

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL  
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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF  
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE  
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE  
BEFORE THE  
SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
EQUIPMENT, RESERVE MATTERS**

**ON**

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Chairman Inouye, Senator Stevens, and distinguished members of the committee, 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 today is firmly committed to and capable of warfighting excellence. 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

Recruiting, retaining, responding; your Marine Corps Reserve is steadfast in our commitment to provide Reserve Marines who can stand shoulder to shoulder with their active duty counterpart and perform equally in all contingencies, from combat on foreign soil to local humanitarian needs. As our nation pushes on in the longest mobilization period in our history, we have maintained the pace and will continue to sustain that pace for the foreseeable future.

During this past year, over 3,800 Marines from Fourth Marine Division have served in Iraq. Included are two infantry battalions, as well as armor, reconnaissance, combat engineer, and truck units. Our Marines have demonstrated dynamic flexibility by performing in non-traditional roles, including military police, riverine operations, and advisory duty with Iraqi security forces. An additional 500 Marines from Fourth Marine Division have deployed to Djibouti as security forces for Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.

As deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan have reduced the ability of the Active Component to participate in theater engagement exercises, Fourth Marine Division has filled the gap. During this past year, Marines of Fourth Marine Division have conducted exercises in Morocco, Kenya, Australia, the Netherlands Antilles, and Brazil. During the upcoming year, they will visit Senegal, Mongolia, the Ukraine, Belize, Peru, Chile, Ecuador, and Argentina; and will return to Morocco, Australia, and the Netherlands Antilles.

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. Pre-deployment training events such as Mojave Viper and Hawaii Combined Arms Exercise, along with bi-lateral exercises Cope Tiger, Foal Eagle, Cobra Gold, Talisman Saber and Southern Frontier, have been the foundation upon which our Corps prepares for combat. Currently,

units from Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing are supporting numerous deployments and individual augmentments for the Long War. A Civil Affairs Group Detachment, Provisional Security Detachment and a Provisional Security Company from Marine Air Control Group 48 have been mobilized in support of operations in the Horn of Africa. Additionally, Marine Wing Support Group 47 has provided an Engineering Detachment and a Motor Transport Detachment in support of OIF. Lastly, Marine Transport Squadron Detachment Belle Chasse has provided a UC-35 Citation Encore detachment which brings a time-critical lift capability to the Central Command's area of responsibilities.

From the spring of 2006, the Fourth Marine Logistics Group has endeavored to build upon its established history of providing the Active Component with highly skilled, dedicated personnel capable of delivering sustained tactical logistics support. During this time frame, Fourth Marine Logistics Group contributed over 600 Marines and Sailors from across the spectrum of Combat Service Support for its ongoing support of OIF. Included in this population was a large dichotomy of occupational specialties to include Motor Transport, Landing Support, Communications, and Personnel Recovery/Processing. In addition, Fourth Marine Logistics Group deployed selected individuals to serve the commanding officer and nucleus staff for Combat Logistics Battalion 5, and to be Chiefs of Staff for the 1st Marine Logistics Group, (Forward) and (Rear). Throughout this period, the Marines and Sailors of the Fourth Marine Logistics Group demonstrated responsiveness, flexibility, and an extremely high level of professionalism in their seamless integration with the Active Component.

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 (ANGLICO) 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.

Mobilization Command, during the past year, conducted 14 Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) administrative musters, screening 6,118 IRR Marines. Musters were conducted in Phoenix, San Antonio, Marietta, Richmond, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Elk Grove, Bellevue, Burlingame, Waltham, Newark, Pittsburgh, Miami, and Charlotte. Overall, Mobilization Command updated contact information on over 40,000 IRR Marines. The Customer Service Center at Mobilization Command

answered 67,300 calls from all Marine components, including retirees, dealing with disparate issues, while maintaining an average wait time of 28 seconds per call. The Mobilization Command Maintenance Section performs all administrative maintenance on the service records of more than 60,000 IRR Marines with a monthly turnover of approximately 2,100 IRR Marines. In addition, Mobilization Command processed 2,643 sets of IRR orders that enabled Marines to perform missions under Active Duty Operational Support, Reserve Counterpart Training, mobilization, Appropriate and Associate Duty, and Notice of Eligibility status.

