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BY THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

**STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID G. BELLON
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
BEFORE
THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE
CONCERNING
THE GUARD AND RESERVE
ON
7 JUNE 2022**

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Lieutenant General David G. Bellon

Lieutenant General David G. Bellon is currently serving as the Commander, U.S. Marine Forces South and U.S. Marine Forces Reserve.

Lieutenant General Bellon was born in Fort Polk, Louisiana, and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1987 and the University of Missouri School of Law in 1990. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1989. Bellon began service as an Infantry Officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. He then served as a Judge Advocate with 1st Force Service Support Group.

In 1997, he left active duty and joined the Selected Marine Corps Reserve serving six years with 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion in a variety of positions. As a civilian, Bellon founded his own law firm in 1999 located in Oceanside, CA.

After 9/11, he returned to active duty for four combat tours in support of both OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). During OIF I, he served as Operations Officer for 4th LAR with both TASK FORCE TARAWA and TASK FORCE SCORPION. During OIF II, Bellon served as the Intelligence Officer for Regimental Combat Team 1 during its 14 month deployment in and around the City of Al Fallujah, Iraq, participating in both battles for the city. His third OIF tour was in Command of Battalion Task Force 3d Battalion, 23d Marine Regiment, in 2007-2008. The Task Force executed counter-insurgency operations in and around the city of Al Haditha, Iraq.

In 2008, Bellon was selected as the Marine Corps Reserves representative in a full-time student status attending Top Level School at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. While there, he was promoted to Colonel and received subsequent orders for deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Bellon deployed to Afghanistan in September 2009 with the British 6th Division. While in Afghanistan, he served as the Chief of Operations for Southern Afghanistan during NATO's 2010 surge of forces to secure the strategically vital area in and around Kandahar City.

Bellon was promoted to Brigadier General in 2013. His assignments as a General Officer prior to his current billet include Deputy Commander (Mobilization) 1st Marine Expeditionary Force; Deputy Marine Forces Command; Director Reserve Affairs; Commander Marine Forces South; and Director of Strategy, Policy, and Plans (J5) U.S. Southern Command. He was promoted to his current rank and assumed duties as Commander, Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces South.

Introduction

Chairman *Tester*, Ranking Member *Shelby*, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you and provide an overview on the current state of the Marine Corps Reserve.

The Marine Corps Reserve, as part of a single, integrated Total Force Marine Corps, remains a vital contributor to the warfighting capability and capacity of the Naval Service. While the global pandemic continues to challenge each Service in unique ways, know that your Marine Corps Reserve remains relevant, ready, and responsive for the Nation. Reserve Marines are actively serving side-by-side with their active duty counterparts and are making tremendous contributions in support of each Combatant Commander on a daily basis. While the Marine Corps Reserve is supporting current Service and Combatant Command requirements, we are also participating in the Service's efforts to redesign our force and our warfighting capabilities to deter against the pacing threats as prescribed by the National Defense Strategy.

I am deeply impressed by the professionalism, competence, and dedication of our Reserve Marines and Sailors. Like their Active Component counterparts, they serve selflessly to protect our great Nation. I am inspired by the way they balance family responsibilities, civilian careers, and military service with humility and a sense of pride and dedication that is consistent with the great sacrifices of Marines from every generation. As a warfighting organization, the key to our success has been and will continue to be the individual Marine, and the success of the Marine Corps relies on the dedication and selflessness of our Reserve Marines and their families.

A Total Force

Throughout the past year, the Marine Corps Reserve continued global deployments supporting Combatant Commander requirements despite the continued challenges presented by COVID-19. The Marine Corps Reserve provided Combatant Commanders with forces focused on combat operations, crisis prevention, crisis response, and theater security cooperation. In addition to the Marines already activated and deployed, 2021 saw an additional 1,144 Reserve Marines mobilized to support 23 operational requirements across four geographic Combatant Commands. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to meet the demand for use as an Operational Reserve; however, this remains a challenge to our readiness and ability to meet strategic requirements.

In FY22, the Marine Corps Reserve has already activated 1,107 Marines in support of Commander United States Northern Command and is slated to support five other Combatant Commanders by activating and mobilizing an additional 639 Reserve Marines to support 18 separate formations. These operations significantly increase the Reserve Component's interoperability with the Active Component, Joint Forces, allies, and coalition partners. I anticipate that we will continue to deploy across the globe and integrate with the Active Component in support of high-priority Combatant Commander requirements for the foreseeable future.

Throughout 2021, due to the ongoing global pandemic, the Marine Corps Reserve continued to provide direct support to the Total Force's accession requirements, and activated a second rotation of more than 450 Marines and Sailors to reinforce the Marine Corps Recruit Depots at Parris Island and San Diego. These Marines ensured the recruits awaiting training maintained proper quarantine protocols, enabling assimilation into training platoons with

minimal risk of a COVID-19 outbreak during training. While this task is now complete, the result of this Total Force effort enabled the mission to make Marines to continue despite the global pandemic.

As Operation Allies Welcome developed, the Marine Corps used its Reserve Component to relieve Active Component Forces so they could return to II Marine Expeditionary Force to restore their readiness and ability to respond to crisis and contingency. The Marine Corps Reserve activated 1,100 Marines to support Tasks Forces supporting Afghan relocation in Quantico and Fort Pickett, Virginia. While the request for Reserve Forces to support was short notice, the ability to meet the requirement in a timely manner with volunteers speaks to the dedication of our Reserve Marines.

The Marine Corps Reserve typically uses participation in the Department of Defense Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) Program to provide joint/military training in the United States and its territories to increase deployment readiness. IRT simultaneously provides key services (health care, construction, transportation, and cybersecurity) with lasting benefits for our American communities. While 2020 saw a significant reduction in IRT Programs due to the global pandemic, the Marine Corps Reserve returned to a much greater level of participation in 2021 supporting 15 exercises under the IRT Program. Our participating units were able to train to mission essential tasks involving both horizontal and vertical construction, logistic support, and medical care while making tangible, meaningful impacts in communities from Arizona to Alaska and Hawaii. With your continued support of these efforts, we look to expand our footprint in this program, which will include construction, medical, and cybersecurity efforts.

