza, Marine Corps reserve; and Chief Petty Officer Douglas Gilmer from the Coast Guard Reserve.

So welcome to each and every one of you. We thank you for being here today and for your dedicated service to the nation. We're going to ask that you speak as an individual service member. You are not speaking as an official spokesman for your component. We have already received sort of the official testimony from a variety of DOD service and reserve component witnesses. We would like each of you to give us a little bit of background about your personal experience and observations, as well as provide any feedback that you may have collected from others in your unit.

So we are going to ask each of you to make a brief opening statement telling us something about yourself and your Guard or Reserve background and experience, and then share any issues and concerns you would like to present to the commission, and then we will have some questions for you.

Again, the members of this commission represent a fairly broad spectrum of people and expertise with a lot of familiarity with these issues. And, again, we really not only thank you for your service to the country, thank you for being willing to spend some time with us here this afternoon and for sharing some of your observations and concerns.

So with that, we'll start with you and just go down the line. Sergeant Kitzerow.

**SERGEANT ALLISON KITZEROW:** My name is Sergeant Allison Kitzerow. I'm 23 years old, and I am from Old Creek, Wisconsin. I graduated from Old Creek High School in 2000 and I went on to pursue a bachelor's degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

In March 2002, I enlisted in the Army reserve and went to basic training and military police school during the summer before my junior year of college. When I was done with training, I was assigned to the 822<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company located in Arlington Heights, Illinois. Less than three months after I reported for my first drill, my unit was mobilized. We spent six weeks training and completing soldier readiness processing at Fort Dix. Then we spent a month training and doing miscellaneous missions and Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

And finally, in March 2003, we moved north into Iraq and stayed there until we redeployed in February 2004. When we first arrived in Iraq, we were tasked with a few short-term missions, which included both setting up perimeter security around an airfield in Tallil, Iraq, and administering vehicle and personnel searches at entry control points in Umm Qasr, Iraq. In April 2003, our long-term mission became EPW, civilian-internee operations at Camp Bucca, Iraq. My unit and I both built the actual compounds of the prison and eventually served as prison guards in the towers.

My entire mobilization lasted from December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2002, until March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2004. When I redeployed from Iraq, I joined a new unit, the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 85<sup>th</sup> Division, located in Fort Sheridan, Illinois. Currently I am a TPU soldier and I work as an executive administrative assistant for Brigadier General Edward Arsen (ph). Also, when I returned home from deployment, I finished my bachelor's degree at Marquette, and I graduated in December 2005. At this time I work as a claims adjudicator for the Department of Veterans' Affairs in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

I really appreciate this opportunity to represent the Army reserve in this very important forum, and I look forward to your questions.

**MR. PUNARO:** Thank you. Sergeant McWilliams.

**SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER MCWILLIAMS:** Chairman Punaro, distinguished members of the commission, I am very grateful for this opportunity to testify here today and give you my feedback on what I have seen on deployments.

Just real short, I joined the Guard in May of 2001. I was mobilized for Operation Noble Eagle shortly thereafter. I have mobilized and served in Djibouti, Africa, Kuwait, and also Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004. I am currently serving with Charter Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 172<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Mountain. Two of the things I want to talk about – they are all in my written statement but I just wanted to touch on a few of them, or deployment issues.

One of the big ones was the adequacy of unit and individual equipment. I saw some great things over there. We fell in on some great equipment, good-armored Humvees that saved lives. There was the Rapid Fielding Initiative, which was a program set up by the Army to issue improved ballistic helmets, goggles, flame-retardant gloves, boots, and anything you can think of to soldiers, which has made life a lot easier and increased the survivability of the troops over there. Programs like that are awesome initiatives that need to continue.

As far as unit and individual training, at MOB station I mobilized out of Fort Dix in February of 2004. I saw a lot of good things and saw some things that could really use some help. One of the good things was marksmanship instruction. There is a battalion mobilized out of the Northwest U.S., soldiers with – (present hunters and stabs ?) which are some of the finest shooters in the world came to Fort Dix to instruct us, and it was by far some of the best training I have seen. Medical training – you know, combat life saver courses, and advanced courses like that, which are awesome for troops because it's not the average that is out there on the road helping soldiers out; it's the everyday soldier that is really doing the lifesaving work.

Some of the bad things I saw at MOB station were not necessarily bad, just things that could use some work, were soldiers who haven't deployed yet are acting as subject matter experts, instructing soldiers who have been there on subjects that perhaps somebody who has been there and just returned would be better suited for.

Another one of the things I have been asked to speak about were competition in benefits both during and after the return – a lot of great initiatives going on as far as the states with the GI Bill and state tuition assistance, great programs, get soldiers through schools. The GSLI increase from 250,000 to \$400,000 was awesome. It put a lot of soldiers, soldiers of mine at ease knowing that if something were to happen, their families were that much better taken of.

And the new traumatic injury protection, the THGLI (ph) program, it's a great program. I have seen a lot of soldiers who were severely wounded receive payments which secured their future. A lot of guys come back with severe injuries and they are really insecure about what is going to happen to their families, and then programs like this are great.

Medical care was a huge one for me. I was wounded in November 2004 severely. I was medevaced to Landstuhl, Germany, where I received the best care – extreme professional. They gave their utmost attention to me. Had it not been for them, you know, I wouldn't be here today. There was also the CBHTO, the Community Base Health Organization, which is a – which is a great program. Soldiers feel better when they are at home, they have their families nearby, and they have somebody, you know, that gives one-on-one attention to their needs. It's a great program and just – at times it was overfilled, and just more funding more people would be awesome.

That pretty much concludes what I have to say, sir. I have enjoyed my time in the Guard, and I would be more than willing to answer any questions you have.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. And I had it wrong – not second class petty – first class petty officer. There you go. Turn your mike there, thanks.

CONSTRUCTION MECHANIC SECOND CLASS JOSE QUIROZ: My name is Joe Quiroz. I'm a construction mechanic, first-class petty office with naval mobile construction, Battalion 22. I have approximately 14 years of service with the Navy. I did three in the fleet and 11 with the reserves.

I was volunteered to be on the tactical movement team due to my background as Bexar County Sheriff's deputy. That automatically put me on the team. It was my duty along with my team members to escort our fellow service members, mostly CBs, Army, and Marines to different places like Ramadi and Fallujah. We took them and their equipment there, made sure they got there safe and unharmed, and everyone got there in one piece.

My team completed over 80 successful missions, and no one got hurt and we all came home in one piece. We have minor accidents such as people getting their hands cut by hand saws and stuff like that, but everybody came home. It was our own special market that complacency kills, and they drilled that into our heads day and night, and that is what brought us home together.

I believe 50 San Antonians went into the desert and all 50 came back, not including the ones from Dallas and El Paso and Oklahoma. That's it. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. Corporal Garza.

CORPORAL ADRIAN GARZA: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen – Corporal Adrian M. Garza of San Antonio, Texas. I am 24 years old. I enlisted in the Marine Corps May 7 of 2001. I attended Marine Corps base, San Diego. Upon graduated, I attended MCT in Camp Pendleton, California. My MOS in the Marine Corps is a food service specialist. I got activated for OIF in January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005, when – actually I got to tour 29 Palms, California for the workup of the tactile weapons company. I was a member of the PSD, personal security detachment to transport the colonel from place to place.

Upon theater on our first patrol of Iraq, within the first week, we struck a mine. We were not in an up-armored Humvee, and the driver lost his left leg within the first week. May 7<sup>th</sup> of 2005, we were involved in a complex ambush in Haditha (ph), Iraq. We lost four members of the platoon and had seven urgent surgical Marines. Upon the ambush we regrouped to push through the mission. We received pretty good support to push us through the rest of deployment.

We finished the deployment October 5<sup>th</sup>. We turned back to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and returned back – we returned back to San Antonio, Texas, where I am a member of the fourth reconnaissance battalion, headquarters in support. I'm currently employed at the Bexar County Sheriff's Office. I have been there for four years, and I have been in the Marine Corps for about five years now.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. Sergeant Allen.

SERGEANT ALPHONZO ALLEN: Chairman Punaro, distinguished members of the commission, I am very grateful for the opportunity to testify here today, and to give you my perspective as an Air National Guardsman who has served in the Air National Guard for eight years and who has been deployed for overseas operations. I have been asked to provide you with my perspective based on experience with the mobilization process, compensation and benefits, family and employer support, and adequacy of unit training as well as equipment. Additionally I have been asked about factors – about those factors which will shape our members' decision to reenlist.

I would like to start with a short narrative regarding my career in the Air National Guard. I joined the Alaska Air National Guard, 168 air refueling wing in October 1998 after completing 10 years of active-duty service in the United States Air Force. While in the Guard, I deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom, Southern Watch, to Kuwait City International Airport, and Iraqi Freedom to Tallil Airbase, Iraq. During the past eight years, I have been fortunate to serve under great leadership within my unit, my wing, and my state.

During my last deployment, my unit was responsible for providing perimeter security to Tallil Airbase, which extended five miles outside of the base, protecting 10,000 coalition troops, 2,000 of which were U.S. Army soldiers, at first within the Air Force and now a model of the perimeter defense capability which the Air Force – which the Air Force uses security forces personnel as the first-line defenders for protecting air bases in Iraq.

My unit's equipment and training prepared us well for the mission in Iraq. We deployed with the latest equipment, which included the latest body armor and plates, the latest-style helmets and the new N4 Carbine rifle, with the new laser aiming system. Our pre-deployment training included qualifying with our new rifles, which allowed each unit to – each unit member to carry their own rifle throughout their deployment. However, the most gnawing inadequacy of equipment assigned to security forces at my base were the armored vehicles, which averaged 15 years old. They broke down a lot and did not have the new AC units that some of our Army counterparts had.

The employer support I received from my department, which is the Fairbanks International Airport Police and Fire Department has been outstanding. The key to this great relationship has been the early notification process of upcoming deployments. As soon as I know about upcoming deployments, my employer knows, and that relationship has worked well.

In conclusion, I have thoroughly enjoyed my service in the Air National Guard, the family support program within my wing, and the compensation I received while I was deployed, added to the quality of life for me and my family. To be able to offer my own experiences to this commission, as it considers the changes through a role of – the future role guards, I mean, it is a great, great honor, and I am happy to share my experiences.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Staff Sergeant Sparks?

STAFF SERGEANT MARIA SPARKS: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the commission. I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my experience with you on being mobilized. I would also like to thank you for taking the time to listen to what we have to say. It is a great honor to be chosen to do this, and I will do my best to answer any and all questions you may have for me.

To tell you a little about myself, I am just two weeks shy of my 30<sup>th</sup> birthday and have a 10-year-old son. I joined the military for the sole purpose of giving my son a better life. At first I tried to go Air Force active duty, but since I was a single parent, the recruiters pointed me in the direction of the Air Force reserves. I swore in two weeks after 9/11 and have never regretted doing so. The mobilization was a surprise but a good one. It gave me the opportunity to get the training I needed to get the job done without doubting whether or not I had done it right. Sorry.

