

STATEMENT BY

BRIGADIER GENERAL BELINDA PINCKNEY

COMMANDER

FAMILY AND MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION COMMAND

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BRIGADIER GENERAL BELINDA PINCKNEY, COMMANDER
FAMILY AND MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION COMMAND
ON ARMY MORALE, WELFARE AND RECREATION (MWR) PROGRAMS**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the status and direction of Army Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) programs. This hearing marks the first time the Commander of the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command has appeared before you. When the Army established the Installation Management Command, the U.S. Army Community and Family Support Center changed its name to more accurately reflect its mission. Our professionals and volunteers continue to deliver "First Choice" programs and services to our Active and Reserve Component Soldiers and their families around the world.

MWR SUPPORT TO DEPLOYED SOLDIERS

We have professional staff in Southwest Asia to support our deployed Soldiers, and we continue to support the forces in the Balkans. We have MWR facilities at 25 large and 17 small sites in Iraq, three major and five remote locations in Afghanistan, and one major and five small sites in Kuwait. Currently, 15 MWR professionals are deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait, meeting the 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 and Operation Enduring Freedom. Similarly, 12 civilian MWR professionals provide support to service members in Kosovo, Bosnia, Hungary, and Macedonia. Since 1995, over 200 MWR personnel have voluntarily deployed to promote physical fitness and provide recreation, social and other support services in the Balkans.

The Armed Forces Recreation Centers (AFRCs) continue their mission of providing quality, wholesome, affordable, family-oriented vacation opportunities to all

authorized patrons. AFRCs are responding to the Rest and Recuperation (R&R) needs of both the Active and Reserve Components by offering discounted packages to personnel authorized R&R in conjunction with a 12 month tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. The discounted R&R programs are available at Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany; the Hale Koa Hotel in Honolulu, Hawaii; and the Shades of Green in Orlando, Florida. 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. Concurrent with their ongoing missions, AFRCs maintain strategic views of the future to preserve the capability to serve tomorrow's Defense Force through an aggressive program of facility investment.

We are committed to meeting the needs of our Soldiers and their families. The following is a brief overview of operating results, key MWR issues, and initiatives we are working to support the transforming Army.

FAMILY READINESS

Army Community Service (ACS) is the principal organizational element responsible for providing personal and family readiness support to commanders, Soldiers, and families. The ACS center staff is proactive in preparing and sustaining families by teaching life skills and providing ongoing training for the Unit Family Readiness Team (unit commander, rear detachment commander, Family Readiness Group (FRG) leaders, and family members). We have published guidance on FRG operations and provided useful and practical techniques for handling deployments for commanders, Soldiers, spouses, and children.

Installation ACS directors reach out to the Army National Guard and Army Reserve units in their geographic areas of responsibility to assist Reserve Component family program personnel with providing information, training, and other deployment

readiness assistance. Our Integrated Multi-Component Family Support Network provides a seamless customer-focused network of services to families regardless of component or geographic location.

The Virtual Family Readiness Group (vFRG), a web based access portal controlled by the military unit, is the primary link among deployed Soldiers, families, FRG leaders, unit commanders, rear detachment commanders, and other readiness personnel. These “virtual communities” provide a secure communications network of support for Soldiers and families. The vFRG, implemented Army-wide in February 2006, currently supports about 650 Army units, continues to be a huge success, and receives positive feedback from all users.

MyArmyLifeToo.com, launched in 2005, provides single portal access to accurate and up-to-date information about Army life. The site has had over 28 million “hits” since its inception. Soldiers and families may sign up to receive the monthly e-newsletter, currently being sent to over 55,000 subscribers. Two additional Department of Defense resources for military families are Military Family Life Consultants (MFLC) and Military OneSource (MOS). The MFLC provide much needed, on-demand support to Soldiers and families. The flexibility of the program allows the Army to deploy and redeploy MFLC where and when needed for up to 90 days. Individuals may be requested with specific skills to respond to installation specific needs. The MFLC provide outreach through direct consultation, classes, groups, and sessions. Topics include: emotional well being; relationships; marriages; parenting; deployment; change management; stress management; and grief and loss. The consultants also provide assistance to ACS and Child and Youth Services staff to alleviate family distress and emotional burnout.

Military OneSource is a 24/7 toll free information and referral telephone line and Internet/Web based service that includes up to six face-to-face counseling sessions available to Active and Reserve Component Soldiers, deployed civilians, and their families. It augments our installation family support services by providing telephonic

and Internet access to families living off installations. Last year MOS staff supported 384 Army pre- and post-deployment briefings and events attended by more than 150,000 Soldiers and family members.

