

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
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SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DENNIS M. MCCARTHY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
RESERVE MATTERS
ON
13 APRIL 2005**

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Graham, Senator Nelson, and distinguished members of the Committee, it is my honor to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps Reserve as a partner in the Navy-Marine Corps team. Your Marine Corps Reserve continues to be “Ready, Willing, and Able.” We remain firmly committed to warfighting excellence. The support of Congress and the American people has been indispensable to our success in the Global War on Terrorism. Your sustained commitment to care for and improve our Nation’s armed forces in order to meet today’s challenges, as well as those of tomorrow, is vital to our battlefield success. On behalf of all Marines and their families, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Congress and this committee for your continued support.

YOUR MARINE CORPS RESERVE TODAY

The last four years have demonstrated the Marine Corps Reserve is truly a full partner of the Total Force Marine Corps. I have been the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve since June 2, 2001 and as I prepare for retirement this summer, I can assure you the Marine Corps Reserve still remains totally committed to continuing the rapid and efficient activation of combat-ready ground, air, and logistics units to augment and reinforce the active component in the Global War on Terrorism. Marine Corps Reserve units, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and Retired Marines fill critical requirements in our nation’s defense and are deployed worldwide in Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgian Republic, Djibouti, Kuwait, and the U.S., supporting all aspects of the Global War on Terrorism.

“Train, Activate, Deploy” has always been a foundation of the Marine Corps Reserve. Following that foundation, your Reserve is maintained as a pre-trained, balanced and sustainable force capable of rapid deployment into a combat environment.

Reserve Marines continuously train to maintain high levels of combat readiness. Because we currently have the luxury of scheduled rotations, we utilize a 48-day activate to deploy schedule. A demanding Mobilization and Operational Readiness Deployment Test program eliminates the need for post activation certification upon activation. The 48-day schedule includes a nine-day Security and Stability Operations (SASO) training package and completes the preparations for the Marine Reserve unit to deploy. The impact of the “Train, Activate, Deploy” foundation is the seamless integration with the Gaining Force Commander (GFC) of a combat capable active duty Marine unit.

Your Marine Corps Reserve is pre-trained—able to activate, spin-up, deploy, redeploy, take leave and deactivate all within twelve months. Twelve-month activations with a seven-month deployment have helped sustain the Reserve force and contributed to the regeneration of our units. In so doing, the Reserves follow the same seven-month deployment policy as our active forces. This activation/deployment construct has allowed the Marine Corps to maximize management of the Reserve force, maintain unit integrity, and lessen the burden on Marine Corps families by maintaining predictable deployments while allowing adequate dwell time between unit deployments.

As of early March 2005, over 13,000 Reserve Marines were activated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Horn of Africa operations. Of these Marines, approximately 11,500 were serving in combat-proven ground, aviation and service support units led by reserve Marine officers and non-commissioned officers. The remaining 1,600 Reserve Marines were serving as individual augments in support of Combatant Commanders, the Joint Staff and the Marine Corps. Since 11 September 2001, the Marine Corps has activated over 36,000 Reserve Marines, and more than 95 percent of all Marine Forces Reserve units.

The Global War on Terrorism highlights our need to remain flexible and adaptive as a force. During the aftermath of 9/11 and the commencement of the Global War on Terrorism, the Marine Corps Reserve was the force the Marine Corps needed. As new war fighting requirements have emerged, we have adapted our units and personnel to meet them, such as with the rapid formation of security forces from existing units, or the creation of provisional Civil Affairs Groups. We reviewed our Total Force Structure during 2004, and laid the blueprint for refining the force from 2005 to 2006. In the coming years, the Marine Corps Reserve will be increasing intelligence, security, civil affairs, mortuary affairs and light armored reconnaissance capabilities, while we pare down some of our heavier, less required capabilities, such as tanks and artillery. However, we are adjusting less than eight percent (8%) of Reserve end strength to support these new capabilities required for the war on terrorism. By reassessing and fine-tuning our Reserve Force, we are enhancing our ability to provide required war fighting capabilities. Although adjusted, the Reserve Force will continue to provide a strong Marine Corps presence in our communities.