Five years into the Long War, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to serve along side our Active Component counterparts. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom have required continuous activations of Reserve Forces. Moreover, with much of the Active Component Marine Corps below the stated goal of 1:2 dwell ratio, Active Forces have been unavailable to fully support joint and bilateral exercises that are key to all Regional Combatant Commanders' Theater Security Cooperation plans. Consequently, the Marine Corps Reserve has significantly increased the level of participation of non-activated units to ensure continued Marine Corps support to all Regional Combatant Commanders.

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. While we remain close to achieving our overall end strength goals, we are facing critical shortages in high demand/low density military occupational specialties as well as in our company grade officers. Equipment requirements to support the Long War have reduced on hand equipment for training as well as war reserve stocks. As the Marine Corps continues to provide warfighting excellence in prosecuting the Long War, resetting the Force is an essential element in sustaining the effort.

## 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 the 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 simulation training devices that challenge our Marines to perform at higher

levels and maintain an adaptive training environment in preparation for conflict; and third, to provide adequate funding to 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 (T/A), which is the amount of equipment needed by each unit to conduct home station training; and, second, to procure the equipment necessary to maintain our capability to augment and reinforce the Active Component. Modernization efforts include the equipping of two new Light Armored Reconnaissance Companies, procuring communications equipment shortfalls, and adequately funding upgrades to our legacy aircraft.

As with all we do, our focus is on the individual Marine and Sailor. Our efforts to equip and train this most valued resource have resulted in obtaining the latest generation individual combat and protective equipment: M4 rifles, Rifle Combat Optic (RCO) scopes, helmet pad systems, enhanced Small Arms Protective Insert (SAPI) plates, and Night Vision Goggles, to name a few. I am pleased to report 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, and Individual Protective Equipment.

Deployed unit equipment readiness rates remain high (95 percent). Ground equipment readiness (mission capable) rates for non-deployed Marine Forces Reserve units average 85 percent based upon Training Allowance. This reduced readiness condition primarily results from shortages in home station Training Allowance equipment due to equipment demands in support of the Long War. Reserve Force equipment that has been sourced to OIF includes communications equipment, crew-served weapons, optics, and one Reserve infantry battalion's equipment set. These shortages represent an approximate 10 percent readiness shortfall across the Force for most equipment - more so for certain high demand/low-density, "big-box" type (satellite/long-haul) communication equipment sets.

Reduced supply availability continues to necessitate innovative approaches to ensure Reserve Marines can adequately train in preparation for deployment, until supplemental funding addresses the above issues. Despite ongoing efforts to mitigate shortfalls, delays in the 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 Forces Reserve equipment requirements are registered in each Marine Corps President's Budget Request and each Supplemental Request as part of the Marine Corps Total Force. In addition, we appreciate Congress's continued support of the Marine Corps Reserve through NGRE appropriations. Since 2002, NGREA has provided \$156M to Marine Forces Reserve. Fiscal Year 2007 NGREA procurements include tactical command and control communications equipment; training simulation systems and devices; and various weapons support systems. NGREA has funded almost the entire Marine Forces Reserve Simulation Master Plan, enabling the Force to obtain Virtual Combat Convoy Systems, Indirect Fire Forward Air Control Trainer Systems, Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement Systems, and Deployable Virtual Training Environment Systems. FY2007 NGREA has also funded the following procurements: Logistics Support Wide Area Network Packages, Defense Advanced GPS Receivers, Sensor Mobile Monitoring Systems, Litening II Targeting Pods and associated modification/installation kits, KC-130 AN/ARC-210 (V) Multi-Mode Radio Systems, and one UC-12 aircraft.

### III. FACILITIES

Marine Forces Reserve is comprised of 184 sites spread across 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Of these sites 32 are owned, 101 are joint, 47 are tenant, 3 are stand-alone, and 1 is leased. Management of these sites requires constant vigilance and flexibility in all aspects of facilities operations. Marine Forces Reserve remains committed to environmental, natural, and cultural resource stewardship. These programs maintain, restore, and improve our natural and constructed infrastructure, while preserving the environment and historic properties, and protect the health and quality of life of our people and nearby communities. We are continually reviewing and updating our Facilities Master Plan to ensure all Reserve sites are accurately accounted for as to condition and accuracy of their readiness status. In accordance with the Marine Corps Installation 2020 plan, in order to ensure optimal compliance with Anti-Terrorism and Force Protection Standards and to maximize the efficiencies inherent in the sharing of resources between Department of Defense (DoD) organizations, we are striving to transition to joint sites and locations aboard established military bases by 2020.

