

Statement of
Chris McLaughlin
Assistant Administrator, Security Operations

Transportation Security Administration
U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Good afternoon Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the efforts of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to implement the Risk-Based Security Screening for Members of the Armed Forces Act.

As has been shared with this Subcommittee in the past, we are taking a number of steps to employ risk-based, intelligence-driven measures to deter and prevent terrorist attacks and to reduce vulnerabilities to the Nation's transportation systems. We've learned more about where and how we can modify procedures without compromising security, and we are transforming TSA and how it accomplishes its mission through risk-based security initiatives. Our efforts to expedite screening for U.S. Armed Forces personnel are part of this larger initiative to move away from the one-size-fits-all construct that was introduced after 9/11.

The Requirements of the Military Screening Act

Signed into law on January 3, 2012, the Risk-Based Security Screening for Members of the Armed Forces Act calls for expedited security screening of uniformed members of the U.S.

Armed Forces who present official orders for air travel. Specifically, the Act requires TSA, in consultation with the Department of Defense (DoD), to develop and implement a plan to provide expedited security screening services for a member of the U.S. Armed Forces and, to the extent possible, any accompanying family member, if the U.S. Armed Forces member, while in uniform, presents documentation indicating official orders for air transportation from a primary airport. In developing the plan, TSA is required to consider leveraging existing security screening models used to reduce passenger wait times; establish standard guidelines for screening military uniform items, including combat boots; and incorporate any new screening protocols into an existing trusted passenger program, credential, or system that uses biometric technology and other applicable technologies to verify the identity of individuals who travel by air.

Expedited Screening Available to U.S. Armed Forces

TSA recognizes that members of the U.S. Armed Forces, who are trusted to protect the security and values of America with their lives, pose a lower risk to aviation security. In fact, TSA is proud to count many uniformed service members among our employees. Over 10,000 veterans – or approximately 23 percent of the Transportation Security Officer (TSO) workforce – serve on TSA’s front line securing our Nation’s transportation sector, and they take pride in both their past and current service to our Nation. Our commitment to recruiting and hiring veterans continues, and TSA is working collaboratively with DoD, veterans groups, and other agencies towards that end. Similarly, TSA is dedicated to doing everything it can to accommodate members of our U.S. Armed Forces when they are traveling by air.

TSA has long provided expedited screening for members of our military. At airport checkpoints nationwide, U.S. service personnel in uniform with proper identification, whether traveling on official orders or not, are not required to remove their shoes or boots unless they alarm our technology. Other screening courtesies that we extend to U.S. military personnel traveling in uniform reduce the likelihood that they will receive a pat down or other additional screening. In addition, family members may obtain gate passes to accompany departing troops or meet their loved ones when they come home. TSA also expedites screening for Honor Flight veterans, and partners with the DoD to expedite screening of wounded warriors.

Additionally, as part of our intelligence-driven, risk-based approach to security, TSA now offers TSA Pre[✓]™ expedited screening benefits to military personnel (including active duty, National Guard, the Reserve Components, and active and reserve service members of the U.S. Coast Guard) at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport as part of an initial proof of concept. All U.S. Armed Forces service members who possess a valid Common Access Card (CAC) are eligible. Eligible service members may also use the TSA Pre[✓]™ lane by presenting their valid CAC to the TSA Travel Document Checker (TDC) along with their boarding pass. By scanning the CAC, the TSA TDC is able to verify the traveler's status as a U.S. service member in good standing with DoD. Upon verification, service members may enjoy expedited screening benefits such as not being required to remove shoes, light outerwear/jackets, or belts, or to remove 3-1-1 compliant bags or laptops from carry-on bags. Eligible service members do not need to be in uniform or on official travel to take advantage of TSA Pre[✓]™ benefits.

This initiative holds the potential to significantly enhance the travel experience for

members of the U.S. Armed Forces at all participating airports. By expanding TSA Pre[✓]™ to members of the U.S. Armed Forces, TSA is able to focus its resources on higher-risk and unknown passengers. As always, TSA will continue to incorporate random and unpredictable security measures throughout the security process.

