

Report to Congressional Committees

August 2017

MILITARY BANDS

Military Services
Should Enhance
Efforts to Measure
Performance



Highlights of GAO-17-657, a report to congressional committees

Why GAO Did This Study

The Department of Defense (DOD) uses military bands to enhance the morale of the troops, provide music for ceremonies, and promote public awareness. Bands across the military services support a range of activities, including funerals for military service members, events attended by highlevel officials, and community-relations activities such as parades. In fiscal vear 2013, DOD restricted its community-relations activities, including placing travel restrictions on bands, as a result of the sequestration ordered in March 2013. DOD reinstated community-relations activities at a reduced capacity in fiscal year 2014.

House Report 114-537 included a provision for GAO to review DOD's requirement for military bands. This report (1) describes the trends in personnel and costs for bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016, and (2) assesses the extent to which the military services have evaluated how the bands are addressing their missions, among other objectives.

GAO analyzed data from the military services on military band personnel and reported operating costs of bands. GAO also reviewed the military services' guidance and approaches to evaluating their bands and interviewed band program officials at the military services.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force each develop and implement measurable objectives and performance measures for their bands. DOD concurred with the recommendations.

View GAO-17-657. For more information, contact Andrew Von Ah at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov.

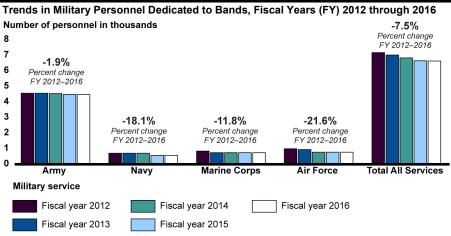
August 2017

MILITARY BANDS

Military Services Should Enhance Efforts to Measure Performance

What GAO Found

All of the military services reported reducing the number of military band personnel from fiscal year 2012 through 2016, but trends in total reported operating costs for the bands, such as travel and equipment expenses, varied across the services. Total military personnel dedicated to bands decreased from 7,196 in fiscal year 2012 to 6,656 in fiscal year 2016, or 7.5 percent (see figure). The Navy and Air Force reported that their total operating costs for bands over this period increased by \$4.1 million and \$1.6 million, respectively, and the Marine Corps reported that its costs declined by about \$800,000. The Army did not have complete cost data for its reserve bands, but reported that the operating costs of its active-duty and National Guard bands declined by \$3.6 million and about \$500,000, respectively, from fiscal year 2012 through 2016.



Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

The military services have not developed objectives and measures to assess how their bands are addressing the bands' missions, such as inspiring patriotism and enhancing the morale of troops. All four military services have tracked information, such as the number and type of band events. Further, militaryservice officials cited the demand for band performances, anecdotal examples, and support from senior leadership, as ways to demonstrate the bands are addressing their missions. However, the military services' approaches do not include measurable objectives or performance measures that have several important attributes, such as linkage to mission, a baseline, and measurable targets, that GAO has found are key to successfully measuring a program's performance. Military band officials cited the difficulty and resources required to quantify how the bands are addressing their missions, but the military services are taking steps to improve how they track information on band events to measure the bands' effectiveness. GAO believes these key steps could inform and guide the services' efforts to develop and implement measurable objectives and performance measures. Doing so could provide decision makers with the information they need to assess the value of the military bands relative to resource demands for other priorities.

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DOD Department of Defense

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August 10, 2017

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 military bands to, among other things, inspire patriotism, enhance the morale of the troops, promote public awareness, provide music for ceremonies, and support recruiting and retention. To do so, bands across the military services—Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force—support a range of activities, including funerals for military service members, events where high-level officials such as the President are in attendance, and community-relations activities such as parades in local communities. When DOD was required to reduce its discretionary budget due to the sequestration ordered in March 2013, the department restricted its community-relations activities to ensure that funding was available for wartime operations and critical priority requirements for national security. These restrictions included prohibiting military bands from traveling outside their local areas for community-relations events. In fiscal year 2014, DOD reinstated community-relations activities at a reduced capacity.

The House Armed Services Committee Report accompanying H.R. 4909 included a provision that we review DOD's requirement for military

¹ "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 nonexempt discretionary appropriation accounts when discretionary spending limits established for a particular fiscal year are exceeded. A sequestration was ordered on March 1, 2013.

bands.² In this report, we (1) describe trends in personnel and costs for military bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016, (2) describe the factors considered by the military services to determine the size and location of bands, and (3) assess the extent to which the military services have evaluated how the military bands are addressing their missions.

To describe trends in personnel and costs, we obtained data from the military services on the number of bands, military personnel authorizations dedicated to the bands, and the total reported operating costs for the bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016.3 We selected this date range because fiscal year 2012 was the fiscal year prior to sequestration in fiscal year 2013, and fiscal year 2016 was the most recent full fiscal year at the time of our review. We also obtained data from the Defense Manpower Data Center on military personnel who had a military occupational specialty as a band member in calendar years 2012 through 2016 and analyzed data on certain personnel costs from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service for that period.4 These personnel costs include basic pay, basic allowance for subsistence, basic allowance for housing, and other special pays and allowances, which we refer to collectively as pay and allowance costs for the purposes of our report. However, we were not able to obtain data that were sufficiently reliable for determining the costs of reserve-component military band personnel from calendar year 2012 through 2016 in time for our review, and therefore only report on these costs for the active component. 5 We selected a nongeneralizable sample of six bands based on their military service, component (whether the band was active duty, National Guard, or reserve), size, type of band, and geographic location, and interviewed their commanders to understand the nature of their bands' costs and

²H. Rep. No. 114-537 (May 4, 2016), accompanying H.R. 4909, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017.

³The scope of our review included military bands in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. We did not include the U.S. Coast Guard in our review because it is a military service within the Department of Homeland Security when not operating as a service in the Navy. The U.S. Coast Guard has one band located at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

⁴We did not obtain data on military band personnel costs by fiscal year because Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials stated that the agency manages pay and allowances on a calendar-year basis.

⁵For example, in calendar years 2012 through 2016, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service could not identify pay and allowance data for between about 6 and 24 percent of the military personnel that the Defense Manpower Data Center reported were assigned to Army National Guard bands in those years.

operations. Observations from these interviews are not generalizable to all military bands. We also interviewed officials with responsibilities for providing guidance to their respective band programs as well as force-structure or budget officials at all of the military services on changes in the structure or costs of military bands over time.

To better understand the types of facility and transportation resources bands have, we sent a questionnaire to Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force bands actively performing in fiscal year 2017 and to the Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band and the Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities. The Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band or Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities completed questionnaires on behalf of each Navy band actively performing in fiscal year 2017 because the Navy centrally manages the operations of its bands. For the other three services, the individual bands completed the questionnaire. We received responses for 129 of the 134 bands or band operating locations (or 96 percent). We describe our questionnaire development and analysis process in appendix I and report on the types of facilities and transportation resources the bands had in appendix II.

To describe the factors considered by the military services to determine the size and location of bands, we reviewed relevant military-service guidance and available documentation on the number of members in military bands and their location. In addition, we interviewed band program officials about the factors that the military services have used to determine the size and location of their military bands. We also interviewed officials from each service knowledgeable about how military bands are considered in force sizing and resourcing processes to discuss the services' processes for reviewing the size of and ongoing needs for their bands.

To assess the extent military services have evaluated how military bands are addressing their missions, we reviewed military-service guidance on the missions of the bands and the extent to which the military services track information related to events performed by bands. We obtained data from the military services on the number and types of events performed by military bands in fiscal year 2016—the most recent full year such data were available—as well as available data on event requests declined and

⁶Two Air Force bands have an operating location in a different state or country and completed a separate questionnaire for the band and its operating location.

the estimated number of audience members in attendance at events. As part of the questionnaire described above, we asked the military bands to identify the type of information they track on their events and examples of how they have made changes to their future events as a result of tracking this information. We also interviewed military-service band program officials on how they determine that their bands are addressing their missions and the extent to which the military services have established measurable objectives and performance measures for their bands to determine how military bands are addressing their missions. We assessed the military services' efforts to evaluate how bands are addressing their missions against GAO's *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* regarding defining objectives⁷ and GAO's important attributes of successful performance measures.⁸

To assess the reliability of the data we used in this report, we reviewed corroborating documentation; analyzed the data for inconsistencies, incomplete data fields, and outliers; reviewed relevant documentation about data systems or databases used to generate the data; and interviewed military-service officials about the reliability of the data. We discussed limitations we identified with DOD or military-service officials and noted any limitations in the report, where appropriate. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable to describe the trends in the number of military bands, the number of military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands, and the total reported operating costs for military service components' bands, except for the Army Reserve, from fiscal year 2012 through 2016; the trends in pay and allowances for active-duty military personnel dedicated to military bands from calendar year 2012 through 2016; and context about the number of events performed by military bands, the number of event requests declined, and the estimated number of audience members in attendance at band events, in fiscal year

⁷GAO, Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 10, 2014).

