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Opening Statement

General Ham and other distinguished members of this Commission, my name is Ben Banchs and I am the Business Manager for the Laborers International Union of North America (LIUNA) National Guard Council Local 1776. I am also a member of the Louisiana Air National Guard with over 24 years of service. I currently hold the rank of Technical Sergeant and work on F-15 Avionics Systems. I've worked in the combat aviation field for over 20 years.

On behalf of the more than 500,000 members of LIUNA I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify here today. LIUNA proudly represents hard working Americans from all walks of life, and from numerous different sectors of employment. While our membership consists primarily of construction workers, our organization also represents thousands of civil servants at all levels of government. Among these are Army National Guard Technicians. It is on their behalf that I provide this testimony.

Even though this Commission is tasked with looking at the entire Army, our testimony focuses primarily on the aviation aspects of the force since it was the Army's proposal to remove Apaches from the National Guard that pushed Congress to establish this panel. With that in mind, the arguments put forth in our testimony apply equally across the entire spectrum of the National Guard force whether they are air, ground, or cyberspace.

The Army's Plan to Gut National Guard Combat Aviation Reverses Decades of Progress and is Inconsistent with the Total Force Policy

The scaling down of U.S. combat forces after any major conflict and the subsequent in-fighting that ensues amongst the military services to preserve equipment and budget dollars is something that the American public has become accustomed to. The last time we watched the Armed Services engulfed in a budgetary civil war was after Desert Storm. This time is no different, and even though the Navy and Marines have mostly been watching from a safe distance, the war of words and dollars between the Army, Air Force, and their Reserve Components will prove to be a long and bloody self-preservation campaign for all involved.

The US Air Force fired the first salvo of the budget battle against their brothers and sisters in the Guard behind the rallying cry: "We just don't have the money!" Air Force brass proposed drastic cuts, many of which disproportionately affected the Air National Guard. Among these was grunt favorite and long-time staple of the Air National Guard, the mighty and still relevant A-10 Thunderbolt II (a.k.a. Warthog). The Air Force has been trying to rid itself of these tank-killers since before Desert Shield/Storm. It didn't make sense then, and it doesn't make sense now. This time they saw another opportunity to execute that plan by citing sequestration, budget cuts, and potential savings needed to fund the F-35 as justification. Surely they felt this would be a milk run...they were wrong.

As the Air Force was lining up to start their budgetary bombing run on the A-10 program they immediately were shot down by the impenetrable shield that is Congress. In their haste to retire the A-10 the Air Force failed to account for two very important factors. First, the A-10 has rightfully earned a reputation for being the best at what it does. No one, not even former A-10 pilot and current Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. Mark Welsh, is going to be able to say otherwise and get away with it. Second and more importantly, the Air Force failed to account for all those troublesome voters down in the trenches who see those same supposed cost-saving cuts to programs like the A-10 for what they really are...job losses and tax dollars being sucked out of their local economies and going to local economies elsewhere.

The politicians that represent those voters acted swiftly. In response to the outrage expressed by their constituents and complaints of disparity voiced by Air National Guard leaders, Congress halted all proposed cuts and forced a Commission upon the Air Force to study their plans. After a year of gathering evidence and hearing testimony, one of the Commission's most resonating recommendations is that, rather than taking missions away, the Air Force should instead look into transferring as many missions as possible to the Air National Guard and Reserves, as a cost saving measure. While these are merely recommendations, it was a huge victory for advocates of the Reserve Components who can now cite these findings as confirmation of what they've been advocating for all along. It also appears that Congress is going to let the A-10 live to fight

another day (or year), and that's nothing but good news to those on the front lines whose lives depend on the aircraft. If you're keeping score: Guard & Reserves 1, US Air Force 0.

Caught Off-Guard

As the high-flying drama was unfolding between the Air Force and Congress, the US Army was taking notes from the gallery. With major ground conflicts winding down and money resources growing more and more scarce, the Army and Air Force find themselves in similar self-preservation predicaments. Along those same lines, both branches have proposed cuts that have caused the National Guard and Congress to recoil into a defensive position. For the Army, the most controversial proposal thus far has been their plan to transfer all AH-64 Apache helicopters out of the National Guard. The Army saw that the Air Force's plan to unilaterally cut money and systems out of the Guard failed because they did not adequately prepare for the coming battle. Rather than go in with a half-cocked budget-cutting proposal the Army settled on a different approach and spent the better part of the last three years readying for the fight that surely would ensue against their politically powerful opponent, the Army National Guard.

Their anti-Guard battle plan was brilliant, almost reminiscent of a CIA operation. It's been as much covert as it is overt. Every briefing, interview and news article cleverly planted and released; each move carefully planned and executed. You can almost picture Army Chief of Staff General Ray Odierno and his team talking behind closed doors, pouring over a map of the political battlefield, and preparing for every move National Guard opponents would make in reaction to their strategy: we can't compete dollar for dollar so we have to attack their readiness. As a result, the Army's propaganda slogan became 'cheaper means second rate.' In other words, don't just raise fiscal concerns as the Air Force did, also publicly question their ability to fulfill the mission. Since then, Gen. Odierno and other top Army brass have stated repeatedly that the Guard is just not good enough to be 'first string.' Rather, Odierno compared Guardsmen and women to rag-tag benchwarmers not ready for primetime, and definitely not ready for a front-line combat aviation tasking.

