

STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE
BEFORE THE
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
– GUARD AND RESERVES –
ON
14 MAY 2008

Chairman Inouye, Senator Stevens and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my honor to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps Reserve as a major contributor to the Total Force Marine Corps.

Your Marine Corps Reserve fully understands that the road ahead will be challenging—not only in the immediate conflict in Iraq, but in subsequent campaigns of the Long War on Terror, which we believe to be a multi-faceted, generational struggle. In an environment where the Total Force Marine Corps must be able to rapidly adapt to broad strategic conditions and wide-ranging threats, your Marine Corps Reserve, a primarily Operational Reserve, stands ready to meet the challenges before us.

We continue to recruit and retain the best of our Nation's sons and daughters. We continue to train them in tough, realistic scenarios and we continue to provide them the best equipment available.

On behalf of all our Marines and their families, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for your continuing support. The support of Congress and the American people reveal both a commitment to ensure the common defense and a genuine concern for the welfare of our Marines and their families.

I. TODAY'S MARINE CORPS RESERVE

Today's Marine Corps Reserve is firmly committed to and capable of war fighting excellence and continues to be a major contributor to the Total Force Marine Corps. We remain steadfast in our commitment to provide Reserve units and personnel who can stand as full partners with their Active Component counterparts while seamlessly performing in all contingencies. Today's Marine Corps Reserve continues to maintain the pace during the longest mobilization period in our history, and will continue to meet the challenge of sustaining that pace for the foreseeable future.

Last year I reported to this committee on the implementation of an integrated Total Force Generation Model that would lay out future activation and deployment schedules for Marine units. The model was designed to provide predictability for the individual Reserve Marine who is striving to strike a balance between family, civilian career, and service to community as well as country and

Corps. I am happy to report that implementation has been successful and we are about to activate the third rotation based upon the model.

To date, we have activated and deployed 6,600 Marines in two rotations to Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom based on the model and are activating approximately 2,400 in April, May, and June of this year in order to train and deploy late summer to early fall. The predictability the Force Generation Model provides has been well received by the Reserve Marine who can now confidently plan for the future; whether going to school, building a civilian career, or making major family decisions.

The Force Generation Model continues to assist Service and Joint Force planners who can count on a consistent flow of manned, equipped, trained, and ready Selected Marine Corps Reserve units to support future operations in the Long War. This steady flow of Reserve force packages also supports our Active Component in reaching their stated goal of 1:2 dwell time. The model, based on a one year activation to four-plus years in a non-activated status, continues to be both supportable and sustainable, thus providing the Marine Corps with a truly Operational Reserve force. Predictable activation dates permit unit commanders to focus their training on core mission capabilities early in the dwell and then train to specific OIF and OEF mission tasks once they are within twelve to eighteen months of activation. Furthermore, regularly scheduled dwell time enables our units to recover from past activation practices that had required substantial cross-leveling while simultaneously degrading parent unit cohesion in order to deploy combat capabilities. With each subsequent rotation, the requirement to cross-level Reserve units decreases. In fact, for an upcoming activation of 2nd Battalion, 23d Marine Regiment, we foresee little to no required cross-leveling of enlisted personnel in order to activate a full battalion.

We believe the full benefit of the Force Generation Model will be realized once we have completed a full cycle of rotations, which is presently nine rotations per cycle, and the Active Component reaches the authorized end strength of 202,000. That, coupled with our use of the Force Generation Model, will be instrumental in the Reserve Component migrating to a 1:5 dwell.

In addition to the 6,600 Marines activated and deployed in support of OIF and OEF, an additional 4,000 Marines from Marine Forces Reserve deployed worldwide in support of joint/combined security cooperation exercises in the past year as we continue to fill the gap left by a lack of available Active Component forces. Between OIF and OEF and security cooperation exercises, nearly one-third of our force has deployed outside the continental United States both in

an activated and non-activated status, again, demonstrating the operational nature of the Marine Corps Reserve. We believe that this level of operational tempo will continue and we are prepared to maintain and sustain this pace for the foreseeable future.

