

**THE COMMISSION ON
THE NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVES**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2006

**10:30 AM -12:30 PM TRAINING UNIT
TRAINING OFFICERS**

WITNESSES:

**MAJOR THOMAS FRILOUX, URNG, 3rd BATTALION, 156TH
INFANTRY, LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

**MAJOR DAVID OWEN, USMC, 2ND BATTALION, 24TH MARINE
REGIMENT, 4TH MARINE DIVISION**

**MAJOR CHRISTOPHER F. FOXX, USAR, DIVISION
MAINTENANCE OFFICER, 108TH HQ (DIVIT), CHARLOTTE, NC**

*Transcript by:
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

ARNOLD L. PUNARO: We'll continue our exploration of reserve and guard training with a panel of battalion training officers. General Stone and Colonel Blain have given us a solid overview of the reserve component training issues they grapple with on a daily basis in preparing mobilized soldiers and Marines for deployment. They must often deal with issues that could've been addressed in pre-activation training that become even more problematic in preparing an increasingly operational reserve force to fulfill mission requirements.

For the second panel, we will hear from the battalion officers responsible for pre-activation training in order to get their inputs on the challenges they face, including units with equipment shortfalls. Tomorrow we'll complete the picture when we hear from their battalion commanders. For this panel we welcome Major Christopher Foxx, 812th Transportation Corps Battalion, Army Reserve; Major Thomas Friloux, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry, Louisiana Army National Guard; and Major David Owen, 2nd Battalion, 24th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division. Each of you has an extraordinarily important difficult job in today's environment and we ask you to candidly give us the benefits of your expertise and experience.

The commission needs a more complete understanding of the training challenges you face. For example are there too many competing demands for limited training hours? Are there an insufficient number of days to meet training requirements? What is the quality of the training environment itself? What about the age and quality of equipment or lack of equipment? If you feel more training days are required to achieve radius objective, how would this be accepted by service members, their families and employers? We welcome your perspective on how pre-activation training and equipping policies could be improved to get maximum returnable training time invested and just the day-to-day challenges of being a battalion training officer in today's operational reserve.

A number of us here on the commission have served in your jobs, we've been battalion training officers ourselves and so we were particular anxious, as we have been throughout our hearings, to hear from the people that have the direct responsibilities for making things happen, individuals like yourselves. We on the commission now that all wisdom does not reside in Washington and so we're out in the field trying to get the candid inputs because if we're going to make good recommendations about the future, we need good candid input up front, we need to know what the problems are, and we know that at your level you overcome multiple problems every day. Again, many of us have served in similar capacities.

So thank you again for being here this morning and without objection any detailed prepared statements will be placed in the record and I guess we'll just kind of start with Major Owen and go in that direction.

So, Major Owen?

MAJOR DAVID OWEN: Thank you, sir, and just to clarify because I brought my statement in this morning, do you want me to just go ahead and move through that or did you want to move on to question and answer?

MR. PUNARO: No, go ahead and make your presentation.

MAJ. OWEN: Thank you. Gentlemen you probably have my presentation in front of you. Just to follow a little bit what 2/24 did – overview – it got activated in 1 June of '04, deployed to Camp Pendleton for the ILOC (ph) training from June to mid-September of '04 and then to Iraq in mid-September. Initially chopped OPCON to 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit in south Baghdad where today I believe the 101st Second Brigade combat team is. Our mission was, as most is, to conduct full spectrum counterinsurgency operations.

Kind of a unique history for us. During our deployment there, and Lieutenant Colonel Smith will put his commander's piece on this when you talk to him, but we had a unique history in the fact that we had multiple higher headquarters during the period while we were there first working for 24th MEU, which is a non-standard configuration some of you may know. They normally command and control one battalion. Been working for 2nd Brigade Combat Team from 1st CAVDIV, then 5th Brigade Combat Team also 1st CAVDIV, and then the 256th Brigade combat team, which is an enhanced separate battalion out of Louisiana.

Moving on to what I saw as the general issues as listed in the information I was provided, the first issue that was addressed was how was the battalion trained and equipped prior to activation. I know we've talked about training in blocks and I'll reference that later, but just to give a quick snapshot, our focus of training with the time allowed was primarily on the conventional or what was called block three warfare a lot of times. We did do limited security and stability operations training, also limited operations-other-than-war training and some amount of training – however, I want to highlight that as being one of our shortfalls partly driven by limitations of facilities.

Our typical training cycle for the year was that the first quarter we'd focus on the individual skills; second quarter focus on the collective skills, to include more staff training; third quarter, unit proficiency which again included a battalion staff planning for the annual training period as well as a battalion fire support exercise focused on bringing the whole battalion together within that. The fourth quarter of the fiscal year was typically when we did our annual training, addressed family readiness issues and more or less in a pre-deployment process. Of course, any of this was subject to manipulation during scheduling of ranges and the annual training schedule.

With regard to equipment, there were shortfalls within all the functional areas. Many of those shortfalls were really in my mind tied to material readiness. And what that means is oftentimes we had the equipment on hand but due to supply priority where we were at within the training cycle we weren't able to bring that equipment up and fully

use it. So instead of perhaps the company level having three Humvees available, they may have had one. And, again, we had the people to fix them, but we may have not had parts due to the current supply priority we had.

General issue number two: deficiencies that need to be addressed after activation and how successful our pre-deployment training process was. Again, keeping in mind that I'm looking at this primarily from a training perspective with regard to operations, but I did put it into what we see the typical categories of S1 through 6. So in administration or S1, personnel movement and accountability was an area we emphasized and needed training. Within intelligence or S2 intelligence systems, to include analyst notebook and the Marine Corps' every Marine a collector program. Within operations systems to include MDACT, C2PC, Blue Force Tracker, CPOF, FBCB2 and AFATDS, information operations, CMO, MOUT (ph), SASO, fire support, supported attacks, defensive operations, mounted/dismounted patrolling, company commandpost operations, time sensitive targeting, weapons proficiency, and language and culture training with logistics sustainment operations, convoy operations, driver training, engineering construction statements of work. Within communications, the PRC-117, PSC-5, the MBITR, and again what are essentially operation systems but or maintained by the communicators – the MDACT, C2PC et cetera, network integration at a much higher level that our communicators were used to and SMART-T and radio retransmission procedures.

Continuing general issue two, gentlemen, and I wont belabor all the details but I think if you get a chance to look at the information I've assembled we did through our pre-deployment training process addressed all of what we saw as training shortfalls; again, adopting very much a train as you fight concept for movement control in everything that we did at Camp Pendleton and beyond. There was a lot of hard work and some creativity that went into that. For example, in the statement provided by the general previously reference Desert Talon as part of MOTS (ph). Our forward air controllers and our 81mm mortar platoon took place in that for about 21 days. That wasn't a standard training package it was set up; it was training that they sought.

We also saw, due again to lack of facilities and also competing requirements from other units working at Camp Pendleton, training in an urban environment out in town with the local community as well as coming down here to the San Diego area and using Stu Segall's (ph) strategic operations to essentially provide a nine-day package of what we called hyper-realistic training, which included although not complete structures at least the facades of buildings to create an Iraqi village, mules, chickens, Iraqi role-players, et cetera, much along the lines of what you see now at a much grander scale at JRTC.

So continuing, again, we did address these issues within our training. Language and culture training I will say in particular was one thing that started early and was continuous. It started before the activation the mobilization period and continued through the ILOC training and I think generally was a success. With regard to adjusting the logistics issues, we did go through the 1st Marine Division convoy course for convoy

operations. Again, driver training is something that I don't know where we're at today, again with me returning 2005 from our deployment, but I think we provided unrealistic driver training for Marines and soldiers going over into theater and that is a reference fact that our driver course is essentially administrative in nature and if you'd like to discuss that point, I'd be glad to.

Engineering and statements of work: our engineering officer that was later attached was familiar to that. It's something that fell apart S4 quite often due to manpower challenges and we had to get tuned into. With communications, again, programs were provided within the (method of ?) division to bring our folks up to speed and we provided our own internal training programs. However, some systems such as Blue Force Tracker, FBCB2 and CPOF we did not get any training on. That is to be somewhat understood, as those are not systems that the Marine Corps at the time was using, particularly CPOF. And again network integration and SMART-T was challenged by getting to use those assets in theater.