Unlike DoD Active Component Installations, which are often hidden from public view behind fences in outlying areas, Reserve facilities are often located in the heart of our civilian communities. This intimate and dynamic arrangement requires close partnering with state and local entities nationwide. As such, the condition and appearance of our facilities have a direct effect on the American people's perception of the Marine Corps and the Armed Forces in general. In addition to impacts on the safety, security and operational capability of the Total Force, the condition of Marine Forces Reserve facilities have a direct effect on recruitment and retention efforts, especially in attracting and retaining highly qualified, loyal Americans. Perception is everything. Quality facilities attract quality people.

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 \$16.5 million dollar backlog across the Future Years Defense Plan (FYDP) and an overall backlog of \$52.6 million dollars. Currently, 12 of our 32 owned sites are rated C-3 or C-4 under the Commanding Officer's Readiness Reporting System (CORRS) for facilities. The FY2008 budget, if approved, will provide programmed upgrades for eight sites to C-2 or better, with all sites meeting C-2 or better by FY2010. However, it should be noted that POM 2008 does not address the reported backlog created by prior years funding shortfalls. To mitigate, we continue to apply internal savings to address R&M projects at the end of each fiscal year.

The movement of FSRM funding into a new unfenced appropriation would prevent Marine Forces Reserve's ability to "buy back" the significant Sustainment and R&M backlog from internal savings. This would result in an additional increase to the FSRM backlog over the FYDP and jeopardize our ability to meet the C-2 or better CORRS rating for quality by 2010 as mandated by OSD. Additionally, the pending sale of the former Marine Corps Reserve Center in San Juan, Puerto Rico will potentially provide funding to address nearly 50 percent of the R&M shortfall. As a result of this sale, a significant improvement in overall facilities readiness is anticipated. Use of Real Property Exchanges (RPX), and other similar laws, will be invaluable tools toward addressing shortfalls and emerging requirements. Continued support for the FSRM program is essential. Funding shortfalls will rapidly result in degradation of facilities readiness, jeopardizing the safety

and health of our Marines.

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 FY2008 budget contains \$28.8 million for military construction and \$829 thousand in planning and design funding. Congressional approval of this budget provides a new Marine Corps Reserve Center in Dayton, Ohio; the Marine Corps share of a new Armed Forces Reserve Center in Austin, Texas; Reserve Center additions in Miramar, California and Quantico, Virginia; and a new Vehicle Maintenance Facility in Selfridge, Michigan. The MCNR program, combined with a strong FSRM program, is essential to addressing the aging infrastructure of the Marine Corps Reserve. With more than 50 percent of our Reserve Centers over 40 years old and 35 percent over 50 years old, support for both MCNR and FSRM cannot be overstated.

The Base Realignment & Closure (BRAC) 2005 is an area of increasing concern due to the reduction in FY2007 funding for BRAC military construction projects. The impacts of this reduction (50 plus percent of the requested Department of the Navy appropriations) are still being analyzed. Another concern to the Marine Corps Reserve 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 Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) policies toward shared Joint Reserve Centers. As a result, any funding shortfalls experienced by these two services will also negatively impact the Marine Corps Reserve. If we continue to operate under the Continuing Resolution Authority at FY2006 funding levels, there will not be sufficient funding for FY2007 and shifted impact for FY2008 military construction projects. The ramification is that Marine Forces Reserve will be forced to shift projects further into the out years, thus affecting the FSRM budget and possibly the MCNR program as well. Though the 2007 Joint Funding Resolution may address some of these shortfalls, restoration of funding for the entire BRAC program is essential to meeting the statutory requirements of the 2005 BRAC Law, within the designated timeframe.

