

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
RELEASED BY THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
MILITARY PERSONNEL
ON
MARCH 1, 2006

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Chairman Graham, Senator Nelson, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview of your Marine Corps from a personnel perspective.

Introduction

We remain a Corps of Marines at war with over 39,000 Marines deployed to dozens of countries around the globe. Your Marines are performing magnificently in no small part due to your support and the realization that they have the support of the American people. The young men and women who fill our ranks today recognize the global, protracted, and lethal nature of the challenges facing our Nation, and their dedicated service and sacrifice rivals that of any generation preceding them.

The continued commitment of the Congress to increase the warfighting and crisis response capabilities of our Nation's armed forces, and to improve the quality of life of Marines, is central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. Marines remain committed to warfighting excellence, and the support of the Congress and the American people is indispensable to our success in the Global War on Terror. Thank you for your efforts to ensure that your Marines and their families are poised to continue to respond to the nation's call in the manner Americans expect of them.

The 25,000 Marines and Sailors under the command of II MEF in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq and those Marines assigned to transition teams have made significant progress in their efforts to develop capable, credible Iraqi Security Forces. In setting the conditions for the historic constitutional referendum and national elections, they have also distinguished themselves with valor and distinction in places like Fallujah, Ramadi, and the Euphrates River Valley. In Afghanistan, we have 1,200 Marines and Sailors continuing to provide support to the

increasingly capable Afghan National Army. As part of CJTF-76, a Marine infantry battalion has conducted operations against the Taliban and Anti-Coalition Militia in the north-eastern portion of the country. Marine officers and senior enlisted leaders continue to train, mentor, and operate with their Afghan counterparts as part of Task Force Phoenix.

The success of our Marines in the current fight is the result of time-tested methods. Today, we continue to recruit quality Americans who are infused into a culture that requires them to think independently and act aggressively in chaotic and unpredictable environments where information is neither complete nor certain. We rigorously train these young Marines to perform under adverse circumstances, and to accept greater responsibility as part of a team. We educate our Marines and their leaders to prepare their minds for the intellectual component of the clash of wills and chaos inherent to combat. Our fundamental tenet—every Marine *a* rifleman—continues to serve as the foundation for all our training, and provides the common core that defines every Marine. I know you share my pride in the young men and women we are fortunate to have in our Corps of Marines.

Your Marines have proven equally capable of responding in support of humanitarian operations. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and following the earthquake in Pakistan, Marines were quickly on the scene. In response to Katrina, 2,650 Marines and sailors, from our Active and Reserve components deployed to conduct Search and Rescue, Humanitarian Relief, and Disaster Recovery Operations in Louisiana and Mississippi. Survivors were rescued, streets were cleared, food and water was distributed, transportation provided, and medical care administered in six separate locations. Our contribution totaled 815 helicopter sorties which transported 1.1 million tons of cargo and 5,248 survivors. We conducted 446 rescue missions, rescuing 1,467 people. After the devastating earthquake in Pakistan, your Marines deployed to

the cities of Shinkiari and Muzaffarabad providing a hospital, Helicopter Support Teams, and Air Traffic Control in support of the Combined Joint Task Force. The Marines and Sailors treated more than 11,600 patients.

The Nation is receiving a superb return on its investment in the world's finest expeditionary force. Nearly one in three Marines of our operating forces is today forward deployed or forward based protecting America's interests. This contribution remains distinctly out of proportion to the four percent share of the Defense Department budget the Marine Corps typically receives.

Personnel Readiness

The Marine Corps continues to answer the call because of our individual Marines and the support they receive from their families, the Nation, and Congress. The individual Marine is the most effective weapon system in our arsenal. Our ranks are comprised of intelligent men and women representing a cross section of our society. Our Marines must think critically and stay one step ahead of the enemy despite an uncertain operating environment; their lives and the lives of their fellow Marines depend upon it. Morale and commitment remain high. Marines join the Corps to "fight and win battles" and they are receiving the opportunity to do that.

Warfighting Initiatives. On 28 October 2005, the Secretary of Defense approved a Marine Component within Special Operations Command (MARSOC). The new Marine Component will provide approximately 2,600 USMC/Navy billets within U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), led by a Marine major general. The MARSOC will provide additional capability to SOCOM by adding forces that will conduct direct action, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism, and foreign internal defense. MARSOC will include organic fires integration, combat support, and logistics capabilities. Additionally, Marine Corps Special

Operations Forces linked to the Marine Expeditionary Unit will provide a scalable worldwide maritime special operations force presence for SOCOM. The current plan provides the MARSOC to SOCOM with an initial operational capability during the spring of 2006 and a full operational capability by 2010.

In 2004, we conducted an extensive Force Structure Review recommending approximately 15,000 structure changes to improve the Marine Corps' ability to meet the long-term needs of the Global War on Terror and the emerging requirements of the 21st Century. This effort was end strength and structure neutral—offsets to balance these increases in capabilities come from military to civilian conversions and the disestablishment and reorganization of less critical capabilities. For example, we are assigning each artillery regiment a secondary mission to conduct civil military operations (CMO). To do this, each regiment will be augmented by a reserve civil affairs capability. By assigning a secondary CMO mission to artillery units, we have augmented our high-demand/low density civil affairs capability while retaining much needed artillery units.