Your Marine Corps Reserve continues to prove we are “Ready, Willing and Able” to accomplish our primary mission of augmenting and reinforcing the active component with fully trained, combat capable Marines.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Marine Corps is committed to and confident in the Total Force Concept as evidenced by the overwhelming success of Marine Reserve units serving in support of the Global War on Terrorism. Activated Marine Reserve units and individuals are seamlessly integrating into forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Forces and regularly demonstrate their combat effectiveness. The recent efforts of your Reserve Marines are best illustrated in the following examples of a few of the many Reserve units supporting the war effort:

FORCE UNITS:

Fourth Civil Affairs Group (4th CAG), commanded by Col John R. Ballard USMCR, a professor at the Naval War College, and assisted by his senior enlisted advisor, SgtMaj Joseph A. Staudt, a construction appraiser and project manager, was instrumental in rebuilding communities from the ground up in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. They assisted in everything from recreating the infrastructure for a city or town, to clearing unexploded ordnance and equipment left by the Iraqi army from school buildings. Fourth CAG was instrumental in projects such as supporting local elections in Fallujah and assisting the Iraqis in reopening schools in Al Anbar province. Just last month, 4th CAG ended its tour of duty in Iraq and were replaced by 5th Civil Affairs Group (5th CAG), commanded by Col Steve McKinley USMCR, a retired bonds salesman from Wachovia, with the assistance of SgtMaj John A. Ellis, a Baltimore fireman.

FOURTH MARINE DIVISION:

First Battalion, 23^d Marines (1/23), under the command of Lt. Col. Gregory D. Stevens USMCR, a building contractor in southern California, supported by his senior enlisted advisor, SgtMaj David A. Miller, a military academy instructor, were the first to enter and assess the threat in Hit, Iraq last year and won decisive battles with insurgents in that city. Sgt Herbert B. Hancock, a sniper from 1/23 was credited with the longest confirmed kill in Iraq during the battle for Fallujah, taking out insurgent mortarmen from a distance of over 1,000 yards. From October 2004 to January 2005, the Mobile Assault Platoons of 1/23 patrolled the supply routes around the Haditha Dam area in Iraq. With the aid of long-range optics, night vision and thermal imaging scopes, they vigilantly watched day and night for insurgent activity, while remaining unobserved. During their last month in Iraq, the efforts of the Mobile Assault Platoons caused an 85 percent decrease in the total number of mines and IEDs utilized in the Haditha Dam area.

Second Battalion, 24th Marines, commanded by LtCol Mark A. Smith USMCR, an Indiana state policeman, with SgtMaj Garry L. Payne, a business owner, as his senior enlisted advisor, supported the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (24th MEU) by bringing a measure of security to northern Babil Province. Marines with law-enforcement background were so common in the battalion that even the smallest units boasted of having a few police officers. Many law-enforcement strategies and tactics employed in the Chicago area were mimicked in Iraq such as executing raids, handling heavy traffic jams and conducting crime scene analysis. The battalion even used police procedures in its intelligence battle, comparing anti-Iraqi forces to criminals back home. As Chief Warrant Officer-5 Jim M. Roussell, an intelligence officer and 28-year veteran of the Chicago Police Department stated, “There are a lot of similarities between street gangs and the guys we’re fighting out here.” Working alongside Iraqi security forces, the Marines rounded up nearly 900 criminals, thugs and terrorists and seized more than 75,000 munitions to make the local area safer for the Iraqi residents.

FOURTH FORCE SERVICE SUPPORT GROUP:

Throughout my tenure as Commander, Marine Forces Reserve, I have made repeated visits to Marines serving abroad. During a recent trip to Iraq with my senior enlisted advisor, SgtMaj Robin W. Dixon, I visited our Marines from Fourth Force Service Support Group (4th FSSG) who were serving with 1st FSSG. I can confidently state that the Reserve Marines were fully integrated with 1st FSSG and were meeting all the challenges to ensure Marines throughout Iraq had everything from food and medicine to mail and ammunition. They willingly braved dangerous roads filled with IEDs to ensure supplies arrive at their destination. Our Marines who are on the front lines can do their tasks superbly because their needs back at the base camp are all being met by the Marines of FSSG. From refueling to performing major overhauls on vehicles, to moving the

fuel and materials of war from the rear to the front, to distributing “beans, bullets, and bandages” – the FSSG takes care of all the needs of their fellow Marines.

The most sobering task that the Reserve Marines from 4th FSSG perform in Iraq is Mortuary Affairs, which is predominately a Reserve mission. Chief Warrant Officer-2 Anthony L. High, the Officer in Charge of Mortuary Affairs, ensures that the remains of the fallen in Iraq return home with the proper dignity and respect they deserve for the price they have paid for our country. Even enemies killed in Fallujah were given burials commensurate with the customs and procedures of their native country and religious beliefs, winning approval of Iraqi religious leaders.

