

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

**PUBLIC HEARINGS  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2006**

**8:30-10:30 AM READINESS: BATTALION COMMANDERS  
RECENTLY RETURNED FROM IRAQ AND  
AFGHANISTAN AND EXPERT ON READINESS,  
TRAINING, AND EQUIPPING**

**WITNESSES:**

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS PLUNKETT, ARNG, 3<sup>RD</sup>  
BATTALION, 156<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY,  
LOUISIANA ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK SMITH, USMCR, 2<sup>ND</sup>  
BATTALION, 24<sup>TH</sup> MARINE REGIMENT, 4<sup>TH</sup> MARINE DIVISION**

**LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS SISINYAK, USAR,  
COMMANDER, 812<sup>TH</sup> TRANSPORTATION BATTALION**

**JANET ST. LAURENT, DIRECTOR, DEFENSE CAPABILITIES AND  
MANAGEMENT TEAM, GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE**

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

ARNOLD L. PUNARO: Okay, I think we're going to get started here. If we can have our witnesses take their seats, please.

The commission will come to order. Good morning. Welcome to today's hearing of the Independent Commission on the National Guard and Reserves as we continue to examine readiness, training and equipment.

Yesterday we received testimony from commanders – from the commanders of the two national training centers for the Army and Marine Corps charged with preparing soldiers and Marines for deployment, and we obtained their perspective on the pre-activation training and shortfalls they saw that they get corrected during that process at the NTC and 29 Palms, and also talked a little bit about the certification process, which they are not in charge of, but how they feed into that as well.

We also heard from three battalion training and operations officers – your battalion training and operations officers – and they were extremely impressive and very sharp and were very helpful to the commission. I don't think that's any surprise to the battalion commanders sitting here today. They were responsible for that phase of – at the staff level – the pre-activation training for their units, which we know is a very tough and challenging responsibility, and especially in today's environment.

Our witnesses this morning are the three battalion commanders of those battalions, all of whom had very successful combat tours in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Our fourth panel member is a true expert from the Government Accountability Office who has done extensive work on the issues we are dealing with today. So for this panel we welcome Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Sisinyak, commander of the 812<sup>th</sup> Transportation Corps Battalion United States Army Reserve; Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Plunkett, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry, Louisiana Army National Guard; and Lieutenant Colonel Mark Smith, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division; and Janet St. Laurent, director of Defense Capabilities and Management, Government Accountability Office.

For the battalion commanders we of course would welcome your thoughts and observation on lessons learned from OIF, not only on readiness, training and equipping but more broadly on other issues and concerns that you would like to share with the commission and that you believe fall within our mandate. We're going to ask you to take us step by step through the process of preparing your battalions, the overall readiness picture prior to activation and any impediments you encountered in trying to improve battalion readiness, the efficiency and effectiveness of the post-mobilization process in addressing any deficiencies prior to deployment, any factors you were concerned about that might improve or impact morale and retention, your thoughts on how to improve the process – for example, whether the number of pre-activation training days should be increased – or any factors in there.

We've heard a lot of testimony today about concerns about the overall mobilization process for everybody related to OIF in Afghanistan and we're looking at ways on how that can be changed for the future. As a commander, your likely evaluation – or your evaluation of the likely impact of such improvements on the individual service members and members' families and their employers and equally important the relevance of the training to what's demanded of the service member in theater. And, again, as I indicated at the outset, any issues or any comments you have that you believe are important to the mandate of this commission.

For our GAO expert witness, we're looking for her evaluation of the trends and possible solutions discussed, including the implications of those solutions on enhanced readiness, cost effectiveness and retention. We're interested in your assessment of what you consider to be a realistic expectation for readiness given the competing time demands and other obligations that national guardsmen and reservists must deal with. And I want to express my appreciation to the GAO and particularly to the head of the GAO, David Walker, for the tremendous assistance he's been providing to the commission with expert witnesses like we have today, as well as some of the work that he has underway for the Commission particularly norming and baselining the cost – the true cost of Guard and Reserve and comparing that apples to apples to what the cost is on the active duty side. So that kind of expert input is going to be very essential, as is the testimony of our battalion commanders today.

A lot of people would tell you on the ground side of the military – I think it's particularly true and I know in the Army and Marine Corps that when you're a young captain or a skipper the greatest thing is to be a company commander and as a captain you figure there is no better job than that. Once you – you have to go through the rank of major. There aren't any fun jobs to do as a major. We all know that. There are no good jobs at all. They ought to get rid of that rank. When you get to be a lieutenant colonel, you've reached the peak and if you get through the highly competitive and highly selective process to be a battalion commander or squadron commander, that's about all there is. So I know our battalion commanders recognize and based on just knowing what they've done, they're not going to have any trouble with successful careers, but I can tell you there aren't many fun jobs past being battalion commander, so you're at the pinnacle.

And just for the people in the audience and people that may read this transcript, it's a very competitive, very selective process and probably is about the peak for anybody's military career to command a battalion in combat. So we know that our witnesses today are true experts and people that care deeply about the troops and their family.

So thank each of you for being here this morning and for your dedicated service to the nation. We'll put in all your prepared statements in the record without objection, but we want you to go through whatever it is you want to share with the committee today and not be constrained by time. So we're going to start kind of that end and go to this end. So Lieutenant Colonel Plunkett, we'll start with you.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS PLUNKETT: So much for the rehearsal in coming in here yesterday, sir, because you started on the left and went right. So I thought I had a few minutes. (Laughter.)

Sir, on behalf –

MR. PUNARO: We always want to keep these battalion commanders – we know how sharp you are; we want to keep you on your toes.

LTC. PLUNKETT: On behalf of the soldiers of 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 156<sup>th</sup> Infantry and Task Force Geronimo, I'd like to thank the commissioner and the other distinguished members of this commission for the opportunity to appear here today and tell our story. It is a story of patriotism, valor and professionalism; a call to duty and duty met. But it's one made possible only because of the intelligent, dedicated, and highly adaptable soldiers that make up our formations.

I give you my bottom line upfront as a task force commander. When I crossed the berm into Iraq in October 2004, I led a trained, competent, confident force. We had some equipping issues at that time, but it was ready to execute the full-spectrum missions that were there. However, I have to tell you the process to get to that point was inefficient, wasteful of time and energy, and oftentimes pure torture. While this was ultimately successful, if we're going to transition from a strategic reserve to an operational reserve, we have to improve and shorten this process.

In my prepared statements, I gave a pretty extensive background history of our organization, our unit history, which I think is very important for a Guard unit because from the last 20 years of our organization about every five years our unit has been in a major training event. So when you talk about the ARFORGEN model – somewhat we have been in the ARFORGEN model for 20 years for our organization's structure. And the junior leaders that were in our unit that mobilized in Desert Storm were often the senior leaders during this mobilization.

I was alerted for deployment in March of 2004. At that time, we were told that we were going to become a hybrid motorized heavy MTO (ph) to deploy. I was at 86 percent strength and my organization was filled out by the cross-leveling of our brigade separate cavalry troop. Two things occurred at that point. One was the phased mobilization was implemented and that allowed us to take soldiers that required schools or functional areas and put them on active duty in order to attend those schools.

The second thing that occurred was our state implemented a program of one week where every soldier in our brigade moved to and attended a SRP, a health and medical screening, and trained on all the theater-specific individual readiness tasks. Those two events allowed us to appear at the mobilization station much better prepared in order to train.

We were mobilized on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004, and deployed to the mobilization station on May 20<sup>th</sup>. From the time that we arrived at the mobilization station until the time that we were validated deployment was 77 days. And I've listed in here what breakdown of each of what those days were and what the individual training was done over that. We were the first battalion that was validated for deploy and during that initial stage, I attended my first PDSS – Pre-Deployment Site Survey – which when I went in the country, met with the battalion commander who I was supposed to replace, and got a walkthrough of the theater and stuff that was – the missions that were ongoing at that time.

I came back, completed our training at Ft. Hood, and then we deployed to a mission rehearsal exercise at the National Training Center in August. From the time that I was validated and the time that I arrived and prepared to deploy – prepared to conduct the MRE was 17 days built in there, and then we did a 30-day mission rehearsal exercise at the National Training Center.

Following that we were put on a – we were redeployed to the ISB in Alexandria, had a short final leave density and then deployed into theater. We went in to Kuwait for about three weeks. At that time, I conducted a second PDSS where I went in to the theater and reconned the location that was supposed to replace and came back. That resulted in a change in sector for me and a change in task organization at that time.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, we crossed into Iraq, conducted a road march all the way up to Baghdad and became part of the Multinational Division Baghdad. We RIPTOAed, relieved in place and transfer of authority with 214 Infantry, and I was opcon to 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain for the first six months of our operation that we occurred in theater. Our taskforce was placed south and west of Baghdad, which is in a very rural area, very little Iraqi government, and our operations were primarily combat focused in that area for the first six months.

At the end of six months with the transition between the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, we were returned to 256 Brigade control and we relieved – we were relieved in our sector by 1<sup>st</sup> Squadron, 3<sup>rd</sup> ACR. We then moved into and conducted a relief with Task Force 141 Infantry of the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division and moved into an area that was highly urbanized with a very different set of mission sets.

Our primary mission at that time also became training of the Iraqi – our counterpart Iraqi army battalion, to which we formed an 18 men ad hoc military training team which worked with them. The highlight of our operations in there was a joint operations with the Iraqi battalion that resulted in a rescue of the Australian hostage, Mr. Douglas Woods, that was captured at the time.

We eventually transferred over half of our sector over to 2-1 IA Iraqi army, so I consider that a success of our mission that we did that was there. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, we conducted a relief in place with 187 Infantry out of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 10<sup>th</sup> and we redeployed to the United States. We arrived back in the United States on September 17<sup>th</sup>. This was

after Hurricane Katrina. We were put on administrative leave for four days, came back to the demobilization station and Hurricane Rita hit, and so we were – our mobilization was interrupted by that, but we completed our demobilization by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

I did want to take a moment here to publicly commend the Army for its efforts, for taking care of our soldiers that were affected by the hurricanes. We had over 600 soldiers in our brigade that were directly affected, myself included. The Army established two programs: one was an extended active duty program where any soldier who was affected was allowed to stay on active duty for a second year – for another year, and the second part of it was a SAFE Haven program which provided additional financial assistance. That was truly taking care of soldiers, and on behalf of all of our soldiers that were affected and our units, that was a very positive point and I want to take a moment to tell them that – to publicly recognize that. My battalion has just recently transitioned from a heavy to a light as of 30<sup>th</sup> September of this year.

I have some recommendations for the committee that I'd like to make in order to improve this process and to better prepare us for the future. Number one, I would tell you is fully fund the full-time force. I think you've probably heard this before, but there is no greater factor that increases unit readiness more than the full-time guy that's there every day during the week working on it. And for a Guard and Reserve unit, this includes working on administration, personnel, medical readiness, logistical equipment readiness and even recruiting because our guys that are out in these armies are the face of our National Guard. We have recruiters that work for us that are out there, but when people in the communities think about the National Guard, they think about the armory, they think about the guy that works there inside that place.

When we went to deploy, we were at 63 percent; we're now at 55 percent manning. There's a document which establishes what you're supposed to have in a unit and then they fund you based off of that. So are funding is at much less where it needs to be.

Now, when you are alerted for mobilization, they do give you a 10 percent increase. That helps, but you're making up – you're catching up from that point forward, and so if you really want to work to improve the sustained readiness organization, and if Plunkett was king for a day I'd fully fund the full-time force.

Second recommendation I'd have to you is implement ARFOGEN model because ARFOGEN model gives you a predictability and it gives you a phased set of standards that you build towards. I can tell you that it closely follows what we've done in our history of every five years. We did an NTC rotation in 2001; we developed a four-year training plan which led up to it and it actually increased days during the year above your 39 days by the use of leader training funds and some additional funds, and that model, based on my experience, was a success. So I believe that the ARFOGEN model can be a success; it's just got to be funded, particularly for equipment and schooling, and you cannot wait until year three or year four to do 100-percent fielding of equipment and 100-percent schooling. Schooling and some sets of equipment have to come early.

Next is maintain recruiting and retention bonuses. I had an over an 80-percent retention rate in country; that's largely because of the bonuses that existed there. They were tax-free, tax exempt, and that is – those were tremendous programs and those are critical to retaining quality soldiers that we have. And any program that will help in recruiting and retaining the family is important now and I think in terms of healthcare and other benefits that may be out there. Today's environment, you recruit and you retain a family. When you're recruiting a new soldier off the street, his mother and daddy are involved in this process. When you retain a quality soldier, his spouse and family are in this process because of the deployments and what we look in the future doing deployments, so it's critical to retain those programs which assist us in that regard.

There needs to be a clear pre-mobilization standard. Everybody, you know, says what does it take to get, you know, fully mission capable mobilization? For a battalion, it's extensive, but I need to know clearly what you want me to arrive at the mobilization station having completed. Is it platoon level? Is it individual level? Is it company level? What it is – tell me exactly what it is and I'll show up there and I'll tell you what I need in order to get it done. What's critically important is the TRO, the training readiness and the validation authorities there is they need to accept what I have done in the prior year. At Ft. Hood, we had to retrain many tasks, individual tasks that had been done the prior year, and particularly we had to redo a number of the SRPs and personnel tasks that had already been accomplished before we arrived there.