To be honest, one week in the months and two weeks a year is really meant to be a refresher time, but it is not a sufficient enough time to get all of the training needed, especially for those incoming – incoming airmen. The weekend time is usually taken up by other military training that is not related to the AFAC. While mobilized, I received all of the training needed and became proficient in my job, well enough that my supervisors appointed me the new trainer for the incoming airmen. It has also given me the chance to bond with my co-workers and other office personnel as well.

I have become well known around my squadron and other squadrons for being a valuable asset to my office. Some of the highlights of my career are that I have received the Plans and Scheduling Technician of the Year Award, and Airman of the Quarter followed by Airman of the Year by my unit. It is now hard for me to imagine doing anything other than being a maintenance scheduler. I was first mobilized for two years, and then chose to volunteer for an extended tour of duty, and will keep on doing so for as long as I am needed.

As far as my family is concerned, they couldn't be more proud of what I have accomplished since being activated. Before I was mobilized, I was a sales associate at a Western store trying to figure out what type of career I wanted. When the mobilization happened, I figured that. Since I'm satisfied and content with the job I'm doing while in the military, I now aspire to be an air reserve technician so that this would not just be a temporary type job, it would be permanent.

If I were to be deployed right now, I am confident that I would be ready. Again, thank you for this opportunity.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Chief Petty Officer Gilmer.

CHIEF PETTY OFFICER DOUGLAS GILMER: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the commission. It is a pleasure to appear before you today and to represent the extraordinary men and women of the United States Coast Guard Reserve. And it's also a true honor to sit on a panel with these true American heroes sitting to my right.

You have already received my written testimony, and I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments in addition to the testimony that you have already received for your consideration. And recap regarding my own mobilization, I was notified on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, that I would be getting mobilized. Soon after, we all watched the terrorist attacks unfold on live television. I reported to Wilmington, North Carolina, on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001, where I immediately Maritime homeland security operations, primarily boarding in-bound foreign flag commercial vessels coming to the United States, looking for embargoed items, contraband subjects, anything that might be a threat to a our nations' security.

Over the course of my mobilization and my return to civilian life in which I serve as a senior special agent with the Department of Homeland Securities Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and subsequent mobilization since then and period of time on active duty, I have gained the experience and the comments from fellow enlisted members as to what has most concerned them about their own periods of time being mobilized, one of which is job and financial security.

I think every member of the reserve, whether they are Coast Guard, Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, or National Guard needs to know that they have reemployment rights when they get off of active duty, and that they are going to have a job waiting for them. They also need to know that their financial security is in fact secure. They shouldn't have to worry about how they are going to pay their mortgage, how they are going to pay their child's tuition while they are on active duty. It's an added stress that takes their mind off of the dangerous task at hand. And more than one reservist commented to me during my initial mobilization on how ironic it was being a recall to secure the homeland, yet at the expense of losing their own home.

Also, the simplification of benefits that we all receive – I give great credit to Congress for passing many of the enhanced benefits that we all receive as being part of the military, but I think it needs to be made a little bit more simple. It's very confusing not knowing exactly which benefits we all qualify for, benefits that oftentimes go unused because we don't know what is available, and again it adds to the stress of a family and to a service member who is already under great amounts of stress.

And third, the issue of training and equipment: I, like many others in the reserve components found out soon after being mobilized that we either hadn't received the amount of training that was needed to adequately perform the job, or we were without the proper equipment. And all of us have joined the branches of service that we are in because we choose to serve, and we all want to do the job for which we signed up to do. And nothing is more demoralizing to a service member, I believe, than being called up, being prepared, being motivated to do a job, but being told you can't do it because you don't have the equipment to perform the task.

I'm glad that this commission is meeting here today and addressing these particular issues, especially because I believe the results are going to be overwhelmingly beneficial to those members of the Guard and Reserve. I sat on here this morning, and I listened to Vice Admiral Cotton make the comment on only 28 percent of 17 to 24 year olds being eligible to serve in the Coast Guard, or being able to serve in any of the military forces today. And if you couldn't tell from my I'm sure audible gasp from the back of the room, I was completely surprised and just horrified by that very fact.

And I think it's important that no matter what service we are in, we have to become stakeholders in the future of today's youth because today's youth in fact really aren't our future; they are our today, and the military needs to take stake in the lives of these young people so that we can make sure that we have a qualified, motivated, and capable reserve force for the future. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. Thank you, all; that is very helpful to get us started. Let me start with the first question, and let me pose to you kind of a hypothesis or a theory because my question really is focused on the future, not on the present. We have heard plenty of testimony and had first-hand experience, particularly with the remarkable careers that you at the witness table have had, the tremendous professionalism and accomplishments of our Guard and Reserve personnel.

I can't tell you how many commanders we talk to in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan or here at home, or governors, that active-duty four stars that have never had an opportunity to serve with the Guard and Reserve were bragging about units and they didn't even know they were Guard and Reserve units. I mean, we know it's seamless, and we know the magnificent job that is being done.

The question is, when you look at the profound changes that we have had testimony on already, where we have gone from a strategic reserve, that is a reserve that was going to be used in the peak of World War III, and perhaps some units had 180 days, some had a year to be able to train up and mobilize and get the right equipment to an operational reserve.

And you're pretty much – your testimony bears that out. Your units are busier than they have ever been. They could get called up to do something abroad or here at home on a moment's notice. I have first-hand experience with 4<sup>th</sup> Recon Battalion as the

former commander of that unit, and I know they are a lot busier today than they would have been in 1995.

So the question really is how do we sustain that for the future? And how do we basically – because the backbone of our military remains individuals like yourself that come in and perform well and eventually aspire to be – have as many rockers and be as crusty and salty as all of the senior enlisted personnel that are sitting out in the audience today, in mentoring young soldiers, sailor, air, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen like yourselves as you go up the career ladder – how do we keep you in the military, and more importantly, how do we keep your colleagues in the military?

We have heard – Sergeant Sparks said – and it mirrored what we heard from the RC chief this morning. Thirty-nine days on the weekends and two weeks a year is not a sufficient amount of training for the kind of operational reserve we are going to need for the future. And we already have units that have gone back and mobilized for not once, twice, but three and four times. And we know that is the way it's going to be in the future. It's not going to go back to the way it used to be. That is really the paradigm change that we are in.

So the question really is what motivates you to stay in the military because – and two, what motivates your colleagues? And what changes do we need to make to make sure that the young corporals and sergeants five years from now are as well trained and well equipped and well prepared as you believe you are for the job you were asked to do today, and do it on a more frequent basis. So kind of a – that is just sort of looking to the future.

In other words, again, you know, what do we need to change to make sure that we keep people like you in the military, but then that we keep your colleagues in the military, and that we attract – there are people that if you tell them, look, if you join the reserve, you're going to be gone for a year or a year-and-a-half every three years – you know, that might make somebody nervous that has never been in the military.

We know from the families that have talked to us that they are not anxious – people that join the Guard and Reserve, if you wanted to be on active duty 365 days out of the year 10 years in a row, you would be in the active-duty military. You have elected to perhaps go that route as an Air Force technician. That is terrific.

And people ought to be able to move back and forth. It ought to be real easy. Somebody ought to just say make it happen, and it ought to just happen. That is the way the seamless thing – but there are those that want to have a civilian career and have a different experience, how do we keep them in the Guard and Reserve. It's going to be more of an operational Guard and Reserve in the future.

So why don't we start with Sergeant Kitzerow, and just go down the line.

SGT KITZEROW: I'm sorry, could you come back to me? I would like to think about the question a little bit more, please.

MR. PUNARO: Sure thing.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Sir, there is a lot involved in how to keep people in. For some, as for myself, it's just the honor to serve. You know, there is nothing I would rather do. For some, they are on the line. You know, they love to serve, but – and they have a family waiting at home, it comes down to bonuses or healthcare, some of the stuff discussed this morning. Really, there is no solid answer. There should be a wide variety of options for soldiers, be it healthcare, a bonus, you know, help with the mortgage or something like that. It is different for everybody, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Do you think – do the folks in your unit, as they look at the fact that they may be deployed more often than they have in the past, is that a concern for them, or are you saying that if we provide the proper benefit structure, they are going to be willing to accept those kind of more frequent deployments.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: It is always a concern, sir, but it makes life a lot easier. Myself, for example, when I deployed, I didn't have much of a family, wasn't married. I had no issues at all. I would spend five years overseas, no issues. A lot of the guys I work with in my unit, you know, their civilian jobs are high paying, they have got three kids and a wife, and they haven't deployed yet. The one deployment they did do, it was a big hit, they took a pay cut, and it hurt them a lot, but they are still wanting to stay.

Some of the things – I talked to a few guys in my unit. I was at AT just before this. Some of the things people look at are length of deployments. A soldier deploys for a year-long – you know, every three, four, or five years. It kind of hurts a little bit. You know, deploy soldiers more often, but for less time was one of the things that was brought up a lot. A six-month deployment every two years would be easy, no issues.

MR. PUNARO: So the length of the deployment makes a big difference.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And I assume the train-up time for that deployment would make a big difference.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, okay, Petty Officer?

CM2 QUIROZ: A couple of years ago when I was in tech school, they went around the room and asked why did you choose to join the Navy. And I stated that I had joined because I had wanted to serve my country, and I got laughed at. Well, that still

applies today. It is servitude to my country and to my shipmates; that is what keeps me in.

But recently – my enlistment is coming up in March and my end of enlistment is coming up in March, and I don't qualify for a bonus because when I enlisted the last time, I got a \$3,000 bonus. So because I have received the bonus I don't get another one. If another service member from a different branch came into the military, into the Navy reserve, I believe they get a bonus of \$20,000, so why not offer that across the board and make me happy, and give me money too.

MR. PUNARO: You would have the option of joining – not that I'm suggesting that a CB would want to join another component because of these pre – but you would have the option of – would you have the option of getting a bonus if you shifted over to the Guard or the Army reserve.

CM2 QUIROZ: Oh, I'm sure. I just have to weigh my options.

MR. PUNARO: Right. So what you're saying is – and of course the bonus structure they have out there now is much richer than the one that you got before that says precludes you from getting a bonus now, correct. What would be – if you were to reenlist, what is the term of your reenlistment?

CM2 QUIROZ: I have 14 years so I would probably do six.

MR. PUNARO: Right. So do you think – do you think when they look at somebody like yourself, you have had a deployment, you're highly skilled in your military job and in your civilian job, you're in a very skilled demand area, do they look at it and say, okay, he has got 14 years in, why would we want to invest anything extra – he is probably going to reenlist anyway? Is that – or what do you think is behind that?

CM2 QUIROZ: I think they can see me coming and say this guy is just going to stay; he's not going anywhere.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah. What about some of the factors that affect your colleagues in terms of their reenlistment?