FOURTH MARINE AIRCRAFT WING:

The accomplishments of Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 452 (VMGR-452), of Marine Aircraft Group 49, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, under the command of LtCol Bradley S. James USMCR, a United Airlines pilot, supported by his senior enlisted advisor, SgtMaj Leland H. Hilt Jr., an auditor for the IRS, show the overwhelming commitment we impose on our Reserve Marines. VMGR-452 has been activated twice since 9/11. A detachment from VMGR-452 was activated in January 2002 to support Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The remainder of the squadron was activated later in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I (OIF-I). Upon deactivation, the squadron reverted back into their normal high operational tempo, supporting reserve missions worldwide. The squadron supported the full spectrum of KC-130 missions that included aerial delivery in support of Special Operations Command (SOCOM), performing multiple aerial refueling missions in support of the Fleet Marine Force and the US Army, logistics runs in support of Marine Forces Europe and deployed units in Djibouti, and support of a Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise (CAX). The entire squadron was reactivated in June 2004 and deployed in August to Al Asad Air Base, Al Anbar Province, Iraq. They quickly began combat operations in support of First

Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF). The squadron conducted numerous types of tactical missions, to include logistics support, Fixed Wing Aerial Refueling (FWAR) and radio relay throughout several countries to include Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Turkey and Italy. On 7 November, when Operation Phantom Fury commenced in Fallujah, VMGR-452 found its versatile KC-130 platforms greatly needed for a variety of missions. The squadron flew 341 sorties, logged 864.9 flight hours, transported 1,273,150 pounds of cargo and 1,980 personnel, and offloaded 4,324,300 pounds of fuel to 502 receivers during the operation. After Operation Phantom Fury, the squadron conducted its most important mission of the deployment - the movement of Iraqi election officials during Operation Citadel II. During this operation, the squadron transported over 1,200 Iraqi election officials from An Najaf to Al Taqaddum and Mosul so that they would be in place before the election on 30 January. Following the elections, the squadron transported the election officials back to An Najaf in less than six hours by running three fully loaded KC-130's continuously. February saw the squadron surpass 3000 mishap-free flight hours for the deployment.

ACTIVATION PHILOSOPHY

Sustaining the force has been consistent with Total Force Marine Corps planning guidance. This guidance was based on a 12-month involuntary activation with a 7-month deployment, followed by a period of dwell time and, if required, a second 12-month involuntary reactivation and subsequent 7-month deployment. This force management practice was designed to enhance the warfighting and sustainment capability of the Marine Forces Reserve by providing trained, well-balanced and cohesive units ready for combat. We view this both an efficient and effective use of our Reserve Marines' 24-month cumulative activation as it serves to preserve Reserve Units to sustain the long-term nature of the GWOT that will require future Reserve force commitments.

ACTIVATION IMPACT

As of January 2005, the Marine Corps Reserve began activating approximately 3,000 Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) Unit Marines in support of the next Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation and 500 SMCR Unit Marines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Even with judicious use of our assets and coordinated planning, the personnel tempo has increased. As the members of this committee know, Reserve Marines are students or have civilian occupations that are also very demanding, and are their primary means of livelihood. In the past two years, 933 Reserve Marines exceeded 400 days deployed time. In total, approximately 3,900 Reserve Marines have been activated more than once; about 2,500 of whom are currently activated. Information from March 2005 indicates that approximately 65 percent of the current unit population and 47 percent of the current IMA population have been activated at least once. About one percent of our current Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) population deployed in support of OIF/OEF. If you include the number of Marines who deployed as an active component and have since transferred to the IRR, the number reaches 31 percent. This is worth particular note as the IRR provides us needed depth – an added dimension to our capability. Volunteers from the IRR and from other Military Occupational Specialties, such as artillery, have been cross-trained to reinforce identifiable critical specialties.

Although supporting the Global War on Terrorism is the primary focus of the Marine Corps Reserve, other functions, such as pre-deployment preparation and maintenance, recruiting, training, facilities management and long term planning continue. The wise use of the Active Duty Special Work (ADSW) Program allows the Marine Corps to fill these short-term, full-time requirements with Reserve Marines. In fiscal year 2004, the Marine Corps executed 947 work-years of ADSW at

a cost of \$49.1M. Continued support and funding for this critical program will enhance flexibility thereby ensuring our Total Force requirements are met.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

Like the active component, Marine Corps Reserve units primarily rely upon a first term force. Each year approximately 6,000 new Marines join Marine Corps Reserve units, while a similar number move into the Individual Ready Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, Active Reserve or Retired Reserve communities. Currently, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to recruit and retain quality men and women willing to manage commitments to their families, their communities, their civilian careers and the Corps. Recruiting and retention goals were met in fiscal year 2004, but the long-term impact of recent activations is not yet known. While current attrition is below the averages of previous years, the Marine Corps Reserve is monitoring post-mobilization retention very closely to assess the impact of deployment on Marines, their families and their civilian careers. As always, the training, leadership and quality of life of our Marines remain significant Marine Corps priorities. Despite the high operational tempo, the morale and patriotic spirit of Reserve Marines, their families and employers remains extraordinarily high.

