
Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management
Installation Management Command
StratComm

Strategic Communication Plan in support of:

Housing Market Crisis Assistance

For Soldiers and Families

“Not only do I have to worry about staying alive, but now I got to worry about whether or not my family’s going to get kicked out of the house.”

*Staff Sgt. Daniel Escamilla
Third combat tour in Iraq
Mortgage payments tripled
Source USA Today 04/24/2008*

Written and Submitted By:

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I. SITUATION

A. Overview: Soldiers and Families (Active, Reserve and National Guard) are being negatively affected by the National Housing Market Crisis. This crisis can impact a Soldier's ability to sell, purchase, or rent their homes during permanent change of station (PCS) transfers, thus, leaving the Soldier with financial and/or Family separation challenges. Many Soldiers feel they have only two options, taking drastic financial actions or becoming geographical bachelors. Many Soldiers and Families are unaware of the extent that assistance is available through military and civilian resources.

B. Strategic Context: The Army must build trust and confidence among Soldiers and Families while recognizing the commitment and increasing sacrifices they make every day. The strength of our Soldiers comes from the strength of their Families. Sustaining Soldiers is critical to sustaining an All-Volunteer Force. Financial and Family crises diminish Soldier and Family Quality of Life, thus affecting the Army's ability to sustain the All-Volunteer Force. Such crises impede a Soldier's ability to focus on the mission at hand, and thus, impact overall unit readiness. The Army is committed to providing Soldiers and Families a Quality of Life commensurate with their service and improving Family readiness. This includes training, counseling, and providing them information to help overcome such challenges. (Sustain)

C. Background Discussion: Increasing variable home interest rates, plummeting home market values, historic numbers of foreclosures, and an overall economic downturn have combined to create the housing market crisis.

D. Audiences: In developing strategies for this communication effort, not only must traditional "primary (end user)" audiences be considered, but due to the scope of this effort, it is also necessary to communicate with "secondary (supporting) audiences."

- i. Primary (end user) Audience:
 - a. Soldiers
 - b. Families

- ii. Secondary (supporting) Audiences:
 - a. Garrison Commanders
 - b. Command Sergeants Major
 - c. 1st Sergeants
 - d. Assistance Providers and Counselors
 - i. Relocation Services
 - ii. Family Assistance Centers
 - iii. Housing Services Offices
 - iv. Financial and Legal Counselors
 - v. Soldier and Family Assistance Organizations
 - vi. Army Emergency Relief
 - vii. Etc.

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E. Audience Analysis

i. Primary (end user) Audience:

a. Soldiers

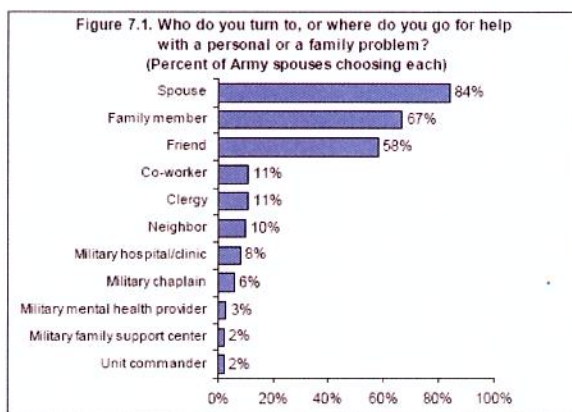
i. Assumption (a): When under PCS orders, not having the ability to successfully fulfill financial housing obligations at their “old” duty station, combined with concerns about finding housing and spousal employment at the “new” duty station can increase the Soldier and Family concerns to the point of considering detrimental alternatives, such as foreclosure, bankruptcy, or temporary Family separation.

ii. Assumption (b): Many Soldiers may be hesitant to seek assistance through their Chain of Command or on post services for fear that it may have a negative impact on their military standing and/or abilities to maintain security clearances.

iii. Assumption (c): Increased pressures on Soldiers may push some already having a high level of existing stressors across a threshold and result in drastic social and personal consequences such as abuse, divorce or even suicide.

b. Families:

i. Observation: The military member is the most likely to provide traditional social support to his or her spouse if faced with a housing crisis issue. Thus, if the military member is educated on how to obtain training, counseling and information, in overcoming difficulties created by the housing crisis, they additionally become part of the “supporting audience,” as a key communicator to their Family and other Soldiers and Families.



