

United States Air Force



Presentation

Before the House Appropriations
Committee, Subcommittee on Military
Construction and Veterans Affairs

***Fiscal Year 2013
Quality of Life in the
Military***

Witness Statement of
CMSAF James A. Roy
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

February 16, 2012

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February 16, 2012



BIOGRAPHY

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT OF THE AIR FORCE JAMES A. ROY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Roy represents the highest enlisted level of leadership, and as such, provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests, as appropriate, to the American public, and to those in all levels of government. He serves as the personal adviser to the Chief of Staff and the Secretary of the Air Force on all issues regarding the welfare, readiness, morale, and proper utilization and progress of the enlisted force. Chief Roy is the 16th chief master sergeant appointed to the highest noncommissioned officer position.



Chief Roy grew up in Monroe, Mich., and entered the Air Force in September 1982. His background includes numerous leadership roles at squadron, group, numbered air force and combatant command levels. He has been stationed at locations in Florida, South Korea, Missouri, Guam, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia, Kuwait, Japan and Hawaii. He has worked a variety of civil engineer duties. Chief Roy also served as a superintendent of a military personnel flight and a mission support group before becoming a command chief master sergeant at the wing, air expeditionary wing, numbered air force and combatant command levels. Before assuming his current position, he served as Senior Enlisted Leader and adviser to the U.S. Pacific Command Combatant Commander and staff, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii. He was appointed to this position on June 30, 2009.

EDUCATION

1985 Noncommissioned Officer Preparatory Course, MacDill AFB, Fla.

1991 Associate of Science degree in construction management, Park College, Parkville, Mo.

1992 Associate in Applied Science degree in construction technology, Community College of the Air Force

1993 Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Kadena Air Base, Japan

1993 Associate in Applied Science degree in instructor of technology and military Science, Community College of the Air Force

1996 Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Gunter AFB, Ala.

1996 Bachelor of Science degree in engineering management, Park College, summa cum laude, Parkville, Mo.

2000 Master of Science degree in human resources management, Troy State College, Troy, Ala.

2005 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Center for Creative Leadership, Greensboro, N.C.

2005 Keystone - National Defense University, Suffolk, Va.

2005 Leadership Team Awareness Course, Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, Patrick AFB,

February 16, 2012

Fla.

2006 USAF Senior Leadership Course, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.

2008 Security Assistance Management-Overseas Course, Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

ASSIGNMENTS

1. September 1982 - November 1982, trainee, Basic Military Training, Lackland AFB, Texas
2. November 1982 - February 1983, student, heavy equipment operator, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
3. February 1983 - January 1987, heavy equipment operator, 56th Civil Engineer Squadron, MacDill AFB, Fla.
4. February 1987 - December 1987, heavy equipment operator, 554th Civil Engineer Squadron, Osan AB, South Korea
5. January 1988 - May 1992, instructor, instructor supervisor and heavy equipment operator, Detachment 0001, 3770th Technical Training Group, Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.
6. May 1992 - May 1993, Foreman, Horizontal Construction, 8th Civil Engineer Squadron, Kunsan AB, South Korea
7. May 1993 - March 1994, Foreman, Heavy Repair, 633rd Civil Engineer Squadron, Andersen AFB, Guam
8. April 1994 - March 1995, Manager, Heavy Repair, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron, Andersen AFB, Guam
9. March 1995 - November 1996, Chief, Readiness Flight, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron, Andersen AFB, Guam
10. November 1996 - July 1997, Chief, Heavy Repair, 36th Civil Engineer Squadron, Andersen AFB, Guam
11. August 1997 - July 1999, Chief, Facility Maintenance, 81st Civil Engineer Squadron, Keesler AFB, Miss.
12. July 1999 - March 2000, Superintendent, Military Personnel Flight, 81st Mission Support Squadron, Keesler AFB, Miss.
13. March 2000 - September 2000, superintendent, 81st Mission Support Group, Keesler AFB, Miss.
14. September 2000 - September 2002, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 14th Flying Training Wing, Columbus AFB, Miss.
15. September 2002 - May 2004, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 437th Airlift Wing, Charleston AFB, S.C.
16. June 2004 - August 2005, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 1st Fighter Wing, Langley AFB, Va.
(October 2004 - November 2004, Command Chief Master Sergeant, 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, Southwest Asia)
17. August 2005 - May 2007, Command Chief Master Sergeant, U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force, Yokota AB, Japan
18. June 2007 - June 2009, Senior Enlisted Leader and Adviser, U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, Hawaii
19. June 2009 - present, Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

