

**Testimony before the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service
April 24, 2019 | Washington, DC**

**National Service Hearing: Answering the Call: How to Meet Potential National Mobilization
Needs**

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Chairman Heck, Vice Chair Gearan, Vice Chair Wada, fellow commissioners, good afternoon and thank you for inviting me to speak with you today.

As you know from your research thus far, and from recent media reports, the Army is facing difficulties recruiting enough new Soldiers to meet the nation's needs. As you discuss in your interim report, the eligible pool of young people who can meet the Army's enlistment requirements is shrinking. The number of young people with a propensity to serve, and with awareness of opportunities for service, is an area of concern. Increasing their awareness and inspiring them to serve is the responsibility of commanders and recruiters throughout the Army accessions enterprise as well as school teachers, coaches, counselors, and other adults who are influential in the lives of our American youth. I am grateful for the Commission's efforts to bridge the military-civilian divide and raise awareness of opportunities to serve in our Army and the other services.

As the commission's interim report states, family members of current or former service members are exposed to military service, and as a result are more likely to show an interest in serving in the military. We find that this propensity to serve increases among college-enrolled youth as they learn more about what it means to be an officer. Our Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps units have Recruiting Operations Officers on many, but not all, of our campuses who can reach out to potential cadets and inform them of the benefits of service. Lack of awareness or understanding about Army service can serve as a barrier to entry, but an increase in childhood obesity and drug use signals an alarming trend in our eligible populations.

U.S. Army Cadet Command is responsible for commissioning second lieutenants through the Army Senior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program and serves as one of the three principal Army commissioning sources – the other two being the United States Military Academy at West Point and the Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. ROTC traces its beginnings to 1819, when former West Point Instructor Captain Alden Partridge established the American Literary, Scientific and Military Academy in Norwich, Vermont. Partridge advocated having able-bodied men receive military training while attending civilian institutions of higher education. ROTC as we know it today was codified in the Morrill Act and the National Defense Act of 1916. The Morrill Act provided federal monies to colleges that offered instruction in military tactics. The National Defense Act of 1916 formally created ROTC and allowed for graduates of the program to commission as second lieutenants. Today, Army Senior ROTC has over 32,000 cadets enrolled in 975 host, cross-town, and extension units at colleges and

universities throughout the nation's 55 states and territories. Over 21,000 of these cadets are contracted to join the Army following graduation and commissioning.

Since ROTC was formally established in law over a century ago, we have gone from commissioning 133 officers in 1920 to over 5,000 second lieutenants in 2018. Of the 32,000 cadets currently enrolled, over 16,000 of them are earning a college education with a Senior ROTC scholarship. These two-, three-, and four-year scholarships totaled approximately \$348 million in 2019, including \$15 million for nurse scholarships, making U.S. Army Cadet Command the nation's largest scholarship grantor.

With a rate of over 5,000 second lieutenants per year, Senior ROTC is the Army's primary source for commissioning officers. Senior ROTC produces 67% of new Army officers. While ROTC's name implies that our officers go on to serve only in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard, more than half go directly from college to the Active Army. Last year that total eclipsed 3,000 officers. Senior ROTC is the commissioning source for 63% of Active Duty Army officers and 64% of Active Duty Army general officers.

Women have been part of Senior ROTC for almost half a century. A pilot program developed in 1972 led to the first enrollment for women. Today, over 27% of our 32,000 Senior ROTC cadets are female. Increasingly, these young women are choosing officer branches in the combat arms. In Fiscal Year 2018, 22 women out of 233 cadets chose the Armor Branch; five women out of 639 cadets chose the Infantry Branch; and 75 women out of 336 cadets chose the Field Artillery branch. As an Army aviator, I have proudly served with and flown with female pilots throughout my career. Females comprise an even greater proportion of Junior ROTC – over 40% of cadets in our high school program.

This strong female representation in both the junior and senior programs represents just one aspect of the diversity of our cadet corps.

Among our Senior ROTC cadets, 13.3% identify as African American, 12.3% as Hispanic, 7.8% as Asian, 1.1% as Native American, and 2% identify as other races.

Approximately 40% of Junior ROTC programs reside in inner city schools serving a student population with over 50% minority representation.

Our diversity of gender and ethnic background is a significant attribute of the Senior ROTC program. Students representing a variety of perspectives and thought processes strengthen our Army and support our engagements with military and civilian partners around the world.