Social support can be informal or formal. Though both informal and formal support are important, in times of need, people, including Army Family members, tend to turn first to informal support (see Figure 7.1). It is only if they lack sufficient informal support or the informal support does not alleviate the stress that they seek formal support. Informal social support for Army Families typically derives from relationships between the Soldier and spouse, extended Family members, friends, other unit members and their Families, and

neighbors. Formal social support for Army Families derives from participation in and use of unit, installation, and civilian community-based resources designed to promote well-being and intervention services. Source: *Survey of Spouses of Active Duty Personnel*, Defense Manpower Data Center

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ii. Assumption (c): Many Soldiers and Families in need of assistance may not be aware of the confidential resources available to them, which could help them overcome their housing crisis issue.

ii. Secondary (supporting) Audiences:

a. Secondary (supporting) audiences are those most likely to be approached by a Soldier or Family having difficulties when traditional “social support” networks fail.

b. Assumption (a): Garrison Commanders (GC), Command Sergeants Major (CSM), 1st Sergeants are aware of ongoing housing crisis issues. However, they may not be fully aware of the specific crisis most affecting their geographical area. Leaders will guide and assist Soldiers and Family members to local sources of training, counseling, and information.

c. Assumption (b): Assistance providers are aware of ongoing housing crisis issues. Through experience, they may be aware of the local impact the housing market crisis is having in their geographical area. However, they may not be fully aware of the vast array of training, information, and services available to Soldiers and Families.

iii. Communication Preferences:

a. Primary and Supporting Audiences: There are two distinct communications preferences within the primary and supporting audiences. Generally, the communication preferences of the first group are traditional media. This first group is normally over the age of 33 and prefers news and feature print and broadcast products. The second group is normally under the age of 33 and prefers to absorb information in small chunks, or short bursts as received through e-mail, cell text, online, and other social media. This group is very diverse and tech savvy. They are less likely to respond to traditional action-response approaches.

b. Previous Communication Effectiveness Baselines: During a recent Customer Service Assessment, 62.4% of the respondents (12,930) felt garrison communications of services and programs were effective, very effective, and most effective. With 37.6 respondents (7,799) responding that they felt garrison communications of services and programs were somewhat or not effective at all.

c. According to the respondents, the most effective methods to communicate information about services and programs (top three) found 68.8% favored Email, 56.2% installation newspapers, 49.4% installation website, 29.9% electronic signs, 23.4% briefings, orientations, etc, 19.5% flyers and handouts, 16.5% town hall, public forum, 16.1% paper signs, posters.

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iv. Demographics

a. Communication Age: According to the latest figures, approximately 68% of enlisted, 16% of warrant officers, and 34% of officers are under the age of 34. Approximately 59% of enlisted spouses and 28% of officer Spouses are under age 31.

b. Housing: About half of active duty Soldiers and nearly two-thirds of active duty Army Family members live off post in housing embedded within the larger civilian community. Approximately 35% of active duty officers and 12% of the enlisted live off post and own their home; approximately 38% of active duty officers and 25% of the enlisted live off post and rent homes. Because virtually all Army National Guard (ARNG) and Army Reserve (USAR) Families reside in civilian communities, there is a challenge to ensure access to the support they need, particularly during extended periods of mobilization and deployment.

II. MISSION

A. Purpose: This StratComm Plan provides guidance for IMCOM efforts to alert command teams, assistance providers, and counselors of the affects the housing market crisis is having in their geographical area, the online resources available, and thus enable them to encourage Soldiers and Families to seek out and utilize the training, counseling and information to help overcome housing market crisis issues.