The Army hit the ground running and caught most of us in the National Guard community by surprise. Personally, I found it disrespectful that the top officer in the United States Army would disparage the Guard in such a way. I immediately thought of my friends and acquaintances in the Army Guard, a good number of them with at least 1 if not 2 combat deployments in the last 10 years, some with 4 and even 5, and some who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The narrative coming from the top did not match reality. However, for all their preparation and political savvy the Army could not stave off the inevitable, and now here we are providing testimony in front of a distinguished panel tasked with answering a trillion dollar question: what *does* the Army of the future look like?

Fact vs. Fiction

Let's dispatch with the nonsense right from the start: the National Guard has and is ready to accomplish any mission that is asked of us. This is true not just on foreign battlefields but also here at home. Unfortunately for Gen. Odierno fact truly is much more telling than fiction. For example, on April 23, 2013, Odierno was 'all-in' as he put forth his case in front of the US Senate, dismissing arguments by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) in favor of the Guard and alleging that in order to 'keep them at the same readiness level as an active component, you've got to spend more and more money.' He followed that with claims that it takes the Guard two years to respond to an activation call-up. Odierno's statements summarily dismissed a decade of sustained combat and side-by-side duty in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other hot-spots around the world, to include at one point in 2005 where 'more than half of the combat forces in Iraq were National Guard.'¹

That statement also clashed head-to-head with another reality that Odierno either didn't know or wasn't aware of because halfway around the world, less than 48 hours earlier, AH-64D Instructor Pilots from the South Carolina Army National Guard's (SCARNG's) 1-151st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion (ARB) were providing Night Deck Landing Qualification (DLQ) training for their US Army active duty counterparts assigned to the 4-2 ARB in South Korea. Here we have the Army Chief of Staff calling into question the Guard's readiness and capability while almost simultaneously that same second-rate organization is hard at work training the supposed superior force. The fact is SCARNG pilots were the first AH-64D Deck Landing Qualified Instructor Pilots in all of the Army, and were there to train and qualify their 4-2 ARB AH-64D active duty counterparts as instructors so that they could establish a local Deck Landing Qualification and sustainment program to enable other AH-64 aviators to operate off of the deck of US ships in the Pacific.

It took just a few weeks for the SCARNG's 1-151st ARB to respond to the request for training and qualification, not 2 years as Odierno was lamenting to Congress, and the SCARNG paid for the cost of the training out of their own current-year funds, so it did not cost the US taxpayer any extra than already had been budgeted. The 4-2 ARB now has a vibrant shipboard operation capability that has exponentially enhanced strategic and operational deterrence in a region rich with tension, something that would not have been possible without the expertise and knowledge that, at the time, resided only in the National Guard.

The SCARNG's monopoly on DLQ's Instructor Pilots stemmed from their unit being the only AH-64D Apache battalion flying over Iraq in late 2011, during the last months of Operation New

¹ USATODAY.com - Death toll rises for U.S. reservists in Iraq. (2005, October 10). Retrieved July 8, 2015, from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/nation/2005-10-10-reservestoll_x.htm#

Dawn. Because of the diminished presence the commander of US forces became concerned with Iran and was relying on the SCARNG Apaches to be the ‘force multiplier’ needed to keep the Iranians at bay. In order to maximize their reach within the area of operations the SCARNG needed to be able to operate both from land and from the decks of allied ships in the Persian Gulf. However, landing on ships was something the Apache community had stopped practicing since 9/11. As a result, not only did the SCARNG become the first and only Apache DLQ unit in the entire Army, they also developed their DLQ program in-theater, and were the only unit with qualified DL IPs in the Army.

Fast-forward to 2012. As it turns out, the SCARNG’s Pacific presence in April of 2013 was nothing new. An email shared with us by a top-level aviation official of the SCARNG showed that just 5 months earlier (well in advanced of Odierno’s remarks to Congress), Battalion Staff members from the 1-151st ARB had been in Japan supporting Yama Sakura 63, a recurring bi-lateral exercise hosted by the US Army’s Pacific Command (USARPAC’s) since 1982. The exercise focuses on the development and refinement of Japan’s Ground Self-Defense Force and ‘the U.S. Force’s efforts in the areas of bi-lateral planning, coordination, and interoperability.’² According to an email sent to the SCARNG by USARPAC staff after the 2012 exercise, Yama Sakura 63 is one of (then USARPAC Commander) LTG Wiercinski’s ‘most-important Bi-lateral Training Exercises.’ The email went on to thank the SCARNG for their ‘professionalism, dedication and expertise,’ and highlighted the fact that their participation was responsible for USARPAC ‘developing Brigade level concepts incorporating lift/attack assets in a time constrained environment.’ Needless to say, these seasoned SCARNG ARB Staff members were pivotal in filling active component Aviation Staff Shortages for this very important exercise.