During this past year, more than 3,500 Marines from Fourth Marine Division have served in Iraq. Included are two infantry battalions, as well as armor, reconnaissance, combat engineer, and truck units. A highlight during this past year was the deployment of Battery F, 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, a Reserve unit from Oklahoma City. Battery F was the first Marine Corps High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) unit to be deployed in a combat role; thus demonstrating the success of horizontal fielding of equipment within the Total Force Marine Corps.

The Division also deployed two of its regimental headquarters in the role of Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTF) command elements. The 24th Marine Regiment headquarters deployed as a Special Purpose MAGTF to U.S. Southern Command to support the new Partnership of the Americas series of small combined security cooperation exercises in South America, while 25th Marine Regiment headquarters led the MAGTF in support of the combined/joint exercise Talisman Sabre in Australia with more than 1,500 Marines from across Marine Forces Reserve. The Division also conducted training to assist our friends and allies in foreign militaries from Mongolia to the Republic of Georgia. The Division continued its ongoing relationship with the Moroccan military during combined exercise African Lion. The upcoming year will be another busy one for the Division as they will conduct training in Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Korea, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Brazil, Peru, Colombia, Curacao, Aruba, Argentina and Bosnia. They will also be returning for exercises in Morocco and the Republic of Georgia.

Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing has provided necessary exercise support and pre-deployment training as the Active Component squadrons continued supporting deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. The Marine Corps' premier pre-deployment training exercise, Mojave Viper, received a majority of air support from our fixed wing and helicopter squadrons. Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing deployed Marine Wing Support Squadron 473 to run airfield operations and Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 773 (-) to support combat operations for Multi-national Forces-West in Iraq. Additionally, they deployed a Marine Transport Squadron Detachment with the UC-35 Citation Encore in order to bring time-critical lift capability to U.S. Central Command.

In addition to these missions, the Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing has participated in several combined, bi-lateral and joint exercises in Africa, Asia and Australia. Support for these exercises

not only includes supporting U.S. and Marine Corp forces, but also can focus on training and supporting our allies, as in African Lion, when our pilots trained Moroccan pilots in techniques of air-to-air refueling.

Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing is an integral partner in the Marine Corps Aviation Transition Strategy. Focused on the long term war fighting capability of Total Force Aviation, the initial steps require a transfer of certain Reserve Component aviation manpower, airframes and support structure to the Active Component Marine Corps. As a result, two Reserve Fighter/Attack-18 squadrons will be placed in cadre status and a Reserve Light Attack UH-1N/AH-1W helicopter squadron, a Heavy Lift CH-53E helicopter squadron, an Aviation Logistics Squadron and two Marine Aircraft Group Headquarters will be decommissioned. Another Heavy Lift CH-53E helicopter squadron will be reduced in size. Additionally, as part of the Aviation Transition Strategy, Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing has commissioned two Tactical Air Command Center Augmentation Units to reinforce the Total Force in the prosecution of the Global War on Terror. Long term, to complete the Aviation Transition Strategy, Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing will be equipped with 21st century airframes and C2 capabilities.

Fourth Marine Logistics Group continues to provide the Active Component with highly skilled, dedicated personnel capable of delivering sustained tactical logistics support. During the past year, Fourth Marine Logistics Group provided more than 1,800 Marines and Sailors from across the spectrum of combat service support for its ongoing support of OIF. Also during this past year, Fourth Marine Logistics Group demonstrated the true meaning of Total Force as they provided a headquarters for an engineer support battalion comprised of Marines from their own 6th Engineer Support Battalion combined with Active Component Marines from 7th and 8th Engineer Support Battalions and deployed in support of OIF.

In addition to ground, aviation, and logistic elements, Marine Forces Reserve has provided civil affairs capabilities since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Air-Naval Gunfire Liaison Detachments from Marine Forces Reserve have augmented the supported Marine Air Ground Task Forces and adjacent commands with air/ground fires liaison elements. Marine Forces Reserve also continues to provide intelligence augmentation for Operation Iraqi Freedom, to include Human Exploitation Teams, Sensor Employment Teams, and Intelligence Production Teams.