Army Junior ROTC represents the nation's third-largest youth development program behind 4-H and Scouts BSA. Established by the National Defense Act of 1916, JROTC is today comprised of 304,000 high school students participating across 1,709 Army Junior ROTC units in all 55 states and territories and in four countries.

Junior ROTC's principal focus is citizenship and character development. Students who participate in Junior ROTC have higher attendance and graduation rates than their peers who do not, and their grade point averages are higher than non-participating peers. Junior ROTC graduates are better prepared to succeed in post-secondary institutions and career pathways, and demonstrate more active engagement in civic concerns that impact the community and society as a whole.

While Junior ROTC is not a recruiting program, approximately 20% of cadets express an interest in pursuing a military career. In the 2015-16 school year, 10.7% of Senior ROTC scholarships went to Army Junior ROTC cadets; 32.4% of scholarships went to students who had participated in all service Junior ROTC programs (Army, Navy, and Air Force Junior ROTC programs combined). In fact, research completed by Cadet Command and independently verified by Army Human Resources Command and Army Recruiting Command demonstrates that a student who attends high school at any one of the 3,400 JROTC programs administered by DoD is twice as likely to enlist in the Army as a student that attends a high school without a program. This is true regardless of the JROTC component (Army, Navy, Air Force or Marine) represented at the school, and regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled in the program. The mere presence of JROTC at the high school correlates to a higher enlistment rate.

STEM and cyber education is an important aspect of the Junior ROTC program. As technology continues to develop and evolve, the need for specialized skills in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, cyber, and medical fields is increasing. The military, along with civilian organizations, requires professionals with these critical skills.

Our Junior ROTC cadets participate in a variety of STEM programs. In 2016, the Army began working with VEX Robotics to develop and enhance problem solving, and stimulate STEM skills in youth. Cadet Command piloted a program with VEX in Fiscal Year 2017 and began expanding the program throughout our Junior ROTC programs in Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

In addition, Army Junior ROTC participates in the CyberPatriot program. CyberPatriot, created by the Air Force Association in 2009 for Air Force Junior ROTC cadets, expanded to all services in 2010. Participating teams develop projects on cyber systems for industry, commerce, public safety, communications, and national defense. This academic year, Army Junior ROTC had 257 teams registered to participate in CyberPatriot XI, and we sent two teams to compete in the National Finals Competition in Baltimore, Maryland, earlier this month.

In our colleges, 26% of currently enrolled Senior ROTC cadets are pursuing STEM majors to include nursing.

Senior ROTC is the Army's primary commissioning source for nurses. In 2018, 233 Medical/Surgical Nurse Officers were accessed onto active duty; of those, 71% were commissioned from Senior ROTC.

If we were to face a national mobilization, Army Officer Candidate School, or OCS, would be the primary source for commissioning new officers to meet the increased demand. With its 12-week program, it is able to rapidly turn enlisted Soldiers or civilians into commissioned officers. Expansion of OCS's capability would require an increase in funding, cadre, and administrative staff involving both uniformed personnel and Department of the Army Civilians.

It is possible that a crisis of significant magnitude could inspire more young adults to apply for Senior ROTC programs. Our ability to enroll more cadets would depend on receiving increased funding, military instructors, and civilian and military administrative staff. Title 10 of the United States Code requires that students complete the third and fourth years of Senior ROTC prior to commissioning, so without a change to law we would be unable to commission them faster.

Senior ROTC does, however, have an Early Commissioning Program, or ECP. ECP allows students who graduate with an associate's degree from one of six identified Military Junior Colleges to commission as second lieutenants, generally at the completion of their sophomore year. Following commissioning, they must enroll at a four-year college or university and complete their bachelor's degree within 36 months. On average we commission 110 second lieutenants annually through the ECP program. During a state of national mobilization, the requirements to enroll immediately in a four-year program and to complete a four-year degree within 36 months would have to be waived so that the second lieutenants with associate's degrees could enter immediately into active service.

In conclusion, two broad elements factor into meeting the nation's needs in the event of a national emergency – the availability of candidates who are able to serve among the eligible population and have the required skillset, and the ability of the armed services to transform able candidates into service members.

For Senior ROTC to increase the number of commissioned officers, and accelerate the speed at which they are commissioned, changes to law and an increase of resources would be required.

Finally, a national mobilization effort would require that we have a population of young adults who are able to serve. Holistic nationwide efforts should be made to address the two largest physical disqualifying factors for military service – a failure to meet height/weight standards and illicit drug use.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today and for your work in supporting military, national, and public service. I look forward to your questions.