⁸See GAO, *Tax Administration: IRS Needs to Further Refine Its Tax Filing Season Performance Measures*, GAO-03-143 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 22, 2002), p. 45, for a description of how we developed the attributes of effective performance goals and measures. Subsequent GAO work added baseline measure as an attribute of effective performance measures. See GAO, *Defense Health Reform: Additional Implementation Details Would Increase Transparency of DOD's Plans and Enhance Accountability*, GAO-14-49 (Washington, D.C.: Nov. 6, 2013).

2016.9 We identified some data limitations, which we discuss in this report.

We conducted this performance audit from September 2016 to August 2017 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.

Background

Band Types and Structure

The military services have two types of bands: (1) premier and specialty bands and (2) regional and field bands. ¹⁰ The premier and specialty bands are predominately located in the National Capital Region and have a ceremonial mission, but they also engage in community-relations activities. ¹¹ For example, the bands' performances include ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery and events where high-level officials—such

⁹A small portion of the pay and allowances may include amounts paid to service members who had a military occupation other than a band member for a portion of the calendar year. The Defense Manpower Data Center identified service members with a bandmember military occupational specialty in any month during the calendar year, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service provided us with the total calendar-year amount of pay and allowances paid to these service members. As a result, a service member with a band-member military occupational specialty for a portion of the calendar year and a different military occupational specialty for the other portion of the calendar year would include the pay and allowances for the portion of the year the service member was not in a band. However, our analysis showed that this affected a small percentage of the pay and allowances reported in calendar years 2012 through 2016.

¹⁰With the exception of the premier and specialty bands, the military services refer to their bands located throughout the United States and worldwide by different terms: The Army refers to these bands as music performance units; the Navy refers to these bands as small fleet, large fleet, or major command bands; the Marine Corps refers to these bands as field bands; and the Air Force refers to these bands as active-duty regional or Air National Guard bands. For the purposes of this report, we refer to the military services' bands other than the premier and specialty bands as regional and field bands.

¹¹The military services' nine 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.

as the President and the military service Secretary and Chief of Staff—are in attendance. The regional and field bands are located throughout the United States and worldwide, and provide musical support to military units or commands by fulfilling ceremonial missions, participating in community-relations events, and performing for military service members.

Bands typically consist of multiple musical groups, such as a ceremonial band, brass quintet, and popular music group. Figure 1 describes examples of the different types of musical groups a band may have.

Figure 1: Examples of Musical Groups within Military Bands



Concert band: A concert band can present a wide array of marches, patriotic selections, and orchestral transcriptions.



Woodwind quintet: A woodwind quintet supports protocol functions and formal events and can also be used for ceremonies in small rooms and community relations events.



Popular music group: A popular music group, such as a rock or country band, plays contemporary music for troop morale and community relations events.



Bugler: A bugler, or a single trumpet player, performs at funerals, memorial services, wreath-layings, and formal military dinners.



Ceremonial band: A ceremonial band performs marches, patriotic music, and official ceremonial music.



Brass quintet: A brass quintet provides ceremonial, patriotic, and entertainment music, at indoor and small outdoor venues, ceremonies, official receptions, and community relations events.



Jazz ensemble: A jazz ensemble performs jazz, swing, rock, and other styles of popular music.

Sources: GAO analysis of military-service information (information); photos by Anna Andrew, Louis Briscese, Heide Couch, Adam Grimm, William Holdaway, Colbey Livingston, and Stephen Wright—courtesy of Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System (photos). | GAO-17-657

Roles and Responsibilities of Organizations and Personnel Related to Military Bands

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. ¹² In this role, the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs oversees the execution and movement of military bands to support community-relations activities.

The services vary in their structures for managing their bands. The Navy centrally manages its band program, while the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force have decentralized management of their bands. All Navy regional and field bands and the U.S. Naval Academy Band are field activities of the U.S. Navy Band. The U.S. Navy Band also provides funding to the Navy's regional and field bands through Fleet Band Activities, while the Superintendent of the U.S. Naval Academy provides funding to the U.S. Naval Academy Band. The Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force have service headquarters-level organizations that manage their band programs, but their service guidance provides that local commands maintain control over and provide funding for their bands. Table 1 identifies Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force offices that manage their military service's bands, and summarizes the offices' responsibilities.

Table 1: Service Headquarters-Level Organizations for Managing Band Programs and Summary of Responsibilities

Military service	Headquarters-level organization	Summary of responsibilities			
Army Chief, Army Music		Coordinates, recommends, and enforce policy, plans, and programs related to Army bands. ^a			
Navy	Commanding Officer, U.S. Navy Band	Maintains, supports, administers, and provides applicable resources for nine fleet and area bands, the U.S. Naval Academy Band, and Navy Fleet Band Activities.			

¹²DOD Directive 5410.18, *Public Affairs Community Relations Policy* (Nov. 20, 2001) (certified current as of May 2007).

¹³OPNAV Instruction 5450.346A, *Missions, Functions and Tasks of the U.S. Navy Band* (Feb. 23, 2015).

¹⁴Army Regulation 220-90, *Army Music* (Nov. 9, 2016); Marine Corps Order 5000.18, *Marine Corps Band Manual* (May 10, 2013); Air Force Instruction 35-110, *U.S. Air Force Band Program* (Aug. 11, 2014).

Military service	Headquarters-level organization	Summary of responsibilities
Marine Corps	Director, Marine Corps Communications	Serves as program manager and provides regulations and guidance for all band personnel engaged in representing the Marine Corps in public affairs matters. ^a
Air Force	Chief, Bands Division	Manages all aspects of Air Force bands program policy and guidance, officer and enlisted manpower requirements, advertising, accessions, and assignments for active-duty bands. ^a

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

The band members' roles and responsibilities related to training and deployment vary across the services. Members of all bands except for the U.S. Marine Band—"The President's Own" complete basic training and ongoing physical fitness requirements. Their responsibilities for deploying to a combat environment and whether they perform nonmusical duties in combat environments vary by service and the type of band. Except for the Marine Corps, the primary mission of band members who deploy is to perform music. Marine Corps band members, according to band program officials, provide perimeter security or support convoy operations when deployed to a combat environment. In addition, according to military-service band program officials, members of Army National Guard and Air National Guard bands can be called upon to assist other Air and Army National Guard units with civil-defense duties and disaster-relief efforts. Table 2 shows the basic training, ongoing physical fitness, and combat environment requirements for the military services' bands.

	Completes basic training and ongoing physical fitness requirements	Deployable to combat environment	Primary mission is to provide music when deployed to combat environment
Army			
Premier and specialty	Yes	No	Not applicable
Regional and field	Yes	Yes	Yes ^a
Navy			
Premier and specialty	Yes	No	Not applicable
Regional and field	Yes	Yes	Yes ^a
Marine Corps			

^aAccording to military-service guidance, local commands maintain control over and provide funding for Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force bands.

	Completes basic training and ongoing physical fitness requirements	Deployable to combat environment	Primary mission is to provide music when deployed to combat environment	
Premier and specialty Yes—Drum and Bugle Corps No—U.S. Marine Band		No	Not applicable	
Regional and field	Yes	Yes	No	
Air Force ^b				
Premier and specialty	Yes	Yes	Yes ^a	
Regional and field	Yes	Yes	Yes ^a	

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

All Military Services
Have Reduced the
Number of Bands and
Band Personnel since
2012, but Total
Operating Cost
Trends Varied across
the Services

The military services reduced their number of bands by 9.3 percent, and also reduced military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands by 7.5 percent, from fiscal year 2012 through 2016. Over the same period, the Navy and Air Force reported increases in their total operating costs for bands, while the Marine Corps reported that its costs declined. The Army did not have complete data for the operating costs of its reserve bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2015, but reported declines in total operating costs for its active-duty and National Guard bands. Pay and allowance costs of active-duty military personnel dedicated to bands decreased from calendar year 2012 through 2016 for all of the military services, consistent with the reductions in military personnel authorizations dedicated to active-duty bands. ¹⁵

^aBand program officials stated that deployed band members may perform nonmusical duties as directed by their local command.

^bOn a year-round basis, members of Air Force bands deploy for 90 days to the Air Force Central Command Band located in Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, to perform events throughout the command's area of responsibility.

¹⁵We did not obtain data on military band personnel costs by fiscal year because Defense Finance and Accounting Service officials stated that the agency manages pay and allowances on a calendar-year basis.

The Number of Military
Bands and Authorized
Military Personnel
Decreased across All
Military Services from
Fiscal Year 2012 through
2016

Number of Bands

The number of bands in the four military services decreased from 150 in fiscal year 2012 to 136 in fiscal year 2016, a decline of 9.3 percent (see table 3). The extent of reductions in the number of bands varied by service, with the Air Force reporting the largest decrease and the Army reporting the smallest decrease in the number of bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016.