Yama Sakura 63 wasn’t a fluke. In fact, SCARNG Apache aviators are apparently in very high demand and are known Army-wide for their expertise and skills. This is something top Army brass is either unaware of or chooses to ignore because just a month before Odierno was relaying his lack of confidence in the National Guard’s capability to Congress in April 2013, the Deputy Director for Aviation US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) was requesting the SCARNG’s 1-151st ARB participate in 2 pre-deployment joint live-fire exercises being conducted by the US Navy’s (USN’s) Fleet Forces Atlantic to validate their Carrier Strike Groups. The Director stated via email that she wanted to inform the SCARNG about the coming exercises because they (FORSCOM and the USN) could use their ‘shipboard expertise.’ She goes on to say that ‘they are pushing hard for joint integration but from the (active component) side we really don’t have the capacity for the near term and with the budget impacts not sure we can convince FC CG to commit flying hours to the summer event. Although we haven’t discounted the active component participation we are challenged with having the trained crews to execute.’

² The United States Army | United States Army Pacific. (n.d.). Retrieved July 8, 2015, from <http://www.usarpac.army.mil/ys63/index.asp>

Not one to sit idle for very long, the SCARNG returned to South Korea in 2014 to fill Army Aviation Subject Matter Expert (SME) staff shortages in support of VIII Army's Ulchi Freedom Guardian. 1-151st ARB Staff members worked in support of the G3 for Aviation and became aviation liaisons to the 17th Republic of South Korea's (ROK) Infantry staff. Their role was to train South Korean forces on how to request, employ, and integrate US Army Aviation assets. That same year, 2014, the SCARNG was once again being recognized for their expertise, this time by the Chief of Aviation for 3rd Army/US Army Central Command. In an email message dated March 3, 2014, the Chief shares with SCARNG aviation leadership some information concerning maritime and joint-service operations. Of note is the Chief's remark that the '1-151 ARB has developed a significant reputation with Navy Strike Group Atlantic.' He continues on to say that '1-151 ARB SCARNG is the most trained and ready aviation unit in the Army in supporting attack operations in the maritime and littoral environment. We would not have had the data to develop a AGM—14L7A or an appreciation of the efficiency of the AH-64D against these target sets without their support. They maintain DLQ qualified IPs and have assisted USARCENT with integrating units preparing for deployment ISO Operation Spartan Shield. The G32 relies on them to support interoperability assessments we cannot conduct in theater based on constraints. We strongly recommend that HQDA generate a tasking to FORSCOM/NGB to continue to support this effort.'

In addition to the training and joint exercises previously mentioned, and in spite of disparaging remarks by both Odierno and other leaders, the Army has also come to rely on National Guard aviators to train future generations of pilots, including Apache crews. Whenever Fort Rucker (the Army's helicopter aviation and maintenance training hub) has experienced shortages of instructor pilots (IPs) they have relied on the National Guard to fill the gap. Right now the SCARNG has both an AH-64D IP and maintenance examiner on loan to Fort Rucker to augment their training function. Fort Rucker trains on all aspects of Army aviation, and they don't just settle for anyone to come and train their students, they make by-name requests. Earlier this year the Chief of the Master Gunner Branch requested via email that SCARNG Master Gunner, CW4 Austin Norris (Purple Heart Recipient), come to Fort Rucker as a guest instructor at the annual Master Gunner's course for RC and AC Components so that the next group of Master Gunners could 'benefit from the lessons learned and successes of your program...this would be great exposure and benefit to the MG course and the community.'

The SCARNG's most recent exploits were just the latest in a long history of aviation excellence. To highlight this you have to go back to 2004. That year the 1-151st ARB was alerted for an out of cycle mobilization. The unit alerted, mobilized, and deployed so quickly that then Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, Gen. (Retired) Dick Cody, made a special visit to Kuwait to engage directly with 1-151st ARB staff and better understand how a National Guard unit was able to devise a short-notice training plan that completed all pre-deployment training requirements, and

in contrast to Gen. Odierno's recent assertions, rapidly deploy into the hornet's nest that was Mosul, Iraq. This unit was ready, deployed, and flew the Army's only 'Gray Apaches' over the skies of Iraq, to include overseeing the first free elections of the Iraqi people since the toppling of Saddam Hussein.

It's interesting to note that by the time SCARNG returned to Iraq in 2008, Gen. Petraeus had handed Multi-National Force – Iraq (MNFI) to Gen. Odierno. SCARNG UH-60 pilots became the sole rotary wing unit assigned directly to GEN Odierno for rotary wing transportation. Ironic how Odierno would trust his own life on a daily basis to Blackhawk maintainers and aviators from SCARNG and yet not want SCARNG Apache pilots – some of the most-experienced aviators in the Army – supporting and sustaining the lives of the ground troops he was charged with leading and protecting.

We would add more to the narrative but we don't believe it's needed; we believe we've made our point. While the examples provided here are specific to the SCARNG Apache program, they serve to quickly call into question the claims and allegations being made by Gen. Odierno that the Guard is second rate, that we're not ready. Frankly, they dispel the myth that is his narrative. In fact, the examples provided here only validate what National Guard members can and have accomplished over the last few decades. Regardless of whether they fly, drive, shoot or maintain helicopters, tanks, trucks, or artillery, the National Guard is not a second rate force.

