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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
JUNE 1, 2023**

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Lieutenant General David G. Bellon

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

Lieutenant General Bellon is a native of 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 the duties as Commander, Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces South.

Introduction

Chairman Tester, Ranking Member Collins, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to testify on behalf of the Commandant of the Marine Corps and provide an overview on the current state of the Marine Corps Reserve and an insight into our vision for the future.

Your Marine Corps Reserve has always been ready, relevant, and responsive for the Nation, and to maintain that status we must innovate and evolve to meet the threats of both today and tomorrow. As part of the Marine Corps' effort to modernize our force and our warfighting capabilities through Force Design, the Marine Corps Reserve has embraced several unique initiatives to drive innovation on multiple fronts. The establishment of the Marine Innovation Unit (MIU) aboard Stewart Air National Guard Base in New York is a shining example of how your Marine Corps Reserve is leading from the front in this area. The MIU harnesses an untouched talent pool of Reserve Component Marines with unique skill sets from diverse backgrounds. MIU, in partnership with the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, postures the Marine Corps to accelerate the adoption of advanced capabilities, and transform Naval Service capacity for technology while retaining and investing in Total Force human capital. In addition to the MIU, and in collaboration with the Defense Innovation Unit, the Marine Corps Reserve has been exploring a unique opportunity to identify and purchase dual-use commercially available small craft for littoral operations. These craft will allow the Marine Corps to leverage Reserve Component Assault Amphibian Battalion units and their littoral warfighting expertise to support Service-level experimentation and learning in littoral areas of operations. Continuous refining of how to compete and fight against a peer adversary is key to retaining the talent and service of these maritime-oriented Marines, and it is key to our evolution.

Just as we innovate and evolve, the Marine Corps Reserve remains dedicated to connecting with and contributing to the communities in which they reside, forming a critical link between the Marine Corps and our communities across the Nation. In 2022 we celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. For 75 years Marines and their families have given back to their local towns and neighborhoods through their participation in this program; uniting local communities in a common cause to help less fortunate children through annual toy collections and distribution campaigns. Every year, no matter the climate or place, the Marine Corps Reserve is on the forefront of this initiative to support communities and families across the Nation.

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 individual Marines and their families. Your support of the National Guard and Reserves, down to the individual Marine Reservist, ensures we have the resources and funding to fight and win our Nation's battles.

A Total Force

Throughout the past year, the Marine Corps Reserve continued global deployments supporting Combatant Commander requirements by providing multifaceted forces focused on combat operations, crisis prevention, crisis response, and theater security cooperation. In addition to the Active Component Marines already deployed, 2022 saw an additional 1,847 Reserve Marines activated and mobilized to support 22 operational requirements across six geographic Combatant Commands. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to meet the demand for use as an Operational Reserve; however, challenges to our readiness and ability to meet strategic requirements remain.

In FY23, the Marine Corps Reserve has already activated more than 83 Marines in support of four Combatant Commands and is forecasting the activation and mobilization of 589 additional Reserve Marines to support 21 separate formations. These operations significantly increase the Reserve Component's readiness and interoperability with the Active Component, Joint Forces, allies, and coalition partners. Planning is currently underway for increased activations and deployments across the globe that integrate Reserve forces with the Active Component commencing in FY24 and stretching across the Future Years Defense Program in support of high-priority Combatant Command requirements.

Throughout 2022, the Marine Corps Reserve continued to provide direct support to Operation ALLIES WELCOME with more than 1,100 Reserve Marines. Upon the successful completion of Operation ALLIES WELCOME, 103 Reserve Marines volunteered to extend their mobilization and deploy to Kosovo for Operation ALLIES WELCOME-KOSOVO located aboard Camp Bondsteel. The ability to augment this humanitarian aid mission with volunteers from the Reserve force speaks volumes to the dedication, professionalism, and compassion of

our Reserve Marines. The Marine Corps' continued employment of the Reserve Component as a supplemental force has enabled the Active Component to focus its effort on global crisis response and contingency operations.