This spring, we will be conducting an even more comprehensive initiative to determine what capabilities we must have in your Marine Corps of the future and in what capacity. We are conducting this review to ensure we are fully prepared for irregular warfare and as we adjust to the establishment of MARSOC, our decision to man infantry battalions at 100%, and the potential reduction of authorized end-strength.

End Strength. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates the increase in end strength to 179,000 as authorized in the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act. If appropriated, we will use this additional end strength to help implement our force structure initiatives, to support the Global War on Terror. Currently, our Program of Record requires that

we internally fund any end strength in excess of 175,000 Marines. We are resourcing these additional costs through Supplemental funding.

Military to Civilian Conversions. The Marine Corps continues to pursue sensible military-to-civilian conversions in support of Marine Corps Warfighting initiatives. These conversions increase the number of Marines in the operating force and help reduce stress on the force. Funding remains a critical issue to the success of this initiative; cuts in both the Fiscal Year 2005 Appropriations Bill (\$35 million) and Fiscal Year 2006 Appropriations Bill (\$20 million) has decreased our ability to execute our planned Fiscal Year 2005 conversion program and will reduce our planned Fiscal Year 2006 conversions.

Funding. The President's Fiscal Year 2007 budget provides for a total force of 175,000 active duty Marines, 39,600 reserve Marines, and approximately 14,000 appropriated fund civilian Marines. Approximately, 61 percent of Marine Corps Total Obligation Authority is targeted toward Military Pay, Retired Pay Accrual, Basic Allowance for Housing, Defense Health Care, Basic Allowance for Subsistence, Permanent Change of Station relocations, and Special pays. Only one percent of our Military Personnel budget is available to pay for discretionary items such as our Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB), Marine Corps College Fund recruitment program, and Aviation Continuation Bonus. Of the few discretionary pays that we utilize, the SRB is crucial. We take pride in our prudent stewardship of these critical resources. For Fiscal Year 2007, we are requesting \$55.4 million, up from \$53.1 million in Fiscal Year 2006. This remains just one-half of one percent of our Military Personnel budget, and it is critical to effectively target our retention efforts. In Fiscal Year 2005, the Marine Corps derived great results from our SRB efforts in the infantry MOSs. This proven application of SRB monies is a sound investment. The Marine Corps' prudent utilization of the SRB reduces

recruiting costs and retains experienced Marines in the force. Congress' continued support of our SRB program is critical to the continued health of your Marine Corps.

Compensation. The Marine Corps appreciates the efforts by this Subcommittee to raise the standard of living for our Marines. Being a Marine is both challenging and rewarding. America's youth continue to join the Marine Corps and remain, in a large part because of our institutional culture and core values. However, it is important that the other factors in the accession and retention decision remain supportive, to include compensation. Compensation is a double-edged sword in that it is a principle factor for Marines both when they decide to reenlist and when they decide not to reenlist. Private sector competition will always seek to capitalize on the military training and education provided to our Marines – Marines are a highly desirable labor resource for private sector organizations. The support of the Congress to continue appropriate increases in basic pay and to ensure a sound comprehensive compensation and entitlements structure greatly assists efforts to recruit and retain the quality Americans you expect in your Corps. As the Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation concludes its review, we look forward to a complete and thorough analysis of their recommendations during the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation.

Recruiting

Active Component. In Fiscal Year 2005, the Marine Corps achieved 100.1 percent of the enlisted shipping (accession) objective. Nearly 96 percent of those shipped to recruit training were Tier 1 high school diploma graduates, above the Department of Defense and Marine Corps standards of 90 percent and 95 percent, respectively. In addition, 70 percent were in the I-III upper mental testing categories, again well above the Department of Defense and Marine Corps standards of 60 percent and 63 percent, respectively. As of 31 Jan 2006, we have shipped

(accessed) 9836 Marines which represents 102 percent of our shipping mission. We fully anticipate meeting our annual mission. With regard to our self-imposed contracting mission, we are ahead of our current plan for the year and expect to meet our objectives. Concerning officers, we accessed 1,425 in Fiscal Year 2005, 100 percent of mission, and we are on course to make our officer accession mission in Fiscal Year 2006.

Reserve Component. The Marine Corps similarly achieved its Fiscal Year 2005 reserve enlisted recruiting goals with the accession of 5,927 non-prior service Marines and 2,259 prior service Marines. As of 31 Jan 2006, we have accessed 1,668 non-prior service and 800 prior service Marines, which reflects 28 percent and 39 percent of our annual mission, respectively. Again, we project to meet our reserve recruiting goals this year. Officer recruiting and retention for our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units is traditionally our greatest challenge, and remains the same this year. The challenge continues to exist primarily due to the low attrition rate for company grade officers from the active force. We recruit reserve officers exclusively from the ranks of those who have first served a tour as an active duty Marine officer. We continue to explore methods to increase the reserve participation of company grade officers to include the use of increased command focus on reserve participation upon leaving active duty and reserve officer programs for qualified enlisted Marines. Your support of legislation to authorize the payment of the reserve officer affiliation bonus has helped in this effort.

