

STATEMENT BY

**BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN A. MACDONALD
COMMANDER
U.S. ARMY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
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ON MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

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U.S. ARMY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER
ON MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION (MWR) PROGRAMS**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, it is a pleasure to appear before you again to share with you the progress we are making in reshaping Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programs to ensure they meet the challenges and opportunities presented by the transforming Army. We will continue to deliver predictable MWR programs and services that enhance the well-being of our Soldiers and their families.

MWR SUPPORT TO DEPLOYED SOLDIERS

The U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center (USACFSC) has a long history of providing policy, guidance, direct personnel, and materiel support to deployed Soldiers whether across the country or around the globe. MWR facilities are established at 25 large and 22 small sites in Iraq, four major and five remote locations supporting operations in Afghanistan, and one major and five small sites in Kuwait. Currently, four MWR Emergency Essential Civilians are deployed to Afghanistan, Qatar, and Kuwait, meeting United States Central Command's MWR support requirements. We have deployed a total of 50 MWR professionals since 9/11 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Similarly, 12 civilian MWR professionals provide support to service members in Kosovo, Bosnia, Hungary, and Macedonia. Since 1995, almost 200 MWR personnel have voluntarily deployed to promote physical fitness and provide recreation, social, and other support services in the Balkans.

In addition to the mission of providing quality, wholesome, affordable, family-oriented vacation recreation opportunities to authorized patrons, the centrally-managed Army-operated Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRCs) offer a discounted Rest and

Recuperation (R&R) program for service members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, has operated a discounted U.S. Army, Europe R&R program since October 2003. Similar R&R programs have been offered at the Hale Koa Hotel and at the Shades of Green, since May 2004. The Dragon Hill Lodge in Seoul, Republic of Korea, offers an individually tailored program to any Soldier visiting Korea on R&R or post-deployment leave status. A special "Warrior Express Weekend" program is also available for 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers using the Dragon Hill Lodge.

FAMILY READINESS

The Army has learned many lessons about how to support families during separations and deployments. We must be there for Soldiers and families when they need assistance, direct them to appropriate resources, ensure they have the tools to remain self-reliant, and provide the best communication possible among the Soldier, unit, and family members. This effort is vital to both enhancing the welfare of Soldiers and their families and enabling the Army to maintain ready, responsive forces.

Family readiness groups (FRG), rear detachments (RD), FRG deployment/support assistants (FRGDSA), and virtual Family Readiness Groups (vFRG) have a prominent role in unit preparedness. Unit commanders work with local Army Community Service (ACS) representatives and other agencies to prepare Soldiers and families for the phases of deployment. Family Readiness Groups, volunteer organizations run by Army family members, promote cohesion by providing information, referral assistance, and mutual support. When a unit is notified of an imminent deployment, unit commanders alert FRGs and identify rear detachment assets to provide a link between the unit and families. The vFRG web system provides all of the functionality of a traditional FRG in an ad-hoc, on-line setting to meet the needs of geographically dispersed units and families across all components of the Army. The virtual Family Readiness Group links deployed Soldiers, their families, the FRG leader, the unit commander, the rear detachment, and other family readiness personnel on a controlled access web portal. The vFRG currently supports 171 Army units; an

additional 1,000 units will be added in increments of 200 as resources become available.

The Army is testing a Multi-Component Family Support Network (MCFSN) to provide seamless customer-focused services to families, regardless of component or location. Four regions (Northwest, Southwest, Southeast, and Pacific) developed alternative models using the same guiding principles as a way to test different strategies for coordinating family program services. The purposes of these pilots were to increase family service providers' awareness of each component's resources and structure; improve communication across components; execute joint training ventures; and identify policies and organizational environments that facilitated and hindered support service delivery. For Soldiers and families, the pilots provided insight into how they could best obtain information about family programs; determined when in their careers they should learn about these programs and services; shared their perceptions about family services; and identified barriers or challenges to receiving services. The pilots revealed best practices. The final results will be used to develop an Army-wide MCFSN.

