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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF  
CNOMC(SW/SS) KEVIN H. LICURSI  
COMMAND MASTER CHIEF  
NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT  
OF THE  
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ON  
CONDITION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES AND FAMILY HOUSING  
21 MARCH 2001

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**MSCM(SS/SW) Kevin H. Licursi**  
**UNITED STATES NAVY**

**COMMANDER**  
**NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST**  
**COMMAND MASTER CHIEF**

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Master Chief Petty Officer Kevin H. Licursi was born in Danbury, Connecticut in 1959. He entered the Navy in August 1977 and after completion of recruit training, attended MS "A" School in San Diego, California where he volunteered for submarine duty. Upon completion of "A" school he reported to Basic Enlisted Submarine School in Groton, Connecticut.

His first duty station was the USS DANIEL BOONE (SSBN 629)(BLUE) from 1978-1981, where he made four deterrent patrol from Holyloche, Scotland. After being advanced to Second Class Petty Officer, he attended Instructor School and reported to Recruit Training Command Orlando, Florida for duty as a Recruit Company Commander. In October 1984 he reported to the USS LEWIS AND CLARK (SSBN 644)(GOLD). HE served as the Command Career Counselor and was command advanced to First Class Petty Officer. He also was awarded the Naval Submarine League Charles A. Lockwood Award for Submarine Excellence. He volunteered for New Construction duty and reported to the PCU PENNSYLVANIA (SSBN 735)(BLUE) in September 1988 as the Supply Leading Chief Petty Officer. In 1990 he reported to Naval Station Mayport for assignment to the Navy Food Management Team where he served as a member of the SUBLANT INSERV TEAM, Food Service Management Automated Records Coordinator for the south east region of the United States, and the team's Senior Instructor. He was selected for the Chief of the Boat program and reported to the USS MARYLAND (SSBN 738)(BLUE) where he served in that billet from November 1993 to October 1996. While serving in MARYLAND he was selected into the Command Master Chief program. He graduated from the Navy Senior Enlisted Academy in December 1996 and reported to USS CARNEY DDG 64) as Command Master Chief. He served in that billet until October 1998. He reported to Naval Air Station Lemoore in October 1998 as Command Master Chief. In May 2000 he was selected as Command Master Chief, Navy Region Southwest.

Master Chief Licursi has been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars, the Navy Achievement Medal with one Gold Star, and various unit awards.

Good morning Senator Inhofe and distinguished subcommittee members. As the

CNO Directed Master Chief for Commander, Navy Region Southwest (NRSW), I am honored this morning to appear before you and speak about the condition of Navy facilities and family housing on behalf of the over 300,000 Sailors, civilian employees, and family members that live and work in Navy Region Southwest. I would especially like to thank the subcommittee members for your past efforts and continued commitment to improve quality of life for our Sailors and their families. Our Sailors sincerely appreciate all you and our Navy leadership has done on our behalf.

Many of the improvements in Sailors' quality of life over the past years have been a direct result of your partnership with Navy leadership. In recent years, military construction (MILCON) and non-appropriated fund construction (NAFCON) projects throughout Navy Region Southwest such as family housing, bachelor housing, child development centers, youth centers, recreational and medical facilities to name a few, have either been completed or they are in work. Additionally, with your support, we have received appropriated funds to remodel old bachelor housing to improve our Sailors' standard of living.

The committee's efforts have also resulted in providing our Sailors much-improved Navy morale, welfare, and recreation programs. All the Navy bases in my region either now have or are slated to have Single Sailor Recreation Centers that offer high adventure outdoor activities, access to technology in the form of internet computers, leisure programs such as libraries, games and movie theaters, and personal life skills education. After traveling throughout Navy Region Southwest and talking to thousands of Sailors, I am convinced that these types of activities are providing Sailors healthier lifestyles by offering alternatives to alcohol and other activities that negatively effect personnel readiness. The recreation centers are conveniently located where the single Sailor population lives and works. These recreation centers would have never been realized without the necessary appropriated funding which you were instrumental in obtaining for the Navy to construct, repair, and outfit the buildings, and provide the programs that are being used by great numbers of Sailors today.