At the end of fiscal year 2004, the Selected Marine Corps Reserve was over 39,600 strong. Part of this population is comprised of Active Reserve Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees and Reserve Marines in the training pipeline, but the preponderance, about 32,500, belong to the units of Marine Forces Reserve. An additional 60,000 Marines serve as part of the Individual Ready Reserve, representing a significant pool of trained and experienced prior service manpower, which, as stated, the Marine Corps has frequently drawn upon for volunteers. Reserve Marines bring to the table not only their Marine Corps skills but also their civilian training and experience as well. The presence of police officers, engineers, lawyers, skilled craftsmen, business

executives and the college students who fill our Reserve ranks serves to enrich the Total Force. We are very mindful of the sacrifices that they and their employers make so that they may serve this country. The Marine Corps appreciates the recognition given by Congress to employer relations, insurance benefits and family support. Such programs should not be seen as “rewards” or “bonuses,” but as tools that will sustain the Force in the years ahead.

Support to the Global War on Terrorism has reached the point where 80 percent of the current Marine Corps Reserve leadership has deployed at least once. Nevertheless, the Marine Corps Reserve is currently achieving higher retention rates than the benchmark average from the last three fiscal years. As of January, fiscal year 2005, the OSD attrition statistics for Marine Corps Reserve unit officers is 10.9 percent compared to the current benchmark average of 15.8 percent. For the same time period, Reserve unit enlisted attrition is 6.4 percent compared to 8.5 percent average.

Good retention goes hand-in-hand with the successes of our recruiters. In fiscal year 2004, the Marine Corps Reserve achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goal for non-prior service recruiting (6,165) and exceeded its goal for prior service recruiting (2,083). For our reserve component, junior officer recruiting remains the most challenging area. This is due mainly to the low attrition rate for company grade officers leaving the active force and that the Marine Corps recruits Reserve officers almost exclusively from the ranks of those who have first served an active duty tour as a Marine officer. We are successfully expanding reserve commissioning opportunities for our prior-enlisted Marines in order to grow some of our own officers from Marine Forces Reserve units and are exploring other methods to increase the participation of company grade officers in the Selective Marine Corps Reserve through increased recruiting efforts and increased active duty command emphasis on Reserve opportunities and participation. We thank Congress for

the continued support of legislation to allow bonuses for officers in the Selective Marine Corps Reserve who fill a critical skill or shortage. We are aggressively implementing the Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus program and expect it to fill fifty vacant billets this year, with plans to expand the program in the coming years. We appreciate your continued support and funding of incentives such as this, which offset the cost that officers must often incur in traveling to billets at Marine Corps Reserve locations nationwide.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Our future success will rely on the Marine Corps' most valuable asset – our Marines and their families. We, Marine Forces Reserve, believe it is our obligation to arm our Marines and their families with as much information as possible on the programs and resources available to them. Arming our Marines and their families with information on their education benefits, available childcare programs, family readiness resources and the health care benefits available to them, provides them with unlimited potential for their quality of life.

EDUCATION:

Last year I testified that there were no laws offering academic and financial protections for Reserve military members who are college students. I was glad to see that there is movement in Congress to protect our college students and offer greater incentives for all service members to attend colleges. I appreciate recent 2005 legislation protecting a military member's college education investments and status when called to duty.

More than 1,000 Marine Forces Reserve Marines chose to use Tuition Assistance in fiscal year 2004 in order to help finance their education. This Tuition Assistance came to more than \$1.9M in fiscal year 2004 for more than 3,700 courses. Many of these Marines were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, and took their courses via distance learning courses. In this way Tuition

Assistance helped to mitigate the financial burden of education and maintained progress in the Marine's planned education schedule. We support continued funding of Tuition Assistance as currently authorized for activated Reserves. I fully support initiatives that will increase G.I. Bill benefits for Reserve and National Guard service members, as it is a key retention and recruiting tool and an important part of our Commandant's guidance to enhance the education of all Marines. House Resolution 4200, passed by both the House and Senate in October 2004 authorized Montgomery G.I. Bill benefits for certain Reserve and National Guard service members and increased the benefits for others. I heartily thank you for this initiative and look forward to its anticipated implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs in September 2005.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS:

Marines and their families are often forced to make difficult choices in selecting childcare, before, during and after a Marine's deployment in support of the Global War on Terror. We are deeply grateful for the joint initiative funded by the Department of Defense and announced on March 3, 2005 by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Without the fiscal authorization provided by the Senate and House, these programs could not have been initiated or funded. These combined resources have immeasurably contributed to the quality of life of our Marines' and their families. I thank you all for your support in the past and the future in providing sufficient funds for these key initiatives.

