



September 2016

# COMMUNITY RELATIONS

## DOD's Approach for Using Resources Reflects Sound Management Principles

Accessible Version

# GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-16-794](#), a report to congressional committees

## Why GAO Did This Study

DOD conducts community relations activities—such as aircraft flyovers, exhibitions by DOD jet and parachute demonstration teams, and performances by military bands—to expand the public’s understanding of the military’s mission and capabilities, among other goals. During sequestration in fiscal year 2013, DOD restricted its community relations activities—for example, placing travel restrictions on bands. DOD reinstated community relations activities at a reduced capacity in fiscal year 2014.

Senate Report 114-49 included a provision for GAO to examine DOD’s community relations activities. GAO (1) evaluates the extent that DOD follows sound management principles in its approach for determining which community relations activities to undertake and (2) describes what is known about the resources that DOD has used for community relations activities.

GAO assessed DOD and military service guidance and processes against management principles in federal internal control standards; identified resources (personnel, equipment, and funding) that DOD and the military services planned to use in fiscal years 2014-17 for community relations activities; and interviewed public affairs officials at DOD and the military services.

GAO is not making any recommendations in this report. GAO provided DOD with a draft of this report for comment, DOD did not provide formal comments in response.

View [GAO-16-794](#). For more information, contact Andrew Von Ah at (213) 830-1011 or [vonaha@gao.gov](mailto:vonaha@gao.gov).

September 2016

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

### DOD’s Approach for Using Resources Reflects Sound Management Principles

#### What GAO Found

The Department of Defense’s (DOD) approach for determining which community relations activities to undertake reflects sound management principles—both for activities requested by non-DOD entities and for activities initiated by the department. DOD and military service guidance on community relations activities is consistent with management principles in federal internal control standards, such as delegating authority by assigning responsibilities and establishing mechanisms to enforce directives. In addition, DOD and the military services have processes for reviewing and approving which activities to undertake based on factors such as the level of resource commitment required, the possibility of any interference with other official duties, and the nature of the event. Since fiscal year 2014, DOD’s and the military services’ public affairs offices have coordinated to prepare an annual Outreach Planning Document to provide an overview of and direction on community relations activities they are to undertake each year. According to officials, this annual planning effort has been beneficial and this concept is included in a draft update of community relations guidance that is expected to be issued by the end of fiscal year 2017. GAO notes that by conducting this annual effort and producing this document, DOD is better able to record and communicate information on community relations activities.

DOD has leveraged resources from across the department to support community relations activities and has generally relied on the military services’ annual Operation and Maintenance appropriations to fund them. Within these appropriations, there is no single budget activity group dedicated to these activities. Almost all of the leveraged personnel and equipment also support other DOD missions. For example, DOD has used pilots and equipment to conduct flyovers for community relations purposes from widely dispersed units that are primarily dedicated to support other missions. Likewise, musicians from DOD’s 137 bands have performed other missions, including ceremonial and funeral support, in addition to performing at community relations events. In the Outreach Planning Documents for fiscal years 2014-17, DOD provided not-to-exceed amounts for community relations activities ranging from about \$130 million in fiscal year 2014 to about \$191 million in fiscal year 2017. According to a DOD official and DOD documents, these amounts provide a general picture of resources to be leveraged and help set a reasonable upper limit on the number of activities the services conduct annually.

#### Examples of Community Relations Activities



Flyovers



Aerial demonstrations



Speaking engagements



Bands and ceremonial units



Military-hosted events

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information; Defense Video and Imagery System (photos). | GAO-16-794

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**Abbreviations**

DOD	Department of Defense
OATSD/PA	Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

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September 19, 2016

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman  
The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
United States Senate

The Honorable Mac Thornberry  
Chairman  
The Honorable Adam Smith  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Armed Services  
House of Representatives

The Department of Defense (DOD) uses community relations activities to expand the public's understanding of the department's mission, the nation's defense posture, and military capabilities by increasing the public's exposure to military personnel, facilities, equipment, and programs.<sup>1</sup> Community relations activities include, but are not limited to, aircraft flyovers, performances by DOD jet and parachute demonstration teams, musical and ceremonial unit appearances, public speaking appearances by DOD officials, and military installation open houses. However, when DOD was required to reduce its discretionary budget during sequestration in fiscal year 2013, among other things, the department restricted its community relations activities to ensure that funding was available for wartime operations and critical priority

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<sup>1</sup> Although one objective of community relations activities is to support the military services' recruiting programs by earning public support and understanding of operations, missions, and personnel requirements of the services through well-planned community relations programs, direct recruiting activities are not community relations activities.

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requirements for national security.<sup>2</sup> For example, musical and ceremonial units were prohibited from traveling beyond their local area to perform, and DOD's jet and parachute demonstration teams were restricted from participating in events such as air shows and open houses for half of the fiscal year. DOD reinstated community relations activities at a reduced capacity in fiscal year 2014.

The 2015 Senate Armed Services Committee Report accompanying S. 1376 included a provision that GAO examine DOD community relations activities.<sup>3</sup> This report (1) evaluates the extent that DOD follows sound management principles in its approach for determining which community relations activities to undertake and (2) describes what is known about the resources that DOD has used for community relations activities.

Throughout this report we characterize community relations efforts as either aviation or non-aviation activities. We define "resources" as the personnel, equipment, and funding used to conduct those community relations activities. For both objectives, we reviewed applicable guidance and documentation of the processes used to review and approve community relations activities. We also interviewed officials from the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OATSD/PA); the community relations organizations within the headquarters public affairs function at the military services, including active and reserve components; two DOD jet demonstration teams; two parachute teams; and representatives from multiple military bands from each of the military services.<sup>4</sup> We limited our focus to community relations activities conducted by the military services, occurring in the United

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<sup>2</sup> "Sequestration" is the cancellation of budgetary resources provided by appropriations or direct spending laws. Section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, Pub. L. No. 99-177 (1985), as amended, requires the Office of Management and Budget to calculate and the President to order a sequestration of non-exempt discretionary appropriation accounts when discretionary spending limits established for a particular fiscal year are exceeded. A sequestration was ordered on March 1, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> S. Rep. No. 114-49, at 99 (May 19, 2015), accompanying S. 1376.

<sup>4</sup> The Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs establishes policies and implementation guidance for DOD's public affairs programs, including community relations activities. The military services coordinate community relations activities as part of their public affairs functions.

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States, rather than those conducted by the functional and geographic combatant commands.

For the first objective, we assessed DOD and military service guidance related to the processes for reviewing and approving community relations activities against pertinent management principles in GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*.<sup>5</sup> The standards call, among other things, for (1) an agency's organizational structure to clearly define key areas of authority and responsibility and establish appropriate lines of reporting; (2) the delegation of authority and responsibility for operating activities, reporting relationships, and authorization protocols; (3) control activities, the policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms that enforce management's directives and help ensure that actions are taken to address risks; and (4) control activities that include diverse activities such as approvals, authorizations, and the creation and maintenance of related records. In addition, we reviewed documentation from a department-wide planning effort for community relations activities that began in fiscal year 2014. We also interviewed DOD and military service officials responsible for community relations activities to corroborate our understanding of the guidance documents, the processes in place for authorizing community relations activities, and the department-wide planning effort.

For the second objective, we analyzed DOD and military service planning documentation for community relations activities from fiscal years 2014 through 2017. We selected this time period because DOD had initiated its department-wide planning effort in fiscal year 2014. We identified resources that DOD and the military services have planned to use for these activities during this time period, and interviewed DOD and military service officials. We analyzed the fiscal year 2015 budget execution material—the most recent full year such data were available—included in the President's fiscal year 2017 budget request. In addition, we obtained fiscal year 2015 data—the most recent full year such data were available—from the military services on the personnel that DOD

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<sup>5</sup> GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999) was in effect prior to fiscal year 2016 and covers the time period of most of DOD's guidance regarding community relations. The standards were subsequently updated. The updated standards, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014), went into effect on October 1, 2015.



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used for selected aviation activities and for military band performances. We focused on these two areas because all of the military services conducted these types of community relations activities. Through our discussions with DOD and military service officials, we concluded that the data are sufficiently reliable for the purpose of providing context about the order of magnitude of DOD's planned and actual resource commitments toward specific community relations activities.

We conducted this performance audit from July 2015 to September 2016 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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## Background

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### Community Relations Activities Conducted by DOD and the Military Services

DOD and the military services conduct aviation and non-aviation community relations activities both on and off military installations. These activities can be requested by non-federal entities (e.g., non-profit or for-profit civilian organizations) and by other federal government agencies (e.g., Congress) or can be initiated by DOD components (e.g., the military services). Figure 1 describes aviation and non-aviation community relations activities that DOD and the military services conduct.

**Figure 1: Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities That the Department of Defense and the Military Services Conduct**

**Aviation community relations activities »**

**Non-aviation community relations activities »**



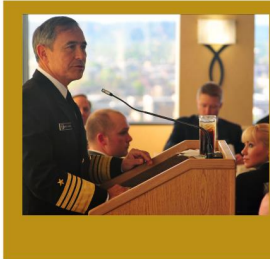
**Flyovers**  
 A flyover is a straight and level flight, usually limited to one pass, by no more than four military aircraft of the same type from the same military service.



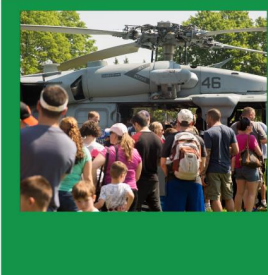
**Military-hosted events**  
 Military-hosted events can include military installation open houses, military air shows, Department of Navy fleet weeks and port visits, Navy Week, and Marine Week.<sup>a</sup>



**Aerial demonstrations**  
 A demonstration is designed to show performance techniques involving a single aircraft or group of aircraft or personnel – such as helicopter flight techniques, precision aerial maneuvers flown by the jet demonstration teams, and parachute jumps.



**Speaking engagements and other outreach**  
 Authorized speeches and briefings by DOD military and civilian personnel on matters of interest to the public. Personnel often appear at functions coordinated by non-governmental organizations, veterans' and military service organizations and civic or corporate leaders.



**Static displays**  
 A static display is the ground display of military aircraft and their related equipment. The aircraft does not taxi or start its engines while spectators are in the display area. When aircraft are on static display, qualified military personnel must be available at the aircraft to answer questions on aircraft performance and missions.