In addition to participating in operational requirements, the Marine Corps Reserve conducts a wide array of combat related training exercises across the globe. The purpose of these exercises is to improve the Marine Corps Reserve's combat readiness, international relations, and interoperability between allied nations and partners. In FY22, the Marine Corps Reserve led or participated in 59 military exercises across 16 countries, contributing 10,599 Reserve Marines. In FY23, the Marine Corps Reserve is forecasted to participate in 49 exercises globally, with a total force of 9,887 Reserve Marines. We expect the overall number of exercises and engagements to increase in the coming year as planners from the Marine Corps Reserve continue to attend exercise-planning events.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to participate in the Department of Defense (DoD) Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) Program, which provides joint/military training in the United States and its territories to increase deployment and unit readiness. The IRT program simultaneously provides key services such as health care, construction, transportation, and cybersecurity with lasting benefits for our American communities. In 2022, the Marine Corps Reserve participated in nine exercises under the IRT Program, with two of those exercises involving both Active and Reserve forces. Our participating units were able to train to mission essential tasks involving both horizontal and vertical construction, logistical support, communications, and medical care while making tangible, meaningful impacts in communities located in Alaska, Indiana, Ohio, Texas, and Hawaii. With your continued support of these

efforts, we look to expand our footprint in this program; to include airlift, construction, medical, and cybersecurity efforts.

In addition to participating in operational requirements throughout the world, 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, most Marine Corps casualty notifications and follow-on assistance calls to the next of kin are made by our Reserve Marines.

During FY22, I-I and Reserve Site Support staffs supported 247 of the 298 active 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 as needed. They assist family members with planning the return and final resting place of their Marine and ensure the filing of appropriate documents so that 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 many of these services for our fallen Marines and their families. Marine Corps funeral honors are dedicated to ensuring all Marines who have

served honorably receive the appropriate honors. It is a final salute to their life and the final demonstration of our country's gratitude to those who, in times of war and peace, have faithfully defended our Nation. Marine Corps Reserve units performed 22,819 military funeral honors in 2022, 93% of the total funeral services provided by 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 33,000 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 1,502 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 64,500 Marines who serve in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The Marine Corps Reserve continues to monitor the activation viability of these IRR Marines with 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

24 muster events in which 4,626 IRR Marines attended. In addition to the in-person muster events, the Marine Corps Reserve contacted and screened 47,711 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 modernizes our forces to ensure we are postured to confront future potential adversaries, we are making every effort to retain those Marines who are affected by Force Design initiatives. During 2022, the Marine Corps Reserve deployed a series of Personnel Transition Teams (PTTs) to every Reserve unit where the Commandant's Force Design program had a direct impact on Marines and their ability to continue serving; this also included those units who were affected by the Marine Forces Reserve Site Optimization program. These PTTs were specifically designed to ensure each Marine was provided information, education, and one-on-one career counseling concerning available incentives, career opportunities, and continued service options. We successfully retained more than 64% of all Reserve Marines assigned to those site locations through voluntary reassignment to another Marine Reserve unit, while an additional 14% of those Marines chose to transfer to another Service to continue their military careers. Survey responses show that 83% of the Reserve Marines felt they had been provided with the information and support needed to make an informed decision, while 90% of the Reserve Marines felt their best interests were kept in mind.

Recruiting and retaining high-quality Marines is essential to the Marine Corps' role 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 with recruiting in a COVID-19 environment have persisted into the past fiscal year. The Marine Corps Reserve still enjoys high affiliation from non-prior service recruiting and accomplished its recruiting goals in FY22. The Marine Corps Reserve is thankful for and greatly appreciates the retention programs supported by Congress and the DoD, which include inactive duty travel reimbursement and multiple bonus programs. 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 84.6% of the total requirement and maintain a grade and Military Occupational Specialty match rate of 72.3%. Our personnel readiness not only reflects the health of the force, but it directly contributes to our overall operational readiness. We fully expect to meet or exceed 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 our staff non-commissioned officers' ranks, and fully rebuild readiness from previous force structure changes.

Equipment

Every Marine Corps Reserve unit is manned, trained, and equipped to standards that facilitate seamless integration and employment of forces to meet the requirements of both the Service and Geographic Combatant Commanders. Marine Corps Reserve units, along with their

personnel and equipment, continue to be in high demand due to their high interoperability with their Active Component counterparts.

The Marine Corps Reserve is designed to be equipped at near parity with its active component counterpart due to the Total Force approach to equipment fielding. However, the 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. Inadequate or delayed fielding coupled with delays in appropriation of funds disrupts our ability to program long-term activities and challenges our efforts to improve current and future readiness. One of the greatest ongoing concerns has been our Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment (ICCE) deficiencies. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY23 provided a line-item appropriation specifically providing the Marine Corps Reserve the ability to place ICCE procurements at levels which will meet current materiel Table of Equipment allowance requirements. Currently, ongoing enterprise-wide contracting and manufacturing delays have impeded the replenishment of unserviceable 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) funds, and third-party logistics. First, we refine a unit's 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.