CM2 QUIROZ: There was an incident or several incidents where a couple of the reservists enlisted prior to getting deployed and they were promised reenlistment bonuses, and once they were officially on active duty, they didn't qualify for that bonus. So they had to wait to get demobilized to reapply for that reserve bonus so they didn't get it.

MR. PUNARO: Good, thanks. Corporal Garza.

CPL GARZA: Sir, one of the things that in talking to other Marines that I think that could help would be better education, education benefits, as well as medical and

dental benefits. Like, on my behalf, a big thing that I struggle with is time off from work. I am allowed 15 days from my employer, which pretty much covers an AT. After that, it's pretty much out of my own time. So I do end up losing money throughout the year. But talking to other Marines, I think – bonuses as well. I mean, as a Marine, I have never really heard of too many bonuses being offered. Maybe the only time was when we were in theater for reenlistment bonuses. But other than that, I mean, bonuses could probably be a big thing as well as better education benefit, as well as medical and dental.

MR. PUNARO: Right. I believe I heard you say you're in law enforcement in your civilian career, is that right?

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir; in detention, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And as pro-military as I'm sure they are, I mean, what you're saying is if you need extra time or the Marines of course says you have got to train more because you're operational now, not just the two weeks and the 39 days, they can't afford to pay you when you're gone doing your Marine training. That is what you're saying.

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Is it a relatively small police force, or –

CPL GARZA: It's a pretty big, fair size, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, but still, they are not going to pay people when they're not doing their –

CPL GARZA: Right.

MR. PUNARO: Which is understandable. I mean, I don't think anybody else would be able to afford to do that as well. So somehow we have got to recognize the fact that the reservists are – the modern reservist in the future is going to be gone more from their civilian jobs, not necessarily for just deployments but for training, so probably some kind incentives on the side of the employers would help as well I would guess.

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And you're saying that when you talk to your colleagues, the healthcare benefit, the bonuses, education, those seem to be jumping out as the things that they would value most in terms of recognizing the increased stress and operational nature of the reserves. Is that a fair statement?

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir, because a lot of them as well are just students. A lot of them don't have any type of health coverage or dental coverage as well.

MR. PUNARO: Right. When is your enlistment up?

CPL GARZA: November 18<sup>th</sup> of this year, sir.

MR. PUNARO: So are they talking to you about reenlisting?

CPL GARZA: Somewhat, sir. Somewhat.

MR. PUNARO: So what is going to motivate you to reenlist?

CPL GARZA: It is probably just going to be just for the troops, sir, if I do my Marine.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Sergeant Allen?

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, for me, one of the things that I think has been mentioned already is the enlistment bonuses, but those – I think the Air Force has changed where they allow those across the board to your second- and third-term airmen. Initially when I came, it was only to the first-term airmen, and then the services started noticing, well, all of our experience is walking out the door, so we better offer them something as well. So that has worked well – bonuses to not only the first term, but the second and third term.

Also, in my state, I work for the state of Alaska, and if we're mobilized, my state has been proactive in providing compensation. They wrote into state law that if we are mobilized and deployed, the state will pay the difference if you lose money during the mobilization.

So I think that is one aspect that will help keep troops in for the state that they are enlisted in. And as well as the people – the one thing that I found throughout my career in the Air National Guard is the people that I worked with, which had a huge effect on the troops that are in my unit. We have been together longer, we worked together, we trained together, we see the same faces, and we get a chance to build that continuity, not only in the work, not only in my military unit, but we see each other in the community. We live – we are neighbors.

So when one of us goes or something happens, it is a much closer-knit community, and I think whatever we can do to maintain that will help foster people stay enlisted and to want to join because they see the younger people that come out to the base, they see, hey, what is going on over there; that looks pretty good. Inviting them out to the family days and things like that have worked well for me and my –

MR. PUNARO: You're saying unit cohesion that is in community based is very important, right.

MSGT ALLEN: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Anything else?

MSGT ALLEN: No, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Staff Sergeant Sparks.

SSGT SPARKS: Well, as you heard earlier, I am actually trying to stay in. So as far as getting me to stay in that is no issue. As far as my co-workers, it's a different – it's kind of different. They are all older. I'm trying to say the age group. I don't want to offend anybody. But they have got more intelligence.

MR. PUNARO: So they are probably 35, right. They are a lot older? (Laughter.)

SSGT SPARKS: Yeah, around there. (Laughter.)

MR. PUNARO: Let me tell you, speaking from the party, age is a relative thing. (Laughter.)

SSGT SPARKS: Well, they are a bit older and they are air reserve technicians. Almost everyone I work with are air reserve technicians. So they are content with where they are at and they don't have too many issues. But as far as the younger ones, I think the airmen that first come in, they come in and the jobs they have, the civilian jobs they have, they don't really have great medical, great dental, so I think maybe instead of just having medical and dental when you're mobilized, maybe there is a way they can keep it throughout their career. That would be a great thing, especially if you have got youngins. I myself do, so.

And as far as keeping them trained, well, like I said, it's only two weekends – one weekend a month, two weeks a year. There should be a little more time for that, especially if you're going to be deployed fairly quickly.

MR. PUNARO: Now, tell me in your specific case, how does a single parent handle mobilization overseas.

SSGT SPARKS: I am one of the lucky ones. I have – my son has great grandparents that live about two hours away. So as far as anyone else, I know it's pretty difficult. Well, our unit gives them – our mobilized members that have family from far away, our unit gives them phone cards and their bosses are pretty well – like, giving them three-day weekends to spend with their families, so.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thanks. Petty Officer Gilmer.

CPO GILMER: My enlistment is up in December, and I fully intend to enlist in the Coast Guard reserve. I doubt I am going to offered a bonus. If I were, I would probably accept graciously, but regardless, I would reenlist, again, out of motivation for love of my country and for service to my country.

I do believe – and this was mentioned this morning. I think as you get older, or as one matures in their careers, at various stages of life, that there maybe other tangible benefits that could be offered to reservists to supplement or in addition to, or in exchange of a bonus: additional healthcare coverage. It was mentioned, maybe some educational benefits for children, those types of things.

I think at some stage at life, like I said become probably a much better idea, or a much more of a motivating factor for a person to stay in that just simply the promise of cash. You know, I also think back to some of the remarks in my opening statement. I think reservists need to know that they are going to be taken care of. Nobody wants to join an institution if they feel like they are going to not be taken care of, if they are going to be second-class citizens, that they are going to have to worry about their family, their mortgage, their children back home, how they are going to pay the bills. If those issues can be addressed, I think it gives people a much greater sense of comfort.

And from the Coast Guard perspective, which is a little bit different from the other branches of service represented here, whose branches of service here can be seen nightly on the news or daily on the news participating in theater, in OIF, and Afghanistan, and the great contributions that they are making overseas to the global war on terrorism, but I think within the Coast Guard, we are not the visible service necessarily in the global war on terror that these other – that these other branches are. And I think maybe we need to do a better – a better job of selling the mission of the Coast Guard, and its role, and the global war on terror, and homeland security, and national defense.

I think if you give people mission, and you can sell them on that mission and get them to believe in it, they will serve.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Thank you. Before we turn to you, Sergeant Kitzerow, I just want to warn Commissioner Stump, we're going to start down on your end of the table this afternoon, so you'll be the next questioner. And Sergeant Kitzerow, I didn't ask you about Marquette's basketball team, so we will let you off the hook on that one.

SGT KITZEROW: Okay, thank you. (Chuckles.) Okay, there is five things that I would like to happen before I would reenlist. And by the way, my initial contract is up in March of 2010.

Okay, I would like to know how often and what would be the lengths of deployment so that I could plan my civilian career, and also furthering my education. I was planning on maybe getting a graduate degree or going to law school.

And also, communications about those deployments, one so that we actually have a schedule because, like, right now at the unit I'm at, there is just rumors. They're, like, plan; there might be a mobilization, and then it never happens. And I kind of mentally gear myself up, like, you know, is that going to happen or isn't it. I would like something that is set in stone because I don't mind deployments, but it's just that I would like kind of like a schedule to plan.

Also, I wouldn't like redeploying, but I would like a different mission. I was military police and I served as a tower guard. It was a very boring and mundane job, and I would not like to go over there and do that same mission. And along with that, if I did reenlist, I would like to reclassify to a new MOS because I realize that military police is not a good fit for me, and I wish that I would have I guess looked into it more when I was in the recruitment process. I was just kind of – I'll admit it; I was gullible. I'm like, okay, 5,000 down with some bonus. It sounds like it could be cool and then I just did it and I realized it is not a good fit for me.

Also, I am big into the benefits. I am so happy that in addition to the GI Bill's chapter 1606 benefits, that there is also the Chapter 1607 benefit that was added. That was very helpful for my last three semesters of school when I got back. And I would also like to know more about additional benefits for education that I've just slowly been getting information about, such as loan cancellations for some of your government loans. It seems like you have to jump through a lot of loops to get those now, and I wish that our units would provide us with information on how to go about doing that.

And finally, about healthcare, I know that through – since I work for the VA – I don't work for the VA hospital, but I know that when you come home, you receive two free – or two years of care for free when you come back from your deployment. And I wish that that period would be extended because sometimes problems arise after that, those two years. For example, my two years was up in March of 2006. And in January of 2006, I got letters from the VA saying there was OIF groups where you could get together with other veterans and you could talk about your experiences, and you could, like – learn how to distress and relax. And some of those things I wish that I would have known about when I first got home because I would have liked to participate in groups like that. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Now, in terms of your MOS, what is the process in the Army reserve? Wouldn't you be able to look at going to a different MOS?

SGT KITZEROW: Yes, I would. And actually, I'm trying to reclassify right now, but I'm really not sure how to go about the process, so I'm actually looking at that.

MR. PUNARO: What kind of military occupational specialty are you interested in?

SGT KITZEROW: Well, one of my majors was writing, and so I'm interested in doing print journalism for the military, something with public affairs.

MR. PUNARO: That ought to be – that ought to be something that's easy to do, not hard to do. Okay, this is very helpful.

We will now turn to Commissioner Gordon Stump.

MR. STUMP: Well, good afternoon, and thank you all for your service. I'm really touched by the experiences and the great things you have been doing for the country.

What I would like to have you discuss and get into is the demobilization process. If each of you could kind of give us an overview of how your de-MOB went, the things that you thought were good during de-mobilization, the things that helped you; where the de-mobilization was lacking. Did you get transition assistance classes during de-MOB? Were there things for your family? Did they talk to you about reemployment rights and things of this nature? Things that went right and then things that went wrong and can be improved. Sergeant Kitzerow?

SGT KITZEROW: Okay, from what I remember about that, because it only lasted a few days for us at – I believe we did it at both Camp Arifjan, Kuwait, for a few days, and then once we got back to Fort Dix, we did it for a few days. And all I can remember, it was some very short briefings, and nobody paid attention because we were so excited to go home.

