

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
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ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
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NEW ORLEANS, LA
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT
ON
21 MARCH 2001
CONCERNING
INSTALLATION READINESS**

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

I am Colonel Ken Boles, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Facilities for Marine Forces Reserve, Headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana. I appreciate this opportunity to come before you today to discuss the status and concerns that we have within Marine Forces Reserve in the areas of installation readiness and infrastructure. My intent today is to provide you the most current information and status on the reserve installations that I manage on a daily basis. I also hope to impart to each of you the challenges we face and needs that we have within the Marine Corps Reserve in our attempts to provide our Marines and assigned Sailors the very best facilities we can to accomplish their day-to-day missions.

Briefly, Marine Forces Reserve is made up of 185 sites. We're currently located in 47 states, the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. We have full funding responsibility for 41 of those sites. At the remaining 144 sites, we are tenants. As tenants we provide a representative portion of the expenses the host incurs to operate each Center. These Reserve Centers are the workplace for more than 5,200 active duty and active reserve Marines and Sailors as well as 32,702 Selected Marine Corps Reserve, SMCR Marines, better known as drilling reservists.

My challenge as the Facility Manager for Marine Forces Reserve is how to use the limited dollars that I receive to maintain, repair, enlarge and, eventually, replace our aging buildings and infrastructure.

Over 75% of the reserve centers we are in are more than 30 years old, and of these, about 35% are over 50 years old. The average age across the board is 38. The cost to repair, maintain and upgrade these aging facilities increases annually and can be substantial. Since these Reserve Centers were built, construction techniques, methods and materials have changed. In addition,

the equipment that we have fielded to our units over the years has changed. The equipment is bigger, heavier, wider and longer. Most require appropriately constructed or modified maintenance facilities as well as adequate electrical power and other support infrastructure upgrades to maintain their combat readiness. Even in our administrative spaces, the increased use of computers, fax and answering machines, televisions, VCRs, projection systems, copiers, simulators and the like have placed a huge electrical demand on our facilities. Facilities that were built for manual typewriters and the M151 jeep, of World War II fame, are now inadequate for the equipment our modern Marine Corps uses. When we renovate a Reserve Center we must address each of these shortfalls. Where found, we must also remove materials that were once commonly used, such as asbestos and lead based paint, materials, which we now know, have detrimental health effects. This can push up the renovation cost significantly as it takes specially trained and equipped personnel to remove and dispose of these materials. Additionally, meeting current building codes in our various states we reside in for electrical, plumbing and other disciplines is expensive. You may see a similar situation when you have an accident in your car. The car you purchased for \$20,000 from General Motors or Ford, might take \$35,000 in parts and labor at Joe's Body Shop to make it whole again. When that happens in an auto accident your car is totaled and replaced. We frequently find this to be true when we do work up renovation estimates. We frequently find it cheaper to build a new Reserve Center than it is to repair and upgrade an existing one. Unfortunately, Marine Forces Reserve is not funded sufficiently enough to do this. Hence we repair or renovate a Reserve Center when it would really be better to build a modern, energy efficient reserve center from the ground up.

The tools at my disposal to address Reserve Center replacement and repair are the Military Construction, Naval Reserve (MCNR) program and the Operations and Maintenance,

Marine Corps Reserve (O&MMCR) program. Our present MCNR Backlog is \$205M. Our Real Property Maintenance (RPM) Backlog is \$20.2M, consisting of a \$9.9M Backlog of Maintenance and Repair (BMAR) and a \$10.3M Backlog of Minor Construction, called MCON.