FAMILY READINESS:

Everyone in Marine Forces Reserve recognizes the strategic role our families have in our mission readiness, particularly in our mobilization preparedness. We help our families to prepare for day-to-day military life and the deployment cycle (Pre-Deployment, Deployment, Post-Deployment, and Follow-On) by providing educational opportunities at unit Family Days, Pre-

Deployment Briefs, Return and Reunion, Post-Deployment Briefs and through programs such as the Key Volunteer Network (KVN) and Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.). We also envision the creation of Regional Quality of Life Coordinators, similar to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command program, for our Reserve Marines and their families.

At each of our Reserve Training Centers, the KVN program serves as the link between the command and the family members, providing them with official communication, information and referrals. The Key Volunteers, many of whom are parents of young, un-married Marines, provide a means of proactively educating families on the military lifestyle and benefits, provide answers for individual questions and areas of concerns and, perhaps most importantly, enhance the sense of community within the unit. The L.I.N.K.S. program is a spouse-to-spouse orientation service offered to family members to acquaint them with the military lifestyle and the Marine Corps, including the challenges brought about by deployments. Online and CD-ROM versions of L.I.N.K.S makes this valuable tool more readily accessible to families of Reserve Marines not located near Marine Corps installations.

MCCS One Source is another important tool that provides Marines and their families with around-the-clock information and referral service for subjects such as parenting, childcare, education, finances, legal issues, elder care, health, wellness, deployment, crisis support and relocation via toll-free telephone and Internet access.

The Peacetime/Wartime Support Team and the support structure within the Inspector and Instructor staff uses all these tools to provide families of activated or deployed Marines with assistance in developing proactive, prevention-oriented steps such as family care plans, powers of attorney, family financial planning, and enrollment in the Dependent Eligibility and Enrollment Reporting System.

All of these programs depend on adequate funding of our manpower and O&M accounts.

MANAGED HEALTH NETWORK:

Managed Health Network, through a contract with the Department of Defense, is providing specialized mental health support services to military personnel and their families. This unique program is designed to bring counselors on-site at Reserve Training Centers to support all phases of the deployment cycle. Marine Forces Reserve is incorporating this resource into Family Days, Pre-Deployment Briefs and Return & Reunion Briefs to ensure a team approach. Follow-up services are then scheduled after Marines return from combat at various intervals to facilitate on-site individual and group counseling.

TRICARE:

Since 9/11, Congress has gone to great lengths to improve TRICARE benefits available to the Guard and Reserve and we are very appreciative to Congress for all the recent changes to the program. Beginning April 2005, TRICARE Reserve Select will be implemented, providing eligible Guard and Reserve members with comprehensive health care. This new option, similar to TRICARE Standard, is designed specifically for reserve members activated on or after September 11, 2001 who enter into an agreement to serve continuously in the Selected Reserve for a period of one or more years. Other key provisions include coverage for Selected Reserves after an activation, which provides a year of coverage while in non-active duty status for every 90 days of consecutive active duty. The member must agree to remain in the Selected Reserve for one or more whole years. Also, a permanent earlier eligibility date for coverage due to activation has been established at up to 90 days before an active duty reporting date for members and their families.

The new legislation also waives certain deductibles for activated members' families. This reduces the potential double payment of health care deductibles by members' civilian coverage.

Another provision allows DOD to protect the beneficiary by paying the providers for charges above the maximum allowable charge. Transitional health care benefits have been established, regulating the requirements and benefits for members separating. We are thankful for these permanent changes that extend healthcare benefits to family members and extend benefits up to 90 days prior to their activation date and up to 180 days after de-activation.