MAJOR AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

Defense Superior Service Medal
Defense Meritorious Service Medal
Meritorious Service Medal with silver oak leaf cluster
Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Force Achievement Medal with silver oak leaf cluster

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

1993 John Levitow Award, Noncommissioned Officer Academy
1996 Senior Noncommissioned Officer the Year, 13th Air Force
1996 Ancient Order of Chamorro and a special resolution from Guam's 24th Legislature

EFFECTIVE DATES OF PROMOTION

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force June 30, 2009

(Current as of July 2009)

Introduction

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for giving us an opportunity to express some concerns important to America's Airmen, their families and our United States Air Force. I'm honored and privileged to join my fellow Service Senior Enlisted Advisors to represent our Nation's finest men and women.

Our Air Force includes more than 690,000 Total Force Airmen—Active, Guard and Reserve—with more than 508,000 in uniform and 181,000 civilians.

We appreciate your Subcommittee's continued support, which is vital to our successes. We rely on your efforts, actions, and legislation to protect our servicemember's and veteran's pay and benefits. We also appreciate all the visits House members made to support our Airmen in the field and our Wounded Warriors in health care facilities.

Our Airmen provide critical skills to Combatant Commanders in a variety of theaters around the world. Many of our Airmen provide combat support from their home station in the form of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, nuclear deterrence, global strike, and cyber operations. However, there are still 30,000 Airmen forward-deployed, leaving behind family and friends. Our new National Defense Strategy charges us with preserving the quality of the all-volunteer force, and making sure we don't break faith with our men and women in uniform and their families. To that end, it is our responsibility to ensure Airmen and their families are safe, healthy, and well educated. We must also keep Airmen properly organized, trained, and equipped for employment by Combatant Commanders. It's my honor to tell you about what America's Air Force is doing each and every day.

Airmen in the Joint and Coalition Fight

Nearly 133,000 Total Force Airmen provide strategic mobility, space and missile capabilities, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance to Joint warfighters on a daily basis. Roughly 30,000 others are currently deployed to 151 locations worldwide. In all, 56 percent of our Active Duty force and 43 percent of the Total Force support Combatant Commander requirements every day.

While our combat forces are no longer in Iraq, there are still more than 23,000 Airmen deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations, with nearly 4,000 filling Joint expeditionary taskings. These Airmen are on the frontlines with their fellow Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines, working in detainee operations, convoy operations and protection, explosive ordnance disposal, police training, military transition, civil engineering, security, communications, fuels, medical services, logistics, intelligence, and base operating support. They are part of the Joint team, serving in whatever capacity needed. Together with our sister Services, we are training and augmenting Afghan security forces, rebuilding critical infrastructure, and providing needed medical services.

Our remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) platforms provide increasing support to Joint and Coalition warfighters on the ground. Airmen are finding, fixing, and tracking our enemies using Predator, Reaper and Global Hawk aircraft. Our Predator operations alone have continued to increase from 12 combat air patrols in 2007 to 57 today. By employing more RPA operators and increasing the number of combat air patrols to 65 by May 2014, we are protecting Joint and Coalition interests around the globe.

We also remain dedicated to meeting the demands of the nuclear mission, which requires discipline and compliance with the highest standards. It is imperative that Airmen at every level

February 16, 2012

are focused on upholding our core values of *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do*.