	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change, FY 2012–2016 (percent)
Army Active Duty	32	32	32	31	31	-3.1
Army National Guard	51	51	51	51	51	0.0
Army Reserve	17	17	17	17	17	0.0
Total Army Bands	100	100	100	99	99	-1.0
Navy Active Duty ^a	13	13	13	11	11	-15.4
Marine Corps Active Duty ^a	14	12	12	12	12	-14.3
Air Force Active Duty	12	10	9	9	9	-25.0
Air National Guard	11	11	5	5	5	-54.5
Total Air Force Bands	23	21	14	14	14	-39.1
Total All Services	150	146	139	136	136	-9.3

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Total Band Personnel

From fiscal year 2012 through 2016, according to military-service data and officials, total military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands decreased by 7.5 percent—from 7,196 in fiscal year 2012 to 6,656 in fiscal year 2016 (see table 4). The extent of reductions in military personnel authorizations varied by service and component. For example, the total number of military personnel authorizations dedicated to Air National Guard bands declined from 320 to 200—or 37.5 percent—from

^aThe Navy and Marine Corps have only active-duty bands.

fiscal year 2012 through fiscal year 2016, while the total for Army Reserve and National Guard bands stayed the same in that period. According to military-service officials, resource constraints have led to past reductions in the size of their bands.

Table 4: Number of Military Personnel Authorizations Dedicated to Military Bands in Fiscal Years (FY) 2012 through 2016, by Service and Component

	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change, FY 2012–2016 (percent)
Army Active Duty	1,842	1,842	1,825	1,772	1,755	-4.7
Army National Guard	2,040	2,040	2,040	2,040	2,040	0.0
Army Reserve	702	702	702	702	702	0.0
Total Army	4,584	4,584	4,567	4,514	4,497	-1.9
Navy Active Duty ^a	729	729	729	597	597	-18.1
Marine Corps Active Duty ^a	867	765	765	765	765	-11.8
Air Force Active Duty	696	644	595	595	597	-14.2
Air National Guard	320	320	200	200	200	-37.5
Total Air Force	1,016	964	795	795	797	-21.6
Total All Services	7,196	7,042	6,856	6,671	6,656	-7.5

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Note: This table does not include military personnel authorizations that support the band programs. In fiscal year 2016, the Army reported 90 military personnel authorizations for the U.S. Army School of Music, recruiting, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe International Band—the official musical representative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and other staff positions; the Navy reported 46 military personnel authorizations for instructors and staff at the Naval School of Music, recruiting, students, and personnel transitioning between assignments; the Marine Corps reported 31 military personnel authorizations for instructors at the Naval School of Music, recruiting, and other support staff; and the Air Force reported 13 military personnel authorizations for a U.S. Air Force Academy Instructor, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe International Band, public affairs staff offices, and Air National Guard band program management.

Our analysis shows that the total military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands account for a relatively small amount of the military services' end-strength authorizations, and have decreased at a similar rate compared to total service end-strength authorizations from fiscal year 2012 through 2016. ¹⁶ Specifically, in fiscal years 2012 through 2016, the number of military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands was less

^aThe Navy and Marine Corps have only active-duty bands.

¹⁶Authorized end strength is the number of personnel that each active-duty, National Guard, and reserve component of a military service is authorized by Congress to have at the end of a given fiscal year. End-strength authorizations are provided in each fiscal year's National Defense Authorization Act.

than half a percent of the military services' end strength for all services. In addition, the total number of military personnel authorizations dedicated to bands declined by 7.5 percent compared to a 6.6 percent decline in personnel authorizations overall (from 2.3 million authorizations in fiscal year 2012 to 2.1 million authorizations in fiscal year 2016) across the four military services over this period.

Future Changes to the Number of Bands and Total Band Personnel

The Army plans to reduce the number of bands and military band personnel from fiscal year 2017 through 2019. The Army plans to close 12 bands—8 active-duty bands and 4 reserve bands—and reduce the number of personnel authorizations dedicated to 43 National Guard bands over this period. As a result of these reductions, the Army plans to reduce the total number of military personnel authorizations dedicated to Army bands from 4,497 in fiscal year 2016 to 3,865 in fiscal year 2019, or by about 14 percent (see table 5). The other three services do not have plans to change the number or size of their bands at this time, according to service officials.

Table 5: Planned Changes in Number of Army Bands and Military Personnel Authorizations Dedicated to Army Bands in Fiscal Years (FY) 2016 through 2019

		FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	Change, FY 2016–2019 (percent)
Army Active Duty	Bands	31	27	27	23	-25.8
	Personnel authorizations	1,755	1,638	1,638	1,400	-20.2
Army National Guard	Bands	51	51	51	51	0.0
	Personnel authorizations	2,040	2,040	1,919	1,919	-5.9
Army Reserve	Bands	17	17	13	13	-23.5
	Personnel authorizations	702	726	566	546	-22.2
Total Army	Bands	99	95	91	87	-12.1
	Personnel authorizations	4,497	4,404	4,123	3,865	-14.1

Source: GAO analysis of Army information. | GAO-17-657

Note: This table does not include military personnel authorizations for the U.S. Army School of Music, recruiting, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe International Band—the official musical representative of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and other staff positions.

Trends in Total Reported
Operating Costs Varied
across the Military
Services, and Active-Duty
Military Personnel Costs
Have Decreased
Consistent with Personnel
Reductions

Reported Operating Costs for Fiscal Years 2012 through 2016

The Navy and Air Force reported that the total operating costs of their bands increased from fiscal year 2012 through 2016, and the Marine Corps reported decreased costs over this period. The Army did not have complete data for its reserve bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2015, but reported decreases in total operating costs for its active-duty and National Guard bands. To Operating costs for the bands include expenses not related to military personnel, such as travel, transportation, instruments, uniforms, office supplies, and civilian salaries. According to military-service band program officials, the military services use operations and maintenance appropriations to fund their band programs. At the component level, the Army active-duty, Army National Guard, Marine Corps active-duty, and Air National Guard bands reported decreases in their total operating costs from fiscal year 2012 through 2016, and the Navy active-duty and Air Force active-duty bands reported increases in their costs in the same period (see table 6).

Table 6: Total Reported Operating Costs for Military Bands in Fiscal Years (FY) 2012 through 2016, by Service and Component

Dollars in millions						
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change, FY 2012-2016
Army						
Active Duty	14.6	12.7	13.4	13.8	10.9	-3.6
National Guard	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.5	-0.5
Reserve	Not available for FY 2012 to FY 2015 ^a				1.6	Not applicable

¹⁷According to Army budget officials, the Army Reserve did not have complete data on the amount of funds obligated for its bands in fiscal years 2012 through 2015. As a result, we are not reporting trend data for Army Reserve bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016.

¹⁸Operations and maintenance appropriations fund the training, supply, and equipment maintenance of military units as well as the administrative and facilities infrastructure of military bases.

Dollars in millions						
	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	Change, FY 2012-2016
Navy ^b	3.1	2.8	4.3	4.7	7.2	4.1
Marine Corps ^b	5.8	5.3	5.5	5.6	5.0	-0.8
Air Force						
Active Duty	8.8	6.3	8.5	8.7	10.6	1.8
Air National Guard	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	-0.2

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding. According to military-service band program officials, the military services use operations and maintenance appropriations to fund their band programs. Operating costs for the bands include expenses not related to military personnel, such as travel, transportation, instruments, uniforms, office supplies, and civilian salaries. According to Army and Air Force officials, they estimated the amount of civilian salaries, while the Navy used the actual amount expended on civilian salaries. According to a Marine Corps budget official, the Marine Corps did not have any civilian authorizations dedicated to military bands in fiscal years 2012 through 2016.

^aAccording to Army budget officials, the Army Reserve did not have complete data on the amount of funds obligated for its bands in fiscal years 2012 through 2015. As a result, we are not reporting cost information for Army Reserve bands in these years.

Navy band program officials stated that their bands' operating costs increased in part because the band program was not adequately funded to meet its mission in fiscal years 2012 through 2014 prior to the band program's reorganization in fiscal year 2015. 19 In addition, the officials stated that the U.S. Navy Band had onetime renovation costs of \$749,000 in fiscal year 2016 for its office facilities and had to increase civilian and contractor staffing to meet its new command responsibilities as a result of the band program's reorganization. An Air Force band program official stated that local commands are responsible for funding their bands, so bands may have had unique circumstances that led to increases in costs over time. For example, the official noted that after Bolling Air Force Base transitioned to Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, the band at that location became responsible for funding such things as building maintenance for its facilities on the base. The official stated that the band was not previously responsible for these expenses, which, in part, led to increases in the band's funding in fiscal years 2014 through 2016.