**Service birthday and historical commemorations activities**  
 Anniversary and commemorative activities include celebrating the anniversary of a service's founding and commemorating historical military operations such as the Battle of Iwo Jima. Personnel such as musicians and senior civilian and military leaders, as well as equipment are often used as a part of the activity.



**Bands and ceremonial units**  
 Military bands, band detachments, and buglers provide public musical support. This support includes, but is not limited to, parades, concerts, choral presentations, patriotic openers or presentations, and other events.  
 Ceremonial units generally consist of color guards, marching units, and salute batteries and can support patriotic observances and civic parades.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information; Defense Video and Imagery System (photos). | GAO-16-794

<sup>a</sup>Fleet weeks involve multiple Navy vessels and Navy and Marine Corps crew members docking and visiting major cities in the United States. Members of the public can tour the naval vessels, interact with military personnel, and learn about the vessels' technologies and capabilities. The Navy Week program is intended to introduce the Navy to areas of the United States without a significant Navy presence and to bring naval resources to a city for a week-long series of events with corporate, civic,

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government, education, media, veterans, community service, and diversity organizations. During Marine Week, military officials interact with the local government, businesses, community organizations, and citizens at events such as a demonstration of a Marine Air Ground Task Force or of static equipment and aircraft displays.

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## Roles and Responsibilities for DOD Community Relations Activities

According to DOD guidance, a principal goal of community relations activities is to increase the public's understanding of DOD's mission, the nation's defense posture, and military capabilities by increasing the public's exposure to military personnel, facilities, equipment, and programs. In addition, the guidance states that community relations activities support the following objectives:

- fostering and sustaining good relations with the public;
- supporting the department's equal opportunity goals;
- maintaining a reputation as a good neighbor and respected public organization;
- increasing knowledge about the department's and services' missions, policies, and requirements;
- supporting personnel recruiting and retention programs; and
- inspiring patriotism.<sup>6</sup>

In September 2013 and December 2014 memorandums, the Secretary of Defense stated that community relations remain a crucial departmental activity that showcases superior combat power, demonstrates readiness to defend the nation, and helps to preserve the all-volunteer force.<sup>7</sup>

Community relations activities are considered to be separate from DOD's direct recruiting; advertising; and morale, welfare, and recreation activities. Although community relations activities can support recruiting efforts and are often coordinated with recruiting efforts, a June 2015 DOD memorandum from the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs emphasized that community relations activities should not be

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<sup>6</sup> DOD Directive 5410.18, Public Affairs Community Relations Policy (Nov. 20, 2001) (certified current as of May 2007).

<sup>7</sup> DOD, Secretary of Defense, Memorandum, Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2015 Strategic Public Affairs Outreach Activities (Dec. 14, 2014) and DOD, Secretary of Defense, Memorandum, Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Outreach Activities (Sept. 30, 2013).

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confused with recruiting and advertising.<sup>8</sup> Recruiting efforts include recruiters, financial and other incentives, and advertising. DOD advertises through the placement of recruiting messages intended to inform or persuade an audience through various types of media, such as television, radio, digital media, direct mail, and others. Nor are community relations considered Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs, which benefit military and civilian personnel as compared to community relations activities which help earn public support and understanding of the military mission. Examples of Morale, Welfare, and Recreation programs include free motion pictures, parks and picnic areas on military installations, childcare and youth programs, recreation centers, and membership and non-membership clubs.

Community relations activities fall under the purview of DOD's public affairs function. According to DOD guidance, programming funds for community relations programs are the responsibility of each DOD component and its commands, and are to be kept to the minimum necessary to accomplish DOD objectives. Further, DOD guidance on community relations assigns various responsibilities to multiple DOD components, including the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and the Secretaries of the military departments (the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force). The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs' responsibilities include, among other functions, establishing policies and implementation guidance for community relations activities. The Secretaries of the military departments' responsibilities include executing community relations activities and approving the military services' participation in public events—which are those events not connected with the military functioning of DOD and intended primarily for non-military audiences. Table 1 identifies the headquarters-level organizations that are focused on supporting community relations activities within each military service.

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<sup>8</sup> DOD, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Public Affairs, Memorandum, Department of Defense Clarifying Guidance for Community Relations Outreach and Recruiting Activities (June 9, 2015).

**Table 1: Headquarters-Level Organizations Focused on Supporting Community Relations Activities within Each Military Service**

<b>Military service</b>	<b>Headquarters-level community relations organization</b>
Army	Community Relations Division within the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, which is a field operating agency within the Headquarters Department of the Army Staff
Navy	Community Outreach Directorate within the Navy's Public Affairs Headquarters—The Navy Office of Information
Marine Corps	Community Relations Branch within the Office of United States Marine Corps Communications, which is part of the Headquarters of the U.S. Marine Corps
Air Force	Engagement Division within the Office of the Director of Public Affairs, which is part of the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information. | GAO-16-794

## DOD's Approach for Determining Which Community Relations Activities to Undertake Reflects Sound Management Principles

To manage requests and planning for community relations activities, DOD and the military services have established guidance that we found is consistent with the management principles in GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*. DOD and the military services have also established processes for implementing this guidance, including reviewing and approving activities requested by non-DOD entities as well as those initiated within the department. Starting with fiscal year 2014, DOD introduced an annual department-wide planning process that culminates in an annual planning document that is intended to further guide the military services on what community relations activities to undertake.

## DOD and Military Service Guidance for Managing Community Relations Activities Is Consistent with Federal Internal Control Standards

DOD and the military services have established guidance for managing community relations activities that reflects sound management principles articulated in GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*. The standards provide an overall framework to help agencies achieve missions and program results, minimize operational problems, and improve accountability.<sup>9</sup> The management principles in the framework include clearly defining authority and responsibility; establishing delegation of authority and authorization protocols; and outlining policies, procedures, and mechanisms to enforce directives. We

<sup>9</sup> [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#).

reviewed DOD guidance<sup>10</sup> and military service guidance<sup>11</sup> governing community relations activities and found that these guidance documents reflect these management principles. Table 2 provides examples where the guidance reflects the principles. Additionally, we found that DOD and the military services have implemented this guidance by establishing processes for reviewing and approving requests for community relations activities submitted by non-DOD entities and for department-initiated activities.

**Table 2: Examples from Department of Defense (DOD) and Military Service Community Relations Guidance That Reflect Principles from GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government***

GAO principle	DOD and military service guidance
Organizational structure that defines key areas of authority and responsibility and establishes appropriate lines of reporting.	<p>The Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs' community relations responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing policies and implementation guidance for community relations activities and</li> <li>• granting exceptions to the policies in the department's guidance directive to the DOD components—including the military services.</li> </ul> <p>The Secretaries of the military departments' community relations responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• executing community relations activities and approving the military services' participation in public events and</li> <li>• supporting the use of military aircraft for specific community relations activities.</li> </ul>
Delegation of authority and responsibility for operating activities, reporting relationships, and authorization protocols.	<p>The Secretaries of the military departments may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• further delegate community relations responsibilities with the expectation that those executing community relations activities shall do so consistent with DOD's public affairs community relations guidance.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> DOD Directive 5410.18, Public Affairs Community Relations Policy (Nov. 20, 2001) (certified current as of May 30, 2007); DOD Instruction 5410.19, Public Affairs Community Relations Policy Implementation (Nov. 13, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Army Regulation 360-1, The Army Public Affairs Program (May 25, 2011); Navy Instruction 5270.44C, Department of the Navy Public Affairs Policy and Regulations (Oct. 14, 2014); Naval Operations (OPNAV) Instruction 5726.8A, Outreach: America's Navy, (Dec. 21, 2012); Marine Corps Order 5720.77, Marine Corps Public Affairs (PA) Order (July 8, 2010); Air Force Instruction 35-105, Public Affairs Community Relations, (August 31, 2011).

GAO principle	DOD and military service guidance
Policies, procedures, techniques, and mechanisms that enforce directives and address risks.	<p>DOD guidance documents detail multiple guidelines for community relations activities, including that these activities should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interfere with official duties and impair operational, training, or other readiness requirements;</li> <li>• take place at events that provide a selective benefit or preferential treatment; support partisan political activities; have planned actual or anticipated public confrontation or staged controversy; or are restricted in terms of admission, have specific membership requirements, and restrict data about the sponsoring organization from being accessible ;</li> <li>• use military personnel in uniform in a demeaning or menial fashion—such as ushers, bag handlers, guards or similar capacities in public events occurring off a military installation; and</li> <li>• be in competition with private enterprise, especially commercial musicians.</li> </ul> <p>DOD guidance documents provide additional instruction on procedures and techniques for determining and planning community relations activities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an evaluation checklist and</li> <li>• request forms.</li> </ul>
Diverse activities such as approvals, authorizations, and the creation and maintenance of related records.	<p>DOD guidance documents detail multiple guidelines for approving, authorizing, and documenting community relations activities, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The requirement that the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs approve all DOD community relations participation in programs or events that by their nature or because of expected media coverage could be of national or international interest.</li> <li>• The requirement that commanders at all levels maintain records of community relations activities that include the following information: support request forms or letters, disposition of requests, description of events and activities undertaken; type and extent of the participation by the military services; and indications of effectiveness (e.g., crowd size and media coverage).</li> </ul>

Source: GAO analysis of DOD information and GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*. | GAO-16-794

**Processes for Reviewing and Approving Community Relations Activities Requested by Non-DOD Entities**

For both aviation and non-aviation community relations activities that are requested by non-DOD entities, DOD and the military services have processes to determine which activities to undertake. The processes are to implement DOD and military service guidance that, as discussed earlier, reflects federal internal control standards. For aviation activities, according to DOD and military service officials, this process starts with the receipt of the standardized "Request for Military Aerial Support"<sup>12</sup> form (see app. I for a copy of the form). Non-DOD entities requesting

<sup>12</sup> DD FORM 2535, "Request for Military Aerial Support (October 2010)." According to an OATSD/PA official, the current form is set to expire on September 30, 2016, and an updated form has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval.