But now, when I look back on it, I wish that there would have been – I wish they would have gone more in depth about, like, readjustment issues, and how to deal with going home because we were just like, oh, it's going to be great; we're just going to be home; it's going to be awesome. But later on, once you're home for a while for a few months, then some things start to – you start to realize that you're not adjusting as well as you wanted to.

So I think that not only demobilization process, when you actually are done with your deployment, but a few months later when you report back for your battle assemblies, I think it would be good to have some people on site or some briefings to go over some of those things again, readjusting with your families, employment rights, et cetera.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: I went through a different de-MOB than the rest of my company because I was wounded in Iraq. I was on the CBHTO for some time, but the unit took good care of me. I was married – I got married while I was attached CBHTO, processed all the paperwork, it was seamless. It was a great program. When it came time for de-MOB, they were there. Everything I needed was taken care of. When my unit de-MOBed I was also there – watched them de-MOB, and I guess it's kind of a – in my unit's case, the leadership did a great job.

Like Sergeant Kitzerow said, it's not that first month or two when a soldier gets back that he has issues; it's six months down the line, eight months down the line. And it was my unit's policy that during a drill, four to five months after they came back, that the soldier was required to attend a vet center counseling session. They provided transportation to a vet centered counseling center about a mile or two away from the armory. The soldiers came in in the morning for formation, did some drill stuff, jumped in a van, rode over, did rotations, sat down for 15 to 20 minutes talking to a counselor, came back and then continued drill. And then did it again several months later.

Regardless, we still had soldiers that had issues, but I think my leadership doing this prevented a lot more issues. That is just a huge factor, is taking care of soldiers as far as their mental being is a big step.

CM2 QUIROZ: My de-MOB process was about a week long, an hour a day. They put out the information, handed out the literature, told us to have a nice day and they would see us in California.

I wish they would implement something along the lines of a de-MOB to four, six months after we're back in the States just to see how we are doing. Currently during our drill weekends, we do check up on each other, make sure everybody is doing fine, make sure everybody is getting along at home and so forth, and we do that on our own, and that is about it.

CPL GARZA: Well, sir, from my experiences, after we were put out of combat operations, we received a class with the chaplain. We did talk about readjusting back to the civilian life that we were coming back to. That was pretty much the only brief we had in theater. Back here in the states, I think the thing is everybody is just happy to be home, so a lot of times people weren't paying attention a lot of times. When we return back, I think there should be more towards the effort later on down the road when you – because more of the problems are going to occur later on down after you – we have turned back to your reserve status. Early, as you return, you are still around a lot of people and you still feel comfortable as I felt comfortable around the other Marines. I think there should be more effort months down the road, three to six months down the road where the problems might start occurring.

MSGT ALPHONZO ALLEN: Sir, for me, it all started with the mobilization process initially. My wing had a town-hall-style briefing for all of us, which included medical, Red Cross, all of the agencies that were available for us when we departed for our deployment. And then once we returned, the first thing besides my – I was fortunate enough that my commander went with us.

Upon our return, the first thing he said was I don't want to see you guys for 30 days. Get out of here because I know you're ready to go and be with their families and enjoy that. But within that first – during that time, he told us he did say that he wanted to hear from – we had a schedule meeting of everyone that deployed to come back in about two, two-and-a-half weeks later where we had appointments with the medical folks and as well as some of the other counseling agencies shortly thereafter we got back home.

So like I said, it all started with the mobilization process making us aware with what was available to us, and then when we returned home, they didn't let us get too far away before they checked on us and said, look, these are the benefits you have available to you. If anyone needs them, use them. You know who the contact personnel are, and so the whole process was, again, our leadership at the – my wing did a great job in providing just from start to finish.

MR. STUMP: Thank you.

SSGT SPARKS: Well, as far as myself and the de-MOB process wasn't really – wasn't too hard. It took a few days. Well, my orders ended one day and the next day I started a new set. So, and that was by my choice. As far as my co-workers, they are all, you know, traditional reservists, so they are right back in the same office, just not in uniform. And I think the biggest issue they had was going from a certain rank pay to the actual civilian pay they had.

The only thing I really saw bad about the de-MOB process was it needed a little more time to go through medical, go through dental, take care of your paperwork, but that was pretty much it for us.

CPO GILMER: Maybe it's because the Coast Guard is a smaller service, but I have had always had the feeling that the Coast Guard is much like a close-knit family, and my own de-MO process was very seamless, very smooth. The Coast Guard I felt did an extraordinarily good job of doing separation or de-MOB counseling. They had classes. They brought in the VA to let everybody know what benefits they were eligible for.

As confusing as that is sometimes, the Coast Guard offered as needed CISM or a critical Internet stress management classes and counseling for those reservists that needed it. The Coast Guard would not allow any of our people to be discharged unless they were in 1020 condition. Everybody went through medical. And if there was any injury or anything that could be attributed to your service on active duty or any condition that developed during that period of time, you aren't going to get released until the Coast Guard had taken care of you.

As a matter of fact, it wasn't until I went through my de-mobilization medical procedure that I found out that I needed glasses, and they would not release me, as much as a fit as I pitched, they would not release me until I went and got a set of prescription glasses.

Most recently during the Katrina operations in New Orleans there were a large number of reservists that were once again mobilized for that. I responded to New Orleans proper as part of my civilian job, but then also had the opportunity to serve in New Orleans as a member of the chief's mess down there in helping with some issues on behalf of the Coast Guard.

And I do recall that one of the recurring things that kept coming up among both the active duty and reservists that were in New Orleans was what a good job the Coast Guard was doing in stress management. You know, you all saw the pictures and heard the horror stories of things that were occurring and were happening in New Orleans, and the Coast Guard was right in the midst of that. And members one after another gave high praise to the Coast Guard for the job that they did in providing the chaplains and the

stress-management counselors to help them with those issues and reintegrate back in the civilian society.

MR. STUMP: Thank you very much. For those of you who came back to civilian occupation work, were all of you aware of your employment rights under USERRA? And were your employers aware of those rights. And was there an ESGR person there to counsel and help you getting reemployed when your deployment ended?

SGT KITZEROW: Sir, that actually was not an issue for me because I went back to just being a full-time college student and I had a part-time job. I just found a new part-time job. So that was actually not an issue for me.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: It wasn't an issue for me either, sir. I was unemployed when I deployed overseas. I was on the medical for some time, and I just recently got hired as a technician. And as far as the other soldier from my unit, it wasn't an issue either. ESGR was a big piece of the de-MOB process. People were ready to answer any questions and if need be, fight to get a soldier's job bac.

MR. STUMP: Great.

CM2 QUIROZ: I was aware of the ESGR, as well as my employer. I had no problems whatsoever going back to work.

CPL GARZA: Sir, the same here. I was aware. We had a representative of the VA come down and give us all of the information that we needed upon going back to our civilian deployment.

MR. STUMP: Great.

MSGT ALLEN: No problems, sir. Our ESGR representative is a retired security forces person. He visits the unit outside of any deployment so we knew he was, and there was never any issue for me.

SSGT SPARKS: As far as myself, I was aware of it, and if my employer knew, I'm not sure, but I can ask her because she is my mother-in-law. (Laughter.) And that is really it.

CPO GILMER: Personally I had no issues whatsoever. There were some that served with me that had issues but that were ultimately worked out with the support of ESGR.

MR. STUMP: Good. One last question. The TRICARE Prime -- did any of you use it after you got back, and how easy or how hard was it to use the TRICARE Prime?

SGT KITZEROW: I did use it, as a matter of fact, and I found that it was very difficult to use it because they had us enrolled in a region where we de-MOBbed to Fort

Dix, New Jersey, and I was trying to use it in Milwaukee, which was a different region. I mean, I was like, what is going on here. I didn't know – I mean, I have never had my own insurance before; I was always on my parents'. So I did not know what I was doing. I called – finally somebody told me about it. But it would have been helpful to also get materials on how to use it and what type of benefits were available under that, and we received none.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: I didn't use it until – ever since two months ago. I got married almost a year ago, but I'm on the TAMP program. It is the 180 days continued TRICARE after deployment – a little bit tough to use even with all of the pamphlets and all of that, but just, you know, a little bit of persistence and time you'll get it done.

CM2 QUIROZ: I haven't had any problems with the TRICARE but I did have a problem with the dental, the Concordia Dental Plan. They kicked me out of the plan. I had to reapply and then when I did, they took two months worth of premiums at one time. It got resolved, but it just put me in a bind because I didn't have any dental coverage for a month.

CPL GARZA: Sir, I never used the TRICARE. I went back to my employment insurance.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, I personally did not use the TRICARE. Some of our other members of our team did. They didn't – as far as I know, they didn't have any complaints with it. However, one thing that I did notice about the TRICARE within the community is that a lot of doctors either don't take TRICARE or you would have to pay an upfront premium to use it, which is – can in the nexus of \$150 to \$200 to use it. But I personally didn't use it.

SSGT SPARKS: I am actually still on TRICARE since I'm on a new set of orders. So no issues there.

CPO GILMER: I did not use the TRICARE, but I do know experiences that people that I served with had using TRICARE more or less nearer those experiences as mentioned by Master Sergeant Allen.

MR. STUMP: Okay. Thanks.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Don Stockton.

DONALD L. STOCKTON: Thank you all for being here and especially thank you for your service.

I want to continue to think a little bit and talk about employer and civilian careers issues. And you have already testified some of you were in different stages of employment or unemployment around the time of your deployment or employment, whichever the case might be. But I'd like for you to think about – not only for yourself

but maybe others that you are aware of in your units, especially close friends maybe that you've served with – do you find that your employer or the employers of your colleagues are supportive of your military service? And also, a secondary question to that is, do you feel yourself at a disadvantage perhaps compared to the other civilian coworkers that may not be in – in this case – the reserve military service?

SGT KITZEROW: My civilian employer right now is the Department of Veterans Affairs, and I find that they are very helpful for my like annual training. They give me fifteen days for military leave for a fiscal year and it is no problem. For example, to come to this, I am on AT orders, and I gave my employer notice one day before it was going to happen and they gave me off no problem. They are very, very supportive.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: It wasn't an issue for me, sir, but my unit is kind of split in half. I have soldiers with me that they work for big corporations and it's not an issue. You know, they receive benefits while they're deployed, you know, the pay increase or the pay makeup. The other half of soldiers work for small companies and they get hit kind of hard. You know, the companies don't make enough to actually pay that difference, so it's the guys that work for smaller companies that don't see the benefits.

CM2 QUIROZ: My employer is supportive, but every time I need extra time to do additional ATs or ADTs or what have you, it puts them in a bind because we're shorthanded as it is, and then they have to find a replacement for me for those additional days. And as far as being looked over for promotions and stuff like that, it's really not a problem. But if they've got somebody who is there all the time and someone who is on military, obviously, they're going to take the guy that's there all the time, because like I said, we're understaffed and don't have enough people to cover me.