Travel and equipment expenses are among the highest-operating cost areas for individual bands, according to military-service band program officials. Bands travel throughout their areas of operations or

^bThe Navy and Marine Corps have only active-duty bands.

¹⁹Effective in fiscal year 2015, the Navy reorganized its band program to realign all of the Navy Music Program under the Commanding Officer of the U.S. Navy Band.

responsibility to perform at events. In addition, according to militaryservice guidance or band program officials, bands maintain professionalgrade instruments for their band members. Band program officials or band commanders we met with noted that band members need to have professional-grade instruments for several reasons, including working at a high number of events in a range of weather conditions and a variety of venues, such as an indoor reception or an outdoor parade. One band commander we met with stated that the band's travel costs were about \$364,000 in fiscal year 2016, accounting for 43 percent of the band's total costs of about \$850,000. That same band commander stated that the band's supply costs, such as instruments, instrument supplies, and uniforms, were at least about \$142,000, or at least 17 percent of the band's total costs in fiscal year 2016. For another band, the band commander we met with reported that travel costs were about \$228,000, or 68 percent of the band's total costs of about \$338,000 in fiscal year 2016, while the band's costs of purchasing instruments, instrument supplies, sheet music, and sound supplies were about \$92,000, or 27 percent of the band's total costs.

Active-Duty Military Personnel Pay and Allowance Costs for Calendar Years 2012 to 2016 According to data from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, pay and allowance costs of active-duty military personnel dedicated to bands decreased from calendar year 2012 through 2016 for all of the military services (see table 7). Although a direct comparison with personnel authorizations is not possible because the personnel counts above are in fiscal years and pay and allowance costs were reported by DOD in calendar years, the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force reduced pay and allowance costs over time consistent with the overall decrease of 10 percent in personnel authorizations dedicated to active-duty bands from fiscal year 2012 through 2016.

Table 7: Active-Duty Military Personnel Pay and Allowances Allocated to Military Bands in Calendar Years (CY) 2012 through 2016, by Service

Dollars in millions						
	CY 2012	CY 2013	CY 2014	CY 2015	CY 2016	Change, CY 2012-2016
Army	131.5	131.0	130.6	127.8	125.9	-5.6
Navy	49.6	46.1	45.0	43.1	41.4	-8.2
Marine Corps	56.6	55.3	54.1	52.6	52.9	-3.8
Air Force	48.0	48.5	47.2	44.7	44.6	-3.5

Source: GAO analysis of Department of Defense data. | GAO-17-657

Note: Numbers may not add due to rounding. The pay and allowances costs do not include the cost of military personnel benefits, such as those related to health insurance and retirement. Band program officials noted that the number of military band personnel are within the service end-strength

authorizations established by law and are not a separate or direct operational cost of military music programs.

We were not able to obtain data that were sufficiently reliable for determining trends in the pay and allowance costs of military personnel dedicated to National Guard and reserve bands in the Army and Air National Guard bands in the Air Force in time for our review. For example, in calendar years 2012 through 2016, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service could not identify pay and allowance data for between about 6 and 24 percent of the military personnel that the Defense Manpower Data Center reported were dedicated to Army National Guard bands in those years.

Military Services
Consider
Instrumentation and
Regional or
Command Needs to
Determine the Size
and Location of
Bands, and Assess
Ongoing Needs
through Existing
Force-Structure and
Budget Reviews

The military services consider the instrumentation needed to perform at required events, as well as needs of the region or command to which a band is assigned, to determine the size and location of their military bands. In addition, the military services assess the overall size of, and ongoing needs for, their bands through existing force-structure and budget review processes, typically in response to proposed resource reductions.

Military Services Consider Instrumentation Needed to Perform at Required Events to Organize Their Bands

The military services consider the instrumentation needed to perform at a variety of required events to organize their bands. According to military-service band program officials, the premier and specialty bands tend to be larger than regional and field bands because of the bands' unique missions and the number and types of high-profile events these bands perform. In fiscal year 2016, the premier and specialty bands ranged in size from 35 to 252 military personnel authorizations. According to military-service guidance or band program officials, the military services organize their premier and specialty bands so that each band consists of multiple musical groups to meet a variety of musical requirements. These

groups can range from a large concert band to smaller musical groups, such as a rock band, and can perform simultaneously at different venues. For example, Army force-structure and band program officials stated that the U.S. Army Band—"Pershing's Own," which had 252 military personnel authorizations dedicated to the band in fiscal year 2016, has seven musical groups that performed a total of about 6,000 events in fiscal year 2016, according to data from the Army. According to these officials, the musical groups include a 54-member ceremonial band that supports official government events and military funerals at Arlington National Cemetery, a 54-member concert band that performs at official and public engagements, and the 16-member Herald Trumpets ensemble, comprised of 14 trumpet players and 2 drummers, that performs at the White House to welcome foreign ambassadors and visiting heads of state.

Regional and field bands are generally smaller than premier and specialty bands and, with the exception of one 15-member band in the Air Force, ranged in size from 35 to 75 military personnel authorizations in fiscal year 2016. Similar to the premier and specialty bands, the military services have organized these bands with multiple musical groups to perform at required events. For example, Air Force guidance states that regional and field bands must have a sufficient number of band members to support State Funeral Plans and deployments, and to ensure the bands have adequate personnel for assignment rotations both within and outside of the United States. In the case of the Marine Corps, officials stated that each regional and field band needed to be the size of a rifle platoon to meet its ceremonial requirements and because band members may deploy to support combat operations. Figure 2 shows the organization of a 35-member Navy band, illustrating how a military band is organized into multiple groups to meet its musical requirements.

35-member banda Considered one band 20-member 5-member 8-member ceremonial band brass quintet popular music group Official military and Community relations civilian functions, events, educational Troop morale Musical groups that can public concerts, and clinics, small military and community perform simultaneously other patriotic events ceremonies, and relations events official receptions Jazz Trios and **Buglers** quartets Military Musicians from musical Official Community funerals groups used to create receptions and relations events. memorial smaller groups or to serve services, community educational relations events clinics, small wreath-layings, military and formal military dinners ceremonies and official receptions

Figure 2: Musical Groups within a Navy 35-Member Band and Types of Events Performed

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Regional and Field Band Locations Are Determined Based on Command Assignments or Regional Needs

The military services have generally determined the location of their regional and field bands based on the command or region the bands support. Appendixes III and IV include a map showing the location of active-duty and reserve-component bands, respectively, in fiscal year 2016.

Army— Army guidance provides rules of allocation and stationing for regional and field bands.²⁰ The guidance allows planners to determine required resources and personnel to execute music support operations and identify stationing and mission command relationships. Allocations

^aThe 35-member band has an enlisted bandleader and operations chief who are not included in the number of members for each musical group.

²⁰Army Techniques Publication 1-19, *Army Music* (Feb. 13, 2015).

and stationing are based on the type of organization being supported, such as division headquarters or training centers, as well as the number of brigades. According to the Army, the Army has assigned its active-duty regional and field bands to division commands and training centers, and its National Guard and reserve regional and field bands geographically based on factors such as (1) population centers to support recruitment and retention of Army musicians and (2) the location of troop and veteran populations in the states and territories. For example, an Army Reserve band is located in Los Angeles County, California, which had the highest estimated number of veterans in the United States as of the end of fiscal year 2015, and an Army National Guard band is located in Maricopa County, Arizona, which had the second-highest estimated number of veterans in the United States.²¹

Navy—According to Navy band program officials, the Navy's regional and field bands are located in the largest fleet or headquarters locations. Each of the regional and field bands located within the contiguous United States has a geographic area of responsibility, while the operational commanders define the geographic areas of responsibility for the regional and field bands in Hawaii, Italy, and Japan.

Marine Corps—A Marine Corps band program official stated that the Marine Corps has assigned its regional and field bands to major commands. Marine Corps guidance requires the commanding general of the commands to which bands are assigned to determine the size of each band's area of responsibility for performing events, which the guidance defines as the geographic area in which an installation, its units, and personnel have an economic and social impact. For example, the commanding general of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, located in San Diego, California, established its band's area of responsibility for military and civilian events as within a 100-mile radius of the installation, to include other specific Marine Corps units outside of this radius, such as the Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma, Arizona. A band program official stated that the Marine Corps regional and field bands are located at major commands to provide ceremonial support to the largest number of Marines and subordinate commands.

²¹We determined the counties with highest estimated veteran populations as of the end of fiscal year 2015 based on data from the National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics website.

²²Marine Corps Order 5000.18, *Marine Corps Band Manual* (May 10, 2013).