B. Desired Effects of Communication Effort: Create awareness among Soldiers and Families that training, counseling, and information is available to those affected by the housing market crisis and action them to seek and utilize those availabilities.

III. EXECUTION

A. Concept of the Operation:

i. Implement a five-phase communication process:

a. (Phase 1) Alert Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, Direct Reporting Units, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve units to this Strategic Communication effort through "Stand To," and other internal communication products and resources.

b. (Phase 2) Through this Strategic Communication plan, provide Garrison Commanders geographical information on the housing crisis, fact sheets, briefing slides, training request information and information on how to access online resources. Through existing distribution and chain teaching, provide others within the installation's Soldier and Family support network with a working knowledge of

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problems in their geographical area and where resources can be found to overcome those challenges.

c. (Phase 3) Through Command Sergeants Major and 1st Sergeants, during formations, in- and out-processing briefs, and face-to-face encounters, alert Soldiers to training, counseling, and information available to them in overcoming housing market crisis issues.

d. (Phase 4) Through installation assistance providers and during town hall meetings and other community or face-to-face encounters, alert Soldiers and Family members to training, counseling and information available to them in overcoming the crisis resulting from the housing market.

e. (Phase 5) Supplement, reinforce, expand, and update information provided to Soldiers and Families on the training, counseling, and information available to them through the use of existing installation and social media.

ii. Overarching Communication Strategy: During any PCS move, but particularly during the PCS seasons, Soldiers and Families will be alerted and encouraged to utilize the training, counseling and information available to help them overcome housing market crisis issues.

iii. Overarching Theme: Training, information and services are available to Soldiers and Families affected by the housing crisis. It is free, confidential, and it's OK to ask.

iv. Overarching Message: The nation is experiencing a housing market crisis. The chain of command, military and civilian resources, and the Army One Source website (<https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>) can provide information to Soldiers and Families to help overcome most housing and financial challenges. The Army cares.

v. Talking Points:

a. Many Soldiers, Families, and Civilians are experiencing difficulties resulting from the housing market crisis. Information, training, and resources are available through the command, support services, and Army One Source at www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx.

b. Free, confidential and accurate information is available for Soldiers, Families, or civilians, homeowners and renters to divert or prevent a housing crisis, through their chain of command, Housing Services office, ACS, or go to Army One Source.

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c. It's ok to ask for help during this housing market crisis. Information, training, and help are available. The Army cares.

d. There is information and assistance available to Soldiers, Families, and Civilians facing mortgage, financial, or rental challenges. Commanders, CSMs, Housing Services offices, ACS, and other agencies have the information.

e. The Army is committed to giving Soldiers and Families a quality of life commensurate with their sacrifice; this includes providing information, training, and assistance for those living off base and faced with a housing crisis.

f. From on post legal services, training, private and public programs, to web based information, help during the housing market crisis is available. The Army cares and is committed to helping improve the quality of life for Soldiers, Families, and Civilians living on or off post.

g. The Army National Guard has a population of Active Guard Reserve (AGRs) that are under T10, Active status. This assistance is also available to them. Reserve Component Soldiers including AGRs are encouraged and seek assistance through Army One Source.

vi. Focus of the effort: Focusing initially on face-to-face Soldier contact, conduct simultaneous and integrated communication efforts to inform Soldiers and Families of the training, counseling, and information available to them via the Army One Source website (<https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>) in overcoming National Housing Market Crisis issues.

vii. Implementation Roles and Responsibilities:

a. Supporting Soldiers in Current Housing Market (SSCHM):

i. Schedule and conduct meetings and briefings to develop the operational scope, concepts and goals of this communication effort.

ii. Present scope, concepts and goals of the operational effort to the ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication; review, update, and approve the one page brief, assist in the coordination and SSCHM staffing of the StratComm Plan, associated documents and releases.

iii. Obtain demographic information that geographically depicts current and ongoing Housing Market Crisis information. Include that information in this StratComm Plan as Appendix (3).