In addition to participating in operational requirements across the globe, the Marine Corps Reserve supports the Total Force by dutifully executing the sensitive and crucial mission

of providing casualty assistance to the families of our fallen Marines. There is no responsibility we treat with higher regard than this solemn mission. Inspector-Instructor (I-I) and Reserve Site Support staffs are geographically positioned to accomplish the vast majority of Marine Corps casualty assistance calls and are trained to provide compassionate and thorough assistance to families. Indeed, the vast majority of Marine Corps casualty notifications and follow-on assistance calls to the next of kin are made by our Reserve Marines. During FY21, I-I and Reserve Site Support staffs performed 76% of the casualty calls performed by the Marine Corps. The professionalism and compassion of our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) continues well beyond the initial notification. We ensure that our CACOs are well trained, equipped, and supported by all levels of command through a combination of in-person and online training. Once assigned, the CACO serves as the family's central point of contact and coordinates with funeral homes, government agencies, and other organizations. They assist family members with planning the return and final resting place of their Marine and ensure the filing of appropriate documents so families receive all entitled benefits. In many cases, our CACOs provide a long-lasting bridge between the Marine Corps and the grieving family.

The Marine Corps Reserve also performs the solemn mission of military funeral honors, and our Reserve units take pride in performing the majority of these services for our fallen Marines and their families. Marine Corps funeral honors are dedicated to ensuring all Marines who have honorably served receive the appropriate honors as a final salute to their life and the final demonstration of the country's gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our Nation. COVID-19 still presents many challenges for units performing military funeral honors. These challenges include the temporary closing of our cemeteries, mandatory compliance with local, city, state and federal government travel restrictions, and strict

adherence to health and safety guidelines. Notwithstanding these challenges, Marine Corps Reserve units accomplished 21,474 military funeral honors in 2021, which was 92% of the total funeral services provided by the Marine Corps.

Finally, the Marine Corps Reserve functions as the greatest link between the Marine Corps and communities across the Nation. From the Toys for Tots campaigns each holiday season to community engagement events and solemn funeral details, we are the face of the Marine Corps to the majority of the American public. With Reserve units located across the country, the Marine Corps Reserve is uniquely positioned to interact with the American people and communicate the Marine Corps story to our fellow citizens, most of whom have little or no experience with the Marine Corps.

Personnel

Our Marines, Sailors, and civilian Marines are the foundation of all that we do. The resources we dedicate to sustaining and developing this foundation directly contribute to the success of our Service and the Marine Corps Reserve. The vast majority of the Marine Corps Selected Reserve's authorized end strength of 36,800 falls under Marine Forces Reserve. The Selected Reserve is composed of Marines in four categories: Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) Units, Active Reserve (AR), Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and Service members in Initial Active Duty Training (IADTs). Embedded with these Marines are 1,557 Active and Reserve Component Sailors who serve critical roles in the operational, medical, dental, and spiritual readiness of our Reserve Force. The success of the Marine Corps Reserve would not be possible without the support of these Sailors and U.S. Navy programs.

In addition to the Marines and Sailors of the Selected Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve administratively manages approximately 63,000 Marines who serve in the Individual Ready

Reserve (IRR). The Marine Corps Reserve continues to monitor the activation viability of these IRR Marines through the use of muster events at multiple locations across the country. The events also provide the opportunity to address administrative issues, conduct mental health and post-deployment assessments, review Reserve obligations and new opportunities, and meet with Marine Corps prior-service recruiters. During the past year the Marine Corps Reserve conducted 26 muster events in which 5,669 IRR Marines attended. In addition to the in-person muster events, the Marine Corps Reserve contacted and screened 47,414 IRR Marines.

The Marine Corps Reserve strives to attract and retain the most qualified Marines capable of fulfilling our leadership and operational needs. Marines approaching the end of their current contracts, whether Active or Reserve Component, receive counseling on the tangible and intangible benefits of remaining affiliated with the Selected Reserve. We educate each transitioning Active Component Marine on opportunities for continued service in the Marine Corps Reserve through the Marine Corps' transition assistance and educational outreach programs.

As the Marine Corps restructures our forces to ensure we are postured to confront future potential adversaries, we are making every effort to retain those Marines impacted by force design decisions. During 2021, the Marine Corps Reserve deployed a series of Personnel Transition Teams (PTTs) to every Reserve unit impacted by force design. These PTTs were specifically designed to ensure each impacted Marine was provided information, education, and one-on-one career counseling concerning available incentives, career opportunities, and continued service options. For example, during the divestment of our reserve tank battalion, we successfully retained over 52% of all Reserve Marines assigned to those site locations through voluntary reassignment to another Marine Reserve unit, while an additional 21% of those

Marines chose to transfer to their local Army National Guard tank unit to continue their military service. Survey responses show that 92% of the Reserve Marines felt they had been provided the information and support needed to make an informed decision, while 91% of the Reserve Marines felt their best interests were kept in mind.

Recruiting and retaining high-quality Marines remains essential to the Marine Corps' reputation as the Nation's force-in-readiness. Although the Marine Corps Reserve has recruited and trained Marines safely in the face of the global pandemic, the challenges associated with COVID-19 have had a significant impact on our ability to recruit. As a result, during calendar year 2020, the Selected Marine Corps Reserve faced a 50.4% reduction in new non-prior service accessions and a loss of 7.9% of the forecasted prior-service accessions. Although reserve recruiting has returned to near historic levels during calendar year 2021, the force will continue to be impacted by these notable losses. The Marine Corps Reserve still enjoys high affiliation and retention rates enhanced through incentive programs such as occupational specialty retraining, inactive duty travel reimbursement, and bonus payments. These programs are essential to ensure we continue to meet authorized end strength and retain our most talented Marines. Your continued support of these critical programs has helped preserve our overall personnel end strength at 89.7 of the total requirement and maintain a grade and Military Occupational Specialty match rate of 77.4%.