The trend in recent years toward increased participation of our Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines continued in FY2007. During the FY, the Marine Corps Mobilization Command

(MOBCOM) processed 2,500 sets of active duty orders for IRR Marines. Consequently, the readiness requirements of our IRR Marines and their families have also increased. We have modified IRR management practices accordingly. In FY2007, the Marine Corps Mobilization Command screened 4,000 more IRR Marines than in FY2006, just short of 11,000 of the 60,000 Marines in our IRR population. MOBCOM accomplished this by increasing the number of administrative musters conducted at locations throughout the United States and, also, by increasing the quality of communications between the Marine Corps and members of the IRR. Higher quality communications keeps our Marines better informed and prolongs their connection with each other and our Corps. We believe that these longer-term connections will be critical as we truly seek to create the continuum of service necessary to support a sustainable Operational Reserve and our Total Force through the Long War.

In summary, more than six years into the Long War, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to serve shoulder-to-shoulder with our Active Component counterparts. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have required continuous activations of Reserve Forces. Accordingly, your Marine Corps Reserve continues to focus upon the future challenges of the Total Force and corresponding requirements of modernization, training and personnel readiness to ensure that the Marine Corps Reserve meets and exceeds its obligations within the Total Force.

While we continue to support the Long War, it is not without a cost. Continuing activations and high Reserve operational tempo highlights the fact that we have personnel challenges in some areas and we are putting additional strain on Reserve equipment.

II. EQUIPMENT STATUS

The Marine Corps Reserve, like the Active Component, faces two primary equipping challenges: supporting and sustaining our forward deployed forces in the Long War while simultaneously resetting and modernizing our Force to prepare for future challenges.

Our priorities for supporting and sustaining our deployed forces are: first, to provide every Marine and Sailor in a deploying Reserve unit with the latest generation of individual combat and protective equipment; second, to procure essential communications equipment; third, to procure simulation training devices that provide our Marines with valuable training to enhance survivability

in hostile environments; and fourth, to provide adequate funding to our Operation and Maintenance accounts to sustain training and pre-deployment operations.

Our priorities in support of resetting and modernizing the Force include the following: first, to procure principal end items necessary to reestablish on hand equipment to the level dictated by our Training Allowance, which is the amount of equipment needed by each unit to conduct home station training; and, second, to procure the equipment necessary to enhance our capability to augment and reinforce the Active Component. Since the Marine Corps procures and fields equipment as a Total Force, equipment modernization efforts of the Marine Corps Reserve are synchronized with the efforts of the Active Component.

As with all we do, our focus is on the individual Marine and Sailor. Our ongoing efforts to equip and train this most valued resource have resulted in obtaining the latest generation individual combat and protective equipment: M16A4 service rifles, M4 carbines, Rifle Combat Optic scopes, improved helmet pad suspension systems, enhanced Small Arms Protective Insert plates, Modular Tactical Vests, and the latest generation AN/PVS-14 Night Vision Devices, to name a few. I am pleased to report, as I did last year, that every member of Marine Forces Reserve deployed in support of the Long War is fully equipped with the most current authorized Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment to include Personal Protective Equipment.

Deployed Marine Corps unit equipment readiness rates remain high - above 90 percent. Ground equipment readiness rates for non-deployed Marine Forces Reserve units average 88 percent, based on Training Allowance. The slightly lower equipment readiness posture is primarily attributable to home station Training Allowance equipment shortages caused by sustainment requirements of the Long War. The Marine Corps Reserve equipment investment overseas since 2004 in support of the Long War is approximately five percent of our overall equipment. This investment includes various communications, motor transport, engineer, and ordnance equipment, as well as several modern weapons systems such as the new HIMARS artillery system and the latest generation Light Armored Vehicle. This investment greatly adds to the war fighting capability of the Total Force while providing minimal impact to our home station training requirements. Deliberate planning at the service level is currently underway to reset the Total Force, to include resourcing the Reserve equipment investment made to the Long War. This will allow the Marine Corps Reserve to remain ready, relevant, and responsive to the demands of our Corps.