Accomplishing the Mission. The Marine Corps' recruiting environment continues to be highly competitive and challenging. Low unemployment, lower propensity to enlist and higher costs in advertising continue to foster the need for innovation in marketing the Marine Corps. We continue to market intangible benefits by projecting the Marine Corps message of "Tough, Smart, Elite Warrior," focused on the "transformation" that a young man or woman makes to

become a Marine. The Corps continues to explore the most efficient manner to communicate and appeal to the most qualified young men and women of the millennial generation. We continue to attempt to inform and influence the parents of potential applicants. Parents continue to have the greatest influence on young men and women in their decision to serve their country, and it is important that we educate them on the benefits of serving in the Marine Corps.

Our message is reinforced through marketing and advertising programs - paid media, leads for recruiters, and effective recruiter support materials. Paid advertising continues to be the most effective means to communicate our message and, as a result, remains the focus of our marketing efforts. As advertising costs continue to increase it is imperative that our advertising budgets remain competitive in order to ensure that our recruiting message reaches the right audience. Marine Corps recruiting successes over the past years are a direct reflection of a quality recruiting force and an effective and efficient marketing and advertising program.

Finally, a very important factor in our success lies in ensuring clear and direct responsibility and oversight. The Commanding Generals of our Marine Corps Recruiting Regions are “dual-hatted” as the Commanding Generals of our Training Depots, responsible for obtaining the right high quality individual and seeing them through initial training until they earn the title Marine. Consistent with this, our recruiters' commitment to recruiting quality recruits is reinforced by the fact that they are held accountable for recruits' successful completion of “boot camp.”

Retention

A successful recruiting effort is but one part of placing a properly trained Marine in the right place at the right time. The dynamics of our manpower system must match skills and grades to our Commanders' needs throughout the operating forces. The Marine Corps endeavors

to attain and maintain stable, predictable retention patterns. However, as is the case with recruiting, civilian opportunities abound for Marines as employers actively solicit our young Marine leaders for private sector employment. Leadership opportunities, our core values, and other similar intangibles are a large part of the reason we retain dedicated men and women to be active duty Marines after their initial commitment. Of course retention success is also a consequence of the investments made in tangible forms of compensation and in supporting our operating forces – giving our Marines what they need to do their jobs in the field, as well as the funds required to educate and train these phenomenal men and women.

Enlisted Retention. As we continue our fight on the Global War on Terrorism, we recognize that achieving our enlisted retention goals is of national importance for the Marine Corps, our senior civilian and military leaders, and the American people. History has proven that the enlisted leadership in our Noncommissioned Officer and Staff Noncommissioned Officer ranks is the cornerstone to our Marine Corps' combat effectiveness on today's battlefield.

The Marine Corps is a youthful service by design and retaining the highest quality Marines to lead our force remains of paramount importance. Within our 160,260 active duty enlisted force, 107,545 Marines are on their first enlistment. Sustaining our career force requires that we reenlist approximately 25 percent of our first-term Marine population. In Fiscal Year 2005, we reenlisted 6,159 first term Marines with a 96.0 percent MOS match and achieved our first-term goal for the 13th consecutive year. To better manage the career force, we introduced the Subsequent Term Alignment Plan (STAP) in Fiscal Year 2002 to track reenlistments in our active career force. In Fiscal Year 2005, we met our career reenlistment goals for the fourth consecutive year. Concerning our reserve force, we satisfied our manpower requirements by

retaining 80 percent in Fiscal Year 2005; the fifth consecutive year above our pre-9/11 historic norm of 70.7 percent.

The Marine Corps' appeal for today's Marines remains the "intangible" benefits of leadership, esprit de corps, and camaraderie from claiming the title 'U.S. Marine' and is the singular reason why we continue to experience retention success in our Marine Corps. We are off to another strong start this fiscal year. As of 10 February 2006, I am pleased to report that we have attained 84.3 percent of the First Term Alignment Plan's (FTAP) goal of reenlisting 5,887 Marines while sustaining a 99 percent MOS match. This impressive MOS match ensures that we are keeping the "best and brightest" while prudently placing the right skilled Marines in the right job. We have also achieved a higher reenlistment rate for first-term infantry Marines this fiscal year by reenlisting 86.2 percent of our goal thus far, as compared to 81.3 percent at this point in Fiscal Year 2005. The Marine Corps is also on track to achieve its career force target of 6,250 Marines for Fiscal Year 2006; we have already reenlisted 3,355 (53.7%) Marines with a corresponding MOS Match of 98% for our career force, ahead of last year's successful pace.

The Selective Reenlistment Bonus Program continues to shape and complement our reenlistment efforts; it helps us keep our critically skilled Marines. Surveys of Marines nearing the end of their first enlistment, and Center for Naval Analyses studies, continue to bear out that the Selective Reenlistment Bonus Program and duty station options add impetus to the intangibles of being a 'U.S. Marine.' Thus, we increased the Selective Reenlistment Bonus Program from \$51.1 million in Fiscal Year 2005 to \$53.1 million in Fiscal Year 2006, with a supplemental request for another \$31.5 million. To date, we have paid over \$62.5 million in Selective Reenlistment Bonuses, with an average payment of \$15,354. This program remains a powerful influence for the undecided who witness another Marine's reenlistment and receipt of

his or her Selective Reenlistment Bonus in a “lump sum.” With the added benefit of the Thrift Savings Program, our Marines can now confidently invest their Selective Reenlistment Bonus Program funds for future financial security. The Marine Corps takes great pride in prudent stewardship of the resources Congress has allocated to the critical Selective Reenlistment Bonus Program.