CPL GARZA: Sir, before the deployment, my boss was really supportive of what I did. When I returned back, I fell under another person that was running the shift. He kind of has a problem sometimes with short notices. He don't understand that in the military, things change from one day to the next, so he can't give me a hard time about that. As far as being looked over, everything is done based on scores so that's not really a problem for promotion.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, I didn't have any issues with my employer. I was due a promotion – not promotion increase but a step increase – while I was deployed. When I returned back, I received that, so there wasn't an issue for me and my employer. Also goes to our ESGR representative, like I said, he comes out to our unit and lets us know what our rights are and he does that, like I said earlier, even when we're not deployed, so guys within my unit that are taking up new employment or different employment, we know who he is. He's not just somebody – hey, call this person we've never seen before. And he comes out to our unit and quizzes us and asks us, you know, how are you doing? How are you doing in your job? Does your employer know if you are in the Guard? And if you ever have any problems, let me know, and here is my number. Here is how to get a hold of me. Put me to use, because that's what I'm there for. But no, no problems whatsoever.

SSGT SPARKS: My employer didn't have any problem. She was very supportive. But I also think I was the very first reservist she had as an employee. And as far as being a disadvantage compared to other employees, I think there was one just because of the fact that she knew that those people would be there day-in, day-out to be counted on, and there was a possibility I'd be gone for a week, a day, a year. So as far as disadvantage, yeah, there's a slight one.

CPO GILMER: As mentioned, I work for the Department of Homeland Security fulltime in my civilian capacity, and ultimately my boss is Secretary Chertoff who is also the de facto secretary of the Coast Guard. And so, no matter which job I'm working at, there's no escape. He's got a body one way or the other. (Chuckles.) And so I've not experienced any hardship or any pushback at all from my employer regarding my military service. And in fact, my experience in what I do in the Coast Guard has done nothing but actually enhance my career within DHS. I would say that I have felt at times that the federal government maybe has been a little bit behind the 8-ball in terms of benefits for federal employees who are also reservists – benefits while mobilized – that type of thing. And I think maybe it's just because of the size of the bureaucracy that a lot of the HR people or the personnel people within the federal government don't truly understand the laws and the policies that are out there that regulate employees who are mobilized, and that can cause conflict and friction sometimes.

MR. STOCKTON: I have one more question. The Defense Department has been developing plans for the current time, I guess, to try to put some more predictability – and many of you have mentioned predictability – of deployments. We've heard this from many other people besides you that have testified to this. And they're talking about – I think they're using an Army example – in the Army National Guard that it would be one year in six, and possibly the Army Reserve is one year in five. And that would put predictability into the time that you would expect to be deployed. And do you feel that this level of usage will allow you and other reservists like you to complete the civilian-desirable careers that you also want to pursue?

SGT KITZEROW: I definitely think so. If I knew that then, I could plan future schooling that I plan to do and also – I just started my civilian career so I don't know how far I'm going to advance in that but – I definitely think that would be acceptable.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir. It's leaps and bounds better than what we have now. But again, if the tour is going to be shortened to six months and then perhaps the number of rotations doubled, that would be even better. Just let our soldiers spend a little more time at home.

CM2 QUIROZ: I think predictability would be a definite asset in keeping us sharp, well-trained, and ready to go.

CPL GARZA: So I think the seven-month deployments do keep us ready. They keep us ready and it does allow me to spend time here at home as well as execute my career, the civilian side.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, that definitely would help. But as I stated earlier, we have been doing that prior to that already, and it allows my employer – when I mentioned a town hall meeting that my unit had, my employer was able to be invited to that, so they got the same briefing that I received, which they knew exactly – not where I was going – but how long I would be gone and when they could expect me to return. And I’ve always kept them informed as well as my commander does a really good job of making contact, because I’m a police officer in civilian life. They see my chief and they communicate offline a lot as well. So that would be a great asset for them, the plan to know exactly when I’m leaving and what to expect up in the future.

SSGT SPARKS: I actually believe that would be a really great thing to do, mainly because it gives you enough time to plan for your future career-wise and family-wise.

CPO GILMER: I believe that our port security units within the Coast Guard who I affectionately refer to sometimes as the Green Guard – they are our expeditionary warfare, Marine Corps combat skill trained members of the Coast Guard who are in fact all reservists. Every member of a PSU in the Coast Guard that is a member of one of these port security units is a reservist. I think that they especially would appreciate maybe a more set deployment schedule. And I know that their deployment schedule has had a very high op-tempo over the last few years. But again, as mentioned this morning, because of the Coast Guard’s multi-mission capability and responsibility. It’s really hard to set a deployment schedule or a mobilizations schedule for any of us, because the next hurricane, natural disaster, or terrorist attack could happen tomorrow and that’s what we do. We have to be ready in 24 hours.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Okay, Commissioner Jimmy Sherrard.

MR. SHERRARD: I too want to thank each of you for your service and you make us very proud. And we all wish we were still 30 too, or also, I should say, not 32 but 30 also.

Two quick questions – one relates to family support or family readiness, and it’s just a quick yes or no, I think; it should be for you. Are you and your family aware of the Military One Source program, and did you utilize it or any other type of family support program that your individual service or unit may have been working? I’d just like to run down that if I could real quick.

SGT. KITZEROW: No, I do not know what you’re talking about and neither do my family.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Sir, I know the Military One Source.

CM2 QUIROZ: Yes, sir. I am aware of the program.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay.

CPL GARZA: No, sir. I'm not aware of the program.

MSGT ALLEN: No, sir. We did not use the program, but we used Military Spouse, which was made available through our family support center.

SSGT SPARKS: Yes, I've heard about it. There was actually an email that went out about it with a website.

CPO GILMER: I'm not aware of the One Source Program. We simply used – had a local ombudsman that helped address family affairs.

MR. SHERRARD: The other relates to IDT and how important does the cost of IDT impact you and your future considerations for continuing to serve in your particular service? And when I'm saying IDT, I mean inactive duty for training, i.e. the UTA training assembly, the costs that you have to incur yourself to perform that duty.

SGT KITZEROW: Could I just have a few more minutes to think about the question please?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: In my particular company, sir, it is a zero issue. New Hampshire only has one infantry company, and those that are there in the infantry company want to be there. They'll travel three hours drive, you know, no issues. Our company provides lodging, either in the armory or out in the field when you're in the woods. Or for example, we have two soldiers – one who lives in New Jersey and drives six hours each way. Drives there on Friday night, leaves Sunday or perhaps stays with his brother who lives an hour away. And we have another soldier who lives in DC who flies up for drill. He doesn't get reimbursed for it, but he wants to be there and that's how he does it, sir.

CM2 QUIROZ: Sir, that's not an issue for me. I have no problem going to and from. As a matter of fact, I do additional work relating to the reserves on my own time and don't get credit for it. So it's free time.

CPL GARZA: Sir, the same here, it's not an issue to me. I just enjoy serving.

MSGT ALLEN: It's not an issue for me, sir. My wing, we have aircraft that we fly our out-of-towners out of Anchorage to serve and put them in Billiton and it's all squared away so it's not an issue.

SSGT SPARKS: As far as myself, it was not really an issue other than the mileage, gas, getting back. I know people that travel nine hours just to get to where we are on UTAs.

CPO GILMER: I'm currently about 80 miles from my unit, which is the closest I've been to a unit during my career in the Coast Guard reserve. It's always been at least three hours and up to eight hours away. And I've always happily made the trip at my own expense. So the Coast Guard reserve and my unit in particular has been very good about making sure that every reservist who travels more than 50 miles has a place to stay. Although I do know, however, that with increased travel cost and that type of thing today, I know that probably I would have to give, you know, some consideration anyway, if I were going to accept an assignment across country, something like that where I knew if I was going to have to – even career enhancing – if I was going to have to fly at my own expense every month. I'd either have to make some strong consideration and some financial planning to make that work.

SGT KITZEROW: Sir, I am outside of the 50-mile radius as well from my unit, and I find that as no problem financially to attend battle assemblies.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay, one last question for you, if I might. When you were activated – I think you said you were activated in December – had you paid that first semester fees and did you get reimbursed for that from the school?

SGT KITZEROW: I believe my loans were frozen at the time? Yeah, I think so.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Wade Rowley.

WADE ROWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank all of you for the time spent here today testifying before us. The enlisted corps is real near and dear to my heart. Of my 20-plus years in the military, well, about half of it was enlisted time. In fact, I was like a perfect like a staff sergeant before I was commissioned, so you – (chuckles) – no, we're real proud of you. Where we were when I was enlisted and where you are today, you're way ahead of where we were, and we're very proud.

I'd like to talk a little bit about educational benefits, and I know that you brought that up. You know, currently there is one benefit for the active component, the component where they pay \$1,200 and they receive over a \$1,000 a month for educational benefits. Then we've got the select reserve GI bill and also the REAP program, the reserve education assistance program. Have any of you been able to use that or are planning to use that?

SGT KITZEROW: Before I left on my deployment, I used the chapter-1606, and when I came home, luckily – my unit didn't tell me this – but the VA representative at my university told me about the chapter-1607 benefits that was just started. And actually, I just got a retroactive check of that and that was very helpful for school.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: I have not yet used any education benefits, sir, however, I am currently looking into pursuing a college degree. And the state education counselor is extremely helpful. He's got all the information and I've just found a way to go to school for free and in fact make money going to school.

MR. ROWLEY: Great.

CM2 QUIROZ: I have used the educational benefits. It paid for my Texas Peace Officer license as well as my state exam.

CPL GARZA: Sir, I am aware of the benefits. But I have not used the benefits yet, but I am aware of it.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, I am aware of the benefits. I haven't taken advantage of them. I just would like to add my spouse has asked numerous times about would she be able to use them, but I personally haven't been.

SSGT SPARKS: I know about them, but I've never actually had to use them because I finished college right before I joined the reserves.

CPO GILMER: I haven't yet had the opportunity to use the benefits, although the Coast Guard does a very good job of making everybody aware of the educational benefits, at least at my unit level, although I am planning on taking advantage of those benefits starting this fall.

MR. ROWLEY: Okay, then next question. Under the GI Bill select reserve benefit, the eligibility is for fourteen years. First of all, do you think that's long enough to continue that eligibility, and would it be beneficial to you – which I imagine it would especially for the older soldiers, airmen, sailors, and marines – be able to transfer that benefit forward, if you leave the service or still use it after you leave the service, or should you be able to transfer that benefit to your spouse or your children?

SGT. KITZEROW: I do not have a spouse or children, so that doesn't apply to me. But I would appreciate if you could use the benefit after you do leave the reserve. And also, I'm sorry what was the other part of the question?

MR. ROWLEY: Basically, if you leave the reserve, could you use the benefit? And if you had spouse or children and didn't use it, could you pass it on to them having served your time basically earned that benefit?