The Gates Commission³

The integration of the active and reserve components began in earnest in 1973 when DoD implemented their Total Force Policy. Originally the brainchild of Gen. Creighton Abrams, this new policy would treat the National Guard and Reserve as part of the whole force, not in addition to their active counterparts. It also formalized reliance on the reserve components as the initial and primary back-up for active duty personnel.⁴ The drive towards Total Force integration was born out of the necessity to fix the US military as it emerged broken and demoralized after Vietnam. A 2008 report to Congress by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves captured the state of military reserve forces prior to, during and after Vietnam. The lessons learned between 1958 and 1973 would become the driving force for implementing a Total Force strategy.

³ The Report of the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed force (February 1970), p. E-1 – E-9, <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/MG265/images/webS0243.pdf>.

⁴ Congressional Budget Office, *Improving the Readiness of the Army Reserve and National Guard: A Framework for Debate* (February 1978), p. ix, https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/113xx/doc11380/1978_02_improving.pdf.

The 2008 report recalled that ‘the importance of the reserve components diminished’ in the years leading up to Vietnam. This was due in part to the ongoing draft and maintenance of a large standing military ‘for the first time’ in our history. Rather than rely on the reserves, DoD relied on draftees to support ongoing combat operations in Southeast Asia. As the US got bogged down in a mismanaged war and casualties mounted, reliance on a conscript active force became a recipe for disaster due to a higher fatality rate among draftees compared to volunteers. The report noted that while only ‘one-fifth of all forces in Vietnam’ were conscripts ‘more than 50 percent of the Army and an equal percentage of those killed in combat were draftees.’ That was a staggering statistic, and it had a resoundingly negative effect on the draft. As American public support for the war waned, those that didn’t want to report for duty found ways, both legal and illegal, to avoid their draft call. One of the legal ways to minimize the chances of going to Vietnam was to join the Guard and Reserves. This only served to stigmatize all reservists as draft dodgers. The perception created a cultural divide between the active and reserve components that lasted for decades, and only started to be alleviated after the successful integration and performance of Guard and Reserve forces during and since Desert Storm. Sadly, recent comments made by Gen. Odierno (that the Guard is second rate) only serve to erase the progress made over the last four decades.

Vietnam became a major fork in the road for the US military as it approached the 21st Century. As the Nation struggled with the possibility that we were not going to succeed in Vietnam, and as the draft became more and more unpopular, President Richard Nixon formed a Commission to study a shift to an all-volunteer force. Known as the Gate’s Commission (in reference to its Chair, former Secretary of Defense Thomas Gates), the members on the panel were diverse and came from all different walks of life; military, politics, academics, and even the civil rights movement. In the end, while the Commission made numerous findings, their overall recommendation “that the United States should not rely on a regular draft for its military manpower” was unanimous. As a result of the Commission’s recommendations, Nixon and Congress moved swiftly to shift the military to an all-volunteer force. On July 1, 1973, legislation was passed officially ending the draft, and closing a dark chapter in American history.

In order to stop reliance on the draft the Gates Commission recommended that the reserves become the primary source of volunteers for the active duty military in time of war. As such, the integration of the active and reserve components began in earnest in 1973 when DoD formalized their Total Force Policy. While the concept seems simple enough on paper, executing the Total Force Policy has been anything but. From the time Total Force was implemented in the 70’s until the turn of the century and even today, problems have existed which plague the strategy. The most glaring of these problems is the fact that the National Guard and Reserves are under-funded and under-equipped, and that the equipment which traditionally was assigned to the reserve components was outdated.

The Times They Are Not A Changing – Then and Now

The Total Force Policy is now part of the US legal framework under Titles 10 and 32 of the United States Code, and is implemented by DoD via Directive 1200.17 titled *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*. The Directive states that the reserve components will ‘provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict,’ that the active and reserve components will be ‘integrated as a total force based on the attributes of the particular component and individual competencies,’ and that the reserve components will be ‘resourced to meet readiness.’ So, integration is no longer a new concept, but it has yet to be perfected.

Shortly after the Total Force Policy was implemented, a 1978 Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report titled *Improving the Readiness of the Army Reserve and National Guard: A Framework for Debate*, captured many of the initial challenges faced in trying to fulfill the new US defense strategy. The report affirmed that the primary role of the reserves was always to help defend the US and its allies during a major war, and that formalization of DoD’s 1973 Total Force Policy made this role ‘increasingly important.’ The report also made several key observations, many of which remain relevant today.

In 1978, CBO found that the reserves had a problem, especially the Army National Guard and Reserves, because they were ‘short on people...sometimes short on equipment, and (short) of time and places to train. As a result, the Army reserves...might not be ready to meet the increasing demands placed on them.’ Those findings are still true in the present day. In 2009 a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report echoed the 1978 findings. The GAO recalled how Cold War-era reserve components were resourced with only ‘between 65 and 74 percent of their *required* personnel and 65 to 79 percent of their *required* equipment (emphasis added),’⁵ and that as of 2009, even though the reserves had shifted from a strategic reserve to an operational one since the Cold War, and especially since 9/11, the Army had ‘not modified its full-time support staffing requirements to reflect the needs of the operational role.’ GAO went on to say that ‘reserve component units face difficulties in performing key readiness tasks at current staff levels,’ and that the Army had ‘not reevaluated the reserve components’ requirement for the full-time staff that are needed to perform key readiness tasks on a day-to-day basis in light of their new operational role.’ GAO continued, ‘with most members of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve serving 2 days a month and 2 weeks out of the year, the reserve components rely on a small number of full-time personnel to perform the day-to-day tasks such as maintaining unit equipment and planning training events that reserve units need to accomplish in order to maintain readiness for their mission and be able to deploy... insufficient full-time

⁵ General Accounting Office, *Army Needs to Finalize an Implementation Plan and Funding Strategy for Sustaining an Operational Reserve Force* (September 2009), p. 7- 8, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a507086.pdf>.

support levels place the operational force at risk.’⁶ In essence, even though they were 30 years apart, both reports confirmed what everyone knew all along, that from a funding and resourcing standpoint, the reserves are set up for failure.