Reserve members are also eligible for dental care under the Tri-Service Dental Plan for a modest monthly fee. In an effort to increase awareness of the new benefits, Reserve members are now receiving more information regarding the changes through an aggressive education and marketing plan. I would like to also ask Congress and this committee for their support of the new fiscal year 2005 legislation that includes improvements. These initiatives will further improve the healthcare benefits for our reserves and National Guard members and families.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE:

One of the most significant responsibilities of the site support staff is that of casualty assistance. It is at the darkest hour for our Marine families that our support is most invaluable. By virtue of our dispersed posture, Marine Forces Reserve site support staffs are uniquely qualified to accomplish the majority of all Marine Corps casualty notifications and provide the associated family assistance. Currently, Marine Forces Reserve conducts approximately 92 percent of all notifications and follow-on assistance for the families of our fallen Marine Corps brethren. In recognition of this greatest of sacrifices, there is no duty to our families that we treat with more importance. However, the duties of our casualty assistance officers go well beyond notification. We ensure that they are adequately trained, equipped and supported by all levels of command. Once an officer or staff noncommissioned officer is designated as a casualty assistance officer, he or she assists the family members in every possible way, from planning the return and final rest of

their Marine, counseling them on benefits and entitlements, to providing a strong shoulder when needed. The casualty officer is the family's central point of contact, serving as a representative or liaison with the media, funeral home, government agencies or any other agency that may be involved. Every available asset is directed to our Marine families to ensure they receive the utmost support. The Marine Corps Reserve also provides support for military funerals for our veterans. The Marines at our reserve sites performed 7,621 funerals in calendar year 2004.

The Marine Corps is also committed to supporting the wishes of seriously injured Marines, allowing them to remain on active duty if they desire or making their transition home as smooth as possible. Leveraging the organizational network and strengths of the Marine for Life program, we are currently implementing an Injured Support program to assist injured Marines, Sailors serving with Marines, and their families. The goal is to bridge the gap between military medical care and the Department of Veterans Affairs – providing continuity of support through transition and assistance for several years afterwards. Planned features of the program include: advocacy for Marines, Sailors and their families within the Marine Corps and with external agencies; pre and post-Service separation case management; assistance in working with physical evaluation boards; an interactive web site for disability/benefit information; an enhanced Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) “One Source” capability for 24/7/365 information; facilitation assistance with federal hiring preferences; coordination via an assigned Marine liaison with veterans, public, and private organizations providing support to our seriously injured; improved Department of Veterans Affairs handling of Marine cases; and development of any required proposals for legislative changes to better support our Marines and Sailors. This program began limited operations in early January 2005. We are able to support these vitally important programs because of the wide geographic dispersion of our units.

MARINE FOR LIFE:

Our commitment to take care of our own includes a Marine's transition from honorable military service back to civilian life. Initiated in fiscal year 2002, the Marine For Life program continues to provide support for 27,000 Marines transitioning from active service back to civilian life each year. Built on the philosophy, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," Reserve Marines in over eighty cities help transitioning Marines and their families to get settled in their new communities. Sponsorship includes assistance with employment, education, housing, childcare, veterans' benefits and other support services needed to make a smooth transition. To provide this support, the Marine For Life program taps into a network of former Marines and Marine-friendly businesses, organizations and individuals willing to lend a hand to a Marine who has served honorably. Approximately 2,000 Marines are logging onto the web-based electronic network for assistance each month. Assistance from career retention specialists and transitional recruiters helps transitioning Marines tremendously by getting the word out about the program.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT:

Members of the Guard and Reserve who choose to make a career must expect to be subject to multiple activations. Employer support of this fact is essential to a successful activation and directly effects retention and recruiting. With continuous rotation of Reserve Marines, we recognize that a the rapid deactivation process is a high priority to reintegrate Marines back into their civilian lives quickly and properly in order to preserve the Reserve force for the future. We support incentives for employers who support their activated Guard and Reserve employees such as the Small Business Military Reservist Tax Credit Act, which allows small business employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in the military reserve component and are called to active duty.

EQUIPMENT

Currently, the Marine Corps has approximately 30 percent of its ground equipment forward deployed. In certain critical, low-density items, this percentage is closer to 50 percent. This equipment has been sourced from the active component, Marine Forces Reserve, the Maritime Prepositioned Force as well as equipment from Marine Corps Logistics Command stores and war reserves. Primarily, our contributed major items of equipment remain in theater and rotating Marine forces fall in on the in-theater assets. In some cases where extraordinary use has resulted in the inordinate deterioration of equipment (such as the Corps' Light Armored Vehicles), equipment rotations have been performed as directed and managed by Headquarters, Marine Corps.