#### IV. TRAINING

Thus far during the Long War, several Marine Corps Reserve units have been activated to perform "in lieu of" missions. Employment of units for missions "in lieu of" their primary mission

has degraded their capability to perform their primary mission. For example, as of the summer 2007, all of our artillery batteries will have been activated at least once, however, most will have performed Military Police duties. A unit will not train to primary mission standards during assignment as an "in lieu of" force. While "every Marine is a rifleman" and many of the individual combat skills are common to all, primary mission occupational specialty and unit training are also required. Consequently, employing units as "in lieu of" forces degrades unit readiness to perform primary missions.

We continue to capitalize on advances in technology to enhance our training and mitigate the downside of performing "in lieu of" missions. Marine Forces Reserve's ambitious simulation program provides realistic training to increase effectiveness of our units and survivability of our Marines. Simulation capabilities include the Virtual Combat Convoy Trainers and Combat Vehicle Training Systems that provide training for the M1A1 Main Battle Tank, Assault Amphibian Vehicle, and the Light Armored Vehicle. The Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer (VCCT) provides tactical training in simulated up-armored High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) armed with .50 caliber machineguns. The Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer has been vital to the pre-deployment training of tactical drivers, who will be operating on the most dangerous roads in the world. The VCCT allows the most effective training to occur for both drivers and teams. A byproduct of utilizing the VCCT is a requirement for a reduced number of CONUS-based vehicles designated for training. The Virtual Combat Convoy Trainer also allows us to reach our current relatively-high equipment readiness rates by reducing maintenance man-hours and parts costs in one area and using the resources in other areas. The same holds true for the simulators for our family of armored vehicles; quality, realistic training is provided while allowing the reallocation of both the time for training and maintenance money to other units. In the next year, we will be procuring the Indirect Fire & Forward Air Control Trainer to provide realistic call-for-fire training at a reduced cost, allowing the reallocation of both ammunition and flight hours to increase training levels. With your continued support, we will expand our simulation programs to also include additional individual weapons and vehicle operator trainers, and begin procurement of combined arms trainers.

## 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 remain extraordinarily high.

In FY2006, the Marine Corps Reserve achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goal for non-prior service recruiting (5,880) and exceeded its goal for prior service recruiting (3,165). 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. Currently, the forecasted Selected Reserve end strength for FY2007 is 39,362, within the plus/minus 2% limit authorized by Congress. Realizing that deployments take a toll on Active Component Marines, causing some to transition from active duty because of high personnel tempo, in June 2006 we instituted the Selected Marine Corps Reserve Affiliation Involuntary Activation Deferment policy. 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 FY2007, 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. We are developing several incentives for enlisted Marines to stay in the Selected Marine Corps Reserve. A first step will be increasing the initial three year re-enlistment bonus from the current \$2,500 level to the maximum allowed \$7,500. The subsequent re-enlistment bonus will increase from the current \$2,000 to the maximum allowed \$6,000.

Junior officer recruiting 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 ó Reserve was established for qualified enlisted Marines, Reserve and Active, who possess an Associates Degree or equivalent number of semester hours. We are expanding Reserve commissioning opportunities for our prior-enlisted Marines in order to grow some of our own officers from Marine Forces Reserve units and are exploring other methods to increase the accession and participation of company grade officers in the Selective Marine Corps Reserve. Through these initiatives, we estimate that we will fill 90% of our company grade officer billets by the end of FY2011. When coupled with the continued use of the Selected Reserve officer affiliation bonus authorized in the FY07 National Defense Authorization Act, we believe we have the tools necessary to sustain robust, ready Selected Marine Corps Reserve units for the Long War.

## VI. PREDICTABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

As we position ourselves for the Long War, we recognize the challenges facing 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. The most difficult challenge thus far has been to provide our individual Marine Reservists with the predictability needed to incorporate activations and deployments into their long-term life planning. To provide predictability, we have developed an integrated Total Force Generation Model that lays out a future activation and deployment schedule for Marine units. The model is based on one-year activation and includes a seven-month deployment (standard for battalion-sized Marine units and smaller), followed by at least four years in a normal drill status. The model provides for approximately 6,000 Reserve Marines on active duty at any one time (3,000 deployed and 3,000 preparing to deploy or returning from deployment). The Total Force Generation Model provides the individual Marine with the confidence to plan for the future; whether going to school, building a civilian career, or making major family decisions. Furthermore, the predictability of the model serves as a tool to assist in recruiting and retaining quality Marines. This is particularly true in recruiting company grade officers and junior staff non-commissioned officers who are transitioning from active duty and are attempting to establish civilian careers, but still have a strong desire to serve Corps and country.