Mobilize units by MTO. Our unit when through a lot of pain and agony because of the mobilization of a hybrid heavy motorized unit. Now, I understand METT-T, mission and enemy troops, terrain, and civilians determines what your requirements are in theater, and there was need to transition from a completely heavy to a motorized force, but throwing the MTO out the window entirely gave us a lot of problems.

What they ended up having to do was develop an EDL, equipment density list, and an ONS, an operational needs statement, which became in de facto the MTO, but it was just a very, very excruciating process with the equipment – putting the equipment together, determining what the equipment was, and it constantly changed and that caused us trouble with completing training requirements, particularly with weapon systems.

Next, restructure the MOBCAP (ph) restrictions. We were mobilized with a number and that number became a limiting factor because every soldier that was non-deployable that was mobilized under that number stayed on that number and held a slot up, even if he was identified fairly early on. The state and us had done a very good thing by doing the health and dental screenings in advance. It allowed us to identify problems and fix problems or determine the guy was never going to be deployable, but as we moved along through the process, individuals who were hurt in training would remain in our books even if they stayed at Ft. Hood and never deployed. So this seems to be a way – I know you can't have an open checkbook on people, but there needs to be in order that when a guy is non-deployable and you know it, he needs – he's going to stay at Ft. Hood

and not come for six to eight months or something, I need to be able to get a replacement to fit him.

Mobilization structure and infrastructure. Our training at Ft. Hood almost came to a complete halt because of the lack of repair parts for tank and Bradley gunnery. And it was only through the intervention of the Louisiana National Guard, which shipped over \$2.5 million worth of parts to us, that we were able to sustain our gunnery through our post-mobilization training. This was because of two factors: one was Ft. Hood was a completely modernized force, so they had M1A2s, M2A3s or M2AT ODS vehicles. We were old vehicles that were there and they did not have an adequate stockage of parts, and because of difficulties of tying in the systems, there was a delay in getting the parts. So infrastructure at your mobilization station has to be prepared to support the type of unit that's coming in.

Post-mobilization training. The theater defines the requirements, but the TRO and the unit commander need to be able to understand those requirements and come together with a clear post-mobilization training plan. In our case, there was a distinct lack of communication between theater and the TRO. It resulted in training on tasks that weren't applicable in theater and some tasks that weren't trained. Particularly noteworthy for us was the fact that we were transitioning to a motorized force, but there was no plan for motorized gunnery, much like you have a tank or Bradley gunnery.

We had to – I had to argue extensively in order to get a motorized gunnery program instituted at the mobilization station as part of the post-mobilization training. We were finally able to do it for my taskforce only because I insisted on it, but that was the primary engagements we had for the motorized force was from the vehicle, and yet there was no plan to conduct that type of training at post-mobilization. And there was very little collective training on night operations at post-mobilization, which we had to fight to get that put in the training command. The TRO was just reluctant to make changes to the plan that they came in with and I think it was largely because of a disconnect between what was going on in theater.

Now, some of this I'd have to caveat has to do with the timing of this. This occurred in the late spring, early summer of 2004 and the fight that was going on over there changed some during that time period. There was not a lot of – a lot of current people who had been deployed in theater working as part of our trainers. A recommendation to you would be to make an early PDSS reconnaissance with the TRO and the unit into theater so they can work with those – determine those.

My last recommendation concerns the mission rehearsal exercise and I think consideration needs to be done to do an MRE at the post-mobilization site. We consumed an inordinate amount of time having to move to the National Training Center – 17 days for us – in order to then ship out. This was particularly difficult because the MRE was conducted at the end of our training and we were in the process of shipping personnel and equipment to theater, to NTC, and even back home for some of the



equipment because we had to create an equipment set at Ft. Hood and NTC did not have an equipment set to assist in our training at that time.

The key benefit I will say from the mission rehearsal exercise that I received was that that was the first time I'd worked with an OCT who had actually been in theater. So you do not want to lose the quality of those type of people and what they can bring to you, but when you're talking about training days and consuming 20 days or so right there just because you're moving equipment, people from one place to another, that – I think that's something that needs to be seriously concerned.

Sir, during our deployment we executed highly successful full spectrum operations in our effort to establish a free and democratic Iraq. It was a fully trained and highly proficient force that ably represented our citizens.

Thank you for allowing me to be here today representing these great soldiers. It's an honor and privilege to have led such men in combat and a similar honor to appear here to give my thoughts and insights to this commission as it considers how to be best posture the Army National Guard to meet the challenges of the future. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Colonel Sisinyak?

LIEUTENANT COLONEL THOMAS. W. SISINYAK: Good morning Chairman Punaro, distinguished members of the commission. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in these hearings.

I am Lieutenant Colonel Tom Sisinyak and I commanded the 812<sup>th</sup> Transportation Battalion from August 2003, to August 2006. Specifically, I was the battalion commander during OIF II. We were mobilized to active duty on 11 December 2003, and redeployed to the mob station at Ft. Stewart on 26 October 2004. The battalion deployed with six subordinate units and during our deployment the strength and composition of the battalion fluctuated to as many as 16 units under the 812<sup>th</sup> command.

We had three primary missions, first being providing medium truck transportation support into Iraq and Kuwait. We completed approximately 1,200 missions and over 2 million mission miles. Second mission was to provide camp command responsibilities to Camp Navistar to include force protection. Third mission was to train the Air Force to serve as escorts along the supply routes in Iraq.

I believe each of you has a copy of my three-page opening statement and that statement is broken down into five different areas: readiness, post-mobilization, morale and retention, training days, and equipment. Under readiness, this battalion – 812<sup>th</sup> – had a C1 readiness rating and what I saw and experienced of the down trace units, which were comprised of both Guard and Reserve units – that they were also in a high state of readiness. The exception was the one company, the 227<sup>th</sup> Trans Company. That unit, to give you a little bit of history, the 88-mikes, the truck drivers, were taken out of that unit in support of OIF I, which left basically a shell of the company left in the rear, and then

for OIF II the actual 227<sup>th</sup> was mobilized. I tell you this because that was the one exception to readiness. That unit had a lot of problems from the start all the way through deployment and redeployment.

Second category: post-mobilization. The post-mobilization process was adequate; however, there are some things that can be improved upon. I feel that the officers and the NCOs that deployed, although very, very good, could have used some of the training such as (cache queue ?) and battle staff NCO course prior to going to facilitate TOC operations and other operations in theater. In addition to the post-mobilization process, although adequate, I'll throw a caveat in there. At the time, it was good. Obviously, things have changed in theater and as I see and as I hear things are being changed there.

One of the things that I would recommend is a little more realistic training at the mobilization station, and specifically one of the things that we received upon redeployment which should have been at the mob station was not convoy live-fire, but VCCT, which is virtual combat convoy training – outstanding training that we received at Ft. Bragg and I would hope that anybody that traverses the MSRs would receive that kind of training.

Third category: morale and retention. Morale before and during deployment remained healthy. The biggest factors negatively impacting morale were the cross-level actions and the extensions of units in theater. Morale dipped upon redeployment and retention has been a constant struggle since redeployment to present.

Fourth category: training days. The 39-day training cycle is adequate in my opinion if – and that's a big if – if this time is truly used to train. The problems that we're seeing at the battalion level is the requirements for items such as metrics, urinalysis, HIV, ethics training – all of that is important, but being very truthful with each of you, that has become the priority and training has taken a back seat, and if we're going to reset and retrain and redeploy or get ready to redeploy, we've got make the focus training.

Final category is equipment. Because we are transporters, a lot of the equipment was identified as SBE – stay behind equipment. 998s, 915s, 872s, commo equipment were the primary things that were left in theater. What that does to us – this lack of equipment has limited our ability to train; not only to redeploy, but also – to help out Lieutenant Colonel Plunkett down in Louisiana – we had one of the missions to basically prepare for hurricane relief, those sorts of things, while they tasked my battalion to support, and we did, but we struggled immensely trying to find the equipment to help out if called upon. And since that time, I know there has been a lot of activity to preposition equipment around the southeastern seaboard to facilitate that effort, but it's kind of hard to do when your equipment basically is nonexistent.

In conclusion, units had a high state of readiness prior to deployment. Post-mobilization was adequate and supported our needs. Our biggest opportunity for

improvement lies in maximizing the training opportunities during battle assemblies and in annual trainings. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you.

Colonel Smith.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MARK SMITH: General Punaro, sir, semper fi, and to the honorable members of the commission, first it's an honor to be here testifying to this commission today.

Per the initial instructions I received, and in typical Marine Corps fashion I received just days prior to crossing the line of departure to come down here, I was asked to do a brief five-minute introduction and address what I saw as six key issues that were provided to me to this commission. That particular task, as with this war, does not lend itself to a five-minute discussion, so I defaulted to a submitted presentation to the commission trying to focus on your questions from the wave top perspective and making myself available at any time, anywhere for follow-on questioning or requested or required subsequent actions.

MR. PUNARO: Just take whatever time you need. Don't be – feel constrained by time.

LT. COL. SMITH: Roger that, sir.

MR. PUNARO: We want to get the full picture.

LT. COL. SMITH: Roger that, sir. With that said, I felt the best way for the commission to understand where I'm coming from as a Marine reservist is to understand the experiences of the unit I had, what we did, and how that plays into the role of your commission. I'll do that with a quick overview of our operational history, which will end the introduction portion, and then I'll hit on some very key topics from my perspective.

I will start out by saying that I caveat both what I submitted in writing and anything I'll say here that as a battalion commander my default position is always when it comes to policies and procedures, what is the effect that it has on an individual Marine level? I say that because in my time in Iraq I am absolutely convinced that it is at the individual Marine and soldier level that this vile enemy will be destroyed and anything that we do that does not benefit them I would argue as the wrong way to go about business.

It's this down with the blood and guts and mud in the beer level that the key to success against this enemy lies and having personally lost 14 outstanding Marines during our tour, I don't believe in big-picture thinking when it has a direct effect on the training, readiness, lethality, or survivability of the magnificent Marines, who with a happy heart

ride into battle and willingly sacrifice all while giving us their undying loyalty up to and including their violent and early death.

So with that said, let me introduce the Mad Ghosts and our contribution to the global war on terror. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines activated on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2004. We deployed to Camp Pendleton, California for our intermediate location training, which commenced in earnest on the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2004, and lasted until mid-September, at which time we started our phased rotation into Iraq.

We arrived in Iraq in mid-September 2004, conducted a relief in place and transfer of authority with 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marines, an active duty Marine battalion known as the War Lords from Camp Lejeune. We were immediately chopped operational control to the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, Special Operations Capable – first reserve unit to ever be assigned to a Special Operations Capable MEU. And our area of operations was split between South Baghdad and the North Babel provinces of Iraq.

Our mission was forward and simple in its language, complex and its execution. We were to conduct full-spectrum counterinsurgency operations in order to set the conditions for free and fair Iraqi elections on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2005. We did that by utilizing what we called in our mission analysis the zip code offense, which for any of the members that might be Vietnam veterans was very similar to the strategic hamlet concept. Essentially, we were going to push forward and occupy terrain in what we knew was heavily owned territory by the insurgents and the terrorists and we were going to live, locate, and destroy them in their backyard.

Through persistent and relentless operations based on the 4<sup>th</sup> generation warfare model that the most important thing – the first task facing the counterinsurgency role is to identify the enemy and then follow on with his neutralization or destruction in zone. In order to do that, one of the key things that we would have to do, which would be counterintuitive to what was going on at the time was to reduce our presence on security missions and guarding terrain. In other words, not protecting the castle and going out and trying to find the enemy and destroying him in his backyard.

I point that out because upon arrival the MSR that ran through our zone at that time was the highest IEDed MSR in all of theater and our enemy activity exceeded any zone in theater. However, by the 30<sup>th</sup> of January, 2005, on election day, we had reduced enemy violence by 80 percent, voter turned out was 71 percent, and estimated enemy dead was over 300 and we had detained over 1,000 suspected insurgents and terrorists, over 80 percent of which had been processed on to Abu Ghraib prison for lengthy detentions.

The last slide that I'd really want to hit on before I go into key points was our unique history and I say this because I think it has specific relevance to this commission. 2/24 had a very unique operational history due to the enormous amount of higher headquarters that we worked for in our seven months there. We started out under the command of the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU with Colonel Ron "Jawbreaker" Johnson from September

through to December of '04. In late December of '04 through the beginning of February '05, we chopped to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division under Colonel "Fighting" Mike Fomica.

In February through the beginning of March, we then chopped to the 5<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division under Colonel Stephen "Lightning" Lanza. In the beginning of March and until the end of our time at the beginning of April, we chopped the 256<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team under the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division under General Mitchell and actually he then stood up through his assistant division commander, Colonel Marshall Johnson, a bravo command who actually oversaw operations in our zone. So what came out of that for us was an enormous amount of experience with both active duty Army, Marine Corps, and National Guard units. It was an enlightening experience for us and we became absolute masters at PowerPoint and PowerPoint presentations as a result.

That will end my introduction and a couple of things that I will point out as I go through my key elements that I'd like to hit on before available for the question and answer period. We arrived in zone as the mayhem from the heartland battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines. By the time we left the enemy, had called us the "mad ghost." That's the moniker that the battalion now carries. By the time we left, the world knew our zone is the triangle of death and does to this day. I would point out for any media members that were here, it was called the triangle of death for the impact we were having on the enemy, not the other way around which is the way it's constantly reported. So there is my contribution to the information operations war.

I would also point out that I believe as a result of our experiences, 2/24 from our time we returned up until today's date, has never gone below 100 percent TO strength. The Marines were extremely motivated; morale and retention was enormously high and remained so to this day. I think that is a result of the unique experience we had and the manner in which we went about business from pre-mobilization all the way through post-mobilization.

