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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

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FEDERAL PERSONNEL AND COMPENSATION DIVISION

SEPTEMBER 23, 1981

B-204355

RELEASED



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The Honorable Ted Weiss
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Weiss:

Subject: Staffing, Funding, and Use of Military Bands
(FPCD-81-72)

In response to your June 9, 1981, request, as modified during our July 10, 1981, discussion with your staff, we have obtained information concerning the staffing, funding, and use of military bands. Since 1964, the earliest year for which personnel data was available, the number of military bands and the number of band members have declined. In 1964, the 4 services had 200 bands and 7,465 band members. As of June 1, 1981, the 4 services had 100 bands and 5,048 band members, a reduction in bands of 50 percent and a reduction in people of 32 percent during the 17-year period. Funding levels, in terms of constant fiscal year 1975 dollars, have also declined, although appropriation amounts have increased.

OBJECTIVE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

In response to your request, our objective was to provide historical and current information concerning the funding, staffing, and use of the bands. To do this, we interviewed personnel responsible for band operations at each of the services and obtained documentation on funding and personnel levels at each of the services. We did not verify the accuracy of the information the services provided.

MILITARY BANDS HAVE HAD SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN THE NUMBER OF BAND MEMBERS

Since 1964, the bands have experienced a slow but steady decline in both the number of bands and the number of band

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members. The following table summarizes the changes which have taken place from 1964 to June 1981. (See encs. I to IV for further details on these reductions.)

Year	Air Force		Army		Marine Corps		Navy	
	Bands	Per-sonnel	Bands	Per-sonnel	Bands	Per-sonnel	Bands	Per-sonnel
1964	39	1,731	93	3,688	15	748	53	1,298
1970	31	1,642	a/64	a/2,897	a/19	a/661	47	1,219
June 1981	20	1,131	49	b/2,596	14	623	17	698
Percent of change 1964 to June 1981	49	35	47	30	7	17	68	47

a/1973 information.

b/Since the Army could not furnish us with an exact band personnel count, we used the authorized strength figure.

The most recent reduction in the number of band members resulted from the congressionally mandated 10 percent appropriation cut in the fiscal year 1978 budget. At that time the services established their current personnel ceilings, which, with the exception of the Air Force, are expected to remain constant through fiscal year 1982. The services do not include in their authorized personnel strength figures any recruits at training centers who are temporarily placed in recruit class bands.

The Air Force plans to increase its authorized band personnel strength by 15, from 1,119 to 1,134, during fiscal year 1982. The 15 members will be added to the band at the Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., because the Air Force has determined that this band cannot effectively perform its mission at the current staff level.

BAND FUNDING LEVELS

Fiscal year 1975 was the earliest budget data we could obtain for any one service. Therefore, we used 1975 as the base year and, using the Consumer Price Index, translated

subsequent budget amounts into constant 1975 dollars. Our computations show that, although the bands' current appropriations increased since 1975, in terms of constant dollars, funding has decreased. For example, in constant dollars, Navy funding has declined 36 percent between 1975 and 1980; Air Force funding has remained essentially the same between 1978 and 1980; Army funding has declined 1 percent between 1977 and 1980; and Marine Corps funding has declined 30 percent between 1977 and 1980. (See encs. I to IV, the last two cols.)

USE OF BANDS HAS INCREASED
DESPITE DECLINING RESOURCES

According to the services, bands are an integral part of military life and tradition. The services believe that:

- Band participation in military ceremonies and parades is essential in maintaining the high standards of morale and esprit de corps that these activities are designed to achieve.
- Bands are an effective tool in military recruiting programs. Through radio and television appearances, concerts, shows, and performances at local schools, bands improve the professional image of the military.
- Bands provide support for community relations programs. Their public performances, as a public service, project the professional military image and reenforce feelings of national pride and patriotism within the civilian community.

The military services believe that the public has a right to see the bands perform without charge. They said that if a band appears at an event for which an admission is charged, such as a baseball game, the band appearance would be incidental to the event and the band would not derive income from the admission fee. A performance of this nature would be considered directly related to community relations and indirectly related to recruiting.

The services do not have a uniform method of maintaining records of performances. The Navy and the Air Force record the event by category--direct military support, recruiting, etc.; the Army compiles its records by band component--marching band, ensemble/soloist, etc.; and the Marine Corps records by type of event--a formal concert, a ceremony, or a

Department of State request performance. (See enc. V for the number of performances and the percentage of performances by type reported by the services during fiscal year 1980.)

The number of requests received for band performances and the number of band performances each year is not maintained on an historical basis by all services, and therefore a complete record is not available. Performance information we could obtain, however, shows that, despite personnel reductions, the number of annual performances per band increased substantially between 1970 and 1980.

In an effort to adapt to personnel and funding restrictions, the services believe they have reorganized their band structures to make optimal use of available resources. As structured, each band can be broken into several smaller performing groups, i.e., dance band, rock band, marching band, so that a band can be performing at several locations simultaneously. The following table shows the band strength and the number of average annual performances per band by service in 1970 and 1980.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Air Force</u>			<u>Army</u>		
	<u>Band strength</u>	<u>Annual performances</u>	<u>Performances per band</u>	<u>Band strength (note a)</u>	<u>Annual performances</u>	<u>Performances per band</u>
1970	20	7,451	373	(b)	(b)	(b)
1980	15	11,176	745	49	25,010	510

<u>Year</u>	<u>Marine Corps</u>			<u>Navy</u>		
	<u>Band strength</u>	<u>Annual performances</u>	<u>Performances per band</u>	<u>Band strength</u>	<u>Annual performances</u>	<u>Performances per band</u>
1970	(b)	(b)	(b)	47	16,450	350
1980	14	4,900	350	17	11,591	682

a/Represents only those bands stationed in the continental United States.

