

**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
PRESENTATION TO THE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

**SUBJECT: RECRUITING AND RETENTION**

**STATEMENT OF: BRIGADIER GENERAL DUANE W. DEAL  
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee, I'm honored to appear before you on behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Air Force Recruiting Service to present a few perspectives regarding recruiting. To echo General Brown, we owe Congress, and particularly the Members of this Committee, our deepest gratitude for your tremendous support last year, and particularly your passage of the National Defense Authorization Act. Your actions demonstrate to our airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines that you both understand and appreciate their service.

FY01 proved to be a banner year for recruiting the nation's finest young men and women into America's Air Force. Our nation can be proud of the selfless dedication, integrity, and effort that Air Force recruiters and recruiting support personnel put forth every day in fulfilling the recruiting mission. Recruiting lays the foundation for readiness, and charts the Air Force's ability to respond to any call with trained, professional airmen.

## **ENLISTED RECRUITING**

As you're well aware, we continue to perform the recruiting mission in an extremely competitive environment. Continued relatively low unemployment, higher college opportunities and enrollments, and a declining awareness among young people of the advantages and benefits of life in the military all add to the challenges facing our nation's recruiting forces. Until three years ago, we were seemingly able to meet most of our recruiting objectives with significantly less manning and less funding than is necessary today. FY99 accessions numbers proved the inadequacy of previous

manning and funding levels. While FY00 numbers looked better and overall goal was exceeded, we were still not recruiting enough of the needed skills to meet all of the Air Force's needs. I am pleased to inform you that in spite of the increased recruiting demands of FY01, our recruiters were able to exceed their goals and ship more airmen to basic training than in any year since FY90. We exceeded the goal by putting hundreds of new recruiters on the street, along with additional marketing and bonus programs. With such course corrections made, enlisted production is not only on the upswing, it is currently meeting all of the current category needs that can be satisfied by young airmen—specifically, needs in the mechanical, administrative, general, and electronic aptitude areas.

But quality is not being sacrificed for quantity. In terms of quality, the Department of Defense asks the Services to access at least 90% of its new recruits as "Tier 1"--high school graduates or individuals with 15 or more semester hours of college. Compared to a DoD standard of 90%, the Air Force maintains a target of 99%--and we exceeded that in FY01. Against a DoD benchmark of 60% of new accessions scoring in the top half (Cat I-III A) of the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT), last year the Air Force surpassed 75%. A further reflection on quality is our first measure once they put on a uniform: compared to an historic Basic Military Training attrition rate of 9%, attrition last year dropped to 6.8%--a low level not seen since FY83.

Even through FY01, we knew that challenges would remain and evolve regarding the FY02 accessions goal of 36,000. Already this FY, this goal has been raised twice in order to support homeland defense and the war on terrorism, and currently rests at 37,283. Without the increased recruiter manning and funds for enlistment bonuses, we

would not have been able to dig our way out of the enlistment contracts deficit; as things presently stand, we have been able to exceed by 867 our goal of 13,612 accessions for the first five months of FY02. We expect our summer months to be very productive in terms of new enlistment contracts—we plan to ship more airmen to basic training than in any year since FY89, and anticipate being well postured to start meeting FY03 accessions goals.

## **OFFICER RECRUITING**

The challenges that face our officer accessions recruiters continue to grow. These men and women must persuade doctors, dentists, nurses and other professionals with high-earnings potential and often significant college debt to become members of the Air Force. Despite this challenge, FY01 was punctuated with many successes in officer recruiting. The men and women of Air Force Recruiting Service attained at least 100% of their production goals in physician scholarships, dental scholarships, medical administration specialists, and non-technical line officers. The nationwide nurse shortage has impacted us as well, making nurse recruiting particularly difficult; as a result, we could recruit only 228 of a desired 349 nurses in FY01. Other shortfalls occurred with biomedical scientists, dentists, and technical officers. Officer recruiting in FY02 is presenting yet another challenging year. To address officer recruitment difficulties, we are pursuing a number of initiatives with the Air Staff, which include expanded bonus and loan repayment programs. We are grateful for the FY02 National Defense Authorization Act increasing the individual limits for an officer accession bonus from \$30,000 to \$60,000, and allowing us to offer bonuses to line

officer candidates with skills certified as critical by the SECAF. This act is a good start on our road to achieving our bonus and loan repayment needs.