Our personnel readiness is not only reflective of the health of the force, but it directly contributes to our overall operational readiness. We fully expect to meet our Selected Marine Corps Reserve retention goals this year. Continued use of available incentive programs is critical to optimally match individuals to our requirements, maintain individual and unit-level

readiness, address shortfalls in staff non-commissioned officers, and fully rebuild readiness from previous force structure changes.

Equipment

Reserve Component units remain highly interoperable with their Active Component counterparts due to the Marine Corps' Total Force approach to equipment fielding and management. The Reserve Component is manned, trained, and equipped to standards that facilitate the seamless, integrated employment of forces to meet the requirements of Combatant Commanders. Our Reserve units and personnel continue to be in high demand despite the challenges associated with the COVID-19 operating environment.

This high demand for Reserve units and the resulting high operational tempo places stress on the Marine Corps Reserve's ability to maintain equipment and replenish deficiencies. One of the greatest ongoing concerns is our Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment (ICCE) deficiencies, specifically ballistic protection and load-bearing equipment. Additionally, the ability to provide sustainment of ICCE on hand is hindered by the delay in implementation of sustainment contracts, further delaying the ability to order and receive shortfall items. In the event of a large-scale wartime mobilization, to include any sizable call-up of the IRR, ICCE deficiencies may become a Service level risk.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to mitigate risk and ensure maintenance readiness through Training Allowances (TA), Operation and Maintenance Marine Corps Reserve (OMMCR), and third party logistics. First, we refine a units' TA, which is that portion of a unit's full Table of Equipment (TE) located at Reserve Training Centers (RTCs). Our goal is to balance the amount of equipment necessary to conduct training with the amount of equipment

that can be maintained within personnel, facility, and fiscal constraints. Second, we leverage OMMCR funds to employ mobile maintenance support teams that augment our limited organic maintenance capacity in the Marine Corps Reserve. Third, we utilize a Service-managed third party logistics provider to repair secondary components that cannot be repaired organically due to limited intermediate maintenance capacity. Congressional support for Reserve funding is paramount to our continued success in sustaining our equipment and maintenance readiness.

Future fielding of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) and Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) will provide the Reserve Component with the latest generation of combat equipment. However, the Reserve component fielding of the JLTV and ACV has been delayed beyond the current Future Year's Defense Program (FYDP), with the JLTV fielding not scheduled to resume until FY 2029 and the full allowance of ACVs currently scheduled for fielding in FY 2027. Additionally, fielding of programs such as the Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR), Ground Weapons Locating Radar (GWLR), All Terrain Crane (ATC), Platoon Water Purification System (PWPS), and Mobile Integrated Remains Collection System (MIRCS) will enhance our ability to fight, maneuver freely, and win on the modern battlefield.

Training

The Marine Corps Reserve typically participates in a number of training exercises in the United States and overseas each year to improve combat readiness and enhance our ability to rapidly activate and integrate with the Active Component. Although the global pandemic presented numerous challenges to the Reserve Force's ability to participate in and conduct training, drill weekends and annual training periods have resumed to the maximum extent possible. In addition, telework drill weekends continue to be an option along with online

training when feasible. Local commanders continue to demonstrate initiative and creativity in conducting meaningful training for the Marines. While digital training continues to allow for an increase in individual skills, the focus of effort is to conduct critical unit training at the company and battalion levels.

As operations in a COVID-19 environment are the new norm, precautions still include the wearing of masks and social distancing, when practical, during training. Local commanders continue to adjust their training to include spreading out unit drills over multiple weekends to ensure compliance with local health mandates and reduce gatherings of personnel. During in-person drills, our small-unit leaders continue to perform admirably, maintaining communication with their Marines and ensuring mitigation measures are enforced to guarantee quality training while preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Although the global pandemic has adversely affected higher-level training normally gained during regularly scheduled exercises, Reserve participation in scheduled exercises has slowly begun to increase in FY21. In the past year, the Marine Corps Reserve participated in 46 exercises, training a total of 10,072 Reserve personnel. Reserve Forces returned to their participation in the annual service-level Integrated Training Exercise (ITX), conducted aboard Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms California. This evolution included 4,311 personnel from 77 different units that spanned 58 Home Training Centers. Over the span of 20 training days, ITX improves combat readiness and efficiency in Total Force integration and enables more rapid activation response times at the battalion and squadron levels. Through measured matriculation of Marine Corps Reserve Forces back into Combatant Commander-sponsored exercises and battalion/squadron annual training exercises in FY21, the Marine Corps Reserve is continuing to focus on operational readiness.

Resident Professional Military Education (PME) courses regained momentum in FY21 as seat capacity returned to 1,080. In addition, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to leverage distance education and virtual learning to maximize PME training opportunities.

The Marine Corps Reserve uses training simulators wherever and whenever possible to preserve fiscal and materiel resources. Reserve units employ Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainers (ISMTs) to maintain combat marksmanship skills and to maximize the use of their most precious resource, time. The ISMTs enable onsite training and eliminate long distance travel to remote Department of Defense (DoD) training locations. The use of this and other simulations systems, as well as increased online training, enabled the force to complete mission essential tasks and required DoD and Service-level annual training during the global pandemic.

Facilities

The Marine Corps Reserve occupies facilities in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These facilities include 27 sites that are owned and maintained by the Marine Corps Reserve, 131 tenant Reserve Training Centers that are operated by other Services, three family housing sites, one permanent barracks, and one General Officer Quarters. Although some sites are located on major DoD installations, most are situated within civilian communities, ranging from residential neighborhoods to industrial and commercial districts. We continue to improve the maintenance and security of our facilities to ensure the safety of our Marines and Sailors and to provide an effective training and mobilization location.

Fifty-seven percent of the facilities budget supports the sustainment and maintenance of existing infrastructure and day-to-day operating costs. We have improved the overall readiness of our facilities inventory through the Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization

(FSRM) support program and maximized the impact of our budget through divestiture and demolition of excess footprint.