I would point out and I think it's necessary to point out that Major General McCarthy, the commanding general of the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division was absolutely instrumental in our success during the pre-mobilization period in fighting through some bureaucracies and getting us some things at the general officer level that had he not done would not have shaped us as well as we were, so I want to just specifically recognize Major General McCarthy, former CG, 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

What remains in my written presentation is about 14 slides, where I address each of the commission's questions in detail. The ones that I would specifically want to point out at this point and that will end my written portion – verbal portion is, first of all, I can only speak for the Marine Corps Reserve, but I have come to – this is my fourth go-round. I mobilized to combat during OIF. I was an individual augmentation mobilization during OIF that went to Marine forces specific in Hawaii. I was a battalion commander for 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines and since the 28<sup>th</sup> of April I've been here in Southern

California as the officer-in-charge of the 24<sup>th</sup> Marines Forward Headquarter and Combat Mentorship program in support of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines, who's in the process of rotating over.

Having been through this process four times now, three as a unit and one as an individual, this will not make me popular in the United States Marine Corps, but success of a unit is in spite of the mobilization process, not because of it. The Marine Corps Reserve mobilization process is a very bureaucratic, very intensive, insanely difficult process to execute, particularly at the battalion command level.

The second point that I would hit on is, as I believe was testified to yesterday by my operations officer as he and I have spent a lot of time on this, I do believe the 39-day model in a non-mobilized status is sufficient. However, we need to change the paradigm. The one weekend a month and the two weeks in the summer is wholly insufficient because of the drill weekend there is just not enough time to execute the skill sets, the amount of equipment that we're throwing at these magnificent Marines and soldiers and particularly in the asymmetric fight, which is my next point.

I would argue that any policy or procedure changes that this commission, the United States Congress, or anybody else considers needs to be based first and foremost on wrapping all of our brains around the fact that we are in an asymmetric warfare fight. The asymmetric warfare fight needs to be based on the following principle. We cannot fight the war and the enemy that we want. We must fight the war and the enemy that we have. He does not read our PowerPoints and he cares not about our timelines. He has an agenda, he has a method in which he is going to fight, and he will continue to do that for the next 100 years. And all our intents to get him to put on an uniform and meet us in the middle of the desert are going to fail and they are going to fail badly.

With that said, I would also argue that one of the things that I believe the Marine Corps Reserve needs to take a hard look at is a mentorship – a fully funded mentorship program and what I would call a asymmetric warfare center of excellence, where all Reserve units would rotate through when they're in a non-mobilized status, much the way the Marine Corps uses the combined arms exercise program. We would establish an asymmetric warfare center of excellence that they would go through, so that upon mobilization they are better shaped for success because even in 100 – 90 to 120 day training model, taking your standard rifleman whose been trained in two speeds in the Marine Corps – 3<sup>rd</sup> generation all-out warfare or liberty – and then asking him to operate in a daily basis on a force continuum violence spectrum is a very difficult task set to get through in 90 to 120 days.

That will end my introductory comments. Again, I thank you for the opportunity and on behalf of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines, I appreciate the efforts that the commission's doing on behalf of all guardsmen and reservists. Thank you.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. Ms. St. Laurent.

JANET ST. LAURENT: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the readiness challenges faced by the Army National Guard and Army Reserves. The commission has a very significant role and I hope that GAO's work will be useful in your deliberations.

Over the last few years, we've examined the effects of expanded mission requirements on the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, including their new operational role in supporting the global war on terror in conducting homeland security missions. In addition, we have ongoing work related to a wide variety of other reserve component issues, including reserve component compensation and benefits work that we're doing and have been discussing with commission staff.

My testimony this morning will focus on two issues. First, the Army Reserve component's challenges and sustaining equipment in personal readiness and second the extent to which the Army's planned transformation initiatives are likely to enhance readiness. Perhaps the most important conclusion of our work today is that the Army National Guard and Army Reserve missions have changed so significantly that DOD's former model for equipping and mending reserve component units is outdated and needs to be rethought.

Reserve units have made significant and heroic contributions overseas and at home. However, because both the Army National Guard and Army Reserve have historically been viewed as a strategic reserve force and resourced with fewer personnel and less equipment than required to conduct war fighting missions, increased use of reservists during the past few years to support overseas operations has stressed reserve components capabilities and has led to declining readiness. To provide deployable units for Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army National Guard and Army Reserve have transferred large numbers of equipment – hundreds of thousands of pieces of equipment – and personnel from non-deployed units to deploying units in order to meet the combatant commanders' requirements for fully equipped and staffed units.

We visited some of these units and witnessed the cycle of ad-hoc transfers in which Reserve units that initially were asked to donate equipment were then subsequently alerted for mobilization. This approach has resulted in growing shortages among non-deployed units and it's not sustainable over the long term. Moreover, DOD has required Reserve units to leave over 60,000 pieces of equipment overseas for use by other forces and much of this equipment has not been replaced yet, nor is it clear when it will be.

As a result, Army National Guard units had almost completely exhausted their inventory of almost 220 critical items such as certain types of night vision goggles, chemical warfare monitoring and decontamination equipment as of July of 2005. And overall, when substitute equipment and equipment left overseas is subtracted, the Army National Guard estimates it has less than 40 percent of its essential war fighting equipment on hand.

Our work has also shown that reported equipment statistics and readiness data often do not provide the complete picture. For example, in February 2006, the Army Reserve estimated it had about 78 percent of its required equipment, but about one-third of this equipment would not be considered deployable by combatant commanders and a significant amount needs maintenance.

In addition to creating the potential risk to the nation's ability to respond to unforeseen events overseas, equipment shortages could also adversely affect Reserve units' ability to perform homeland defense missions and provide support to civil authorities, an increasingly important role, particularly for the Army National Guard. Some items, such as Humvees, night vision goggles and chemical protective suits, which are in short supply among non-deployed forces, may also be extremely important in responding to domestic events. We've recommended that DOD more closely examine the National Guard's potential role in homeland security missions and begin to better define the equipment, personnel and training needed to respond.

In addition, a number of factors have negatively affected Army Reserve components' personnel readiness and these include cross-leveling of large numbers of personnel, increasing difficulty in identifying reservists trained in the skills required by combatant commanders, and fewer full-time support staff than authorized, which you've heard about from several other witnesses. For example, while the Air National Guard is staffed to meet the 100 percent of its full-time personnel requirements, the Army National Guard has only about 68 percent of its requirements in the aggregate and the Army Reserve has only 59 percent. We've made recommendations also that the full-time personnel requirements be revisited in light of this changing security environment and the new roles that reserve units are being required to perform.

Turning to the issue of how to best fix these challenges, we see both opportunities and significant risks associated with the Army's two major transformational initiatives. The creation of modular forces and implementation of a fourth generation model to provide reservists with more predictable deployment patterns are significant and represent positive steps. However, the extent to which these initiatives will alleviate equipment and personnel challenges is unclear at this time.

Our recent reports have identified challenges and risks associated with the Army's plans and made several recommendations to improve the Army's prospects for success. For example, although the Army plans to spend over \$20 billion to improve Reserve components' equipment status during the next several years, the Army has not provided very detailed plans at this point showing how unit equipment levels will compare to the quantities called for by the Army's new modular designs. And without such data, it's not clear to what extent reserve units will continue to have equipment shortfalls or the extent to which they'll continue to have substitute equipment; that is, equipment that is much older than the type of equipment that active units have. We believe the Army should be required to develop more detailed plans as well as measures for evaluating the success of this initiative to determine whether they're achieving the intended benefits of the modular force.



In addition, the Army has not yet developed detailed equipment plans for the Army force generation model that talks about expected readiness levels at each phase of the cycle, nor has it fully identified the resources it will need to effectively implement the model. Although DOD has agreed with our recommendations that more detailed plans are needed, it's not taken many specific actions to date in response to the recommendations and as a result many questions remain about the risk inherent in the Army's plans.

One key question that we believe needs to be addressed is whether units in early phases of the model will have sufficient quantities of equipment for potential domestic missions. This is when they're in the reset mode.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared remarks. I'll be happy to respond to any questions from you and the commission members.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you and thank all of you for your very helpful testimony. Let me start by seeing if I can summarize what I think I heard as consistent themes from all four witnesses, recognizing that each of your battalions in the end had a very successful combat tour and that's, you know, one of the keys, but as you indicate, if we don't make some changes, can we repeat that model? And can we repeat it not just for one battalion, but at any one time we have hundreds of battalions engaged, so it's important that every battalion be successful. So kind of my own shorthanded summary, and it won't be in the precise words that you used.

Obviously, the mobilization process needs significant improvements and changes if it's going to work for the future. Two, the equipment deficiencies are increasingly harmful to training and readiness. Obviously, the training time needs to be more efficient and effective and increased. We need to train to the real threat: the nature of the war that we're facing. The full time support – the GAO says we've got to revisit the levels and once we know the exact right levels, we should be fully funding the ones that we have now, but it may be that they need to be increased. Personnel policies of cross-leveling and not allowing for replacements for people that fall out during training are not helpful. The model for equipping and funding an operational Guard and Reserve certainly is broken. I think that is very consistent with previous testimony. And the deployment model – the ARFOGEN deployment model of one and five and one and six, at least for the Guard, appears to be possibly workable.

What did I miss, if anything, of the key things that you all were concerned about, or did that capture most of it? Just start with Colonel Plunkett. Did I miss anything?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, I think that captured the key points.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. How about you, Colonel Sisinyak?

LT. COL. SISNYAK: Check. I think it did.

MR. PUNARO: Colonel Smith?

LT. COL. SMITH: Yes, sir, I would agree.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Thank you and I will say, Colonel Smith, I appreciate your comment about the insane Marine Corps mobilization process and with your permission, I will excerpt that part of your testimony and send it to Headquarters Marine Corps in NPP60, which is the office in headquarters responsible for that. I've been battling with them for 25 years with no success. Perhaps I should have been using the word insane. That might have been more helpful, but you're absolutely right.

I mean, it's amazing to me – and all of you talked about is the bureaucracy is so resilient. In the face of these compelling changes that are necessary, it's amazing to me they are more resilient than the enemy in some cases, so we'll continue to work on that. But I'll tell you, it will be an uphill fight because we've been fighting to get it changed for a lot of years and they're pretty resilient.

So in any event, let me see if I can't – two issues I want to talk to you about this morning is I want to get a better feel for the full-time support that's required and then I want to get a better feel for the frequency of mobilization.

Let me start with you, Colonel Plunkett. In the Guard, you basically have two kinds of full-time support as I recall. You've got the National Guard technicians, correct?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Yes, sir, you have National Guard technicians and you have Title 32 AGR.

MR. PUNARO: AGRs. Now, on the technician side of the house, are those – tell us, just so we all will be on the same sheet of music – how are they different from the AGRs and who funds them?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Federal technicians or federal civil service employees, so they are paid as civil service salary and then they receive a Guard check for their weekend IDT, AT – whatever days they perform in a military status – as part of their federal civil service job, they have to be an active serving member of a Guard unit.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Now, what – what – in your battalion, were they up to their full level of funding?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, they were not. The federal technicians are primarily focused in specific areas – maintenance. We were a heavy brigade combat team, so that maintenance shop that we had, both our OMS, which is the local warrant, which handles the local vehicles that we have on station, and our MATES (ph) – which is a Mobilization

Systems Training Sets, which is at Ft. Polk – we’re below – I think they were about 60 percent manning at the Fedtec (?) at that time.

MR. PUNARO: And your AGRs?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: AGR – we were at 63 percent manning at the start of this; we are now down to 55.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, but the difference between an AGR and a technician?

LT. COLONEL PLUNKETT: An AGR is an active duty soldier. (Inaudible.)

MR. PUNARO: Okay. So for your battalion, a heavy battalion or whatever your manning documents are now that you’ve transitioned, what should be the total number of AGRs and National Guard technicians that your battalion should have under your manning documents and how many do you have today?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: The AGR is 48 and I currently have 26 and the fed techs, I’ll have to get you an exact number on that, but it’s probably about 12 that I should have and I’m probably running about eight. I’ll get you a correct answer on that one, sir.

MR. PUNARO: So basically for your battalion, you should have roughly 60 full-time people supporting that battalion. Is that correct?

LT. COLONEL PLUNKETT: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Is that a ballpark? How about you, Colonel Sisinyak? What’s the model in the Army Reserve?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: The model tracks pretty closely with Lieutenant Colonel Plunkett. I think where the exception really – a part of mobilization, we were really in good shape now, AGR, mil-techs. At the battalion level, we are, if not 100, very very close to 100 percent. However, the companies – that’s where we’re taking a beating – it is 50 percent or less and I’m going to guess, because I don’t have the exact number, but it’s probably within a battalion size element, I’d say 60 is a good number.

MR. PUNARO: So that’s 60 for the whole battalion – battalion level, company level, et cetera?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: Yes.

MR. PUNARO: Sixty? Sixty total for the battalion and 60 total for a guard battalion?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: Yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, at platoon, company, and battalion level. I'm trying to make sure I have the total number for the battalion – roughly 60. You can get us the exact number for the record?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: I can.

MR. PUNARO: And how many do you think you have today?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: I'm going to say between 25 and 30. The reason why I'm hesitating is because the battalion is going through a massive C2 realignment, so our units and our size and structure are moving around right now.