Lingering Concerns about Readiness

Questions about National Guard readiness have surfaced in the past. As a result of the Total Force Policy, both the Army and Air Force began to rely on the reserves to complement the active component. For example, some Army divisions are comprised of both active and National Guard brigades, with the National Guard units referred to as ‘roundout’ brigades. As stated previously, the Army funds reserve units at less than 100%. However, under the roundout concept, these brigades were supposed to receive a higher priority for equipment and funding on the basis that they would be among the first reserve units activated in a real-world situation.

Desert Storm was the first major mobilization of combat forces since Vietnam. In support of Desert Storm nearly 150,000 Army reservists (including National Guardsmen) were called to active duty, half of which were in-theater performing actual combat and support missions. In spite of the overwhelming successes and contributions of Reserve and National Guard units during Desert Storm, detractors of Total Force focused in on the readiness issues experienced by three specific Army National Guard units: the 48th and 256th Infantry Brigades, and the 155th Armor Brigade.

When Desert Shield kicked-off in late 1990 the Army had eighteen active divisions, six of which were rounded-out by National Guard brigades. During the buildup of forces the Army activated the three aforementioned National Guard roundout brigades in support of their divisions; however none of the three made it to the combat theater and eventually had to be substituted by other active brigades. As often happens, the successes of the Total Force Policy were completely overshadowed by the failure of these three brigades to make it into theater, even though their inability to do so was not their fault, rather it was Army policy that set them up for failure.

After Desert Storm, a GAO study found that: 1. peacetime training was not adequately preparing the roundout brigades for rapid deployment; 2. differences between National Guard and Active Duty personnel and supply administration systems made it difficult for National Guard personnel to transition to the combat environment; 3. peacetime National Guard medical screening practices were inadequate; and, 4. Post-mobilization training plans were unreliable. GAO

⁶ General Accounting Office, *Army Needs to Finalize an Implementation Plan and Funding Strategy for Sustaining an Operational Reserve Force* (September 2009), p. 18, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a507086.pdf>.

recommended the Army take action to correct the problems discovered by their study, which DoD concurred with.⁷

Despite isolated readiness concerns the overwhelming consensus after Desert Storm was that Total Force worked. Had it not our leaders would have been hesitant to call upon the National Guard and Reserves ten years later in support of the wars that followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, the same training and funding obstacles that were present during Desert Storm were also with us on 9/11, and are still with us today. Incredibly, some of the proposal being floated by current military leaders like Gen. Odierno would send the National Guard and Reserves back in time.

Real Impact of Army Plan on the Role of the National Guard and Reserve Aviation

The current state of Army Aviation (meaning Active, Guard and Reserve combined) is the product of decades of lessons learned and DoD's requirement to implement the Total Force Policy devised at the end of the Vietnam War. It is also the result of a commitment made at the beginning of the 21st Century to modernize and fully integrate the Guard and Reserves into the Army's Combat Aviation Strategy. In 2000, then Army Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Plans and Force Development, Brigadier General Craig Hackett, introduced the Army's Aviation Modernization Plan with much pomp and circumstance during an April 4, 2000, press brief about the aviation modernization efforts. The motivations for the plan Hackett rolled-out was a push by senior leadership for true integration between active and reserve components, a need to address hard operational lessons learned during Task Force Hawk (an active-component Apache-unit deployment to Kosovo which brought to light questions about pilot shortages, pilot proficiency, unit combat training, communications equipment, aircraft survivability equipment and force structure), a GAO report concerning cost overruns in the Comanche Program, and the grounding of legacy UH-1 and AH-1 helicopters.⁸

At the briefing, Hackett and staff answered several questions about the plan, and spoke directly to what role the National Guard and Reserves would play moving forward. In response to a question about plans to increase the number of pilots, and whether there would be enough aircrews to fly available combat ready aircraft, Hackett and crew pointed out how those looking at the modernization plan had to look beyond the active component alone, and realize that the total number of combat pilots available to fill seats would be augmented 'because we changed

⁷ General Accounting Office, *National Guard: Peacetime Training Did Not Adequately Prepare Combat Brigades for Gulf War* (September 1991), p. 3 - 6, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/160/151085.pdf>.