The Military Construction, Navy Reserve (MCNR) Program focuses on providing construction for new and enduring capabilities, as well as recapitalization of our aging facilities. The construction enabled by the annual authorization and appropriation of MCNR funding is an important factor in advancing our facilities support mission as we optimize our force laydown throughout the Nation. Continued support for our MCNR request is essential as we divest of failing infrastructure and continue to modernize our capabilities.

The safety of our Marines, Sailors, and their families is of utmost importance. We are engaged in ongoing efforts to improve the overall force protection at all of our sites by working with our Service partners and the National Guard for joint occupied facilities. Numerous protection assessments have been conducted at our facilities and security engineering reports have been generated to assist and develop designs to mitigate protection concerns, specifically physical security. These assessments identify requirements and serve to prioritize enhancements to improve facility security for our Marines, Sailors, and their families.

The combined effects of our targeted site consolidations, FSRM, and MCNR Programs have steadily reduced the number of inadequate or substandard Reserve Training Centers and enabled better support to the force. However, as our infrastructure ages, the operating costs have steadily increased and will continue to grow as the Marine Corps modernizes to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy. Continued support to our annual funding request for our facilities program will enable us to improve the overall physical infrastructure that reinforces the operational readiness of our units and personnel.

Health Services

The Marine Corps Reserve Health Services Support (HSS) system prioritizes the health and wellness of our Reserve Marines and Sailors. We continue to improve medical readiness through a robust Individual Medical Readiness Program within the Marine Corps Reserve and by accurate monitoring, identification, and supervision of unit level actions necessary to attain readiness goals. Additionally, our Health Services personnel participate in Force Readiness Activation Assessment Program inspections and audits which provide oversight at the unit level and the ability to monitor readiness and adherence to policy.

The Reserve Health Readiness Program (RHRP) has greatly increased overall medical and dental readiness throughout the force. This program provides support using contracted civilian medical and dental providers to work with units that do not have organic medical or dental support personnel or are not supported by a Military Treatment Facility (MTF). During FY21, the RHRP performed 15,814 Periodic Health Assessments (PHAs), 846 Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRAs), 18,903 audiological examinations, and 13,408 dental examinations.

The Marine Corps Reserve HSS's priority is to achieve the DoD's goal of a 90% medically ready force. National, regional, state, and local restrictions on travel and group activities due to COVID-19 community transmission affected scheduling and availability of both organic unit and RHRP readiness events over the course of several months. During FY21, our individual medical and dental readiness rates were 76% and 81%, respectively. Marine Corps Reserve units rely heavily on RHRP to maintain our medical and dental readiness and continued support of this program is imperative for maintaining overall readiness.

Behavioral Health

In addition to the RHRP, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to execute a multifaceted behavioral health program that includes Combat Operational Stress Control Capability, Suicide Prevention Capability, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Family Advocacy Programs. The Combat Operational Stress Control Capability (COSCC) provides essential knowledge, skills, and tools to assist commanders with improving mission readiness, force preservation, and improving the long-term health of Marines and their families. The COSCC is comprised of two trainings: Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) and Deployment Cycle Training (DCT). OSCAR builds teams of selected Marines and unit leaders along with medical and religious personnel to work together acting as sensors for the commanders by identifying small changes in personnel behavior and helps to enable a bias for action within the command. The DCT is conducted at all levels and is provided to Service members at the appropriate point in the deployment cycle. The combination of these programs help to prevent, identify, and effectively manage combat and operational stress, whether deployed or in garrison. Each of these tools supports the unit commanders in building unit strength, resiliency, and readiness, as well as keeping Marines in the fight.

COVID-19 community transmission has not only impacted medical readiness, but also the mental health of our Marines and Sailors. Amongst our Active and Reserve Component Service members, mental health effects included increased isolation, relationship stress, and financial strain. The Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery continues to support behavioral health through various independent, contracted programs such as PDHRA and the Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP). The PDHRA Program focuses specifically on identifying issues that emerge after our Marines and Sailors have returned home from deployment. PHOP

secures behavioral health screenings, psychological treatment referrals, and essential follow-up treatment to ensure our Service members' behavioral health needs are met. In FY21 PHOP connected with 5,960 Marine Corps Reservists; an estimated 11% of those connections resulted in intensive case management. Through their outreach services, PHOP addresses both post-deployment behavioral health concerns and crisis-related interventions by providing our Marines and Sailors access to local resources through a network of contracted behavioral health programs. Internally, PHOP and Force Chaplains regularly exchange contact rosters to multiply networking effectiveness. These programs are critical to maintaining a resilient force by providing pathways for Marines, Sailors, and families to seek behavioral health assistance.

Signs of operational and combat stress may manifest long after a Service member returns home from deployment. This delayed onset of symptoms presents unique challenges to Reserve Marines who may be detached from vital medical care and the daily support network inherent in active duty Marine Corps units. Encouraging Marines to recognize and communicate mental health challenges is a pervasive issue facing our commanders. The Marine Corps Reserve addresses the stigma associated with mental health care through key programs such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) and COSCC. We market all of our behavioral health initiatives and programs through our Marine Corps Reserve website and during key Marine Corps forums throughout the year.

The Marine Corps Reserve developed a smart phone mobile application (app) – USMC Reserve Connect - that is tailored to Marine Reservists and family members. The app, which is approved by the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), is an enterprise-wide, mobile app that serves as a gateway to public content on government websites. The app was established to deliver portable, timely, and relevant information to Marines, Sailors, and their families and

to reduce reliance on traditional computers to access career and personal resources. The app is customizable, enabling units to provide Marine Reservists with relevant, unit-specific information. The app includes a mobile Common Access Card (CAC) portal that allows Marines to pair their devices with a mobile CAC reader to access some CAC-secured sites. USMC Reserve Connect increases engagement, communication, and connectedness through greater access to career, lifestyle, and behavioral health resources. USMC Reserve Connect is free to the public and is available for download in most mobile app stores.

The Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program continues to educate Marines and Sailors on substance misuse and how misuse may impact relationships, coping mechanisms, thinking patterns, and risk awareness. The Substance Abuse Program provides tools to promote the safety and total fitness of Marines, Sailors, and their families to sustain and improve personal readiness and unit performance. The Marine Corps Reserve relies profoundly on its Drug Demand Reduction Program that uses random urinalysis testing to deter the use of illicit drugs and misuse of prescription drugs. Each Reserve unit conducts monthly drug testing to screen Reserve Marines and Sailors for drugs as well as breathalyzer testing to screen for alcohol use while in a duty status. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Alcohol Screening Program has been paused until an installation reaches HPCON A or at the local unit's commander's discretion to ensure the safety of all Marines. The Substance Abuse Program staff provides quarterly, on-demand education and awareness training on the dangers of abusing prescription drugs as well as information on the proper disposal of unused and outdated medications. Additionally, the Substance Abuse Program's annual supervisor-level training increase leaders' awareness of the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. In FY21, the Substance Abuse Program expanded its educational efforts to include the introduction of new universal prevention training

through Prime for Life. This 4.5 hour training is designed for Substance Abuse Control Officers and their unit leaders to explore how biology and choices affect an individual's risk of alcohol and substance dependence, with emphasis focused on values and goals.

The Marine Corps Reserve recognizes there are a multitude of factors contributing to suicide-related events. Risk factors can include depression, social isolation, impulsive or aggressive tendencies, and substance abuse. Common precipitating stressors include relationship, legal, and financial challenges, as well as disciplinary problems. Commanders employ a coordinated, consistent, and effective suicide prevention methodology that allows for the identification of stressors and application of mitigation measures to prevent and address conditions that lead to suicidal behaviors within their units. Force Preservation Councils are established to optimize the potential of all Active and Reserve Marines and Sailors by identifying additional risk factors and applying holistic risk management courses of action in order to improve individual and unit readiness. Once a possible behavioral health challenge is identified, appropriate interventions are delivered while command leaders coordinate with the individual and mental health professional to develop an effective reintegration plan. Through this coordination, leaders continue to demonstrate dignity and respect for the Service member while meeting the needs of the unit.

The Marine Corps' Unit Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training (UMAPIT) educates every Marine on the basics of suicide prevention, assists with normalizing life changes, and emphasizes the need to seek help with the aim of decreasing the negative stigma around behavioral health. UMAPIT is a tiered initiative designed to improve the total fitness of Marines, help foster mission readiness, and increase the chance for early intervention. This training incorporates evidence-informed practices and raises awareness about common risk

factors and warning signs associated with a range of behavioral health issues such as substance abuse, suicide, family maltreatment, and combat operational stress before such issues become unmanageable. There has been a noticeable shift in the Marine Corps culture toward encouraging Marines to seek help. This culture shift aids in reducing barriers to care and the fear of reprisal for seeking help. Lastly, all Marines are taught to recognize suicide warning signs and to seek appropriate resources for themselves and others to ensure that no Marine is left behind.

Care Management Teams focus on supporting Reserve Marines and Sailors through the Department of Veterans Affairs Transition Care Management Program. The Reserve Marines and Sailors are assigned a Care Manager who oversees the referrals, follow-on care, and individual health care needs of the Reserve member. The Marine Intercept Program (MIP) is an evidence-informed, targeted intervention for service members serving on active duty or activated Reservist who have had an identified suicide ideation or suicide attempt. MIP includes a series of telephonic contacts in which a counselor assesses the Marine for risk, encourages the use of a safety plan, and identifies and addresses barriers to services or resources. These services are also provided to our Reserve Marines and Sailors through the PHOP.

Our Marines have proven their strength in navigating challenging issues such as frequent moves, deployments, and separations from loved ones. To help with these challenges, our Marines, Sailors, and family members are able to access behavioral health programs at Marine Corps installations through Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) while on active-duty orders. Additionally, we continue to support Military OneSource which provides confidential, non-medical counseling, resources and support to Service members and their families anywhere in the world.

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response

Sexual assault is a complex and challenging problem with short- and long-term consequences for victims and their families, friends, and communities. In the military, those consequences include harm to unit cohesion, morale, and potentially the confidence of the Service as a whole. Sexual violence is often interrelated with readiness challenges, behavioral health issues, and destructive behaviors. For the Marine Corps Reserve, addressing the health and safety of our Service members and fostering a culture of dignity and respect are top priorities toward reducing and ultimately eliminating sexual assault within our ranks. In one step toward accomplishing this goal, the Marine Corps Reserve administers and implements a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. Seven full-time, professional employees ensure the efficacy of the program and its services across our geographically dispersed force. In addition to the force-level Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), each Major Subordinate Command (MSC) within the Marine Corps Reserve has a full-time civilian SARC who serves as a special staff officer and subject matter expert to their Commanding General. The SARCs manage each MSC's SAPR Program from Marine Forces Reserve headquarters in New Orleans, Louisiana. There are also two professional civilian SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs) who travel throughout the country to provide in-person advocacy services, training, and unit-specific program guidance to Marines, Sailors, and their families. The Marine Corps Reserve works diligently to improve our victim response, outreach, and sexual assault prevention by approaching these efforts as a team. The SARCs and SAPR VAs work together to ensure there is never a gap in coverage, regardless of the MSC. Leaders at every level and anyone in need of support services have access to a SAPR staff member for program guidance.

The SAPR staff trains up to 160 individuals to become victim advocates each year during courses held quarterly in New Orleans. After completing the 40-hour training course, these trainees submit an application for credentialing through the DoD's Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program. Once credentialed, the SAPR VAs are officially appointed by their commanders to serve in the billet at their respective RTCs. In total, the Marine Corps Reserve maintains an active roster averaging more than 200 SAPR VAs across the country.

