

FOR CLEARANCE

STATEMENT BY

LIEUTENANT GENERAL CLYDE A. VAUGHN  
DIRECTOR, ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

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Chairwoman Davis, Ranking Member McHugh, and distinguished Committee Members, it is a pleasure and an honor to appear before you as the Director of the Army National Guard. I am pleased to report to you that both recruiting and retention in the Army National Guard are strong. We've achieved great success through our innovative approach to recruiting and by giving the States and Territories the proper tools to meet the mission. I applaud the leadership of the Congress, governors, adjutants general, and our communities for their tremendous efforts and achievements. The Army National Guard is the largest community-based defense force. We can all be extremely proud of the overwhelming response of our patriotic communities.

The Army National Guard is authorized by law to have 350,000 soldiers plus a two percent increase at the discretion of the Secretary of Defense for a legal limit of 357,000 soldiers. Because of our multiple-program team approach, we are proud to report that as of 30 June 2007, the Army National Guard is 351,950 soldiers strong. America needs a robust National Guard to protect the lives, property, and interests of the American people both at home and abroad. If the National Guard is able to continue this strong recruiting and retention, we would be capable of reaching and surpassing our fiscal year 2013 endstrength goal of 358,200 soldiers during fiscal year 2008.

We have experienced 9 consecutive months of end-strength growth this fiscal year. Retention remains strong, and is above year-to-date goals. We expect to exceed our reenlistment goals for fiscal year 2007.

In fiscal year 2006 the Army National Guard added 13,111 Soldiers to the rolls -- the most growth since the draft era of the 1970s. At the half way

mark for fiscal year 2007 (as of 31 March 2007), the National Guard exceeded the 350,000-Soldier goal for the first time since May 2004.

In addition to strong recruiting and retention numbers, our soldier quality has been consistently strong. We've had our highest quality accession numbers since 1987. Today 92.5% of our recruits are high school graduates (far above the 10-year average of 84%). Scores on the Armed Services Aptitude Battery – a test administered to potential soldiers – and our pass rate for the General Educational Development Diploma (GED) are on a par with recent years and running averages.

The Army National Guard recruiting success has been the result of several innovative programs, soldier incentives, and some old-fashioned accountability management. The National Guard increased the number of our full-time Recruiting and Retention specialists from 2,700 in fiscal year 2004 to 5,100 by the end of fiscal year 2006. We took many steps to reverse negative trends and maximize end-strength. This included increasing bonus maximums to \$20,000 for enlistments, \$15,000 for reenlistments, and \$15,000 for prior service enlistments. The Army National Guard also increased retention bonuses from \$5,000 to \$15,000. These steps helped move our end-strength trend upward starting in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2005 through the end of June 2007. We are looking forward to good news for end of month July 2007 and beyond.

Three years ago the Army National Guard was losing people faster than we could replace them. Today we have successfully reversed that trend. To accomplish this turn-around we have implemented several initiatives to help achieve and maintain congressionally-authorized end-strength levels: the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program (G-RAP), Every Soldier a Recruiter, the Recruit Sustainment Program, GED Plus, and the "American Soldier" and "Army Strong" advertising campaigns.

The Guard Recruiting Assistance Program is a civilian contract recruiting program. G-RAP Recruiting Assistants are drilling members of the National Guard who also are privately-employed, performance-based subcontractors who provide recruiting services. In their day-to-day lives, our

soldiers know and meet many potential service members at their civilian jobs, at school, at church, and at social events. We created a program that provides a financial incentive for our members to extend that invitation and say: “come serve in the National Guard with me.” Under the Guard Recruiting Assistance Program, when one of our soldiers convinces a friend, co-worker, or classmate to serve with us, that soldier can receive a payment. He or she receives a second payment when the new soldier completes the required initial training. More than 105,000 part-time recruiting assistants have signed up nationwide.

The Recruit Sustainment Program reduces training pipeline losses by introducing newly enlisted National Guard soldiers to the military and easing their adjustment to Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training.

Recruiting Assistants are deeply involved in the local communities and are well positioned to reach target populations. We have a new Comprehensive Communication Skills recruiting class at our Strength Maintenance Training Center at Camp Robinson (in Arkansas). This program trains the force on how to recruit in a wartime environment and address the inherent challenges of recruiting young men and women to serve with us during the Global War on Terrorism. Advertising campaigns are refocusing the image of the National Guard from a rarely-used strategic reserve to a highly deployable operational force with new messages, imagery, mediums, and response devices. We are refining media spending with proven methods; implementing innovations to better communicate with the next generation of National Guardsmen. These innovations include communicating through NASCAR races, event teams, pizza boxes, gaming, theater, web-based advertising, and internet-based media such as iTunes and the 1 800-GO-GUARD website and phone number.

Congress has been and will continue to be a crucial partner and “parent” for the Army National Guard. Your support and guidance for the funding and authority we need are absolutely essential. We need your support and financial authorization to maintain today’s Army National Guard and to fortify the Army Guard for future generations.

The Secretary of Defense has the legal authority to authorize a reserve component to exceed authorized strength by up to two percent. This flexibility provides the Army National Guard the room to grow to 357,000 strong.

Our recruiting team is examining bonuses, incentives, benefits, and other recruiting and retention programs. We are evaluating rewards versus risks to find the right balance between the patriotic willingness to serve and the incentive bonuses that encourage young people to accept the tangible and intangible benefits of service to their nation and their home state.

Given the threats our nation faces at home and abroad, a robust Army National Guard is essential to the security of the American people. Thanks to the support of Congress in the past and some innovative new thinking and new approaches in the National Guard, your Army National Guard is experiencing historical recruiting and retention success. Patriotic Americans are joining and staying in the Army National Guard in record numbers. With adequate funding and authority, this success can become a strong foundation for present and future end strength.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today and invite your questions or comments.