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iv. Coordinate the development a publicly accessible website which describes and links to appropriate housing assistance information and resources.

v. Develop a 5 to 7 minute slide briefing with notes that incorporates the key message and talking points of this StratComm plan, and that can be localized, adapted and utilized by garrison or senior commander briefings. Include that slide show brief in this StratComm Plan as Appendix (5).

vi. Provide a summary of the types of training available to Soldiers and Families in dealing with housing market crisis issues and instructions on how Garrison commanders can request and/or obtain such training. Include that information in the StratComm Plan as Appendix (4).

b. ACSIM/DAIM-ISH:

i. Based on input from the SSCHM Task Force, develop publically accessible web pages on “my army one source” depicting links to information and resources available to Soldiers and Families to help overcome conditions resulting from the ongoing housing market crisis.

ii. Monitor and document traffic to the established website at <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>

iii. Report any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations to the ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication which may be useful in the successful completion to this or future StratComm efforts.

c. ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication:

i. Coordinate with existing SSCHM Task Force, chaired by Chief, Strategic Planning and Construction Branch, Army Housing Division OACSIM, and develop a one page brief and a five phase Strategic Communication Plan.

ii. Brief the one page StratComm Plan to the Strategic Communication Coordination Groups (SCCG). Provide the one page brief for inclusion in this StratComm Plan as Appendix (1).

iii. Integrate recommendations of the SCCG, staff and coordinate the approval of the Housing Market Crisis Support to Soldiers and Families StratComm Plan by the ACSIM.

iv. Coordinate with the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs and the Defense Media Activity for the production and release of a “Stand To,” “Army

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Green Top,” and “Army Home Page” introductory coverage of the Army One Source web page at www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx.

v. Coordinate draft and staff a “Memorandum from ACSIM,” for dissemination to all Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, Direct Reporting Units, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve units and personnel, alerting them to the availability of the StratComm Plan and the Army One Source website. Provide a copy of the “Memorandum from ACSIM” for inclusion in this StratComm Plan as Appendix (7).

vi. Develop a one page Housing Crisis Fact Sheet which incorporates the key message and talking points of this StratComm plan, which can be utilized by Commanders, Command Sergeant’s Major, 1st Sergeants, assistance providers, counselors, and others during face-to-face encounters. Include that fact sheet in this StratComm Plan as Appendix (2).

vii. Based on input from SSCHM Task Force, IMCOM, FMWRC, Regions, Garrisons, primary “end user”, and/or secondary “supporting audiences,” stand ready to issue Fragmentary Orders (FRAGOs) to supplement or modify this strategic communication effort.

d. IMCOM Headquarters:

i. Independent of this StratComm Plan, disseminate approved memorandum from the Commanding General to all Regions and Garrisons.

ii. Disseminate approved Strategic Communication Plan in Support of The Housing Market Crisis Assistance for Soldiers and Families to all Regions and Garrisons.

iii. Through NETCALLS, the IMCOM Bi-Weekly, and other existing internal publications, promote the message and talking points of this StratComm Plan, encouraging Region Directors and Garrison Commanders to implement and support this strategic communication effort.

iv. IMCOM Region public websites should link to Army OneSource <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>.

e. FMWRC Headquarters:

i. Through existing resources, alert ACS service providers of this communication effort and the resources at <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>

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ii. Maintain coordination with DAIM-ISH (Point of Contact: Shenise Foster, (703) 601-0708 and provide alerts when links to Housing Assistance Information is removed or relocated within FMWRC websites.

f. IMCOM Regions:

i. Monitor and assist Garrisons in the implementation of this strategic communication effort.

ii. Report any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations to the ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication which may be useful in the successful completion to this or future StratComm efforts.

iii. IMCOM Region public websites should link to Army OneSource <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>.

g. IMCOM Garrisons:

i. Ensure senior garrison leaders, assistance providers, and counselors are aware of, and familiar with, this strategic communication plan, to include familiarity with current housing market crisis as it pertains to the installation's geographical area as outlined in Appendix (3).