The average President's Budget funding level for the MCNR program, Marine Corps Exclusive, for fiscal years 1993 to 2001 is \$3.8M, not including Planning and Design. The average appropriated funding level for the program during the same period is \$10.7M, again, not including Planning and Design. However, even at an annual funding level of \$10.7M, it would still take nearly 20 years to reduce the current backlog. It also requires making the unrealistic assumption that no new projects are identified during the same period

The funding level for RPM, including Quality of Life, Defense (QOL,D) enhancements, has averaged \$410M during fiscal years 1995 through 2001. The Congressional Quality of Life, Defense funding provided to Marine Forces Reserve has provided a substantial boost to our RPM program during this period. In fact, slightly less than one-fourth of our RPM funding has come from this Quality of Life funding source. These funds are particularly beneficial because they are allocated specifically for RPM shortfalls. We direct our RPM funds toward correcting critical facility repairs that could result in self-aggravating facility damage, health impacts as identified by facility inspections, or command directed safety and mission essential projects. The second effort is to fund non-critical facility repairs and renovations or mission enhancing minor construction projects. Lastly, facility enhancing aesthetic repairs or minor construction projects will be accomplished. During this past fiscal year, five whole-center repairs were funded at Wyoming, PA; Lynchburg, VA; Brooklyn, NY; Brookpark, OH and Pico Rivera, CA. These projects have substantially improved the working conditions for our Marines and assigned Sailors and improved units' abilities to accomplish their respective missions. At the same time,

aesthetic improvements not only enhance the physical appearance of the center but the surrounding communities as well.

The MCNR and RPM programs are closely related. The age and current condition of facilities dictate a temporary, short-term RPM fix until a project goes through the MCNR process for approval and funding. The normal process for projects that have a high command priority takes three to five years from the time a project is identified on the MCNR list until it receives funding. During this period, RPM funds are used to address temporary, short-term fixes. These RPM projects only address health, safety, and self-aggravating facility issues.

In 1999, the Department of Defense directed the implementation of the Commanding Officer's Readiness Reporting System (CORRS). We strongly support this effort because it standardizes individual Service requirements. It has become one of the most important tools we use during our planning process. Combining CORRS with our property management procedures has enabled us to examine the numerous maintenance, repair, and construction projects and formulate our Facilities Master Plan objectives. In fiscal year 2000, we completed CORRS data collection on all 41 sites for which Marine Forces Reserve has 100% funding responsibility . We are currently developing projects from this CORRS information that will further increase our RPM and MCNR backlogs. This report identified \$57M worth of repairs and new construction. The new construction was needed to address a space shortage of 186,000 square feet identified throughout the 41 sites.

The main shortages of space were found within the equipment maintenance, administrative and supply areas. For the fiscal year 2001 CORRS data collection, our focus has been on the remaining 144 sites where Marine Forces Reserve occupies Marine exclusive space at Joint and Tenant Reserve Centers. This year's CORRS report will cost Marine Forces Reserve over

\$500,000. The tough decision this fiscal year was whether to spend lean RPM funds to gather the CORRS information or fund maintenance and repair projects. We chose to fund the remaining CORRS data collection effort. We anticipate the CORRS data for Joint and Tenant spaces will have similar results as last year and future projects will be developed and placed on the RPM and MCNR project lists, further increasing the backlog of both programs.

Another useful program that we actively participate in is the Joint Service Reserve Component Facility Boards, which meet annually throughout the United States. These boards successfully coordinate the efforts of each Service's Reserve new construction initiatives. Although unilateral reserve centers are possible we are seeing more and more joint reserve centers as a result of this Service-wide Reserve coordination.

The overall condition of Marine Corps Reserve facilities presents a daunting task. It will continue to demand a sustaining, combined effort of innovative RPM management, a pro-active exploration of and participation in Joint Facility projects, and a well targeted use of the MCNR program that will allow the Marine Reserves to reduce both the MCNR and RPM backlogs.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would like to say once again that I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your subcommittee members on such an important topic. The condition of our Reserve Centers is of paramount importance to the Marine Corps. Better facilities mean improved readiness and Quality of Life. I sincerely hope that the information that I have provided today will help you determine how best to allocate funds to improve installation and infrastructure readiness.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.