SGT KITZEROW: Okay. And then also what you had said about the fourteen years I would hope that you could use it for a lifetime.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: I also agree, sir, that it would be a great benefit to have over the course of your life or if you chose not to use it, opt to have your family use it.

CM2 QUIROZ: Sir, I also think it would be a good idea to let our families use the educational benefits as well.

CPLG GARZA: Sir, I think that it also should extend over the fourteen years, and I think it should carry over to your family as well.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, I think it should be a lifetime benefit and as well being able to transfer it to your family members would be great.

SSGT SPARKS: I do think that it should go on after you're out of the reserve for fourteen years, and I do think it would take off a big financial burden if you could pass it on to your children as they get older.

CPO GILMER: I concur with everything they said.

MR. ROWLEY: I figured so. Now, one last question, especially for you. It sounds like you're the resident expert on GI benefit. (Chuckles.) The reserve benefit is different than the active duty benefit. I'm taking it this new law that was passed allowed you to use the active duty benefit because of your service overseas, or is that just a change in the current reserve benefit?

SGT KITZEROW: I believe they added money onto the chapter 1606, so if you were mobilized for at least 90 days after September 11<sup>th</sup>, then you are eligible for the 1607.

MR. ROWLEY: But as of right now, we don't know of anybody because of their active duty deployment been offered the active duty benefit?

SGT. KITZEROW: I don't know if I can answer that question.

MR. ROWLEY: I don't think we have, okay. Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time and we're really proud of you, thanks.

MR. PUNARO: Great, thanks. Commissioner Dan McKinnon.

MR. MCKINNON: Instead of getting each one of you, I'd like to get personal with a couple of you, just to understand a few things here. Sergeant, you got a college education now. You want to even get a master's degree. How come you haven't selected to become an officer or made the effort or have you?

SGT KITZEROW: When I came home from my deployment, I looked into doing Army ROTC at Marquette University, and they asked me if I had any medical problems from my deployment. And I said, yes, I have irritable bowel syndrome, and they told me that I could not be an officer because of that.

MR. MCKINNON: That's obviously gone by, I would assume, by now. So do you still have the opportunity to renew that or do you have to go to ROTC or could you go to – don't they have an OCS?

SGT KITZEROW: I'm not sure actually, sir. I do have irritable bowel syndrome still and they said that I could not be an officer because of that.

MR. MCKINNON: When you mobilized, what kind of medical problems did the other people have when you mobilized? Do you have a lot of people in your unit at that time that had other problems that were disqualified from being mobilized?

SGT KITZEROW: Some of them more had to do with mental health. We had a few people who tried to commit suicide not very successfully, but they tried to take pills and so they were disqualified. And there was someone else who was qualified for something too, although I can't remember. I think it had to do with a back problem.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. Sergeant McWilliams, just to get a little personal, what were you doing when you were injured?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Sir, I was in a combat patrol in a vehicle acting as the gunner. It was during the second invasion of Fallujah by the Marines. I guess a few guys filtered out sitting IED. And it was an IED-initiated ambush. Had it not been for the 1114 up-armored Humvee, the add-on armor, the IDA, the plates and all that, I wouldn't be here today. The IED detonated probably about three feet from the truck. It was a large explosion. Cut a good piece of my shoulder open, put some holes in my back, but the gear, all the equipment saved my life.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, so you had good equipment, and then you go through a hospital, I assume where, in Germany on the way here?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. MCKINNON: And then you get to the States, and then – now the interface, do you still go to a military hospital or do you go to VA? How does that work?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: It all depends on where you live, sir. There was kind of a conflict between whether I was supposed to go to Walter Reed or Fort Dix, so they just sent me to Fort Dix. Didn't have the facilities there to treat me, so there was a CBHCO liaison there who worked real hard and got me signed up for the program.

MR. MCKINNON: I'm sorry. What again was CB –

SGT MCWILLIAMS: The CBHCO, sir, the community-based healthcare organization. There is not one in every state, but there is one within reasonable distance of each state. On the way home from Fort Dix, I stopped at Hanscom Air Force Base, where I joined the Massachusetts CBHCO. They in-processed me, assigned me a platoon

sergeant and a case manager. I went home. The next day I got a call to say hey Sergeant McWilliams, this is the deal. We're going to try out, send you to this hospital, see what they can do. I went to the VA for awhile, progress was going kind of slow. They said well let's try something else, and they sent me to Boston Medical Center, a civilian doctor where the care really got stepped up a notch. I recovered a lot better than I would have if I'd remained in the VA.

MR. MCKINNON: And the military paid for all that?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. MCKINNON: Even the civilian hospitals that you went to?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. MCKINNON: And do they allow you to remain in the service now or in the reserves?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir. That was one of my big concerns was being put out. However, because of the care I received, I'm still here.

MR. MCKINNON: And does it limit your duty? Do they limit your MOS or anything like that because of that?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: As of now, sir, no. I've made a miraculous recovery. I'm doing really well. Things are still a little slow-going. I'm still in the ending stages of recovery, but things are going great.

MR. MCKINNON: Would you have any suggestions on the military care that went along during this whole stage of the recovery.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Just the mobilization deal, Landstuhl, or the cache in Baghdad where I was Medivaced from was great. They stabilized me, saved my life, sent me to Landstuhl. Landstuhl said, you know, we'll keep you for a little bit, stabilize you, and send you home. When I got to Fort Dix, you know, I had two majors arguing about well, no, no, no, you shouldn't be here. You should be in Walter Reed. You know, really kind of confused me as to where I should be. You know, I'm not a doctor. I don't know the severity of my wounds. I guess a set standard for where a soldier goes when he's hurt.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, thank you. Corporal – and if you could talk a little closer to the mike, I'd appreciate it – what about the equipment? What kind of equipment did you train on when you were getting ready to deploy?

CPL GARZA: Sir, we trained on a Mark 19 machine gun, 50 cal, a lot of heavy, heavy machine guns, softback Humvees, no up-armored Humvees.

MR. MCKINNON: Soft Humvees?

CPL GARZA: Yeah, no up-armored.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. When did you get checked out on the up-armored Humvees, when you got in the theater?

CPL GARZA: When we got into theater, we filled in on two up-armored Humvees and still two that were not up-armored.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, so would it be fair to say that the equipment you trained on here in the States was not the same equipment that you utilized in theater.

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir. Well, even here in the States, we never train with no up-armored Humvees.

MR. MCKINNON: I think they're all over in the theater right now is the problem with that.

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir, but even as of when we fell in, we still fell in.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, in the lead-up to when you were mobilized to go over to the theater, was the equipment the same as you had in the theater? My question is are you – it's continuous all the way through, the same equipment?

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir.

MR. MCKINNON: Was there any shortages of equipment?

CPL GARZA: Sir, there was – handsets for the COM, for the radios themselves. We always had pause with them. They were hard to come by.

MR. MCKINNON: And anything else?

CPL GARZA: Pretty much mid through deployment, we started getting all the up-armored Humvees that were starting to make their ways out there.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, did you have a training like in Kuwait or someplace in the up-armored Humvees before you went into the theater, or how did that transition work?

CPL GARZA: Well, we pretty much fell in what we fell on. And we just went with what we had.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. Sergeant Sparks, you talked about additional training. How would you structure it if 39 days is not – what kind of responsibilities did you have? I missed that I think.

SSGT SPARKS: I myself am a maintenance scheduler.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, so you're sort of in the background in a way to be sure what schedule for maintenance of the aircraft or vehicles or what?

SSGT SPARKS: The aircraft.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, and then what kind of training would you think would be good to have in addition to whatever you had?

SSGT SPARKS: Honestly, I think –

MR. MCKINNON: If you pull that mike a little closer, we could hear a little better.

SSGT SPARKS: The incoming airmen, I think instead of just coming in serving their first weekend and then going home, I think maybe the incoming airmen should be put on orders maybe 30, 60 days something like that, just so they have more time to train and they see day-to-day what goes on in your office. You know, from Monday through Friday, they could see all the type of work that they have to do, everything they have to deal with, not just the training they get that one weekend a month. You've got to also think that the one weekend a month that they come, they've got their work training, their job training, plus additional military training. So it's kind of you don't get that much training.

MR. MCKINNON: So you're saying what, before you're activated?

SSGT SPARKS: Well, when you're activated, you get plenty of training.

MR. MCKINNON: No, before you're activated is what I'm concerned about.

SSGT SPARKS: Before you're activated, well, you don't really need training, because once you come in and you're activated, you get all the training you need while you're there.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, well, I'm trying to figure out what you said you need more training for then.

SSGT SPARKS: That's just if you're not activated., for those that don't get mobilized, that don't get activated. Whether they're on whatever type status, profile status anything like that. We've got new airmen. They come in. They're only there that one weekend a month and we don't get to see them that often.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, and you went to the theater.

SSGT SPARKS: No.

MR. MCKINNON: Thanks a lot. I appreciate – like everybody else, we really appreciate your contribution to the defense of this country. We're in a war and it's a long-term war and you've been very helpful.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Patty Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: I want to share in thanking you for your service and for your time today and for all the information you've shared. Did any of you have any problems with your pay or did anyone in your units have pay problems? And if so, were they resolved to your satisfaction or was it something that was too complex and it should have been easier?

SGT KITZEROW: I did not have any issues with pay.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Only one issue, ma'am. It was solved very quickly. But I've spoken to some other soldiers who had the same thing. When I was Medivaced to Germany, I was put on another set of orders – medical retention orders – when I got placed on those, my pay cut. I wasn't getting paid at all until I got back to the States and they said, well, you're not getting paid, and I got all the back pay and all that though.

CM2 QUIROZ: There was an issue. The Navy pay system and the active duty – I'm sorry, the Navy reserve pay system and the active duty pay system don't communicate. And that was a big issue. I think they're still trying to work that out. (Laughter.)

MS. LEWIS: We understand there's a problem there. (Chuckles.)

CPL GARZA: Ma'am, I didn't have no pay issues, and nobody from my platoon that I can recall had any pay issues at all.

MSGT ALLEN: No issues, ma'am. My wife was very happy with my pay. (Laughter.)

MS. LEWIS: We want that to be true.

SSGT SPARKS: I'm sorry. That was funny. I didn't have any pay issues, but I did hear of some people that it took about two months before their pay finally came in. And as far as how long it took to get resolved, it took two months, so that was really it.

CPO GILMER: I had really no significant pay issues. I did get paid late a couple of times. But we did have others that again, one month, two months into their

mobilization and still not receive pay. Ultimately, you know, with the assistance of the District 5 master chief, those issues were ultimately rectified.

MS. LEWIS: We talked some about demobilization and counseling immediately following demobilization. Certainly, the stress of the deployment contributes to significant mental health issues for service members and their families. Did you find that for yourself or any members of your unit that were seeking mental health or counseling services available, and were they easily accessible or is it a challenge to get to the place someone would need to to get that kind of support?

