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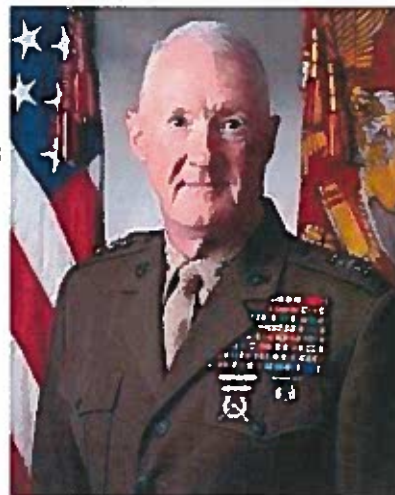
**STATEMENT OF  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL RICHARD P. MILLS  
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
BEFORE  
THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
CONCERNING  
THE GUARD AND RESERVE  
ON  
APRIL 29, 2015**

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## **Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills** **Commander, Marine Forces Reserve; and Commander, Marine Forces North**

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Lieutenant General Richard P. Mills assumes his most recent assignment as Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve and Marine Forces Northern Command on 28 August 2013. A native of Huntington, New York, Lieutenant General Mills was commissioned via Officer Candidates School. As a Lieutenant he served at the battalion level in two Marine Divisions as a rifle platoon commander, weapons platoon commander, rifle company executive officer, and adjutant. As a Captain he attended Amphibious Warfare School, and served at Parris Island as a recruit company commanding officer before commanding Alpha Company, 6th Marines.



As a Major, he was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps, attended the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, was a Military Observer with the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization in Palestine, and served with Marine Air Group 29, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing.

Lieutenant Colonel Mills served as Operations Officer, 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU SOC) taking part in operations off Bosnia and Somalia, was assigned to the staff of the Commander, United States Sixth Fleet in Gaeta, Italy, and as Commanding Officer, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines.

While a Colonel, he studied at the Royal College of Defense Studies, London, England, was the Officer-In-Charge of the Special Operations Training Group, II MEF, and commanded 24th MEU (SOC). While under his command the 24th MEU (SOC) participated in Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo and combat operations ashore in Iraq as part of Task Force Tarawa. Colonel Mills later served at United States European Command (EUCOM) in Stuttgart, Germany as the Assistant Chief of Staff. Upon selection to Brigadier General, he served as Deputy Director of Operations for EUCOM.

From 2007 to 2009 Brigadier General Mills served as Assistant Division Commander and Division Commander, 1st Marine Division and upon promotion to Major General as Commander, Ground Combat Element, Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Upon returning from Iraq he again assumed command of the 1st Marine Division and then was selected to command the I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) which deployed to Afghanistan as part of the

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). In June 2010, he assumed command of the newly-created ISAF Regional Command (Southwest) in Helmand Province. Major General Mills was the first Marine Corps General Officer to command NATO forces in combat.

In July 2011 and upon promotion to Lieutenant General he assumed the duties as the Commanding General Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Quantico, VA, Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, and Commander of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command.

## *Introduction*

The Marine Corps is the Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. For approximately 6 percent of the defense budget, we provide an affordable, capable and responsive insurance policy for the American people. As an integral part of the Total Force, Marine Forces Reserve plays a key role in providing that insurance policy. We have been fully engaged across the globe over the past 14 years of combat operations, serving as the essential shock absorber for our Active Component. Organized like a traditional Marine Air-Ground Task Force, Marine Reservists from each of our major subordinate commands -- 4th Marine Division, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, 4th Marine Logistics Group, and Force Headquarters Group have made a tremendous impact across a diverse spectrum of operations in support of every geographic combatant commander's operational and theater security cooperation requirements, as well as Service commitments.