General issue number three: how could pre-activation equipment training policies be improved to optimize time spent on essential training and minimize time spent mobilized but not deployed? With regard to the pre-activation equipment policy, I think that assuring all equipment was all on hand no later than one year prior to activation is essential. For us with some small items – individual items such as the ACOG (ph), which for those of you who aren't familiar is an aiming device for the M16, we got less than one-third of the complement that we were going to see to train on and we received that several weeks before deploying and put everybody through a training package. That may have been addressed since now. Again, that was in August of 2004. But material readiness – again, supporting pre-deployment non-ILOC training so that all the equipment that the unit has is up and ready to go to train as if you're going to go to war because you can get a lot more out of it in that manner. And the correlation of that is again increasing the supply priority, which to me does have a direct correlation to funding – a question that was asked earlier.

With regard to the pre-activation training policy, as much as we can train as we fight, increase hyper-realistic training, which is again being referred to here by the training commands as far as being able to immerse Marines in the proper environment. Just conceptually I'll introduce something that we thought may have been a benefit, which would be a quarterly drill period being progressive in nature somewhat more consistent with affording more time to train. There are some pluses and minuses to that, so I'm not advocating that this is a solution that is ready to go primetime, but in our mid one of the challenges – and you'll see I speak to later – is always time. And depending on where the reserve unit is and what is the training facility they'll use is located, you may spend one-half of your time or maybe even up to two-thirds of your time traveling and doing administrative things vice training. And for other units, it may be the other way around if they're very close: they may spend two-thirds of their time training and one-third in travel and administration. But we do think that the quarterly drill period would afford for more unit cohesion and allow for greater training objectives to be accomplished.

Continuing with that essential training time versus minimal mobilized non-deployed time the approach we took to everything that was a quality of life, of family readiness was a function of overall readiness, a big part of which was training. In other words, if a Marine was well prepared, well informed, well trained to do his job that generally speaking things were going well at home and he was ready to execute.

The mobilization dates ought to be set based on a rotation date into theater and we would recommend minus 120 days for ILOC training with a minimum of 90 days. We think that our 90-day training period that we accomplished at Camp Pendleton did the battalion very well, but only add that we didn't see training in Kuwait as a substitute for anything. We see it as a pre-combat rehearsal. And just to put it in that in mind because sometimes it's a thing that's referred to as if you can't accomplish that, you may be able to accomplish it on an IDARI (ph) range.

Specific issues from the commission: what prevents reserve component units from being fully trained prior to mobilization. A few issues: one that effects cohesiveness, personal turbulence that's been addressed again previously. Approximately 40 percent shortfall of officers for our unit upon mobilization, which limits some continuity and provides for a variety of experience levels and professional military education. Equipment: again, material readiness really being the issue because if you don't have the material readiness, you end up with some unrealistic alternative solutions but the training will get accomplished. Time: again, tied to the concept of possibly looking at quarterly drill periods. Training time can be maximized if we can somehow limit the travel time and the administrative time associated with it. In any environment, fourth generation warfare is very complex so there's a need to adapt training to direct assessment of the enemy TTPs and better prepare Marines and soldiers.

How would we change the 39-day training model is specific issue number two from the commission. Potentially we see the current 39-day period as sufficient. I don't think is sufficient to train Marines or soldiers to go to war directly from the reserve centers or National Guard centers, but sufficient to focus on some of the skills. We accept the challenges of fourth generation warfare or asymmetrical warfare that examine the quarterly drill periods, look at the progressiveness, the possibility, do a detailed study, and then execute to the maximum degree possible having done a few annual training overseas when available to maintain theater focus, global engagement exercise, the full deployment process for both the units and the families. Continuing with that, again, as I alluded to before, you'll see the first quarter through fourth quarter to include annual training period focusing on the block skills of one through four.

As part of this, at least a recommendation that we see for MARFORRES with possibly all the services take a look at would be to establish it an asymmetric warfare center of excellence really much along the lines of what's being done at JRTS, Mojave Viper, NTC. But this would not be part of the certification process for pre-deployment which is essentially what's being done at those locations now. This will be part of the annual training process in our rotational basis to put our units through that. So in other

words, it would be within the Title Ten responsibility of the units to organize, train, and equip and then provide those forces to the geographical combatant commanders with the service chiefs certifying that through whatever appropriate exercise program they have.

Again, they have a staff available for training during the spring quarter and prior to annual training. Six of nine battalions, at least for the Marine Corps Reserve, could train during the fiscal year potentially and the following year would be focused on the third generation warfare skill set at annual training.

Challenges for that, employer and family support for this training concept. I think the employer support again could come with the right policies put in place and that family support is as much tied to knowing what's ahead and being well informed. Certainly, they would to lose a spouse for a week every three months, but at the same they would recoup two weekends out of the year. There are some other ideas we have with regard to benefits, but we see that one of the key things is education of the service members, their families, and the employers.

Next specific issue as far as the commission had, which is where was time wasted in pre-activation training and pre-deployment training and why? Within pre-activation training travel time to and from training areas and facilities, again, limits what you're able to do, so I see that as a real drain on time. Individual skills training such as language, culture, PME limitations that many things – and many of our Marines did step forward – we need to get accomplished in that pre-deployment period outside of mobilization is voluntary. And just Marines just by their profession are limited in what they can do, but there are other means, some of which are already being pursued, such as virtual training via webcam for language and cultural training. As much tied to that, too, where we can provide a qualification or something that really counts to the service member that he can add to his background as well. And at attendance of pre-activation annual training we chose to move our annual training up so we would have another full training period prior to the actual training at the ILOC and we couldn't garnish full attendance just because of the student population that we had, which is an issue you just have to deal with.

As far as pre-deployment training went again travel due to limited facilities specifically MOUT, we saw at every term places to train. We worked with the community. We worked with contract training and made it work. But each time we had to travel from Camp Pendleton, that was an increase in time that was wasted. Overall, however, we really maximized time at every turn. Within the 90-day training period, we worked seven days of week averaging 14 to 18 hours days. We did allocate a leave period during there, but we saw that leave period as essential to both providing for some family time prior to deployment as well as preventing training burnout.

Specific issue number four says how can this be prevented in the future; in other words, reference how can we prevent wasting time. With regard to pre-activation training, I see an increase in training time at areas and facilities if we can maximize training time as well as maximize the attendance of our combat support units within that

same training period I think that the time would be more suited to what we want to do. Individual skills training, I've spoken to that, again I think we can pursue some other venues, particularly in the technology age and redesign the training concepts.

With regard to preventing waste of time with the pre-deployment training period, I think providing a training and support cadre to the activated units much the same as you already have that exists at the training centers, but there are issues that come up within both the support aspect as well as the training aspect that leveraging a cadre just to support the unit whether that comes from within the division or whatever the case is would be of great benefit to those units.

Continue to leverage seven days a week training capability. One of the challenges aboard the active duty installations as a trainer if you're going to work seven days a week is that folks don't work on the weekends so unlike a typical experience on a reserve weekend where we would travel to, say, Camp Edinburgh (ph) in Indiana or Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, the tremendous support mechanisms on those weekends within those bases because those are guard and reserve installations. We ran into some challenges and I don't know if these gentlemen had the same but as far as garnishing that support on the weekends.

Again, reduce travel from the ILOC to outline training sites where at all possible and increase theater-specific MOUT training infrastructure across the Department of Defense to support everything from squad to brigade combat team-sized operations. A focus on regional mobilization support bases, and just to emphasize in there that there's already a JROC or a joint requirements oversight council memorandum from 2004 that states the need for improved urban training facilities.

Gentlemen, that concludes my brief subject to your questions.

MR. PUNARO: Thanks.

Major Foxx?

MAJOR CHRISTOPHER FOXX: Chairman, distinguished guests of the panel, I want to thank you for allowing me to be here this morning. I am Major Christopher Foxx. I was the battalion support operations officer for a medium transportation battalion in Charlotte, North Carolina. We deployed on Operation Iraqi Freedom II. The unit with mobilized active duty on 11 December '03 and moved to MOB station at Fort Stewart on 14 December '03. The unit validated late January of 2004 and arrived in theater on 13 February. Our initial mission was to provide transportation support to coalition forces and also to manage and control Camp Navistar, which was a convoy support center on the Iraqi border; also to handle anti-terrorism force protection of Camp Navistar to also include the coalition crossing force – all southbound convoys coming out of Iraqi theater of operations.

Sir, you have my opening statements, so I won't read verbatim. I will hit the highlights. In regard to the first commission had about the type of training that was taking place prior to activation, overall the readiness of our battalion prior to activation was a C-1. The majority of the companies were also trained and prepared with the exception of one transportation company that was originally stripped of all personnel due to cross-leveling of all the leadership and the truck drivers – 88 Mikes. That unit was later activated and required cross-leveling also. That presented a problem in training in personnel. Those individuals were brought away from home far distances and therefore a lot of personnel issues had to be taken care of prior to movement to MOB station.