We continue to cultivate partnerships between the Army and the civilian sector to improve services to families. The Army Spouse Employment Partnership (ASEP) supports Soldier retention and contributes to family financial stability by helping spouses maintain careers. Currently, 26 corporate and military partners use innovative methods to provide job and career opportunities to military spouses. MyArmyLifeToo.com and the military spouse job search website, www.msjs.org, provide portals for military spouses to develop their resumes and apply for jobs. In fiscal year 2006, ASEP partners hired over 5,000 military spouses, bringing the total of spouses employed by ASEP partners to 16,000. The Council of Better Business Bureaus, a key community partner, works with military installations and local Better Business Bureaus to resolve consumer issues affecting military personnel and their families.

The Army has a dynamic program – the Army Family Action Plan (AFAP) – that enables our Soldiers, retirees, civilians and families to tell us what’s on their minds. Our communities leverage the 24-year success of the AFAP to raise issues to leadership for resolution. Installations and headquarters monitor issues and their progress through regular guidance, direction, and leadership approval. AFAP recognizes that as the operational tempo of the Army changes, we need to change with it to continue to meet the needs of our Soldiers and families. At the November 2006 world-wide conference, we added a workgroup to this vital process to represent our wounded warriors. Each year, the conference pursues resolution of critical quality of life issues. AFAP is recognized and supported by local commands as well as senior Army leadership and is the force behind hundreds of legislative, regulatory and policy changes, and program and service improvements. Our Soldiers, retirees, civilians, and families know AFAP is their “voice” in the Army’s future.

Although families are resilient, they can't do it alone and shouldn't have to. We enhance that resiliency by providing care, support, and meaningful opportunities for social bonding. There must be sufficient infrastructure, independent of volunteer support, properly resourced to deliver consistent quality services to all components in a seamless manner.

CHILD AND YOUTH SERVICES INITIATIVES

Army Child and Youth Programs are a quantifiable force multiplier and remain essential to reduce the conflict between Soldiers' parental responsibilities and unit mission requirements. Quality, available, affordable, and predictable child and youth programs allow Soldiers to focus on their missions, knowing their children are thriving in our child care programs and their teens are adjusting as they move from school to school. The demand continues to increase, and we have taken a number of actions to address this need.

First, we procured 18 Child Care Interim Facilities at nine installations highly impacted by Army Transformation. They are Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Carson, Colorado; Fort Drum, New York; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Riley, Kansas; Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia. Permanent construction projects are programmed in the Future Years Defense Plan to replace these interim facilities by 2013. Additionally, we are using the authority granted by section 2810 of the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act to add 10 permanent modular child care facilities using Operation and Maintenance funds at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Fort Lee, Virginia; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pennsylvania; Anniston Army Depot and Redstone Arsenal, Alabama; Detroit Arsenal, Michigan; and Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey. This will help us replace lost child care capacity as we close bases in Europe and expand capacity in the United States.

Increasingly, we find our on-post, Army-operated child care programs insufficient to meet the growing demand for services. Many Soldiers are geographically dispersed. Others live in civilian communities surrounding installations. Now, for the first time, we can provide Army-sponsored services where families live through our new initiatives – *Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood* and *Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood*. *Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood* child spaces are targeted to meet the child care needs of recruiters and Soldiers with independent duty assignments dispersed throughout the country. *Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood* supports families living in the immediate catchment areas surrounding some of our large installations. Under both programs, families pay reduced fees for child care services delivered through state licensed/regulated and nationally accredited or credentialed community child care programs

We are also increasing our efforts to sustain and expand our home-based Family Child Care program. Without the dedicated family members who provide child care in government housing – especially extended hours, evening and weekend care – we could not provide the care needed to support mission requirements beyond the traditional duty day.

Child and Youth Programs play a vital role in helping reduce stress for families. Garrison Child Development Centers and Family Child Care Homes have extended operating hours. The respite care we provide, at minimal cost, gives parents time to attend to personal needs or take breaks 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 and offer value-based programs to help youth deal with the stress associated with parental deployments.