Air Force—According to Air Force band program officials, the Air Force has assigned its active-duty regional and field bands to major commands and generally located Air National Guard bands in states with higher numbers of Air National Guard wings. Air Force guidance assigns a geographic area of responsibility to the active-duty and Air National Guard regional and field bands located within the contiguous United States, while the commands for the two bands located in Germany and Japan assign their bands' geographic areas of responsibility. ²³ Air Force band program officials noted that they have also kept the active-duty bands located with major commands, in part, because they are spread out evenly across the United States where the bands can reach large population centers.

Military Services Consider the Number and Size of Bands and Ongoing Needs as Part of Their Existing Force-Structure and Budget Review Processes

The military services consider the overall size of, and ongoing needs for, their military bands through existing force-structure and budget reviews. In the past, the services have generally assessed the size of their bands in response to proposed resource reductions; however, Army force-structure officials stated that the Army plans to make recommendations based on a review of its music structure by the end of fiscal year 2017.

Army—The Army reviews the number and size of its bands through its annual Total Army Analysis process, during which the Army determines how it allocates its end strength among its units.²⁴ Army force-structure officials stated that they have considered several factors when making force-structure decisions regarding band numbers and size, including senior-leader priorities, critical mission needs for other organizations, and the location of other military bands. For example, Army force-structure officials stated that having an Air Force band in San Antonio, Texas, was a factor in the Army's plans to close an Army band in San Antonio in fiscal year 2019. In February 2017, the Director of the Army Staff directed the Commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and the

²³Air Force Instruction 35-110, *U.S. Air Force Band Program* (Aug. 11, 2014).The Air Force active-duty regional and field band located in Japan has 26 members, as well as an operating location with 15 members in Hawaii.

²⁴The Total Army Analysis process is envisioned to help the Army allocate its end strength among its enabler units—those units that deploy to support combat forces—after initial decisions about the size of combat forces, other types of Army formations, and key enablers are made. Army force-structure and band program officials stated that the Army reviews the Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps with other Army administrative units as part of the generating-force Total Army Analysis process.

Chief of Army Music to conduct a comprehensive review of the Army's music structure, including determining the proper organization, mission and goals, functions, priorities, and management oversight for Army bands. Army force-structure officials stated that the recommendations from that review will be made to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army by the end of fiscal year 2017.

Navy—Navy manpower officials stated that the Navy considers the number and size of Navy bands as part of the service's annual budget-development process. During the fiscal year 2012 budget-development process, the Navy decided to reduce the size of its bands to offset resource needs for other programs because of reductions to the Navy's overall end strength, according to Navy manpower officials. Subsequent to the decision to make these reductions, the Navy reorganized its band program effective in fiscal year 2015, in part because Navy band program officials wanted to ensure that all Navy bands had a sufficient number of band members to meet their primary mission of performing ceremonies.

Marine Corps—Marine Corps officials stated that they consider their bands as part of reviews of total force structure. In fiscal year 2013, after a force-structure review, the Marine Corps closed two regional and field bands because of budget reductions. In addition, in March 2017, a Marine Corps force-structure official stated that in an ongoing review officials had considered reducing the size of bands to offset increases in end strength needed to support other new Marine Corps capabilities. However, the official stated that the Marine Corps decided not to reduce the size of bands because senior officials recognized how much the bands are used by commands; also, the leadership noted the value of the bands to troop welfare and to community relations, and noted band members' secondary role of providing perimeter security in combat.

Air Force—Air Force manpower officials stated that the Air Force reviews the number and size of its bands through its annual budget-development process. From fiscal year 2012 to 2014, the Air Force closed three active-duty and six Air National Guard regional and field bands to address budget reductions or to offset increases for other mission needs, according to band program officials. During the fiscal year 2015 budget-development process, the Air Force Bands Division submitted four options for reducing the number and size of bands that took into consideration, among other things, the reduced support to major commands and the number of outreach opportunities missed to connect with industry leaders and the public in the areas that would no longer have band support. However, the Air Force did not implement any of

these options. Air Force manpower officials noted that, when the Air Force has proposed past reductions, the commanders and community leaders strongly advocated for maintaining bands assigned to their command and local areas because of the bands' effect on troop morale and community relations.

Military Services
Have Tracked and
Used Information on
Band Events but They
Have Not Developed
Objectives and
Measures to Assess
How Bands Are
Addressing Their
Missions

The military services have tracked and used information on band events; however, the services have not developed objectives and measures to assess how their bands are addressing the bands' missions, such as inspiring patriotism, enhancing the morale of troops, and promoting U.S. interests abroad.

Military Services Have Tracked Information on Band Events, and Bands Reported Using This Information to Plan and Improve Future Events

All four military services have tracked information, such as the number and type of band events, and military bands reported using this information to aid their planning for any improvements at future events. The type of tracked information varies, but all services at a minimum track the number and types of events the bands have performed, as well as the number of audience members at these events and broadcast audience counts. In addition, the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force track the number of event requests their bands are not able to fulfill. Military bands generally enter this information into a database or regularly report the information to the services' band program offices. We found that the number of audience members varies widely depending on the type of event. For example, according to Air Force data, one of the U.S. Air Force Band's musical groups performed at the Super Bowl in 2016 in front of an estimated 71,000 ticketholders, while another musical group performed at a service member's promotion ceremony that had an estimated 75 people in attendance. Table 8 shows the reported number of events performed by the military bands, the number of event requests that were declined, and the estimated number of audience members at events in fiscal year 2016, according to data collected by the military services.

Table 8: Reported Number of Events Performed by Military Bands, Number of Event Requests Declined, and Estimated Number of Audience Members in Attendance in Fiscal Year 2016

Military service	Number of events	Number of event requests declined	Estimated number of audience members in attendance at events (in millions) ^a
Army ^b	24,053	n/a ^c	28
Navy	5,599	2,369	19
Marine Corps	4,032	987 ^d	n/a ^e
Air Force	4,687	1,352	11

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Note: n/a = not available at band-program level.

^dThe number of event requests declined for the Marine Corps does not include the number of event requests declined by the U.S. Marine Band—"The President's Own" or the U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps—"The Commandant's Own." Marine Corps band program officials stated that while they do not track the exact number of event requests declined by the U.S. Marine Band—"The President's Own," the officials monitor the number and they estimated that the band declines one out of every four requests.

^eAccording to Marine Corps band program officials, the Marine Corps regional and field bands combine the number of audience members at events and broadcast audience counts when the bands report the information to the band program office. As a result, we were not able to identify the number of audience members in attendance at events performed by the Marine Corps bands. However, band program officials stated that individual bands separately track the number of audience members in attendance at events and broadcast audience counts.

Each military service categorizes the types of events performed by its bands differently. The Army, Navy, and Air Force track several specific categories for the types of events their bands perform. For example, the Army tracks, among other categories, the number of funerals performed, which accounted for 35 percent of the events Army bands performed in fiscal year 2016 according to Army data. The Marine Corps categorizes the types of events its regional and field bands perform more broadly as either "Military" or "Civilian," and reported that 79 percent and 21 percent of the events performed by these bands in fiscal year 2016 were "Military" and "Civilian," respectively.

Military bands perform at a variety of events, such as military ceremonies, community events or parades, and funerals for service members. According to band commanders we met with, their bands prioritize

^aThe total estimated number of audience members in attendance at events may not reflect unique individuals because the same individual may have attended more than one event.

^bTwo Army bands did not report the number of events they performed or the estimated number of audience members in attendance at these events in fiscal year 2016.

^cAccording to Army band program officials, the Army does not track the number of event requests declined at the band-program level, but they have asked the bands to individually track this information.

performing at military ceremonies or events where service members are in attendance. In addition, the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs issues an annual outreach planning document that articulates, for the upcoming fiscal year, (1) the military services' priorities for community-relations activities, (2) key resources available for use, (3) summary details about known and anticipated activities, and (4) certain cost information for the identified activities.

The responses to our questionnaire showed how individual bands track and use information to plan future events. According to their responses, 101 of 125 bands (or 81 percent) responded that they track social-media analytics, such as frequency of mentions on Facebook. ²⁵ In addition, we found that bands use their band websites, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to expand the reach of their events. For example, in November 2016, the U.S. Army Field Band posted a YouTube video of the band's performance of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" that had about 1.6 million views as of June 2017. The U.S. Air Force Band also posted a YouTube video in December 2015 of an event at Union Station in Washington, D.C., that had about 4 million views as of June 2017. The military bands that responded to our questionnaire identified the following examples of how they used tracked information to make changes to their performances:

- An Army band reported changing the timing of summer concerts from Sundays to Saturdays to meet its audiences' preference.
- An Air Force band determined that audience members wanted an overall entertainment product with performances using lighting, staging, and other elements—rather than just music.
- An Army band stationed in a foreign country determined that audiences wanted mostly small-group performances, local pop music, and other music that caters to both U.S. and local national audiences.