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community relations activities are to provide the following information on the form:

- whether the requested aviation community relations activity is a flyover, static display, or aerial demonstration;
- whether a specific military service, type of aircraft, or aerial demonstration team—such as the U.S. Navy Blue Angels or the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds jet demonstration team—is preferred; and
- what applicable financial and non-financial support will be made available.<sup>13</sup>

Upon receipt of this form, according to DOD and military service officials, public affairs officials use the information provided to evaluate the eligibility of each request for support in terms of its appropriateness—for example, whether the event where the community relations activity were to occur would benefit a broad segment of the community as a whole, not only the financial interest of an event sponsor—and compliance with DOD policies. Within the Navy, the Marine Corps, or the Air Force, the service’s headquarters’ community relations organization decides on the eligibility of all requests for aviation community relations activities. Within the Army, its headquarters’ community relations organization decides on the eligibility of flyover requests. Army units decide on the eligibility of requests for static displays and aerial demonstrations. In addition to determining the eligibility of the requests, according to officials in the military service headquarters’ community relations organizations, the public affairs function may recommend some requests over others based on factors such as expected audience size, media coverage, reaching a demographic group that is under-represented in the armed forces, and the level of awareness about the military among event attendees.

Once activities requests are deemed eligible for support, the reviewing public affairs function forwards the requests to the internal military service stakeholders—including those with operational control over the aviation

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<sup>13</sup> When the U.S. Navy Blue Angels or the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds jet demonstration teams participate in events, requesting non-DOD organizations are to pay \$6,000, which is to partially defray lodging and meal expenses. The U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute demonstration team requires reimbursement for expenses such as lodging, meals, and ground transportation from the requesting organization, military or civilian.



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resources—to make a final determination about whether to approve or deny the request.<sup>14</sup> For example:

- In the Army, according to an Army official, the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs coordinates its review of flyover requests with the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Judge Advocate General, and the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Army G-3/5/7 (Operations).<sup>15</sup> Once this group of officials concurs, the Chief of Public Affairs sends requests with recommendations to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army for final consideration and approval.
- In the Navy, according to Navy officials, the Navy’s Chief of Information, after review by the Aviation Outreach Working Group, makes the final decision on flyover requests. Representatives from the Navy’s headquarters community relations organization and two commands—Pacific and Atlantic Naval Air Forces and Naval Air Training—serve on the Aviation Outreach Working Group.
- In the Marine Corps, requests for demonstrations involving the AV-8B Harrier jet aircraft and MV-22 Osprey helicopter are further reviewed by the AV-8B Harrier and MV-22 Osprey Flight Demonstration Board.<sup>16</sup> Members of this board have aviation, public affairs, recruiting, and legislative affairs expertise and are further supported by representatives from the Marine Air Wings and the Marine Corps Forces and Marine Corps Forces, Pacific commands. According to Marine Corps officials, this group makes recommendations from the list of eligible aerial demonstration events for the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps’ final consideration and approval.

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<sup>14</sup> The U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds jet demonstration teams plan their schedule 2 years in advance. In addition, these two teams are to confer with one another when planning their respective schedules since according to DOD guidance they should not appear the same event nor perform near than 150 nautical miles of each other on the same show day. The U.S. Army Golden Knights and the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs parachute demonstration teams plan their respective schedule 1 year in advance.

<sup>15</sup> These aviation units can be in the active Army, the Army reserves, and the Army National Guard.

<sup>16</sup> On July 15, 2016, the Marine Corps announced that a Community Relations Outreach Board will replace the AV-8B Harrier and MV-22 Osprey Flight Demonstration Board among others.

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- In the Air Force, before individual aviation units can participate in a requested aviation activity, the operations organization in their respective parent major command has the final approval authority.<sup>17</sup>

In certain circumstances, OATSD/PA has approved the military services' participation in requested aviation community relations activities. According to DOD guidance, OATSD/PA approves all community relations participation in programs or events that by their nature or because of expected media coverage could be of national or international interest. The OATSD/PA is also the designated authority for granting exceptions to established community relations policies. For example, OATSD/PA approved the National Football League's request for a flyover for the 2016 Super Bowl in California and granted an exception to current policy regarding the number of aircraft used in a flyover, allowing the U.S. Navy Blue Angels to conduct the flyover with six rather than four aircraft.

According to DOD and military service officials, they receive more requests for military participation in aviation community relations activities than can be accommodated. Further, officials explained that there have been occasions where approved requests went unfulfilled because no aviation unit was available to participate or because of operational limitations such as training schedules, limited flying hours, or weather cancellations. For example, according to an Air Force official, in fiscal year 2015 of the 567 eligible requests 427 of them were fulfilled.

Similar to requested aviation community relations activities, DOD and the military services have a process to determine what non-aviation activities to undertake when military participation in such events is requested by non-DOD entities. According to DOD and military service officials, this process begins with the receipt of the standardized "Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation)" form (see app. I for a copy of the form).<sup>18</sup> Entities requesting non-aviation community relations activities are to include on the form information such as the non-aviation

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<sup>17</sup> These aviation units can be in the active Air Force, the Air Force reserves, and the Air National Guard.

<sup>18</sup> DD Form 2536, "Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation) (October 2010)." According to an OATSD/PA official, the current form is set to expire on September 30, 2016, and an updated form has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval.

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resource being requested, details about the event and requesting organization, and the financial support to be provided. Generally, according to officials in the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force military services' headquarters community relations organizations, the review and approval processes are decentralized to the greatest extent possible. The officials stated that this approach for delegating authority is appropriate given the level of resources committed. The headquarters community relations organizations serve as a resource for questions, but generally do not review these requests. For example, a request for a color guard or band from a specific military service could be reviewed and potentially approved and fulfilled by the military installation nearest the event. According to Marine Corps officials in the community relations organization, since the fiscal year 2013 sequestration, the Marine Corps' headquarters community relations organization has been reviewing all requests for non-aviation and non-band community relations activities for eligibility, appropriateness, and compliance with DOD policies. However, according to a Marine Corps official in the community relations organization, this organization is planning to delegate responsibility for these reviews by the end of fiscal year 2016.

An exception to the above process involves requests for band and ceremonial units within the National Capital Region.<sup>19</sup> The Military District of Washington has acted, on behalf of OATSD/PA, as the coordinator for approval of musical and ceremonial support requested within this region.<sup>20</sup> According to Military District of Washington public affairs officials, the community relations staff reviews these requests for appropriateness, eligibility, and compliance with DOD policies and then

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<sup>19</sup> According to DOD Directive 5410.18 (Nov. 20, 2001) (certified current as of May 30, 2007), the National Capital Region is the geographic area located within the boundaries of the District of Columbia; Montgomery and Prince George's Counties in the State of Maryland; Arlington, Fairfax, Loudon, and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria in the Commonwealth of Virginia; and all cities and other units of government within the geographic areas of such District, Counties, and City.

<sup>20</sup> The Military District of Washington is a direct reporting unit to the Chief of Staff of the Army. According to DOD guidance, the Military District of Washington is responsible for coordinating all support requests for official federal government events and acts as the DOD coordinator for approval of musical and ceremonial support within the National Capital Region except for requests from Members of Congress and requests for exceptions that are approved by the OATSD/PA.

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forwards eligible requests on to the operations staff in the appropriate military service that can further approve and fulfill the request.

Similar to requested aviation community relations activities, OATSD/PA has approved the military services' participation in requested non-aviation community relations activities where they could be of national or international interest or require an exception waiver because they go beyond established activities. For example, according to OATSD/PA officials, they have approved requests for a ceremonial unit or touring band based in the United States to perform at an international community relations activity—such as at the Edinburgh International Military Tattoo or at Argentina's independence centennial celebration—when an internationally based unit was not available.

Process for Reviewing and Approving Community Relations Activities Initiated by DOD

For community relations activities initiated by the military services, DOD has established a process to determine which activities to undertake. This process is to implement DOD and military service guidance that, as discussed earlier, reflects federal internal control standards. This process involves varying levels of authority depending on the type of community relations activity and the required level of resource commitment. For example, according to DOD officials, local commanders at military installations can approve the use of resources under their operational control for events such as tours of a military command or installation for members of the public including civic leaders; however, per guidance, if a proposed community relations activity is worthy of support, but exceeds local support capability or authority, it shall be referred through command channels to the applicable higher level.<sup>21</sup> According to military service officials, the military services' headquarters community relations organization or public affairs functions have responsibilities to plan or coordinate community relations activities such as those that may require a higher resource commitment, such as multiple personnel, types of equipment, or time and travel obligations. For example:

- The Army's public affairs function oversees a touring program with living Medal of Honor recipients.

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<sup>21</sup> Local commanders at military installations may request support from aviation assets not under their operational control by using the DD FORM 2535, "Request for Military Aerial Support" (Oct. 2010).

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- The Navy’s community relations organization has planned, coordinated, and implemented multiple annual Navy Week events.
  - The Marine Corps’ community relations organization has planned, coordinated, and implemented an annual Marine Week event.
  - The Air Force’s community relations organization has planned and implemented the National Security Scholars Conference in different locations in the United States. This annual conference is an off-the-record exchange among a select group of scholars and senior leaders such as the Secretary of the Air Force.
  - All of the military services’ community relations organizations support the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference. This annual conference is geared toward a small number of civilian guests of the Secretary of Defense who interact with senior military and civilian officials and gain experiences by visiting installations throughout the United States to observe activities and operations of each military service.
  - According to DOD guidance, the touring bands of the military services—the U.S. Army Field Band, the U.S. Navy Band, the U.S. Marine Band, and the U.S. Air Force Band—generally are assigned a national performance touring area in addition to their responsibility to conduct community relations activities in their local area. OATSD/PA has assigned areas within the continental United States where these bands can tour on a rotational basis over the next 5 years starting in fiscal year 2014.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> DOD, Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs; Memorandum Assignment of Band and Large-Scale Service Production Tour Areas, 2014-2018 (May 28, 2014), *as amended*. This guidance also applies to the military service’s large-scaled productions such as the Army’s Spirit of America 2-hour show that is performed by the soldiers from the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment and the U.S. Army Band, among others, in which they present the history and development of the Army.

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## DOD Introduced an Annual Department-wide Planning Process to Further Guide What Community Relations Activities to Undertake

In response to restrictions on community relations activities during sequestration<sup>23</sup> in fiscal year 2013, OATSD/PA instituted an annual department-wide community relations planning process that resulted in an Outreach Planning Document.<sup>24</sup> The planning document was first issued in fiscal year 2014 and has been updated annually. The military services, among others, participate in this process and contribute sections to the planning document. The planning document articulates, for the upcoming fiscal year, (1) the military services' priorities for community relations activities, (2) key resources available for use, and (3) summary details about known and anticipated activities. In addition, the Outreach Planning Document includes certain cost information for the identified activities that DOD officials refer to as "not-to-exceed" amounts. This cost information is discussed in the next section of this report. According to an OATSD/PA official, the Outreach Planning Document provides an opportunity for top management to consider the number and types of activities being undertaken and an approximate level of resources being committed to these efforts.