MR. PUNARO: Right, okay. How about Marine Infantry Battalion, Colonel Smith for the (INIs ?) and the ARs?

LT. COL. SMITH: Sir, this is kind of an interesting discussion based on what I'm hearing from the Reserve and the Guard. As you know –

MR. PUNARO: Yeah, you're going to ask for more I know. I can hear it coming.

LT. COL. SMITH: No, actually I'm not, sir. As you know, the inspector instructors system in the Marine Corps Reserve for a battalion would be in the 60 to 75 range and I've never heard any issues on the Marine Corps Reserve side as far as them not being – they're all billeted. The issue that you hear on the Reserve side is they don't have time to do their primary duties in support of the Reserve due to principally funeral details is the number one drag on their time and that's a very sticky issue because we all understand the importance of the veterans rating a funeral, but it would seem the easy answer to allow them to support the Reserve unit is ADSW funeral honors, but trying to get that money is like, you know, watching a monkey throw a football. It just doesn't seem to be available and then Toys for Tots – I mean, between those programs.

MR. PUNARO: I understand.

LT. COL. SMITH: But the numbers and the funding of it is right on target.

MR. PUNARO: So the INI you're talking about – and I believe the Marine Corps law provides like 5,500 active duty Marines in support of the Marine Corps Reserve, but you're saying for a battalion in the Marine Corps – infantry battalion – it's 60 to 75.

LT. COL. SMITH: I'd have to get you exact figures – that's about right, sir, because you –

MR. PUNARO: All right. What about the active reserves in the battalion? With your reservists – they are on full-time active duty supporting the battalion. How many would you have there?

LT. COL. SMITH: It's probably about 10 percent, 10 to 20 percent of the INI staff are AR billets.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, so when you gave me the 60 to 75 figure, that includes the ARs?

LT. COL. SMITH: That's correct, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. And basically you're saying your experience is the Marine Corps typically keeps those full-time support full up.

LT. COL. SMITH: Yes, sir, it's definitely a priority with the Marine Corps.

MR. PUNARO: Right, but the concern is that they are not basically doing their training and maintenance and equipping; they are obviously deflected to other missions.

LT. COL. SMITH: Yes, sir, it's their multitasking. And the other issue that I would say we have is the integration. The integration is absolutely the right way to go. We need to go all the way. The inspector instructors – again, only in the Marine Corps, non-integration integration – we use them. The battalions that want to succeed will take every one of their inspector instructors and insert them.

MR. PUNARO: Right. Well, I – is Colonel White sitting at the back of the room? When I was CG of division, I tried to integrate 70 percent onto our warfighting TO so that basically in the Marine Corps in the past, in the first Gulf War, the active duty personnel that trained that platoon, trained that company, trained that battalion, the battalion went off to war and the INIs stayed back home. So we – the headquarters wouldn't let us go 70 percent. I think we got about 40 percent. So that was at least a down payment, but I think the integrated model works pretty well.

LT. COL. SMITH: Yes, sir, it does. The only thing I would add would be for the inspector instructors and for those officers to be added to the integration model under the TO.

MR. PUNARO: Right. What's the GAO's experience in the full time manning area in your view of the importance of full-time support from the active component to our various Guard and Reserve units?

MS. ST. LAURENT: As we visited Reserve units, it's one of the very top issues that they've identified for us, and I think they point out that there're a lot a different functions that these full-timers perform. Another issue is when we've looked at the full time manning of the Air Guard and the Air Reserves, you know, they have always had a

much higher percentage. Now, aircraft maintenance, of course, you have to make sure you have the required numbers of folks to keep those aircraft in very good condition, so I'm not saying the levels necessarily need to be exactly comparable, but it runs about 30 percent, where as if you look at the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, there're in the teens in terms of overall manning, full-time manning as a percentage of overall manning.

And the other issue we hear is that the full-time support requirements really have not been revisited and revalidated in terms of looking at all the Guard's new roles and missions. The homeland defense requirements for planning for those missions, the fact that units sometimes partially deploy and there is equipment left at home that needs to continue to be maintained, the family support issues and health monitoring issues that that full-time support can help with are very important functions.

MR. PUNARO: Right. I mean, so basically, what you're saying is that those manning levels were determined when it was a strategic reserve, not an operational reserve. You made the observation that it's now an operational reserve and yet the policies, the procedures, the manning, the funding is still tied back to it being a strategic reserve. Now, is it accurate to say that you could trace unit readiness, or would there be a way to trace unit readiness to the level of full-time manning a particular unit has?

MS. ST. LAURENT: I think that's very difficult to do when you look at the readiness data. You will sometimes see comments about the level of full-time manning that commanders put in there and raise in an issue. But I think our conclusions have come a lot from just looking at the overall data: where the Army Guard and the Army Reserves are with respect to they're even old requirements. And then also, when you hear the pain points as you go out and visit the units, this is one of the very, very top issues they identify as problem.

MR. PUNARO: Would it be appropriate from an analytical model that when you're costing out, for example, a Reserve battalion that you include in the cost of that battalion the cost of their full-time support?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Absolutely.

MR. PUNARO: And in my – I thought that would be your answer and I believe when you do that, we still find that Reserve and Guard – and all the Reserve component chiefs testified that the Guard and Reserves still remain a tremendous bang for the buck for the taxpayers. The infantry battalions, I think, you'd have to look at what kind of infantry. A straight leg infantry battalion like the Marine Corps, even with your full-time support cranked into the model, and all the equipment, is still 30 percent, as opposed to 100 percent for an active duty, so it's 70 percent cheaper. A heavy battalion probably a little bit more expensive, but even with the full-time support cranked in it's still a bargain for the taxpayer.

Let me go to my next issue, which is frequency of mobilization. And we don't need to argue about the assumptions. Let me just give you the assumptions because I want an answer based on my assumptions, not your assumptions. Basically, we're going to be an operational reserve. We heard testimony yesterday, we've heard testimony from people in Washington, you know, the long war is a long war. It's not – we're not going to defeat this enemy overnight. I think our Guard and Reserve, as has been indicated, they have more missions, not less missions. They're both increasing in frequency overseas than at home and therefore, I think, we can expect this high operational tempo and high state of deployment requirement to continue.

Two of our major active duty forces, the Air Force and the Navy, are actually downsizing the size of their active component. The Marine Core is staying a little stable; they're ticking up about 5,000. The Army probably would like to get larger, but they have such massive equipment requirements it's hard for me, personally, to see how the Army can expand their active force without very significant increases in the top line that don't seem that realistic. So basically I believe, based on the testimony we've heard, the Guard and Reserve will be called on even more than they are now, and that's pretty intense.

So from a readiness standpoint, equipment readiness, training readiness, personnel readiness, recruiting and retention standpoint, we've heard the ARFOGEN model is one in six. We've heard some units we have now, battalions that are back for their second, some for their third tour. They're certainly not only one-in-six model; they're like a one-in-two. Where do we – and I know you're not going to want to tackle this because you don't know when you could break the bank – but what is the frequency for a battalion? You know, could you sustain a combat-ready battalion, equipping, training, manning, recruiting, retention and all the factors, what is the frequency that we can expect to be able to call those battalions up and use them in an operational context at home or abroad?

And I think we need to basically say that you're talking at least a year. I don't think it's – you know, people are looking at – even the Marine Core model when they deploy for several months, you're called up for at least a year; the Guard's called up for 18 months.

Let me start with you Colonel Plunkett. You know, what is the frequency we could realistically expect to mobilize these battalions and have them, you know, survive?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, I would think that if you – I think the ARFOGEN model is as close and accurate area – or a framework towards –

MR. PUNARO: So is that one in five for a Guard battalion?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: One in six, sir, sixth year being deployment a year.

MR. PUNARO: One in six.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: I think that correlates to an individual soldier to essentially one deployment per tour service.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, and so – and so that one in six would be 18 months mobilized every six years?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: That's probably where I got the rub. The 18 months is the time that we spent in post-mobilization at Ft. Hood, is the one factor that I could tell you – our soldiers will tell you that grates on them more than anything else. A lot of it had to do with the repetitiveness and redundancy of the training; a lot of it had to do with, you know, just somewhat of a waste of time.

MR. PUNARO: You're saying you could shorten the 18 months down to a couple of months, but you're still talking one in six?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Yes, sir. If we can – if we can get the total dwell time to about 12 months, I think it's one in six. It works.

MR. PUNARO: So you – you don't think it's one in six if it's 18 months?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, I don't think so, no.

MR. PUNARO: Yeah.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Based on talking to soldiers and stuff like that, I think that's too much for the soldier and his family.

MR. PUNARO: So would you have for – for 18 months, would you make it one in seven or one in eight? What would you do?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, that's a tough one to answer, I've got to tell you.

MR. PUNARO: What don't you take that for the record and think about it and get back to us. This is really important because, I mean, the whole future of the Guard and Reserve it's going to have to be set on the expectation for mobilization and you're going to have to understand it, families are going to have to understand it, employers are going to have to understand it, and we're going to have to direct our organizing, our training, our equipping, and our funding to what's a likely mobilization model. So this is probably the key question – one of the key questions.

How about you, Col. Sisinyak? What's your judgment on this?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: I'd feel the one in six is a good model. Lt. Col. Plunkett made a good comment reference. The mobilization station – if we could tighten up that timeline and knock that down to instead of an 18-month maybe a 15-month, the expectation that we received – 365 BOG – boots on ground – that's a given. We've



talked about morale and things like that, but to sit at the mobilization station for an extended period of time – all that does is kill morale.

MR. PUNARO: Right. So you're saying one in six, but that's with a shorter mob time?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: That's correct.

MR. PUNARO: Okay. Colonel Smith?

LT. COL. SMITH: Sir, from the Marine perspective, on the gun line and then the trench line they're completely comfortable more with the one in three. The way the average Marine reserve looks at it is take what the active duty cycle is; if they're over seven, back 12 dwell (?) and go seven again. The average reserve Marine says, double it for me and I'm on board. Their only expectation is to be well led, well equipped and trained, and they'll go.

MR. PUNARO: So how do you – how do you, so tell me how that timeline would work. You'd be mobilized for a year, correct?

LT. COL. SMITH: Twelve to 13 months, yes, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Twelve to 13 months and then your down cycle would be what? Two years?

LT. COL. SMITH: Eighteen months to 24 months.

MR. PUNARO: Okay, and you believe you could get all your equipment back and you could recruit and retain and turnaround in less than eight – in less than two years?

LT. COL. SMITH: Yes, sir. The equipment piece being a little bit of a challenge, but that's big Marine Corps; that's not at the battalion level.

MR. PUNARO: The problem is I'm trying to be realistic. You know, everybody can do – I mean, if we told all three of these battalions, you're going to go in 30 days, I guarantee you everyone would roger up and figure out how to do it, so I'm really not looking for the can-do attitude. I'm looking for kind of the realistic because we've got to be worried about hundreds of battalions. If you don't have the equipment, you don't have the equipment. Are you sure that you could get all the equipment back and get it reset in less than two years?

LT. COL. SMITH: Well, the reason – the reason I'm going to say yes, sir, is that's – as you know, that's the way the Reserve works anyway. Based on the training allowance, you will have your training allowance when you come back from your 90-day moratorium. So the basic equipment you need to train to skill sets, yes, but again that's

why I would come back to the asymmetric center of excellence: you spend that next 12 to 18 months preparing for that follow-on mission, I think it's absolutely doable.

MR. PUNARO: Has – do you know if the Marine Corps has done any analysis on recruiting and retention of a one-in-three model?

LT. COL. SMITH: I do not know, sir.

MR. PUNARO: Do you know – does Headquarters Marine Corps have a policy on this? Do you know?

LT. COL. SMITH: There is no written policy on Reserve dwell time right now, just active duty. Informally, it's listed as two years dwell time.

MR. PUNARO: So it is one in three.

LT. COL. SMITH: That's the informal policy, that you're available. Now, I'm not aware of anyone with the exception of 1/24, who was mobilized for OIF, who's actually executing that model, but again it's very difficult to gauge because of the volunteer policy. It's not really 1/24, it's 1/24 sourced from throughout 24<sup>th</sup> Marines.

MR. PUNARO: That's totally different now. I mean, I talked about your battalion. I'm not talking about a composite battalion that you cross-level from 45 different units. What I'm saying – I'm talking about an integral unit cohesion battalion. So now you're telling me something that's one in three if you bring people in and cross-deck them from all over.

LT. COL. SMITH: No, sir. What I'm saying is my opinion is it's one in three. The only battalion that's actually tested the model is 1/24, but it's an invalid test because of the current policy.

MR. PUNARO: Right. Got it. Okay. What – what – has the GAO done any work on this and have any view on the frequency of mobilization for these units?

MS. ST. LAURENT: We've been looking at the plans for the implementation of ARFOGEN model and I would say as we talk with the Guard folks and the Army Reserve, they are fairly comfortable with initially trying a five- or six-year cycle. We've asked them, is there any empirical data that tells you that that's going to work? And the answer, I think, is no, but we think it's reasonable.

We've also looked at the Air Force as they've implemented their expeditionary Air Force model and they have had to make adjustments along the way. You know, I think each – what we're saying is each service needs some kind of a model providing predictability to reservists, but those models may differ very much. The Navy model with their fleet response plan, the Air Force model, and it's important as the Army goes along with this that they do collect good data on the recruiting and retention impacts of

this, and they may need to make adjustments. But most folks that we've talked with feel that this is a reasonable starting point.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you. And we know up here one size doesn't fit all, and we know that in the Air Guard and the Air Force Reserve they have a lot of commercial pilots. We know in the Marine Corps you have a lot of college students. I don't know the guards – I mean, one size doesn't fit all. A lot depends on what people's civilian job occupations are, and so that has to be factored in as well.