Officer Retention. Overall, we continue to achieve our goals for officer retention. We are retaining experienced and high quality officers. Our aggregate officer retention rate was 91.3 percent for Fiscal Year 2005, which is above our historical average. Current officer retention forecasts indicate healthy continuation rates for the officer force as a whole. Reserve officer retention in Fiscal Year 2005, was 79.5 percent, slightly above the pre-9/11 historical average of 77 percent. For the current year, reserve officer retention has thus far remained above historical norms. It is important to note that despite high retention in the active component, which reduces the number of officers transitioning (thus accessions) into the Selected Marine Corps Reserve, our reserve force continues to meet its operational requirements. Several initiatives are being reviewed to significantly close the gap between reserve officer requirements and manning, specifically in the junior officer ranks.

Marine Corps Reserve

This year marks the fourth year that our reserve component has augmented and reinforced our active component in support of the Global War on Terror. Thanks to strong Congressional support, the Marine Corps has staffed, trained and equipped its Reserve to respond to crises around the world. Our Reserve Component possesses capabilities to fight across the full spectrum of conflicts to support our Marine Air Ground Task Forces. To date, over 36,000 Reserve Marines have served on active duty since 9/11. The Marine Corps Reserve

continues to recruit and retain quality men and women willing to serve in our military and help our nation fight the Global War on Terror. These men and women do so while maintaining their commitments to their families, their communities and their civilian careers.

More than 7,000 reserve Marines are currently on active duty with over 5,500 in cohesive reserve ground, aviation and combat support units and nearly 1,600 serving as individual augments in both Marine and Joint commands. Seventy one percent of all mobilized Reservists deploy to the CENTCOM area of operations. To support ongoing mission requirements for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the Marine Corps Reserve provides approximately 10 percent of our Total Force commitment. The progression of the current mobilization reinforces the point that our Reserve force is a limited resource that must be carefully managed to ensure optimum employment over a protracted conflict. In addition to supporting the overseas GWOT mission, our Reserve Marines are positioned throughout the country ready to support homeland defense if required or assist with civil-military missions such as disaster relief efforts as shown in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

As mentioned, recruiting and retention remain a significant interest as the Marine Corps Reserve continues its support for the GWOT. The funding increases and flexibility inherent in the Reserve incentives you provided in the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act are an invaluable asset to assist in our continued recruitment and retention mission. The approved legislation assists our efforts to encourage reserve affiliation by officers transitioning from active duty. The generous increase in affiliation bonus and the broadening of eligibility to include those officers who have prior enlisted service in the reserve are greatly appreciated. The increased bonus not only generates greater interest in reserve affiliation, but also provides financial assistance during the critical period of transition from active duty to reserve service.

Healthcare remains an essential part of mobilization readiness for our reserve component. The new healthcare benefits that Congress authorized this fiscal year will help ensure that our Selected Marine Corps Reserve members, and their families, have access to affordable healthcare as they do their part to prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. Increased access and flexibility to healthcare for these families assists in alleviating one of the most burdensome challenges facing families of deploying reserve Marines.

The long-term success and sustainability of our Reserve Forces is directly related to our ability to prepare and employ our forces in ways that best manage limited assets while meeting the expectations and needs of individual Marines and their families. In an effort to ensure a well-balanced total force and address any potential challenges that may arise, we are constantly monitoring current processes and policies, as well as implementing adjustments to the structure and support of our reserve forces.

In order to meet the operational needs of the Global War on Terror, the Marine Corps continues to make changes to active and reserve structure and capabilities. We conducted a top-to-bottom review of our Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) program during the spring of 2005 as part of our force rebalancing efforts. As a result, we increased overall IMA manning levels by nearly 1,200 paid billets - matching paychecks to previously unmanned structure. The preponderance of manning increases were applied to commands possessing unique high demand-low density skill set requirements, such as military intelligence or communications and information systems. We view our IMA Marines as force multipliers - augmenting active component staffs and commands with trained, skilled and experienced Marines - and we will continue to actively and effectively employ all members of our total force when and where needed to meet mission requirements.

In regard to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), the Marine Corps' present policy is to only activate members who have volunteered for duty. The current number of activated IRR volunteers is 820. The two primary means of recruiting IRR volunteers for Individual Augmentee billets are through the use of Reserve Duty On-Line and the Mobilization Command Call Center. Currently, there are 1,324 Individual Augment billets being filled by Individual Mobilization Augmentees, Individual Ready Reserves, and retired recall or retired retained Marines. These Marines have been critical to successfully meet these individual augment requirements.

Civilian Marines

Civilian Marines are integral to the Marine Corps Total Force concept. We have approximately 25,000 Civilian Marines, of which approximately 14,000 are appropriated fund employees and 11,000 are non-appropriated fund employees. Our Civilian Marines fill key billets aboard Marine Corps bases and stations, freeing active duty Marines to perform their war fighting requirements in the operating forces.

Marine Corps Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan. Marines, more than ever before, recognize the importance of our civilian teammates and the invaluable service they provide to our Corps as an integral component of the Total Force. To that end we continue to mature and execute our Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan, a strategic road map to achieve a civilian workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the future. We are committed to building leadership skills at all levels, providing interesting and challenging training and career opportunities, and improving the quality of work life for all appropriated and non-appropriated Civilian Marines. As part of our effort to meet our goal of accessing and retaining a select group of civilians imbued with our Core Values, we have developed a program to provide our Civilian

Marines an opportunity to learn about the Marine Corps ethos, history, and Core Values – to properly acculturate them to this special institution. All this supports our value proposition, why a civilian chooses to pursue a job with the Marine Corps - to “Support Our Marines. Be Part of the Team.”