I would like to see more guidance and standards established directing all units to possibly conduct soldier readiness, doing battle sims, to include perhaps a three-day SRP to address those problems. I'm not arguing against cross-leveling, but it goes along with the taking care of the administrative and personnel issues prior to mobilization and it tends to impact more heavily on cross-level soldiers because they're away from their families. The family support system sort of breaks down because they are thinking they're going to be deployed with their hometown unit and now they're being cross-leveled to units with great distances. So if you have a shortage of personnel, there's all the impacts on family support.

And going on to the pre-deployment training program was successful in correcting most of these deficiencies once the soldier's personnel issues were resolved and they were available to train through the mobilization process. Personnel readiness and time allocation was the largest prevention to the reserve units being fully trained prior to mobilization. A lot of administrative requirement that has to get done doing battle assemblies. We'd like to see a process where we could put more emphasis on taking care of all the administrative requirements that have to be done during the battle assemblies – important things, not downplaying the importance of administration and personnel stuff, but training focus should be paramount in taking care of those things in the early part of the battle assemblies. Devoting the two-week annual training period to individual soldier tasks and then devoting collective tasks during mobilization to wrap it all up for quick deployment to alleviate the time mobilizing and not deployed.

And lastly, sir, finally the post-mobilization process during my team was adequate. The opportunity for improvement as I see it is at the unit level before mobilization. The current priority that must be changed is administrative requirements. Training must be the priority and support to accomplish this must be in place before units are able to reset for future deployments. I think the mobilization process went well.

One thing you have to understand is that prior to activation with the CSS units, it's a different environment over in Iraq that came about after OAF1 (ph). We didn't have the threat of IEDs, small arms fire, so the mobilization platforms did a great job in addressing those threats to our convoys. We've made great success. We have the virtual convoy combat training system now, so great improvements being made, but I just think we need to put more focus on training readiness and to take care of the administrative areas and personnel areas, and I think we've made great improvements on that. Since my

deployment in the first Gulf War, we've made marked improvements on soldier readiness but it's a changing environment for convoy operations and I think we're doing a great job in addressing that but we still need to continue.

The 39-day training cycle I think is adequate. I agree with Major Owens. It's just that we have to I think prioritize the administrative requirements to allow time for essential training. And that pretty much wraps it up, sir. I won't belabor this, but you have my statement there.

MR. PUNARO: Did you say that 39 days was adequate or inadequate?

MAJ. FOXX: Adequate.

MR. PUNARO: Adequate, okay.

Major Friloux?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir. General Punaro and other distinguished members of the commission, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to appear today before the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves as a representative of the Army National Guard.

The global war on terror, along with catastrophic natural disasters within the last year has transformed the Army National Guard from a strategic reserve for the Cold War to an operational reserve that regularly deploys to support both its federal and state missions. The Army National Guard of today has the most experienced in combat operations and homeland defense since the Second World War.

The 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment of the 256th Infantry Brigade, Louisiana Army National Guard, returned in September 2005 from an 18-month mobilization in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III, which included a one-year deployment to Baghdad, Iraq. The battalion was tasked – organized in Iraq into Task Force 3-156 Infantry with the mission to conduct full-spectrum operations within the multinational force division Baghdad area of responsibility, and that included combat operations, humanitarian assistance, and stability and support operations. The Task Force conducted both combined and joint operations with active Army and National Guard combat units, joint special operations units, active and reserve component Marine Corps units, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi police, and other Iraqi security forces.

Upon our redeployment from Iraq back to Louisiana, some members of the battalion were thrust in to another fight: military support to civilian authorities in response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. The battalion was again task organized into a task force to provide security and local assistance to local law enforcement and humanitarian assistance for three Louisiana parishes affected by Hurricane Rita.

I had the privilege to serve as the operations officer of the 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment during pre-mobilization, post-mobilization, deployment, redeployment, and post-deployment operations. This experience allows me to provide you with details on the issues that prevent reserve competent units from being fully trained prior to mobilization, the effectiveness of the current 39-day training model for reserve component units prior to mobilization, issues during pre-mobilization and post-mobilization regarding training and equipping, and recommendations to avoid previous issues during future mobilizations.

Pre-mobilization readiness. The current 39-day training model used by reserve component forces does not allow maneuver combat units in the Army National Guard to be fully trained for combat prior to mobilization, but the model does allow National Guard combat formations to meet established expectations prior to mobilization. These expectations include proficiency in combat maneuver units at the platoon level, proficiency in combat service support units at the company level, and fully proficient battle staffs at the brigade and battalion levels.

Increasing the expectation of reserve component units prior to mobilization will require additional resources in funding and training. In 2004 prior to mobilization, the full-time unit support personnel in my battalion were funded at only 25 personnel, which is 60 percent of a required 42 full-time personnel. Today after mobilization for OIF III, transformation of the unit, and a foreseeable future of deployments for both federal and state missions, we have witnessed a decrease in our full-time manning support. We are now funded at 55 percent. There are 26 out of a required 48 personnel.

My experience has taught me that full-time manning directly correlates to unit readiness. The Army Force Generation model provides, or ARFORGEN, provides additional assistance in decreasing the necessary training time from mobilization to deployment. The ARFOGEN model for the Army National Guard allows five focused training years from reset following a deployment to future mobilization. Additional training funds are necessary with the model to increase yearly training days as the unit gets closer to mobilization.

The 39-day training model. The current 39-day training model for reserve components is a dinosaur of the strategic reserve force. As I've stated, the model does allow units to meet established expectations prior to mobilization, but these expectations are for a strategic reserve force and far below what is necessary for the minimal post-mobilization train-up for an operational reserve. The 39-day training model allows for 15 days of active duty training and 14 days of inactive duty training divided into monthly drill periods.

The current model allows units to meet yearly individual soldier training requirements and limited leader and collective tasks training. Increases in the number of funded active duty training days and inactive duty training days will increase the mobilization expectation of a unit. An increase of active duty training days from 15 days to 21 days would allow combat maneuver units to increase their collective task training

and gain proficiency at the company level as opposed to the platoon level. Increases in the number of authorized inactive duty training or drill days allows for focused leader training to support the collective task training.

The ARFORGEN model takes these considerations into account. In the model, training years immediately following redeployment used a 39-day training model and focused on unit reset and individual soldier proficiency. As the unit gets closer to the mobilization year, increases in inactive duty days and active duty training day periods are authorized to support additional leader and collective tasks training. These additional days must be funded in order for the ARFORGEN model to work and allow minimal post-mobilization train up.

Pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training and equipping: bottom line up front, Task Force 3-156 Infantry was fully trained and equipped for full spectrum operations when it assumed responsibility of its area of operations north of Baghdad, Iraq, in mid-November, 2004. The process to get there from mobilization in May 2004 to deployment in October, 2004, was both long and inefficient in the pre-mobilization and post-mobilization phases.

During pre-mobilization, the decision to mobilize the battalion as a wheeled infantry unit without an official table of organization and equipment and not as mechanized infantry unit as organized with an approved modified table of organization and equipment caused the unit to spend much of its valuable pre-mobilization time creating a unit and then reorganizing available personnel and equipment into it. Additionally, almost three months after the March 2004 alert and less than a week prior to mobilization in May 2004, the battalion MTO&E was changed again when it was tasked to mobilize one company as mechanized infantry.

Equipment shortages were also an issue during pre-mobilization. Many critical pieces of equipment, such as crew-served weapon systems and night vision devices, were laterally transferred to other mobilizing Louisiana Army National Guard units and other mobilizing Army National Guard units across the country. All M240-B machineguns in the battalion were laterally transferred to the 39th Brigade, Arkansas Army National Guard, in February 2004, for their deployment to OIF II, one month prior to the alert of my unit for mobilization. The loss of these critical pieces of equipment during the pre-mobilization phase would haunt the unit throughout post-mobilization training.

Training during the unit's post-mobilization at Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Irwin, California, was effective in its end state of producing a fully combat ready unit, but long and inefficient in method. Training was conducted on tasks already trained and documented during the training year, such as individual weapons qualification and common task training. Collective task training did not accurately reflex the tasks being conducted in Iraq. Too much emphasis was placed on collective tasks for CSS units such as convoy operation and convoy live fire exercises and not enough emphasis was placed on maneuver unit collective tasks such as steady state operations, cordon and search operations, humanitarian assistance, and cultural awareness.

The tactics, techniques, and procedures for force protection such as counter-IED operations and presence patrols taught at the mobilization station were not the same tactics, techniques, and procedures used daily in the combat theater. An informational link between the power projection platform and the combat units in theater was not evident.