Communication plays a vital role in keeping families connected. CFSC created www.MyArmyLifeToo.com to provide family members access to articles and information on diverse topics such as Army customs, relocation tips, home and personal safety, and financial management. The web portal explains family program services in language common to family members rather than Army terms and acronyms. Family members may take on-line classes to familiarize themselves with the Army and its culture and may sign up to receive monthly updates of family support information.

We increased our efforts to reach Army junior spouses directly and early in their Army "careers" by implementing spouse sponsorship programs at Army installations. This initiative includes providing welcome briefings or in-processing targeted to spouses and family members; using multi-modal advertising to "get the word out" to spouses

about programs, resources, etc.; and using family readiness groups and rear detachments as information conduits.

The Army Spouse Employment Partnership (ASEP) supports Soldier retention by helping spouses maintain careers and contribute to family financial stability. The website www.MyArmyLifeToo.com and the job search website www.msjs.org provide portals for military spouses to develop their resumes and apply for jobs. ASEP partners recruit from this database to fill their employment needs. Currently 21 corporate partners provide job and career opportunities to military spouses.

The Army recognizes the imperative to address the Soldiers' reintegration into their families and emerging behavioral issues related to post traumatic stress disorder. In response, we have mounted an aggressive campaign to make counseling accessible and to reduce the stigma of seeking mental health services.

Soldier and Family Life Consultants (SFLC) provide reunion and reintegration support to Soldiers and their families in a variety of formats to reduce the stress affecting them. The SFLCs work within ACS on an active duty installation, with the Army National Guard and Army Reserve for state and readiness region coverage, and consult with community agencies.

Military OneSource (MOS) supplements existing family programs by providing a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week toll-free information and referral telephone service. It includes six face-to-face counseling sessions available to active duty, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve Soldiers, deployed civilians, and their families worldwide. MOS provides information ranging from everyday concerns to deployment and reintegration issues. Additionally, if there is a need for face-to-face counseling, MOS can provide referrals to professional civilian counselors. Overseas, face-to-face counseling is provided via existing medical treatment facility-contracted marriage and family counselors.

Soldiers who know their families are self-reliant with appropriate support systems available are better able to concentrate on their missions and are more likely to remain in the Army. The Army will continue to offer quality programs and services that support readiness and retention.

CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES INITIATIVES

Army child care continues to be mission essential for our Soldiers and families – Active and Reserve Component – to reduce the conflict between parental responsibilities of the Soldier and unit mission requirements. Factors that make child care and youth supervision options necessary include large numbers of infants and toddlers; duties requiring child care and youth supervision options 10-14 hours per day including early morning, evenings, and weekends; lack of care options at remote sites and overseas; large numbers of parents whose spouses are deployed making them temporarily geographically single; and younger Soldiers and spouses who are separated from their own extended families and former neighborhoods. Quality, available, affordable, and predictable child and youth programs allow Soldiers to focus on their missions knowing that their children are thriving in our child care programs and teens are adjusting as they transition from school to school. Army Child and Youth Programs are a quantifiable force multiplier.

Child Care Interim Facilities: Changes to Army force positioning cause a need to address an anticipated spike in child care requirements. Existing child care facilities on Army installations operate at or near capacity and cannot handle the increased need for child care. The Army developed interim, 100-child capacity facility designs to meet immediate child care needs. The interim facilities are a “stop gap” measure until permanent Military Construction facilities can be built. Sixteen facilities will become operational between April and July 2006 at Fort Carson, Fort Campbell, Fort Bliss, Fort Riley, Fort Lewis, Fort Hood, Fort Stewart, and Hunter Army Airfield. Installations have permanent construction projects programmed to replace these interim child care facilities. The Army views the use of interim child care facilities as a return on

investment benefit strategy because it limits Soldiers' out of pocket expenses, will facilitate the transfer of furnishings and equipment from interim to permanent facilities, and the reassignment of trained staff to permanent facilities as they become operational.