Due to the past support of Congress, there has been a considerable investment into Family Housing in Navy Region Southwest. But there is still much work left to do where our Navy family housing either falls below our standards or where the community is not capable of supporting our sailors with private assets.

The Navy's three-pronged approach to solving our housing needs is crucial to the recruitment and retention of our highly trained sailors. First, the goal to increase the Basic Allowance for Housing in order to eliminate out of pocket expenses is the key to enabling our Sailors to afford the available housing in the private community. Second, where it is feasible, we are leveraging available resources through the use of the Public/Private Venture (PPV) authority that Congress extended through December 31, 2004. Third, we ask you to continue to support housing MILCON so that we can finish the job of improving the quality of living available to our Sailors and their families.

In San Diego there is a current vacancy rate of less than 1 percent, and a projected shortfall of over 5,000 homes for our Navy and Marine Corps families. The cost of deregulated utilities has grown exponentially. The average waiting time for Navy housing is 18 to 36 months for enlisted and officer personnel respectively. To combat this untenable situation, we are about to award our first PPV contract in Navy Region Southwest. We are excited about this program. You can understand this excitement when you realize that for the price of one MILCON house through PPV, we can house 13 Sailors and their families at a higher quality of living.

Our Sailors and I personally thank you for recently pulling forward the replacement of 100 more houses into this years program. As a result, NAS Lemoore is about 75% through the multi-phased replacement of 1,547 quality homes. With the increase in expected families, it is imperative to keep this project on track.

Regrettably, while I have mentioned some of the progress that has been made toward enhancing the QOL facilities in Navy Region Southwest, workplace quality of life continues to suffer due to the continuing deterioration of shore infrastructure.

Operational aircraft hangars I have toured at our bases are old and in poor condition. Leaking roofs, plumbing leaks, ventilation and air conditioning systems (when provided) don't work. The average age of buildings within Navy Region Southwest is 50 years. We recently had to evacuate the aircraft from Hangar 340 at Naval Air Station North Island due to deterioration of the building in the ceiling structure. Pieces of concrete that form the structure have fallen and are posing personnel and equipment hazards. This has greatly affected the Quality of Workspace and morale of the Sailors assigned to the Helicopter Squadrons housed at that hangar. They are required to work in temporary enclosures that have been purchased to provide shelter while working on the aircraft along with temporary lighting. Neither of these conditions is acceptable by Navy Leadership and myself.

At Naval Air Facility El Centro, modern tactical aircraft won't fit into the vintage 1940 hangars. As a result, the Sailors who maintain the aircraft are exposed to outside temperatures in excess of 115 degrees Fahrenheit. This makes it difficult to conduct maintenance, because the skin of the aircraft is too hot to touch.

Bachelor quarters' infrastructure also has a negative effect on Sailors' quality of life. In the barracks, the lack of routine maintenance and restorations due to funding constraints; the build-up of condensation and mildew from antiquated a/c systems; the age; outdated basic designs; and the lack of availability to house all Sailors desiring a room in bachelor housing all contribute to poor QOL.

While residing in existing barracks, our Sailors are living with furniture that is well beyond it's life expectancy, due to lack of available funding for furniture. The Navy's goal is to replace the furniture every seven years. We are currently replacing furniture about once every ten or more years. As a benchmark, industry replaces furniture every five

years on average. In addition to these living conditions, our Sailors are often required to perform janitorial duties in spite of the Navy's inter-deployment training cycles (IDTC) initiative, which in essence eliminates duties not directly related to the Sailors rate, especially while in port. This has further affected the ability to provide adequate Quality of Life services in our barracks as we continue to fight for scarce funding.