New equipment training and replacement training was not frontloaded in post-mobilization training; it was a training distracter during valuable collective task training time. The battalion had to schedule weapon ranges throughout the post-mobilization rain up to qualify soldiers and crews on newly issued weapons such as M-240-B machine guns, M-107 sniper rifles, and M-500 shotguns. Equipment shortages during training were most significant during the mission rehearsal exercise at Fort Irwin, California. A significant portion of the unit's equipment was shipped to Kuwait just prior to the exercise at Fort Irwin. The unit conducted task force level operations with one company's amount of vehicles. Subordinate companies were constantly cross-leveling vehicles throughout the exercise to accomplish assigned tasks. Battalion-level steady state operations were not possible to rehearse.

Recommendations for future mobilizations: issues faced during pre-mobilization and post-mobilization training can be addressed with the following recommendations. First, fully adopt the ARFORGEN model as currently designed. This model will increase training, funding, and assets to units approaching a mobilization window and will produce a unit at a higher level of combat proficiency once mobilized.

Second, mobilize a unit as currently organized with its approved table of organization and equipment. The transformation of the entire U.S. Army into a modular force is ongoing and will assist in avoiding creation of organizations just prior to mobilization.

Third, the validation authority at the power projection platform needs to accept and validate training conducted prior to mobilization by the mobilized unit. The ARFORGEN model will enable units to reach higher levels of combat proficiency during pre-mobilization. Training during post-mobilization should not start at lower levels of training.

And last, a direct link between the power projection platform and the theater combat commanders must exist before and during post-mobilization training. The tactics, techniques, and procedures are very fluid in theater and lessons learned by units in combat must be immediately forwarded to inbound units to allow for an adjustment to training, as necessary.

In conclusion, the 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment mobilized, conducted post-mobilization training, deployed to Baghdad, Iraq, and conducted full-spectrum operations during OIF III in order to assist in the establishment of a democratic Iraq. The

unit was fully trained to conduct its mission and successful in all assigned tasks. The road to war was long, painful, but effective.

Thanks for allowing me to be here today. It's my honor and privilege to offer my training experience and insight to this commission as it considers changes to the training approach and future roles of the Army National Guard. It is my pleasure to answer your questions at this time.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. The testimony of all of you will be extremely helpful. Let me make sure before I ask my questions that I've got each of your statuses correct. Major Owen, I sort of detect from your bio you're an active duty Marine, correct?

MAJ. OWEN: That's correct.

MR. PUNARO: And you were basically assigned as the inspector instructor for company F, 2/24. Were you a captain then or a major?

MAJ. OWEN: No, sir, I was a major.

MR. PUNARO: You were a major, and so when the battalion was called up, you fleeted up to be the OPSO for the battalion, is that correct?

MAJ. OWEN: That's correct, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Was that part of the 4th Marine Division's preplanned INI (ph) integration or was that just kind of happenstance?

MAJ. OWEN: No, sir, that occurred due to officer manning shortfalls within the battalion. The battalion did have an S3 at the time that was a reserve member and just as we went through the process we did some reorganization within the staff. We had some shortfalls in the S4 and due to the fact I had some more operational experience I became the S3 and the S3 went to the S4.

MR. PUNARO: Great, thanks. I mean, I think that was – I assume from the inspector instructor model you have all these active duty Marines, some of which are integrated on the TOs of the 4th Marine Division and immediately called up. Others, like yourself, are available when you have shortfalls or less experience than you need, correct?

MAJ. OWEN: Yes, sir, there's no set model per se. Typically, prior to the INIs that were available were sourced to the MEF or to division, but typically outside the battalion. However, in this case because of already having a consistent working relationship within the battalion an investment in the Marines and their families, a fight was made to keep us within the battalion and it was successfully done, so actually all five inspector-instructors were integrated, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Good. Major Foxx, what about you? You are a pure Army reservist?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir, I am.

MR. PUNARO: What is your civilian job?

MAJ. FOXX: I am a chief probation parole officer for the state of North Carolina.

MR. PUNARO: And you currently back in your civilian capacity?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, I am.

MR. PUNARO: How about you, Major.

MAJ. OWEN: Sir, I'm an AGR soldier – full time active duty Army National Guard.

MR. PUNARO: So guard technician, or tell me again?

MAJ. OWEN: It's active duty, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Active duty.

MAJ. OWEN: Yes, sir, AGR program.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, nothing unusual about any of this. This is the mix of having full-time people and the reservists. We find, I know in the Marine Corps in particular, the INI system, in particular the full time support in the guard is very essential to have people even to the readiness levels you're able to get in the reserves.

I want to really kind of zero in on this training issue because both General Stone and Colonel Blain, the two principal training commands for the Army and the Marine Corps – it was not surprising to me and I'm sure none of the other commissioners when they say they'd like to see the reserve and guard have a lot more training when they're in their inactive duty status, their weekends and their two weeks. And they suggested on the order of 90 days. We didn't really zero in to find out how much of that they would do during just inactive duty or they would do pre-mob, but I mean about 90 days, which is substantially higher than the level of training that we're able to provide today based on the way the model works.

Major Owen, you made I thought a very innovative suggestion about a quarterly training program where you would come in and I think we all know, and maybe the general public doesn't know that our guards and reserve personnel, some of them are luck

to be able to live in their hometown and drill in a unit that's right in their hometown, but many of them travel long distances to be in the various units they want to be in. And also, if you want to have a career in the guard and reserve, you're going to need to move around and you're going to need to move to different units and they travel far distances.

And of course you've already pointed out the fact that a lot of our units are not co-located with any major training areas and so you've got a lot of down time in transportation in getting to those units. So you're coming in late on a Friday and you're either bussing them or whatever through the night and you've got a days worth of training and you're lucky if you're going to get a couple of hours Sunday morning when you've got to be bussing them back to the drill center because they've all got to go home and go to work or go back to school Monday morning.

So a quarterly training thing you could basically concentrate, get them there, really maximize the use of the training. Now, my question is going to be about both the concept of concentrating their drills as well as increasing the amount of training time. Let's don't think about whether that's the right thing to do or not or the right model to do, how would it be received by the drilling reservists? I mean, that's the key because if you're going to sustain an operational reserve, the "poobahs" at the high levels, the training experts in TRADOC and Marine Corps Training Command, and the commanders of the NTC and 29 Palms, they can wish all they want about how they'd like to see it done, but it's got to be supported by the people that are going to be our citizen-soldiers, airmen, Marines, coastguardsmen and their families and their employers.

So you all have extensive experience, and I'm not talking about when 2/24 gets told, you guys are going to go to Iraq and we know that the morale is high – I'm just talking about, now, let's talk about a steady state in a long war that you heard General Stone describe as generational, and that's generally the conventional wisdom – very intense, so we're not going to go back to the way it used to be when the reserves were strategic. We're not going to see those days again. So we're going to be in this increased operational tempo for our active forces and our guard and reserve forces. The threats at home are increasingly higher. I believe the guard and the reserve are going to be used more at home.

So I'm talking about – you don't have to agree with me but I'm saying that's what my postulation is, so what is the receptivity of your drilling reservists to the idea that they may be faced with sort of three things: one, increased training that's not tied to a specific mobilization but makes that unit more ready if and when they get mobilized with the understanding they're probably going to be mobilized more often than they were in the '80s and early '90s. And, three, then how receptive would they be to this concentrated training block? I know it's kind of a lengthy question and maybe be overly complicated, but I think that's really the heart of dealing with it.

So, Major Owen, we'll start with you.

MAJ. OWEN: Thank you, sir. I started this conversation, I suppose, with the concept. We initially introduced the idea that within 2/24 prior to knowing that we would be mobilized; again, to try to increase the training time. And without a fully developed plan I can tell you it was probably about an even split between, hey, this is a great idea and, gee, I don't know. And so I think without a fully developed concept to include what are the benefits going to be for the employer, for the family, for the military service member, we don't know exactly where we're at.

I know that the primary concern of my officer population was the impact it would have on their employer. I think that, again, that could be addressed by a combination of policy and education, but certainly that was one aspect. I think from the family aspect when we're asked those questions I think it would have been positively received as far as, again, you're gaining two weekends back out of any quarter. You lose the member for a week and, again, until you do some type of test bed it's hard to assess the complete impact of that. Does that mean daycare now for the spouse if the husband isn't available? Do they work alternating shifts?

Certainly, the strength of the program – although we do have members as you alluded to that travel across the country to come drill depending on what their billet is, is the fact that for the most part for the units their family is in that hometown where they're from, so they do have a better support network in some cases – not all – than what you would see for example of a young service member who has been displaced from his home in Indiana and is now stationed somewhere in the southeastern United States with a young bride and first child.