⁸ Bleakney, E.M. (2000). *The 2000 Army Aviation Modernization Plan Effect on Active Component Army and Army National Guard Interoperability and Integration*. M.A. Thesis. Naval Postgraduate School: Monterey, CA. Retrieved from <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a386466.pdf>.

the structure of the National Guard and Reserve components to mirror those of the active components and we don't have that training lag now...so I have two options...I can ask for crew to supplement an operation because I can take them from the National Guard and deploy them with an active component unit, which gives me 24-hour capability. Or I can ask for the entire unit to come, and that gives you that more robust capability, and you double your capability on the battlefield.'⁹

Based on the performance of combined Army Aviation assets over the last 14 years of sustained combat operations, it would be safe for even the lay person to assert that the Total Force Policy implemented in the 1970's together with the modernization efforts of 2000 came together at the right time. The Army's current plan to remove all Apaches from the National Guard would not support the 'mirror' structure of the 2000 modernization plan, and would also not allow support of the 24-hour capability mentioned by Hackett since there would be zero Apache assets available in the Guard/Reserves to support and supplement the active duty pool of combat pilots or maintenance crews. Both of these concepts were in full force during the course of Iraq and Afghanistan operations. A departure from these concepts would be incredibly detrimental to the Army's ability to sustain combat aviation operations in any period of prolong conflict. Frankly, the Army's proposal makes no sense other than from a self-preservation perspective.

Rather than make shortsighted decisions that will impair our ability to fight current and future foes, the Army should expand on the model in place since 9/11, and continue to build on the successes experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan. Unfortunately, the proposal by current Army leadership to remove combat aviation assets out of the Guard and Reserves will decimate reserve aviation and truly make it the second rate force Gen. Odierno claimed it to be. From a legal and technical perspective we believe that the proposal to remove combat assets from the National Guard, whether those are helicopters or tanks, is against the law, and against DoD Directive 1200.17, which requires that the reserve components be 'fully integrated' into our Nation's defense strategy. To do otherwise would set us back to a pre-Vietnam era strategy.

Ultimately, it's always about the money. It should be clearly stated that the Army's initial and still primary justification for taking the Apache mission out the Guard was due to the cancellation of the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter, and the need to save money while at the same time fulfilling that mission. It was only later on in the debate that Gen. Odierno began disparaging the National Guard by claiming less readiness and comparing them to second stringers on a football team. Ill-advised as they may be, Odierno's comments are a necessary part of the active duty narrative in order to justify their proposal. In addition to public comments, DoD had been shopping around to Congress a slide presentation titled 'Rationale for Changes in

⁹ Department of Defense, News Transcripts. (2000). Brig. Gen. Hackett updates Army Aviation Modernization Program. Retrieved from <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1156>.

Army National Guard' to justify its proposed cuts to the National Guard. The slides all cited the usual reasons for justifying the Apache move: that the Guard is not as ready, that there are training issues, that Guard's missions weren't as dangerous or demanding as the active components. As we showed earlier in this testimony, some of those arguments may be true when focusing on National Guard units individually, like the three Brigades that failed to make it into theater during Desert Storm, but they are due to the fact that the Guard and Reserve are not fully funded and resourced, and the same folks that criticize reserve readiness, training, and mission complexity are the same ones that deny the reserves the proper budget to train and be fully ready, and are the same ones that decide which missions are going to be assigned to the Guard and Reserve. It's disingenuous to criticize the shortfalls of an organization when those doing the criticism created the situation to begin with.

As the old saying goes, there are two sides to every story. So, for as true as it is that some reserve forces may not be as ready as their active duty brothers and sisters, the real truth is, and always has been, that the reserves can and have achieved the same level of readiness even though they were underfunded and undermanned, and that if they were funded and resourced properly, even at 100%, the Guard and Reserves would still be cheaper than their active counterparts. This is nothing new. The Guard, the Governors, and the organizations that lobby for the National Guard, such as NGAUS, EANGUS, and this labor union, are constantly touting the cost effectiveness of the National Guard. It's true today, and it was true back when we embarked on the Total Force concept. That same 1978 CBO cited earlier noted that 'on a man-for-man basis, [Army National Guard and Reserve forces] are about five times as cheap as active forces. Even with all the readiness improvements discussed in this study, the reserves are unlikely to be more costly on a man-for-man basis. Thus, the more Army reserves that can be included in the active/reserve mix and still accomplish the military mission, the cheaper the mix is likely to be. How many can be included in the mix? That depends on the effectiveness, which in turn depends on the nature of wars they must help fight and whether they can be ready.'¹⁰ The 1978 CBO report also lends credibility to claims made by the recent Commission on the Structure of the Air Force which has recommended that the force mix between active and reserve be increased in favor of the reserves, and that the Air Force transfer as many missions as possible to the reserves. It was hard to argue with the CBO then, and it would be hard to argue with the Commission now.

At this point, this Commission is the only truly objective and unbiased way to ascertain what the Army should look like as we wind down our engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan. It's also the only way to avoid drastic and shortsighted decision making that may be narrowly focused on preserving size and budget dollars, but that does not set us up for success in the years to come. Since the Spanish American War, the US has not been able to enjoy relative peace for period of

¹⁰ Congressional Budget Office, *Improving the Readiness of the Army Reserve and National Guard: A Framework for Debate* (February 1978), p. ix, https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/cbofiles/ftpdocs/113xx/doc11380/1978_02_improving.pdf

more than 15 years between major conflicts. If history is any predictor of the future, we will more than likely be engaged in another war sometime in the early to mid 2020's. We need to be prepared.

