

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DENNIS M. MCCARTHY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
MARCH 19, 2003
CONCERNING
RESERVE PERSONNEL**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE**

Chairman Chambliss, Senator Nelson, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is my privilege to report on the status and the future direction of your Marine Corps Reserve as a partner in the Total Force. On behalf of Marines and their families, I want to thank the Committee for its unwavering support. Your efforts reveal not only a commitment for ensuring the common defense, but also a genuine concern for the welfare of our Marines and their families.

CURRENT STATUS

Today's Marine Reserves are ready, willing and able to support the active component and to serve our communities in peace or war. During the Global War on Terrorism, Reserve units have filled critical roles in our nation's defense--whether deployed to Afghanistan, Djibouti or Kuwait or on standby at U.S. bases to quickly respond to Homeland Security crises.

As of February 27, approximately 15,000 Marines were activated as part of units or individual augments in support of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. This represents approximately 40 percent of the Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) and 1.7 percent of the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The number has risen sharply since the beginning of 2003 in response to the deployment orders for Marines to reposition to Southwest Asia for possible future contingency operations. Roughly 75 percent of the SMCR Marines currently activated are or will be forward deployed into the U.S. Central Command area of operations.

Reserve integration can readily enhance Marine Corps operational capabilities, however, recognizing the reserve as a finite resource the Commandant has insisted on its judicious use. In the first year of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom we activated no more than 11

percent of the SMCR (units and Individual Mobilization Augmentees) and less than 2 percent of the IRR. All of the IRR members were volunteers.

The men and women in Marine Forces Reserve have responded tremendously to the call to duty. Only 1.1 percent of those receiving orders have requested delay, deferment or exemption from duty.

Mobilization readiness is our number one priority all the time. The hard work and dedication of the Marines and Sailors of Marine Forces Reserve to this task has resulted in the efficient execution of the mobilization. During the first two months of 2003 we moved 7,860 passengers and 136,220 short tons of cargo directly from reserve training centers to embarkation points using 605 tractor-trailers and 210 chartered buses and flights—without missing a designated arrival date. More than 12,000 reserve personnel have initiated the Anthrax vaccine series at their home training centers and most smallpox vaccinations are being administered at the gaining force command within 48 hours of deployment. No reserve unit has had to ask for relief to enter theater without the required inoculations.

The ability of the Reserve to rapidly mobilize and integrate into the active component in response to the Marine Corps' operational requirements is a tribute to the dedication, professionalism and warrior spirit of every member of Marine Forces Reserve – both active and reserve. Our future success relies firmly on the Marine Corps' most valuable asset – our Marines and their families.

We continue to evaluate personnel policy changes regarding entitlements, training and employment of Reserve forces, and support for family members and employers to minimize the impact of mobilization on our Marines. Our success in this area will enhance our ability to retain the quality Marines needed to meet our emerging operational requirements.

We need your continued support to attract and retain quality men and women in the Marine Corps Reserve. Our mission is to find those potential Marines who choose to manage a commitment to their family, their communities, their civilian careers, and the Corps. While such dedication requires self-discipline and personal sacrifices that cannot be justified by a drill paycheck alone, adequate compensation and retirement benefits are tangible incentives for attracting and retaining quality personnel. This challenge will be renewed when mobilized units return from active duty and begin the process of reconstitution.

Last year, the Marine Corps Reserve achieved its recruiting goals, accessing 5,900 non-prior service and 4,213 prior service Marines. This is particularly significant as the historic high rate of retention for the active component reduced the pool for prior service recruiting. Enlisted attrition rates for FY02 decreased approximately 2.8 percent from our historical four-year average. Marine Corps Reserve officer attrition rates were slightly higher than historical averages which can in part be attributed to Reserve officers leaving non-mobilized SMCR units in order to be mobilized in support of individual augmentation requirements.

The incentives provided by Congress, such as the Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) and the MGIB Kicker (Kicker) educational benefits, enlistment bonuses, medical and dental benefits, and commissary and PX privileges, have helped us to attract and retain capable, motivated, and dedicated Marines, which has contributed to the stability of our Force. Congressional enhancements allowed us to increase our recruiting and retention incentive programs during FY01. We continued to fund these programs to the same levels in FY02 and FY03 through internal realignment. The increase is also reflected in our FY04 budget request. The tangible results of your support for these incentives are the decreased attrition and recruiting successes I have just highlighted.

The Marine Corps is the only service that relies almost entirely on its prior service population to fill the ranks of its Reserve officer corps. Although the Marine Corps Reserve exceeded its recent historical SMCR unit officer accession rates in FY02, manning our unit officer requirements at the right grade and MOS continues to be our biggest recruiting and retention challenge. We are exploring ways to increase the Reserve participation of company grade officers.

The long-term impact of mobilization on recruiting and retention is still undetermined. More than 2,000 of our activated reserves have now exceeded the one-year mark. We will not know the overall retention impact until we demobilize a significant number of these Marines and they have an opportunity to assess the impact of mobilization on their families, finances and civilian careers.

Combat readiness and personal and family readiness are inseparable. Marine Forces Reserve Marine Corps Community Services is working aggressively to strengthen the readiness of our Marines and families by enhancing their quality of life (QOL). Our many MCCS programs and services are designed to reach all Marines and their families regardless of geographic location--a significant and challenging undertaking considering the geographic dispersion of our Marines and their families throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. During the current partial mobilization we are seeing the payoffs of our significant investment over the past several years in family readiness programs. Key volunteers and site support personnel are assisting families and keeping communities informed.