National Security Personnel System. The Marine Corps is actively participating with the Department of Defense in the development and implementation of this new personnel system. Following an intensive training program for supervisors, managers, human resources specialists, employees, commanders and senior management, we will execute our first phase of implementation, with a tentative conversion date of October 2006. In the Marine Corps we will lead from the top and have our Headquarters Marine Corps civilian personnel included in our first phase.

Information Technology

We continue to transform our manpower processes by exploiting the unique benefits of the Marine Corps Total Force System, our fully integrated personnel, pay, and manpower system. The Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS) seamlessly serves our active, reserve and retired members, both officer and enlisted; provides total visibility of the mobilization and demobilization process of our Marines; and ensures proper and timely payments are made throughout the process. MCTFS provides one system, one record, regardless of an individual’s mobilization status.

MCTFS is addressing three key deficiencies currently existing in DoD:

- Financial visibility/traceability – Positioning the Marine Corps for an unqualified audit opinion in FY07, a DoD strategic goal;
- Manpower recruiting and retention goals - Pay Marines on time and accurately, while supporting manpower models for recruiting; and

- Information Technology Management - Supporting the Department's stated IT goal of "making information readily available and in a useable format."

MCTFS is a key enabler of the Marine Corps Financial Improvement Initiative. Sixty-one percent of the Marine Corps budget is calculated, obligated and accounted for by MCTFS.

Intrinsic to MCTFS is full traceability of all of these expenditures to the source of input.

MCTFS contains robust business logic that seamlessly links personnel and pay events.

According to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service's "Bare Facts" report, MCTFS has an accuracy rate of 100% for our active component and 99.73% for our reserve component so far in Fiscal Year 2006.

With MCTFS as the backbone, the Marine Corps developed the Total Force Administration System (TFAS), a virtual administration center. TFAS's enterprise architecture and software, business processes, organizational arrangements, and the defined roles of the commanders and individual Marines all combine to efficiently reduce and/or eliminate highly labor intensive and redundant administrative processes. During 2005, individual Marines and their leaders leveraged MCTFS' capabilities using TFAS via Marine OnLine, a web based application that automatically processes more than 1.3 million transactions, including over 60% of our annual leave events. In December alone, more than 26,000 Marines processed their leave via TFAS/Marine OnLine. This capability eliminated the need for 26,000 individual pieces of paper to be manually routed from requesters, to one or more approvers, to an administrative clerk's desk, and to then be manually entered into MCTFS. Coupling MCTFS integrated business logic with Marine OnLine's web-based capabilities increases the amount of time Marine leaders can devote to warfighting. Routine administrative tasks are being virtually eliminated,

decreasing the requirement for administrators. TFAS is the catalyst for realignment of more than 1,700 administrative billets to other critical occupational fields.

MCTFS' integrated environment directly feeds our Operational Data Store Enterprise and Total Force Data Warehouse, a shared data environment of current and historical individual and aggregate data. Our Manpower Performance Indicators then present this data in a flexible, easy to read, graphical format to operational commanders and headquarters planners via the Internet. We program continued technology investments that build on these integrated capabilities, ultimately providing greater effectiveness and efficiencies to allow us to continue decreasing Marine administrative support and redirect structure to warfighting capabilities. Proper management of our manpower requirements and processes requires continued investment in modern technologies; we remain committed to these prudent investments.

Military Health Care Benefit

The DoD military health care benefit is important, and a benefit we must properly sustain. To sustain this outstanding benefit, the issue of the rising costs of the military health care benefit needs to be addressed. Despite past management actions, these alone will not stem the rising cost of the military health benefit. Costs have doubled in the past five years and projections indicate that they will jump to over 12% of the total DoD budget by 2015 (vs. 4.5% in 1990).

We support DoD's efforts concerning military health care and want to work closely with Congress to sustain this outstanding health benefit for the men and women of our Armed Forces and our retired community. It is critically important that we place the health benefit program on a sound fiscal foundation for the long term, so that we can sustain the vital needs of our military

to recruit, train, equip, and protect our Service members who daily support our National Security responsibilities throughout the world.

Taking Care of Marines and Their Families

We remain committed to providing for our Marines and their families in a manner befitting their unwavering dedication and sacrifice. As an expeditionary force, the personal and family readiness of Marines and their families has always been integral to mission readiness. Today, some of our Marines are on their third deployment to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF)/Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). Separation from loved ones can be a challenging experience and tests the endurance of Marines and their families. While away for a seven-month deployment, significant life events may occur on both the battle and home fronts. During the same cycle, a Marine may experience the joy and wonder of parenthood and the loss and sympathy associated with the death of a fellow Marine or family member at home. The stress of combat and increased operational tempo may also be experienced. Marine spouses certainly experience the responsibilities associated with “keeping the home fire burning.” Our Marines and their families must be ready, therefore, for separation and the inherent requirements to sustain and succeed in the mission. As our warfighting skills are advanced and honed, so too must be our personal and family readiness skills, regardless of the number of times deployed. We have made transformational advances in providing for the personal and family readiness of Marines and their families and believe these changes are making a positive contribution to their preparedness.