The Marine Corps' commitment to the American people is as strong today as ever in its 239-year history. That commitment is backed by a cadre of Active and Reserve Component Marines and Sailors exceptionally experienced in taking the fight directly to the enemy. Our Marines have been doing what they have done best since 1775: standing shoulder-to-shoulder to fight and win our Nation's battles. We don't differentiate; all Marines - whether Reserve or Active Component - are disciplined, focused, and lethal. We are a Total Force and, as such, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to be integrated in all areas of the Marine Corps.

I am deeply impressed by the professionalism, competence, and dedication of our Reserve Marines. Like their active-duty brothers and sisters, they serve selflessly to protect our great Nation. I am inspired by the way they balance family responsibilities, civilian lives, school, jobs, and careers -- while simultaneously keeping faith with the Marine Corps. They do so with humility, without fanfare, and with a sense of pride and dedication that is consistent with the

great sacrifices of Marines from every generation.

As an integral element of the Total Force, the Reserve Component must remain highly interoperable. Our Marines and Sailors share an expeditionary mindset that shapes Marine Corps culture, ethos, and thinking. Accordingly, your Marine Corps Reserve is organized, manned, equipped, and trained to provide a professionally ready, responsive, and relevant Force as a Marine Corps solution to enable joint and combined operations. We are, and will remain, a key component in the Marine Corps' role as the Nation's expeditionary force in readiness.

### ***A Total Force***

Over the past 14 years, the Marine Corps Reserve has been engaged in combat operations and large-scale counterinsurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as in regional security cooperation, crisis response, and crisis prevention activities in support of geographic combatant commanders. This persistent operational tempo has built a depth of experience through the ranks that is unprecedented in generations of Marine Corps Reservists.

In 2014, more than 1,100 Reserve Marines mobilized in support of operational requirements to include those in all geographic combatant command areas of operation. In 2015, we are projected to continue our support to the Combatant Commanders by mobilizing an additional 750 Reservists. This operational tempo has enabled Marine Forces Reserve to remain an operationally-relevant Force over the last 14 years. Marine Forces Reserve has sourced preplanned, rotational, and routine combatant commander and Service requirements across a variety of military operations. We routinely supported operations in Afghanistan while simultaneously sourcing other combatant commander requirements across the globe. In 2014, nearly 3,700 Reservists participated in more than thirty exercises supporting combatant command requirements in eighteen countries spanning five regions of the world. Support to these

operations and exercises is a critical way that we increase our operational readiness while enabling Total Force integration of the Reserve Component and the rapid transition to operational roles and support to major contingency operations. While large-scale operations are winding down, the demand for Marine Corps capabilities is only growing – from Amphibious Ready Groups/Marine Expeditionary Units and Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Forces to Marines at embassies, Marine Forces Reserve will continue to serve as the shock absorber for the Active Component. The future operating environment will continue to be characterized by challenges that will stretch the employment capacity of the U.S. military and demand a force-in-readiness with global response capabilities. While our Nation emerges from years of major combat and counterinsurgency operations, we are not returning to a defensive posture. Marine Forces Reserve will again deploy more than 3,000 Marines to a multitude of theater-specific exercises and cooperative security events that are designed to increase interoperability with our allies, as well as develop theater security cooperation activities.

Marine Forces Reserve's operational focus will continue to directly support the geographic combatant commanders in roles that include multi-lateral exercises - such as African Lion in Morocco, Peninsula Express in South Korea, and Maple Flag in Canada. The way ahead for Marine Forces Reserve includes deploying forces to meet high priority combatant commander requirements to include remaining committed to the Resolute Support Mission (NATO)/OPERATION FREEDOM'S SENTINEL (US).

In addition to operational requirements, Marine Forces Reserve serves as the connecting file between the Marine Corps and local communities. We present the face of the Marine Corps to the American public across the nation. With Reserve units located across the country, Marine Forces Reserve is uniquely positioned to interact with the public and communicate the Marine

Corps story to our fellow citizens – most of whom have little or no contact with the Marine Corps. Last year, for example, Marine Forces Reserve personnel and units conducted more than 350 local and regional community relations events across the country.

