

**UNCLASSIFIED**

**STATEMENT BY**

**LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY M. WYATT III  
DIRECTOR OF THE AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL**

**FIRST SESSION, 111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**

**ON**

**RECRUITING, RETENTION AND END-STRENGTH OVERVIEW**

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NOT FOR PUBLIC DISSEMINATION  
UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

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Mr Chairman, members of the committee I wish to thank you for the opportunity to share the story of the men and women of our Air National Guard. Since beginning my assignment one month ago as the 14th Director of the Air National Guard I have worked hard to assess our people, their resources and their equipment. Make no mistake, our Guard Airmen are answering the call—Guarding America, Defending Freedom—from shore to shore and around the globe.

In today's fight, your Air National Guard accounts for 30-percent of fighter, 40-percent of tanker and 30-percent of airlift capability for the Total Air Force. We continue to operate 16 of 18 Air Sovereignty Alert sites, while transforming more than 20-percent of the force into new and emerging mission areas needed by our Combatant Commanders.

The Air National Guard could not succeed at these levels without the continued support of Congress, the American people and the Air Force. We thank you for that support and hope you will continue to stand in our corner as we posture ourselves for the future.

I have been fortunate; the organization I inherited is on a solid course with a strong field-driven approach to strategic planning. Our Adjutants General are actively engaged in the future of the Air National Guard and they are committed to protecting our number one asset—our people—the 106,700 men and women of the Air National Guard.

Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention programs play a critical role in supporting today's fight and how we posture our force for the future. This year, for the first time since 2002, we successfully met end strength in the face of numerous mission changes and high deployment rates. The commitment of our field commanders and their exceptional recruiters were key factors in our recruiting successes. Their partnership with the National Guard Bureau enabled us to remove barriers that traditionally prevented our ability to meet end strength in past years. We continue to build on that

success, but, there are areas we will need to focus on to ensure the overall health of our organization. The strength of the Air National Guard is rooted in the quality of our recruits, our ability to retain them, and, having the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

The quality of our recruits has not declined and our retention rate remains strong at 96.9-percent, the highest of all the services and components. Our challenge as we move forward is our ability to strengthen “effective” recruiting while continuing to meet our end strength goals. By the end of this year we will have in place a field-driven national program to address the challenges of effective recruiting. The continued support of the Air Force, Department of Defense and Congress will undoubtedly shape the foundation of our success. To understand the scope of the issue of effective recruiting, you must first understand the barriers our program has to overcome to be successful. Air National Guard recruiting succeeds in spite of not having in place a personnel strategic plan linking our recruiting and retention program to our organizational strategic plan. We continue to operate on year-to-year execution plan that seeks only to meet end strength. Our goal is a program, vastly different than the one we have today, which addresses effective manning, diversity, and prepares our organization for tomorrow’s new and emerging roles and missions.

While our overall recruiting and retention continues to meet and exceed our goals, we show troubling signs in areas such as officer recruiting (currently, 42.1 percent of the year to date goal) and critically manned mission areas our Combatant Commanders need including Health Care Professionals, Chaplains, Engineers, Intelligence, and Mobility aviators. We raised our numbers in the non-prior service market to account for lagging numbers in prior service recruiting. Our advertising to the non-prior service market through radio, theatre, print media and web sites undoubtedly enhanced our recruiting. But, this program also requires additional recruiters, community presence with store front offices and advertising dollars we previously did not require. An unfortunate spin-off of this strategy has placed a burden on Basic Military Training, causing backlogs in that program.

While the non-prior service market remains a priority, we need to increase the emphasis on recruiting the prior service market. Our focus in this area allows us to retain critical skills lost from the active component and save valuable training dollars. In 2008, through the use of our 12 In-Service Air National Guard recruiters strategically placed at active duty bases, the Air National Guard garnered approximately 1,140 confirmed accessions of a total of 5,413 accessions.

Our Air National Guard incentive program is a critical component in our Recruiting and Retention efforts and serves to motivate and support manning requirements in units with skills that are severely or chronically undermanned. It is established to encourage the reenlistment of qualified and experienced personnel. The Air National Guard saves on average \$62,000 in training cost for every qualified member we retain or recruit. Stable funding for the Air National Guard Recruiting and Retention program is critical to our success.

Focusing on the effectiveness of our recruiting allows the Air National Guard to address the Secretary of Defense's renewed emphasis on managing the Reserve Components to provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements. It allows us to do so with a force whose cost effectiveness has proven to be 25-percent of its active component.

Our force is not only cost effective and efficient; it is poised to expand in areas such as homeland defense/civil support, increase Air National Guard participation at the Joint Force Headquarters in each state and territory, improve cyber security, and, increase manning to response teams and Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Emergency (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Packages.

The Air National Guard is critically important to the expanded and enhanced authorities of the Chief, National Guard Bureau and National Guard. Our focus to improving capabilities and fielding dual-use equipment will be a key component to ensuring we meet the Department of Defense's homeland defense priorities and support our nation's governors.

The Air National Guard can and will assist the Air Force as they respond to the needs of the Combatant Commanders in all mission areas including manned and unmanned Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), cyber security, irregular warfare and building global partnership capacities through state partnership programs and training. Through the effective use of associate organizational constructs we will be able to maximize our impact and contribution to the Total Air Force. These constructs capitalize on the cost effectiveness of the Reserve Component while maximizing the use of our dwindling and aging fleet of aircraft. They also offer us the ability to capture valuable skills for the Total Air Force and ensure their continued availability and contribution.

Recruiting and retention is not our only program to support our Airmen. As part of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2008, we have directed attention towards the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. This program emphasizes the reintegration of National Guard and Reserve members and their families. Our national program consists of informational events and activities through four phases: Pre-deployment, Deployment, Demobilization and Post-Deployment-Reconstitution. We are emphasizing reconnecting members and their families with service providers and understanding their benefits and entitlements. This month we expect to have the contract awarded to begin implementation across all 54 states and territories.

Finally, with the assistance of our Adjutants General and Command Chiefs we began the implementation of a program to honor our Airmen who have been deployed for 30 or more consecutive days. The "Hometown Heroes" program is intended to thank our re-deploying Airmen and their families for their contributions. Our initial efforts are intended to honor more than 70,000 eligible Airmen who met the criteria between 9/11/01 through 12/31/08. By 2010, we expect to have the program fully implemented across the entire Air National Guard. We understand the importance and enormity of this effort and believe it is simply the right thing to do as we seek to take care of our people.

The men and women of the Air National Guard thank you for the cooperation and support you have provided in the past and look forward to working with you as we meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Thank you.