So I think there's some complexities, but I think until we do some full development and then a test bed for analysis I think it's still a viable concept.

MR. PUNARO: What about the idea that people that are in the reserve and guard are going to have to do more than what they've typically done in the past in terms of training? Forget whether it's quarterly or monthly, but what's the receptivity to having to do more training time? I'm not, again, talking about mobilization.

MAJ. OWEN: If I understood your question, sir, you're talking about an increase over the 39-day period? Okay, we had not explored that; however, I do think there would be some potential – how do I describe it properly – I don't think it would be received as well, I think, as possibly a modification. It is demanding. As an active duty member, one of the things I've noticed about my time with the reserve component – it is what I called the truly the all-volunteer force. They sacrifice a lot to come and perform their duties, as we all do, but I was really impressed by what they're able to do and as they manage some of them getting out of drill at 18:00 on a Sunday and going to work that night. I was very impressed with the level of dedication. And I don't know – and perhaps the other two gentlemen do – to what degree we could increase that without having some retention problems.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Major Foxx?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir. Well, I think it's a universal issue, just like Major Owen said. It won't be received well with the family in – (unintelligible). I concur with that. Soldiers – I think it can be accomplished. I think after the deployment the soldiers who want to maintain their status in the reserves – I think they're here and they want to be trained, it goes back to what I said before: taking care of the personnel issues, administrative. I think we make training top priority. I think it's something that can be accomplished – an additional week on annual training for additional training. I think it can be accomplished on the side of the reserves. The issue would be the employer and the family members. Family members are sensitive with the deployment of National guard and reserve soldiers now; employers are also. That would be the hurdle I see with the soldiers. It it's mission-focused and they're part of the team – a lot of guys have mentioned about enjoying doing things on home territory and being trained and mission ready. I don't see an issue with that.

MR. PUNARO: Thanks. Major Friloux?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir. First, how would they take the increased training level? I think the soldiers want the increased training. I don't think they want a minimal lower level of training. I think they would be receptive to it. The second is the change of the training time as per quarter or once a month. It all goes down back to, gentlemen, the 48 MUTAs (ph) that is received to make the 39-day training model and how the unit uses those MUTAs is up to the unit.

Now, we've had some experience in have quarter drills where you're taking nine MUTAs and putting them together to do qualification on tank gunnery and Bradley gunnery – very intense training to be done over a weekend, but you need that extra time and we did not have problems, as a whole, with the soldiers reporting for that training. I think it would receptive, but it goes back to the unit being able to use those 48 MUTAs efficiently on how he sees doing it, whether it be a drill once a month or once a quarter, and it and I may be a little different than my counterpart, because in the National Guard our armories and training units are very close to where our soldiers live, so it's a little easier to have a monthly drill. But we have done and the soldiers are willing to increase the number of training days.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Let me give you now the flipside of that question and say, okay, maybe we've picked up the increased training in the mobilization training cycle. Now, I know the Army Guard, basically for their units – I think that they're on an 18-month cycle. When they get called up they've got I believe and correct me, three months of mob training and then they deploy for a year and then they can use that three months on the demob side. Is that correct?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Well, sir, when we mobilized, we have five months of post-mobilization training, a year deployment, and about a month afterwards.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, so it's five months on the front end. All right, so – and for the Marine Corps, for example, let's take a typical battalion. Is their deployment over – the Marine's, you know, go on a six- or seven-month rotation come back. And I don't know – are the battalions – the reserve battalions called up for a year?

MAJ. OWEN: Sir, it varies. Some of the support units such as the military police are called up more frequently.

MR. PUNARO: But what kind of mobilization – what's the mobilization training time, say, for a unit that's deploying? Now, they're doing one month, two months, three months, four months, five months before they deploy?

MAJ. OWEN: Three months is the standard.

MR. PUNARO: Three months.

MAJ. OWEN: There could be some variation slightly –

MR. PUNARO: What about on the back end?

MAJ. OWEN: On the back end we typically spend anywhere from a week to two weeks at the ILOC and another two weeks at the reserve center, so about a month. About the same.

MR. PUNARO: So about a month. How about for the Army Reserve?

MAJ. FOXX: It's 18 months, sir.

MR. PUNARO: So what's the training on the front end?

MAJ. FOXX: Normally three months.

MR. PUNARO: Three months. So, five months, three months, three months – okay, so basically, the model we're using now – they are, you know, you could argue to General Stone and to Colonel Blaine, that's where they're getting now this additional days – the delta between the weekend drills and the 90 days of training. And maybe that's the concept we ought to look at, because then you basically tell them and then you've got – the ARFORGEN model allegedly tells the Army Guard and brigades, you know, how many times they're going to deploy.

We know in the military that's never, you know, that accurate, because it's the needs of what you need when you need it. People have talked about a continuum of service. You join a unit and you're told, hey, if you join this unit, this is a unit that's going to be operational one in two or one in three and you're going to do, you know, 100 days of active duty a year opposed to – things like that. So there are a lot of models out there, but it seems to me that we're not going to get away from this upfront post-

mobilization – meaning mobilization being, you know, you’re called up from your drill site and you’re going to go do training.

Now, how much of the three months and the five months is done at home station and how much of it is done at a station of initial assignment?

MAJ. OWEN: Sir, just speaking for the Marine units, specifically 2/24, all of ours was done at Camp Pendleton, which was our intermediate location, so it’s all away from home station.

MR. PUNARO: Right.

MAJ. OWEN: Basically from going through the activation process, mobilizing, going to the ILOC, we considered ourselves deployed at that point.

MR. PUNARO: Right. Now, did you all rotate – did you all go through 29 Palms?

MAJ. OWEN: No, sir. At the time we were going to March Air Force Base for the First Marine Division – (unintelligible).

MR. PUNARO: So do all the Marine battalions now go through 29 Palms for post-mobilization training?

MAJ. OWEN: That is my understanding, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Where did you all do your training, Major Foxx?

MAJ. FOXX: Fort Stuart, Georgia, sir.

MR. PUNARO: And how about you, Major?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Sir, we went to Ft. Hood, Texas for four months and did one month over at Ft. Irwin, California.

MR. PUNARO: Now, my last question is, what was you all’s experience for your battalions in terms of unit integrity and train as we fight? You did some cross-decking I know, but was 2/24 called up and mobilized pretty much the unit that was in place, spread around the Northeast as they are – companies in Milwaukee and different locations or did they do a lot of cross-decking?

MAJ. OWEN: No, sir, at that point in time, for the most part, the battalion’s manning was good. We essentially, within the battalion, mobilized for the most part battalion-pure. We had some augmentation. However, we did have a very active process to get officers into the battalion.

MR. PUNARO: Right. You didn't have the company-grade officers you needed, correct?

MAJ. OWEN: Correct.

MR. PUNARO: And where do they come from, other parts of the reserves or from the active Marine Corps, or both?

MAJ. OWEN: Both. Some literally came off active duty and walked in the door to their new unit. So, but – so at those levels, I think we had good continuity. 1/24, as you may know right now activated, has had to pull from a number of units across –

(Cross talk.)

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, because we're getting into the second, third iteration. That's a lot more.

MAJ. OWEN: Yeah.

MR. PUNARO: Major Foxx?

MAJ. FOXX: The bulk of the cross-leveling obviously came from the unit I spoke of earlier, sir. The headquarters have a small amount of cross-leveling. Some staff officer was cross-leveled in, but the bulk came from the company – massive cross-leveling.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah.

Major?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir, in my battalion we did mobilize all four companies. We did have to do some cross-leveling from HHC into the line units to get them to a higher level of personnel readiness based on what our personnel readiness level was at the time, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah. Last question. It's not a loaded question; it's just a factual question. We asked it out in San Antonio. We visited a unit at Ft. Hood, a guard brigade that was going to redeploy, and to basically to get it up to full strength they had to pull people in from 48 different units or states to basically fill out that unit because, as you've said, we're seeing more and more cross-decking.

As a unit-training officer – that's what you're representing here today – what do you think about a concept where you've got to put these hodgepodge brigades and battalions together? Does that – we've always argued, train as we fight. Does that turn the concept train as we fight, kind of flip it on its head, Major Owen?

MAJ. OWEN: It doesn't necessary flip it on its head, sir. I think what it does is it lends even more validity to that 90-day or five-month, 120-day training period that is required because it is not outside of the ordinary in any unit, even an active duty unit, to get a Marine or a soldier maybe 90 days or 120 days before you're going to deploy on a routine deployment or to a combat zone now. It is not ideal, I will say that, and I think particularly even more so the more rank and responsibility that individual has.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Major Foxx?