Organization and Program Delivery –

Separation from loved ones necessitates clear communication, a plan for discharge of responsibilities, such as family care plans, payment of bills, a review of benefits and

beneficiaries, and other miscellaneous but important actions. To address these issues and information requirements, we provide Marines and families a continuum of support throughout the deployment cycle by way of the Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS).

MCCS was first established in 1999 and enables the leveraging of all community services programs for common achievement of goals. The melding of our Exchange operations, MWR programs, and personal and family readiness programs is a model that has provided incredible support to our Marines and their families. As a former operational commander and significant user of the programs, I believed MCCS was the right model for the Marines in the field, as well as being the ideal tool to assist commanders in support of Marines and their families. As the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, I have observed the continued evolution of MCCS and seen the energy and dedication of base and station commanders and their staffs as they seek to provide needed support. MCCS is right for the Marine Corps and has proven to be beneficial for customers and leaders alike. At home stations of Marines and their families, MCCS offers more than 80 programs that make our bases and stations responsive and livable communities. In the process, MCCS programs are helping Marines and their families pursue healthy lifestyles, lifelong learning, responsible citizenship, family readiness, quick acclimation (whether a result of relocation or transition), and providing valued goods and services to support basic necessities and other desired merchandise. This home station support is the base of MCCS capabilities that is then scaled for deployment with Marines, while still supporting the needs of those who remain behind. Regardless of environment, MCCS is focused on enhancing the personal and family readiness of Marines and their families.

Deployment Support. At the pre-deployment phase, Marines and spouses receive briefs on a wide range of issues from coping skills, including the potential of traumatic combat

experiences and stress; to financial matters; to safety. These briefs help to ensure smooth household operation while the Marine is away.

Marines are proud of their accomplishments in OEF/OIF and morale remains high among these selfless warfighters. They are appreciative of the touches of home they receive while in theater, and we endeavor to see that deployed Marines, especially those at remote sites, enjoy a measure of recreation and relaxation. Working with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, the Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) offers warriors items such as health and comfort products, DVDs, magazines, and snack foods. MCX services are available at the main camps seven days a week. We also have Tactical Field Exchanges at various locations. Moreover, we have placed a high priority on our Warrior Express Service Teams, who regularly travel to Marines at the outlying remote sites to ensure they have access to MCX items. To keep Marines in steady contact with home, there is in-theater phone service and mail service. We also continue to offer our Internet-based mail service, "MotoMail." MotoMail has been highly successful and its popularity continues to grow -- the service has generated nearly one million letters since its inception in December 2004. MotoMail services are currently offered at 11 camps in OIF. As a result of its success, we plan to extend it to additional deployed environments.

Successfully providing for our families allows us to maintain our warrior ethos and operate effectively in the current high operational tempo, wartime environment. There is a direct correlation between mission readiness and family sustainment. Marines concentrate on their mission because they know their families at home have the resources and support necessary to tackle and triumph over issues that may arise during deployment. Our resources, tools, and support mechanisms are readily available and easily accessible to help Marines manage separation issues, multiple deployments, and other associated challenges.

Especially today, the Key Volunteer Network (KVN) and Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.) programs are particularly relevant. The KVN supports the spouses of deployed Marines by providing official communication from the Command about the welfare of the unit and other key status or information. Beyond providing a source for accurate and reliable information, KVN also offers referral services and fosters a sense of community within the unit. L.I.N.K.S. is a mentoring program that helps spouses adapt to the military lifestyle and understand Marine Corps history, our traditions, and language. Spouses who participate in L.I.N.K.S. gain important knowledge from seasoned spouses, veritable pros, on surviving and flourishing during separation periods. Participants also learn about benefits and services such as health, housing, and compensation, and available community services. For our Reserve families, we are updating and streamlining our KVN and L.I.N.K.S. training guides to more appropriately reflect their needs, based upon their separated locations. Under a recent enhancement, Reserve unit Key Volunteers can contact MCCS/Military One Source and request a “Know Your Neighborhood” report on all available community support resources to be used as part of the “Local Resources” portion of KVN education. We will continue to grow and improve KVN and L.I.N.K.S. programs.

Strengthening Personal and Family Readiness -

Combat/Operational Stress Control (COSC). The nature of today’s battlefield is uncertain and chaotic and the Marine Corps will continue to recruit and retain the right men and women to thrive in this environment. We educate Marines and their leaders to prepare their minds for the intellectual component of the clash of wills and chaos inherent to combat. Part of this preparation is effectively addressing the potential effects of combat/operational stress both before and after it may occur. Since the Marine Corps crossed the line of departure into Iraq in

March 2003, we have continuously developed and improved our operational stress control programs based upon lessons learned.

Though we provide many prevention and treatment programs, we know that their success is dependent upon Marines confidently availing themselves of the support offered. As such, we consistently encourage use of our many easily accessible resources. We also emphasize that stress heals more quickly and completely if it is identified early and managed properly. We are vigilant in watching our young and vigorous members for signs of distress and endeavor to effectively manage operational stress at every level. We provide pre-deployment training, assistance when the stress is occurring, a multi-tiered deployment health assessment process, and post-combat monitoring and assistance to identify mental health issues early so those affected will have the best chance of healing completely.