The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) and Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) will provide the Reserve Component with the latest generation of combat equipment. The Marine Corps Reserve began receiving its allocation of 2,628 JLTVs in 3rd quarter FY21; to date, we have received only four vehicles. An additional eight specialty vehicles for the artillery community are scheduled for fielding in FY23/24. All Marine Corps Reserve ACV deliveries are currently scheduled for FY27. Final ACV Full Operational Capability (FOC) quantities and timelines will be determined pending future Service-level Force Design 2030 assessments.

Training

The Marine Corps Reserve participates in a number of training exercises in the United States and abroad each year to improve combat readiness and enhance our ability to rapidly activate and integrate with the Active Component. The Reserve Force's ability to participate in and conduct training, drill weekends, and annual training periods have resumed to a steady state following the global pandemic. Local commanders continue to demonstrate initiative and creativity in conducting meaningful training for the Reserve Marines at each opportunity. Virtual training continues to allow for an increase in individual skills, but the focus of effort is to conduct in-person unit training at the company and battalion levels.

The dual-hatted Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces South command structure has resulted in efficiencies by enabling Reserve Marines to meet Geographic Combatant Command

requirements while simultaneously providing realistic multinational training for our Reserve formations. During FY22, Marine Corps Reserve Forces participated in the annual Service-level Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California. ITX provides an opportunity for units to perform realistic, coordinated, live-fire training to meet Marine Air Ground Task Force mission essential tasks. In addition to the tactical training, ITX also serves as a rehearsal exercise in the activation and mobilization processes. The Reserve Force that forms at Twentynine Palms for training, receives orders to muster and move personnel from 77 different units located at 58 disaggregated Home Training Centers. Additionally, units plan for and coordinate the transportation of equipment to arrive simultaneously with the units in Twentynine Palms. These actions replicate similar tasks the units would be required to perform should there be a wartime activation and Reserve Force mobilization. 4,237 Marines participated in ITX across the span of 20 training days this year. This realistic training aids in improving combat readiness for all exercise forces and enhances efficiency in Total Force integration to enable more rapid activation response times at the battalion and squadron levels.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to focus on operational readiness within the Marine Air Ground Task Force and the Joint operational environment. Using joint aviation assets from the Marine Corps, Air Force, Air National Guard and Army National Guard, the Marine Corps Reserve conducted Tactical Air Control Party training to sustain Joint Terminal Air Controller (JTAC) qualifications at Smoky Hill Bombing Range in Salina, Kansas. This training benefitted the other Services by enabling more than 45 fixed and rotary wing aviation platforms to achieve mission essential training in close air support while certifying Reserve Marine JTACs.

Resident Professional Military Education (PME) courses regained momentum in FY22 as seat capacity returned to 1,091 Reserve Component seats. 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. Marine Corps 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 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.

Facilities

The Marine Corps Reserve occupies facilities in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These facilities include 28 sites that are owned and maintained by the Marine Corps Reserve. The other 130 Reserve Training Centers, in which the status is "Tenant," are owned and maintained by other Services. Although some sites are located onboard major DoD installations, most Reserve Training Centers are located within civilian communities, ranging from residential neighborhoods to industrial and commercial districts. With a continuous effort to improve the maintenance and security of all our facilities, our main goal is to ensure the safety of our Marines and Sailors by facilitating effective readiness training and efficient activation and mobilization locations.

Traditionally, the Marine Corps Reserve has committed 100% of the facilities budget to support the sustainment and maintenance of existing infrastructure and day-to-day operating costs. Because of this investment and commitment, we have been able to improve the overall readiness of our facilities' inventory. Moreover, through the comprehensive utilization of the Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) program, we have also retained and maximized inadequate facilities that were deemed vital to support the Marine Corps Reserve's mission. Currently, we are working to identify major FSRM projects for future funding. In conjunction with our maximization efforts, we also sought out cost and funding savings in the divestiture of facilities and demolition of excess footprint. In the last two years, the Marine Corps Reserve has divested, or is in the process of divesting, from 19 sites at a savings of approximately \$200k-\$300k savings per site.

As we capitalize the utilization of the Military Construction, Navy Reserve (MCNR) program, our focus is on providing construction for new and enduring capabilities, as well as recapitalization of our aging facilities. The construction projects enabled by the annual authorization and appropriation of MCNR funding are a significant factor in advancing our facilities support mission, especially as we optimize our force laydown throughout the Nation. Continued support for our MCNR program requests is essential for the planning and execution to modernize our capabilities and, when needed, the ability to divest from failing infrastructure or facilities that no longer meet the mission.

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 improved support to the Reserve units and personnel. However, as our infrastructure ages, the operating costs have steadily increased and will continue to increase as the Marine

Corps modernizes to meet the requirements of the National Defense Strategy. The continued support of 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.