SAPR personnel respond to Marines, Sailors, and adult dependents who request support services related to a report of sexual assault. The SARCs and VAs screen for potential safety issues, develop individualized safety plans, and offer advocacy services and referrals in the military and civilian sectors. In order to more effectively support the Reserve Component, the SAPR Program maintains a database of nationwide resources for victims of sexual assault who may not have access to military providers.

The Marine Corps Reserve operates a dedicated Sexual Assault Support Line that is staffed by the professional SAPR team 24/7. The Marine Corps Reserve also actively publicizes the DoD Safe Helpline, an additional resource that offers crisis support services for members of the DoD community. The DoD Safe Helpline is available 24/7 worldwide with "click/call/text" user options and can be used anonymously for confidential support.

The Marine Corps Reserve's prevention strategy is holistic and integrated with other programs aimed toward eradicating sexual assault and interpersonal violence, such as the Equal Opportunity Program, Safety, Spiritual Readiness Initiatives, the PHOP, Total Force Fitness initiatives, and Behavioral Health. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to set the example by employing a zero-tolerance policy related to sexual assault and harassment and a retaliation-free command climate. Leaders at every level are encouraged to actively engage with Marines and

Sailors to create a positive environment free from attitudes and behaviors that are incompatible with our core values. Each year, all Marines and Sailors receive SAPR training that covers reporting options, available resources, and prevention techniques. New course material was recently released for our Staff Non-Commissioned Officer population focusing on leadership traits and the importance of fostering a positive command climate to reduce the risk of sexual violence. Along with overall education about the SAPR Program, these periods of instruction give individual Marines and Sailors an opportunity to interact with their local Command SAPR representatives, thereby helping to generate trust in the program and confidence that the prevention of sexual assault is a priority for leadership.

Military Equal Opportunity

A key component to mission readiness is a healthy command climate, devoid of unlawful discriminatory practices and unacceptable behaviors that are collectively referred to as Prohibited Activities and Conduct (PAC). These behaviors may include bullying, dissident and protest activity, harassment, hazing, prohibited discrimination, sexual harassment, and wrongful distribution of an intimate image. The Military Equal Opportunity (MEO) Program is enforced throughout the Marine Corps Reserve to eliminate such behaviors and foster a culture of dignity and respect, regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation. The MEO Program is staffed by fully trained, Active Component Marines who possess the 0147 Military Occupational Specialty. These billets include a force-level Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) and three additional EOAs at the MSC levels. The Marine Corps Reserve EOAs work cohesively as trusted agents to ensure seamless coverage by providing sound program advice to commanders and assistance to members across the force.

EOAs are also assisted in program implementation by unit-level Equal Opportunity Representatives (EOR), a collateral duty maintained by Staff Noncommissioned Officers and higher at every O5 and O6 level command. Additional EORs are utilized at geographically dispersed subordinate units throughout the force for additional program implementation at the lowest level.

Both EOAs and EORs provide training to all Reserve Component members in preventing, identifying, and reporting PAC. Additional guidance is provided to ensure members understand the benefits of a healthy command climate and the adverse impact that PAC has on individual members, units, and the Service. EOAs and EORs are responsible for monitoring and advising commanders on command climate issues to include those identified in their Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) results. During FY21, Marine Corps Reserve units were in full compliance with the Secretary of Defense-directed DEOCS requirements, including all follow-on corrective action plans. In addition to MEO resources, commands utilize the SAPR and behavioral health programs for a holistic approach to maintaining healthy command climates. Both EOAs and EORs work cohesively to ensure formal PAC complaints are addressed in a timely manner and in accordance with the applicable references. During FY21, the Marine Corps Reserve resolved 49 unique cases through the complaint resolution process. Throughout this process, commanders ensured complainants were protected against all forms of retaliation, maltreatment, ostracism, and reprisal.

As a testament to the outstanding work performed by the Marine Corps Reserve MEO Program, the Marine Corps Reserve EOA was awarded the FY21 Equal Opportunity Advisor of the Year award for the Marine Corps.

Quality of Life

The Marine Corps Reserve is committed to ensuring quality of life support programs are designed to effectively assist all Marines, Sailors, and their families, whether they are deployed or on the home front. The Marine Corps Reserve is geographically dispersed throughout the country and often stationed away from most traditional brick-and-mortar resources available at major bases and stations. Therefore, we strive to provide awareness of, and access to, the numerous support programs available for their benefit. Face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities are offered along with toll-free telephone and internet resources. The ability to access the comprehensive set of MCCS programs, which support operational readiness, warfighting capabilities, and quality of life, can have a profoundly positive effect on the well-being of our Marines and their families. MCCS programming includes Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP), School Liaison Program, personal and professional development, fitness and recreation, deployment support, family team building, and prevention. MCCS is a user-friendly and responsive resource that provides constant and enduring support to Marines and their families throughout their entire service or affiliation with the Marine Corps. The Unit, Personal, and Family Readiness Program is supported by civilian Deployment Readiness Coordinators and Uniformed Readiness Coordinators who implement a commander's family readiness vision and provide a vital link to Marines, Sailors, and their families to ensure a constant state of family readiness.

MCCS programs continue to be flexible, constantly adjusting to meet the needs of our geographically dispersed Marines and their families. The training programs provided to our commanders, Family Readiness Command Teams, and Marines and their families help to produce a ready and resilient force equipped to achieve success. The Marine Corps Family

Team Building (MCFTB) Program enhances readiness and resiliency through non-clinical preventative education, professional training, and community-building support to Marines, Sailors, and their families throughout the wide array of mission, life, and career events. As a direct result of the global pandemic and the different state and local gathering restrictions implemented throughout the country, MCFTB training events were delivered almost exclusively through virtual interactive webinars at 158 RTCs. During FY21, the Marine Corps Reserve conducted 176 training events in which 3,008 Marines and family members received valuable information to prepare for and flourish during deployments and achieve a positive post-deployment reintegration experience.