## **MARKETING**

We continue to make great strides in creating and implementing new ways to get the Air Force message across to young Americans. During FY01, Air Force Recruiting Service began partnering with the GSD&M advertising agency from Austin, TX. GSD&M began last year concentrating efforts last fall to develop and field our "Cross Into The Blue" advertising campaign through various media efforts, including television, radio, print, the Internet, motor sports, and other interactive projects. In concert with in-house government civilian marketing experts and field-proven recruiters, GSD&M continues to develop and research new ideas to help the Air Force achieve recruiting and retention goals by increasing public awareness of the opportunities an Air Force career offers.

With our target audience spending an average of 10-12 hours per week on-line, we are increasingly using the Internet as a front-line weapon to reach this increasingly technology-savvy audience. Activity on our web site continues to increase dramatically; inquiries from the site in 2001 were up over 165% from 2000 alone. To help capture and attract the teenage audience, AIRFORCE.COM launched a new site on 5 Nov 01 promoting the "Cross Into The Blue" campaign. The site includes multiple sections to help people learn more about Air Force careers, educational opportunities, and the Air Force lifestyle. Also, it provides the public a chance to read about specific airmen serving today and how they support the Air Force mission. In addition, the site provides the ability to contact a recruiter and locate the closest recruiting office.

Although the new site has been operating for only three months, initial figures show it to be extremely popular. In Nov-Dec 01, there were over 1.5 million visits to the page, over 100,000 locator searches were conducted, and 15,000 leads were generated from the website. Each month our team of recruiters supporting the Internet site responds to over 2,250 inquiries, answers questions from site visitors about all aspects of the Air Force, and provides additional information on how to join. The team also e-mails, reviews, and routes over 600 health professions and engineering resumes per month via the Monster.com system and other career search sites.

In addition to the advancements made on the web, concentrated on-line media placement has also increased. Links to AIRFORCE.COM and Air Force advertisements can now be seen on ESPN.com, SportsIllustrated.com, the MSNGaming Network, Yahoo.com, and many more high-traffic web sites. The Air Force also posted job descriptions on various career search pages including Monster.com, producing high-quality leads for officer accession recruiters.

We have experienced increasing, quantifiable success promoting the Air Force through our television campaign. At the beginning of March 2002, approximately one quarter of 18,000 Air Force applicants and active duty members said they were influenced by television advertising material. To complement this effort, our national print campaign has produced new advertisements currently appearing in *Teen People*, *VIBE*, and *US News and World Report*.

We continue our outreach to minorities and women. We were gratified when the Air Force was one of five companies nationwide recognized for their diversity outreach during last July's NAACP convention in New Orleans; we were also gratified that just

last month the *Black Collegian* magazine cited the Air Force as number 3 of the nation's top 100 companies in outreach to African-American college graduates. As a new element of such outreach, we are currently fielding a campaign honoring the distinguished Tuskegee Airmen. This campaign reflects the expertise, courage, and dedication this group of airmen displayed during a time of immense hostility, at home and abroad. The campaign involves both print and television advertisements. With tag lines such as "They escorted bombers into Europe, and equality into America," and "Before the Air Force broke the sound barrier, these airmen broke the race barrier," this campaign will appeal not just to the minority population, but also to the public at large. Other campaigns honoring women aviators and celebrating the centennial anniversary of flight are being prepared.

This year marks the second year the Air Force has been an associate sponsor of NASCAR Winston Cup Series driver Elliot Sadler and the legendary Wood Brothers' No. 21 racing car. We're particularly excited with a new venture as this year we are also teaming with the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to sponsor a Busch Series car. Sponsorship of this car creates an ideal partnership between our Air Force and the ONDCP, sending both a public service and anti-drug message. Finally, a NASCAR Air Force show car is making its way across the country serving as a recruiting tool to use at high schools, local shopping arenas, and other places and events which may attract our target market. This Air Force blue show car enables teens, children and families to see inside the car and speak with recruiters about our job opportunities.

As the Air Force continues to compete with the general market for overall qualified applicants, there are certain career fields that continue to remain hard to fill and pose a problem for targeted marketing. Principal challenges in the enlisted arena include such skills as our Special Tactics and Rescue Specialists—or STARS; formerly called Air Commandoes, these include our combat controllers and pararescue airmen, vital skills not often associated with the Air Force. Officer challenges include chaplains, nurses, pharmacists, physicians, dentists, and engineers. To help recruiters attract people to these positions, we use brochures, posters, sales aids (“giveaways”), targeted advertisements, distinct sections on AIRFORCE.COM, and direct mailings that target these groups.