²⁵Four bands did not respond to our question about whether they tracked social-media analytics on the events the bands performed.

Military Services Have Not Developed Objectives and Performance Measures to Assess How Their Bands Are Addressing the Bands' Missions

While the military services have tracked information on the events their bands performed, they have not developed objectives and performance measures to assess how their bands are addressing the bands' missions, such as inspiring patriotism, enhancing the morale of troops, and promoting U.S. interests abroad. Table 9 shows the missions for the military bands, according to military-service guidance. In May 2017, officials from the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs stated that DOD is revising its guidance for community-relations policy implementation to incorporate an overarching mission for military bands.

Military service	Mission		
Army	U.S. Army Band—"Pershing's Own"—Assigned to and supports the U.S. Army Military District of Washington. ^a The band provides musical support to the White House, Department of Defense (DOD), and other governmental and civic agencies in the National Capital Region and represents the Army and the United States at national and international events as directed by DOD and Headquarters, Department of the Army.		
	U.S. Army Field Band—Assigned to the U.S. Army Military District of Washington and operates under the direction of the Chief of Public Affairs in the Office of the Secretary of the Army. The band performs as part of national and international-relations efforts as directed by DOD and Headquarters, Department of the Army.		
	U.S. Military Academy Band—Assigned to and supports the U.S. Military Academy as well as other military activities in its area of responsibility. The band also presents performances for national and international events as directed by Headquarters, Department of the Army.		
	The Old Guard Fife and Drum Corps—Assigned to and supports U.S. Army Military District of Washington and provides support to the White House, DOD, and other governmental and civic activities in the National Capital Region. The band also represents the Army and the United States at major national and international events as directed by DOD and Headquarters, Department of the Army.		
	Regional and Field Bands—Provide music throughout unified land operations to instill in the forces the will to fight and win, to foster the support of our citizens, and to promote national interests at home and abroad.		
Navy	All Bands—Provide musical support to the President of the United States, the Department of the Navy, and other senior military and government officials. Through ceremonies, national and regional tours, public concerts, and recordings, the U.S. Navy Band inspires patriotism, elevates esprit de corps, enhances Navy awareness and public relations, supports recruiting and retention efforts, preserves the Nation's musical heritage, and projects a positive image at home and abroad.		

Military service	Mission	
Marine Corps	U.S. Marine Band—"The President's Own"—Provide music for the President of the United States and the Commandant of the Marine Corps.	
	U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps—"The Commandant's Own"— Provide musical support for ceremonies, functions, and other occasions aboard Marine Barracks Washington, other military installations, and throughout the civilian community as may be directed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps or the Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks Washington, in order to improve morale, inspire, motivate, and instill in the audiences a sense of pride and patriotism, and to re-affirm our core values, customs, and traditions, and best represent the United States Marine Corps.	
	Regional and Field Bands—Provide musical support for ceremonies, functions, and other occasions aboard military installations and throughout the civilian community as may be directed by proper authority in order to improve morale, inspire, motivate, and instill in the audiences a sense of pride and patriotism, and to reaffirm core values, customs, and traditions, and best represent the United States Marine Corps.	
Air Force	All Bands—Provide a wide spectrum of musical support for events that enhance the morale, motivation, and esprit de corps of Airmen, foster public trust and support, aid recruiting initiatives, and promote national interests at home and abroad.	

Source: GAO analysis of military-service guidance. | GAO-17-657

^aThe 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 Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs.

Band program officials cited several examples of how they can determine that their bands are addressing their missions.

- Indicators of demand—Band program officials noted that the audience counts and number of declined event requests as cited above indicate the demand for their events and that the demand exceeds supply. Air National Guard band program officials stated that in addition to the counts of performances cited above, Air National Guard bands survey audiences during summer tours to understand how their bands are received by the general public. For example, based on responses to these surveys in 2016, program officials reported that 1,135 (or 98 percent) of 1,154 survey respondents stated that they had a better understanding of the federal and state missions of the Air National Guard after attending the bands' performances.
- Examples of effectiveness—Military service band program officials cited examples where bands were used to address specific challenges or objectives in their local area of operations. Air Force band program officials provided an example where recruiters at a base had difficulty recruiting diverse service members, so in March 2016 an Air Force band performed recruiting concerts at local

- schools; the result was the band reached 7,000 students, and recruiters reported an increase in queries after these events.
- Support from senior leadership—Officials from all of the military-service band programs stated that senior leadership has supported the bands' missions, citing how bands aid in outreach to troops, communities, or international audiences. For example, Navy and Air Force band program officials stated that senior leadership has noted how performances by bands can be an initial step towards improving relationships with foreign nations. The Commanding Officer of the U.S. Navy Band provided an example where the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff hosted a delegation from a foreign nation that had tense relations with the United States at the time. According to the Commanding Officer, the U.S. Navy Band's chorus provided after-dinner entertainment, and as part of the performance, sang one of the foreign nation's folk songs in the native language, which was videotaped, posted on YouTube, and had over 1.1 million views.

While these examples provide important context about the bands' reach and impact, the approaches do not include measurable objectives nor exhibit several of the important attributes performance measures should include. GAO's Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government states that management should define objectives in specific and measurable terms so they are understood at all levels of the entity and that performance towards achieving those objectives can be assessed.²⁶ In addition, the standards state that management should establish activities to monitor performance measures. GAO has developed several important attributes that performance measures should include if they are to be effective in monitoring progress and determining how well programs are achieving their mission, such as performance measures being clear, objective, and measurable, and having baseline and trend data to identify, monitor, and report changes in performance and to help ensure that performance is viewed in context.²⁷ Table 10 identifies each attribute and its corresponding definition.

²⁶GAO-14-704G.

²⁷See GAO-03-143 and GAO-14-49.

Table 10: Important Attributes of Successful Performance Measures		
Attribute	Definition	
Balance	A suite of measures ensures that an organization's various priorities are covered.	
Clarity	Measure is clearly stated, and the name and definition are consistent with the methodology used to calculate it.	
Core program activities	Measures cover the activities that an entity is expected to perform to support the intent of the program.	
Government-wide priorities	Each measure covers a priority such as quality, timeliness, and cost of service.	
Limited overlap	Measures provide new information beyond that provided by other measures.	
Linkage	Measure is aligned with division and agency-wide goals and mission and is clearly communicated throughout the organization.	
Measurable target	Measure has a numerical goal.	
Objectivity	Measure is reasonably free from significant bias or manipulation.	
Reliability	Measure produces the same result under similar conditions.	
Baseline and trend data	Measure has a baseline and trend data associated with it to identify, monitor, and report changes in performance and to help ensure that performance is viewed in context.	

Source: GAO. | GAO-17-657

However, we found that the services have not developed objectives and performance measures that include several of the important attributes for successful performance measures to assess how their bands are addressing the bands' missions. Specifically, the services' approaches do not exhibit the linkage attribute in that there is not clear alignment between the information and how it affects the bands' ability to achieve their missions. GAO's key attributes state that linkages between an organization's mission and measures are most effective when they are clearly communicated and create a line of sight so that everyone understands how their work contributes to the organization's efforts. Also, the military services have not established a baseline for the information, so they are not able to assess the program's performance and progress over time. Identifying and reporting deviations from the baseline as a program proceeds provides valuable information for oversight by identifying areas of program risk and their causes to decision makers. Lastly, the services' approaches are not using the GAO attribute of measurable targets to facilitate future assessments of whether overall objectives were achieved.

Officials from all of the military-service band program offices stated that they have not quantified whether their bands are addressing their missions because the bands' missions, such as inspiring patriotism, enhancing the morale of troops, and promoting U.S. interests abroad, are not quantitatively measurable. While we believe that inspiring patriotism and enhancing the morale of troops could be quantitatively measured through techniques such as surveys and focus groups, band program officials stated, and we recognize, that they have limited resources to conduct these types of activities. We also acknowledge that evaluating how the bands are addressing their missions is difficult. However, using the information the military services already track, such as the number of events performed or the number of audience members in attendance, the services could, for example, develop a baseline assessment for current performance, set measurable targets, and monitor trends over time to assess progress.

DOD and the services are taking steps to improve how they track information on events to measure the effectiveness of military bands. In September 2016, the Chief of Army Music established an Army Music Analytics Team to define and gather data points to regularly collect information from Army bands to report quantifiable effects on event performance, audience engagement, and messaging. In June 2017, an Army band program official stated that the team has expanded its scope to collaborate with academia and industry to obtain insights and identify metrics that can be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of Army bands. Also, in response to our review, officials from the Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs stated that they met with service band program officials and band commanders to establish standard metrics to collect on events performed by bands. According to these officials, DOD plans to include these metrics in its guidance on community-relations policy implementation.