The safety of our Marines, Sailors, and their families is of utmost importance; therefore, we are actively engaged in ongoing efforts to improve the overall force protection at all our sites. We take pride in working with our Service partners and the National Guard to improve our sites where joint occupation is optimal. Throughout the last 10 years, numerous force protection assessments have been conducted at our facilities and security-engineering reports have been generated to assist in developing designs that mitigate protection concerns, specifically within the realm of physical security. These assessments identify requirements and serve to prioritize enhancements, which ultimately improve the overall facility security for our Marines, Sailors, and their families. While we are funded for the Installation Physical Security of our owned sites, at Reserve Training Centers where we are considered “tenants,” we are reliant on the other Services to fund the physical security requirements. However, to ensure the Physical Security requirements for these units, the Marine Corps Reserve often funds security projects that should be funded by the host command. As a direct result, the Marine Corps Reserve plans to submit a budgetary increase in the future years to ensure our projects are funded to the required levels.

Health Services

The Marine Corps Reserve Health Services Support (HSS) system prioritizes the health and wellness of our Reserve Marines and Sailors. We 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 individual unit, as well as 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 uses contracted civilian medical and dental providers to work with units that do not have organic medical or dental support personnel or are remote from, or not supported by, a nearby Military Treatment Facility (MTF). During FY22, the RHRP performed 11,237 Periodic Health Assessments (PHAs), 54 Onsite Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRAs), 17,465 audiological examinations, and 8,600 dental examinations.

The Marine Corps Reserve HSS's priority is to achieve the DoD's goal of a 90% medically ready force. While national, regional, state, and local restrictions on travel and group activities due to COVID-19 affected scheduling and availability of both organic unit and RHRP readiness events over the course of several months, FY22 individual medical and dental readiness rates were nevertheless 91% and 89%, 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.

As a result of the overlapping Marine Forces Reserve/Marine Forces South relationship, MARFORRES/MARFORSOUTH HSS coordinates with Headquarters Marine Corps and Navy Medicine to align with Force Design 2030. This relationship provides unique opportunities to achieve Mission Essential Tasks (METs) and Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) to address prioritized expeditionary medical support capabilities, including Prolonged Casualty Care, Multi-modal Patient Transportation and Patient Movement, and Scalable Force Packages for support to Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations (EABO) and Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE).

In partnership with USSOUTHCOM, the Marine Corps Reserve has aligned with Service components to advance the USSOUTHCOM Global Health Engagement strategy. Opportunities to foster relationships with Partner Nations throughout Central and South America and the Caribbean could not have come at a more fortuitous time. In an environment where instability, post-pandemic restrictions, and malign near-peer influence may impact access, the Marine Corps Reserve is initiating smart, innovative, and cost-effective medical capability concepts in partnership with the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab that include the Tactical Scalable Surgical System (TS3) and Virtual Reality training to demonstrate constant U.S. presence and support to our partners in the USSOUTHCOM region. A fully developed suite of collaborations in the Global Health and Medical Education spaces further demonstrate how the Marine Corps Reserve and other Service components will continue to be the partner of choice in the region, as well as a vehicle to preparation for operations throughout the world.

Behavioral Health

The Marine Corps Reserve executes a multifaceted behavioral health program that includes Combat Operational Stress Control Capability, DoN's Deployment Health Program, Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP), and collaboration with the National Guard Bureau and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as targeted initiatives for Suicide Prevention Capability, Substance Abuse Prevention, and Family Advocacy Programs. The Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) capability 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 COSC 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 as sensors for the commanders by identifying small changes in personnel behavior. OSCAR teams help to enable a bias for action within the command and link individuals to appropriate resources. The DCT is conducted across every rank and is delivered to service members at the appropriate point in the deployment cycle. The combination of these programs helps 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 and Sailors in the fight.

The Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery supports behavioral health through various independent and contracted programs such as Post-Deployment Health Reassessment/Mental Health Assessment (PDHRA/MHA) and PHOP. The PDHRA Program is intended to focus specifically on identifying issues that emerge after our Marines and Sailors have returned home

from deployment. The MHA is conducted at multiple intervals throughout the deployment cycle, annually with a Marine or Sailor's physical health assessment (PHA), and during the Separation Health Assessment (SHA). The MHA serves as a screening for any mental health concerns including but not limited to depression, alcohol misuse, and post-traumatic stress syndrome symptoms. PHOP secures behavioral health screenings, psychological treatment referrals, and essential follow-up treatment to ensure our service members' behavioral health needs are met. In FY22 PHOP connected with 9,129 Marine Corps Reservists; an estimated 13% of those connections resulted in intensive case management. Through their outreach services, PHOP addresses general behavioral health needs, post-deployment 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 Marine Corps Reserve's Force Chaplains regularly exchange contact rosters to multiply networking effectiveness. These programs remain critical to maintaining a resilient force by providing pathways for Marines, Sailors, and families to seek behavioral health assistance.