Army School Transition Plan: The Army identified the need for an Army School Transition Plan to develop strategies for successful transition of military-connected students from overseas locations to schools in the United States. The plan incorporates coordination with national, state, and local education agencies to integrate military-connected students into local school systems. Some affected local education agencies have expressed concerns about the ability to sufficiently accommodate the influx of transitioning students. Some communities have moved ahead with bond issues, and others have engaged the Department of Education and Department of Defense to explore new avenues for funding facilities, transportation, teachers, and textbooks. The Army is working with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Department of Education to address transition issues.

Child Care and Deployment Support: To help Soldiers meet critical mission requirements, both Child Development Centers and Family Child Care Homes have extended operating hours. Respite care, provided at little or no cost, gives parents time to attend to personal needs or take a break from the stresses of parenting. Partnerships with organizations like the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and 4-H enhance our School Age Services programs and Teen and Youth Centers to offer value-based programs to help youth deal with the stress associated with parental deployments.

SURVEY OF ARMY FAMILIES

Every four to five years, the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center, in conjunction with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences conducts the Survey of Army Families (SAF). The SAF provides data on the attitudes and behaviors of civilian spouses of active duty Soldiers about the Army way of life and the

quality of life for Army families. The agencies conducted SAF during the fall and winter of 2004 – 2005.

We have long known that the Army recruits Soldiers and retains families. The most recent SAF results support this belief. Sixty-three percent of spouses would be satisfied if their Soldier spouse were to make the Army a career; 57 percent are satisfied with the Army as a way of life; and 70 percent believe their families have adjusted well to the demands of being an “Army family.” All of these percentages are greater than those from the 2001 SAF survey. Respondents completed that survey just prior to September 11th.

Army MWR and family programs made a difference to spouses when Soldiers deployed. They used recreation programs, child development services, and took advantage of personal and financial assistance programs. The majority of users were satisfied with the programs.

RECREATION

Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRCs): Army-operated AFRCs are optimally structured to serve America’s Defense Force. The Army unveiled a brand new 330-room resort hotel in Germany (the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort) and opened the doors to a newly expanded and renovated 586-room Shades of Green on WALT DISNEY WORLD Resort in 2004. The 394-room Dragon Hill Lodge (Korea) expanded by adding a new tower in 2000, and the Hale Koa Hotel (Hawaii) is currently undergoing a complete renovation of the now 30-year-old original Ilima tower that should be completed by 2008. All of the AFRCs are well-received and attain occupancy ratings exceeding 90 percent; unheard of in the hotel industry.

There are a few MWR initiatives I would like to mention specifically:

Libraries: The General Library Information System (GLIS) is a web based information system that will provide library services for deployed Soldiers and the power projection platform installation libraries that support them. The long-term goal is for

GLIS to be the web based information system for all Army MWR libraries. Through GLIS, deployed Soldiers will be offered the same library and information services as if they were actually visiting their home libraries. They will be able to 1) check status of library account, 2) request books from within the system, 3) search across many data sources with one "mouse click" including the library's online catalog and electronic resources, 4) ask a librarian for help locating information, 5) read newspapers, magazines, e-books online and 6) find materials in other military libraries through the Military Education Research Library Network. GLIS has been fielded at Fort Campbell, Fort Benning, Fort Bliss, Fort Polk, Fort Bragg, Europe, and Fort Dix. Eight additional libraries will be on board at the end of fiscal year 2006.

Commercial databases purchased by CFSC and available through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) portal include journal articles, auto repair information, online practice tests, and e-books. NetLibrary, the e-book content database in AKO was recently augmented with new titles paid for by the Europe Regional Library Program and by the Combined Arms Research Library at Leavenworth -- a true Army library enterprise effort. Over 2,600 e-books are now available to the Army 24/7 through AKO.

Military Idol: The Military Idol competition is a joint initiative between CFSC's Business and Recreation Directorates to help installations offer exciting programming and generate sales for MWR. Army Entertainment negotiated a licensing agreement with Fremantle Media, owners of American Idol, to use the Idol name, logo, program format, and promotional resources. CFSC required installations to host their competitions in food and beverage facilities and provide local judges. CFSC furnished everything needed to run the competition including marketing materials, promotional items, employee handbooks, rules, ballots, scoring sheets, and prize money.