As we move forward, TSA and DoD intend to transition from a military ID card-based model towards a list-based boarding pass issuance model. With this approach, eligible service members will be issued a unique Known Traveler Number by DoD for use when traveling, consistent with other TSA Pre[✓]™ populations. Along with name, date of birth, and gender, the Known Traveler Number will be used when making an airline reservation to identify the service members as TSA Pre[✓]™ eligible travelers. TSA and DoD believe this approach will best enable eligible service members to receive expedited screening at all TSA Pre[✓]™ airports. Although there are a number of challenges with implementing a list-based model, TSA and DoD are working closely to determine next steps as well as timelines for screening members of the military through all TSA Pre[✓]™ lanes.

Additional Initiatives to Assist Members of the Armed Forces

TSA employees regularly go above and beyond their required duties to honor and support the military. We are proud that our workforce dedicates extra effort to recognizing the service of military personnel.

Since February 2005, TSA has partnered with DoD and the military services to facilitate the screening of injured and wounded service members through the Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Center program. Without sacrificing security standards, TSA is able to provide high-quality service to our injured military heroes as they travel through the Nation's

airports. Under the program, TSA has assisted nearly 4,000 severely injured service members during the current Fiscal Year, and we continue to promote awareness of the program through military hospitals, DoD, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and other veterans' support and service organizations.

TSA Federal Security Directors and their staff also work closely with military and military-contracted personnel and airport operators to provide assistance that may be required when an Honor Guard Detail escorts a fallen service member at an airport, provides appropriate honors, and participates in the transfer of the deceased service member from the aircraft to the hearse, another aircraft, or other ground transportation. Air carriers have been instructed to provide a Secure Identification Display Area-badged escort to accompany the military or civilian escort and Honor Guard Detail to the aircraft while the service member's remains are unloaded. TSA provides an escort in instances where an air carrier is unable to do so. When the escort or Honor Guard Detail arrive planeside without previously undergoing checkpoint screening, TSA will make arrangements to screen the individuals at an appropriate location, such as the jetbridge, cargo facility, or secure area.

In addition, the Honor Flight Network transports U.S. veterans and their escorts to Washington, D.C., to visit the war memorials built and dedicated to honor their service. With the assistance of U.S. aircraft operators, the Honor Flight Network facilitates flights from around the Nation that arrive at airports in the National Capital Region (BWI, DCA, IAD). In May 2011, TSA implemented new procedures for passengers on Honor Flight Network flights. These new procedures reduce, but do not eliminate, screening requirements on Honor Flight Network flights.

TSA employees have devoted significant time and effort toward assisting military personnel, and a few examples include the following:

- TSA personnel at Mobile Regional Airport (MOB) and Dothan Regional Airport in Alabama used their personal time to accomplish a project suggested by members of the Employee Advisory Council whereby they donated the materials for and hand crafted seven unique “Quilts of Valor” that were presented to soldiers hospitalized at the Brooke Army Medical Center.
- On two separate occasions, a Lead Transportation Security Officer (LTSO) at MOB discovered several service members settling in to sleep in the airport lobby after their flight was canceled. The LTSO and her family provided the soldiers with food and lodging, as well as transportation to and from the airport.
- A TSA personnel member at Chicago O’Hare International Airport has been a United Service Organizations (USO) volunteer for the past seven years, and was awarded the President Volunteer Service Award in 2008 by former President George W. Bush for volunteering 1,000 hours in one year at the USO.
- TSA participated in the groundbreaking for a new USO facility opening this Fall at Tampa International Airport (TPA), which will be a welcome addition to the support provided to the thousands of military personnel and their families who travel through TPA monthly.

These stories and dozens of others are reflective of TSA’s efforts to support the military both at and outside of the checkpoint.

Conclusion

TSA will continue its efforts to enhance the travel experience for soldiers and their families throughout the United States. Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Jackson Lee, I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.