A fundamental component to the Reserve Marine's quality of life and resiliency is the religious ministry support provided by 139 chaplains and Religious Program Specialists who make up the Religious Ministry Teams (RMT). Religious ministry support and care extends to all Marines and Sailors, regardless of religious affiliation. Beyond equipment, training, and technical skill, the strength of spirit enables our Marines and Sailors to accomplish the mission with honor, to overcome adversity, and to sacrificially serve with meaning and purpose. RMTs, as uniformed Service members, help to increase the readiness of Marines, Sailors, and their families by preparing them for the rigors of military life including the demands of military operations. The Marine Corps Reserve has chaplains embedded in 41 Marine Corps Reserve units across the country. By being present in person, these chaplains are able to cultivate trust with leadership, offer religious services, and provide confidential counsel.

The Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operations (CREDO) Program provides transformational retreats and workshops including the Marriage Enrichment Retreat (MER), the Personal Resiliency Retreat (PRR), and the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills

Training (ASIST) class. The MER and PRR initiatives equip Marines, Sailors, and their families with practical relationship and communication tools that strengthen marriages and individual resiliency on the home front and during deployments. The PRR helps Marines and Sailors set personal goals, make good decisions, deal with stress, and live their lives with greater purpose and satisfaction. During FY21, 1,563 individuals participated in 16 MERs and 69 retreats and workshops focused on resiliency and team building in the context of leadership and human dynamics.

In an ongoing effort to reduce suicidal events, the CREDO Program offers ASIST and Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK), evidence-based programs that train individuals to intervene in suicidal ideations and keep the individual safe until they can receive follow-on care. A total of 137 personnel were trained at six ASIST and two safeTALK classes in FY21 that helped provide commands with the necessary resource of trained personnel. Participants in these programs self-reported an 83% increase in their likelihood to intervene to help a person having thoughts of suicide. In FY21, the program continued to emphasize “taking it to where the Marines are” by offering three of the workshops in conjunction with travel to remote geographic locations.

COVID-19 continued to impair the operational tempo of the CREDO Program throughout FY21, limiting travel for in-person training and necessitating the cancellation of four retreats and four ASIST workshops. Live virtual training helped to enable mission execution with three offerings on MarineNet’s Adobe Connect platform: Leadership and Personal Growth Workshops (LPGW), Marriage Enrichment Workshops (MEW), and Professional Naval Chaplain Workshops (PNCW). In FY21, CREDO conducted 63 virtual and 31 in-person workshops consisting of 677 training hours for more than 1,700 participants.

The Marine Corps emphasizes the importance of readiness for Marines and family members in many areas of life. The Marine Corps Personal and Professional Development Programs continue to provide training and educational resources to increase awareness and build skills for individual and family development. These programs enhance the quality of life for our military community by promoting self-reliance and self-sufficiency, as well as continuing the tradition of “taking care of our own.” The Marine Corps Personal and Professional Development Programs include transition readiness, personal financial management, voluntary education, and information and referral.

The Marine Corps’ Transition Readiness Program (TRP) is a comprehensive program which helps Marines and their families formulate and achieve effective post-transition employment, educational, and entrepreneurship goals. It provides the tools and resources needed to comply with Department of Defense (DoD) directed Career Readiness Standards (CRS). Further, the Marine Corps has incorporated a Marine for Life Cycle approach to transition readiness that informs Marines throughout their career. Transition Readiness is a process that occurs across the Marine for Life Cycle, not an event that occurs at a single point in time. Additionally, the Marine for Life Network links our Marines to employment, education, and community resources in their hometown areas to support their future goals. The Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) is a week-long program required by Title 10 for all Active and Reserve Component Marines and Sailors who have served a minimum of 180 consecutive days on active duty. Due to the global pandemic, most installation-based transition courses were temporarily closed to non-tenant Service members; however, our geographically dispersed Marines continued to meet this requirement through virtual course participation.

Several library resources are also available. Marines may take advantage of the Department of Defense partnership with Tutor.com which offers our Marines and their dependents access to 24/7, no-cost, live tutoring services for grades K-12 and college students. Our Marines are also provided with remote access to language courses through Mango Languages, which supports over 70 languages, including English as a Second Language. Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course helps Marines build math and verbal skills to excel on the job, pass exams, and advance their careers and education.

Marines with a solid understanding of their personal financial situation and sound financial management practices are better prepared to meet the needs of the nation. The Personal Financial Management Program provides personal financial education, training, counseling, and information and referral as the number one source for unbiased financial information to Marines and their families. The PFMP utilizes the Financial Education Action Points to increase the knowledge and improve the financial practices of Marines at predetermined milestones within their career, such as promotion, PCS, marriage, birth of a child, and others. The PFMP is available to all Marines free of charge and on a variety of platforms (in-person, hybrid, and virtual).

The Marine Corps' Semper Fit Program partners with our bases and stations to provide fitness education activities that promote physical and mental readiness and develop positive self-esteem and healthy lifestyles. Additionally, the High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) Program focuses on physical resiliency, combat readiness, and injury prevention. The HITT Program provides hands-on, science-based strength and conditioning courses and online physical fitness tools to include instruction on injury prevention, nutrition, and weight management.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) is a DoD-wide effort to promote the well-being of National Guard and Reserve members, their families, and communities by connecting them with resources throughout the deployment cycle. The YRRP is an enduring and invaluable part of our efforts to build resiliency. Since its inception in 2010, we have conducted more than 944 training events for more than 53,500 Marines, Sailors, and family members. In FY21, we conducted 22 virtual events connecting more than 1,500 participants with local resources before, during, and after deployments.

We remain a dedicated advocate for flexible quality of life programs and services that evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our Marines, Sailors, and their families. The combined effect of these programs and services is critical to the readiness and retention of our Marines, Sailors, and their families.