SGT KITZEROW: I'd like a few minutes to think about that, ma'am. Thanks.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: At first, I was really skeptical about going, showing up to this kind of thing. One, how is it going to affect my career if I go there? I didn't bother going until I – you know, I got back in with the company. The leadership says hey, everybody has got to go. And by doing that, they did a really good thing. Made it easy for someone to go. You know, you're not going by yourself. You're going with a group of guys you trust and know. And just, it was a good experience.

CM2 QUIROZ: I believe the only challenge is admitting you have an issue and try to convince yourself to seek and get that medical attention. As far as facilities, San Antonio is surrounded by military bases, so it's just a matter of getting there.

CPL GARZA: Ma'am, I think the same. It was more people would think will happen to the careers if they pursued the health. As far as the health itself, the health was – it was brought to your attention where we could get help if you wanted to step forward.

MSGT ALLEN: Ma'am, before we left theater, we had appointments of our processing where those services were made available to us if we wanted them and as well as we had an interview with the doctor and he'd ask questions, how do you feel, and a little questionnaire that we had to fill out. And they would address it then as well as tell you who to contact when you got back home and follow up if needed. But no issues.

SSGT SPARKS: I agree with what Petty Officer Quiroz said, plus we have a really good chaplain. And I think twice a week, he sends us an email with a little quote from the bible and then his number and counseling services on the bottom.

CPO GILMER: As mentioned previously, the Coast Guard I believe does a fantastic job of providing counseling services for its members both active and reserve.

MS. LEWIS: I know it had been mentioned by a number of senior DOD officials that they were trying to take a number of initiatives to remove the stigma of seeking that kind of support and help and I just wanted to make sure that was happening.

One last question, initial deployments – you've all said your employers have been very positive, people in your units obviously have other employers. Do you see the

impact of multiple deployments creating more significant problems and have you heard any concern from other members of your unit about that?

SGT KITZEROW: I switched units when I came back from Iraq and I do not keep in contact with many people from my unit so I don't know of any issues that they have with their employers.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: For the most part, all the guys in my unit are squared away. No problems with our employers or the occasional few still have issues, but ESGR is right there willing to help them anytime.

CM2 QUIROZ: As far as support, I believe my employer would support us in multiple deployments, but again because we're so short-staffed, it would cause a hindrance as far as staffing is concerned.

CPL GARZA: As far as the deployments, I don't see it being a problem with anybody that I work with in the unit. I think everybody's employers are pretty supportive of the operation.

MSGT ALLEN: The same as Corporal Garza, ma'am. No issues. As long as my employer knows when they'll come and how frequent, they're willing to work with me, and the same for other members of my unit.

SSGT SPARKS: My previous boss wouldn't have any problems with that, just that she is now no longer there and there is a new boss, so I don't know how that person would react.

CPO GILMER: I personally don't believe I would have any problems. I am aware of issues regarding other service members, particularly those assigned to the port security units, again made up entirely of reservists who after 9/11 were being deployed I think multiple times within a year. They were being mobilized. And I know many members of those units who chose not to either re-enlist when they were contract complete, go IIR, or simply attempt to get out or transfer because of employment, family issues, and so forth due to the multiple mobilizations.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you all very much and again thank you all for being here today.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Larry Eckles.

MR. ECKLES: First of all, I want to tell you how proud I am of each of you and your comrades-in-arms for your service to our great nation. I thank you for that. I'd like to go back to the mobilization process when you were first mobilized. And I'd like to have you share with me the single biggest problem that you saw during the training portion of the mobilization process before deployment.

SGT. KITZEROW: Okay, sir. My biggest concern is that my unit had the time to train but we didn't utilize that time effectively. For example, we had six weeks at Fort Dix and in that time there was only two days that we actually trained on military police tasks, such as searching prisoners, setting up entry control points or controlling riots. I think it would have been helpful to have learned a little more Arabic, especially since we had to give some commands in the prison. It also would have been helpful to train on how to control riots. We were basically told when we were at Fort Dix and Camp RF Chan (sp), which was a total of I think almost two months that we had to train that we had to train for eight hours a day. And basically, we just fulfilled that requirement but not very effectively or efficiently. We just – an NCO would get up there and teach a class like how to shoot an ASMT (sp) or how to use a compass or basically things that we didn't even use the entire deployment.

MR. ECKLES: Okay, thank you.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: I spent about 45 days in Fort Dix for the mob. I'd say a good majority of it was just kind of a checkup log type thing, just get it done. Like a portion of it had no bearing overseas. The company set its own training up internally and then we just did the mob station training, checked up log. A lot of time sitting around going nothing, a few days of intense ten-, twelve-hour days on the range and then four or five days of here's an hour block of instruction.

MR. ECKLES: Okay, thank you.

CM2 QUIROZ: Sir, as I mentioned earlier, I was attached to the tactical movement team providing convoy security. And what we were trained on in California and in Kuwait before we went into Iraq wasn't necessarily what we used when we got into Iraq. It was a totally different ballpark. There was no SOP – standard operating procedures – for convoy security, and what we did have was outdated and inadequate. So we basically had to form our own rules and regulations on the fly, on the road. We did have an outgoing battalion on a day convoy as far as security is concerned, but day convoys and night convoys are totally different.

MR. ECKLES: Okay, thank you.

CPL GARZA: Sort of the same, I felt a lot of times that we had a lot of down time where we were finding ourselves just looking for something to train on. Like the sergeant said, a lot of it just checking the box type situations. I got some training, but I think there was time for a lot more training that could have taken place. A lot of the training that we did was a lot of outdated training that from experience we would never use when we got into theater.

MSGT ALLEN: Sir, for my unit, we do additional training all the time. As I stated in my written testimony, my unit has an average of five years deploying or together, and we've all most of us had at least one deployment under our belts. So I think the only thing for us is we didn't have enough bullets to shoot to train, which in a security

forces unit, especially our unit, we want to do that all the time, but they have to limit us. No issues though, leading up to the deployment.

SSGT SPARKS: My unit actually had no issues whatsoever.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you.

CPO GILMER: I think 9/11 – I know 9/11 caught the Coast Guard off-guard just like it caught everybody off-guard, and for a number of years, Coast Guard law enforcement operations though still on paper and still one of the traditional missions of the Coast Guard, I think it had kind of taken a back seat to a number of other issues, and a new culture had developed within the Coast Guard. And you had a lot of people in command positions that certainly did not want reservists involved in law enforcement operations, even though it was your reservists who five or six days a week were fulltime law enforcement officers performing those operations in much more stressful environments than they would within the confines of the Coast Guard. So when 9/11 happened and we were recalled, we were faced with a shortage of certified instructors and equipment. Most of us who were in law enforcement on the civilian side actually had to supply our own equipment – gun belts, holsters, body armor, radios, that type of thing just so that we could operate – train effectively. There was a shortage of ammunition, which you can still train but you just can't train effectively with firearms without ammunition. And so, those were some of the key issues that developed and plagued us immediately after 9/11 and when we were all mobilized.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you. That's all I have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, Commissioner Rhett Dawson.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to be brief and also want to join my colleagues in commending all of you for the service to your country and your willingness to appear here today and testify about your experiences. I'm not sure I got this right, but when Commissioner Lewis asked Sergeant Kitzerow a question about mental health, I thought she might have skipped over you. Is that possible?

SGT KITZEROW: Yes, that's correct, sir.

MS. LEWIS: I'm sorry.

MR. DAWSON: No, no, no, Patty, it's not your fault. I just want to make sure that we for the record heard from her and went back and gave her – I noticed how careful – you may end up going to law school. I notice that first of all you don't answer a question right away unless you've thought about it. (Laughter.) And secondly, you very carefully take notes, and those are two good traits that – am I the only lawyer on the panel? I may be.

MR. PUNARO: Thank goodness he's the only lawyer on the panel. (Laughter.)

MR. DAWSON: So I wanted to give you the chance to answer that question.

And then if I have – time permits, Mr. Chairman, if you want to wind up, I'll be happy to stop or do whatever you desire.

SGT KITZEROW: Thank you, sir. Ma'am, the answer that I had to your question is that in my unit, there was such a stigma placed on people who sought out mental health. And I wish that my unit would have had what Sergeant McWilliams' unit had where the entire unit goes to just talk to a counselor. And also, I believe that it would have been helpful to have that after demob process, because during the demob process, we just wanted to go home. And we were told that if you did say something that you might have an issue that you were going to have to stay longer at the demob site, and everybody just wanted to go home.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you, and I'm sorry I forgot to go back to you on that one, but that's important and I appreciate it.

MR. DAWSON: Mr. Chairman, do you want to wrap this up or can I ask a question following up on Commissioner Eckles?

MR. PUNARO: Go ahead.

MR. DAWSON: Just a quick question, Chief Gilmer, you alluded to how much the mission of the Coast Guard had changed in the wake of 9/11. I'd like to draw you out just a little bit more on that in a second. But first of all, for your colleagues on the panel, I'm going to follow up very quickly and ask you whether you've seen your mission change dramatically, because what the department of Defense says is that Homeland Security, if not the top priority, is a very, very significant priority for DOD. So first off, Chief Gilmer, you could elaborate a little bit on what you think has been done and what you think needs to get done and what you've seen and witnessed in your personal experience, and then anybody else wants to volunteer, we'll go right ahead and do that. Chief Gilmer?

CPO GILMER: Of course, the overall mission and the priorities of the Coast Guard have changed after 9/11. The Coast Guard was forced to change. Obviously, one of the biggest changes that occurred as a result of 9/11 was the creation of the department of Homeland Security and the transformation of the Coast Guard from the department of Transportation into DHS, which was an historical event and I believe is probably one of the top two or three events in the history of the Coast Guard. It's done nothing but I believe help the Coast Guard. It's helped it to transform its mission and give it some legitimate credibility within the realm of national defense, homeland security, and within the federal law enforcement community as well.

The Coast Guard has changed and adapted and obviously now homeland security and national defense is a top priority. I don't believe that the Coast Guard is necessarily negating or pushing to the back burner any of its traditional roles, but has done a very

good job of adapting and realizing that there is still a legitimate threat that faces the United States day in and day out. And I guess I'm fortunate because I get to see it day in and day out in both my civilian career and within the Coast Guard. However, I do believe that the Coast Guard has shown since 9/11 that it can easily adapt to a new mission. The Coast Guard went for a long time doing a great deal with very little. 9/11 showed that the Coast Guard can do a lot with very little, and since then, the Coast Guard has been giving a great deal of resources and I believe that the Coast Guard has been overall a pretty good steward of those resources and using those effectively to increase the overall effectiveness of the Coast Guard. And I think the Coast Guard as a result has shown that it is uniquely and strategically qualified to become the lead federal asset and response to maritime antiterrorism and counter-terrorism operations. And I believe the Coast Guard needs to remain focused on that mission without, again, pushing to the back burner those other traditional missions that we have. And it's a commission like this – it's these types of discussion groups that will help put into motion the changes that need to be made down the line in terms of recruiting the right people, training the right people, equipping the right people to do that job from now until the job is done.