MAJ. FOXX: I don't think it's flipped on its head, sir. It's just – those things we spoke of earlier, it's just being on the same accord with training. If you cross-leveled, you understand that the operations of a M-915 (ph) is done in the incoming unit.

So, no, I don't think it flipped on its head. It's just that training has to be the focus and personnel issues have to be taken care of. When those soldiers get to their gaining units, they are ready to train and they are ready to mobilize.

MR. PUNARO: Great. Major?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Exact same comments as Major Owen, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, thanks.

Commissioner McKinnon?

DAN MCKINNON: We appreciate you folks being here. I just had two thoughts, or two ideas I was interested in. One is what is the attitude out there now on retention? A fellow who's been over once or twice over to Iraq, he's got the one out of six supposedly that he's involuntarily activated. What kind of – what do you feel is going on in retention out there? Are the guys going to continue to re-up or you start seeing a little bit of erosion about fellows who want to remain in the guard or reserves?

The second thought is that on leadership. You talk about the lack of leadership I guess in the junior ranks – the more junior officer ranks. What is causing that problem and what's the solution to it? I guess, Major Owen, you're getting the first out of the box on all this.

MAJ. OWEN: You guys purposely put the Marine on the left each time and you go that direction. That's fine, sir.

The retention – without having currently spoken to a personnel officer at my former battalion, I'm not sure I can provide insight to the post-deployment, with the exception, again, of a number of the officers.

2/24's retention was very good. I think that was a combination of some excellent leadership and having had a very good experience while we were over in Iraq deployed in

Mahmudiyah, Yusufiyah, and Latifiyah. And the unit did very well and I think that is a hats off certainly to the commander and assisted in retention and we have a number of Marines now going over with 1/24, so – but that being the other part – and Colonel Smith I think, when you talked with him, can provide better insight to that because he’s currently the XO of the regiment is that with deploying 1/24, they did have to draw from across the regiment to include other portions of the division to flush out the unit. So there is some impact there. I just can’t speak clearly without having researched those details with the personnel folks.

With regard to leadership – and everybody may have seen this in some degree in one way or the other, but at one point leading up to OIF-1, I had almost a full complement of officers, so I was actually only one short of the number of officers I was supposed to have at the marine infantry company level. However, post-OIF-1, a number of them went back to the IRR. I know that some of that was trying to figure out when to make that commitment.

What I always advocated with the officers as we try to bring in into the unit was to personally commit to at least a year, if not two, to find out what it’s really about because I think sometimes that if you only do it for three months, particularly if maybe those three months you did were more focused on individual skills and administrative stuff, you may feel like your potential is not being utilized as what it could be. And then there may be pressure from the employer; there may be pressure from home, for example, to, you know, bring those weekends back to the family.

It was always my thought that our Marines who were on contract – our first-term enlisted reserve Marines didn’t struggle with those issues because they were on contract for four to six years and they had to show up. So I always felt like positively that, with, say, for example, a two-year contract for senior enlisted or for officers that obligated them for two years would resolve for them some personal issues at home because otherwise at every drill they may have to revisit why it was they were participating in this, you know, reserve duty because it was taking away from the family or the employer.

MR. MCKINNON: Yes, sir.

Major Foxx?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir, some of the same concerns that Major Owen indicated and with regards to retention. Immediately after redeployment, sort of went back to the cross-leveling – a lot of the cross-leveling soldiers sort of had enough, said they didn’t feel a part of the unit. They thought they were going to be deployed with their unit, so I think that lead to a retention issue there. But since that deployment, things has gotten better with the focus on training and soldiers getting into school training and being a part of the mission again. I was thinking retention has improved.

In the area of leadership, the biggest problem there is junior leaders. We’ve lost a tremendous amount of young leaders, our lieutenants. I think we still struggle with junior

leadership and just like Major Owen stated, it had to do with family obligations. It has to do with employment. A lot of these junior officers sort of put their civilian employment on hold during the many deployments and now they are taking the decision to put forth the effort and continue their civilian employment and I think that's affected retention.

MR. MCKINNON: Yes, sir?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir. Regarding retention, the 256 brigade, which is our parent brigade, had an 85 percent retention rate in Iraq. In combat, this was a unit that had combat losses, a significant number of casualties, and had an 85 percent retention rate. We currently – we're on track to meet the retention rate for this year. I think the key issue is funding of retention bonuses. That's going to help keep these soldiers signing up for more time in the guard. In Iraq, \$15,000 tax-free if you signed up – if you reenlisted in Iraq. That was significant. So, again, the main point is keep coming with the retention bonuses. It's working.

Next, for leadership, just like my (co-officer ?) said, the soldiers – we need to give them some predictability on when they're going to deploy, that way they can work that out with their employer. And I think the ARFORGEN model is going to allow that because a lot of your – these leaders that we've talked about that we're losing, they're concerned about their civilian employment, they have other careers. I think if we can give them the model, for example, in Army National Guard it's every five years. If you can tell your employer, this is about the general timeframe that I expect to be deploying, I think it gives the employer and the soldier a way to work around that for him to continue that career and he'll – and the patriot side will kick in, he'll stay in the reserve component.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. Well, I appreciate your comments. If you fellows think of something else after this is over with, we'd like you, for the record, to submit it because I've got a concern we may be burning our troops up on these long – on a long war like this and we need to be sure we're able to keep the manpower that's necessary.

MR. PUNARO: Thanks, Dan.

Commissioner Eckles?

LARRY K. ECKLES: Good morning. Thank you for spending the morning with us this morning. You've touched during your testimony on some equipment shortages, those kinds of problems prior to deploying to the theater of operations. Specifically, did your troops receive any significant new equipment after they've got into the theater and, if so, what types of problems did that cause? (Audio break.)

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir. Major Friloux. Sir, we did receive some equipment in theater that we never had during the post-mobilization training. One is the Raven UAV, which is a small unit-sized unmanned aerial vehicle. I actually didn't know when I get that in Kuwait. When we were told that we would get that, we started the training

there. Now, the problem that causes is that all our tactics, techniques and procedures had to be adapted to that new piece of equipment.

The same thing goes for some classified counter-IED equipment that we received in country. Again, that equipment caused some changes in the way we conducted our operations in Iraq. Some equipment we did get training on, but very limited and we got much – and we had an increase in and do more training in Iraq was the Blue Force Tracker, which was a significant piece of equipment in Iraq and that should have been – that needs to be fielded immediately to the units and have that training done to the lowest level, because you will see private use a Blue Force Tracker.

MR. ECKLES: Thank you.

MAJ. FOXX: Once we got into a theater, in the area of convoy tracking, we were successful in getting a lot of enhanced communication equipment such as the multiple trackings device to track our convoys as they traversed through Iraq and through the theater on MSRS. We also were fortunate enough to get satellite phones to increase that in-transit visibility of our convoys. Most of the new equipment fell in the realm of communication, which was a great help to track convoys.

MR. ECKLES: Okay. Thank you.

MAJ. OWEN: I kind of echo some of the same these two gentlemen have talked about that, see, combat operations systems was a big one that we always could have used more training on, and I think you overcome that by getting that to the units. And, again, I understand we are all organized slightly different, but, you know, one of the challenges, particularly, for example, 2/24 and five geographic locations to go to a battalion-size training event is, you know, just tracking where everybody's at, but if you use some of those modern enablers we have on the battlefield, integrating them as part of your training – again, train as you fight vice waiting to get them when you're at the ILOC or waiting to get those items in theater, you're ahead of the ball game. So that certainly would require resources to take care of that.

Some of the other new equipment stuff – it's just part of the business. They're enablers. You know, you don't want to say no to the new counter-IED jammer. You would hope that it would show up with a training package, okay, and right now, since that's what I do in my current job – I work in the training division – is that's one of the things we look at of all the new programs that are coming through is to make sure that somebody funded a training program with either that commercial off-the-shelf piece or that new investment that the tax payers are making to the regular process and you'd be surprised on how many times nobody thought of that. So that's just something to be aware of.

Back to the equipment issue, to echo some of the concern that the – Major Friloux had, one of our challenges became, again, equipment that had been moved forward. It's a very motorized or wheeled environment or mechanized depending on what you're in and

we had a very limited number of Humvees, for example, to train with at Camp Pendleton prior to deploying Marines overseas. I alluded to the driver training program before, which again has generally administrative in nature. So a guy gets his Humvee license, goes into theater and the next thing you know, he's blocking four lanes of traffic on an IED cordon somewhere and you know, has to stop the vehicle going at 60 miles an hour headed towards his position. It's a little bit different environment.

MR. ECKLES: One last question. What, if any, changes to current law or policy do you feel could be made to improve the readiness of your particular units?