End Strength

Our mission effectiveness continues to depend first and foremost on the readiness and dedication of our Airmen. Although we continue to see record high retention, we are programmed to meet Active Duty end strength of at the end of this fiscal year (FY). Our Force Management programs will ensure we maintain the right balance of skills across the spectrum. We will continue to meet mission demands with our Airmen executing operations in the air, space, and cyberspace.

Recruiting and Retention

Airmen are our most valuable asset. We need the right number of Airmen with the right skills to support Combatant Commander requirements. We are firmly committed to organizing, training, and equipping our Airmen to the highest possible standard.

We continue to recruit the best and brightest our Nation has to offer. Despite an escalating high school drop-out rate, 99.5 percent of our recruits earned a high school diploma and 19.6 percent have completed some college courses.

Despite significant challenges of disqualifying factors and an increasingly obese youth population, our recruiters are enlisting motivated young people to meet mission requirements. For example, Jeff Bever had been a linebacker at State College, PA and lost 106 pounds to get into the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) career field. He earned a degree in criminal justice before he joined the Air Force and aspires to be a special operations officer. Jeff graduated Basic Military Training with both High Honors and Warhawk Awards. He came home for the holidays and helped eight future Battlefield Airmen prepare for the physical rigors of training, and will

February 16, 2012

come home on Recruiter Assistance Program duty after his TACP training to share his experiences with prospective recruits.

Our recruiters are on track to meet the Service's goals for Active Duty, Air Force Reserve, and Air National Guard accessions. In this fiscal year, 11,038 of America's young men and women have completed or currently attend Air Force Basic Military Training (BMT). Additionally, there are 16,041 recruits contracted to attend BMT this fiscal year.

Recent figures show we are within tolerance of -- and in many cases exceeding -- our retention goals for all Selective Reenlistment Bonus zones. Meeting these goals is encouraging; however, there is a continuing need to manage critical warfighting skills through an appropriately-sized bonus program to ensure manning requirements are met. We are still concerned about meeting manning requirements in a number of career fields, including contracting, career enlisted aviators, command and control specialties, intelligence, civil engineers, and public affairs.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to recruit and retain Airmen who value educational opportunities for themselves and their families. Our most effective tool for retaining quality Airmen in these mission critical specialties is the re-enlistment bonus. We appreciate continued congressional support to protect this incentive.

Developing Airmen

Deliberately developing our Airmen is a key priority. We must ensure our Airmen have a mix of skills so we can maintain combat-ready expeditionary forces, both now and in the future. We do this by providing the appropriate training, education, and experience. Starting with Basic Military Training and continuing through job-specific technical training and on-the-job training, Airmen learn the skills they need to succeed in serving our Nation. Our Professional Military

Education programs help Airmen grow into better communicators, military professionals, and leaders. We also encourage the pursuit of college degrees through off-duty education. Airmen apply this new knowledge to real-world situations, both in garrison and at deployed locations, gaining valuable experience along the way. This training, education, and experience allow Airmen to think with a global perspective and operate effectively in an expeditionary environment.

Building Resiliency

Building resiliency among Airmen and their families is another major focus area because it is a key factor in maintaining the health of our force. While our warriors have recently completed their combat mission in Iraq, Airmen are still in Afghanistan. They have been there for more than 10 years now, and they have been in the Middle East for over 20 years. The sustained high operations tempo at home and abroad stress the need to deliberately increase focus on building strong, resilient families. Resilient Airmen are better equipped to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stress and changing demands -- and to consistently and reliably get the job done. Many of our programs are designed to build more resilient Airmen and families.

Our resiliency efforts include a number of programs that fall under the umbrella of Comprehensive Airman Fitness. This program is governed by the Community Action Information Board, and the Vice Chief of Staff of the Air Force has charged it with implementing several resilience initiatives utilizing a tiered training model.