Access to reliable behavioral health care is a barrier to many Reservists and their families. However, memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the National Guard Bureau, and the Department of Veteran's Affairs have greatly increased the resources available to Reservists and their families. Marines, Sailors, and their families can now utilize more than 400 additional resource sites through the National Guard Bureau's Family Assistance Centers, and 383 veteran centers (83 of them mobile) through the VA. Veteran centers are able to provide psychological assessments, counseling, and additional treatment options.

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 and Sailors 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 COSC. We market all our behavioral health initiatives and programs through our Marine Corps Reserve website, our smart phone mobile application (app), and during key Marine Corps forums throughout the year.

The Marine Corps Reserve smart phone mobile app, USMC Reserve Connect, is tailored to Marine Reservists and family members. This Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) approved app is an enterprise-wide, mobile app that serves as a gateway to public content on government websites. The app delivers portable, timely, and relevant information to Marines, Sailors, and their families and reduces reliance on traditional computers to access career and personal resources. The app is customizable, enabling units to provide Reserve Marines and Sailors 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. The app is free to the public and is available for download in most mobile app stores.

The Marine Corps Substance Abuse Program educates Marines and Sailors on substance misuse and how it 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. In FY22, with the decrease in COVID-19 restrictions and bases returning to Health Protection Condition Alpha (HPCON A), units have reintegrated the Alcohol Screening Program into their monthly testing requirements. In response to this, the Substance Abuse Program has increased education and training for Alcohol Screening Program Coordinators. Additionally, the Substance Abuse Program staff provides quarterly on-demand education and awareness training on the dangers of abusing prescription drugs, information on the proper disposal of unused and outdated medications, and annual supervisor-level training that increase leaders' awareness of the dangers of abusing prescription drugs. In FY22, the Substance Abuse Program continued the use of Prime for Life in our educational efforts. 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 myriad of factors contributing to suicide-related events. Risk factors can include depression, social isolation, impulsive or aggressive tendencies, and substance misuse and abuse. Common precipitating stressors are consistent with the previous year and include relationship, legal, and financial challenges, as well as disciplinary problems. Commanders employ a coordinated 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 conducted monthly to optimize the potential of all

Active and Reserve Marines and Sailors. Through engaged leadership and consultation with subject matter experts, unit leaders identify potential risk factors and apply holistic risk management courses of action in order to improve individual and unit readiness.

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. The Marine Corps culture toward encouraging Marines to seek help continues. 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 provided with 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 Reservists 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 PHOP.

Our Reserve Marines and Sailors 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 can 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 and Response

Sexual assault is a corrosive problem across the Department of Defense with damaging impacts to the victims and their families, friends, communities, and the organizations they serve. Each case of sexual assault causes harm to unit cohesion, morale, unit and individual readiness, and the reputation of the Service as a whole. Recruitment, retention, and most importantly the health and wellbeing of our men and women in uniform also suffer. For the Marine Corps Reserve, improving the health and safety of our service members by fostering a culture of dignity and respect are top priorities as they are key to reducing and ultimately eliminating sexual assault within our ranks. The Marine Corps Reserve has a robust Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program that provides training, advocacy, guidance, and supportive services across our geographically dispersed force. Our current SAPR Program is comprised of seven full-time professional employee positions developed to ensure the efficacy of the program and provide both prevention and response services. 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, along with two professional civilian SAPR Victim Advocates (VAs) who are available to 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's SAPR personnel work diligently to provide prompt and effective 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 or location. Leaders at every level and anyone in need of support services have access to a SAPR staff member for program guidance. To strengthen both prevention and response efforts, the Marine Corps Reserve will be adding more full-time civilian SAPR personnel across the Force in a phased hiring plan based on the Independent Review Commission on Sexual Assault in the Military (IRC)'s recommendations adopted by the Secretary of Defense. The additional SARCs will be advisors to our Regimental and Battalion Commanders, and professional full-time civilian Victim Advocates will further support our leadership at every level and the Marines and Sailors across the country. The SAPR staff historically have trained up to 160 service members to become new victim advocates each year during week-long courses held quarterly in New Orleans. We will continue to reinforce our SAPR program with collateral duty Victim Advocates in operational and deployed as well as geographically isolated environments as we establish a larger full-time civilian staff in alignment with the IRC recommendations approved by the Secretary of Defense. 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. A nationwide database of resources is maintained in order to effectively support Reserve Component members 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 telephonic, secure chat, and web-based resources 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, PHOP, Total Force Fitness initiatives, and Behavioral Health. Leaders at every level are encouraged to actively engage with Marines and Sailors to create a positive environment free from attitudes and harmful 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 focusing on the prevention of interpersonal violence is in development and additional efforts toward fostering a healthy command climate are being highlighted. 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 harmful 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 (Equal Opportunity Advisor) Military Occupational Specialty. These billets include a force-level Equal Opportunity Advisor (EOA) and three additional EOAs at the MSC levels. Currently the MEO program is undergoing a restructuring to increase the number of personnel to support the Marine Corps Reserve's unique structure and geographical dispersion. 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 FY22, 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 FY22, the Marine Corps Reserve resolved 36 unique cases through the complaint resolution process. Throughout this process, commanders ensured complainants were protected against all forms of retaliation, maltreatment, ostracism, and reprisal.