Okay, that helps a lot. I really appreciate that.

Commissioner McKinnon?

DAN MCKINNON: This has really been a delight. The frankness and the bluntness and the right to the point you gentlemen have provided today is really terrific. It's been one of our really good hearings. I want to go back and dwell on a couple of other issues, though. We talked about the 39 days of training and there is some thought that you can't do it just a weekend a month and two weeks in the summer. I forget which one of you brought that up, but I'd like you each to amplify how would you do it differently and what would you – you know, to get your training so you're really better qualified?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, I guess I'll start. We've done a number of things as we developed training concepts. Probably, the key thing that we did was develop – we moved because we are a heavy organization. We found that in order to maximize a real true collective training, the annual training that we had to move our gunnery out of the annual training window and put it on the month during the year. And what we did was, we took IDT's and put them together and made a – basically a MUTA-9 (ph) is what we would call it, put it together in springtime and we would rotate people in. The full-time force would have to set up the ranges and stuff, and normally that was about a three-week process to rotate people through; we'd bring our crews through.

So what we would do was – it wasn't a one weekend a month, two weeks in the summer; it was, you know, one weekend you came in and it was a Saturday only and that was usually briefings and administrative and then you get to spring and you come in on Wednesday and you do gunnery Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. And so we were blending those days in, in order to achieve the training effect that we were looking at. And we're also there – you know, 39 days, there's 39 days of that type of funding. There's also some other funding models out there that provide you additional time, particularly in the area of gunnery. There're funds that come in when you can pay people to come for certain blocks of time either in training prep or in actual training funds; they're additional training assemblies, is what they're called for the Guard, and we will use those. So 39 days, roger, that's what's on the book that's there, but you know, your average soldier, and particularly a leader-type guy, is training more than that. I hope that helps to answer.

MR. MCKINNON: Yes.

Colonel?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: As previously stated, the 39 days works at least for a transport battalion. The caveat to that or the thing I would like to add – I had mentioned the administrative requirements. One recommendation I would like to make – obviously we all had to go through SRP, and that being the medical portion and some of the legal portions and things like that for the individual soldiers. If that could be consolidated over a one or two-month timeframe, allowing the remainder of the training year to focus on training, at least for a transportation battalion, we can hit the mark. That would be easy to do. The recommendation being send – because my unit's out of North Carolina, send the entire battalion down to a Jackson or a Bragg and let them knock out those administrative requirements, allowing each company and the battalion to focus the remainder of the year on training.

LT. COL. SMITH: (Off mike.)

MR. MCKINNON: You've got to push the button down to make it work.

LT. COL. SMITH: – or I'll use this one. Sir, this one is kind of a passion with me and in my written remarks, I broke down the concept that if I was in charge – which obviously will never happen – would be the way I would do it, and I would get away from the drill weekend and I would go to what I call quarterly drill periods where many ATs, where four times a year you would execute 12 drills over a six-day period. And there's two principal reasons for that, both of which were just said by my counterparts: one is from the training management, the other is from the readiness side.

And one of the issues that I always have with my peers in the Marine Corps is if you read the Marine Corps charter for the Reserve, our job – our mission is to be mobilization ready. It's not to be warfighting ready; it's to be mobilization ready, which means equipment readiness, personnel readiness – all those things that aren't sexy and aren't fun to do and always get overlooked. What's fun is to go to the machine gun range and go to the mortar range and learn how to locate, close with and destroy the enemy. But when the mobilization order comes, then you're racked with all your personnel readiness problems.

In the quarterly drill concept, the day one of every quarterly drill is dedicated to nothing but personnel readiness. So you're constantly providing a continuing action to your wills, your powers of attorney, your record books, your medical readiness, your dental readiness. Day two is your pre-combat checks and inspections, you issue your orders, your movement to your training area. Day three, four and five you execute whatever that training is, which goes to the second point. In today's world, to operate in the digital domain, to execute the weapon systems that we have, they are complex skill sets, they take a while to set up, and they take a while to execute. You need three days in order to get set up, train, remediate, and master. It cannot be done on a drill weekend.

We can say it was done on paper, but what was really done was familiarization training, not mastery of the mission essential task list or the individual task list.

And then you would return on day six, which obviously is all your equipment readiness. You'd issue your warning order for the following on quarter drill, and when you add into those four quarters, your AT, which would be battalion level training, I would argue that that system is going to give you a much more not only mobilization ready unit, but a much more combat proficient unit. You go to any Marine Reserve unit and you watch them in a normal AT, the difference in that unit on day one and day 14 is night and day, and you would get those similar effects from a quarterly drill concept vice the monthly 39-model that we currently use. You have just enough time to get your Marines, get them accounted for, issue them their gear, get them to the field, you execute literally seven or eight hours of training, and you are breaking down to come back home. It is not a model for mastery; it is a model for familiarization in a third generation warfare spectrum. Now add complexities of fourth generation warfare and they're just not prepared at mobilization date would be my argument.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay, when you get to mobilization, then how much time do you need to? Is the 90 days enough or 60 days or do you need more to really be a good, qualified warfighter?

LT. COL. SMITH: Under the current mobilization model and with the current skill set that is set out by the Marine Corps, 90 days would be the absolute bare minimum, and that's 90 training days. That's got to be discount mobilization time and movement to the ILOC – 90 training days. Under a quarterly drill concept and an asymmetric centre of excellence, 90 is enough. Minus that, I would argue 120 is more what you really need.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. Before we get to Ms. St. Laurent, let me just go back to another thing. We talked about retention: how fellows would sign up when they're in the theater because of the tax-free money and that. How many times can the fellows go over before you start to lose them? Before – you know, they can't maintain a civilian life. You only talked about one in six and all that, but that's not necessarily what's happening today. So when do you start – when do you start to lose your personnel and have a problem with recruiting?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: Sir, we've only deployed once, so the 18 months that was there, but my instinct kind of tells me that about a six-year time span is a about what you got. If you get any more than that – any quicker rotations than that, you're going to start to see people probably not retained. The key I think is that your window, your service is about a six-year service. So if you know you're going to deploy once or be ready to deploy at that one time, that's a conscious decision that you can make, and I think that's probably sustainable. I'd be very nervous if we started to get to something where it's a one in three. I just don't know that that would be sustainable retentionwise, particularly for the careerists that you have.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: I think it pertains to the individual soldier and their situation. There's probably some within these units that would deploy every opportunity and then there's some – quite a few – that can't, so I will also say that the six-year rotation – it's anticipated, it's expected. Families and employers can recognize and deal with that. Any less than that, it just puts an awful strain on both families and employers.

LT. COL. SMITH: Again, I would say that for the Marine Reserve, the reasonable expectation in the six-year enlistment is that he's probably going to do it twice. He joined to do it once for sure and in the six-year enlistment he's reasonably expecting that he's going to go over twice. Again, bringing it back to the one in three model without breaking them.

MR. MCKINNON: Ms. St. Laurent, the GAO does an outstanding job of analyzing and collecting data and information, but what you analyze is only as good as the information you get. Do you feel you're getting all the information you need out of DOD to do an accurate evaluation?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Yes, I do. And we go through a process before we include data in our reports where we have to have a data reliability check. So one of the things we do is just not accept all the information and statistics on their face value, but we go in and do check the data.

I think the area where I would have the most concern is with regard to plans about future budgets and projections, and that's where we get into the plans for modularity and the Army fourth-generation model because they are plans and concepts at this point in time, and the Army is working on the detail, but a lot of the plans for funding – for example, the new equipment for modular units – have not been worked out yet, and we do have questions about, again, the extent to which Army Reserve units are going to become equipped in comparison with the active component units.

We might not expect that they have exactly the same equipment but I think we'd like to have some understanding what the delta is going to be. If the Army is going to be at 80, 90 percent of the amount of equipment required by the design, where's the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve units going to be – 60, 70 percent, as they've historically been, or is it going to be somewhat higher with the \$20 billion that the Army is providing, and similarly with the fourth-generation model. What readiness levels are we really going to be expecting at each phase of the process?

So the plans – the future plans are still very much in flux. And that makes it very hard to assess the risk involved in these plans.

MR. MCKINNON: You know, we're in a different kind of – we're in – the manning and the equipping costs are such that they're increasing dramatically and we have less equipment than obviously anybody wants. What studies has GAO done as regards the budget for the Department of Defense in relation to the GDP? I mean, have you analyzed – we're down to about 3.9 percent today, which is at the low end of the

historical spectrum. Have you done any studies on what it would take to go maybe 4.0, 4.1, 2, 3, 4, something like that to increase the amount of revenue for the DOD to adequately fund equipping particularly?

MS. ST. LAURENT: We certainly have been monitoring budget trends and federal expenditures, and the comptroller general has in fact been making a large number of speeches on those issues around the country, and I think part of the issue that the future administrations and the Congress will have to deal with is how to balance, potentially, you know, needs for national security against some of the other demographic trends that we're seeing. Baby Boomers, that their aging and more focusing now into the Social Security, and a lot of those kinds of demands on the budget, don't come from the discretionary budget that Congress approves every year, but their sort of, you know, already – those are not annual appropriations that Congress has to make for Social Security, but they're going to be, certainly, a big part of the overall federal budget.

So he has been, I think, speaking out on a need to reassess federal programs and requirements in general, given the changes in demographics and the overall security environment. And we've put out a publication called "21<sup>st</sup> Century Questions" that raises light of these issues and gives our view of where the federal budget picture is headed and we'd be glad to provide a copy of that.

MR. MCKINNON: I appreciate it, but where I'm trying to go is has GAO made any assumptions about the Department of Defense, about different manning levels, and what would be required budget-wise to do it. So we're not planning a budget for DOD based on what the budget is today, but one on the threats are – and so we're basing a threat-based budget as opposed to just a numbers budget. Have you done any studies on that at all?

MS. ST. LAURENT: We have not certainly advocated a particular level of funding for the Department of Defense. Our role is more historically to look at the department's plans. We are doing a job right now looking at the analysis that was done in the Quadrennial Defense Review – how DOD determined its force structure, what kind of assumptions it made about manning – and we'll be raising questions about some of those issues, but we believe we need to sort of look at the DOD studies and identify some of the assumptions and the extent to which those assumptions seem reasonable, and raise questions as opposed to recommend specific budgetary levels for DOD in the future.

MR. MCKINNON: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you.

Commissioner Eckles.

LARRY K. ECKLES: Good morning, and thank you for being with us this morning. I certainly appreciate the fine service that the service members and your units provided during your deployment. Thank you very much.

I'd like to focus my questions on the demobilization process, specifically demobilizing – service members and their families must acquaint themselves with many different federal agencies – DOD, VA for example – which are available to help with the readjustment. But that's not always in a coordinated and effective way. Furthermore, transition assistance is not uniform amongst the reserve components.

My first question is directed toward the two Army components. Did your battalion receive transition assistance classes during your demobilization processing, and where was this conducted, if it was conducted? And in your mind, was this training adequate?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, we did receive the transition briefings and stuff at Fort Polk as part of the demobilization that was there. We were interrupted by the hurricanes, which caused, I would say, a little bit of difficulty because we had to leave. Part of the element had been briefed and done part of it and part of it had to come back.

I think that transition piece for us has been successful, but I would have to caveat that by tell you that my battalion sergeant major is the state representative for transitions and for dealing with that, and so he's very attuned to taking care of soldiers, and if he was here, he'll tell you he spends a better part of his day on the cell phone with that. So I would tell you we're a success but it's largely because of that man there.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: We also received the transition briefings at Fort Stewart. In my opinion they were extremely in depth and provided a lot of information to the soldiers. I think, however, there is a disconnect. Once the units go back home and come off active duty, the residual, such as the suicide threats, the excessive drinking; those sorts of things that happen with our soldiers and is still happening, I think that's where the disconnect comes in, in that these resources are out there but we are not doing a good job of delivering to help these people out. And in many cases – I don't joke about it, but it was as simple as, well, let's get the chaplain to call them, and that's just not an acceptable solution to the problem.

So there is a disconnect there. I'm not sure I've got a good recommendation. If you're situated close to an installation, and we aren't, it's a pretty easy fix in that you could go to the installation and get some help. However, when you're located two, three hours away, then you've got a unique problem in itself just due to the geography.

MR. ECKLES: Okay. Thank you. That's all of the questions I have, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Lewis.



PATTY LEWIS: Thank you for being here this morning. And along similar lines, I'm going to back to some questions that I raised yesterday related to family readiness.

Do you feel that your units, as they prepared for deployment, that the current family readiness and counseling programs were adequate to meet the needs of your soldiers and their families? And if they're lacking, did they create any serious problems in packing your training schedule and readiness as you were preparing to deploy?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: My opinion is the family readiness programs that we had were very good. That's quite a positive I would think. The family readiness groups, the volunteer groups of each of the units, were very strong. But beyond that there was also a program implemented – I don't know if it was a state of Louisiana program or if it was an Army or what it was, but they established family assistance centers at each of the major battalion areas and these became one-stop shopping for any issues for the families that were there.