Reserve Component families often need child care support and face additional child care costs when Soldier parents deploy. Our *Operation Military Child Care* initiative “buys down” the cost of child care for these families in the local community

where the family lives. Reserve Component Soldiers in all 50 states participate in this centrally funded Army Child and Youth Services deployment support initiative

In conjunction with the National 4-H Office, our *Operation Military Kids (OMK)* initiative is a collaborative effort in 34 states to support the children and youth of our Reserve Component Soldiers. In Fiscal Year 2006, more than 29,000 youth participated in OMK events and services conducted in their local communities. This vital FMWRC partnership with the Department of Agriculture is a success story that engages main stream America in directly supporting our military youth.

And finally, the Army is working with the Department of Defense and Department of Education to address school transition issues. Our School Transition Plan includes strategies for successful transition of military-connected students from overseas to schools in the United States. The plan focuses on coordination with national, state, and local education agencies to integrate military-connected students into local school systems. Although some affected local education agencies have expressed concerns about the ability to sufficiently accommodate the influx of transitioning students, most are moving ahead with bond issues, exploring the potential for charter schools; others have engaged the Department of Education and Department of Defense to discuss new avenues for funding facilities, transportation, teachers, and textbooks.

SURVEY OF ARMY FAMILIES

In conjunction with the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, FMWRC conducts the *Survey of Army Families (SAF)*. The *SAF* provides data on the attitudes and behaviors of civilian spouses of active duty Soldiers. Recent in-depth analyses of 2004/2005 SAF V data confirm the importance of MWR and family programs to Soldier readiness and retention. Significant findings include:

- Spouse knowledge and use of Army support assets and being comfortable dealing with Army agencies are keys to positive deployment adjustment.

- Army recreation services are the second most commonly used non-medical service during deployment, with 42 percent of spouses using this installation program. Thirty-four percent indicated they increased their use during the deployment, and 62 percent said they are satisfied with the services they received.
- Sixty-eight percent of spouses who used Army Community Service (ACS) personal and financial assistance programs during deployment found these services helpful, the highest rating of satisfaction for deployment related services in the survey.
- As a result of deployment, depression and school problems affect about one in five children. Parents believe their youngest children cope most poorly with the deployment separation, especially preschoolers under age six.
- Perceptions about the Army as a good place for younger children are linked to Soldier retention: 86 percent of the spouses who think the Army is good for younger children want their Soldier to stay in the Army, while only 51 percent of spouses who think the Army is not good for their children want their Soldier to remain in the Army.

RECREATION

The Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command reviewed how it provides recreation services for military communities to assess ways to provide services more efficiently and effectively. The result was a Recreation Delivery System that increases customer use of programs and services and requires fewer stand-alone facilities and less infrastructure. Additionally, the system integrates MWR with the installation and community, encompasses unit programming, and delivers the programs in the best location. The delivery system uses a team approach for programming to maximize flexibility and provide opportunities to increase customer-focused recreation programs.

Libraries: The General Library Information System (GLIS) is a web-based information system that provides library services for deployed Soldiers and the libraries that support them. The long-term goal is for GLIS to be the web-based information system for all Army MWR libraries. The GLIS has been fielded at 51 libraries in the continental United States, Alaska, and Europe, with five more libraries to be added by the end of 2007. GLIS manages almost two million items including books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, and newspapers for 390,000 users.

FMWRC commercial database subscriptions are available through GLIS both at MWR libraries and through the Army Knowledge Online (AKO) Internet portal. These databases include magazines and journal articles, auto repair information, online practice tests, encyclopedias, dictionaries, e-books, and downloadable audio books. These subscriptions were augmented by the Europe Regional Library Program, Combined Arms Research Library, and the Fort Hood Education Center – a true Army enterprise effort. Audio books which can be downloaded to MP3 players include fiction, non-fiction, and conversational language courses from Arabic to Vietnamese. These commercial databases were used over one million times in 2006.

Military Idol: For the second year, FMWRC supported the Military Idol competition. In August and September 2006, 29 installations, including Camp Anaconda, Iraq, hosted local competitions. They provided important professional development opportunities for garrison staffs, while offering contemporary Soldier programming on a large scale. A panel selected 13 of the installation winners to participate in Army-wide finals at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. FMWRC partnered with entertainment professionals who coached and judged the competitors. Army AKO broadcast the week-long final contest and managed voting for the final competition. The winners, voted by AKO viewers across the Army, were First Place, Specialist Vicki Golding, Fort Myer, Virginia; Second Place, Staff Sergeant Angelo Johnson, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; and Third Place, Sergeant Quanda Brown, Fort Lee, Virginia.