To coordinate our COSC efforts, we have established a COSC Section in our Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department. The objectives of the Marine Corps' COSC program are to provide the tools to prevent, identify, and treat combat/operational stress injuries in warfighters and their family members before, during, and after deployment.

To assist during the pre-deployment phase, Marine Officers and staff NCOs are trained to prevent, identify, and manage stress injuries. Moreover, Marines are trained on the stressors to be expected and how to monitor and manage personal stress levels.

In January 2004, we launched the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) program. OSCAR embeds mental health professionals with ground units, and has been successful in helping Marines deal with the acute stress of combat. It keeps Marines with low-level problems at their assigned duties and allows those with more severe conditions to immediately receive appropriate treatment. OSCAR also plays a role in pre-deployment, as

personnel train with the units they will support during the deployment. This builds two-way trust and familiarity. In addition to OSCAR, there are mentorship programs and treatment services by Chaplains in theater. We also have briefs for Marine leaders on homecoming and how to identify, and refer for help, Marines with persistent operational stress injuries. For families during deployments, KVN and L.I.N.K.S. (discussed previously) provide valuable support and resources. Our families can also avail themselves of various programs offered by MCCA, and Military/MCCA One Source.

To ensure smooth homecomings, we launched the Warrior Transition and Return and Reunion Programs. These programs, launched in 2003, help Marines and their families readjust when the combat Marine reintegrates to home life. Beyond training Marines for homecoming, family members also receive briefs, including information on reuniting with their Marine spouses, and how to know whether their spouse is experiencing a stress problem that requires attention.

We are beginning to screen all returning Marines and sailors for a variety of potential mental health problems after they have been back home for 90-180 days, and those who screened positive are evaluated and treated. Marines experiencing a severe form of stress are referred to medical professionals for diagnosis.

To ensure COSC training participation, we have a system using the Marine Corps Total Force System for unit-level tracking by individual Marines during pre-deployment, re-deployment, and post-deployment.

Finally, we are very proud of the recent activation of a new web-based information and referral tool, the "Leaders Guide to Managing Marines in Distress." The guide gives Marine leaders the ability to help Marines at the point of greatest positive impact: Marine-to-Marine. It

offers leaders at all levels information to resolve high-risk problems faced by Marines that could be detrimental to personal and unit readiness. The faster and more effectively these problems are solved, the more time the individual and unit will have to focus on the mission. The guide is separated into six major categories: deployment, family, personal, harassment, substance use, and emotional. Within these categories, there are 16 main problem areas that include an overview of the problem, risk factors, why Marines may not seek help, prevention strategies, resources, and Marine Corps guidance. The guide can be accessed at <http://www.usmc-mccs.org/leadersguide>.

Marine Corps Critical Incident Stress Response. In the case of mass casualties experienced by a command/unit, the Marine Corps' Critical Incident Stress management trained teams provide crisis management briefings to family members and friends of the command/unit. During crisis management briefings, Marine Corps personnel, Chaplains, and Managed Health Network (MHN) counselors are available to provide information and answer questions concerning the casualties. MHN is an OSD-contracted support surge operation mechanism that allows us to provide augmentation counselors for our base counseling centers and primary support at sites around the country to address catastrophic requirements.

Child Care. We work to help the youngest members of the Marine Corps family adjust to being separated from a deployed parent by providing children-specific deployment briefs. For children who are experiencing difficulties adjusting to deployments, we offer the Operation Hero Program. This program targets children from six to 12 years and provides after-school tutoring and mentoring assistance in small groups with certified teachers. We also have initiatives that target care and support for children of activated Reservists who are geographically separated. For example, we have established partnerships with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the

Early Head Start/Zero to Three Program, and the National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Especially when a parent is deployed, emergency child care needs may arise. Using Department of Defense funds, the Marine Corps implemented the Enhanced Extended Child Care initiative, provided through Family Child care homes. Examples of situations where the services are provided are: when family members have been hospitalized; for attendance at bereavement ceremonies; respite for family members during deployments; and unexpected duty or duty hours.

Suicide Prevention. For the Marine Corps, one suicide is too many, and we remain steadfast in our dedication to prevention and the early identification of problems that could potentially contribute to suicide. All Marines receive annual suicide awareness training to support early identification of problems. We also provide ready access to counseling support and crisis intervention services. More recently, we have updated Marine Corps-specific videos on suicide prevention. In addition, the Leaders Guide to Managing Marines in Distress includes extensive information on suicide prevention. As with any prevention program, its effectiveness is dependent upon on proper usage. With this in mind, we are fostering a climate in which Marines feel compelled to convince their fellow Marines that seeking help is a sign of good judgment and for the betterment of personal and mission readiness.

As for a possible correlation between deployments and the high operational tempo, we closely monitor our suicide cases to determine whether OEF/OIF operations are having an impact on our rates. Our analysis shows no correlation between Marines with a history of deployments and suicide rates.

Domestic Abuse. We have observed that spouse and child abuse continues to decline for the Marine Corps. In Fiscal Year 2001, there were 1,358 substantiated cases of spouse abuse. In Fiscal Year 2005, the number dropped to 995 substantiated cases. Similarly, substantiated child abuse cases declined from 821 in Fiscal Year 2001 to 448 in Fiscal Year 2005. An analysis of this data indicates that abuse does not increase as Marines deploy. Our prevention efforts and care for victims remain strong and effective. We focus on early intervention, education for new parents, and for our victims, our Victim Advocate Program is available around-the-clock.