Maintaining current readiness levels will require continued support as our equipment continues to age at a pace exceeding replacement peace time rates. The Global War on Terrorism equipment usage rates average eight to one over normal peacetime usage due to continuous combat operations. This high usage rate in a harsh operating environment, coupled with the added weight of added armor and unavoidable delays of scheduled maintenance due to combat, is degrading our equipment at an accelerated rate. If this equipment returns to CONUS, costly, extensive service life extension and overhaul/rebuild programs will be required in order to bring this equipment back into satisfactory condition. My recommendation would be to leave the worn out equipment behind and procure new equipment.

Even with these wartime demands, equipment readiness rates for Marine Forces Reserve deployed ground equipment in the CENTCOM AOR is averaging 93%. At home, as we continue to aggressively train and prepare our Marines, we have maintained ground equipment readiness rates of 91%. The types of equipment held by Home Training Centers are the same as those held within the Active Component. However, the "set" of ground equipment presently in garrison is not the full

equipment combat allowance for Marine Forces Reserve. To reach the level of full equipment combat allowance for Marine Forces Reserve would require us to draw ground equipment from other allowances and inventory options across the Marine Corps. Additionally, due to the Marine Corps' cross-leveling efforts of equipment inventories to support home station shortfalls resulting from equipment deployed in support of the Global War On Terrorism, Marine Forces Reserve will experience significant equipment shortfalls of communication and electronic equipment. This specific equipment type shortfall will approximate 10% across the Force in most areas, and somewhat greater for certain low density "black box" type equipment sets. Also, an infantry battalion of equipment originating from Marine Forces Reserve remains in support of deployed forces in the CENTCOM AOR. Although the equipment shortfalls will not preclude sustainment training within the Force, the equipment availability is not optimal.

STRATEGIC GROUND EQUIPMENT WORKING GROUP:

For the past year, Headquarters, Marine Corps Installations and Logistics have chaired the Strategic Ground Equipment Working Group. The mission of this organization is to best position the Corps' equipment to support the needs of the deployed Global War on Terrorism forces, the Corps' strategic programs, and training of non-deployed forces. My staff has been fully engaged in this process and the results have been encouraging for Marine Forces Reserve, leading to an increase in overall Supply Readiness of approximately 5 percent. The efforts of the SGEWG, combined with the efforts of my staff to redistribute equipment to support non-deployed units, have resulted in continued training capability for the reserve forces back home.

INDIVIDUAL COMBAT CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT, INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:

In order to continue seamless integration into the active component, my ground component priorities are the sustained improvement of Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment, Individual Protective Equipment and overall equipment readiness. I am pleased to report that every Reserve

Marine deployed over the past year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, along with those currently deployed into harm's way, were fully equipped with the most current Individual Clothing/Combat Equipment (ICCE) and Individual Protective Equipment (IPE). Continued funding support in this area is most appreciated.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATION:

National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA) continues to provide extraordinary leverage in fielding critical equipment to your Guard and Reserves. In fiscal year 2005, NGREA provided \$50M (\$10M for OIF/OEF requirements, and \$40M for Title III procurement requirements), enabling us to robustly respond to the pressing needs of the individual Marine, Total Force and Combatant Commanders in both ground and aviation programs. This funding also enhanced our ability to sustain the readiness of our units in support of OEF and OIF. NGREA enabled the procurement of important systems such as the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer – Marine (VCCT-M), a cognitive skills simulator that provides realistic convoy crew training and incidental driver training to your Marines. The first of these systems will be deployed to Naval Station Seal Beach, home site to 5th Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, to assist in their preparation for deployment to Iraq. Another device procured through NGREA is the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement Training Simulator, a combined operator and maintenance training system that supports our new medium tactical vehicle. We have also been able to phase out our legacy simulator systems with the purchase of fifty Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer-Enhanced, ISMT-E, systems. Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing has procured critically needed warfighting requirements such as another four HNVS FLIR systems for the CH-53Es, ten sets of aircraft survivability equipment for the AH-1Ws and twenty-six sets of lightweight armor/cockpit seats for the CH-46s. I am also proud to report that we have a combat capable F/A-18A+ squadron currently

deployed as a direct result of previous years' NGREA funding for F/A-18A ECP-583 upgrades. Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron-142 has already seen action in Iraq.

CRITICAL ASSET RAPID DISTRIBUTION FACILITY:

In order to ensure that this equipment is available to the deploying forces, I created the Marine Forces Reserve Materiel Prepositioning Program and designated my Special Training Allowance Pool (which traditionally held such items as cold weather gear) as the Critical Asset Rapid Distribution Facility (CARDF). The CARDF has been designated as the primary location for all newly fielded items of Individual Clothing and Combat Equipment for issue to Marine Forces Reserve. Equipment such as the Improved Load Bearing Equipment, Lightweight Helmet and Improved First Aid Kit has been sent to the CARDF for secondary distribution to deploying units.

