

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**

**PRESENTATION TO THE MILITARY PERSONNEL**

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**COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**

**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**SUBJECT: Recruiting and Retention**

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**BY THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES**  
**UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. Chairman, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. I want to thank you for your continued support, which has helped your Air Force Reserve address vital recruiting and retention. Your passage of last year's pay and quality of life initiatives sent a clear message to our citizen Airmen that their efforts are appreciated and supported by the American people, and also by those of you in the highest positions of government. Wherever you find the United States Air Force, at home or abroad, you will find the active and Reserve members working side-by-side, trained to one tier of readiness, seamlessly integrated into a military force that is **READY NOW!**

## **TOTAL FORCE**

The Air Force Reserve (AFR) continues to address new challenges in 2005. Although Partial Mobilization continues, demobilizations have increased significantly. In spite of the strains that mobilization has placed on the personal and professional lives of our Reserve members, volunteerism continues to be a significant means of contribution. Volunteerism is the preferred method of fulfilling requirements for future Global War On Terror (GWOT) actions. While dedicated members of the Air Force Reserve continue to meet validated operational requirements, the AFR is exploring ways to enhance volunteerism, including use of volunteer Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) members. Recruiting and retention of quality service members are a top priority for the Air Force Reserve and competition for these members among other services, as well as within the civilian community has reached an all-time high.

## **Recruiting**

In FY05, year-to-date, and for the last five consecutive years, Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) exceeded its recruiting goal. This remarkable feat is achieved through the outstanding efforts of our recruiters and with the superb assistance of our Reserve members who help tell our story of public service to the American people.

Despite the long-term effects of high Operations and Personnel (OPS/PERS) Tempo, AFRC only fell short of its FY04 end-strength by .6 percent, reaching 99.3 percent, or merely 578 assigned short of congressionally funded requirements.

Recruiting continues to face significant challenges. The pool of active duty separatees continues to shrink due to force reductions over the last decade, and the competition for these members has become even keener. The active duty is intensifying its efforts in retention and the National Guard is competing for these assets as well. Additionally, the current high OPS/PERS Tempo and a perceived likelihood of activation and deployment are being routinely cited as significant reasons why separating members are declining to choose continuing military service in the Reserve. These issues further contribute to the civilian sector's ability to attract these members away from military service. One consequence of the reduced success in attracting separating members from active duty is the need to make up this difference through attracting non-prior service (NPS) members. Historically, Reserve Recruiting accesses close to 25 percent of eligible separating active duty Air Force members, which accounts for a significant portion of annual accessions.

Finally, with overall end-strength of the Air Force Reserve dipping below 100 percent, some career-fields are undermanned. In order to avoid possible readiness concerns,

recruiters will continue to meet the challenge of guiding applicants to critical job specialties.

The Reserve is taking advantage of an active duty Force Shaping initiative. Beginning in FY04 and ending in FY05, the Air Force will offer active duty members the opportunity to use the Palace Chase program to change components. The Air Force Reserve is using this opportunity to access prior service members with critical career skills. In FY04, 1,200 AD members utilized Palace Chase to join the Air Reserve Component, with over half selecting the Air Force Reserve. This number may grow in FY05.

For recruits who have not served in a military component, the development of the “Split Training Option” which began in October 2003, provides a flexible tool for recruiters to use in scheduling Basic Military Training classes and Technical School classes at non-consecutive times.

### **Retention**

Though retention was improved through “Stop-Loss” in recent years, the eventual effects of this program were realized in FY04. Retention in both officer and enlisted categories has remained strong. FY05, year-to-date, officer retention at 92.3% and overall enlisted retention at 88.4%. These retention rates are in line with averages over the last five years.

As the Reserve Component (RC) continues to surge to meet operational requirements necessary for the successful prosecution of the GWOT, we continue to examine existing laws and policies that govern enlisted incentives and related compensation issues. The reserve enlisted bonus program is a major contributor to attract and retain both unit and individual mobilization augmentee members in those critical unit type code tasked career

fields. To enhance retention of our reservists, we work within existing statutes and allocated resources to ensure members of the Air Force Reserve receive relevant and equitable compensation considering the growing reliance on the RC to accomplish active duty missions. In addition, the Aviation Continuation Pay (ACP), the Career Enlisted Flyers Incentive Pay (CEFIP) and Aircrew Incentive Pay (ACIP) continue to be offered to retain our rated assets, both officer and enlisted.

The Reserve has made many strides in increasing education benefits for our members, offering 100 percent tuition assistance for those individuals pursuing an undergraduate degree and continuing to pay 75 percent for graduate degrees. We also employ the services of the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) for College Level Examination Program (CLEP) testing for all reservists and their spouses. We will continue to seek innovative ways to enhance retention.

I would like to close by offering my sincere thanks to each member of this Committee for your continued support and interest in the Air Force Reserve. I know that we are on the right path in establishing a stronger, more focused, force. It is a force no longer in Reserve, but integrated into every mission of the Air Force.