Between August 1 and September 30, 2005, 36 installations hosted the Military Idol competition. The competition provided an important professional development opportunity for garrisons' staffs, while offering invigorating Soldier programming on a large scale. Fort Gordon staged the Army-wide finals for the first place finishers from

each installation. Entertainment professionals lent their talents to coach the competitors and host the finals. Army Knowledge Online (AKO) broadcast the week-long elimination contest and managed voting for the final competition. AKO recorded over 85,000 visits to the Military Idol site during the competition. The winners, voted by AKO viewers across the Army, were Sergeant William Glenn, Darmstadt, Germany, first; Specialist Richard Sianoya, Wuerzburg, Germany, second; and Captain Ron Cardin, Fort Knox, Kentucky, third.

The competition brought new business to clubs and increased participation. Fort Rucker's sales increased by almost \$30,000 over the comparable period in 2004, and Schofield Barracks' sales increased almost \$26,000. A sponsorship survey found that 40 percent of attendees had not eaten in the facility before and 90 percent would eat there again. Participating installations want to see Military Idol repeated next year. CFSC's goal is to expand the competition to 60 installations.

BUSINESS PROGRAMS

The Community and Family Support Center continues to provide "First Choice" support to Soldiers and their families. Business Programs generated combined revenues in excess of \$276 million and a profit of \$26.6 million. That income enabled the programs to maintain their own facilities and provided much needed funding to other critical MWR programs not capable of generating sufficient revenues to be self-sustaining. Specific accomplishments in support of the Army mission include:

Golf: The Army's 57 golf courses recorded profits of \$11.9 million on net revenue of \$70.9 million. Soldiers, retirees, and their families played over 1.8 million rounds, providing over 8 million leisure hours in a time of intensive operational tempo. Additionally, to expand patronage to the entire military family, many courses are embarking on an initiative to gain approval to open courses for play by honorably

discharged veterans. This represents a win-win scenario for Army golf and former Soldiers who have served this Nation faithfully.

Bowling: The Army's 97 bowling centers worldwide produced \$44.9 million in revenue and profits of \$3.9 million. Bowling patrons enjoyed the state of the art centers by recording over 7.4 million "lines bowled." Army bowling centers have transitioned to Family Entertainment Centers with add-on amenities such as glow-bowling, party rooms, video arcades, billiards, and Strike Zone themed food operations — thus increasing their value as total family fun.

Food, Beverage, and Entertainment: Army Club and Food, Beverage, and Entertainment and Themed Food and Beverage Operations are an integral part of business operations in Army communities. The 266 activities provide a welcome venue worldwide for a variety of programs and services, enhancing readiness and supporting community social needs. Profit of \$10.8 million on revenue of \$160.8 million is significant. Bingo operations added an additional \$8.4 million and a very popular social and recreational outlet.

Events: The Events Division focuses on customer loyalty programs and promotions to generate new customers for our activities. The most successful program was the exciting Military Idol. In addition, other promotional events included Spin-2-Win designed for the Army's MWR Theme Operations. Over 21 locations hosted Fantasy Football promotions in MWR food and beverage facilities. Golfers at 30 Army golf courses participated in the Putt-4-Dough competition celebrating the Army's 230th birthday for a \$10,000 prize if three successive, increasing-length putts were holed. To support sports and fitness, events implemented a "Lighten Up-Tighten Up" promotion to help customers shed excessive pounds and commit to getting fit.

Recycling: Business Programs also provides oversight of Qualified Recycling Programs and generated \$4.5 million for MWR operations. This environmentally friendly and profitable program recycles items in demand in the private sector and

provides funding for other necessary programs such as pollution abatement, energy conservation, and occupational safety and health projects.

These programs combine to make the U.S. Army a better place to serve and work.