Reduced supply availability continues to necessitate innovative resourcing approaches to ensure Reserve Marines can adequately train in preparation for deployment, until the effects of supplemental funding produce tangible results. Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate shortfalls, the inherent latency in procurement timelines and competing priorities for resources will continue to challenge the training and equipping of Reserve Forces for the Long War.

Your continued support of current budget and procurement-related initiatives, such as the President's Budget Submissions, Supplemental Requests, and National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations (NGREA), will guarantee our ability to properly equip our individual Marines and Sailors. Marine Corps Reserve equipment requirements are registered in each of these as part of the Marine Corps Total Force submissions. Reserve equipment requirements that cannot be timely met with these vehicles are identified as the Reserve portion of the Unfunded Priorities List and equipment procurement requirements are sometimes resourced by National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations. It would be impossible for me to overstate the value and importance of NGREA to the Marine Corps Reserve. We appreciate Congress' continued support of the Marine Corps Reserve through NGREA. Since 2002, NGREA has provided more than \$200 million dollars to Marine Forces Reserve for equipment procurements. It is safe to say that we couldn't have provided some critical capabilities to our Nation without NGREA. Moreover, I want to emphasize this year the value of consistent NGREA funding for our Reserve components and specifically, the Marine Corps Reserve. In the last three years, through consistent funding, we have been able to "close out" equipment purchases – or to buy to our established Training Allowance – in 32 different end items. Examples of equipment purchases we have been or will be able to close out using FY2006, FY2007, and FY2008 NGREA funding are: the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer; the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement - Training Systems; the LITENING II Targeting Pod; the AN/ARC-210 (V) Multi-Modal Radio system for our KC-130 aircraft; the UC-12+ aircraft; and, multiple C2 systems components. We've also been able to come close to closing out other equipment purchases. If consistent NGREA funding is received in the coming year, and if requirements for these and other items of equipment do not change, we envision closing out four other equipment purchases with FY2009 funding: the BRITE STAR FLIR; the Tactical Remote Sensor System; the Deployable Virtual Training Environment; and, the HMMWV Egress Assistance Trainer.

III. FACILITIES

Marine Forces Reserve is comprised of 183 sites in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. These sites are comprised of 32 Owned, and 151 tenant sites. In contrast to Active Duty installations, normally closed to the general public, our Reserve sites are openly located within civilian communities. This arrangement requires close partnering with state and local entities nationwide. The condition and appearance of our facilities may directly influence the American people's perception of the Marine Corps, the Armed Forces, and our recruitment and retention efforts.

Marine Forces Reserve Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) program funding levels continue to address immediate maintenance requirements and longer term improvements to our older facilities. Sustainment funding has allowed us to maintain our current level of facility readiness without further facility degradation. Restoration and Modernization (R&M) funding continues to be a challenge due to its current 4.5 million dollar programmed funding shortfall across the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) and an overall backlog of \$130.2 million dollars created through significant funding shortfalls in prior years. Currently, 10 of our 32 owned sites are rated C-3 or C-4 under the Marine Corps' facility readiness reporting system. Our OSD-mandated objective is to maintain levels of C-2 or better. The FY2009 budget, if approved, will see programmed upgrades for eight sites to C-2 or better, with the remaining sites programmed to meet C-2 or better by FY2010. The FY2009 budget attempts to bring the R&M program back on track to address remaining deficiencies. However, it should be noted that this funding does not address the reported backlog created through prior year funding shortfalls. As such, we continue to apply internal savings to address R&M projects at the end of each fiscal year.

The programmed R&M funding shortfalls in the current FYDP, when combined with lingering R&M requirements carried over from prior fiscal years, continue to increase the FSRM backlog exponentially over the FYDP. This jeopardizes our ability to meet the C-2 or better rating for quality by 2010. The FY2007 sale of the former Marine Corps Reserve Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico, will potentially provide funding to address nearly 20 percent of this combined R&M shortfall. Further use of Real Property Exchanges (RPX), and other similar laws, has been an invaluable tool towards addressing shortfalls and emerging requirements. The RPX program extension to 2010 will allow us further opportunities to use proceeds from existing older properties to fill gaps in minor construction projects for our centers to meet evolving needs.