The foundation tier of this model provides all Airmen with a general knowledge of the principles of resilience through an updated accessions training curriculum for both enlisted and officer basic training. The next tier is Master Resilience Trainer Training, which provides face-

February 16, 2012

to-face help with resilience-building skills. Also included in this tier is the Leadership Pathways program which uses incentives to increase attendance in existing resilience-related classes offered (e.g., healthy relationships, nutrition, chaplain's retreat) by helping agencies. The next tier involves weaving principles of resilience throughout all Professional Military Education. The final and most extensive tier is the Deployment Transition Center. The Deployment Transition Center at Ramstein Air Base, Germany uses a resilience-building, strength-based approach to help Airmen who are regularly exposed to significant risk of death in direct combat. It is targeted at helping decompress Airmen and reintegrating them into their home stations, workplaces, and families. As of December 30, 2011, 3,023 personnel have transitioned through the Deployment Transition Center.

Quality of Service

We thank Congress for its steadfast funding of quality of service initiatives. These services are an overwhelming factor in how long Airmen and their families choose to serve. Steady gains in these areas have enabled us to retain skilled Airmen and develop them into the leaders we need for the future. We continue to emphasize our sense of community in and around our bases. We focus on four main areas: health and wellness; Airmen and family support; education, development, and employment; and Airmen and family housing.

Whether Airmen are working on the installation or deployed, they deserve high-standard buildings and facilities. Since 2000, and with the generous support of Congress, the Air Force funded 124 military construction projects totaling \$834 million for child development centers and fitness centers. While this represents a significant investment, many requirements remain. We have \$247 million in projects programmed over the next five years to continue our efforts in this area.

February 16, 2012

Our fitness centers provide a place for our Airmen to stay in shape and burn off stress from work and deployments. The Air Force funded 44 fitness center projects at a cost of \$470 million over the last 10 years. These projects included extensions to existing centers and replacing older and undersized facilities. We continue to construct and expand our facilities to meet the needs of our Airmen and their families and plan to build or improve the fitness centers at 11 more installations over the next five years.

Food Transformation

We remain focused on transforming the way Air Force delivers food service. We have seen a great response to our food transformation initiative, which offers campus-style feeding to Airmen and their families. This initiative addresses changing lifestyles, needs and preferences while improving program and facility standards. Partnering with industry, we started the new transformation process at six bases and have plans to add another eight bases beginning this year. We are very proud to report that customer counts have increased by 561,000 meals, with our junior enlisted members living in the dorms consuming an additional 139,000 meals. Our customer satisfaction score, using the American Customer Service Index scoring method, has increased from 67 to 75. This initiative has increased operating hours and decreased our overall costs by an estimated eight percent.

Assistance to Severely Injured Service Members

Caring for our Wounded Warriors is a lifelong obligation. These brave men and women put service to our country before themselves, and we must give them the care they deserve. More of our Airmen are surviving injuries than in past wars, but many of their injuries present significant challenges to the quality of life for both them and their families.

February 16, 2012

The Air Force continues to strengthen our support for our wounded, ill, and injured population. We are committed to providing them individualized, focused medical and non-medical care. Our Recovery Care Coordinator Program strategically places 33 non-clinical care managers around the continental United States, Hawaii, and Germany to cover every location where Airmen serve. This network of Recovery Care Coordinators provides dedicated care from the moment an Airman is seriously injured. We have improved our care programs by partnering with other organizations committed to the long term care and support of our warriors. Recovery Care Coordinators serve as independent advocates for Airmen and work to ease the burden of administrative and personal requirements.

In 2011, Recovery Care Coordinators increased service to our wounded, ill, and injured by over 30 percent and now support about 1,000 Airmen and their families. Currently, over 1,325 combat wounded Airmen have been served by the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program; about 30 percent remain on Active Duty while the remainder have separated or retired. Of these Wounded Warriors, almost 800 have invisible wounds including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. To help with non-medical care efforts, our Recovery Care Coordinators are piloting a new video service program using high-definition telepresence devices. These devices connect Airmen directly with Recovery Care Coordinators and make it seem as though they are sitting in the same room. This equipment, combined with the professional care management we provide, will allow us to expand coverage from the military treatment facilities to our Air National Guard bases and Reserve units around the country, ensuring quality care for our Total Force.