ii. Where appropriate, request training assistance as outlined in Appendix (4).

iii. Localize and tailor the Housing Market Crisis Assistance fact sheet, Appendix (2) and Housing Market Crisis Briefing, Appendix (5) to emphasize local training and counseling services available in addition to introducing the resources available on the Army One Source website at www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx.

iv. Present the information contained in the localized fact sheet and briefing to Soldiers at formations, in- and out-processing briefs, and other face-to-face venues; to Soldiers and Family members, during town hall meetings, through ACS Relocation Services, Soldier and Family Assistance Centers, Financial Readiness Counselors, Chaplains, Legal Offices, etc., and when encountering Soldiers and Families requesting assistance with housing crisis issues.

v. Supplement and reinforce the messages, talking points, local information, training, counseling, and the availability of information and resource available through Army One Source through existing internal and social media.

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vi. IMCOM Garrison public websites should provide a link to Army OneSource <https://www.myarmyonesource.com/SoldierandFamilyHousing/default.aspx>.

viii. Reporting Requirements:

a. Garrison Commanders: At 30 (27 Aug 09), 60 (28 Sep 09) and 90 (28 Oct 09) days into the implementation of this communication effort, provide Region Directorates:

i. A brief executive summary (EXSUM) of actions taken in support of this strategic communication effort, to include:

ii. efforts to educate and alert leaders, program providers and counselors to this strategic communication effort,

iii. training requested and/or received and approximate number of participants,

iv. number and types of localized briefings conducted (formation, town halls, others),

v. a listing of internal media support provided in support of this strategic communication effort, (traditional and new media),

vi. a summary of existing data relevant to the number of Soldiers and/or Family members seeking training, counseling, or assistance in dealing with buying or selling a home, rental concerns, or other concerns linked to the national housing crisis, and noted increases or decreases in visits or requests,

vii. any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations which may be useful in the successful completion to this or future StratComm efforts.

b. IMCOM Regions:

i. Collect and review garrison data.

ii. At 40 (8 Sep 09), 70 (8 Oct 09), and 100 (9 Nov 09) days into the implementation of this communication effort, identify any significant regional trends, garrisons not reporting and reasoning as to non-participation, and forward collective report with any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations

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which may be useful in the successful completion of this or future StratComm efforts to IMCOM Headquarters.

c. IMCOM Headquarters:

i. Collect and review Regional data.

ii. At 45 (14 Sep 09), 75 (13 Oct 09), and 105 (16 Nov 09) days into the implementation of this communication effort, forward a single collective report containing region/garrison data, to ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication with any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations which may be useful in the successful completion to this or future StratComm efforts.

d. FMWRC:

i. Any significant challenges, best practices, and recommendations which may be useful in the successful completion to this or future StratComm efforts.

e. ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication:

i. At the completion of Phase I of this strategic communication effort, provide ACSIM an EXSUM detailing release and distribution of the deliverables identified in Appendix (6), Execution Matrix, of this strategic communication plan.

ii. Collect and review IMCOM and FMWRC reports and data. At 50 (18 Sept 09) and 80 (19 Oct 09) days into the implementation of this communication effort, prepare and forward to ACSIM an EXSUM updating the efforts being taken at all levels in support of this strategic communication effort, noted trends, statistics, FRAGOs issued, and challenges with recommendations for overcoming those challenges.

iii. At 115 (24 Nov 09) days into this communication effort collect and compile all reports and data received from IMCOM and FMWRC and in coordination with the SSCHM Task Force, prepare and present an After Action Report to the ACSIM, detailing successes and challenges associated with this strategic communication effort, continuing or new trends related to National Housing Market Crisis, and provide recommendations for continuing or adapting this or future communication efforts.