MAJ. FOXX: I don't think I would have any changes to law. It's just maybe changes to procedures. I spoke earlier of putting more emphasis upfront on personnel readiness and putting training our focus prior to mobilization. I support the model of going from, going to train, mobilize and deploy. You know, do the training upfront instead of spending time at mobilization and a mobilization is not deployed. So I don't see any policies there. It's just new procedures and emphasizing training being the focus of our preparedness for our mission.

MAJ. OWEN: None that I can think of, sir.

MAJ. FRILOUX: Gentlemen and lady, my sister is the lawyer – (audio break) – Marine, but I see some – whether it would be policy or law – potential changes that get impact at both retention and readiness and some of the things that we talked about and it's a little bit more detailed in my brief and I think you'll see it in Colonel Smith's, but I think there are some incentive things that could be done both for employers. I think there are retention things that could be done with regard to the individual service member who is activated and deployed towards his retirement; that might be for each year he spends activated, deployed in support of whatever combat operation that is one year that comes off is retirement. So in other words, instead of having to wait until age 62 to collect retirement benefits or whatever the case is, you know, he gets to recoup those earlier for the commitment, the patriotism in supporting this country. So I think there are a number of things that could possibly be addressed, whether it's policy or law, I'm not sure. I don't know if that answers your question, sir.

MR. ECKLES: It's very good. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Lewis?

PATRICIA L. LEWIS: Thank you for your testimony here today. It's been very comprehensive and very helpful to us. I'd like – I'm going to do a broad question and then a specific question and I'll do them both and then you can go ahead and respond as you will, and I'm focused more on post-mobilization in my line of questioning.

How could the process and programs for your Reservists transitioning out of military life back to civilian life be improved? And then specifically, military deployments are both physically and mentally very demanding: is the level of counseling

in mental health support, both while you were activated and post-deployment for the service member and their families adequate, or does some improvement need to be made in that regard?

MAJ. FRILOUX: I'll go ahead and take this one first. The first, how can we improve the transition from the combat zone back to the civilian zone? And that my answer leads exactly to your second question. That was going to be my answer is that the – we need to improve the mental health assessment immediately coming off of active duty especially for Army Reserve/National Guard soldiers.

On active duty, there's a – when a soldier comes – when a unit comes back from Iraq, they go through a week or two of transition where they transition to seeing their family. That doesn't happen in the National Guard. I mean, in my particular instance, I got off the plane and went home for four days with my family and then we came back for a week and we demobilized and then the hurricane came in there, which kind of threw it off track, but the general point is that there is very minimal mental health assessment. And what you're seeing is most of the problems coming in about three months after coming back from theater.

I think there needs to be a significant increase in the assessment when you initially get back from deployment, and maybe the first one or two drills afterwards we continue that post-deployment mental assessment to help assist soldiers that are going to need it. Thank you.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you very much.

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, continue on with that. I actually experienced similar situations there where the process was there. It was good doing the post-mobilization, but it needs to be continued on. Soldiers get that once they redeploy going through the mob out process – the counseling is there, the mental health is there. But it's once that individual gets off active duty back to civilian life where it needs to continue on and the soldier and the family still needs to have access to that mental health counseling services. So I would answer the question that, yes, it's there, but it could be improved by extending the period of time.

MAJ. OWEN: Our experience as a reserve unit coming back from theater was that we requested to add a week to the period we would spend at Camp Pendleton. Typically, it was a five- to seven-day process for a reserve unit returning to its ILOC, which is typically either Camp Lejeune or Camp Pendleton. The reason we asked for that extra week was not to slow the process that existed with regard to turning in equipment, going through dental readiness and medical readiness and a continued health assessment, but was basically to address readjusting the Marines and addressing issues such as combat stress, okay, and the neurology of combat.

And, as a matter of fact, we had retired Lt. Colonel Dave Grossman come twice, once on the front end before we deployed and once on the back end and he's the author of

“On Killing” for those of you who may know – be familiar with that book. And it was to address just sort of those issues and there were Marines within the battalion that stated that those talks were helpful.

And again, rather than having an experience of coming home, being home a short time and then walking straight back into your family, you know, we had a chance still amongst ourselves as combat veterans who like all the units, I’m assuming probably, you know, we all took casualties – we lost 14 Marines from the battalion, and it’s a chance to reconcile your thoughts, your emotions, an environment which is still true to the one you came from and help you adjust back in the civilian environment, which is true for all of us. Even for me, even though I had a small active duty cadre, I certainly lived in a community which was not military at all.

I do think that as far as continued support, we had in place some good mechanisms and I’m assuming they have probably some of the same procedures. We had a requirement to recontact the Marines, whether they continued on active duty or dropped to the IRR, within 30, 60 and 90-day periods and see how they were doing as well as had support mechanisms available back there. So there were some members that required more support, but I think it’s certainly worthy of continued detailed analysis to see what the service members need and deserve when they get back.

But I think one of the things they don’t need is to be rushed back home. Up at the highest levels, the battalion received a lot of pressure to do the five-day ILOC and then send everybody home, and fortunately we didn’t do that and I think it worked out very well.

MS. LEWIS: Are the family members given any type of education on what they might see or expect from the service member that’s just returning from that environment and how they can be supportive from a mental health perspective?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, ma’am, they do. And what’s critical here is the family support groups and the family readiness groups that are ongoing while the units are deployed. Those – about 30 days prior to the 256 brigade returning to Louisiana – it was actually prior to Hurricane Katrina – there were teams going around to each of the MACOMs, to the battalion headquarters, and down to each company level as well, with briefings from the VA, from a degreed psychologist on what to expect and how to deal with that. And it was basically the same thing that the soldier should have got when he got back. It was prepping the family as were as prepping the soldiers. So, yes, ma’am, that is in place and it does happen.

MS. LEWIS: That’s great. Thank you for your service and thank you for your testimony today.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Rowley?

WADE ROWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the exception of the Marine Corps, none of the services as yet has an integrated payroll and personnel system and DOD has been working on the DIMR (ph) system now for ten years and it doesn't look like that will be fielded until 2008. Upon your call to deployment during mobilization, did you have difficulties getting your systems paid – soldiers paid and getting into the system? And if you did, were you offered any assistance to help resolve those problems?

MAJ. FOXX: I didn't experience any pay issues in my unit, sir. As a matter of fact, I was pretty impressed with how it rolled over to the active Army. The only slight problem we had was the tax payment where the reserves – they took it and then they put it back in the accounts. So that was some kind of computer system I understand, but other than that I don't recall any major pay problems as we rolled over to the active component other than that small system where I understand the active Army was totally different: their money was not taken out, as was the reserves. It was taken out, then later given back.

MAJ. OWEN: Yes, sir. We – the battalion mobilized on May, 15th, 2004 and we moved to Ft. Hood, Texas on the 20th and within a week every soldier in the battalion had gone through the finance station. And it was a very smooth transition. I do remember one and maybe two instances where a soldier had a pay problem and was able to get casualty pay and get that to his family for – to help pay for any bills, but very, very smooth transition. There were no issues.

MR. ROWLEY: Okay, that concludes my questioning. That's actually great news. That's not necessarily a case across the board, but it sounds like things are improving. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Chairman?

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Sherrard?

JAMES E. SHERRARD III: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen, realizing that a great percent of your families don't live near families – any place that has a family support center, are you aware of or do you know – have an idea of how well the families are aware of the Military OneSource and are they using it?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, I am aware of it, sir. That is put out quite frequently through the family readiness program. These guys do an excellent job in training the families on that. I think it's our job to make sure that families are brought into the family readiness groups, but that is addressed on family readiness meetings.

MAJ. OWEN: Same – we had an excellent key volunteer network set up. We always had a framework for participation, but when we received notification that we would likely to be mobilized in June, we went from having a half dozen members in the key volunteer network to almost every spouse, girlfriend, mother and father involved and

they really did a superb job of distributing information and the community in all the cities that our units are from responded tremendously in supporting the unit.

MAJ. FRILOUX: Likewise, sir.

MR. SHERRARD: Can I just have one quick question for you to follow up on something you said earlier? If I heard you right, you said at the start of the part of mobilization you were 25 percent manned in your full-time personnel?

MAJ. FOXX: No, Sir. It was 60 percent, 25 out of 42.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay, I misunderstood, so 60 percent. Was the shortage because you couldn't get them or was it because of a deficit on either federal funding and/or state funding?

MAJ. FOXX: Definitely funding, sir. We're only funded at 60 percent of required.

MR. SHERRARD: Do you know if that was federal or state?

MAJ. FOXX: Federal, sir.