Quality of Life

The Marine Corps Reserve is committed to ensuring quality of life programs are designed to effectively assist all Reserve 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 diverse support programs available for their benefit. Face-to-face and virtual learning opportunities are available 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, readiness and deployment support, family team building, and prevention. MCCA is an accessible and responsive resource that provides continual and lasting 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.

MCCA programs are flexible, constantly adjusting to meet the needs of our geographically dispersed Reserve 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. During FY22, the Marine Corps Reserve conducted 183 training events in which 4,848 Marines, Sailors, and family members received essential information to assist them throughout the deployment cycle. These events helped them prepare for and flourish during deployments and achieve a positive post-deployment reintegration experience.

A Reserve Marine's quality of life and resiliency runs deeper than mental and physical wellness. The Marine ethos includes an impressive resolve forged in the spirit and able to perceive that which is greater than self. This connection with the transcendent inspires Marines to be their best and is undergirded by 167 chaplains and Religious Program Specialists who

deliver religious ministry support and care to all Marines and Sailors, regardless of religious affiliation. Beyond equipment, training, and technical skill, it is the strength of spirit that enables our Marines and Sailors to accomplish the mission with honor, to overcome adversity, and to sacrificially serve with meaning and purpose. Religious Ministry Teams (RMT) comprised of uniformed chaplains and Religious Program Specialists, 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 39 Marine Corps Reserve units across the country and nine Religious Ministry Support Units directly supporting the Active Component. Through personal presence, these RMT's cultivate trust with leadership in carrying out the competencies of provision, facilitation, care, and advisement.

Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operations (CREDO) is a programmatic means to increase the spiritual readiness and resilience of service members and other authorized persons as part of the Department of Navy's Strategic Plan for Religious Ministry. Operating within the Command Religious Program (CRP), CREDO provides transformational retreats and workshops, including the Marriage Enrichment Retreat (MER), the Personal Resiliency Retreat (PRR), and Suicide Intervention Workshops such as Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). The MER 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 mobilizations. The PRR helps Marines and Sailors set personal goals, make healthy decisions, develop coping skills for stress, and live their lives with greater purpose and satisfaction. During FY22, chaplains invested in 145 couples through 10 MERs and in 578

individuals participating in 31 retreats and workshops focused on resiliency and team building in the context of leadership and human dynamics.

In an ongoing effort to reduce death by suicide and suicidal events, the CREDO Program offers ASIST, Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK), and START training to Marines and their families. These are evidence-based skill trainings for intervention in suicidal events to prevent death and increase prevention until care is available. Chaplains trained a total of 71 people in five workshops including three in remote locations. Participants in these programs self-reported an 83% increase in their likelihood to intervene to help a person having thoughts of suicide.

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 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 that helps Marines, and their families develop and attain effective post-transition employment, educational, and entrepreneurship goals. It provides the tools and resources needed to comply with DoD directed Career Readiness Standards (CRS). Transition Readiness is a process that occurs across the Marine for Life Cycle; it is not an event that occurs at a single point in time, but rather takes place throughout a Marine’s career. The Marine for Life Network helps to link

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. Marines are encouraged to attend TRS at the closest military installation to their location regardless of affiliation. For geographically dispersed Marines, many of whom are not located near a military installation, a virtual course is available to meet the requirement. In FY22, the Marine Corps Reserve transition staff assisted 800 geographically dispersed Marines with pre-separation counseling and capstone completion.