The Air Force Wounded Warrior program provides long term non-clinical care for wounded Airmen who must meet a Medical Evaluation Board or Physical Evaluation Board to determine fitness for duty. Focused, personal care allows these Airmen the opportunity to make

February 16, 2012

informed decisions when their career path changes because of injury. The Air Force is committed to offering our combat wounded the opportunity to remain on Active Duty in their primary specialty or, if that is not feasible, through training for a new specialty. If they choose to separate or are medically retired, the Air Force Wounded Warrior program continues to provide support and transition services for as long as the Airman wishes.

In 2011, we again celebrated the achievements of our Wounded Warriors. The Warrior Games, held at the Olympic Training Center and United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was a huge success. During the games, 23 Air Force athletes competed in track, cycling, swimming, wheelchair basketball, and seated volleyball. The Air Force team earned 13 medals and was a strong contender in the Chairman's Cup. Besides the Warrior Games, we continue to provide greater opportunities to our wounded, ill, and injured Airmen by participating and hosting adaptive sports events. Through these events, Airmen learn that despite their injuries, they are capable of more than they may believe. Through competitive sports they realize the pride they have in themselves and that their injuries do not limit what they can do in life.

We will continue to work with our Joint partners, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Military Severely Injured Center to make sure we are doing everything possible to care for these heroes and their families – it is our solemn obligation, and we cannot break faith with these heroes.

Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury

Through education and prevention, screening, and treatment, the Air Force aggressively and proactively addresses the negative health outcomes of battle. Two of the most concerning injuries are post-traumatic stress symptoms and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

Airmen learn about responses to traumatic events before each deployment. A mandatory computer-based training program reviews common reactions to traumatic situations and teaches strategies for mitigating those reactions. Most Airmen get additional face-to-face training covering similar topics in a group environment as well. After a deployment, Airmen returning from roles with high potential for combat exposure spend two days at the Deployment Transition Center where they complete a transition and education phase designed to ease reintegration to home and garrison life. All Airmen also receive post-deployment training at their home bases. Finally, each deploying Airman is screened for Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) before and after each deployment at set intervals, to ensure any delayed symptoms may be addressed.

Even if not exposed to battle, Airmen with specific traumatic exposures are offered education in psychological first aid in Traumatic Stress Response interventions while deployed or at their home bases. Should an Airman seek care for, or receive a diagnosis of PTSD, treatment is available. Air Force mental health providers are trained in a variety of evidence-based treatments including Cognitive Processing and Prolonged Exposure therapies.

To reduce the negative stigma often associated with seeking mental health care, Airmen can now see mental health providers without going to a specialty clinic. The Air Force is placing a provider in each outpatient primary care clinic to make Airmen feel more comfortable seeking mental health assistance early. Care provided at early stages can address symptoms before they affect careers and families or require more extensive treatment.

Before deployment, Airmen are trained to recognize potentially concussive events and symptoms of traumatic brain injury. They are also given a computerized assessment that measures cognitive abilities including reaction time and memory. Members are reassessed in

February 16, 2012

theater if they sustain a head injury or blast exposure. As part of the clinical assessment, scores are compared with pre-deployment scores to facilitate return-to-duty determinations. Upon redeployment, Airmen are screened for persistent symptoms from TBI and referred to their primary care manager if required.

Child and Youth Development Programs

Child care remains an important quality of service factor for our Airmen and their families. Quality child care facilities are a key component in assuring Airmen their family is being cared for while they defend our country. We continue to strengthen our Air Force community by meeting child care needs through robust construction, increasing the number of available spaces and putting us on track to meet demand in FY12. Facilities and personnel have been addressed through a robust construction effort, and now we are working to ensure supplies and equipment are available for our child care program that served 62,000 in FY 11.