This annual planning process has evolved over time. For example, for fiscal year 2014, in the wake of the suspension of many community relations activities due to sequestration in fiscal year 2013, DOD and the military services considered several courses of action that ranged from an across-the-board reduction to all community relations activities to eliminating the jet demonstration teams. The fiscal year 2014 Outreach Planning Document showed courses of action and recommended conducting a reduced number of activities listed. The Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Deputy's Management Action Group reviewed and endorsed this approach and

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<sup>23</sup> In a September 30, 2013, memorandum accompanying DOD's Fiscal Year 2014 Outreach Proposal, the Secretary of Defense stated that these restrictions caused the department to withdraw from more than 2,800 events throughout the United States. Secretary of Defense, Memorandum, Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2014 Outreach Activities (Sept. 30, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> As initially developed, the planning document was entitled the "Department of Defense FY14 Outreach Proposal." When updated the following year, the title became the "Department of Defense FY15 Strategic Public Affairs Outreach Plan." Currently, the annual plan is entitled the "Department of Defense FY 16 – FY 17 Public Affairs Outreach Guidance." Throughout our report we use the term "Outreach Planning Document."

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document.<sup>25</sup> In subsequent fiscal years, the Outreach Planning Document no longer presented courses of action but continued to include an overview of the broad categories of community relations activities, the numbers of known and anticipated community relations activities, and their “not-to-exceed” amounts.

According to OATSD/PA officials, prior to sequestration, the military services managed their own community relations activities and did not consistently follow established DOD guidance about when reporting to OATSD/PA was required. Following sequestration, OATSD/PA officials developed this planning process to better articulate costs and the value of community relations activities. OATSD/PA collaborated with the military services to obtain their agreement with the planning process and to make implementation decisions—including how to categorize community relations activities and what common cost calculations could be consistently used. For example, the military services agreed upon a standard formula for estimating the cost of a flyover. The military services’ headquarters-level community relations organizations have been responsible for coordinating this planning process and the contributions in the final planning documents. Specifically, each service’s responsible officials stated that they have consolidated historical or current information on hand, gathered information from multiple locations and stakeholders within the service, and made estimates as needed. According to OATSD/PA officials, they intended for this planning process to coordinate the activities of the individual military services in a unified and strategic manner.

According to DOD and military service officials, the annual planning process and the resulting annual Outreach Planning Document have been beneficial and this concept has been included in a draft version of the department’s community relations guidance that is currently being updated. Officials told us that the process has helped to (1) inform senior

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<sup>25</sup> The Deputy’s Management Action Group is the primary civilian-military management forum that supports the Secretary of Defense and addresses top departmental issues that have resource, management, and broad strategic and/or policy implications. Its primary mission is to produce advice for the Deputy Secretary of Defense in a collaborative environment. The group is co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with the Secretaries of the military departments, the Chiefs of the military services, and DOD’s Principal Staff Assistants holding standing invitations.

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leaders about known or anticipated community relations activities, (2) proactively prioritize their activities, and (3) establish not-to-exceed amounts for these activities. For example, the Outreach Planning Document for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 were reviewed and endorsed by senior DOD leaders including the Secretary of Defense. Collectively the fiscal years 2015 and 2016-17 Outreach Planning Documents listed the following benefits for maintaining the planning document: (1) maximizing visibility at the national level; (2) maximizing national collaboration opportunities; (3) increasing the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense Comptroller's confidence in fiscal responsibility; and (4) building on proven best practices. OATSD/PA officials provided further examples of how these benefits have been realized, including reinforcing DOD guidance for the military services, especially at the installation level, and disseminating best practices.

OATSD/PA officials stated that the department is in the midst of updating department-wide guidance on community relations and has incorporated direction related to the annual planning process and the Outreach Planning Document throughout the draft guidance. According to an OATSD/PA official, the guidance is under review and is expected to be issued by the end of fiscal year 2017. Although direction related to the annual planning process and associated details about it in the draft guidance are subject to change during the review process, we believe—consistent with federal internal control standards on information and communication—that, by conducting this annual planning process and producing the Outreach Planning Document, DOD is better able to record and communicate information on community relations activities to those within the department who need it to carry out their responsibilities.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> See GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1](#) (Washington, D.C.: November 1999). These standards were in effect prior to fiscal year 2016 and cover the time period of most of the DOD guidance regarding community relations. The standards were subsequently updated. The updated standards went into effect on October 1, 2015, and, consistent with the previous version of the standards, emphasize the need for relevant, reliable, and timely information and communication of that information throughout an agency in order to achieve all of its objectives. See GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, [GAO-14-704G](#) (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014).



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## DOD Has Leveraged Resources from across the Department for Community Relations Activities

DOD has leveraged resources that primarily support other missions from across the department to support community relations activities. DOD's Outreach Planning Document outlines a general picture of these resources—such as jet and parachute demonstration teams, military bands, and other non-aviation assets. Also, in the Outreach Planning Documents for fiscal years 2014 through 2017, DOD and the military services have provided dollar amounts for known and anticipated community relations activities that they describe as “not to exceed” amounts. DOD has generally relied on the military services' annual Operation and Maintenance appropriations to fund its community relations activities. The funding is spread across multiple budget activity and subactivity groups that DOD uses to divide its Operation and Maintenance appropriations.<sup>27</sup>

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## DOD's Outreach Planning Documents Outline the Resources to Be Leveraged from across the Department to Support Community Relations Activities

DOD's Outreach Planning Documents for fiscal years 2014 through 2017 outline a general picture of the resources that are to be leveraged from across the department to support community relations activities. In these planning documents, DOD provided planned not-to-exceed amounts for the military services' community relations activities that ranged from a total of about \$130 million in fiscal year 2014 to a total of about \$191 million in fiscal year 2017. According to an OATSD/PA official, these not-to-exceed amounts are used to help assess the value of community relations activities and are based on notional formulas and cost estimates intended to serve as a consistent method used across the military services to set a reasonable upper limit on the amount of community relations that the department conducts each year. In addition, according to an OATSD/PA official, these estimates do not represent actual, executed cost information but rather are “not-to-exceed” amounts that the

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<sup>27</sup> DOD divides the military services' Operation and Maintenance budget requests into four budget activities: (1) operating forces, (2) mobilization, (3) training and recruiting, and (4) administration and servicewide activities. DOD further divides these budget activities into various activity groups, then again into subactivity groups. The number and names of the activity and subactivity groups differ with each military service.

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department is using to prioritize and manage its resources.<sup>28</sup> Overall, our analysis shows that the not-to-exceed amounts for community relations activities account for a relatively small amount of DOD's overall budget. For example, in fiscal year 2015, the total amount that DOD planned for the military services' community relations activities not to exceed was \$181.2 million, which would have been about one tenth of 1 percent of the total Operations and Maintenance expenditures relative to the \$175.5 billion in Operations and Maintenance funds executed for all the services in fiscal year 2015.<sup>29</sup>

In carrying out its community relations activities, DOD and the military services have leveraged resources from widely dispersed units that are used primarily to support missions outside of community relations. According to OATSD/PA officials, due to the decentralized execution of community relations activities, the department does not comprehensively identify the total resources used for these activities. Further, officials told us that they do not centrally track all community relations activities to confirm the number of activities and not-to-exceed amounts outlined in the annual Outreach Planning Document because they found that a previous tracking effort outweighed the value of the information collected and limited the flexibility needed by each military service to effectively execute their community relations programs within the agreed-upon guidance. According to military service officials, the services in general track some community relations activities for their management and

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<sup>28</sup> According to military service officials, these amounts are self-reported by the units or major commands providing the community relations activities, and do not include all costs. Costs such as training flying hours, travel expenses, fuel, and venue rentals related to community relations activities are included in these amounts. Personnel and procurement costs such as for military service members and aircraft are not included because costs associated with these resources would be incurred with or without a community relations mission. Also, the officials told us that these amounts are offset by benefits to the department, such as free publicity through television media, social media discussions, and free space for recruiters at events.

<sup>29</sup> We identified discrepancies between DOD's summary amounts by military service in the Outreach Planning Documents for fiscal years 2014 through 2016 and the amounts we aggregated based on information in the documents for the discrete community relations activity categories for each military service. For each fiscal year, DOD's summary amounts were higher than ours by a range of \$47,000 to \$2.2 million dollars. A DOD official acknowledged these discrepancies but attributed them to mathematical-related miscalculations and stated the information in the Outreach Planning Documents was intended as an internal working product.

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oversight purposes. For example, Army officials stated the Army's headquarters community relations organization launched a Public Affairs Community Engagement Database in February 2015 and requested that public affairs officials throughout the Army use the system to, among other things, plan and track community relations activities. In addition, Army officials told us they use the database to help inform their contribution to the Outreach Planning Document. Navy officials told us that they track throughout the fiscal year the community relations activities listed in the Navy's section of the Outreach Planning Document, regularly highlighting when different activities—such as Fleet Weeks, Port Visits, Navy Week events, and jet and parachute demonstration team performances—will take place, for purposes of informing senior leadership and the rest of the Navy. According to Marine Corps community relations organization officials, the execution and costs of the annual Marine Week is tracked. The Air Force's headquarters community relations organization approves and tracks open house events occurring at Air Force installations in a spreadsheet to have a record of activities provided, the cost of events, and the total attendance numbers. In the following subsections we discuss available information on the resources used to support various types of aviation and non-aviation community relations activities.

### Aerial Demonstration Teams and Flyovers

The Army's, the Navy's, and the Air Force's jet and parachute demonstration teams routinely carry out community relations activities that also help them maintain their proficiency for national security missions and support recruiting and retention objectives. In fiscal year 2015, the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, for example, demonstrated aerial maneuvers at civilian and military air shows throughout the United States, and the U.S. Army Golden Knights and the U.S. Navy Leap Frogs conducted parachute jumps at air shows and other events throughout the United States. According to military service officials, the members of these demonstration teams provide support to other missions such as recruiting and technical parachuting expertise for deployed individuals. Table 3 shows the fiscal year 2015 military and civilian personnel authorizations associated with the jet and parachute demonstration teams that were reported to us by military service officials associated with each of these teams.