The Force Generation Model also assists Service and Joint Force planners. It ensures a consistent flow of manned, equipped, trained, and ready Selected Marine Corps Reserve units to support future operations in the Long War. Providing a predictable Reserve force package will also help our Active Component come closer to achieving their stated goal of 1:2 dwell time. The one year activation to four plus years in a non-activated status is both supportable and sustainable. We will begin implementing the model during the summer of 2007. As force structure increases we will be able to move toward a 1:5 dwell time for the Reserve component.

## VII. QUALITY OF LIFE

Our future success will continue to rely on your Marine Corps' most valuable asset - our Marines and their families. We believe that it is our obligation to prepare our Marines and their families with as much information as possible on family readiness and support programs and resources available to them.

Marine Forces Reserve Lifelong Learning Program (MFR LLL) is responsible for providing educational information to service members, families, retirees, and civilian employees. The majority of the educational programs offered are for active duty service members and these include United Services Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP), Military Academic Skills Program (MASP), Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), and Tuition Assistance (TA).

More than 1800 Marine Forces Reserve Active Duty (AD), Active Reserve (AR), Active Duty Special Work (ADSW), and Mobilized Reserve Marines chose to use Tuition Assistance in FY2006 in order to help finance their education. Tuition Assistance paid out in FY2006 totaled more than \$4.5M, funding more than 4500 courses. Many of the Marines using Tuition Assistance were deployed to Iraq, and took their courses via distance learning. In this way, Tuition Assistance helped to mitigate the financial burden of education and Marines were able to maintain progress toward their education goals.

Marines and their families are often forced to make difficult choices in selecting child care, before, during, and after a Marines' deployment in support of the Long War. The Marine Corps has partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and the National Association for Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA) to assist service members and their families. BGCA provides 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 NACCRRRA, we help families of our Reserve Marines locate affordable child care that is comparable to high-quality, on-base, military-operated programs. NACCRRRA provides child care subsidies at quality child care providers for Reserve Marines 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 that have child care support. We have also partnered with the Early Head Start National Resource Center Zero to Three to expand services in support of family members of Reservists 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. The KVN is a volunteer-based program that serves as the link between the command and family members, providing official communication, information, and referrals. The KVN provides a means of proactively educating 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.

These programs play fundamental roles in supporting Marine spouses and families. 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 not located near Marine Corps installations. We have recently updated and streamlined our L.I.N.K.S and KVN training guides to more appropriately address the challenges of remote access.

To better prepare our Marines and their families for activation, Marine Forces Reserve has developed a proactive approach to provide 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. Services such as pastoral care, MCCS 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 is incorporating this resource into 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.

The Peacetime/Wartime Support Team and the support structure within the Inspector-Instructor staffs provide 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. Military One Source provides Marines and their families with an around-the-clock information and referral service via toll-free telephone and Internet access for a variety of subjects such as parenting, childcare, education, finances, legal issues, elder care, health, wellness, deployment, crisis support, and relocation.

The mission readiness of our Marine Corps Reserve is directly impacted by the preparedness of our families to a 24/7 requirement. It is imperative that we continue to provide our families robust educational opportunities and support services.

## VIII. EMPLOYER SUPPORT OF THE GUARD AND RESERVE

Marine Forces Reserve is acutely aware of the importance of a good relationship with the employers of our Reserve Marines. We fully support all the initiatives of the ESGR and have been proactive in providing the information to our Reserve Marines on the Secretary of Defense

Employer Support Freedom Awards. This is an excellent way to praise the employers that give that extra support to our men and women who go into harmø's way.

## IX. CONCLUSION

As our Commandant has said, "Our Marines and Sailors in combat are our number one priority." Our outstanding young men and women in uniform are our greatest asset. Your Marine Corps Reserve has consistently met every challenge placed before it. We fight side by side with our active counterparts. Your consistent and steadfast support of our Marines and their families has directly contributed to our successes.

As I've said in past testimony, appearing before congressional committees and subcommittees is a great pleasure, as it allows me the opportunity to let the American people know what an outstanding patriotic group of citizens we have in the Marine Corps Reserve. Thank you for your continued support. Semper Fidelis!