DOD's and the services' actions represent key steps that can inform and guide efforts to establish measurable objectives and performance measures that include important attributes. Developing and implementing measurable objectives and performance measures for their band programs that demonstrate linkage to the bands' missions, include an established baseline of data, and have measurable targets could provide DOD and congressional decision makers with the information they need to assess the value of the military bands relative to resource demands for other priorities.

Conclusions

DOD uses military bands to inspire patriotism, enhance the morale of the troops, and promote public awareness by supporting a range of activities, including funerals for military service members, events where high-level officials such as the President are in attendance, and community-relations activities such as parades in local communities. However, the services have not developed measurable objectives and performance measures that include important attributes for successful performance measures, including linkage, a baseline, or measurable targets, to assess how their bands are addressing the bands' missions. While we acknowledge that evaluating how bands are addressing their missions is difficult, the information the services already collect and the additional steps they have been taking to measure their bands' effectiveness could inform and guide efforts to establish such measurable objectives and performance measures that are consistent with GAO's Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government and GAO's past work on important attributes of performance measures. Doing so could provide information that would assist DOD and congressional decision makers as they assess the value of the military bands relative to resource demands for other priorities.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To help ensure that each service can provide information to decision makers as they assess the value of the military bands relative to resource demands for other priorities, we recommend that the Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, direct the Chief of Army Music, Commanding Officer of the U.S. Navy Band, Chief of the Air Force Bands Division, and Director of Marine Corps Communications, respectively, each to develop and implement measurable objectives and performance measures for their respective services' bands. At a minimum, these measures should include the important attributes for successful performance measures of demonstrating linkage to the program's mission, establishing a baseline, and having measurable targets to demonstrate program performance.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to DOD for review and comment. In its written comments, reproduced in appendix V, DOD concurred with our recommendations. DOD also provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

We are sending copies of this report to the appropriate congressional committees; the Secretary of Defense; the Secretaries of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In

addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staffs have any questions about this report, please contact me at (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. Key contributors to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Andrew Von Ah

Director

Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Development and Analysis of GAO Military Bands Questionnaire

To gather information about military bands for this review, we sent a questionnaire to Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force bands actively performing in fiscal year 2017 and to the Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band and Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities. The Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band or the Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities completed a questionnaire on behalf of each Navy band actively performing in fiscal year 2017 because the Navy centrally manages the operations of Navy bands. For the other three services, the individual bands completed the questionnaire. The total number of bands or band operating locations surveyed was 134.1

As part of the questionnaire's development, a representative from each military service familiar with the service's bands reviewed a draft questionnaire for substantive issues, and a GAO survey specialist reviewed the questionnaire for technical issues. To minimize errors that might occur from respondents interpreting our questions differently than we intended, we pretested our questionnaire with a Navy band program official with responsibilities for managing the Navy music program; and leadership from three active-duty bands from the Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force, one Army Reserve band, and two Army National Guard bands. During the pretests, conducted in person or by phone, we asked the officials to read the instructions and each question out loud and to tell us how they interpreted the question. We then discussed the instructions and questions with officials to determine whether (1) the instructions and questions were clear and unambiguous, (2) the terms we used were accurate, (3) the questionnaire was unbiased, and (4) the questionnaire did not place an undue burden on the officials completing it, and (5) to identify potential solutions to any problems identified. We noted any potential problems and modified the questionnaire based on the feedback received from the reviewers and pretests, as appropriate.

To administer the questionnaire, we sent e-mail notifications to each recipient beginning on February 6, 2017. On February 8, 2017, we sent the questionnaire as a Microsoft Word form and a cover e-mail and asked the recipients to fill in the questionnaire and e-mail it back to us. We closed the survey on March 20, 2017. Overall we received completed questionnaires for 129 bands or band operating locations, for a response rate of 96 percent.

¹Two Air Force bands have an operating location in a different state or country and completed a separate questionnaire for the band and its operating location.

Appendix I: Development and Analysis of GAO Military Bands Questionnaire

Because we attempted to contact all bands rather than a sample and we are not generalizing results to any bands, there was no sampling error. However, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey may introduce errors, commonly referred to as nonsampling errors. For example, differences in how a particular question is interpreted, the sources of information available to respondents, how the responses were processed and analyzed, or the types of people who do not respond can influence the accuracy of the survey results. We took steps in the development of the questionnaire, the data collection, and the data analysis to minimize these nonsampling errors and help ensure the accuracy of the answers that were obtained. For example, a social-science survey specialist designed the questionnaire, in collaboration with analysts having subjectmatter expertise. Then, as noted earlier, the draft questionnaire was pretested to ensure that questions were relevant, clearly stated, and easy to comprehend. The questionnaire was also reviewed by military-band subject-matter experts and a survey specialist, as mentioned above.

Data from the Word questionnaires were entered manually by a GAO contractor, data entry was checked, and any data-entry errors were corrected before analyses. We examined the results to identify inconsistencies and other indications of error, and addressed such issues as necessary. Quantitative data analyses were conducted by an analyst using Microsoft Excel, and another analyst verified the analyses.

The verbatim wording of a key survey question whose results are discussed in the body of this report is below.

Appendix I: Development and Analysis of GAO Military Bands Questionnaire

Live audience counts Broadcast or streamed audience counts Number of requests accepted Number of requests declined Social media analytics (e.g., Facebook Likes, Twitter retweets or favorites) Type of engagement (e.g., civic engagement, base support, recruiting) Other positive or negative feedback not listed above (please specify below)	Metric Type	Yes	No
Number of requests accepted Number of requests declined Social media analytics (e.g., Facebook Likes, Twitter retweets or favorites) Type of engagement (e.g., civic engagement, base support, recruiting)	Live audience counts		
Number of requests declined Social media analytics (e.g., Facebook Likes, Twitter retweets or favorites) Type of engagement (e.g., civic engagement, base support, recruiting)	Broadcast or streamed audience counts		
Social media analytics (e.g., Facebook Likes,	Number of requests accepted		
Twitter retweets or favorites) Type of engagement (e.g., civic engagement, base support, recruiting) Other positive or negative feedback not listed	Number of requests declined		
base support, recruiting) Other positive or negative feedback not listed		s, 🗌	
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	 If your band has made changes to how, performs based on observations from the provide examples from fiscal year 2016. type. 	e metrics	above

Appendix II: Observations on Band Facility and Transportation Resources

We sent a questionnaire to Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force bands actively performing in fiscal year 2017 and to the Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band and Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities to gather information on the types of facilities and modes of transportation used by the bands. The Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy Band or the Director of Navy Fleet Band Activities completed questionnaires on behalf of each Navy band actively performing in fiscal year 2017 because the Navy centrally manages the operations of Navy bands. For the other three services, the individual bands completed the questionnaire. Based on the responses to our questionnaire, we made the following observations about the bands' facilities and transportation resources.

Band Facility Resources

Based on the responses to our questionnaire, the types of facilities that bands used varied. When asked to describe the facilities used by their band in fiscal year 2016, bands responded that their facilities included band halls, chapels or church buildings, armories, and former base dining halls, among others. Bands provided additional details on the facilities they used in fiscal year 2016, including the following:

- Bands reported using between one and six buildings. Premier and specialty bands typically reported using more buildings than the regional and field bands.
- Of the 128 bands that responded, 78 (or 61 percent) stated that they shared at least one building with another organization. In some cases, bands responded that they shared a building but not the band's offices or rooms with another organization. In other cases, bands indicated that they shared specific areas with another organization. For example, one band reported that its rehearsal hall was occasionally used as a classroom, while another band stated that one of its larger musical groups rehearsed in the base dining facility.
- Bands generally reported having rehearsal space, office space, and storage space. The overall size of these three types of spaces ranged from 260 to about 48,000 square feet. Premier and specialty bands reported that the overall size of their rehearsal, office, and storage space ranged from 5,000 to about 48,000 square feet, while regional and field bands reported the overall size of these spaces ranged from 260 to over 28,000 square feet.

¹One band did not respond to our question asking whether it shared at least one building with another organization.

Four bands reported that the facilities the band used in fiscal year 2016 were built in fiscal years 2012 through 2016, which they reported had a total cost of \$56 million. In addition, 10 bands identified single projects greater than \$1 million to repair, renovate, or construct a facility for the bands' use that were initiated in fiscal years 2012 through 2016, which they reported had a total cost of about \$29 million. Bands also described the projects and why they were needed. For example, one band reported that the project provided space so that multiple music groups could train at the same time. In another case, a band reported that renovations were needed to correct aged facilities based on inspection results.