Supporting our Wounded, Ill, or Injured Marines and their Families

The Marine Corps ensures the availability of full spectrum care to all wounded, ill, or injured (WII) Active and Reserve Service members through the Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR). Due to the unique nature of how Reserve Marines are activated and mobilized, they often encounter unique challenges to health care when wounded, ill, or injured. The Marine Corps has sought to address these challenges through the establishment of a WWR Liaison Officer whose sole purpose is to provide subject matter expertise in WII policies and procedures, coordination between Reserve leadership and WWR staff, and guidance and training to Reserve units throughout the recovery care continuum.

The WWR staff includes the Reserve Medical Entitlements Determination (RMED) Section, which maintains specific oversight of all Reservists requiring medical care for service-

incurred and duty-limiting medical conditions. In addition to the oversight of medical care, RMED administers the Incapacitation Pay Program for the Reserve Component. Qualification for Incapacitation Pay is determined based upon the member being physically disabled as a result of their service-connected injury and the member demonstrating a loss of civilian earned income from non-military employment or self-employment as a result. During Fiscal Year 2021 the RMED section processed 67 Incapacitation Pay requests for payments totaling \$366,123.48. Reserve Marines facing complex care and recovery needs have access to WWR's network of 45 Recovery Care Coordinators who provide one-on-one transition support and resource identification for WII Reservists and families often living long distances from military installations.

The WWR also has medical advocates at the regimental staff who are available to assist Reservists, as well as Active, retired and veteran Marines, in need of medical care coordination and advocacy. If face to face contact is needed with issues related to non-medical care and case management, the WWR has Reserve Staff Non-Commissioned Officers who are activated through Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) funding called District Injured Support Coordinators (DISC) who are dispersed throughout the country to assist. The DISCs are the WWR Commanding Officer's representatives in the field with the mission to facilitate the successful transition of post-9/11 WII Marines from the Active or Reserve Component to veteran status. This mission is accomplished by providing needs-based support and problem resolution, to include non-medical case management, to post-9/11 WII veterans and their families to ensure we keep faith with all Marines.

The Marine Corps will not forget the sacrifices our Reserve Marines have made for this great Nation and we will continue to work with the WWR to establish resources and programs that address the unique and ongoing needs of our Reserve Service members and their families.

Force Design

The Marine Corps Reserve, operating as both a strategic and operational Reserve, remains a critical part of the Total Force Marine Corps. As the Marine Corps transitions toward Naval Campaigning in response to Strategic competition, the Reserve Component continues to be an integral element of the planning effort. The Marine Corps' force development process is accomplished through deliberate integrated planning teams and comprehensive war games. The Marine Corps Reserve provides support to this force design effort, while remaining a vital global contributor in meeting Combatant Command requirements.

Although significant adjustments to the Active Component forces continue, the redesign of the Reserve Component has yet to mature to the point of implementation. Currently, only the deactivations of 4th Tank Battalion, bridging units, VMU-4, and VMGR-452 have impacted the Marine Corps Reserve. The decision to deactivate Tanks and Bridges impacted the entire Marine Corps while the decision to deactivate VMU was specific to the Reserve Component. With each unit deactivation, whether a Marine is contractually obligated to serve or is no longer obligated, Personnel Transition Teams (PTTs) will travel to impacted locations to meet with each individual Marine in order to assist them in finding opportunities for continued service. As changes to the Reserve Component impact the physical location of Reserve units across the country, we will continue to actively analyze their efficacy to ensure that any and all unit relocations are analyzed in detail and driven by relevant qualitative and quantitative factors.

The Reserve Component remains nested with all Service-related initiatives supporting Force Design 2030. As the Active Component evolves, so will the Reserve Component while also remaining ready and relevant to maintain its position as a vital contributor in support of Combatant Command requirements. Additionally, the Reserve Component, alongside Active Component planners, specifically II MEF, are working to design and mature the concept of Service Retained Forces in support of global crisis and contingency operations. The Service Retained Force concept provides an opportunity for the Reserve Component to remain relevant and ready and provides a clear role for Reserve Marines in the future force under Force Design 2030. This will include potential adjustments to the current capabilities and platforms within the Reserve Component that will ultimately serve to make a more lethal and capable Reserve Force.

Talent Management

Earning victory in the increasingly complex and multi-domain warfighting realm of the future requires all Marines to achieve and maintain an advanced level of technical, intellectual, and physical capability and to operate comfortably in distributed and ambiguous environments. The Marine Corps of the future will require significantly more low-density/high-demand skillsets that are difficult to achieve and retain. To attain these Service objectives, the Marine Corps must leverage the Reserve Component to attract and retain diverse personnel with unique talent and skill. It must also provide a path to service that is more compatible for Reserve Marines who choose to maintain a civilian career concurrently with military duty. As the Active Component Marine Corps develops and implements new talent management and diversity objectives, policies, and programs, the Reserve Component offers the Service many unique opportunities to attract, recruit, identify, incentivize, and retain the most talented individuals across the Total

Force. The Marine Corps Reserve is currently integrating with Active Component teams at Headquarters Marine Corps, Manpower and Reserve Affairs and Marine Corps Recruiting Command to ensure the Reserve Component is seamlessly integrated into all Service-level talent management efforts. A sample of Reserve Component officer billets will be included in the initial release and testing for the Marine Corps' Talent Management and Engagement Platform (TMEP). When this platform reaches full operational capability, TMEP will greatly enhance talent development, diversity, leadership development, and inclusion and equity throughout the Reserve Component. Moving forward, the Marine Corps Reserve will continue to develop innovative policies, pathways, and tools designed to capture, catalogue, and maintain visibility of our diverse pool of talent and ensure these Marines have a path for future service.

Conclusion

As the operational environment continues to change, the Marine Corps Reserve will adapt and triumph over any challenges these changes may present. As a warfighting organization, the key to our success has been and will continue to be the individual Marines, Sailors, and their families. As part of the Total Force Marine Corps, the Marine Corps Reserve will continue to focus on force design, readiness, and manpower in the coming years to maintain and enhance our Service's ability to deter pacing threats as prescribed by the National Defense Strategy. Your Reserve Marines will continue to answer their "irrational call to service" and, with your continued support, we will remain ready. Semper Fidelis!