My battalions S-4's wife was our family assistance coordinator and so she became the person that everybody could call and talk to that was there. They also provided a series of briefings to the families. There was a briefing that – I did part of it before we deployed, and then they did a briefing – I guess it was about 30 to 60 days after we deployed, a separations briefing. And then, before we re-deployed, there was another series of briefings that they gave 30 to 45 days out to the families in anticipation of us coming back together with them at that. So that program, I would tell you, was a success, and I think it worked very well for us – that combined with the volunteer family readiness groups that we had in our units.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: The family support program was a success. However, the actual program at the unit level, it went as the family support coordinator went. If that person was strong, there weren't a lot issues in theater or stateside. However, there were units that had weak coordinators and that's where the problems lie.

A recommendation: There should be more than just classes; there ought to be some kind of validation or check on these individuals because they are literally trying to keep it together in theater and stateside, and are they truly warranted to handle what's coming down the pipe?

So it was a success and the briefings, the support, the resources that were all made available but the trigger point is that family support coordinator.

LT. COL. SMITH: From a Marine Corps perspective, the family readiness program and the orders, as written and as it's structured, are outstanding and it works. The issue that I've seen, both positive and negative, is – from the Marine Corps side – family readiness is a supporting arm, just like artillery, and it's a command responsibility. If the commander takes an active interest in the family readiness program and demands excellence from it, as he does from everything else, it will succeed. If he does not take an

active interest in it, it will fail and failure in the family readiness while you're deployed, is catastrophic.

Our experience was that it was outstanding. I had a great a battalion key volunteer adviser. I had outstanding key volunteers, coordinators, and the key volunteer network was phenomenal. They stood up a website. I would communicate a letter back on a weekly basis with ground-level troops, and we were a huge success in our family readiness as a result. But my caveat would be is it is a command responsibility. I mean, you can have all the networks you want; if the command doesn't take an active interest in it you're going to have a problem on your hands.

MS. LEWIS. Thank you. And then I'd like to give you each an opportunity to comment on retention and if you see any trends, and if so, as you talk to your troops, what the reasons are for any trends that you're seeing – just to get on the record briefly.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: As far as retention, like I said, I've already mentioned the retention bonuses and the positive effect that they had in theater. We also are on track right now to a 76-percent-plus retention rate for this year. So I think it's a very positive trend right now with them. I think that the main thing is that most of them feel – have a feel good about their deployment that they had there. Money talks and I think that's why I recommend the maintenance of the retention bonuses.

I think the real change that I would say now is, more so than ever before you're retaining a family, and you've really got to reach out and make sure that the families understand and see the benefits that exist in continuation of services. And that's a little bit different of a change, I think, but they know they're going to be – they've been deployed and they know the potential exists there in the future, and so any programs that focus in that direction are what I think we need to look at.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: I think retention has stabilized. For the first year after redeployment. We left a lot of very, very seasoned combat veterans but now it has stabilized and I think that is the key and that is money is going to talk here. The families need to understand that there is something for their soldiers and the ones we're focusing on now – the ones that were riding the fence in theater and while they came back, they either stayed or they went.

Now the ones that have remained are the ones that are in for the long haul, and in order for us to keep them, retain them, we have to continue providing bonuses and show them the support in all the functional areas.

LT. COL. SMITH: My conversations and experience with the reserve Marines is they have three basic expectations they want met: to be the best-led, the best-equipped, the best-trained force on the planet. You provide them that and retention skyrockets. Waste their time on drill weekend, not be organized, be inefficient, ineffective, not pay them on time; that's when you start losing people.

MS. LEWIS: Thank you all very much.

That's it, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Rowley.

WADE ROWLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Recent events along the U.S. border have highlighted the need for civil support to law enforcement, and some of the things that are being considered, in fact, are being done with engineer units in particular, is border missions for their annual training. This is directed to Lieutenant Colonel Plunkett. How would you feel about your unit using an annual training to provide support to the Department of Homeland Security and what impact would that have on your retraining for wartime mission?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: If it was directed to be the annual training, an event that was – obviously, we'd execute the mission as it was, but you're going to reduce my collective proficiency to the extent that I can't match the type of pass that we're there.

Louisiana, interestingly enough, at this time is performing a support-the-law-enforcement in New Orleans. There is approximately 300 soldiers that are there. That is being done on a volunteer status and is going to happen through Mardi Gras, I think, of next year or through the first of the year, and that's just kind of a sustainable as a volunteer thing. But, I mean, it gets back to, what do you want me to appear at mobilization station trained in? What level would you want, and anything that you do is going to take large blocks of training away from that – are going to reduce that.

MR. ROWLEY: That brings up the next question. How would your units and your personnel feel about a shift in focus from the war-fighting mission, the away game, and more towards the home game? How would that affect your recruiting and retention, the morale of your units, the whole way that your units think?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: People, don't enlist to be in infantry, be in arms, whatever it is. They enlist to be a combat soldier, so there has to be the primacy of that mission; that's the focus of stuff that is there. I never asked a guy what he would think – whether he would reenlist if he was just going to be guy guarding the critical infrastructure down the road. But I tell you, the primary focus of a mission needs to be the federal missions, but those missions marry in a lot of ways, things that you do in support of Homeland Security – traffic control points, fixed-sites security, president's patrols, reaction forces – and as long as you marry those two training up, I think you get the benefits from that.

MR. ROWLEY: Yeah, this is for the Marine Reserve as well as the Army Reserve. Do you see a role in anyway for the active or the reserve forces to play a role in homeland security also, or do you think that it more traditionally should be left to the National Guard-type units?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: I think it depends on the mission. Transportation is about all I know at this point and they certainly have a mission. Can you take a battalion-size element? Sure you can, and they have in support of Katrina when that occurred. And just like my counterpart, the soldiers don't care about the mission as long as they have one and understand it, so yes.

LT. COL. SMITH: Ironically enough, it was the 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment that provided Marine forces to Marine Forces Katrina last year, so when that wrapped up, we spent a lot of time doing operational planning on your exact question, Commissioner. And the Marines will do it. The biggest concern is mission creep. Them going down to do what they're trained to do, which is an infantry regiment, doesn't lend itself real well to the home game. So I would say from the – they'll do what they're told to do, but the preference from the Marine Reserve perspective is the away game. If ordered to do the home game, they would like to see it under a specific set of guidance and mission tasks – (unintelligible) – pretty much the chaos that they found themselves in.

MR. ROWLEY: Answer – Ms. St. Laurent, have you seen any steps taken by the DOD to address outfitting the – specifically the National Guard for the Homeland Security mission? Have you seen anything at all?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Yes. I think the National Guard Bureau has been fairly proactive in trying to take some measures to look at and better prepare the Guard for some of the Homeland defense missions. I think some of these steps may need to be looked at in a broader DOD perspective. For example, as you know, we do have already the fulltime civil support teams dedicated to chemical and detection issues.

But in addition to that, the Guard Bureau has worked with the Army to identify less than 342 dual-use items that have high relevance to domestic events, but are also part of units' worked on requirements. And I think a really important task for the future is to incorporate in readiness-reporting systems a better data on the homeland security implications of the guard's equipping status. For example, right now all the readiness reporting is dealt, of course, to units' war fighting missions and if they're short of equipment, how that would that effect those war fighting missions. But the Department of Defense, working with the Guard Bureau, is trying to develop some measures whereby they would be looking at equipment readiness for Homeland Security, and that's very positive. It needs to be developed further but that's very positive.

So if you deploy all your chemical units, what's left? You know, I think we have not had those measures that give visibility to what's left domestically, and in the future, we need to have better data on what's left.

MR. ROWLEY: So you're confident that's being resolved, at least being addressed as far as the effect this will have on – as far as – until all the backup of – to alleviate the problem effecting the training mission and the overseas mission. Do you see what they're doing what now that's impacting the overseas capability?

MS. ST. LAURENT: I think what we're seeing is the beginning of a process to try to look at how we balance equipment for the overseas mission and overseas deployments, with equipment that might be need for homeland missions. I think more work needs to be done.

There's also, with regard to these 342 items that the Army has identified that could be dual use, the guard currently does not have all of that equipment. And it's not clear when some of that will be funded to greater quantities and these do include things like night vision goggles, generators, chemical-weapons suits, monitoring equipment, things like that that could – were used in Katrina, will certainly have the potential to be used in future domestic missions, and so to the extent that they could be given some priority on the equipment process so that guard units have them in their inventory, that would be very helpful. And again, the guard's working with the Army, but whether the funding is going to be there to fund all those 342 items is not clear.

MR. ROWLEY: Yes, then the last question for you, do you see any movement form the Homeland Security side to try and fill that void or is it all being borne on the shoulders of DOD?

MS. ST. LAURENT: There is some movement. I was recently in Florida visiting with the National Guard there and they had received some equipment that had actually been purchased by the state of Florida, using grants from Homeland Security Department, mobile command centers and things like that, so I think that was a positive development. But I would say that, in general, much more work needs to be done in terms of coordination between DOD and the Department of Homeland Security on – first of all, looking at the 15 planning scenarios for homeland security missions that were developed by the Homeland Security Council and the kinds of capabilities that they might require. And these are primarily large multi-state kind of events that could happen, ranging from pandemic flu to large natural disasters. And again, as our work on Katrina has showed, there hasn't been a great deal of coordination yet in terms of the Department of Defense working with the Department of Homeland Security on what capabilities DHS would bring to bear, what capabilities Title 10 forces would bring to bear, and then what capabilities the National Guard is likely to be able to bring to bear.

MR. ROWLEY: Thank you all very much for your time this morning. It's very much appreciated.

Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Thank you.

Commissioner Sherrard.

JAMES E. SHERRARD III: Good morning. I wanted to talk a little bit about mobilization concerns, and you've addressed most of the questions that I had laid out but

I still have a couple I'd like to run by you. The issue of cross leveling, did the individuals that were cross leveled – were they under your command and other organizations or did they come from outside? The second part of that is, were they volunteers or non-vols? And the third part, which I think is probably the most crucial, is who had responsibility for their pre-MOB preparation?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, it was easy for me. I started at 86 percent strength and they cross-leveled the Brigade Separate Calvary troop into my organization. That cavalry troop was already under me for training oversight, so they came, they were involuntarily brought into me that was there, but there was really no issue. That brought be up to 97-plus percentile and that's what I deployed and fought with.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: The soldiers, for the most part, came from outside of my command. Although, there were a few that came from within the command. From a pre-MOB standpoint, basically when we received the soldier, that soldier had already – he's ready to go, in that – been through the MOB station either with us or before or after. So that process worked in that they were as prepared as the soldiers – the integral soldiers that I had.

LT. COL. SMITH: I'm going to address this one from my current duty perspective as regimental XO for 124 because when we went over, I was about 98 percent organic, minus officers, which is standard in the reserves, but 124 currently is about 50 percent of their strength came from cross leveling. Currently, coming just from the reserve side, they're dealing with Marines that have come from 21 separate home training centers throughout the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

Who was responsible for their pre-mobilization training is the unit that that they belong to, and we got a complete cross section from a full-up individual Marine, both equipped and pre-MOB trained, to personnel that showed up with no equipment and virtually no pre-mobilization training. They also ran the gamut from guys who volunteered because they wanted to go back to Iraq, to units who had Marines that had not yet been, and when they were tasked with the quotas, those were the ones they sent, so it just crosses the gamut on your question from the 124 side of the house.

MR. SHERRARD: Thank you very much.

Back to the Army Guard and the Army Reserve, in terms of your fulltime people that you did not have, do you have the authority to put traditional reservists or guardsmen against those billets to man against the military portion of that fulltime billet? And also, as a caveat to that, do you have authority to over-man your unit?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: As far as the fulltimes, there's no funding to support me bringing on additional people, other than if they get some specific funds at the end of the year, so it would be an exception and certainly not the rule. So I don't have anything that I can use to bring people on for any extended period of time to do anything.

And as to the second portion, we can recruit up and above our authorized strength, and that is where we're trying to get to because obviously we have embedded soldiers in our organization that are training-based soldiers and not fully-trained soldiers at that point.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: And in the reserves we can also fill the position even though if it's a fulltime position. If you're mobilized deployed, yes, you can put a person in there to fill that vacant position. We didn't have any issues at all. I'm tracking with my counterpart on that in that – no issues, and I don't see the mobilization portion of that as an issue now or going forward.

MR. ROWLEY: One last question for my guard friend here: Can you give me the example of the type of training issues and items that you had already validated that you had to revalidate after mobilization, that your word wasn't good enough as a commander?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: The SRP portion itself, which was done actually by our state and not us, a lot of that had to do with once they got to the mobilization stage – and they were using a different system so they had to completely revalidate that – but any of the T-CERT (ph) training that we had done, the theater – the individual readiness training and stuff that had been done prior to that, we had had embedded AC guys, training support battalion guys who were there, but they had been pulled out to support the other mobilizations. If those guys would have been present, they may have been able to utilize that, but it was really the T-CERT individual training that we'd done, the weapons qualifications training that we've done; all of that was basically had to restart.

MR. ROWLEY: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Stockton.

DONALD L. STOCKTON: Good morning to all of you, and thank you for all that you do and for being here today. I would like to focus my question to you, Ms. St. Laurent. The GAO recently reported – and I think that's in the report that you just gave to us – that Army support skills are in an increasingly short supply for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. And you further found, or the organization found that the DOD lacks data on skilled individuals available for future deployments. And it does not comprehensively assess the courses of action to take more personnel available for future – or to make more personnel available for future rotations. I noticed that some of those skills you identified here in this report are military police, engineering, and civil affairs. Are there others, maybe, that we should be aware of?