The Secret to the National Guard's Success

While we understand that the Commission is tasked with looking at the entire Army, the initial focus of the debate surrounded the proposal to remove the Apache from the National Guard so our focus here primarily concerns this area. After fourteen-plus years of sustained combat operations it is well accepted that the National Guard, especially its Combat Aviation Cadre, performs on par with their Active Duty counterparts and in some instances better, both at home and abroad, in spite of the fact that the Guard is often underfunded, undermanned and underequipped. Even with these documented manning and funding challenges the National Guard has consistently accomplished the mission professionally and honorably, all at a net cost-savings to the US taxpayer. Understanding that the main driver of the Army's proposal is supposedly cost, we believe that the estimated savings (if any) are far outweighed by the overall loss in our collective ability to bring the fight to the enemy as a Total Force.

Completely removing the AH-64 Apache from the National Guard will not be without consequences to our overall fighting ability. While the short term impact of the Army's plan most directly affects those states and communities that currently have Apache Battalions, including AZ, ID, MO, NC, PA, SC, TX, and UT, the Army's proposal to remove Apaches from the National Guard will have far-reaching long-term effects that we believe negatively impact the entire Army Aviation community, to include a degradation of the US Army's overall combat aviation capability. An exodus of this type of aircraft from the National Guard at a minimum sets us back to the days before the Army's Aviation Modernization Plan of 2000. Worst case scenario, our defense posture eventually reverts to the Vietnam-era. The most immediate affect is that the Army plan denies the active component a reserve pool of experienced and qualified combat aviators and maintainers to sustain future combat operations. This reserve pool of personnel is one that the Army has and will continue to heavily rely on whether they want to admit it or not. This statement is not just loose speculation, rather it is based on fact as our examples from the SCARNG demonstrate, and as highlighted by BG Hackett in 2000 in order for Army aviation to maintain a '24-hour' combat capability.

Dismantling National Guard Apache Battalions will essentially eliminate a third of the most experienced Apache aviators and maintainers within the Total Force. Shifting this knowledge and experience out of the Apache community will take years (perhaps decades) to replace, if it can even be replaced. The only way to fill this experience gap without relying on the Guard would be to hire contractors, a move which would more than likely negate some of the savings the Army claims it would experience if their proposal is approved. It is inconceivable that the

most powerful fighting force in the world would deliberately tie one hand behind their back as it readies itself for the mid-21st Century battlefield.

While an Active Duty Battalion has on its payroll over 400 full-time soldiers regardless of whether they are involved in peacetime or combat operations, the Guard maintains the same level of peacetime readiness with a handful of full-time personnel who fly and maintain the entire National Guard fleet. This full-time workforce is composed primarily of two types of personnel categories: a small contingent of approximately 30 Active Guard Reserve (AGR) and a larger force of approximately 85 dual-status technicians. While AGRs are compensated in the same way as their active counterparts, much of the reason for the cost-effectiveness and experience advantage of the Guard can be attributed to the men and women we represent; the small and obscure yet knowledgeable full-time dual-status technician workforce that is on average more experienced than their active duty counterparts by a factor of 10 years or more working and operating the same type of equipment.

Technicians are Federal civil servants who are required to maintain satisfactory reserve membership as a condition of their civilian employment. However, since their primary status is that of a Federal civil servant, the cost to employ a technician is much less than those of an Active Duty (AD) Soldier since, for example, technicians do not receive a tax-exempt housing and food allowance and also have to pay out of pocket for a substantial portion of their health coverage, two of the biggest cost drivers for the active duty force.

Aside from the net payroll savings, the technician personnel themselves are an asset. National Guard technician maintainers and aviators are hired on a full-time basis to maintain and fly Apaches, period, with very limited non-Apache related tasks authorized during their work week. Some of our full-time personnel boast 15, 20, and even 25 years of experience maintaining, driving or flying the same tank, truck, or airframe. This type of in-house knowledge is the backbone of the Guard, and it truly is the secret to our success because in spite of our forces being underfunded, undermanned, and under equipped these are the folks that allow us to continue getting the job done. I challenge you to find this pool of experience anywhere else within the military at such a bargain price. In contrast, aside from being younger and less experienced, AD personnel have multiple distractions which take them off the hangar floor or out of the cockpit throughout their careers. Couple those distractions with less stick/wrench time and what you have is an experience gap that is often times filled by relying on civilian contract support, a hidden cost the Army doesn't openly acknowledge.

This experience factor is something we believe is not being given proper consideration by those who support the Army's proposal. This experience is the lynchpin for the National Guard's ability to accomplish any tasking asked of us at such bargain basement prices. We should not only retain our combat role, especially the AH-64 Apache mission, but this Commission should

seriously consider recommending an increase in the Guard's role as it makes its report to Congress. We propose that if the Army is truly interested in maximizing their return on budgetary investment, it should look into transferring more of that Combat Aviation capability to the Guard.