The Military Construction, Navy Reserve (MCNR) program, including Marine Corps Exclusive and Navy-led projects, is addressing critical needs for new facilities to replace older buildings and accommodate changes in Marine Corps Reserve force structure. The President's proposed FY2009 budget contains \$22.8 million dollars for military construction and \$836 thousand dollars in planning and design funding. Congressional approval of this budget provides new Marine Corps Reserve Centers in Atlanta, Georgia, and at the Naval Air Station Lemoore, California. Your continued support for both the MCNR program and a strong FSRM program are essential to addressing the aging infrastructure of the Marine Corps Reserve. With more than 50 percent of our Reserve Centers being more than 40 years old and 35 percent being more than 50 years old, support for both MCNR and FSRM cannot be overstated.

The Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC) 2005 is an area of continuing concern due to the limited funding for BRAC military construction projects. Unique to the Marine Corps Reserve BRAC program is the secondary impact to our Reserve Centers that are part of Army and Navy BRAC actions. Of the 25 BRAC actions for the Marine Corps Reserve, 21 are in conjunction with Army and Navy military construction projects, reflecting OSD policies toward shared joint Reserve centers. As a result, any funding shortfalls experienced by these two services will have a secondary negative effect on the Marine Corps Reserve. Escalating prices in the construction industry continue to challenge the Reserves in narrowing the gap between funding requirements for projects and budgetary allowances. In FY2007, two of three BRAC projects awarded for Marine Forces Reserve required significant increases in funding over what was programmed, ranging from \$500 thousand to \$3 million dollars over the budgeted amounts. These factors challenge Marine Forces Reserve and its designated construction agents, as well as the other Reserve Components, to award projects and comply with BRAC law deadline. The ramifications of this trend are that Marine Forces Reserve will have less funding available in later years for any overages and be forced to either significantly cut our requirements at the cost of Facility Mission Functionality or move funds from other required Facility programs. Adequate and timely receipt of funding for the entire BRAC program, including restoration of the FY2008 budget cut no later than FY2009, is essential to meeting the statutory requirements of BRAC 2005. The compounding effect of the back-to-back continuing resolutions we have experienced to date, during peak BRAC construction years, has heightened the risk that we will not meet statutory compliance by 15 Sep 2011.

Our Marine Forces Reserve Environmental Program promotes accepted stewardship

principles as well as compliance with all regulatory requirements in support of training both on site and outside the fence line. Marine Forces Reserve has initiated a nationwide program to reduce waste production and ensure proper disposal at our centers. We have also executed several major projects to protect the nation's waterways near our drill centers. Continued funding is essential to ensure that both emerging environmental requirements are met and critical ongoing training continues.

IV. TRAINING

Since 9-11, approximately 99% of U.S. Marine Corps Reserve units have been activated and 98% of those units have deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism. The collective lessons wrought from their experiences abroad have helped improve nearly all facets of our current Reserve Component training. In this regard, one of the most exciting areas where we are continuing to transform the depth and scope of our training is in the cutting-edge arena of Modeling and Simulations Technology.

Rapid advancement in modeling and simulation software, hardware and network technologies are providing ever new and increasingly realistic training capabilities. Marine Forces Reserve is training with and continuing to field several complex digital video-based training systems which literally immerse our Reserve Component Marines into "virtual" combat environments, complete with the sights, sounds and chaos of today's battlefield environment in any clime or place, day or night, spanning the full continuum of warfare from high-intensity conventional warfare to low-intensity urban conflict.

Some of these new training capabilities that we are training with and continuing to field to support our Reserve Marines stationed at our 183 training sites located throughout the country include the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer-XP. This interactive audio/video weapons simulator provides enhanced marksmanship, weapons employment and tactical decision making training for a variety of small arms. The system consists of infantry weapons instrumented with lasers that enable Marines to simulate engaging multiple target types.