NAF CENTRAL PURCHASE

Fitness centers continue to be our most used and highly rated MWR program, but a fitness center is only as good as the equipment on the floor. CFSC and the Installation Management Agency (IMA) are collaborating to provide predictable levels of service and performance at Army Installations by using a Centralized Funding and Purchasing Initiative. The objective is to leverage Army MWR buying power with centralized contracts for commonly used items such as fitness equipment. Program advantages include standardizing training, maintenance, and lifecycle replacement requirements at Army Installations; worldwide equipment delivery, assembly, and service; and uniform staff training on use and preventive maintenance. More importantly, this initiative uses funding more efficiently by locking in prices for the life of the contract and significantly reducing the cost per item because of deep quantity discounts. The joint fitness equipment initiative proved the benefit of this approach. Army MWR purchased treadmills and elliptical machines and saved \$269,300. The savings allowed the Army to purchase an additional 59 treadmills and 15 elliptical machines. CFSC and IMA also centrally purchased golf cars and expect to save from 11 percent to 16 percent. CFSC and IMA will continue to identify common items for centralized purchases.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Operationally, total appropriated fund (APF) and nonappropriated fund (NAF) support to the Army's MWR (Fitness, Sports, Recreation and Library, Youth Programs, and Child Development Services) Programs for fiscal year (FY) 2005 amounted to

\$1.52 billion. NAF revenue was \$910.6 million, and field activities' net income before depreciation was \$104.5 million. APF support, including military construction was \$605 million.

Re-stationing effects in the next few years will almost certainly present significant requirements for NAF capital investments in the United States. Re-stationing may depress revenue because Soldiers and families stationed overseas spend more per capita in post exchanges and MWR activities than they do in the U. S. During the transition period, expenses may not decrease as quickly as revenues drop. Army MWR's primary imperative is to serve Soldiers and families, and it will continue to do so right up to the last minute at locations scheduled to close. MWR will adjust its operations to successfully weather the transition.

The DoD standard is to use APF to fund 100 percent of costs for which they are authorized. The metrics only specify funding minimums of 85 percent for Category A (CAT A) activities, and 65 percent for Category B (CAT B) activities. No standards are specified for the APF-authorized common service support or overhead expenses, and this category of expenses represents the major use of NAF in lieu of APF. Additionally no standard exists for the use of APF in Category C programs, which is slight. In FY 2005 we exceeded the specified minimums in both the measured categories of CAT A and CAT B by meeting 89 percent of the program operating expenses for CAT A and 66 percent for CAT B with APF.

The Army is implementing Uniform Funding and Management (UFM), authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2003, to streamline the resource flow to the MWR program components. This major business re-engineering initiative merges APF and NAF for the purposes of providing MWR services using NAF rules and procedures. For FY 2005, the Army selected four continental United States installations (Fort Campbell, Fort Drum, White Sands Missile Range, and U.S. Army Garrison-Selfridge) and the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center as pilot sites to test UFM implementation. Positive feedback concerning the upfront APF to NAF transfer process and the seamless move towards an all NAF workforce helped keep the

transition plan on track. In FY 2006, the United States, Korea, Japan, and U.S. Army Garrison-Grafenwoehr implemented UFM. In FY 2007, the remaining overseas locations will implement this initiative. The process of UFM does not increase or decrease the levels of APF supporting MWR. Rather, it is a new way of executing the program with an emphasis on eliminating redundancy and improving business practices in providing support (Procurement, Financial Management, and Human Resource Management).

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, ARMY

The FY 2007 President's Budget contains \$67.7 million for eight Child Development Centers at Forts Campbell, Drum, Lewis, Richardson, Riley, Stewart (2), and Schofield Barracks. It also contains \$26 million for a co-located Fitness Center and Child Development Center at Vicenza, Italy.

CONCLUSION

Retaining highly trained, motivated Soldiers and their families is the first step to a ready Army. And we know readiness and MWR are inextricably linked. At a time of tremendous turbulence, MWR and Family Programs maintain a clear focus on the Soldiers and families who are serving our Nation so honorably. We are there to support Soldiers; we are there to support their families while they are deployed. We are orchestrating services to the deployed force. Finally, we are focusing on our mission to participate in the "re-creation" of our Soldiers as they re-integrate with their families and train for future missions. It is through your continued steadfast support that we are able to provide first-class MWR programs that support Soldiers and their families appropriately for their invaluable service and sacrifices.