**Table 3: Military and Civilian Personnel Authorizations for Department of Defense Jet and Parachute Demonstration Teams (Fiscal Year 2015)**

<b>Team</b>	<b>Military and civilian personnel authorizations</b>
U.S. Army Golden Knights (parachute team)	85
U.S. Navy Blue Angels (jet team)	118
U.S. Navy Leapfrogs (parachute team)	12
U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds (jet team)	135
<b>Total</b>	<b>350</b>

Source: DOD data provided by Army, Navy, and Air Force officials associated with each team. | GAO-16-794

Furthermore, pilots and aircraft from other military units within the active, reserve, and National Guard components that are not part of the U.S. Navy Blue Angels or the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds also support aviation community relations activities—including flyovers. In fiscal year 2015, these military units conducted 482 flyovers (see table 4).

**Table 4: Aircraft Flyovers for Community Relations Activities Conducted by Military Service Components (Fiscal Year 2015)**

<b>Military service</b>	<b>Number of community relations flyovers</b>
Army	14
Navy	22
Marine Corps	19
Air Force	427
<b>Total</b>	<b>482</b>

Source: Military service data compiled by the military services' respective headquarters-level public affairs officials. | GAO-16-794

According to military service officials, time spent by pilots on community relations activities—including the jet demonstration teams—has training value and is counted against each service's allotment of flying hours. These hours will be flown whether the flyover occurs or not. For example, an Air Force official told us that a 30-second flyover at a public event may occur as part of a multi-hour training session. Further, DOD and military service officials told us that the portion of flying hours associated with community relations activities represents a small percentage of each military service's total allotment of flying hours. According to the Outreach

Planning Document, we calculated that DOD’s planned not-to-exceed amounts for aviation community relations activities—which include flyovers, aerial demonstrations, and static displays—ranged from about \$82 million in fiscal year 2014 to about \$118 million in fiscal year 2016.<sup>30</sup> Officials told us that aviation community relations activities in particular provide additional value in raising the public profile of DOD and support the recruiting efforts of the military services.

## Military Bands

The military services have 137 bands, including 64 in the active-duty component, 17 in the reserves, and 56 in the National Guard. Table 5 shows the number of bands in fiscal year 2015 within each military service.

**Table 5: Military Bands within Each Military Service by Active, Reserve, and National Guard Component (Fiscal Year 2015)**

Military service	Active duty	Reserve	National Guard	Total
Army	31	17	51	99
Navy	11	0	0	11
Marine Corps	12	0	0	12
Air Force	10	0	5	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>137</b>

Source: GAO analysis of data and information from military service officials. | GAO-16-794

In fiscal year 2015, according to data from the military services, DOD authorized a total of 6,862 military personnel for these bands, of which 3,917 were in the active-duty component. Specifically, according to data from the military services, in fiscal year 2015 the:

- Army authorized 4,647 military band personnel;
- Navy authorized 644 military band personnel;
- Marine Corps authorized 766 military band personnel; and
- Air Force authorized 805 military band personnel.

<sup>30</sup> For fiscal year 2017, the military services have provided a total not-to-exceed amount for their community relations activities but the services have not yet specified amounts by the discrete community relations activity categories.

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Each military service's regional/field bands are located throughout the United States and worldwide and routinely participate in community relations activities, but also perform a variety of non-community relations missions, such as funeral support and performances for military service members. Some of the military services' regional/field bands engage in more community relations activities relative to all of their missions, compared with other military service bands. For example, according to military service officials and data, in fiscal year 2015 the:

- Army regional bands performed at 15,221 events of which approximately 20 percent were categorized as community relations activities,
- Navy regional bands performed at 4,084 events of which approximately 45 percent were categorized as community relations activities,
- Marine Corps field bands performed at 3,094 events of which approximately 20 percent were categorized as community relations activities, and
- Air Force regional bands performed at 3,082 events of which approximately 51 percent were categorized as community relations activities.

Also included in table 5 are each military service's premier and specialty bands, which are predominately located in the National Capital Region and which have a ceremonial mission but also engage in community relations activities.<sup>31</sup> For example, these bands perform at, among other functions, ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and events where high-level officials such as the President and the military service Secretary and Chief of Staff are in attendance. The community relations activities these bands engage in vary. Specifically, according to military service officials, in fiscal year 2015 the:

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<sup>31</sup> The military services' premier and specialty bands include the U.S. Army Band – "Pershing's Own," the U.S. Army Field Band, the U.S. Military Academy Band, the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps, the U.S. Navy Band, the U.S. Naval Academy Band, the U.S. Marine Band – "The President's Own," the U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps – "The Commandant's Own," and the U.S. Air Force Band.

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- Army's premier and specialty bands performed at 8,407 events of which approximately 18 percent were categorized as community relations activities,
  - U.S. Navy Band performed at 1,510 events of which approximately 22 percent were categorized as community relations activities,
  - U.S. Marine Band performed at 972 events of which 35 percent were categorized as community relations activities, and
  - U.S. Air Force Band performed at 1,584 events of which approximately 29 percent were categorized as community relations activities.

Based on DOD's Outreach Planning Document, we calculated that the planned not-to-exceed amounts listed for bands and ceremonial units ranged from about \$17 million in fiscal year 2014 to about \$27 million in fiscal year 2016.

#### Other Non-Aviation Resources

DOD uses other resources, in addition to military bands, within the military services to support non-aviation-related community relations activities such as hosting open houses at military installations. Based on DOD's Outreach Planning Documents, we calculated that the planned not-to-exceed amounts for these types of community relations activities ranged from about \$30 million in fiscal year 2014 to about \$44 million in fiscal year 2016. Like aviation community relations activities, some of these resources routinely carry out community relations activities, while other resources, such as senior military leaders and ground equipment, are used on a more episodic basis. For example, the Navy has flag officers and senior civilian leaders engage with government officials and other community leaders in executive outreach visits including to locations where there is little to no naval presence. Similarly, the Army, the Marine Corps, and the Air Force engage their senior leadership with community officials and provide speakers for leadership forums or other speaking events. Additionally, multiple military installations in all of the military services host open houses for the public and all rely on multiple resources to engage and inform the public.

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## DOD Funds Its Community Relations Activities through the Military Services' Annual Operation and Maintenance Appropriations

DOD generally relies on the military services' annual Operation and Maintenance appropriations to fund community relation activities.<sup>32</sup> DOD's guidance states that funding for community relations activities is the responsibility of the military services and their subordinate commands and is an integral part of the military services' Operation and Maintenance accounts. DOD and the military services do not have a single Operation and Maintenance account dedicated to all community relations activities that would be reported in the President's annual budget submission to Congress. Instead, as demonstrated by the President's annual budget submission for fiscal year 2017, the funding sources for different community relations activities are spread across multiple and distinct Operation and Maintenance appropriation accounts and the budget activity and subactivity groups into which DOD divides its appropriations. These subactivity groups also support non-community relations activities.<sup>33</sup> For example:

- The Army uses its Other Personnel Support Subactivity Group to fund its regional bands. Also, the Army uses its Other Service Support Subactivity Group to fund unspecified community relations activities, among other public affairs tasks.
- The Navy also uses its Other Personnel Support Subactivity Group to fund its band and music program which, among other things, funds national tours, public concerts, and travel costs incurred by some Navy bands. The Navy also uses its External Relations Subactivity Group to fund contract services and equipment for the Navy Week events and for other unspecified community relations activities. Finally, the Navy uses its Recruiting and Advertising Subactivity Group to fund its jet and parachute demonstration teams that conduct community relations activities, and also for recruiting and advertising activities.

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<sup>32</sup> Operation and Maintenance appropriations fund necessary expenses not otherwise provided for such as civilian pay, readiness and training, food, fuel, and utilities, among other expenses.

<sup>33</sup> As part of its budget justification materials, DOD divides the military services' Operation and Maintenance budget requests into four budget activities: (1) operating forces, (2) mobilization, (3) training and recruiting, and (4) administration and servicewide activities. DOD further divides these budget activities into various activity groups, then again into subactivity groups. The number and names of the activity and subactivity groups differ with each military service. There are 258 unclassified subactivity groups in total across all military services.



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- The Marine Corps uses its Administration Subactivity Group to fund a community outreach program intended to “foster a positive and proactive military and civilian relationship and boost the public’s awareness of the Marine Corps through direct interaction of military personnel in the community,” among other things.
  - The Air Force’s subactivity groups do not identify specific community relations resources or activities; rather, multiple subactivity groups refer to the public affairs function. For example, according to Air Force officials, the Air Force’s jet demonstration team is funded through subactivity groups that support the mission of the Air Combat Command, the team’s parent organization.

The military services have some flexibility in how they allot and expend their appropriated Operation and Maintenance funds. DOD and military service officials told us that many community relations activities are considered collateral duties and the services would expend their Operation and Maintenance funds whether these activities took place or not. For example, among other efforts, the military services expend these funds on flying hours to support pilot training. According to military service officials, flyover community relations activities are part of larger missions and count toward required pilot training. In addition, DOD’s guidance states that except for those Operation and Maintenance funds with a community relations purpose, these activities shall not involve any additional cost to the government and event sponsors are expected to reimburse the government for incidental costs—such as, travel, meals, and lodging—related to specific activities.

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## Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

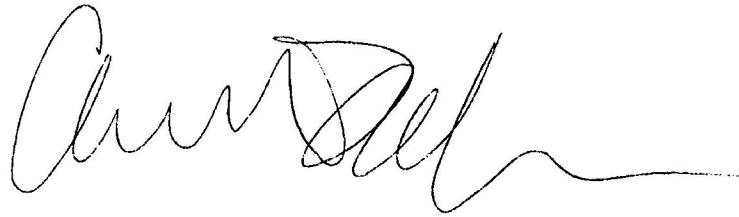
We are not making any recommendations in this report. DOD did not provide formal comments in response to this report. We incorporated DOD’s technical comments in response to a draft of this report as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees, the Secretary of Defense; the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs; and the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (213) 830-1011 or [vonaha@gao.gov](mailto:vonaha@gao.gov). Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last

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page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix II.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Von Ah", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Andrew Von Ah  
Acting Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

# Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities

Event sponsors requesting aviation and non-aviation community relations activities from the military services are to submit the following "Request for Military Aerial Support" or "Request for Armed Forces Participation in Public Events (Non-Aviation)" forms.