Additionally, Marines may take advantage of the DoD partnership with Tutor.com, which offers our Marines, Sailors, 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 more than 70 languages, including English as a Second Language. Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course helps Marines and Sailors 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 (PFMP) provides personal financial education, training, counseling, information, and referral as the number-one source for unbiased financial information to Marines and their families. The PFMP utilizes Financial Education Action Points to increase the knowledge and improve the financial practices of Marines at predetermined milestones within their career, such as promotion, permanent change of station, marriage, birth

of a child, and others. The PFMP is available to all Marines and their families free of charge and on a variety of platforms (in-person, hybrid, and virtual).

The Marine Corps' Semper Fit Program coordinates with our bases and stations to provide fitness education activities that promote physical and mental readiness and develops 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. Life Athlete Readiness and Resilience programs provide opportunities for life skill development, social health, community connectedness, and stress management. Programs include recreational aquatics, outdoor recreation equipment checkout, community centers, community-wide activities, competitive events, parks, trails, picnic areas, youth sports, and other recreational programs.

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 971 training events for more than 58,348 Marines, Sailors, and family members. In FY22, we conducted 27 virtual events connecting more than 1,795 participants with local resources before, during, and after deployments.

The Marine Corps Reserve is 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 Reserve 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 WII. 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. During this past year, RMED solidified professional relationships with key personnel at Defense Health Agency-Great Lakes in order to streamline the process for Reserve Marines injured in the line of duty to access medical health care benefits. This close working relationship resulted in the publication of a coordinated Marine Corps Administrative Message providing detailed guidance and instructions to Reserve units in order to reduce the time between an injury occurring and a Reserve Marine receiving treatment. We believe that arming Reserve units with this knowledge results in improved access to medical health care, which will greatly aid in an injured Marine's recovery timeline and have a positive impact to overall personnel readiness throughout the Marine Corps Reserve.

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 of that injury. During Fiscal Year 2022, the RMED section processed 323 Incapacitation Pay requests for payments totaling \$272,274.

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 who often live long distances from military installations.

The WWR also has medical advocates on the regimental staff who are available to assist Reserve, Active, retired, and veteran Marines in need of medical care coordination and advocacy. This support is called the District Injured Support Coordinators (DISC) program which is provided by WWR Reserve Staff Non-Commissioned Officers who are activated each year through Active Duty for Operational Support (ADOS) funding. The DISCs are dispersed throughout the country and assist in performing face to face meetings as part of their care and case management processes. The DISCs are the WWR Commanding Officer's representatives in the field with the mission to facilitate care and case management to personnel with highly complex needs and the successful transition of post-9/11 WII Marines from the Active or Reserve Component to veteran status.

The DISCs also provide direct support to more than 1,500 Marines currently on the Temporary Disabled Retired List (TDRL) to assist them in meeting all their requirements prior to the Department of the Navy's final determination of their disability. The DISC 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 the Marine Corps keeps faith with all Marines. Due to the reduction of ADOS funding, WWR reduced the DISC manning to minimal viable capability in FY23. Much of the support to the recently separated WII Marines and those on the TDRL has shifted to fully remote.

The Marine Corps will not forget the sacrifices our Reserve Marines made for this great Nation, and we will continue to work with WWR to establish resources and improve 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, is 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 design process is strategy-driven, threat informed, and concept based. Force development is then achieved through deliberate experimentation, wargaming, integrating planning teams, and analysis to provide valuable data in our Campaign of Learning to identify what is effective. The Marine Corps Reserve provides support to this force design effort, while remaining a vital global contributor in meeting Combatant Command requirements.

Although the Active Component forces have been able to rapidly modernize under the direction of the National Defense Strategy (NDS) and the Commandant, the Reserve Component has yet to mature as quickly due to resource limitations. Currently, the deactivations of 4th Tank Battalion, bridging units, VMU-4, and VMGR-542 have been the only divestment requirements

for the Reserve Component. The requirement to divest in Tanks and the associated bridging assets was a total force initiative, while the divestment in VMU and VMGR were 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) travel to those locations to meet with each individual Marine in order to assist them in finding opportunities for continued service. As changes to the Reserve Component alter 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. As the Active Component evolves, so too 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 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, 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. 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. Opportunities for Marine Corps Special Operations Command integration are also being explored in relation to the Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (ISRT) focus area from the MCWL Littoral Maneuver Experimentation Plan.

Innovation and Experimentation

The establishment of Littoral Craft Companies (LCC) is a comprehensive initiative producing strong linkages across several Marine Corps Reserve Lines of Effort (LOEs). The establishment supports numerous key objectives including Site Optimization, Talent Management, New Platforms and Technologies Integration, Experimentation and Wargaming Support as well as Service component integration in a way that effectively aligns broad aspects of the Marine Corps Reserve's strategic vision.