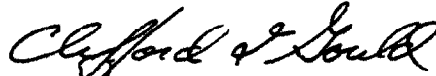
b/Information not readily available.

As previously stated, the number of bands and the number of band personnel have steadily decreased; however, the essential missions of the bands and their responsibilities have

not changed. Between 1970 and 1980, the reductions in band strength have resulted in substantial band relocation as the services try to strategically place the bands so that the accomplishment of their missions is minimally affected. These reductions and subsequent relocations have generally resulted in the remaining bands' having larger spheres of responsibility than in 1970.

As requested by your office, we will not release this letter for 10 days unless you release the information publicly earlier. At that time we will send a copy to the Secretaries of Defense, Army, Navy, and Air Force and to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. We will also make it available to other interested persons.

Sincerely yours,



Clifford I. Gould
Director

Enclosures - 5

AIR FORCE BAND STAFFING AND FUNDING

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Number of bands</u>	<u>Number of personnel billets</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Funding expressed in 1975 constant dollars</u>
				(millions)
1958	49	1,953	(a)	\$ -
1964	39	1,731	(a)	-
1968	35	1,768	(a)	-
1970	31	1,642	(a)	-
1973	25	1,463	(a)	-
1975	25	1,441	(a)	-
1978	21	1,247	\$12.1	10.0
1980	20	1,119	15.4	10.0
1981	20	1,119	17.8	(b)
1982	20	1,134	18.4	(b)

a/Information not readily available.

b/We did not compute the deflated value of funding for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 as the Consumer Price Index figures for these periods have not been determined.

ARMY BAND STAFFING AND FUNDING

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Number of bands</u>	<u>Number of personnel billets</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Funding expressed in 1975 constant dollars</u>
				(millions)
1964	93	3,688	(a)	\$ -
1968	91	3,657	(a)	-
1973	64	2,897	(a)	-
1975	63	2,847	(a)	-
1977	50	2,711	\$29.3	26.0
1978	50	2,596	30.0	24.8
1979	50	2,596	31.5	23.3
1980	49	2,596	39.3	25.7
1981	49	2,596	46.9	(b)
1982	49	2,596	46.9	(b)

a/Information not readily available.

b/We did not compute the deflated value of funding for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 as the Consumer Price Index figures for these periods have not been determined.

MARINE CORPS BAND STAFFING AND FUNDING

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Number of bands</u>	<u>Number of personnel billets</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Funding expressed in 1975 constant dollars</u>
				(millions)
1964	15	748	(a)	\$ -
1968	19	746	(a)	-
1973	19	661	(a)	-
1975	18	650	(a)	-
1977	(a)	(a)	\$ 9.3	8.2
1978	19	920	8.8	7.2
1980	14	828	8.8	5.8
1981	14	828	11.9	(b)
1982	14	828	12.1	(b)

a/Information not readily available.

b/We did not compute the deflated value of funding for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 as the Consumer Price Index figures for these periods have not been determined.

NAVY BAND STAFFING AND FUNDING

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Number of bands</u>	<u>Number of personnel billets</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Funding expressed in 1975 constant dollars</u>
				(millions)
1964	53	1,298	(a)	\$ -
1970	47	1,219	(a)	-
1973	42	1,201	(a)	-
1974	16	878	(a)	-
1975	19	906	\$ 9.1	9.1
1976	19	897	9.2	8.7
1977	19	885	9.5	8.4
1978	17	800	9.4	7.8
1979	17	800	9.6	7.1
1980	17	800	10.4	6.8
1981	17	800	12.9	(b)
1982	17	800	13.4	(b)

a/Information not readily available.

b/We did not compute the deflated value of funding for fiscal years 1981 and 1982 as the Consumer Price Index figures for these periods have not been determined.

FISCAL YEAR 1980 BAND PERFORMANCES BY TYPE

Type of performance	Air Force		Navy	
	Number of performances	Percent of total	Number of performances	Percent of total
Military support	4,582	41.0	6,902	59.5
Recruiting	3,353	30.0	1,583	13.7
Community relations	3,241	29.0	2,177	18.8
Other official civilian ceremonies, etc.	-	-	929	8.0
Total	<u>11,176</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>11,591</u>	<u>100.0</u>

Type of performance	Army		Marine Corps		
	Number of performances	Percent of total	Type of performance	Number of performances	Percent of total
Marching band	6,460	25.8	Formal concerts	1,109	22.6
Concert band	2,955	11.8	Ceremonies	3,237	66.1
Stage band/combo	2,946	11.8	Department of State request	554	11.3
Ensemble/soloist	1,978	7.9	Total	<u>4,900</u>	<u>100.0</u>
Chorus	403	1.6			
Bugler/field music	<u>10,268</u>	<u>41.1</u>			
Total	<u>25,010</u>	<u>100.0</u>			