Marine Forces Reserve continues to monitor the mobilization viability of the Individual Ready Reserve, which consists of more than 68,000 contractually-obligated Marines who have fulfilled their active service commitment, and have returned to civilian life. The mobilization potential of the Individual Ready Reserve is monitored through the use of muster events, which are conducted at multiple locations across the country. The muster event is the Marine Corps' opportunity to physically inspect these Marines to ensure they meet the requirements for mobilization. These events also provide Marines the opportunity to address administrative issues; complete mental health and post-deployment screening; review Reserve obligations and opportunities; meet with military-friendly employers; meet prior service recruiters; and reconnect with fellow Marines. During fiscal year 2014, Marine Forces Reserve held 44 Muster events with 9,684 IRR Marines in attendance.

In addition to participating in operational requirements across the globe and community relations events here at home, active-duty Marines assigned to our Inspector – Instructor and Reserve Site Support staffs dutifully execute the sensitive and crucial mission of providing casualty assistance to the families of our fallen Marines. By virtue of our geographic dispersion, Marine Forces Reserve personnel are well-positioned to accomplish the vast majority of all Marine Corps casualty assistance calls and are trained to provide compassionate and thorough assistance to the families. Indeed, the majority of Marine Corps casualty notifications and follow-on assistance calls to the next of kin conducted made by our Marines. During Calendar Year 2014, our Inspector – Instructor and Reserve Site Support staffs performed 74 percent of

the total casualty calls performed by the Marine Corps. There is no duty to our families that we treat with more importance. This is proven by the professionalism of our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) and the compassionate assistance they provide well beyond the initial notification. We ensure that our CACOs are well trained, equipped, and supported by all levels of command through the combination of in-class and online training. Once assigned as a CACO, our Marines assist family members with planning the return of remains and the final rest of their Marine as well as assist with ensuring the proper documents are filed in order to receive the proper benefits. In many cases, our CACOs provide a long-lasting bridge between the Marine Corps and the family while providing support during the grieving process. The CACO is the family's central point of contact and serves as a representative or liaison to the funeral home, government agencies, or any other agency that may become involved.

Additionally, Marine Forces Reserve units and personnel provide significant support for military funeral honors for our veterans. The Inspector – Instructor and Reserve Site Support staffs, with augmentation from their Reserve Marines, performed 90 percent of all funeral honors rendered by the Marine Corps during Calendar Year 2014. As with casualty assistance, we place enormous emphasis on providing timely, compassionate, and professionally executed military funeral honors.

### ***Predictability***

The Marine Corps Reserve remains an integral part of the Total Force Marine Corps and continues to serve as an operationally-focused Force, whether it is integrated with Marine Forces in Afghanistan, serving as a Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, or filling training and advising roles with security force assistance teams in direct support of combatant commanders' requirements. Consequently, your Marine Reserve Force continues to maintain a



high level of operational experience as it continues to serve side-by-side with our Active Component counterparts. We must remain manned, trained, and equipped to ensure we maintain the ability to seamlessly integrate with and support the Active Component. However, we recognize the potential effect of the fiscal environment on our operational readiness, especially as we consider how to maintain the operational experience of the Reserve Force.

Revisions to our Force Generation Model rotate Marine Reserve units through a five year Training and Readiness Plan to ensure units and personnel are ready to meet any challenge. The Training and Readiness Plan enables the Reserves to have two infantry battalions, an artillery battalion, a combat logistics battalion, and aviation capabilities, as well as an assortment of other forces combat-ready at any given time. This results in more than 3,000 Marines who are trained and ready to augment and reinforce a Marine Air-Ground Task Force, whether in support of a of a contingency response or part of a pre-planned, budgeted for, theater security cooperation mission.