On a more positive note, the Navy has been able to move Sailors ashore in some locations. The Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Clark's goal is for Sailors to live ashore when in homeport. We are working in the Navy Region Southwest towards this goal, but we will need MILCON in order to make significant advances. The pay-off has been improved retention in those locations where shipboard Sailors are living ashore.

Sailors expect to live in less than optimal conditions aboard ship because space is limited, but they are not satisfied living in those conditions ashore. Current funding is not sufficient to provide suitable quarters ashore, because many of our older facilities have not been replaced or renovated. I also want to emphasize that our Navy leadership recognizes this is unacceptable and not how we want Sailors to live. However, until MILCON or repair and maintenance funding to renovate other existing barracks becomes available and the projects are completed, the only other option Sailors have to find suitable housing is to move into the local community. My Sailors would be the ones suffering financially, because of out-of-pocket expenses necessary to reside in private sector housing. Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) for single Sailors does not begin to cover the minimum costs associated with living on the local economy.

Our Navy leadership is aware of the requirements for shore installation funding and the services it provides to the war-fighter. I believe the lack of fully articulating the full shore infrastructure requirement and then underfunding that requirement severely affects our sailors. Historically Other Base Operating Support (OBOS) requirements have been under-funded in order to meet the ever changing and often-unplanned operational fleet requirements brought on by different operational contingencies. Must fund bills such as labor, utilities and BOS contracts reduce the dollars available for any discretionary spending. Because of budget cuts and unplanned events during execution year, some OBOS requirements become unfunded; one example is service craft maintenance. Offsets are paid by the Real Property Maintenance (RPM) account, which defers critical maintenance further. This has accelerated the decline in our regional facilities and has caused critical maintenance backlogs to be unmanageable. Our Navy leadership has been and is being forced to make short-sited and unwanted decisions to cut Special Project funding and other Quality of Service (QOS) improvements to meet current readiness requirements. Bottom line, every dollar taken out of RPM is a direct support dollar taken away from our Sailors.

The effect of the condition of facilities in Navy Region Southwest is not limited to just the deckplate Sailors, but it also frustrates their Leadership. The price of readiness and mission accomplishment is being shifted to the backs of our Sailors because of workarounds brought on by our failing infrastructures. I am concerned that our Sailors

have become so accustomed to the current poor condition of our infrastructure that they have no expectation it will improve.

Your Navy today is manned by young men and women who are the best educated and trained Sailors we have ever had. Their commitment to accomplish the mission has never been stronger. In my 23 years of Naval experience, I have never seen your Sailors fail to answer the call when faced with the challenges and dangers that exist in our world today. They deserve quality family housing that meets today's standards, has reasonable amenities, and affords Sailors the security of knowing their family is safe and taken care of while they are deployed. Our single Sailors deserve quality bachelor housing with reasonable amenities that are maintained, have ample living area, allows for privacy, and is centrally located to support facilities. They deserve a healthy and safe work place that is of sound material condition and equipped with furniture that is functional. They deserve to be equipped with the proper resources, tools, and spare parts to accomplish the job, and equipped with working environmental controls that provide reliable heat and air conditioning. Additionally, it is imperative that Sailors have adequate MWR recreational and fitness/gym facilities that support the population of our bases and enhance both mission and personal readiness.

Our Sailors lives are all about service, service to their country. In return for that service and sacrifice, we as an organization are obligated to provide them a quality of service that is equal to their sacrifice. Quality of Life and Quality of Work are the components of Quality of Service that we owe each and every Sailor. With your help, we have made vast improvements in the QOL portion of the equation. With your continued support, we will be able to attack the problems we have with Quality of Work and working conditions.

Senators, we tell the parents of our Sailors that we will take care of their sons and daughters in return for the service they provide our Country. Your continued support in these vital areas is imperative for us to be able to meet that commitment. I want to thank you for letting me appear before this distinguished panel and I hope that my testimony will help you to decide to support the shore infrastructure repair and construction relief we so badly need in the Navy. I thank you and look forward to answering any questions you may have.