Another system that we addressed in last year's testimony that continues to prove invaluable in the pre-deployment training of our tactical drivers is the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer-Reconfigurable Vehicle System. This is an advanced, full-scale vehicle simulator that trains

Marines in both basic and advanced combat convoy skills using variable terrain and roads in a variety of weather, visibility and vehicle conditions. The simulator is a mobile trailer configured platform that utilizes a HMMWV mock-up, small arms, crew-served weapons, 360-degree visual display and after action review/instant replay capability. Marine Forces Reserve was the lead agency for initial procurement, training and evaluation of this revolutionary training system, which is now being used to train the Total Force.

Starting this summer, we will begin fielding the newly developed Deployable Virtual Training Environment. This is an advanced, first-person, immersive, simulation-based training system, made up of 16 laptops and peripherals packaged in ruggedized deployable cases. The system is capable of emulating and simulating a wide variety of weapons systems and generating high-fidelity, relevant terrain databases in any climate or place. It also provides small-unit echelons with the opportunity to continuously review and rehearse Command and Control procedures and battlefield concepts in a virtual environment. The system consists of two components, the Combined Arms Network providing integrated first person combat skills and Tactical Decision Simulations providing individual, fire team, squad and platoon-level training associated with patrolling, ambushes and convoy operations. Additional environment features include combat engineer training, small-unit tactics training, tactical foreign language training and event-driven, ethics-based, decision-making training.

All of these advanced training systems have been rapidly acquired and fielded with vital Supplemental and NGRE funding. These critical funding resources are not only providing a near-term training capability in support of combat deployments, but are also providing a solid foundation for the transformation of our training environment from legacy static training methods to more realistic virtual combat training environments that are preparing our Reserve Marines and Sailors to succeed on future battlefields.

V. PERSONNEL READINESS

Like the Active Component, Marine Corps Reserve units primarily rely upon a first term enlisted force. 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 their Corps. Despite high operational tempo, the morale and patriotic spirit of Reserve Marines, their families, and employers remains extraordinarily high.

In FY2007, the Marine Corps Reserve achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goal for non-prior service recruiting (5,287) and exceeded its goal for prior service recruiting (3,575). As of 1 April 2008, we have accessed 1,890 non-prior service and 2,482 prior service Marines, which reflects 50 percent of our annual mission.

Our Selected Reserve population is comprised of Reserve unit Marines, Active Reserve Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and Reserve Marines in the training pipeline. An additional 60,000 Marines are included in our Individual Ready Reserve, representing a significant pool of trained and experienced prior service manpower. Realizing that deployments take a toll on Active Component Marines, causing some to transition from active duty because of high personnel tempo, we continue to offer the Selected Marine Corps Reserve Affiliation Involuntary Activation Deferment policy, which was instituted in June 2006. This program allows a Marine who has recently deployed an option for a two-year deferment from involuntary activation if they join a Selected Marine Corps Reserve unit. The intent of the two-year involuntary deferment is to encourage good Marines to participate and still maintain breathing room to build a new civilian career.

I do anticipate greater numbers of Marines from the Reserve Component will volunteer for full-time active duty with the Active Component throughout FY2008 as they take advantage of new incentives aimed at encouraging Marines to return to active duty. These incentives support our plan to bolster Active Component end strength. The fact is we need good Marines to serve longer, either Active or Reserve.