In December 2002, the Marine Corps began participating in a two-year Department of Defense demonstration project providing 24-hour telephonic and online family information and referral assistance. "MCCS One Source" is similar to employee assistance programs used by

many of the nation's leading major corporations as a proven HR strategy to help employees balance work and life demands, reduce stress and improve on-the-job productivity. Already we are receiving positive feedback from users.

The support our Reserve Marines receive from their employers has a major impact on their ability to serve. We have partnered with the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve to foster a better mutual understanding and working relationship with employers. During the current partial mobilization many employers have voluntarily pledged to augment pay and extend benefits which has greatly lessened the burden of activation on our servicemembers and their families. I would like to acknowledge and thank the public and private sector employers of our men and women serving in the Marine Corps Reserve for their continued support.

Like the active component Marine Corps, the Marine Corps Reserve is a predominantly junior force with historically about 70 percent of SMCR Marines on their first enlistment. Many of our young Marines are also college students. Currently, there are no laws that would provide academic and financial protections for students and schools affected by mobilization. We support ESGR's new initiative to improve communication between Reserve component personnel and their educational institutions.

In addition to supporting Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom, Marine Reserves continued to provide operations tempo relief to the active forces during 2002. Notably, more than 300 reserves volunteered to participate in UNITAS 43-02, creating the first reserve Marine Forces UNITAS. From August to December, the Marines sailed around South America conducting training exercises with military forces from Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, Peru, Chile and other countries. Marine Forces Reserve also provided the bulk of Marine Corps

support to the nation's counter drug effort, participating in numerous missions in support of Joint Task Force 6, Joint Interagency Task Force-East and Joint Interagency Task Force-West.

Individual Marines and units support law enforcement agencies conducting missions along the U.S. Southwest border and in several domestic "hot spots" that have been designated as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas.

The Active Duty Special Work (ADSW) Program funds short tours of active duty for Marine Corps Reserve personnel. This program continues to provide critical skills and operational tempo relief for existing and emerging augmentation requirements of the Total Force. The demand for ADSW has increased to support pre-mobilization activities during FY02 and FY03 and will be further challenged during post mobilization. In FY02, the Marine Corps executed 1,208 work-years of ADSW. Continued support and funding for this critical program will ensure our Total Force requirements are fully met.

Maintaining overall SMCR end-strength at current levels will ensure the Marine Corps Reserve's capability to provide operational and personnel tempo relief to Active Marine Forces, maintain sufficient full-time support at our small unit sites, and retain critical aviation and ground equipment maintenance capabilities. SMCR units are structured along the Marine Air Ground Task Force model, providing air combat, ground combat and combat service support personnel and equipment to augment and reinforce the active component. Less than one percent of our SMCR unit strength represents a reserve-unique capability. The current Marine Forces Reserve force structure also reflects a small tooth-to-tail ratio with a minimal number of active duty and reserve personnel in support roles, and a majority of our Reserve and active Marines and sailors as deployable warfighters.

The Marine Corps Reserve also provides a significant community presence in and around our 187 sites nationwide. One of our most important contributions is providing military funerals for our veterans. The active duty staff members and Reserve Marines at our sites performed approximately 6,170 funerals in 2002 and we project to support as many or more this year. The authorization and funding to bring Reserve Marines on active duty to perform funeral honors has particularly assisted us at sites like Bridgeton, Missouri, where we perform several funerals each week. We appreciate Congress exempting these Marines from counting against active duty end strength.

FUTURE ROLES AND MISSIONS

The value of the Marine Corps Reserve has always been measured in our ability to effectively augment and reinforce the Active Component. Over the next several years, the overall structure of Marine Forces Reserve will remain largely the same, however, we are working to create new capabilities to adapt and orient the reserve force to the changing strategic landscape. The capabilities were identified as part of an internal Comprehensive Review begun in 2001 and do not involve any changes to the number of reserves or the geographic laydown of the force.

- Foremost among these capabilities will be the creation of two Security Battalions and an Intelligence Support Battalion. The Security Battalions will provide a dual-use capability consisting of eight Anti-Terrorism Force Protection platoons and an augmentation unit for the Marine Corps Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF).
- Recognizing the increased requirements at Marine Corps and Joint Commands for rapid, flexible Staff Augmentation, the Marine Corps Reserve is enhancing and modifying the

Individual Mobilization Augmentee program to increase the quantity and distribution of Augmentee billets to better support the Warfighting Commander's needs.

- Additional Reserve capabilities involve Information Technology, Environmental Protection, and Foreign Languages.

SUMMARY

In early February this year while visiting a group of Marines in Qatar, the Commandant of the Marine Corps made the following comment: "I understand from the numbers that two-thirds of you here are reservists - I know you simply as Marines - and looking at performance I can't tell the difference." Testaments like this tell the real story of our success. Our greatest asset is our outstanding young men and women in uniform. Your consistent and steadfast support of our Marines and their families has directly contributed to our success. The Marine Corps appreciates your continued support and collaboration in making the Marine Corps and its Reserve the Department of Defense model for Total Force integration and expeditionary capability.