**Figure 2: Form to Request Aviation Community Relations Activities from the Military Services<sup>a</sup>**

REQUEST FOR MILITARY AERIAL SUPPORT ALL EVENT SPONSORS MUST READ THE INSTRUCTIONS ON PAGE 4 BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM.			REQUEST NUMBER	OMB No. 0704-0290 OMB approval expires Aug 31, 2012
<small>The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Service Directorate, Information Management Division, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1155 (0704-0290). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.</small>				
PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION. RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE ADDRESS ON PAGE 4.				
ALL DATA WILL BE HANDLED ON A "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" BASIS.				
SECTION I - ACTIVITY				
1. CATEGORY REQUESTED (X and complete as applicable)	(1) DATE OF EVENT (YYYYMMDD)	(2) TYPE AIRCRAFT REQUESTED ANY (X) SPECIFIC (Optional)	(3) MILITARY SERVICE REQUESTED ALL (X) SPECIFIC (Optional)	
a. FLYOVER (See paragraph 4 of Instructions)				
b. STATIC DISPLAY (See paragraph 5 of Instructions)				
c. SINGLE AIRCRAFT DEMONSTRATION (See paragraph 7 of Instructions)				
d. OTHER AERIAL SUPPORT (i.e. Parachute Demo, SAR Demo)				
e. AERIAL DEMONSTRATION TEAM (X all requested. See Instructions.)	(a) PRIMARY DATE (YYYYMMDD)	(b) ALTERNATE DATE(S) (YYYYMMDD)	(c) I WILL CONSIDER ANY DATE DURING AIR SHOW SEASON (X one)	
U.S. ARMY GOLDEN KNIGHTS			YES	
U.S. NAVY BLUE ANGELS			YES	
U.S. AIR FORCE THUNDERBIRDS			NO	
OTHER (Specify)				
SECTION II - EVENT AND SITE INFORMATION				
2.a. EVENT TITLE (and website, if applicable)				
b. SITE OF EVENT (Must be accessible by persons with disabilities)	c. SITE CITY, STATE AND ZIP CODE	d. SITE ELEVATION (Feet above sea level)	e. RUNWAY LENGTH X WIDTH	
f. ARRESTING GEAR (X one) YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	g. TYPE OF SITE (i.e., airport, park, lake, etc.)			
3. EVENT SITE CERTIFICATION (To be completed by an agent exercising authority for site use) I certify that an agreement has been made with the sponsoring organization indicated in Section III to use the event site indicated in 2.b. above.				
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	b. TITLE	c. TELEPHONE NO. (include area code)		
d. SIGNATURE	e. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)			
4. INCLUSIVE DATES/TIME OF EVENT (YYYYMMDD)	5. IS THERE CIVILIAN AVIATION/AERIAL PARTICIPATION PLANNED FOR THE EVENT? (X one)			YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>
6. ATTENDANCE		7. PLANNED MEDIA COVERAGE (X as applicable)		
a. PROJECTED	b. PRIOR EVENT	TELEVISION <input type="checkbox"/>	PRINT <input type="checkbox"/>	YOUR MEDIA/PR POC (Name/telephone/email):
		RADIO <input type="checkbox"/>	NONE <input type="checkbox"/>	
SECTION III - SPONSOR INFORMATION				
8. LOCAL SPONSORING ORGANIZATION			b. TYPE (X one)	
a. NAME			PROFIT <input type="checkbox"/> NONPROFIT <input type="checkbox"/>	
9. POINT OF CONTACT FOR AVIATION ACTIVITIES FOR THIS EVENT (Please PRINT all contact information.)				
a. (X one) MR. <input type="checkbox"/> MS. <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER <input type="checkbox"/>	b. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	c. RANK (if military)		
d. ADDRESS				
(1) NUMBER AND STREET/SUITE NUMBER		(2) CITY	(3) STATE	(4) ZIP CODE
e. TELEPHONE NO. (include area code or DSN if military) (1) (2)	f. E-MAIL ADDRESS		g. FAX NO. (include area code)	

DD FORM 2535, OCT 2010 PREVIOUS EDITION IS OBSOLETE. Page 1 of 4 Pages Adobe Professional 8.0 Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794 Part 1 of 4

**Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities**

10.a. EVENT TITLE		b. EVENT DATE	
<b>SECTION III - SPONSOR INFORMATION (Continued)</b>			
11. IS EVENT OFFICIALLY SUPPORTED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENT (X one)		YES	NO
12. WILL YOU PROVIDE POST-EVENT REPORT ON REQUEST? (X one)			
13. DOES SPONSORING ORGANIZATION PERMIT MEMBERSHIP WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, RELIGION, SEX OR COLOR? (X one)			
14. WILL ALL ASPECTS OF THIS EVENT BE AVAILABLE TO ALL PERSONS WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, RELIGION, SEX OR COLOR? (X one)			
15. WILL THE EVENT BE OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC? (X one)			
<b>SECTION IV - FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION COORDINATION (Airspace Coordination)</b>			
<p><b>FOR THIS EVENT TO BE CONSIDERED FOR U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT, THE SPONSOR MUST HAVE THIS SECTION COMPLETED BY THE FLIGHT STANDARDS DISTRICT OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONTROLLING THE AERIAL ACTIVITIES AT THE EVENT SITE.</b></p> <p>For events where the airspace falls under the purview of the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) coordination is required for all U.S. military aviation activities described in Section I <b>EXCEPT AIRCRAFT STATIC DISPLAYS</b>. THE SPONSOR WILL FORWARD THIS DOCUMENT, WITH SECTIONS I THROUGH III AND SECTIONS V THROUGH VII COMPLETED, TO THE FLIGHT STANDARDS DISTRICT OFFICE (FSDO) HAVING JURISDICTION OVER THE SITE. After completion of Section IV by the FSDO, form will be returned to the sponsor for submission to DoD. Sponsors will allow a minimum of 45 days for FAA review and completion.</p>			
16. FLIGHT STANDARDS DISTRICT OFFICE REVIEW I have reviewed the requested activity in Section I and determined that: (X and complete as applicable)			
a. FAA/OTHER GOVERNMENTAL WAIVER IS NOT REQUIRED.			
b. WAIVER IS REQUIRED FOR THE FOLLOWING EVENT(S) LISTED IN SECTION I: (Specify)			
c. COORDINATION HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED WITH CONTROLLING AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL FACILITY.			
d. AIR TRAFFIC COORDINATION IS NOT REQUIRED.			
e. DEMONSTRATION SITE FEASIBILITY STUDY IS REQUIRED AND SITE PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY THE SPONSOR. (Must meet show line, crowd line, airspace parameters and show congested areas, dwellings, thoroughfares, and obstructions within 3 NM of show center)			
f. DEMONSTRATION SITE FEASIBILITY STUDY IS NOT REQUIRED.			
g. NO MAJOR NOISE CONCERNS IN THE REQUESTED AIRSPACE.			
17. FEASIBILITY DETERMINATION Based upon my review of this site, I find the site to be: (X one)			
Satisfactory		Conditional Satisfactory (See NOTE)	Unsatisfactory (See NOTE)
NOTE: If the show site is marked "Conditional Satisfactory", explain the conditions which must be met by the show sponsor to provide a "Satisfactory" site in the Additional Comments section. If the show site is marked "Unsatisfactory," the request for the applicable activity cannot be accepted by the Department of Defense.			
18. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (Mandatory if FARs are waived)			
19. COORDINATING OFFICIAL			
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		b. FLIGHT STANDARDS DISTRICT OFFICE	c. TELEPHONE NO. (Include area code)
d. TITLE AND SIGNATURE		e. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)	

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Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794

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**Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities**

20.a. EVENT TITLE		b. EVENT DATE	
<b>SECTION V - PROGRAM</b>			
21. PROGRAM THEME AND OBJECTIVE <i>(Please explain how aviation support is an integral part of the event.)</i>			
<b>22. CHARGES AND FEES</b>			
a. ADMISSION	b. PARKING	c. SEATING	d. OTHER <i>(Specify)</i>
e. DOES EVENT RAISE FUNDS? <i>(X one)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> YES <i>(Complete 22.f. and 22.g.)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> NO	f. FUNDS WILL BE USED FOR <i>(X as applicable)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> (1) CHARITIES <input type="checkbox"/> (2) EXPENSES <input type="checkbox"/> (3) PRIZES	<input type="checkbox"/> (4) OTHER <i>(Explain in 22.g.)</i>	g. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF FUNDS <i>(Company, Charity or Organization to benefit)</i>
<b>23. HISTORICAL INFORMATION</b>			
a. LIST ALL YEARS THE EVENT HAS BEEN HELD	b. LAST AERIAL DEMONSTRATION AND YEAR OF PERFORMANCE <i>(i.e., Blue Angels, Thunderbirds, Golden Knights)</i>	c. LIST CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AIRCRAFT AT LAST YEAR'S EVENT	
<b>SECTION VI - SUPPORT</b> <i>(All Requests other than Flyovers)</i>			
24. THE SPONSOR AGREES TO: <i>(Initial each item signifying acceptance. Lack of initials renders the event ineligible for all support other than Flyovers.)</i>			INITIALS
a. OBTAIN THE AIR SHOW WAIVER FROM THE FAA MONITOR PRIOR TO THE EVENT FOR EACH ACTIVITY REQUIRING A WAIVER <i>(plan a 60-day lead time)</i> . FAILURE TO OBTAIN A WAIVER WILL RESULT IN DEMONSTRATION CANCELLATION AT THE EXPENSE OF THE SPONSOR.			
b. PAY TEAM COSTS AS OUTLINED ON PAGE 4, PARAGRAPHS 6 OR 8 OF INSTRUCTIONS, AS APPLICABLE. <i>(Applies only for Blue Angels, Thunderbirds, or Golden Knights requests.)</i>			
c. PROVIDE OR REIMBURSE TRANSPORTATION, MEALS, AND QUARTERS COSTS <i>(including pre-event visits)</i> FOR ARMED FORCES PARTICIPANTS, AS REQUIRED. <i>(Reimbursement for demonstration teams covered in paragraphs 6 or 8 of Instructions.)</i>			
d. PROVIDE SUITABLE AIRCRAFT FUEL AT MILITARY CONTRACT PRICES. <i>(Sponsor must pay all costs over military contract prices, including any transportation and handling charges, if fuel is not available at such prices.)</i>			
e. PROVIDE SECURITY FOR AIRCRAFT AT EVENT SITE DURING ENTIRE STAY. <i>(Certain assets (i.e., B-2 and F-117) will require extensive security.)</i>			
f. PROVIDE MOBILE FIREFIGHTING, CRASH, AND GROUND-TO-AIR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT AT THE SHOW SITE FOR FLIGHT AND PARACHUTE DEMONSTRATIONS AND STATIC DISPLAY AIRCRAFT.			
g. PROVIDE AMBULANCE AND MEDICAL PERSONNEL ON SITE DURING FLIGHT AND PARACHUTE DEMONSTRATIONS AND CERTAIN OTHER TYPES OF AERIAL ACTIVITIES AS DETERMINED, IN ADVANCE, BY THE MILITARY SERVICES.			
h. PROVIDE TELEPHONE FACILITIES FOR NECESSARY OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS AT THE EVENT SITE.			
i. PROVIDE AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH AND AIRFIELD DIAGRAM UPON REQUEST.			
j. PROVIDE LOCAL MILITARY RECRUITERS, AT NO CHARGE, PRIME SPACE AT THE EVENT SITE FOR RECRUITING ACTIVITIES.			
<b>SECTION VII - CERTIFICATION BY SPONSOR</b>			
25. PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATION/BASE OR WING COMMANDER <i>(If military sponsored)</i> I certify that the information provided above is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that representatives from the military services will contact us to discuss arrangements and additional costs involved prior to final commitments. Any changes to the information on this form may invalidate eligibility for military participation.			
a. SIGNATURE	b. DATE SIGNED <i>(YYYYMMDD)</i>	c. PRINT NAME AND TITLE	