Our focus is to provide an environment that attracts and retains dedicated, high performing individuals. For the current year, Reserve officer retention has thus far remained above historical norms. Enlisted Reserve retention is currently slightly lower than the FY06/FY07 average, and is being monitored very closely. We continue to offer several incentives for enlisted Marines to stay in the Selected Marine Corps Reserve, which includes increasing the initial three year re-enlistment bonus from the current \$7,500 level to the maximum allowable \$15,000. I greatly appreciate the increased reenlistment incentive provided in the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

Junior officer recruiting and consequently meeting our Reserve company grade requirement remains the most challenging area. At the beginning of FY2007, the Marine Corps modified an existing program and implemented two new Reserve officer commissioning programs in order to

increase the number of company grade officers within deploying Reserve units and address our overall shortage of junior officers in our Reserve units. Eligibility for the Reserve Enlisted Commissioning Program was expanded to qualified Active Duty enlisted Marines. The Meritorious Commissioning Program – Reserve was established for qualified enlisted Marines, Reserve and Active, who possess an Associates Degree or equivalent number of semester hours. As of 1 May, the Officer Candidate Course – Reserve (OCC-R) has proven to be the most successful of the three programs. Eighty-four candidates have been commissioned second lieutenants in the Marine Corps Reserve. The OCC-R focuses on ground-related billets. Priorities of fill for recruitment of candidates are tied to our Force Generation Model.

In the long run, if the Marine Corps Reserve is to remain ready and relevant, we must begin to implement necessary changes to the superseded Cold War Reserve Model. In particular, we must develop a new paradigm that allows our top performing Marines to extend their service to the Total Force through a continuum of service. We must continue to develop policies and procedures that allow the seamless transition of individual Reservists on and off of active duty and that would permit varying levels of participation by the service members over the course of a military career. Current administrative policies routinely raise unnecessary obstacles to transitions between military jobs and duty status creating barriers to volunteerism. Presently, there are a significant number of different types of Reserve service, primarily tied to the Cold War Model of a Strategic Reserve. In order to successfully transition a specified number of individuals and unit capabilities to an Operational Reserve, that number of duty statuses could and should be reduced.

VI. QUALITY OF LIFE

Whether we are taking care of our Marines in the desert or families back home, quality of life support programs are designed to help all Marines and their families. Because Marines and their families make great sacrifices in service to our country, they deserve the very best support.

We are aggressively instituting new Family Readiness Programs, revitalizing services, and proactively reaching out to our young demographic to ensure our programs and services have transitioned to a wartime footing.

As part of widespread Marine Corps reforms to enhance family support, we are placing paid, full-time civilian employees to fill the position of Family Readiness Officer at the battalion/squadron level and above to support the Commander's family readiness mission. Modern

communication technologies, procedures and processes are being expanded to support family members including spouses, children and parents of single Marines.

The Marine Forces Reserve Lifelong Learning Program continues to provide educational information to service members, families, retirees, and civilian employees. The program is not only beneficial to career Marines, but also those intending to transition to civilian life. More than 1,300 Marine Forces Reserve personnel (Active and Reserve) enjoyed the benefit of Tuition Assistance, which paid out more than \$2.6 million dollars and funded more than 4,000 courses during FY2007. Tuition Assistance greatly eases the financial burden of education for our service members while enabling them to maintain progress toward their education goals.

The Marine Corps' partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and the National Association for Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) continues to provide a great resource for service members and their families in selecting child care, before, during, and after a deployment in support of the Long War. The Boys and Girls Clubs of America provide outstanding programs for our Reserve Marines' children between the ages of 6 and 18 after school and on the weekends. Under our agreement with BGCA, Reserve families can participate in more than 40 programs at no cost. With NACCRRA, we help families of our Reservists locate affordable child care that is comparable to high-quality, on-base, military-operated programs. NACCRRA provides child care subsidies at quality child care providers for our Reservists who are deployed in support of the Long War and for those Active Duty Marines who are stationed in regions that are geographically separated from military installations. We also partnered with the Early Head Start National Resource Center Zero to Three to expand services for family members of our Reservists who reside in isolated and geographically-separated areas.

We fully recognize the strategic role our families have in mission readiness, particularly mobilization preparedness. We prepare our families 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 Briefs, 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.).