MR. SHERRARD: Okay, thanks.

Mr. Chair?

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, thank you.

Commissioner Stockton?

DONALD L. STOCKTON: Thank you for all that you do and for being here today. Congress has asked us to address one thing with regard to funding. They want to make certain that there is adequate fund and for the National guard and all the reserve components and this commission is getting some mixed information, I guess, you might say. At some levels, we hear that the funding is very adequate and at other levels we hear that well, if it isn't adequate, we pass the equipment where we need and this sort of thing. And I guess we're troubled by that process and Congress is troubled by that Congress – or that process, because they – every year it seems like I feel the need to add on monies to what the Department of Defense has requested.

And so I guess I'd like to know – all of you have been deployed – what is your status of your units reset since you returned from employment and are there any delays or any of the delays due to the funding inadequacies?

MAJ. FOXX: Sir, right now in the battalion, we do struggle with reset in regards to prime movers. You know, we still are not 100-percent back up the strength with

Humvees. A lot of those things were kept over in theater, singlized (ph) radios. I can't really attest that it's a funding issues, so it may just be a fielding issue, but in your question to reset, we still struggle with reset due to those equipment shortages.

MAJ. OWEN: We see the same challenges, sir. Again, I would emphasize, and maybe Major Friloux will do the same, was that we started with those challenges upfront understanding there was some equipment that was being newly fielded that should be prioritized and sent to the theater, but there's – and there's other things that weren't anticipated, such as the need for armored Humvees or Humvees retrofitted with armored kits. But, nonetheless, even having the adequate number of Humvees at the training location to use to support realistic training, I would certainly see that as some resource issues. It's – I understand balancing the books: you can say, I need 1,000 M-16s. I've got 1,000 in the inventory, but when they're in 17 different geographic locations, they're not in your hand, so they don't serve you any good.

MAJ. FRILOUX: Sir, we had a unique challenge in Louisiana. We're a little further in reset than we probably would have been had it not been for the hurricanes. We were advanced in our – we were advanced up the slot in getting new vehicles because we were a coastal state based on the hurricanes that struck last year. But it's not just the major end items. We need additional Class 9 parts; we need the repair parts. So right now we're in – we can execute our state missions right now, sir, but I am not at reset to be able to mobilize again today.

MR. STOCKTON: Thank you very much.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Stump.

E. GORDON STUMP: Yes. First, I'd like to thank each of you for your excellent testimony. You addressed most of the issues that we were looking at in your beginning testimony, and especially Major Friloux, on your testimony – I would ask was there an AAR – an after-action review – when you came back that got back to the Army to address some of these problems and deficiencies?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Sir, I don't know if it got to the Center for Army Lessons Learned, but I know each task force did do an AAR based on lessons learned from Iraq, but I don't have the answer whether it got back to the Center for Army Lessons Learned.

MR. STUMP: Okay. Just one more question to you on the ARFORGEN model. That model would – could possibly deprive you of equipment in the first two years of the model. Eventually, you would get the equipment in the fourth and fifth year, and in the fifth year of the model you would try and have the stability, so you would not have to cross level. However, with the 15- to 20-percent turnover rate and the constant training of the new people coming in, how would you address the fifth year of the ARFORGEN model?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Well, sir, every year you're still going to have to do the individual tasks. You're still going to have to qualify your weapons. You're still going to have to do your warrior training tasks. So as those new soldiers came in, let's say in year 5, everybody's going to the same training again. So we do that, but it's easier to get those soldiers who are doing it for five years through it quicker; then you can focus on the new soldiers.

We have this challenge throughout deployment. You're going to get a piece of equipment that's new and you've got to train for it; we had to do it in combat. But I think the – that the training model set up by the unit for the – (unintelligible) – will take care of that, sir.

MR. STUMP: Do you think you might have retention problems in the first two years due to lack of equipment?

MAJ. FRILOUX: I don't think so, sir.

MR. STUMP: Thank you.

MAJ. FRILOUX: I think – again, let me go back to this – I think it's the retention bonuses, sir. That's the key issue.

MR. STUMP: Okay, thank you for your testimony.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Thompson.

MR. J. STANTON THOMPSON: Major Foxx, did I understand that of the three of you, you are the only traditional reservist holding down a civilian job and being military? Am I correct?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir, it is. That's correct.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. I'm going to zero in on you then. How long – what was your civilian job, again?

MAJ. FOXX: I am chief probation officer for the state of North Carolina – (inaudible).

MR. THOMPSON: Chief probation officer, so you work within the state government?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir, I do.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, and how many years have you done that?

MAJ. FOXX: Seventeen years.

MR. THOMPSON: Seventeen. How many years have you been in the military?

MAJ. FOXX: Eighteen years.

MR. THOMPSON: Eighteen years – so about the same.

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, sir.

MR. THOMPSON: And this was your first deployment?

MAJ. FOXX: No, sir. I deployed during the first Gulf War.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm sorry?

MAJ. FOXX: I did deploy during the first Gulf War.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, so in your 18 years in the military you've been activated – was this involuntary or voluntary this last time?

MAJ. FOXX: Involuntary.

MR. THOMPSON: Involuntary, so you've been involuntarily mobilized twice now in the 18 years?

MAJ. FOXX: Yes, twice. Correct, sir.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, and are you planning a 30-year career?

MAJ. FOXX: I'm taking it day by day. I enjoy what I'm doing. (Laughter.)

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. What I'm getting to is that how tolerant – I want to look at your employer. The ARFORGEN model, we're told, shows that rotation of active duty for reservists could be one every six years. Most of you are saying that somewhere around for the Marines it's seven to eight months. Am I right? Six to eight months somewhere in there – but the Army guys, you guys go out for a while. Now, based on the fact that you might think about a 30-year career, all right, is your employer going to – is your employer going to live with that kind of absence?

MAJ. FOXX: I think yes, simply because it's state government – a lot of good support for North Carolina Department of Corrections. I hear differently from some of the private industries would have more concerns, but I think I'm fortunate in being employed with state government, who very much support the guard and reserve participation. So I would say I'm probably in a unique situation and a fortunate situation that I don't think it will be an impact.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, and then Major Friloux – is that how you pronounce it?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Yes, sir. Friloux.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. After Katrina – we're glad to have Louisiana down here because we've talked to Louisianans from the governor on down and everybody has a little different opinion about Katrina, but the White House published their lessons learned about Katrina and one of the bullets that they recommended was that the National Guard and Reserve component organize, train and equip so that homeland security/homeland defense would be a primary mission.

So let's take Louisiana. What would be the attitude of your brothers and sisters in the guard in Louisiana if there was more emphasis placed on homeland responsibilities and less emphasis placed on combat force and overseas deployment? In other words, you'd be trained, equipped, organized – let's use a figure – 60 percent of the time for homeland defense and your secondary mission would be overseas. What would be the attitude of the rank and file of the guardsmen that you serve with?

MAJ. FRILOUX: Well, sir, I think the soldier today joins the service, especially in the National Guard, knowing that he's the part of a bigger picture, to include the total force in the Army. It's an implied – it's an essential task for our state mission, but I think the focus needs to stay where it is right now. For example, I'll take my brigade, 256 Brigade. It's a light brigade now. A lot of the tasks, the collective tasks, individual tasks of being a light infantry brigade directly correlates to the state mission, sir. So we do yearly and actually quarterly homeland defense training right now and we incorporate the tasks that we use that will do both homeland defense and can be used in, say, such operations like checkpoint procedures assisting local law enforcement, the CA operations working with the nongovernmental organizations.

We do these things in both state mission and federal mission, so there's a correlation between the two, sir, but I think the focus needs to be on the main mettle task of being the infantry brigade, sir.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay. Mr. Chairman, that's it. It reminds me, though; you and I have quite a military history. We've heard of iron majors in our careers, right? I think we have three of them sitting right here.

MR. PUNARO: That's correct. That's why we wanted them, because we know we'd get the straight scoop. Thank you for your great service to our nation in uniform. When we hear from your battalion commanders tomorrow, we're going to know right of the bat why there are so successful, because they have individuals like you working at the deck-pace (ph) level kind of making it happen and improvising where you need to and implementing the plans where you need to.

Pass back to your units our great appreciation for what they do. Feel free to contact us if you think of anything that you wish you'd said after you leave or if there are things you said on the record you'd like to change. We'll give it due consideration. We won't change it because what's said is said, but we look forward to staying in touch with you again. Seriously, thank you for great service to the nation as well as to your unit. So glad to have you here today and look forward to staying in touch. Thank you.

The commission will stand and recess till 1:00 p.m. where we'll hear from state emergency management officials.

(End of panel.)