## **RESOURCE UTILIZATION AND SUPPORT**

Our efforts are supported by our growing ability to exploit current and emerging technologies that improve the recruiter’s ability to target and interact with the market and capitalize on opportunities to enter educational institutions.

Resources dedicated to increasing our technological edge and modernizing the recruiting processes have seen enlisted and officer accessions recruiting become automated through our web-based application processing. We are able to gather information and provide statistical analysis to support informed decision-making, and that capability is being expanded continuously through targeted reporting.

Internet technology promises to grow into our greatest asset and tool by allowing communication and coordination to widespread manpower assets, as well as reaching a vast pool of potential applicants for marketing purposes. We continue to build web-based tools to assist our recruiters and support infrastructure to become more effective



as a single-minded entity, despite the complications of being spread across every state and six countries around the world. As goals increase for our recruiters, our investment in computer and web-based solutions must continue to grow to meet the on-line, time-sensitive demands of our target audience.

“LifeWorks” is a very successful contracted work/life balance and employee assistance program for Air Force Recruiting Service’s geographically separated personnel & their families. Initiated in 1999, LifeWorks offers 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year toll free and Internet access for counseling, information and referral on a multitude of family coping issues such as legal, financial & work issues; and education & schooling issues. Customer feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. As briefed to and highlighted by the previous Secretary of Defense, more than 7,000 U.S. corporations also use LifeWorks, with a combined dispersed workforce totaling more than seven million employees; the other services are now benefiting from LifeWorks as well.

TRICARE Prime Remote is a huge “Quality of Life” boon for geographically separated AFRS personnel and their families. Occasional isolated challenges arise in locating participating health care providers in some areas and specialties, but access to care is improving, as is payment timeliness for care received. This benefit is critical to ensuring adequate medical care for our recruiters, who are often great distances from Military Treatment Facilities.

The Air Force accounts for 11% of the total number of production recruiters in the armed forces. With a total of 1,436 offices, the Air Force Recruiting Service

supports the DoD's effort to revise its space and quality standards to benefit all services, upgrading the location and appearance of offices while providing more space.

## **CONCLUSION**

Before I close, I thought it appropriate to share one of our current thrusts in the Air Force Recruiting Service. In the 48-year history of our Recruiting Service, never before has our sense of mission been as heightened as it has been since 9-11. For starters, we have a recruiting office only a block away from the devastation of the World Trade Center; like thousands of others in the many nations affected, we could not contact our friends and family in Manhattan for many hours after the attack, and thus shared a common bond not only with the nation, but especially within our own command. I had the opportunity to tour that site with some fellow recruiters last month. We were escorted by a member of Congressman Fossella's staff, Mr. Larry Morrish, who had attended 38 of his friends' burials; the police officer with us was Detective Joe Nolasco, who witnessed the attack, had lost 20 dear friends, and was unable to sleep for two weeks after the attack. While our hearts went out to them and to the workers, police, and firefighters at Ground Zero, it took us aback to have them stop their work and applaud us as we visited the site in our military uniforms. Goosebumps aside, that experience truly drove home the bond between the citizen and the soldier, between all public servants, and how we're linked--whatever and wherever duty may lead us. In recruiting, we have always known we're contributing to our nation's readiness by recruiting America's finest for America's Air Force; this cowardly attack on our nation's soil against thousands of innocents sharpened our resolve. To underscore that resolve, we have employed our own component of Operation Noble Eagle throughout our

worldwide offices with its motto that we are “Recruiting today ... to win tomorrow.” With your support and resolve, backed by our nation’s determined recruiting force, we will indeed win.

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, it has been an honor for me to present you with testimony on what I consider the key enabler of our great nation’s air and space power—its recruiters. In summary, coming off a strong FY01, the recruiting mission is poised for even greater success in FY02. Continued funding to support outreach initiatives and improvements in infrastructure are necessary to sustain these positive trends. Incorporating and adapting creative marketing ideas will keep us continuously plugged into America’s awareness. Our new information systems and emerging technologies will allow for decreased applicant processing time and productivity increases. With your support, we will fully utilize existing tools while exploring new paths to improve the processes, support, and quality of life for our most formidable resource, and the foundation of our future readiness--the Air Force recruiter. Thank you again for this opportunity.