The Air Force Expanded Child Care program is in full swing, providing assistance for Airmen who need care during unusual shifts, extended duty hours, and drill weekends. Available, affordable, and quality child care remains our commitment during these challenging times. Through programs like Extended Duty Care, Missile Care, Supplemental Care, and Returning Home Care, the Air Force is able to provide a wide range of support to meet the myriad of needs. Air Force Youth Programs provides activities during the out-of-school hours which can be peak times for “at risk” behavior, particularly in light of reduced school district and community service budgets. Through a variety of fitness and health, deployment support, resiliency building, and community service efforts, we provided sports, camping, and academic enrichment activities to 146,000 Active Duty and Reserve Component youth around the world. In its second year of establishment, the Air Force Teen Council offers advocacy opportunities

and leadership skills while helping our teens develop resiliency and contribute to the larger Air Force community.

Balancing mission requirements with family care responsibilities can be difficult, especially for families with special needs. The Exceptional Family Member Program is designed to help our more than 18,400 Airmen who have family members with special needs. Family Support, the newest addition to the Exceptional Family Member Program, stands ready and trained to provide information and referrals on subjects ranging from housing and respite care to education and support groups located both on and off base. We have 35 full-time family support coordinators on Air Force installations with 175 or more special needs family members, and part time coordinators at the remaining bases. In FY11, Respite Child Care Programs were launched at seven locations to provide support to parents of exceptional family members. This program will expand to 17 locations by the middle of this year. Through the generous support of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), we are also adding 73 accessible child care playgrounds and community nature parks in support of family members with special needs.

Airmen Education Opportunities

The Air Force has the most educated enlisted force in the world. Since April 25, 1977, more than 315,500 Airmen have earned a fully accredited associate's degree, corresponding to their career field, through the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF). Currently, nearly 179,000 enlisted Airmen have earned at least 12 college credits. More than 53,800 have associate's degrees, almost 18,500 have bachelor's degrees or higher, and 21 have earned a doctorate degree.

Our General Education Mobile program makes education more accessible for our Airmen. It offers general education courses required for a CCAF degree through distance

learning courses. This program attracts students who are struggling to earn general education credits due to the Air Force's high operations tempo. Distance learning allows some of our more heavily-tasked career fields to continue their education while deployed. Currently, there are 32 civilian higher-education institutions collectively offering 592 courses. These are tied directly to the CCAF's general education degree requirements. More than 1,180 Airmen are participating in the program and are enrolled in over 2,030 courses.

Our Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative program is helping Airmen who have completed CCAF degrees apply those credits toward a bachelor's degree at military-friendly schools. This program has grown to 46 civilian higher-education institutions and offers 219 bachelor's degree programs. More than 24,000 Airmen are participating in the program, and since its inception in June 2007, 813 bachelor's degrees have been awarded.

CCAF also offers a Professional Manager Certification, a credential that formally recognizes an individual's advanced level of education and experience in leadership and management, as well as professional accomplishments. The program provides a structured professional development track that supplements Enlisted Professional Military Education and the Career Field Education and Training Plan.

Airmen & Family Readiness

We are bridging the communication gap between spouses, family members, and leaders through our Key Spouse Program. With 4,000 volunteers and 96 percent of commanders participating, the program is building a greater sense of community within units, especially when families are separated or deployed.

We continue making great strides in support of Air Force dependents attending public, private, DoD Dependent Schools, home, and virtual schools. Civilian school liaisons and staff at

February 16, 2012

our Airmen & Family Readiness Centers provide school liaison support to base leaders and families through advocacy with local and state school administration and school boards.

Thirty-nine states have passed legislation to establish an Interstate Compact on educational opportunity for military children in state, local, and school districts. The Interstate Compact helps to ensure military children are not negatively impacted in school by their families' service to the nation. It is aimed at providing educational solutions on class placement, records transfer, graduation requirements, immunizations, and exit testing, as well as allowing late entry to extra-curricular activities and sports teams. Ninety percent of our military-connected school age children are now supported by the 39 states on board. OSD continues to work with the remaining states (Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming) to close the gap by passing bills during their respective 2012 state legislative sessions.