MS. ST. LAURENT: There are. There are transportation engineering, medical, intelligence, psychological operations. And I think going back to Commissioner Sherrard's question about the cross leveling, we're actually seeing increased amounts of cross leveling because many of these skills reside primarily in the reserve component and, as you know, DOD policy is to only deploy reservists one time, under the current

mobilizations. And we have the chance the last year to sit in on some of the conferences that Joint Forces Command sponsors to figure out how to meet combatant commander requirements for future rotations to Iraq and Afghanistan. And in the process of that, what we're seeing is there are a very few whole units left, and as a result there is a need to do much more cross leveling as individuals in some of these high-demand specialties.

MR. STOCKTON: We've already received a lot of testimony about the problems with cross leveling and, as you know, Congress has asked us to study the roles and missions of the reserve components. Would that lend support to the fact that maybe we need some more people in some of these skill sets on active duty or in the active components?

MS. ST. LAURENT: I think it certainly suggests that the department has to take another look at that issue. To their credit, a couple of years ago DOD – as we began these operations and began to see some of the problems, DOD did conduct a study. And as a result of that, they did make some decisions to rebalance some of their skill sets. Civil affairs was one of them, so I think that their plan is to put some more capability on the active component.

But as these operations continue, the demand also continues and the department has continuing problems in identifying ready units. So I think there's a need to look at how they're going to meet future rotations and consider all the options. One option is to certainly ask for volunteers, and they do have some success in that. There are other options to look at similar capabilities in the other services, and more and more, DOD is considering that option, looking at Navy and Air Force folks with security backgrounds and things like that to help alleviate some of the demand.

One of the things we saw that we were concerned about is the fact that DOD did not have very good data to use in that process in terms of who has been deployed and what skill sets they have. So they first need to get a baseline so that that data is available for the folks making these sourcing decisions.

MR. STOCKTON: Another thing I'd like for you to comment on, if you can, I and others on this commission have heard testimony about some case where traditional missions that maybe the Army would do in theater, for one reason or another they couldn't do that, they didn't have the manpower or the equipment to do that, and in many cases maybe the Navy or the Air Force was required to backfill and help do some of these support areas, in some cases where they may not have been trained to do that. Of course, I believe they were getting some training, and did one of you mention something about training the Air Force? Okay. Maybe you can comment on that too, but do you have any comments about that?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Yes, we have seen in certain examples, as I mentioned, with security forces, transportation forces, where DOD is trying to tap some folks in the Navy and Air Force to do those missions. They are looking very carefully at the training



required and, in many cases they're sending them through some of the Army's schools and training to make sure that they understand the doctrine and have the skills required.

I think the longer-term issues is how do we transition through this current operation and maybe get back to the point where we can provide some predictability for the Army personnel who are primarily charged with doing these missions? There is going to be bridging phase, as the Army likes to call it, where we have to work our way out of the situation we find ourselves in with large amounts of cross leveling and having to take a lot of ad hoc actions to meet the combatant requirements too – maybe this force-generation model or another process that's going to provide a better match, where you can send whole units to do the missions they've trained in, as opposed to having to do this cross leveling.

MR. STOCKTON: I think I've heard this called as "in lieu of" missions?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Right. It's happened a lot with military police, for example, and the prime example that probably you have all heard about is where they've taken artillery units and converted them to military police units and they've put them through a subset of the military-personnel training. But they've identified that subset by looking at the kinds of MP tasks they're likely to need to perform in Iraq. But again, it just raises issues for the future as to whether we've got the force properly balanced.

MR. STOCKTON: And this could also be considered a training issue. Colonel, did you have any – (cross talk). Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt. Colonel.

LT. COL. SISINYAK: Well, in my case I think instead of an "in lieu," it was "in addition to." Honestly, I was ill prepared for the majority of the work that I had to do over there. From a personal aspect, the easy part – not the easy part, but the one we all knew, was how to basically provide transportation support. The other 80 percent that I had no training on and as Lieutenant Colonel Smith said, we took the mission; we'll get it done.

But very little training in force protection. I had to run a camp with an \$80 million order of magnitude. I had absolutely zero training for that, had support, but still I'm the one that has to take care of that. Training the Air Force on providing basically gun truck support, I had zero training in that. In fact, the TTPs were evolving and still are, over there, so I'd say 80 percent – there should be if there's not already some sort of school that would allow the leaders to at least get their feet wet with that prior to going and having to jump in with both feet.

MR. STOCKTON: Sounds like an important problem that we need to be concerned with and addressing.

Does either of you other colonels have any comments on this or did you see anything about this?

LT. COL. SMITH: Sir, my comment would be that cross leveling is evil, as is the “in lieu” missions. And the reason that I say that is it does not take into account the intangibles. It’s looking at a model – it’s trying to measure metrics on things that you can’t measure. A Marine artillery unit is a Marine artillery unit who takes on being a Marine artillery unit. You take them; you mobilize them; you tell them you’re now going to be a provisional military police battalion; two things happen right off the bat. They’re mindset is, wait a minute, I’m an artillery battalion; I will do my mission. The other effect is you’re basically telling the MPs, anybody can do your skill set. And as a civilian police officer, I know that that’s just simply not the case.

Now, we can put it on paper and we can say that they did this, this, and this training, but to qualify from that that they are now a qualified military police officer discounts the experience that has to reinforce the training that makes one a police officer, civilian or military, which is, again, the mindset. It’s the same thing as an infantryman. We graduate in O311 from the infantry-training course. He’s an O311 on paper. Twelve to 18 months later, when he has served in fire team under a corporal, he’s now an infantryman.

And the whole cross-leveling thing, the effect it has on units, not only from a morale, but the thing that nobody ever talks about – I’ll just give you one quick example. It literally took us in 124 – literally took us almost 90 days to get a master roster of every weapon in the battalion and what Marine was assigned that weapon for the simple reason, again, they came from 21 separate home training sites and about 14 more active duty sites.

Now, it would have been easy if the battalion command had just said the weapon you brought is the weapon you’re assigned, but that’s not the smart way to do business and he didn’t do it that way. He left it up to his company commanders. So Marine X comes from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 24<sup>th</sup> Marines in Terra Haute, Indiana; he brings an M-16 with M203 launcher attached to it. His fire team leader says, you’re now my squad automatic weapon man, so they have to switch weapons. So now you have to go to two separate equipment density lists and two separate serialized rosters, and you have to make those changes. And that went on for 90 days while people screaming at us, we need your crane (sp) report; we need this report; we need that report. Understood; we’re working it.

And that is just one issue. You could across any of the war-fighting functions and you will find that the – what I tell people is when you cross level, take any issue and multiple by its complexity by the number of places from which you cross level and that’s the math you’ve got. So you if you’ve got guys from 35 different locations, you just took that issue and you multiplied the complexity times a power of 35.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, the only thing I’d add to this is once you’re in theater, there are a lot of tasks and stuff that come up that will begin to pull people away that you didn’t really think of, prepare of. I think back to the running a CMAC, a civil military affairs center that we had that end up being a claims center where were

dispensing over \$4 million in claims plus handling distribution of agriculture equipment, a whole bunch of stuff.

Luckily, guard formations tend to have some guys with additional expertise in them. I had a guy that had been a banker and had been proficient at that, and I put him in charge of that. Those types of missions are the kind of things that come up with, that you're not really – you know, it's not stabbing somebody with a bayonet, but it's critical to what we were doing there. And fortunately our organizations have embedded skill sets that are not normal, that you had that you can draw on those people to do those kind of missions. The same guy ended being in charge of my military training with the Iraqis. The bad thing is the division got smart about this while were there and sent down a list requiring us to submit everybody's civilian job and what they had. I had a guy that was a DEA agent that worked in my top that got sucked up because he was – his DEA job was running informants, and so they put together a division team to use him and so I lost that guy along the way, but there's some good to it and there's some bad to it.

MR. STOCKTON: Thank you so very much. Your candor is appreciated.

MR. PUNARO: Commissioner Stump.

E. GORDON STUMP: Well, good morning. Good morning. I'd like to talk a little bit about the Army Force Generation Model, as Ms. St. Laurent indicated. There is a concern on those first two years of the equipment that generation model is a form of tiered readiness, so for the first year or two you may or may not have equipment to do your state mission and to do the training. You just can't go without anything for two years. What would be, in your opinion, would be the minimum amount of equipment that you might need in this Force Generation Model to do your state mission and continue with the training your going to need to retain the people?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, we have had to identify what our requirements are for the state mission, primarily hurricane support, critical infrastructure report, and we have done that. And I think that's a smaller set of equipment than your full up intel finding stuff, obviously, primarily focused on high-water vehicles that you have, night-vision system somewhat, radios, generators, that kind of stuff. So we've identified that and we are getting those pieces of equipment given to us. LNTVs (ph) were fielded early to us back home. If we stay behind equipment, we lost all our home LNTVs, basically. But they've come forward and they've done that to us so I think that problem is going to be resolved.

The key for your intel – for your tactical mission is that you have to have sufficient equipment sets in order to be doing some type of training on, and that's the key. You have to be able to do that. And some of the equipment that you've got is the MOSQ's producing schools for the long term, so you're going to have these people come out of the school but they're going to have to have the training – either a training device or the actual piece of equipment to train on.

MR. STUMP: In the fourth and fifth years of the fourth-generation model, I think another purpose of the model would be to have you more ready so that you would reduce the post-mobilization training time, and I really believe that the one in six – you don't need to go 12, 15 – anything over 12 months in order to make that work. In fact, Secretary Hall felt that – he testified that if you go more than a year in that one in six, it might not work so they're trying to break that down.

How many additional training days do you think that you might require in those fourth and fifth years to make this work?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: As I recall, the model gives you 54 now for the training days for the soldiers. There would also need to be inside there embedded leader training. You already get that through your additional assemblies that are there. So I would think that that works. Based on our experience back when we trained up for the National Training Center in 2001, that's approaching what we ended up doing by adding those additional training days in there. So right now, I would say that model gives you pretty fair assessment of what you need to get it done, particularly if you add the third week to the annual training because those – some days count more than others. Once you're already in your training cycle and beginning to train – I believe Colonel Smith talked about the difference in a Marine from day one of AT to day 14. Well, those extra seven days as you hit those last two years really I think will make a difference.

MR. STUMP: How would you handle the turnover rate in years four and five? You're still going to have an 18-percent turnover rate, and since we don't have a TTHS account, would you suggest over-manning, or how are you going to handle that? Because you're not – would you do a stop loss? I see that as a – you have to minimize the amount of cross leveling, obviously, if you're going to be ready to go without as much post-mobilization training.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, obviously, the over manning is the answer if you can do that – I mean, to do recruiting and retention and stuff that you got there. That's the best case scenario is that you come in the year four and year five and your 110 percent strength or 105 percent strength, and your attrition, you know, kind of amounts out to what you do.

The other part is locking down the leadership and stuff that you've got so there is no loss of critical leaders that are in there working with those. But the crews and stuff, I think that's the best thing is to be over strength of what you have that's going in there. At point you do you put stop loss in is going to be critical decision point for you because that locks people in and some people have a bad feeling about that philosophically when you put that in on them. Year four is obviously too early, but when you start getting into year five, that's probably about the time that you're going to have to say, this is it, boys, you're going, and there's no change to that.

MR. STUMP: The Army modularity that you're probably involved in now, what do you think – what do you think – what effect is this going to have on the National Guard?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: I like the modularity, primarily because you now have everything self-contained inside a brigade organization. We always suffered as a brigade, S-3, for many years. We suffered because of a lack of an MSE signal company. We didn't have one in our state. So I like the modularity where you have all of those capacities that are built into the organizational structure.

There are some difficulties in the guard environment with the modularity. A lot of that has to do with the forward-support companies that you have because they are – they technically become a support battalion, but because of the way you are distributed around the state, they have to reside with the local battalion. And I'm having difficulty right now as we begin to stand up, filling out my forward-support companies because of the MOS's that support that have always resided three hours away from where my headquarters is. And I think over a period of time that will self-correct itself as you recruit and you retain and move people. But I like the modularity that we have because of those factors.

MR. STUMP: Ms. St. Laurent, has the Army indicated that they will fund the modularity and the reserve components to the same level they are doing it in the active component?

MS. ST. LAURENT: It is very unclear. Their goal is to have reserve units that are as capable as the active Army units. And they have identified about \$52 billion worth of costs that the Army says it needs to implement modularity. But as we have looked at how that estimate breaks out between the reserve component and the active component, it does assume that the reserve component units will continue to have some older substitute equipment, will continue to have some shortages in trucks and other areas. So we plan to continue monitoring it very closely.

I think also the Army strategy – and based on discussions of the reserve component – is to establish the units, get them into the new organizational design as quickly as possible by fiscal year '08, and then money for equipment will be trailing over a period of several years. But if we look at the intent of modularity, it is to provide more flexible units that can be tailored, and that is a good – that is an asset and positive aspect of modularity. But it also a new operational concept, and it is really, in some cases, trading more people.

The older brigades had about a thousand more people in some cases than the new brigades are going to have, and to compensate for having fewer people, the Army is relying on having more advanced intelligence surveillance reconnaissance systems, UAVs, and I think because of that concept, to have a brigade of equal capability to the older, larger brigade, you're relying on more technology. It is important for the Army to

look at providing guard units, as well as active units, with some of this new enabling technology.

MR. STUMP: Okay, thank you very much.

MR. PUNARO: Mr. Stockton.

MR. : (Off mike.)

MR. PUNARO: Mr. Thompson.