The LCC initiative emerged in response to a 2020 Service-level decision directing the divestment of C (Galveston, TX) and D (Tampa, FL) Companies, 4th Assault Amphibian Battalion (AA Bn) in FY25 and FY24 respectively. Preserving the talent and facilities at these two key coastal sites became imperative. Recruiting and retention at both Tampa and Galveston are consistently well above average comparable to the rest of the force at a time when the Marine Corps Reserve Component is recovering from COVID-19 and other end-strength challenges. In addition, both sites offer exceptional littoral training venues and wide-ranging opportunities for Joint and Interagency maritime partnerships within the Gulf-coast region.

Transitioning C and D Cos 4th AA Bn into LCCs presents an ideal Talent Management and Site Optimization solution to the problem, with the bonus of integrating new Platforms and Technology in the form of littoral craft. In partnership with the Defense Innovation Unit, the Marine Corps Reserve is pursuing a rapid acquisition of dual-use commercially available vessels through an Area of Interest solicitation to Industry. This highly flexible process offers direct access to vendors capable of producing state of the art littoral craft to the Marine Corps Reserve on an aggressive delivery timeline.

The Marine Innovation Unit and other staffs across the reserve component are coordinating closely with Service-level capability developers and the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) to posture the LCCs for support to live force experimentation in response to Service-level littoral maneuver, mobility, and tactical sustainment-oriented learning demands. Exploration is already underway in key focus areas to include “Training and Training Sustainment” and “Littoral Maneuver Craft Characteristics.” Support to Experimentation is expected to rapidly increase once the LCCs are formally established allowing the Marine Corps Reserve to contribute significantly to the ultimate Total Force capability solution(s).

Initial planning efforts have begun for LCC participation during bi-lateral and multilateral exercises as well as waterborne Theater Security Cooperation activities in the U.S. Southern Command and other Global Combatant Command Areas of Responsibility once initial operational capability is achieved. Opportunities for Marine Corps Special Operations Command integration are also being explored especially in relation to the “Surveillance and Reconnaissance” and “Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Fires and Effects” focus areas from the MCWL Littoral Maneuver Experimentation Plan. This represents yet another clear example of how the LCC initiative links the Marine Corps Reserve Infrastructure, Human Terrain / Talent Management, Capabilities and Capacity and Utilization / Employment LOEs in an extraordinarily cohesive manner with potential wide-ranging, operational benefits for the Total Force Marine Corps.

Talent Management

Earning victory in the increasingly complex and multi-domain warfighting realm of the future requires 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, particularly if we continue to rely so heavily on the Active Component. To achieve Service objectives, the Marine Corps is leveraging the Reserve Component to attract and retain diverse personnel with unique talent and skill, while also providing a path to service more compatible for Reserve Marines who choose to maintain a civilian career in conjunction with military duty. The Marine Corps Reserve is aligned with service goals to mature the force through the introduction of new initiatives to increase career flexibility and further develop talent in the Reserve Component. Initiatives such as the Direct Affiliation Program (DAP) provide unique opportunities for departing Active Component Marines with valuable skills to continue their service in the Reserve Component and provide a vital advantage to increasing reserve unit personnel readiness. Additionally, the Marine Corps Reserve promotes a variety of talent management initiatives, to include the Diversity Aimed Officer Program (DAOP) which targets historically underrepresented populations and provides them an opportunity to visualize and pursue their career path as a Marine Corps Officer through educational events, hands on experience, and senior leader mentorship. In the summer of FY23 we will host our third annual DAOP event, comprised of Marines chosen through a highly competitive process.

As the Active Component Marine Corps develops and implements new talent management and diversity objectives, policies and programs, the Marine Corps Reserve 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 has already begun to integrate 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. Soon, a sample Reserve Component officer billet 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 management, leadership development, as well as enhance diversity, 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 changes, your Marine Corps Reserve will continue to innovate and evolve in order to meet future challenges and deter the pacing threats as prescribed in the National Defense Strategy. Through efforts such as the MIU and the acquisition of dual-use small littoral craft, we are constantly shaping and refining that evolution. As we are evolving our force, we are continuing to keep faith with and remain true to the communities that have supported us with programs such as Toys for Tots. The key to our success has been and will continue to be individual Marines, Sailors, and their families. Your Reserve Marines will continue to answer their "irrational call to serve" and, with your continued support, we will remain ready. Semper Fidelis!