MR. DAWSON: Very eloquent, by the way, throughout most of your testimony. Anybody else seen their mission changed, altered, seen your training changed or altered to a point where it is worth commenting upon?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir. I just came back from AT. It's not even over yet, in fact. I got pulled out of AT to come here. A lot of the training we do is usually just sheer infantry stuff, fly, nav (sp), you know, sleeping, living in the woods, suffering. (Laughter.) The past seven or eight days has been outstanding. The leadership set up a great training day, a great training AT in Montana. We ran through numerous things that keeps us prepared for a wide variety of missions. We did a gunfighter course, which is an urban operations shooting course, convoy live fire, shoot house, door breaching class, combat mindset class, and then just regular infantry tasks, and it really keeps us sharp. Even it's only two weeks, but it keeps us really sharp.

MR. DAWSON: As I understand, you're 11-Bravo, which means you're a basic infantryman. Is that correct?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

MR. DAWSON: Anybody else?

SGT KITZEROW: Sir, I went from a unit that deployed the 822<sup>nd</sup> Military Police Company to now a training support division. And teams are sent from that unit and they go and train and observe client units. So from what I've observed from that, I would hope that in the future, the previous unit I was at would get to participate in some of the mock exercises and the training and observation that teams from my training support unit do now, because before I left for Iraq with the old unit I was with, we didn't participate in mock exercises, and I think that would have been helpful before we left.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you, sergeant. Anybody else, Corporal?

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir. I think the training has changed. Instead of being at the drill center every month for the three days that we go in, I notice that we started hitting the field a lot more, a lot more patrolling, mountain training, convoy ops, trying to prepare for the mission. Like myself, I'm not a school-trained infantry Marine, I'm actually a cook. But out of four cooks in my platoon, we all earned our combat action ribbon and it's opening the eyes that it's not just an infantry war no more, no matter what your MOS is, you need to be willing and you've got to be knowledgeable what's really happening out there. So yes, the training has changed and it's for the better.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Master Sergeant Allen?

MSGT ALLEN: Just, I was going to say for my unit, sir, we just moved into a joint security forces complex with the active duty, and along with that, it allows us to train with them as well as we have the ground missile defense mission, which allows us to run convoys to support that mission. So for us, we've just in one word or two words: be prepared, which means we are constantly, when we get new troops, we get them as qualified as soon, as quickly as possible, because our whole mission in my unit is to deploy and that's what we've been training for since I've been there and that's what we continue to do.

MR. DAWSON: Thank you. Okay, anybody else? Well, then Godspeed to you all and back to you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: All right, thank you. Let me kind of close the hearing out with one last question on people, particularly the new recruits coming in the military today. As I said at the outset, the enlisted personnel, the non-commissioned officers like yourselves are the heart and soul of our military. The future of that military are the young recruits coming in today.

So I'd ask each of you a two-part question. One, do you have any personnel shortages in your current units? And two, what about the caliber of the young troop coming into the military today? Do you have any concerns there, because we know sometimes the recruiters, to make numbers, sometimes might bring some people in that may not be as well suited as perhaps you would like, and then what happens is they don't last very long; they attrit out, creating another vacancy and then creating a requirement to go get additional people. So what about personnel shortages and what about the quality – and these are going to be the young troops coming in; they're going to be in your fire team. These are the people you're going to go to combat with in the future. Start with Sergeant Kitzerow.

SGT KITZEROW: If you could just give me a minute, sir. Thanks.

MR. PUNARO: Sergeant McWilliams.

SGT MCWILLIAMS: A few concerns, sir. It's not really on the individual's character, but I've noticed a lot more pipeline losses – soldiers going to training, but not coming back to the units. I'm not sure what the issues are. And the other is I've heard a lot about easing basic training up a lot. And you know, I'm not high-echelon; I don't make decisions. But you can't weaken training for soldiers. The reality is they're going to battle and it's going to be hard. You lessen the standards there and it only costs lives in the end.

MR. PUNARO: Your instinct is – you were very cautious in the way you say it, but I detect that you believe they have lowered the standards in training. I think I detect. Is that your answer?

SGT MCWILLIAMS: It was, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah. I happen to agree with you. I think that's a very bad thing to be doing in wartime. Petty Officer?

CPO GILMER: Sir, on paper, on any given time, we have approximately 90 personnel assigned to my detachment. Out of those 90, figure about 40 to 30 show up on a drill weekend. We lose the new guys coming in. They'll come in and realize what they're getting themselves into and they don't come back next month. As far as caliber, what we have, the guys are great, willing to do anything for anybody. But I can't judge the ones that are coming in because they don't stay.

MR. PUNARO: So let me make sure I understand this. You're supposed to have roughly 90 people in your unit?

CPO GILMER: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And are all of them supposed to show up for drill?

CPO GILMER: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: So you're saying only about 40 show up?

CPO GILMER: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: That's, by any standards, a pretty dismal attendance record.

CPO GILMER: And that's a good day, sir.

MR. PUNARO: That's a good day. So you've got serious drill attendance problems. Then, it sounds like you have serious retention problems for the young ones, the new ones that come in. They drill a couple of times and then never come back.

CPO GILMER: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, so you would say that's a real problem then, I take it?

CPO GILMER: Yes, it is.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Corporal Garza?

CPL GARZA: Sir, I'm not exactly sure on exactly how much Marines we should have. I think right now we currently have over 50. My big concern is us losing the experienced veterans that we have. A lot of them are going to come up and be up for re-enlistment that are probably going to choose to exit the military. That's a concern as well.

MR. PUNARO: You're kind of picking that up talking to your colleagues is what I'm picking up from you. You know kind of what your colleagues are going to do and you're saying you're concerned because you think a lot of them are thinking about getting out.

CPL GARZA: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And is that because of the nature of what they look at they're facing over the next five or ten years if they stay in?

CPL GARZA: That's some of them, sir. Some of them it has to do with that. And then as far as what we're getting, I hope my branch of service hasn't weakened its standards as far as the boot camp and stuff like that.

MR. PUNARO: You say they have not.

CPL GARZA: I hope they have not.

MR. PUNARO: You hope they have not.

CPL GARZA: I hope not, so –

MR. PUNARO: Of course, it's a lot easier now for folks like you then when I went through, obviously. (Laughter.)

CPL GARZA: From what I hear, sir.

MR. PUNARO: That was a joke.

CPL GARZA: I'm aware of that, sir.

MR. PUNARO: It's a lot tougher now. Yeah, okay. Sergeant Allen?

MSGT ALLEN: I believe in lowering standards to get entry for folks is wrong. And the Marines got it right – the few, the proud. If you want to be one of us, this is what you need to strive to be and that's great. We have UTA attendance as well within my unit – we took a dip as far as security force members. But those are – the recruiting has been back up. Just being here this morning listening to over 78 percent of the population is unfit to join the military, which is pretty scary, other than the fact that I think it relates a little bit to us as Americans as whole. We're taking the mandatory PT stuff out of schools and that doesn't necessarily have anything to do with this commission but the American population as a whole is somewhat obese. We're just taking the physical education out of a lot of things that we don't require our younger people to meet the physical standards that you probably had, that I had. So that concerns me, but I think from my unit, we want people that want to be there. And we lay it all out and we tell them, if you want to be something bigger than yourself, because a lot of people have paved the way for you to be here. So I think in my opinion, every young person should at least join the service, if not the Guard, and then they'll have a better respect for it.

MR. PUNARO: Great, thanks. Sergeant Sparks.

SSGT PARKS: As far as shortages, we've got more aircraft maintenance due right now than we do actual maintenance aircraft workers. And as far as recruiting, we've got some airmen that are put into a job that they really don't want. They would have rather chosen something else. So we've got them transferring to other jobs. And we get a lot of prior active duty Air Force, a lot of prior active duty Navy and Army, so those people actually do want to be there. That does help us out a bit with their experience.

MR. PUNARO: Good, thanks. Petty Officer Gilmer?

CPO GILMER: I know my own unit, we do have open billets. I don't know that I would call it an extreme shortage at this point. You know, we always complain and say that we could use more bodies. I think we have seen from some of the folks that are coming out of training and coming to the unit maybe a degradation in skill sets and overall discipline. My own personal opinion is that just because a person can fire a weapon and pass a PT test and maybe pass a practical test does not mean that I'm willing to take that person on a nighttime opposed force boarding out at sea and put my life in their hands. I think there is a mental state and a physical state that goes along with that and we're not seeing all the time – not in every case – but we're not seeing all the time that sharpness. And as far as basic training goes, I concur with what everybody else has said on this panel. We're the most affluent nation on earth, and even the poorest of kids that goes to basic training is affluent compared to the enemy that we face overseas, the enemy that seeks to destroy this great nation. And that same enemy has had to survive from the day they were born. They've had to learn to survive. And so by lowering the standards and the quality of training that we give our own recruits, it's not doing them any favors.

MR. PUNARO: Great. And finally, and I would say in terms of career counseling, I would discard the recommendation of our lawyer commissioner to be an aspiring lawyer, but I would recommend you consider being an aspiring journalist like you said earlier, and if you need any counseling, we've got some great journalists here in the audience that I'm certain would be happy to talk to you about it. So –

SGT KITZEROW: Thank you, sir. To answer the shortage question, there is a shortage at my unit now, although I don't know the actual numbers. I do know that there are a lot of soldiers who fill positions that they are not MOS qualified for, including myself. I am military police. I do not hold the MOS for the position that I currently hold, which is an administrative position. And that goes with the difficulty of what I was talking about before with the difficulty of reclassing. There is a lot of times I've tried to get into the admin school, but it's been full or people at my unit do not know how to get me into the school. I always feel like I'm uninformed with how to do things.

And that goes along with what I was going to talk about with the caliber of the new recruits. I don't know if there's certain personality traits or a type of person that needs to be in the military, but in the recruitment process, it is so important to keep us informed. I feel like we should be informed about the MOS that we are getting into and we should be informed about now the mission and what it's going to mean to be an Army Reserve soldier because unlike what I thought it was going to be, it is not one weekend a month, two weeks over the summer. It is a lot more involved than that, and I wish I would have known that. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Thanks, and again, we will certainly take all your testimony to heart. It's really been extremely helpful. I knew we were going to get the bird's eye view and the straight scoop from people like yourselves and we've gotten that. Thank you for your great service to the nation in uniform. Please pass along our thanks to your families as well as to your employers. If you think of anything that you want to pass along to the commission that you didn't say in testimony today, don't hesitate to call us. If one of your colleagues grabs you and says, Corporal Garza, why didn't you tell them, you know, one, two, three, four, get that word to us or tell them to get in touch with us. We'd love to talk to them. So again, thank you for being here. And good luck to you, and hope you all do re-enlist and have very productive military careers and service to our great nation. Commission will stand adjourned.

(END)