Every Marine Corps Reserve unit throughout the country has a KVN program, which is a volunteer-based program that serves as the link between the command and family members - providing official communication, information, and referrals. The KVN proactively educates

families on the military lifestyle and benefits, provides answers for individual questions and areas of concerns, and enhances the sense of community and camaraderie within the unit. L.I.N.K.S. is a training and mentoring program designed by Marine spouses to help new spouses thrive in the military lifestyle and adapt to challenges – including those brought about by deployments. Online and CD-ROM versions of L.I.N.K.S make this valuable tool more readily accessible to families of Reserve Marines who are not located near Marine Corps installations.

To better prepare our Marines and their families for activation, Marine Forces Reserve continues to implement an interactive approach that provides numerous resources and services throughout the deployment cycle. Available resources include, but are not limited to, family-related publications, on-line volunteer training opportunities, and a family readiness/mobilization support toll free number. Family readiness educational materials have been updated to reflect the current deployment environment. Specifically, deployment guide templates that are easily adapted to be unit-specific were distributed to unit commanders and family readiness personnel, as well as Marine Corps families, and are currently available on our Web site. Services such as pastoral care, Military One Source, and various mental health services are readily available to our Reserve Marines' families.

Managed Health Network (MHN) is an OSD-contracted support resource that provides surge augmentation counselors for our base counseling centers and primary support at sites around the country to address catastrophic requirements. 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 has incorporated this resource into post-demobilization drill periods, Family Days, Pre-Deployment Briefs, and Return & Reunion Briefs. Follow-up services are scheduled after Marines return from combat at various intervals to facilitate on-site individual and group counseling. Additionally, we are utilizing these counselors to conduct post-demobilization telephonic contact with IRR Marines in order to assess their needs and connect them to services.

The Peacetime/Wartime Support Team and the support structure within the Inspector-Instructor staffs at our Reserve sites provides families of activated and 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. During their homecoming, our Marines who have deployed consistently cite the positive importance of family support programs.

To strengthen family support programs, we will continue to enhance, market, and sustain outreach capabilities. We believe current OSD-level oversight, sponsorship, and funding of family support programs properly correspond to current requirements. We are particularly supportive of Military One Source, which provides our Reservists and their families with an around-the-clock information and referral service via toll-free telephone and Internet access on a variety of subjects such as parenting, childcare, education, finances, legal issues, elder care, health, wellness, deployment, crisis support, and relocation.

Marines and their families, who sacrifice so much for our Nation's defense, should not be asked to sacrifice quality of life. We will continue to be a forceful advocate for these programs and services. We will continue to evolve and adapt to the changing needs and environments in order to ensure that quality support programs and services are provided to our Marines and their families.

VII. EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

Marine Forces Reserve continues to be acutely aware of the importance of a good relationship between our Reserve Marines and their employers. We fully support all the initiatives of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and have been proactive in providing the information to our Reserve Marines on the Five Star Employer Program, Patriot Award and Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Awards, which are tangible ways for us to recognize those employers who provide tremendous support to our men and women who go into harm's way. I recently directed all of my major subordinate commands to appoint a field grade officer to ensure that units have all relevant information to take full advantage of ESGR programs. This will ensure that the most current information is passed down to Marine Reserve units and personnel, and that all units comply with the new requirement for annual ESGR training at the company level. Reserve unit commanders are strongly encouraged to correspond with Marines' employers prior to deployment.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to be a highly ready, relevant and responsive component of the Total Force Marine Corps. As our Commandant has stated in the past, "Our Marines and sailors in combat are our number one priority." There is no distinction between Active or Reserve personnel or units regarding that priority. We fight shoulder-to-shoulder with our Active

Component counterparts and our Reserve Marines have consistently met every challenge placed before them. Your consistent and steadfast support of our Marines and their families has directly contributed to our successes.

As I've stated in past testimony, appearing before Congressional committees and subcommittees is a great opportunity to showcase the absolutely outstanding long-term contributions and commitment of this patriotic group of citizens we have in the Marine Corps Reserve. It has been my honor to serve this great Nation and Corps for the past 38 years, and although I will be retiring from the Marine Corps in the near future, I look forward to continuing serving our great country and the Marines and families of the Total Force Marine Corps for many years to come. Thank you for your continued support. Semper Fidelis!