Sexual Assault. For the Marine Corps, we have always had a zero tolerance policy when it comes to sexual assault. Beyond punishing offenders, we place a high priority on prevention and protecting and supporting victims.

We are in complete compliance with the mandates of the Defense Department's Joint Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. We have established a Sexual Assault Prevention Office, which serves as the single point of contact for all sexual assault matters, including victim support and care, reporting, training, and protective measures. We thoroughly educate Marines on this issue and have instituted extensive sexual assault awareness training for all entry-level officers and enlisted members. We have also established procedures to protect a victim's privacy and right to select unrestricted or restricted reporting. For in-theater incidents, we have trained Uniformed Victim Advocates who stand ready to provide support and care.

Transition Assistance. Our Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) provides resources and assistance to enable separating Marines and their families to make a successful and seamless transition from military to civilian life. TAMP provides information and assistance on various transition topics, including: employment, education and training benefits, determining health and life insurance requirements, financial planning, the benefits of affiliating

with the Marine Corps Reserves, and veteran's benefits and entitlements. For our injured Marines, we provide TAMP services at a time and location to best suit their needs, whether at bedside at a military treatment facility or their home. In cases where the Marine is not in a condition to receive transition information, but the family members are, assistance and services are provided to the family member.

Transition services are available to all Marines and their family members who are within 12 months of separation or within 24 months of retirement. On a space-available basis, separated Marines can attend workshops up to 180 days after their date of separation. Pre-separation counseling and the Transition Assistance Program workshops are mandatory for all separating Marines. Other services include:

- Career Coaching Employment and training assistance
- Individual Transition Plan Career assessment
- Financial Planning Instruction in resume preparation, cover letter, and job applications
- Job analysis, search techniques, preparation and interview techniques
- Federal employment application information
- Information on Federal, State, and local programs providing assistance
- Veteran's benefits
- Disabled Transition Assistance Program

Casualty Assistance. Marine Corps casualty assistance is viewed as a fulfillment of duty and commitment to take care of Marines and their families. Our trained Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) receive training that is always supported by ongoing on-line assistance and the continuous 24/7 availability of the HQMC Casualty Section. Our training is regularly refined based upon lessons learned. We have approximately 5,000 trained CACOS across the country to help our survivors by providing consistent and measured engagement during the entire casualty process and beyond. They provide death notification, help to coordinate funeral arrangements (including travel), and serve as the primary point of contact to connect survivors

with benefits agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, and TRICARE. When survivors relocate, CACO assignments are geographically transferred to continue support of the survivor as needed or desired. In these cases, there is a “warm handoff” between CACOs. For our survivors requiring extended support, CACOs connect families to a Long-Term Survivor Case Manager. The Case Manager makes personal contact with our survivors to reassure them that support will be provided for as long as it is needed.

As with all we do, we will continue to seek ways to improve how we take care of Marines and families into the future.

Marine for Life--Injured Support.

Built on the philosophy "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" and fulfilling our obligation to “take care of our own,” the Marine For Life program offers support to approximately 27,000 honorably discharged Marines transitioning from active service back to civilian life each year.

Leveraging the organizational network and strengths of the Marine for Life program, we implemented an Injured Support program during January 2005 to assist combat injured Marines, Sailors serving with Marines, and their families. The program essentially seeks to bridge the gap that can exist between military medical care and the Department of Veterans Affairs - providing continuity of support through transition and assistance for several years afterwards.

The program recently assigned two full-time Marine Corps liaison officers to the Seamless Transition Office at the Veterans Affairs. These liaison officers interface between the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the Marine Corps on individual cases to facilitate cooperative solutions to transition issues.

Additionally, the Injured Support program conducts direct outreach to injured Marines and Sailors via phone and site visits to the National Naval Medical Center, Walter Reed, and Brooke Army Medical Centers. On average, 30 percent of our seriously injured Marines requested and received some type of assistance.

Lastly, the program continues to work closely with Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) on Marine Corps-related injury cases. Information sharing between the program and OSD contributes to developing capabilities for the Military Severely Injured Center.

Conclusion

As we continue to fight the Global War on Terrorism, our Services will be required to meet many commitments, both at home and abroad. We must remember that Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers are the heart of our Services – they are our most precious assets – and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Personnel costs are a major portion of the Department of Defense and Service budgets, and our challenge is to effectively and properly balance personnel, readiness, and modernization costs to provide mission capable forces. In some cases a one-size fits all approach may be best, in others flexibility to support service unique requirements may be paramount. Regardless, we look forward to working with the Congress to maintain readiness and take care of your Marines.

The Marine Corps continues to be a significant force provider and major participant in joint operations. Our successes have been achieved by following the same core values today that gave us victory on yesterday's battlefields. Our active, reserve, and civilian Marines remain our most important assets and, with your support, we can continue to achieve our goals and provide what is required to accomplish the requirements of the nation. Marines are proud of what they

do! They are proud of the “Eagle, Globe, and Anchor” and what it represents to our country. It is our job to provide for them the leadership, resources, quality of life, and moral guidance to carry our proud Corps forward. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our nation’s call as we have for the past 230 years! Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.