TRAINING ALLOWANCE:

For Principle End Items (PEIs), Marine Forces Reserve units have established Training Allowances (on average approximately 80 percent of their established Table of Equipment). This equipment represents the minimum needed by the unit to maintain the training readiness necessary to deploy, while at the same time is within their ability to maintain under routine conditions. Establishment of training allowances allows Marine Forces Reserve to better cross level equipment to support CONUS training requirements of all units of the Force with a minimal overall equipment requirement. Of course, this concept requires the support of the service to ensure that the "delta" between a unit's Training Allowance and Table of Equipment (that gear necessary to fully conduct a combat mission) is available in the event of deployment. Current Headquarters Marine Corps policy of retaining needed equipment in theater for use by deploying forces ensures that mobilized Marine Forces Reserve units will have the PEIs necessary to conduct their mission. Continued Congressional funding for Marine Corps equipment procurement/replacement will remain vital in

order for the service to continue to do what the Nation asks, and I am confident that you will continue to respond to the needs of your Marine Corps.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Marine Forces Reserve is and will continue to be a community-based force. This is a fundamental strength of Marine Forces Reserve. Our long-range strategy is to retain that strength by maintaining our connection with communities in the most cost effective way. We are not, nor do we want to be, limited exclusively to large metropolitan areas nor consolidated into a few isolated enclaves, but rather we intend to divest Marine Corps-owned infrastructure and locate our units in Joint Reserve Training Centers throughout the country. Marine Forces Reserve units are currently located at 185 sites in forty-eight states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; thirty-five sites are owned or leased by the Marine Corps Reserve, 150 are either tenant or joint sites. 54 percent of the Reserve centers we occupy are more than thirty years old, and of these, forty-one are over fifty years old.

The age of our infrastructure means that much of it was built before AT/FP was a major consideration in design and construction. These facilities require AT/FP resolution through structural improvements, relocation, replacement or the acquisition of additional stand-off distance. With the changes in Force structure mentioned earlier, extensive facilities upgrades are required at a few locations. Maintaining adequate facilities is critical to training that supports our readiness and sends a strong message to our Marines and Sailors about the importance of their service.

BRAC 2005:

We look at BRAC 2005 as an opportunity to realize our long-range strategic infrastructure goals through efficient joint ventures and increased training center utilization without jeopardizing our community presence. In cooperation with other reserve components, notably the Army Reserve

and the Army National Guard, we are working toward Reserve basing solutions that reduce restoration and modernization backlogs and AT/FP vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

As I have stated in the beginning of my testimony, your consistent and steadfast support of our Marines and their families has directly contributed to our successes, both past and present, and I thank you for that support. As we push on into the future, your continued concern and efforts will play a vital role in the success of Marine Forces Reserve. Due to the dynamics of the era we live in, there is still much to be done.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to be a very young force and is always looking for outstanding citizens who strive to give their best for their country. Recruiting initiatives, especially within the education realm, are always an added incentive for our prospective Marines.

I would also ask for your continued support for initiatives that provide assistance to the Reserve and Guard members, their families and employers who are sacrificing so much in support of our nation. Despite strong morale and good planning, activations and deployments place great stress on these Americans. Employer incentives, educational benefits, medical care and family care are just some of the issues that would contribute to the sustainment of Reserve Marines.

Equipment and facilities are the last two areas of concern that I have. The continuous support from congress for upgrades to our war fighting equipment has directly impacted the saving of American lives on the battlefield. However, as I stated earlier, our current operational tempo has led to the rapid deterioration of much of the same fighting equipment throughout the Force. In this regard, I fully support the FY05 Supplemental request and, in particular, actions taken by the House to provide funding for our top priorities: Light Armored Vehicles (LAV) and LAV Product Improvement Program. I ask the Senate to do the same.

Although we currently maintain a high level of readiness, we will need significant financial assistance to help maintain and/or replace our war fighting equipment in the very near future. Also, as the Marine Forces Reserve makes adjustments in war fighting capabilities over the next two years, several facilities will need to be converted to provide a proper training environment for the new units. Funding for these conversions would greatly assist our war fighting capabilities.

My time as Commander, Marine Forces Reserve has been tremendously rewarding. Testifying before congressional committees and subcommittees has always been a great pleasure, as it has afforded me the opportunity to let the American people know what an outstanding patriotic group of citizens we have in the Marine Corps Reserve. Thank you for your continued support.