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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
NAVY ENLISTED PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION
JULY 28, 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Snyder, Representative Wittman, and distinguished members of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the U.S. Navy's approach to Enlisted Professional Military Education (EPME).

The Navy enlisted force numbers over 273,000 active and over 50,000 reserve Sailors. These Sailors serve in 72 ratings or career fields to man ships, squadrons and shore stations around the world. They are the foundation of the Navy as they operate and maintain the systems that allow the Navy to complete a wide spectrum of missions. The demands on their skills and dedication are high. We rely on them not only to support rotational deployments that enable the Navy's global presence, but also to maintain their proficiency through training exercises and to meet emergent requirements that support Combatant Commanders and joint warfighters. The latter is highlighted by the fact that more than 8,600 enlisted Sailors are currently on the ground in an Individual Augmentation role supporting Navy, joint force, and coalition operations.

Each enlisted rating has its unique professional requirements and operational rhythm in terms of time spent in assignments at sea or ashore. However, our priorities for all Sailors are clear, centered on their growth and development, and focused on mastery of their ratings, warfare qualification, and progressive development of leadership skills. EPME provides career-long educational opportunities which complement these priorities by developing adaptive maritime leaders ready to meet the demands of dynamic, fast-paced, multi-mission environments.

NAVY EPME and LEADERSHIP

Navy has long invested in enlisted professional development through extensive initial and advanced skills training, and a formal leadership development program. In 2008, Navy enhanced enlisted professional development opportunities through implementation of a complete

continuum of EPME that spans a career from E-1 through E-9. This continuum contains progressive Navy PME designed to develop professionalism, naval warfighting through military studies, and a deeper understanding of national and global security through a maritime lens and Joint PME requirements as established by the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Navy's continuum includes four Navy PME courses under the purview of the Naval War College that combine with other developmental opportunities to prepare skilled enlisted professionals who are versed in the essentials of naval capabilities and power, and the fundamentals of joint warfare.

Introductory (E-1 through E-4), Basic (E-5 and E-6), and Primary (E-7 through E-9) level NPME are available to Sailors through the Navy Knowledge Online (NKO) portal. This provides learners with a 24/7 worldwide NPME experience to increase professional knowledge and the understanding of the art of naval science and joint operations. Senior level NPME (E-7 through E-9) is accomplished through a six week-long resident course as well as a non-resident course that blends several months of on-line course work with two weeks in residence. At the executive level, E9s serving in or being assigned to joint or combined headquarters or task forces in component, operational and strategic level leadership positions may attend the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Keystone course.

NPME complements the Navy's Enlisted Leadership Development Program that provides targeted leadership training for individual Sailors at pivotal career points. Successive and progressive leadership training is conducted as unit training using standardized content. Members selected for the grades of E-4, E-5, E-6, and E-7 must complete the appropriate leadership course prior to advancement to the grade for which selected. For senior enlisted leaders, leadership development and EPME merge at the Senior Enlisted Academy which is a prerequisite for the Command Master Chief and Chief of the Boat Leadership Course.

CHALLENGES

Over the last decade, Navy end strength has decreased while our operational demands have grown; and, even when combat forces draw down in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Navy's high operating tempo will continue for the foreseeable future. Navy enabling forces will remain in CENTCOM to provide protection; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); and logistics support to our troops and partner forces in the region. Additionally, we will continue to maintain a forward-deployed presence of about 100 ships around the world to prevent conflict, increase interoperability with our allies, enhance the maritime security and capacity of our traditional and emerging partners, and respond to crises.

We implemented our EPME continuum in the midst of this high global demand for Navy forces and cognizant of the connectivity challenges associated with deploying forces. We are highly sensitive to the demands on our Sailor's time and to competing requirements for scarce resources to enable enhanced connectivity. Accordingly, the Navy has chosen to delegate decisions on timing of NPME course completion to our Sailors, their enlisted leadership, and unit commanders who are best positioned to evaluate availability of time and connectivity.

SUCSESSES

The Navy successfully develops highly regarded enlisted leaders who serve in key assignments throughout the Department of Defense. While the Navy rapidly implemented its EPME continuum, the continuum is largely in its infancy. Fielding of our NPME courses included our plan for review, update and revision at 36 month intervals. Our Primary level program was introduced in 2006 and updated in 2009. The Introductory and Basic levels were made available in 2008 and revision is underway for projected release in 2011.

We expect that application of incremental EPME across a career will ultimately result in senior enlisted leaders who are not only technical experts in their fields and effective deck plate leaders, who also have a much greater perspective on the Navy and Joint Force, and have

developed the habits of mind to critically analyze complex situations and achieve better solutions. Today, our Sailors are gaining a common understanding of the Navy, an appreciation for joint operations and the opportunity to see how their efforts fit into the entire scope of national security.

The use of NKO to deliver NPME courses has been advantageous. It has allowed us to provide unlimited access to education that enlisted Sailors had not had before. Electronic delivery is cost effective and convenient to today's internet-savvy Sailor, and has enabled quick course revision to address topical concerns and areas of interest.

CONCLUSION

Our Sailors are performing brilliantly, providing incredible service in the maritime, land, air, space, and cyberspace domains around the world today. EPME is producing better educated and more informed senior enlisted leaders and junior Sailors. We appreciate the flexibility provided by the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff to allow us to manage the content, quality and conduct of our EPME program. We are confident we have provided a balanced approach to Sailor development that allows our skilled and innovative Sailors to turn ships, aircraft and technologies into capabilities that can prevent conflict and win wars while enabling an appropriate life-work balance in the face of many demands.

On behalf of the CNO, Admiral Roughead, thank you for your continuing support for the professional development of the force.