Participating installations want to see Military Idol repeated next year. The goal is to expand the competition to 60 installations.

BUSINESS PROGRAMS

Income generated by Business Programs is vital to financial support of all MWR programs. Total revenues for fiscal year 2006 exceeded \$280 million and produced a net income before depreciation (NIBD) of \$35.5 million. That income allowed business programs to finance the maintenance of their own facilities and provide funding to other critical MWR programs not capable of being self-sustaining. Specific accomplishments in support of the Army mission include:

Golf: Army golf has been proactive in determining the accessibility of Army golf courses for players with disabilities and is currently concluding the Congressionally-directed study of accessibility. In fiscal year 2006, the Army's 55 golf courses recorded NIBD of \$10.4 million on net revenue of \$69.8 million. Soldiers, retirees, and their families played over 1.7 million rounds.

Bowling: Army bowling centers have evolved into Family Entertainment Centers with add-on amenities such as glow-bowling, party rooms, video arcades, and billiards. Strike Zone themed food operations have enabled Army bowling centers to enhance service to Soldiers and families. Bowling patrons enjoy state of the art centers that recorded over 8.1 million games bowled. The Army's 92 bowling centers worldwide produced \$45.1 million in revenue and NIBD of \$6.6 million.

Food, Beverage, and Entertainment: Army Club Food, Beverage, and Entertainment and MWR Branded Restaurant Operations remain an integral part of business operations in Army communities. The 199 activities provide a variety of programs and services worldwide, enhance unit cohesion, and support community social needs. The activities earned NIBD of \$15.1 million on revenue of \$155.3 million.

Events: The Events Division continues to offer diverse, demand-driven promotions that generate excitement and help to increase sales. Promotions included Fantasy Football and Fantasy NASCAR promotions that drew people into facilities to make their weekly selections. The "101 Days of Summer" youth promotion saw 74 bowling centers offer kids a daily opportunity to bowl one game and get a second free. Another promotion was "Race to the Rings" that drew on the excitement of the Olympics.

FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

Total appropriated fund (APF) and nonappropriated fund (NAF) support to the Army's MWR programs for fiscal year 2006 was \$1.55 billion. Of this, NAF revenue was \$949 million, and net income after depreciation was \$32 million. APF support, including military construction, was \$762 million.

The DoD standard is to use APF to fund 100 percent of costs for which they are authorized. No standards are specified for the uncategorized, APF-authorized common service support or overhead expenses, and this category of expenses represents the major use of NAF in lieu of APF. The metrics specify funding minimums of 85 percent for Category A (CAT A) activities, and 65 percent for Category B (CAT B) activities. In fiscal year 2006, the ratio of APF support for CAT A was 83 percent, versus 89 percent for fiscal year 2005. The decline in CAT A is attributed to a revised methodology for allocating overhead which more logically portrays the application of APF and NAF support. CAT B reported 67 percent APF support, versus 66 percent in fiscal year 2005.

The Army is in the final phase of implementing Uniform Funding and Management (UFM), authorized by the Fiscal Year 2003 National Defense Authorization Act. This major business reengineering initiative merges APF and NAF for the purposes of providing MWR services using NAF rules and procedures. 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 for the functions of procurement, financial management, and human resource management. We are well on the way to having a routinely prepared, single financial statement for the APF and NAF resources of the MWR program.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION (MILCON)

In addition to the 10 Operation and Maintenance funded Child Development Centers (CDCs) mentioned earlier, the Fiscal Year 2007 construction program included eight MILCON funded CDCs and three BRAC funded CDCs. The CDC locations are: Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Campbell, Kentucky; Fort Drum, New York; Fort Lewis, Washington; Fort Richardson, Alaska; Fort Riley, Kansas (2); Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia; and Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. There were two BRAC-funded youth centers at Fort Bliss and Fort Sam Houston, Texas in the fiscal year 2007 program. Finally, the program includes a fitness center and a CDC at Vicenza, Italy. For fiscal year 2008, the Army's MILCON program includes two BRAC funded projects, a fitness center and a youth center, both at Fort Bliss, Texas.

CONCLUSION

MWR is critically essential to sustain the All-Volunteer Force and maintain well-being for the Army. Providing "First Choice" programs and services to Soldiers and families worldwide is our top priority and single focus. More than ever before, our programs are demand-driven, quality-focused, and service-based. With your help, we will continue to deliver these vital programs and services to the best Soldiers and families in the world.