In addition to the fulltime workforce, Guard units are also augmented by a complement of drill-status guardsmen (DSGs), which are much less costly during peacetime than their AD counterparts since the majority only receives pay for one weekend a month and two weeks of training per year. In addition to the minimum annual training required of all National Guard members, Guard aviators and mechanics can work Additional Flight Training Periods (AFTPs), which is how most DSGs fulfill the same training requirements demanded of their active duty counterparts. Aviators are authorized up to 72 AFTPs per year (mechanics can receive up to 48 AFTPs a year). When you combine drill weekends with annual training and AFTPs, even part time National Guard aviators are able to fly over 110 days per year allowing them to maintain AD-level proficiency. This is in sharp contrast to the 39 days Gen. Odierno previously stated. However, even with the extra flying days, the Guard is still a bargain considering that a typical National Guard pilot earns a third of the flight pay that his/her AD counterpart receives while still maintaining the same level of proficiency. The other factor which Gen. Odierno's myopic 39-day claim fails to take into account is that the majority of Guard aviators also fly for a living. Granted, they may not fly Apaches in a civilian capacity, but many fly in support of petroleum companies, news helicopters, civilian medevac, and law enforcement. The point is even a part-time Apache aviator is still maintaining basic flying proficiencies when not on military duty. This 'real-world' experience is something that is hard to quantify, and something that is also not duplicated within the active duty world because if someone is an active duty Apache pilot then that is all they are. A part-time National Guard pilot who, for example, transports oil workers to/from off-shore rigs brings a set of skills to the table that an active component pilot cannot duplicate. These aviators fly very challenging over-water flight envelopes, primarily at low level, landing on narrow sea-borne platforms surrounded by all types of obstacles, in very heavily congested airspace, and in all manner of weather. Civilian medevac pilots also fly challenging missions, never knowing in advanced where their next destination may be, whether that be an over-water bridge, a mountain side, or a heavily wooded area with visibility impediments caused by weather or other natural events such as fire. How do you quantify that kind of 'real-world' experience?

This is where the rubber meets the road. When you combine the in-house experience advantage with the affordability of the National Guard it makes absolutely no sense for the Army to be pushing us in this drastic direction. Since 1978, study after commissioned study has determined that the National Guard is more affordable, even during wartime, compared to their AD counterparts. A DSG who performs the minimum required yearly duty of one weekend per month plus a 2-week annual training event (39 total days) cost the US taxpayer 85% less than an

AD soldier. Even during periods of full activation a National Guard member costs the US taxpayer 5% - 20% less than their AD counterpart.¹¹ If this is about cost then we suggest the Army stops trying to re-write history by skewing the available data. Those who have studied this issue have consistently arrived at the same conclusion: the National Guard and Reserves, even if fully manned, would still save the US taxpayer money. With recent history showing that Guard units are just as capable (if not more) than their AD counterparts one has to wonder why the Army has chosen to go down this path, especially one that reverses decades of progress under Total Force.

In Closing

Put bluntly, the Army's proposal to transfer Apaches out of the National Guard is as shortsighted as the Air Force's plan to permanently ground the A-10. To use the Army's own words, the plan is 'risky and irreversible.' Interestingly enough, Gen. Odierno wants the Air Force to keep the A-10 flying regardless of whether they are operated by active or reserve units. It seems he doesn't mind a National Guard A-10 pilot keeping his troops safe...go figure.

Both plans have been halted pending further review, but knowing that both the AH-64 and A-10 proposals received preliminary approval from top Pentagon brass is a bit disconcerting. Simply put, if Congress allowed either plan to move forward it would have set back front-line combat aviation by at least two decades, and would have hindered our overall ability to fight ground wars in the future. While the A-10 and AH-64 are good at killing the enemy, their true value is that they save American lives on the battlefield, and there's really no price that can be put on that.

The fact is the current state of our overall fighting force, meaning Active, Guard and Reserve combined, while not perfect, is the most ready and capable it has ever been because of the balance of active and reserve forces it provides. The lethality of our fighting force across the full spectrum of operations is due in no small part to how well Guard and Reserve assets have been integrated into the overall military structure of US combat forces based on the hard lessons learned during the Cold War, and Vietnam in particular. In order to understand how far we've come, and how damaging the current proposal is, you have to go back in time.

Over a decade of combat and two wars later, one should feel comfortable saying that not only can the Guard and Reserve help fight our wars, but that they are also integral parts of the Total Force defense strategy implemented after the disasters of the Vietnam War; that they have allowed the United States to successfully prevent further terrorist attacks at home and abroad;

¹¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, Report to Congress, *Unit Cost And Readiness For The Active And Reserve Components Of The Armed Forces* (December 2013), pg. 3., <http://www.ngaus.org/sites/default/files/CAPE%20FINAL%20ACRCMixReport.pdf>

that they have repeatedly answered the call to duty on numerous occasions; that they have successfully performed missions ranging from mundane to extremely specialized often side by side and sometimes without the help of their active duty counterparts; that they have simultaneously responded to emergencies back home (something the active duty cannot readily or legally say); and that they have paid the ultimate price right alongside their active duty brothers and sisters, all while being underfunded, under resourced, and at a fraction of the cost of the full time force. The time has come for the Army to embrace the Guard and Reserve, once and for all. We're here to stay.

I would like to thank each of you for the opportunity to present this testimony, and commend you for taking on such a hard task. At this time I will answer any questions that you may have.

Thank You