Band Transportation Resources

Based on the responses to our questionnaire, the transportation used to travel to performances varied by band. When asked to identify the modes of transportation the bands used to travel to performances and whether bands had exclusive use of any vehicles in fiscal year 2016, bands provided us with the following information:

- When traveling to events, bands reported most often using (1) base motor-pool vehicles; (2) buses, cars, vans, or trucks leased or chartered from a private company; or (3) commercial air.
- Of the 128 that responded, 69 bands (or 54 percent) stated that they had exclusive use of certain vehicles, such as box trucks, pickup trucks, passenger and cargo vans, and buses, among others.² The numbers of vehicles that bands had exclusive use of ranged from 1 to 24, with premier and specialty bands reporting that they had exclusive use of more vehicles than regional and field bands. Specifically, premier and specialty bands reported having exclusive use of 1 to 24 vehicles per band, while regional and field bands reported having exclusive use of 1 to 8 vehicles per band.

²One band did not respond to our questions on transportation.

Appendix III: Location of Active-Duty Bands in Fiscal Year 2016

Figure 3 shows the location of the 31 Army, 11 Navy, 12 Marine Corps, and 9 Air Force active-duty bands in fiscal year 2016. The active-duty bands have different areas of responsibility for performing events:

- Army guidance states that a band's geographic area of responsibility is the same as its installation commander's geographic area of responsibility.
- Navy guidance establishes a geographic area of responsibility for bands located within the contiguous United States, while the operational commanders define the geographic areas of responsibility of the regional and field bands in Hawaii, Italy, and Japan.
- Marine Corps guidance states that the commanding general of the commands to which bands are assigned determines the size of each band's area of responsibility.
- Air Force guidance assigns a geographic area of responsibility to its bands located within the contiguous United States, while the commands for the bands located in Germany and Japan assign their bands' geographic areas of responsibility.¹

¹The Air Force active-duty regional and field band in Japan also has an operating location in Hawaii.

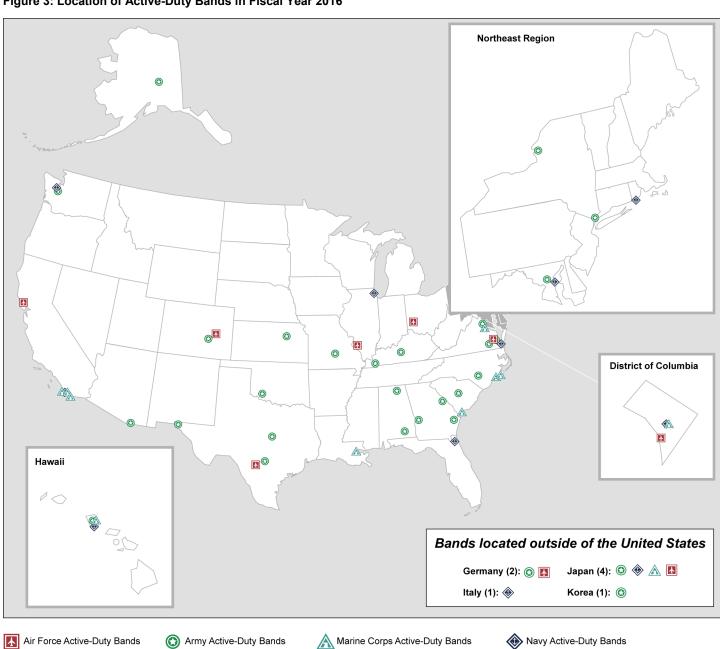
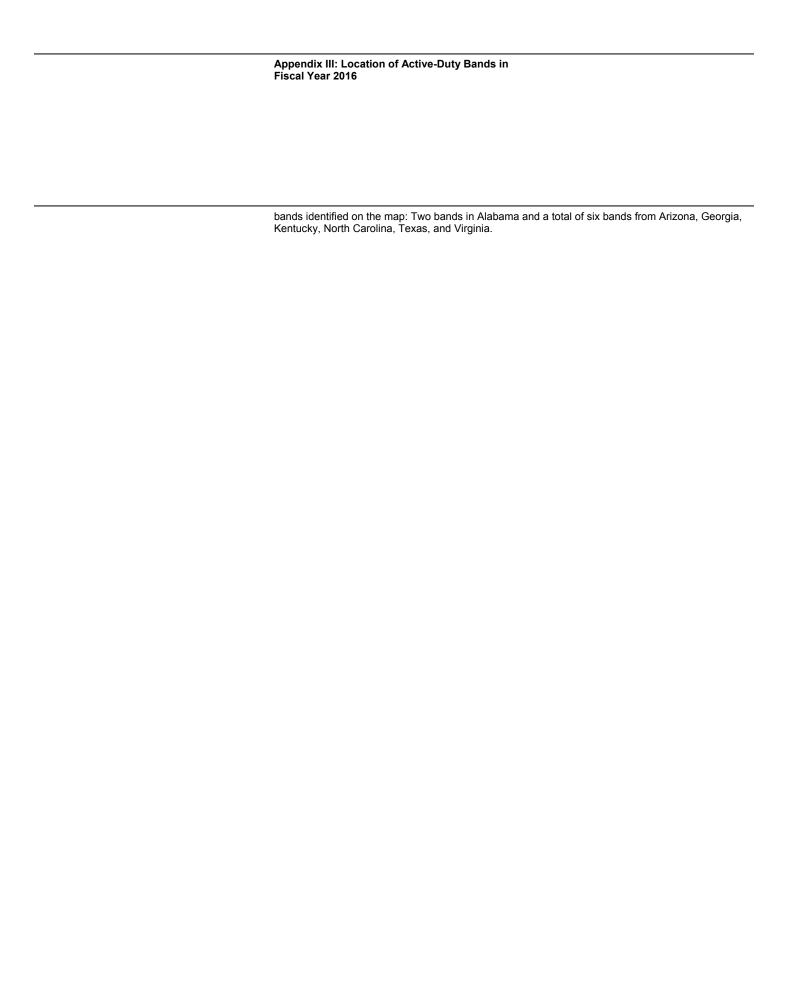


Figure 3: Location of Active-Duty Bands in Fiscal Year 2016

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Note: There are two Army active-duty bands located at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia, and two Marine Corps active-duty bands located at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C. From fiscal year 2017 through 2019, the Army has plans to close eight active-duty



Appendix IV: Location of Reserve-Component Bands in Fiscal Year 2016

Figure 4 shows the location of the 5 Air National Guard, 51 Army National Guard, and 17 Army Reserve bands in fiscal year 2016. According to military-service band program officials, members of the Air National Guard, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve bands are on duty for one weekend per month and 2 weeks during the summer. In addition, these bands have different areas of responsibility for performing events:

- Air Force guidance assigns a geographic area of responsibility for each Air National Guard band.
- The Army National Guard bands generally perform events within their respective state or territory, according to Army band program officials.
- According to Army band program officials, the Army has assigned the Army Reserve bands to Army Reserve Regional Support Commands, and these bands perform events throughout the command's area of responsibility.

¹The Navy and Marine Corps have only active-duty bands.



Army Reserve Bands

Figure 4: Location of Reserve-Component Bands in Fiscal Year 2016

Source: GAO analysis of military-service information. | GAO-17-657

Note: In fiscal year 2018, the Army has plans to close a total of four reserve bands located in Connecticut, Illinois, Minnesota, and New York.

Appendix V: Comments from the Department of Defense



ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE 1400 DEFENSE PENTAGON WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1400

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JUL 3 1 2017

Mr. Andrew J. Von Ah Acting Director, Defense Capabilities Management U.S. Government Accountability Office 441 G Street, NW Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Von Ah,

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) Response to the GAO Draft Report, GAO-17-657, 'MILITARY BANDS: Military Services Should Enhance Efforts to Measure Performance,' dated June 29, 2017 (GAO Code 101133).

The Office of Pre-Publication and Security Review has completed a security review of the subject report and found it to be unclassified and cleared for open publication.

The Department of Defense concurs with the GAO recommendations in the report and plans to incorporate standard performance criteria in its guidance on community relations policy implementation to assist the Military Services with developing and implementing measurable objectives and performance measures that will better enable their bands to assess mission achievement. DoD will provide these standard performance criteria to the Military Services during the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2018, with guidance that each Military Service establish a timeframe for implementing the recommended objectives and measures.

Thank you for the thorough review of our military bands and the recommendations concerning performance measures.

The points of contact in my office who will be responsible for incorporating the standard performance criteria in our community relations policy are Ms. Adrien F. Creecy-Starks at 703-695-6290 or Adrien.F.Creecy-Starks.civ@mail.mil-and_Ms. Kyle Combs at 703-697-7385 or Kyle.A.Combs.civ@mail.mil.

Dana W. White



Appendix VI: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact	Andrew Von Ah, (213) 830-1011 or vonaha@gao.gov
Staff Acknowledgments	In addition to the contact named above, key contributors to this report were Margaret A. Best (Assistant Director), William J. Cordrey, Felicia M. Lopez, Vikki L. Porter, Richard S. Powelson, Michael D. Silver, Jared A. Sippel, Wayne J. Turowski, and Melissa A. Wohlgemuth.

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