MR. THOMPSON: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

I want to kind of drill down a little deeper into this equipment issue. We have had numerous people raise the flag up the halyard, where we just don't have enough equipment here at home. We visited the Army Transportation Command. They talked to us a little bit about resetting the force, both active and reserve component. We never really have gotten into the question about what is the readiness condition of what you have here at home? We have heard that you don't have enough, but we don't really – I know that the National Guard Armory and remarks from OSERA (ph), and just my mark-one eyeball looking at it, I wonder if you could put a key in the ignition and depend upon it starting, the stuff that I see in their equipment yards.

So I would like to know from each one of you what you feel is the readiness level of the equipment that you have.

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, the equipment that we have currently is ready. Our maintenance guys have worked extensively on it because the equipment that we have, other than what was just fielded to us, the LMTVs, they obviously came in good condition; they were new vehicles that came in. But the older equipment that we had that really had stayed behind, particularly wheeled vehicles and such, was used extensively in Hurricane Katrina and Rita, and that stuff came back to us in pretty bad shape. But a year later we have been able to repair most of that, though I'm sure my maintenance chief would tell you that the funding level of the parts and stuff is not adequate for what he really needs to get that and sustain that.

MR. THOMPSON: Colonel?

LT. COL. SISINYAK: The equipment that we have is actually a combination of the COLTAS (ph) – that's the 915 A1s, 2s and 3s, it's in good condition. Once they reconstituted and went through the AMSA shops and got back to the unit, it's in good operating order. Is it ready for another redeployment? The answer is yes. We are getting the support that we need to keep the repair parts on hand, and the AMSAs are doing a wonderful job keeping the equipment running. No issues; no issues from the transportation side of the house.

The only issue that we have is that equipment, unlike the sets that have been left over there, but is that equipment going to go over with or without up-armor? That is the only issue we have. And we had to build our own and a lot of time, effort, and resources spent on that. That is the only part of it where we are not prepared. If we are going to go back over, do we fall in on a battalion set that has already got all of the protection required and the camo (ph) required, or are we going to use this equipment that is sitting stateside to go back over?

MR. THOMPSON: Colonel Smith, now, you all have training sets, am I correct?

LT. COL. SMITH: Correct, sir, what we call training allowances.

MR. THOMPSON: And what is the condition of your training allowance?

LT. COL. SMITH: My observation would be – at this point I would say operationally capable with the caveat that most of the systems that we're currently using in the Marine Corps Reserve, specifically in the infantry environment, are systems that are getting up in age. Whether you're talking Humvees or machine gun sets or mortars, these are weapons systems that have been around for a while now.

And then the second then that I would add to that is, again, due to the changing skill sets, what used to be weapons qualification – i.e., you take the rifle range versus the enhanced marksmanship of combat marksmanship program – where you used to 10 years ago maybe put a thousand rounds through that weapon system, you are now talking 20 (thousand), 30 thousand rounds through that weapon system to qualify the machine gunner or the Marine at his base level.

So they are getting used, and they are getting used extensively. They are still operationally capable but the biggest problem that I see in the Marine Reserve is our maintenance priority system is such that when you lose a weapon system or a piece of equipment due to maintenance in the Marine Corps Reserve, it takes a very long time to get that system fixed and back into the mix. When you're only dealing with six mortar tubes and three of them are down for 12 to 18 months, that is a significant degradation to your training capability.

MR. THOMPSON: I understand. And, Ms. St. Laurent, we are hearing a figure of somewhere between 30 and 35 percent of what the state National Guards would have in inventory within each state is in fact forward deployed. I'm sorry – is at home; the other is forward deployed. Do you have or discovered any data from the sorts reporting that would indicate the condition of this 30 percent that is still stateside?

MS. ST. LAURENT: Excuse me, I think it varies tremendously by unit, and if they were deployed, how recently did they get back to the United States? Certainly units that have been back within a year to 18 months are seeing more maintenance issues. Not only do they not have back all of their equipment, but it's a lot of maintenance required to get the equipment they have back up to speed. So it does vary by unit. And overall, we

have been focused more on the shortages of equipment in our work and the types of things that are lacking, and what the Army's plans are to replace the equipment than the maintenance issues.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, now in the sorts reporting – I want to ask my battalion commanders, and I want God's truth here, okay. In the sorts reporting system, you use personnel as an equation, training as an equation, equipment as an equation. We have been told that you are allowed to substitute in-lieu equipment for what you really are supposed to have in your table of allowance. And we have been told that you could report Charlie 1, let's say – instead of having a modern assault rifle that you're supposed to have, you have 1903 Springfields, but you could substitute the 1903 Springfields and report a higher state of readiness in equipment. Do you use this in-lieu process when you report sorts?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Sir, yes, in lieu if it is an authorized substitute that you have. And I think generally it's the older system that you may have, like an older set of NBGs or an older set of radios and stuff that is there. Our real problem right now is not the in lieu of; it's just that the vast majority of our equipment was the stay-behind equipment, particularly a large part of the weapons systems and stuff that we have had. So we just don't have them right now to have any of this in lieu of.

MR. THOMPSON: If, you're reporting, let's say, Charlie 2 and using in-lieu processes, what would you say would be the degradation to your Charlie rating if you didn't use that tool?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: I'm not sure that it would bring you down a level that is on there because an authorized substitute is a system that works similar; it's just not as new. And I think about the NBGs that are there, or the older model radios that are there. They still function for what they are basically supposed to do; they are just not the modernized version of it. Again, I get back – the issue that I have is not that – I'm in-lieuing a PBG-14 – ANS-PBS-14 (ph) for a seven right now or a seven for a 14; it's that I don't have them because I left them back in country for the other units.

MR. THOMPSON: I guess where I am coming from – so you think that – us here sitting up here, it would be a fair recommendation to say to Congress, it's okay for you guys to have not as good equipment or not as modern equipment as the active component, and that is okay?

LT. COL. PLUNKETT: Oh, sir, I would never say that. I mean, it's – you know, you want the most modern stuff that you have. And to the Army's credit, when we deployed and we crossed in the fight, we did. I mean, so I think there is an implied recognition there by the big Army that we really need the stuff that is there. But if you are asking me – I have got a PBS-7 and a PBS-14 that is sitting there, they both do the same thing; one is just much better at it and much more modern than what it is.

MR. THOMPSON: Any other views?



LT. COL. SISINYAK: The in-lieu, we did a little bit of that and it attracts – with my counterpart, radios was the only thing we did the in-lieu on and it did not degrade our C rating whatsoever. And as far as equipment, are we getting what we need? Again, a transportation battalion, we are getting everything we require and need to the point where they are now phasing in the A-3s and A-4s and the medium trucks and – we've have had no issues with it; none whatsoever.

MR. THOMPSON: Okay, how about the Marine Corps?

LT. COL. SMITH: Well, it's surprising, I'm going to be the odd man out, sir. I don't like in-lieu, and the reason that I say that – a PBS-7 and a PBS-14 bravo – yes, they are both night-vision devices; however, the difference between binocular and monocular is absolutely enormous if you are doing night driving versus you are doing a building entry at 02 in the morning. So how much of that supports your mission needs to be based on that commander's mission analysis. So it should be – sorts reporting should be by specific equipment set, not what they both do because what they do is significantly different in how they interact with all of the other systems.

The thing that really torqued me as a commander when it came to sorts is on the Marine Corps side of the house, where I would be provided documentation that said I rate X number of vehicles – let's say Humvees for an example – I knew I had five of 10 on hand, yet I was told, well, you have five in stores. And I'm sure General Punaro – I see his smile – is very familiar with this concept. No one anywhere in the Marine Corps, anywhere, could go find those five vehicles by serial number and tell me these are the five vehicles that will show up with you at the ILOC. And I think we are probably on our 15<sup>th</sup> battalion now that is mobilized and no one has ever seen a single in-stores piece of equipment.

So, yes, I don't like in-lieu. I think sorts reporting should be by what we call TAM control number, or table of authorized material control number, that is specific to that piece equipment by necessarily, like, a national stock number, which is just night vision, and the stores concept should not be reported in sorts. It's give a completely distorted view of a unit's readiness on the positive side for reporting and on the negative because the unit will never see that piece of equipment.

MR. THOMPSON: And if I could, Mr. Chairman, I would just take about two more minutes just to share an observation from yesterday to you three. One of your training officers – and I want to relate it to retention. I thought about this over the evening, and this young man had a civilian job of 17 years. He had a military experience of 18 years. He is a major in rank and he had been mobilized twice in the 18 years he had been in the military, which is actually longer than the ephigin (ph) model, okay? And I just asked him the question, could he sustain that kind of recall to active duty until the 30-year mark or the 35-year mark. And it was interesting. I don't think he was thinking beyond the 20-year mark. At least my impression of our discussion, that he wasn't looking past it.

And I don't think that we have – traditional reservists, at least my experience has been that they look at the 30- and the 35-year mark more likely than they do the 20-year mark and jump. And yet this young man had two mobilizations and was not going to go the extra 10 to 15 years, or least my impression was. So I don't know that that we really know what retention is, Mr. Chairman, and how this – the pressure on the reserve component is going to affect long term. I don't think we know that yet. But I had not really put in my mind that kids will stop at 20 and not go to 30 and 35, which was more customary in my involvement in the reserve component.

That stops what I'm doing.

MR. PUNARO: Thanks. We'll close out here in just a second.

I want to ask Colonel Smith one last question, mainly because the commission is heading up to Camp Pendleton this afternoon – in fact, as soon as we adjourn, going up there and meeting with Marines and doing some focus groups and some round tables.

You are up at Camp Pendleton, and you're getting 124 ready. So you're in a position to look at what the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division is doing to get the sister battalions ready. Is there a way of looking at apples to apples? We know when a Marine battalion that deploys with a MUSOC (ph) comes back, you know, they go to non-combat ready because the people lie down and move the equipment and come back. They accept that for a period of time because that is just the way the deployment cycle works.

What is the equivalent spin-up time for an active-duty infantry battalion at Camp Pendleton that is going over in the same rotation? Are they doing sort of the 90-day work-up training cycle, or is there a way of looking at this apple to apples?

LT. COL. SMITH: Well, sir, first of all, I envy the panel that you're going to spend time with Marines. There is no better party than that. They are still basically on essentially very similar to the six-month MU (ph) workup, sir. Now, there is a lot more time built into the active duty as far as just your standard delivery periods on the weekend and everything else, which is something I want to make sure the commission understands.

From the Marine Reserve side of the house, when we say they are in a 90-day training cycle, they are in a 90-day training cycle 18 hours a day, seven days a week. There is very little, if any, time off in that 90-day cycle, which is why I said I'd be more for 120 to try to build some in. But the standard active-duty battalion workup right now, sir, is going to be in the four- to six-month period to execute the skill sets for the TCOM (ph) training continuum.

MR. PUNARO: So it really is not that dissimilar from the post-mobilization training cycle of a reserve infantry battalion.

LT. COL. SMITH: No, sir, it's not.

MR. PUNARO: Right. Okay, that is what I thought. I just want to make sure. You're up there watching it.

I bring that up because in the first Gulf War, we had an issue of the 48<sup>th</sup> Mech Brigade of the 24<sup>th</sup> Mech Infantry Division, now the 3<sup>rd</sup> ID, and they said, well – and they sent them to the – our active Army really didn't want to call up the 48 Mech. It was the round-out division for the 24<sup>th</sup> Mech. So it was intended that if the 24<sup>th</sup> Mech ever deployed, it ought to have three full-up combat brigades. Well, the Army leadership at the time didn't want to send the 48 because they didn't – I think personally, just as my personal view, didn't want to admit that a guard brigade could be ready to go.

The 48<sup>th</sup> Mech by the way, because it was a round out, had the same M1, A1 commons – had Bradleys, it had all of the same gear that General McCaffrey's (sp) two active-duty brigades had. So they waited and waited and waited. They finally sent them out to NTC and said, oh, they took up all of this additional workup time. What they didn't compare it to was the 24<sup>th</sup> Mech – didn't deploy when the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division deployed. They didn't – they came over mid to late December. They trained for 90 to 100 days, the 24<sup>th</sup> Mech did, to get them ready to go for their deployment.

So just kind of a historical point that when people talk about the readiness of the guard and reserve and the readiness of the active forces, both forces require train-up time prior to deployment. Now, I'm not suggesting for one second that the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne or Marine Infantry Battalion or a combat support from the active Army doesn't have a significant advantage in terms of if they said, okay, you have got to go in 30 days vice 120 days. But if you look at it just from a pure training standpoint, they actually all require similar kind of workup periods. So that was the point. Thank you.

So as we close out, particularly I want to thank our staff of the commission for the, as usual, truly superb job they did in preparing for this hearing and this week. And we have still got another day-and-a-half of visits; thank the command here for all of the excellent support we have received in the hearing phase. Of course the GAO is the honest broker and they continue to do superb work, objective work, looking at government policies in funding.

And finally I want to thank our three battalion commanders here not only for their personal outstanding service in uniform but for the contributions and success of your battalions and the family members. So please express to each of them our tremendous appreciation for their service to the country.

And we will, on the commission end, do everything we can in terms of listening very carefully to what you have recommended. And our whole charter is to basically recommend to the secretary of Defense and Congress how we can better organize, train, equip, support and fund the guard and reserve to do the kind of missions that we know they are going to be called on to do not only now and in the future, so we take that as a

challenge on our end and hope we can live up to the truly outstanding record and support that you all deserve.

So thanks again, and the hearing will stand adjourned.

(END)