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- f. ACSIM/DAIM-ISH:
 - i. At 30 (27 Aug 09), 60 (28 Sep 09) and 90 (28 Oct 09) days into the implementation of this communication effort, provide to the ACSIM / CG IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication an EXSUM detailing:
 - ii. the availability of the Housing Market Crisis web pages,
 - iii. any significant periods of website unavailability,
 - iv. the number of visitors (hits) to the main linking page,
 - v. any noted trends in visitors,
 - vi. recurring questions related to the website received from Soldiers and Families and/or installation Commanders, Command Sergeants Major, installation service providers, counselors, or referral agencies identified within the website,
- g. SSCHM Task Force, Chair:
 - i. At 30 (27 Aug 09), 60 (28 Sep 09), or as needed, into this communication effort, provide to the IMCOM/ACSIM Director of Strategic Communication an EXSUM detailing any significant trends in the National Housing Market Crisis that could either impact this strategic communication effort, or changes in trends in which supplements or modifications to this strategic communication effort would further support overcoming the operational challenge.
 - ii. At 115 (24 Nov 09) days into this communication effort, coordinate with the Director of Strategic Communication in preparing and presenting an After Action Report to the ACSIM, detailing successes and challenges associated with this strategic communication effort, continuing or new trends related to National Housing Market Crisis, and provide recommendations for continuing or adapting this or future communication efforts.
- ix. Execution Matrix (See Appendix 6)

IV. ASSESSMENT

A. Metrics and Measures of Effectiveness of Communication Efforts:

- i. Phase I: 100% issuance and distribution of the Strategic Communication Plan and Memorandum from the Commanding General.

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ii. Phase 2: 100% dissemination by Regions/Garrison Commanders to installation assistance providers, counselors, and other installation support agencies.

iii. Phase 3: Indications that at least 80% of IMCOM Soldiers were briefed on the availability of training, assistance, and made aware of the Army One Source online information and resources through formations, in and out processing briefs, or during other face-to-face encounters.

iv. Phase 4: Indications that the fact sheets and briefs were localized and presented to Soldiers and Families at town hall meetings, through assistance providers, counselors or other installation support agencies to at least 10% of the total primary (end user) audience.

v. Phase 5: Internal coverage of the availability of these resources and information through at least two media efforts (traditional and social), on each installation supporting Soldiers and Families residing off post.

vi. Training requested and/or utilized during the course of this strategic communication effort by at least 50% of the installations supporting Soldiers and Families residing off post.

vii. A measured increase (based on existing data) in Soldiers and/or Family members requesting housing crisis assistance through command channels, assistance providers, counselors, or other on post support agencies.

viii. Measured and significant (10% per month) increases in web traffic visiting pages specific to the housing market crisis.

B. Evaluation timeline: Evaluation of this StratComm Plan will coincide with report back requirements as contained in Reporting Requirements, paragraph III-A-h.

V. POC and Approval Status

A. CPG members

- a. Mr. Dennis Bohannon, ACSIM/IMCOM, Director of Strategic Communication
- b. Ms. Marlene Naranjit, Chief, Strategic Planning and Construction Branch, Army Housing Division, ACSIM
- c. Ms. Shenise Foster, Installation Services Housing, ACSIM
- d. Mr. William Costlow, IMCOM/FMWRC, Public Affairs

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e. Ms. Laurie Decker (Pugh), IMCOM/FMWRC, Public Affairs

B. Approval Status:

- a. VDAS
- b. ACSIM
- c. StratComm Coordination Group
- d. ACSIM/IMCOM Director of Strategic Communication
- e. SSCHM Task Force

C. Point of Contact for this action is Dennis K. Bohannon at (703) 692-9822, or e-mail dennis.bohannon@us.army.mil.

Signed



ROBERT WILSON
Lieutenant General, USA
Assistant Chief of Staff
for Installation Management

Appendices:

- 1: One Page Brief
- 2: Housing Crisis Fact Sheet
- 3: Housing Crisis Geographical Data
- 4: Training Assistance Information
- 5: Housing Crisis Briefing
- 6: StratComm Execution Matrix
- 7: Memorandum from the Commanding General