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Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794

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**Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- The attached form is used to request U.S. Armed Forces aircraft participation at public events (maximum of 3 days) in support of community relations programs, and for requesting an aerial demonstration team (U.S. Army Golden Knights, U.S. Navy Blue Angels, or U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds) to perform on or off a military installation, worldwide. This form is used by each Military Service to determine eligibility of an event for military aerial support. Once an event has been approved as eligible, it is the event sponsor's responsibility to contact units and coordinate any possible military unit participation. **The event sponsor is required to inform all the other requested military services once acceptance of any military aviation participation has been confirmed.**
- The event sponsor is responsible for gaining the completion of Section IV, FAA Coordination, prior to submission of the form to each appropriate Military Service. The local Flight Standards District Office that has jurisdiction over the event site will complete all appropriate blocks in Section IV. Requests for static displays only do not require FAA coordination. Complete Sections I - III and V - VII, and forward the form to the nearest Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for completion of Section IV. To locate nearest FSDO, visit FAA's website at [http://www.faa.gov/about/office\\_orfield\\_offices/fsdo/](http://www.faa.gov/about/office_orfield_offices/fsdo/).
- The local sponsoring organization is responsible for the accurate completion of the form and conducting the event. The information on this form must be typed or printed in ink, and is used to evaluate the event for compliance with public law and Department of Defense policies, and to determine its eligibility for Armed Forces participation. In all cases, military participation must not interfere with military operations and training programs, and must be at no additional cost to the U.S. Government. Sponsors will consult with local military recruiters and provide, at no charge, prime space at the event site for recruiting activities. Department of Defense is unable to support events for which sponsorship is intended to make a business profit. Events which have an admission charge, or other associated charges, do not necessarily preclude military participation. Military commands cannot participate in events which charge admission unless the military participation is incidental to the event, and not the primary attraction. Incomplete forms, or forms submitted late, cannot be considered and will be returned to the sponsor's representative.
- Requests for flyovers will be considered only for aviation-oriented events (i.e., air shows, airport anniversaries or dedication events), or for patriotic observances (one day only) held in conjunction with Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, POW/MIA Recognition Day, or Veterans Day (event must be within seven days of the actual holiday date to be considered). Flyovers, not to exceed four aircraft, may be performed by operational or training aircraft as determined by the providing Military Service. **Sponsors of events other than bona fide air shows are prohibited from scheduling more than one service to conduct the flyover. Once a military organization confirms flyover support, sponsor must then notify any other military service requested, so they will not participate in the same event. The Blue Angels and Thunderbirds do not perform flyovers.** Requests for flyovers must be received for processing at least 90 days prior to the event for full consideration by the Services. Requests received closer than 30 days will not allow adequate planning for some organizations to support. Requests received 14 days or closer will not be considered. Complete Sections I - III and V - VII, and forward the form to the nearest Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for completion of Section IV. The missing man formation will not be flown in support of any activities requested on this form. It is reserved for funeral services in honor of active duty rated/designated aviators or dignitaries of the Federal Government as determined by the Military Services.
- Requests for aircraft static displays will only be considered for air shows, airport events, expositions and fairs, and public events which contribute to the public knowledge of Armed Forces equipment and capabilities (including recruiting and ROTC events). Complete Sections I - III and V - VII (Section IV is not applicable when requesting static displays only). Requests may be sent from the sponsoring organization to each Service branch's public affairs office listed in paragraph 9 of these instructions. The sponsor must satisfy all safety and operational requirements for the requested aircraft. Requests received closer than 60 days (90 days for Marine Corps support) will not allow adequate planning for some organizations to support.
- Civilian-sponsored requests for performances by a flight demonstration team (Blue Angels and Thunderbirds) will be considered only for events which are: (1) aviation oriented (i.e. air shows, airport events, historical aviation events); (2) planning civilian aviation participation; (3) open to all Military Services for participation, and (4) held during the air show season (mid-March to mid-November). A partial reimbursement cost (quarters and meals) of \$6,000 per official demonstration (including any performance where admission is
- (Continued) charged to view a team) is payable by all nonmilitary sponsors as indicated in the team support manual. Appearances on a military installation or sponsored by a military organization will only be approved in support of an official installation "open house" program (no admission charge/entrance fee). All event sponsors are required to comply with all aspects of the team support manual, as applicable. Requests for the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds must be received by August 1 of the year preceding the year of the event. Requests for the U.S. Navy Blue Angels must be received by August 1 of the year that is two years preceding the year of the event. Complete Sections I - III and V - VII, and forward the form to the nearest FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for completion of Section IV. The annual schedule will be released in December of the year prior to the season. Subsequent to public release of the schedules, teams will be rescheduled if a scheduled event is cancelled, the original sponsoring organization is changed, or the original event site is changed. Previously validated requests will automatically be reconsidered. NOTE: Blue Angels and Thunderbirds require 6,000 and 7,000 foot runways, respectively, and within 30-50 nautical miles of the demonstration site. The Blue Angels also require arresting gear located within 80 nautical miles of the demonstration site.
- Requests for single aircraft demonstrations (i.e., F-15, F-18, Harrier) will be considered for events as described in paragraph 6 (1) through (4) above. Army and Air Force single aircraft demonstrations must be received for processing at least 60 days prior to the event. Navy demonstration requests must be received by January 31 each year. USMC Harrier AV-8B demonstration and Osprey MV-22 static display requests must be received by October 15 of the year preceding the year of the event. The Harrier demonstration can only be performed over a prepared hard surface or open water. (Scheduled Harrier events will receive two aircraft, one for demonstration and one for static display. Fifty gallons of distilled water must be provided for each Harrier demonstration.) Meals, lodging, and transportation for the aircrews must be provided by the sponsor.
- Civilian-sponsored requests for the U.S. Army Parachute Team, the Golden Knights, will be considered for events such as air shows, airport dedications and anniversaries, expositions and fairs, events sponsored by the Army, and those events which contribute to the public knowledge of military and airborne operations, equipment and capabilities. All requests must be received by Army Public Affairs by October 1 of the year preceding the year of the event. Appearances on a military installation will only be approved in support of an official "open house" program. All sponsors, military and civilian, are required to reimburse the team for quarters, meals, ground transportation, and a designated rate for the jump platform (aircraft), as determined by the team, at least two weeks prior to the event (approximately \$2,500 per official show day). The annual schedule will be released in mid-January (approximately 45 days after the flight demonstration teams' schedules). After the official schedule is released, the Golden Knights will consider "add on" performances if received at least 60 days prior to the date of the event. In the event of cancellations, all requests previously validated will automatically be reconsidered, as required. Complete Sections I - III and V - VII, and forward the form to the nearest FAA Flight Standards District Office (FSDO) for completion of Section IV. Please send completed request forms to the appropriate Military Service public affairs office(s) listed below.
- Additional DD Form 2535 may be obtained through the office(s) listed below, through the nearest military installation public affairs office, or on the internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgr/forms/ddforms2500-2989.htm>. **For legitimacy reasons, event sponsors are highly encouraged to fill out applicable information on-line prior to printing form out.**

<p><b>ARMY:</b> Community Relations Division HQDA, Office of the Chief, Public Affairs 1500 Army Pentagon, Room 1D470 Washington, DC 20310-1500 aodcmr2@hqda.army.mil (e-mail) (703) 614-3354 (fax) <a href="http://www.army.mil/comrel">www.army.mil/comrel</a></p>	<p><b>MARINE CORPS:</b> Requests for Marine Corps aerial assets must be submitted online at <a href="http://www.usmc.mil/community">www.usmc.mil/community</a> (703) 614-1034 (voice)</p>
<p><b>NAVY:</b> Navy Office of Community Outreach Attn: Aviation Support 5722 Integrity Drive, Bldg 456-3 Millington, TN 38054 (801) 874-5803 (voice) (801) 874-5813 (fax) <a href="http://www.navy.mil/navco">www.navy.mil/navco</a></p>	<p><b>AIR FORCE:</b> Office of the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) 1690 Air Force Pentagon Washington, DC 20330 (703) 895-9664 (voice) (703) 893-9601 (fax) <a href="http://www.afoutreach.af.mil">www.afoutreach.af.mil</a> Submit request online at <a href="http://www.airshows.pa.hq.af.mil">www.airshows.pa.hq.af.mil</a></p>

**SPONSOR: PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.**

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Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794

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<sup>3</sup>According to an Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs official, the current form is set to expire on September 30, 2016, and an updated form has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval.

**Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities**

**Figure 3: Form to Request Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities from the Military Services<sup>a</sup>**

REQUEST FOR ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC EVENTS (NON-AVIATION)				OMB No. 0704-0290 OMB approval expires Aug 31, 2013	
<p>The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Executive Services Directorate, Information Management Division, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC 20301-1155 (0704-0290). Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ORGANIZATION. RETURN COMPLETED FORM TO THE APPROPRIATE ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THIS FORM.</p>					
<b>ALL DATA WILL BE HANDLED ON A "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" BASIS.</b>					
<p><b>PURPOSE:</b> This form is used to request all Armed Forces MUSICAL UNIT, TROOP, COLOR/HONOR GUARD, and/or EXHIBIT/EQUIPMENT participation in public events. The information is required to evaluate the event for appropriateness and compliance with DoD policies and for coordination with the units involved. Please complete all sections.</p>					
SECTION I - EVENT DATA					
1. SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT (i.e., Band, Marching Unit, Color Guard, Tank, etc.)			2. DATE OF EVENT (YYYYMMDD)	3. TIME OF EVENT a. FROM: b. TO:	
4. TITLE OF EVENT (Website, if applicable)			5. EXPECTED ATTENDANCE		
6. SITE OF EVENT (i.e., Park, Auditorium, etc.) (NOTE: This site must be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.)			7. ADDRESS OF EVENT (Street, City, State, ZIP Code)		
8. PROGRAM (Describe program theme and objective, audience size and civic makeup, and the purpose of Armed Forces participation.)			9. HAVE OTHER ARMED FORCES UNITS BEEN REQUESTED TO SUPPORT THIS EVENT? (If so, specify.)		
10. IS THERE ANY CHARGE? (i.e., admission, parking, etc. If so, specify.)			11. IS THIS EVENT BEING USED TO RAISE FUNDS FOR ANY PURPOSE? (If so, specify how funds will be distributed.)		
12. WILL ADMISSION, SEATING, AND ALL OTHER ACCOMMODATIONS AND FACILITIES CONNECTED WITH THIS EVENT BE AVAILABLE TO ALL PERSONS WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, CREED, COLOR, SEX OR NATIONAL ORIGIN? (X appropriate box)				YES	NO
SECTION II - SPONSORING ORGANIZATION DATA					
13. NAME OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATION					
(X appropriate box for each item.)					
14. IS THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION A CIVIC ORGANIZATION?				YES	NO
15. DOES THE EVENT HAVE THE OFFICIAL BACKING OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT?					
16. DOES THE SPONSORING ORGANIZATION EXCLUDE ANY PERSON FROM ITS MEMBERSHIP OR PRACTICE ANY FORM OF DISCRIMINATION IN ITS FUNCTIONS BASED ON RACE, CREED, COLOR, SEX OR NATIONAL ORIGIN?					
17. SPONSOR'S REPRESENTATIVE (Please PRINT all contact information.)					
a. NAME		b. ADDRESS (Street, City, State, ZIP Code)			
c. PRIMARY TELEPHONE NO. (Include area code)	d. ALTERNATE TELEPHONE NUMBER	e. FAX NUMBER (Incl. area code)	f. E-MAIL ADDRESS		
SECTION III - SPONSORING ORGANIZATION SUPPORT DATA					
Event sponsors must agree to fund certain military expenses when the requested military resources are not local to the geographic area of the event. See paragraph 3 of the Instructions on the back of this form. (X appropriate box for each item.)					
18. Does the sponsor agree to fund the standard Military Services allowance for meals, quarters, and incidental expenses for Armed Forces participants?				YES	NO
19. Does the sponsor agree to fund transportation, meals, and hotel accommodations for unit representatives to visit the site prior to the event?					
20. Does the sponsor agree to fund transportation costs from home station to the event and return for Armed Forces participants?					
21. Does the sponsor agree to fund transportation costs for Armed Forces participants between the site of the event and the hotel?					
22. Does the sponsor agree to provide telephone facilities for necessary official communications at the site of the event?					
SECTION IV - CERTIFICATION					
23. I am acting on behalf of the sponsoring organization and certify that the information provided above is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that representatives from the military services will contact me to discuss arrangements and costs involved prior to final commitments, or to inform me of their inability to support this event. I also understand that operational commitments must take priority and can preclude a scheduled appearance at an approved public activity.					
a. SIGNATURE OF SPONSOR'S REPRESENTATIVE		b. DATE SIGNED (YYYYMMDD)		c. PRINT NAME AND TITLE	

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Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794

Part 1 of 2

**Appendix I: Request Forms for Military Services' Support in Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities**

INSTRUCTIONS	
<p>1. This form is used to request Armed Forces musical unit, personnel, color/honor guard and/or exhibit/equipment participation in public events. The requested information is required to evaluate the event. Please complete all sections.</p> <p>2. Armed Forces musical units are organized for ceremonial and traditional purposes and to support recruiting activities. However, they may be authorized to provide certain specified presentations, such as patriotic ceremonies, for public programs. Armed Forces musical organizations are not permitted to provide entertainment, background, dinner, dance or other social music at public or private events in competition with the customary or regular employment of local civilian musicians. <b>Limited resources permit only one band and/or choir to perform at an event, and the Military Services reserve the right to cancel support to sponsors who have scheduled more than one such military unit.</b></p> <p>3. Department of Defense policies require that Armed Forces participation in public events will be provided at no additional cost to the Government. The sponsor is required to pay, when necessary, the standard Military Services allowance for quarters and meals for all Armed Forces participants and for other services which have been determined in advance by the Military Services and agreed to by the sponsor. Transportation and meal costs are not usually incurred when support is provided from a local military installation. However, circumstances may dictate that reimbursement for any or all of these costs may be necessary. All costs are binding after a unit, personnel, or exhibit has arrived at an event site, even though weather conditions or other unforeseen circumstances force the event to be cancelled.</p> <p>4. This form should be submitted to the appropriate Military Service (<i>listed in right hand column</i>) not less than 30 nor more than 90 days in advance of a scheduled program. Please realize that all Armed Forces units have specific military missions and training requirements. Participation in public programs will only be authorized when such support is in the best interests of the Department of Defense and the Military Services and does not interfere with mission or training programs. In all cases, operational commitments must take priority and can cause previously scheduled appearances to be cancelled.</p> <p>5. Additional forms may be obtained on the Internet at <a href="http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/informal/forms/ddforms2500-2999.htm">http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/informal/forms/ddforms2500-2999.htm</a>. For legibility, event sponsors are highly encouraged to fill out applicable information on-line prior to printing out form. Submit forms through the nearest military installation public affairs office, or from any of the military public affairs offices listed to the right. If you have questions regarding information required on this form, please call the Directorate for Programs and Community Relations between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (703) 695-2113.</p>	<p><b>MAIL COMPLETED REQUEST FORM TO:</b></p> <p>The Commander of the Military Installation closest to the event, OR to the appropriate Military Service listed below:</p> <p><b>ARMY:</b> Community Relations Division HQDA, Office of the Chief, Public Affairs 1500 Army Pentagon, Room 1D470 Washington, DC 20310-1500 aodcomrel2@hqda.army.mil (e-mail) (703) 614-3354 (fax) <a href="http://www.army.mil/comrel">www.army.mil/comrel</a></p> <p><b>MARINE CORPS:</b> Requests for Marine Corps assets must be submitted online at <a href="http://www.usmc.mil/community">www.usmc.mil/community</a> (703) 614-1034 (voice)</p> <p><b>NAVY:</b> Navy Office of Community Outreach 5722 Integrity Drive, Bldg 456-3 Millington, TN 38054 (901) 874-5804 (Voice) (901) 874-5813 (Fax) <a href="http://www.navy.mil/navco">www.navy.mil/navco</a></p> <p><b>AIR FORCE:</b> Office of the Secretary of the Air Force Office of Public Affairs (SAF/PA) 1690 Air Force Pentagon Washington, DC 20330 (703) 695-9664 (Voice) (703) 693-9601 (Fax) <a href="http://www.afoutreach.af.mil">www.afoutreach.af.mil</a> Submit band requests online at <a href="http://www.outreachrequests.hq.af.mil">www.outreachrequests.hq.af.mil</a></p> <p><b>NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU:</b> Submit requests to the State National Guard Public Affairs office in the state where the event will take place. Contact information for State Public Affairs Offices is available online at <a href="http://www.ng.mil/features/comrel">www.ng.mil/features/comrel</a>.</p>
<b>SPONSOR: PLEASE RETAIN A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.</b>	
<p>24. REMARKS (Use this area to continue any items if necessary. Reference by section and item number.)</p>	

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Source: Department of Defense. | GAO-16-794

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<sup>3</sup>According to an Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs official, the current form is set to expire on September 30, 2016, and an updated form has been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval.



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# Appendix II: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

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## GAO Contact

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## Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the individual named above, key contributors to this report were Margaret A. Best (Assistant Director), Darreisha M. Bates, Daniel J. Glickstein, Cynthia L. Grant, Mae Frances Jones, Shveta Khanna, Felicia M. Lopez, Carol D. Petersen, Ophelia Robinson, Amie M. Lesser, and Callie Weir.

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# Appendix III: Accessible Data

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## Accessible Text

### Accessible Text for Figure 1: Aviation and Non-Aviation Community Relations Activities That the Department of Defense and the Military Services Conduct

#### **Aviation community relations activities:**

##### **Flyovers**

A flyover is a straight and level flight, usually limited to one pass, by no more than four military aircraft of the same type from the same military service.

##### **Aerial demonstrations**

A demonstration is designed to show performance techniques involving a single aircraft or group of aircraft or personnel – such as helicopter flight techniques, precision aerial maneuvers flown by the jet demonstration teams, and parachute jumps.

##### **Static displays**

A static display is the ground display of military aircraft and their related equipment. The aircraft does not taxi or start its engines while spectators are in the display area. When aircraft are on static display, qualified military personnel must be available at the aircraft to answer questions on aircraft performance and missions.

#### **Non-aviation community relations activities:**

##### **Military-hosted events**

Military-hosted events can include military installation open houses, military air shows, Department of Navy fleet weeks and port visits, Navy Week, and Marine Week.<sup>a</sup>

##### **Speaking engagements and other outreach**

Authorized speeches and briefings by DOD military and civilian personnel on matters of interest to the public. Personnel often appear at functions coordinated by non-governmental organizations, veterans' and military service organizations and civic or corporate leaders.

##### **Service birthday and historical commemorations activities**

Anniversary and commemorative activities include celebrating the anniversary of a service's founding and commemorating historical military operations such as the Battle of Iwo Jima. Personnel such as musicians and senior civilian and military leaders, as well as equipment are often used as a part of the activity.

##### **Bands and ceremonial units**

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Military bands, band detachments, and buglers provide public musical support. This support includes, but is not limited to, parades, concerts, choral presentations, patriotic openers or presentations, and other events.

Ceremonial units generally consist of color guards, marching units, and salute batteries and can support patriotic observances and civic parades.

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense information; Defense Video and Imagery System (photos). | GAO-16-794

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