An estimated 48 percent of Air Force spouses seek employment with each military move, making spouse employment a constant challenge. In terms of quality of life, Airmen report this as their largest concern because in many cases it constitutes nearly 50 percent of their total family income. Our Airmen have benefited from your support and the White House effort to strengthen our military families by removing barriers that prevent military spouses from maintaining careers because of relocation. Because the former Army Military Spouse Employment Partnership program was expanded to include all Services in July 2011, our Air Force spouses are now linked to 96 corporate partners who are finding them to be a readily available, diverse, and talented pool of hireable candidates.

Air Force spouses have a strong work ethic and possess highly sought-after traits that distinguish them as outstanding employees. Our spouses are adaptable, tech-savvy, and are

highly effective under pressure. By signing the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Statement of Support, corporate partners agree to mentor spouse employees and target jobs for military spouses. They also agree to develop portable employment options and communication networks with spouses by participating in job fairs, which strengthen relationships with military family support centers that provide spouse employment assistance. Partnerships like these make sure family members are not adversely affected when service calls Airmen and their families to relocate.

Unemployment compensation for spouses of service members continues to be critical to military families. Support for unemployment compensation acknowledges military spouses need reasonable time and resources necessary to find suitable employment or meet licensing or credentialing requirements each time they move. We look forward to all states properly compensating spouses that move because of their military obligation.

Housing

The Air Force is committed to ensuring Airmen and their families have quality housing in which to live and raise families. We believe our people deserve well-built and well-maintained housing. Through military construction (MILCON) and housing privatization, we are providing quality homes for our families. We are on track to complete our privatized housing program at bases in the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii. At the beginning of FY 2013, the Air Force will have privatized 41,500 homes at 47 bases with 12,300 units pending at 17 bases. Additionally, we will continue to renovate overseas housing as inventory ages and requires on-going sustainment and modernization.

Investment in dormitories provides high quality housing to Airmen. The Air Force continues to focus on modernizing inadequate dormitories, and completed facility assessments

February 16, 2012

across the Air Force under the 2012-2016 Dormitory Master Plan. Once approved, the plan will be used to create a prioritized list of dormitory conditions which will guide the investment of our limited resources to gain the highest return.

Besides repairing structural inadequacies in dormitories, our focus remains on ensuring we provide a structured environment where commanders and first sergeants serve as mentors in the care and development of our first-class Airmen. The dormitories are not only a place to sleep; they are a place for young Airmen to adjust to military life.

Military Construction

For several years, the Air Force has chosen to take risk in infrastructure in order to invest in modernization efforts. Though we intend to continue modernizing our force, we also expect to support our Airmen by renovating and replacing aging facilities in the coming years. We have prioritized our program to cover our most critical MILCON requirements by focusing on projects that support Air Force priorities and the new strategic guidance. Again, the continued support of this Subcommittee and the House Appropriations Committee have been vital to the success of these MILCON programs.

Summary

Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to represent Airmen and their families by testifying today.

Our Airmen are doing incredible work, ranging from providing humanitarian aid to the earthquake and tsunami victims in Japan to supporting U.S. Central Command on a daily basis in Afghanistan. More than two-thirds of active duty Airmen came in after September 11, 2001, which means the majority of our Airmen have been at war their entire career. They deploy

February 16, 2012

longer than ever before and many need a second hand to count the number of combat tours they've done. Despite this pace, our Airmen have shown amazing resiliency.

Also amazing is the contributions of Air Force families, who take care of the home front while our Airmen are carrying out the warfighting mission. They are brave when faced with extraordinary challenges. They stand strong even while worried about their loved ones deployed to distant lands. Their faith and support is critical to our Airmen fulfilling their mission requirements.

Thank you again for your continued support of our brave Airmen and their supportive families.