Our Training and Readiness Plan provides a level of predictability for both planners and our Reservist Marines while maintaining the “train as we fight” philosophy. The Plan provides our Reservists, their families, and their employers, the ability to plan for upcoming duty requirements five years or beyond. This empowers service members to achieve the critical balance between family, civilian career, and service to our Nation while enabling employers to plan for and manage the temporary loss of valued employees. The key element in the Training and Readiness Plan is the integration of Reserve units, detachments, and individuals into Service and Joint level exercises, creating an environment of interoperability in years two, three, and four of the 5-year plan’s cycle. The units are assessed in a culminating Integrated Training Exercise

during the fourth year of the training cycle. The Training and Readiness Plan assures integration with the Active Component in training exercises conducted in the United States and overseas, and continues to facilitate the Total Force approach in the manner in which the Marine Corps achieved success demonstrated throughout combat operations.

### *Personnel*

Marines and civilians are the foundation of all that we do. Individual Marines – both Active and Reserve - and civilians, make up the foundation of our Corps. The resources we dedicate to sustaining and developing this foundation directly contributes to the success of our institution. Our ability to recruit and retain high quality people directly equates to our ability to meet the Marine Corps' force-in-readiness requirements. Marine Forces Reserve is committed to recruiting and retaining the highest quality people who meet prescribed mental and physical standards, and are ready in mind, body and spirit to execute their duties in the defense of our Nation.

The vast majority of the Selected Reserve's authorized end strength of 39,200 in FY15 fall under Marine Forces Reserve. The Selected Reserve is composed of Marines in four categories: Marines in Selected Marine Corps Reserve Units, Active Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and service members in initial training. By fiscal year 2017, the Selected Reserve authorized end strength will decrease to 38,500 Marines. This force reduction is occurring without any loss of reserve capabilities through the voluntary release of Marines that no longer meet the military occupational specialty (MOS) requirement for their unit due to the force structure changes implemented in 2012 and 2103. Each of these Marines is also being offered an opportunity to retrain to a new MOS now available at their current location.

In addition to Selected Reserve Marines, Marine Forces Reserve administers approximately 68,000 Marines who serve in the Individual Ready Reserve, which is projected to continue to increase due to the Active Component end strength draw down.

As the Marine Corps continues to draw down Active Component end strength, the option of continued service in the Reserve Component has become increasingly appealing to young Marines leaving active duty. Marines approaching the end of their current contracts, whether Active or Reserve Component, receive counseling on the tangible and intangible aspects of remaining associated 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.

While we continue to enjoy strong demand for affiliation in Marine Forces Reserve – with high rates of retention as well as more Marines joining when they leave active duty – retraining, inactive duty travel reimbursement, bonus payments, and incentive programs are crucial to ensure we are able to meet our authorized end strength while also retaining our most talented Marines. Over the past two years, your support for these critical programs have helped improve our overall personnel end-strength at 99 percent of our total requirement and achieve a grade and MOS match rate of 82 percent. While we fully expect to meet our Selected Marine Corps Reserve retention and recruiting goals again this fiscal year, continued use of these programs are critical to optimally align our inventory against our requirements, maintain individual and unit-level readiness, address significant shortfalls in staff non-commissioned officer leadership, maximize Marine deployability, and fully rebuild readiness from previous force structure changes. Your continued support for bonuses and other initiatives that promote service to this great Nation will ensure our ability to gain and retain the very best service members.

## *Equipment*

As an integral component of the total force, and to ensure operationally interchangeability with the Active Component, Marine Forces Reserve is manned, trained, and equipped in the same manner as the Active Component. While complete compatibility is difficult to achieve due to Service level priorities, equipment compatibility between the Active Component and Reserve Component is closer today than it has ever been - due largely to sustaining requirements of over 14 years of continuous operational deployments. This level of compatibility with the Active Component comes at an increase in equipment maintenance cost due to the introduction of non-standard equipment, the fielding of new systems, and the overall increase in the scale and complexity of equipment.

Marine Forces Reserve equipment readiness levels are healthy and capable of supporting all home station training and our current operational deployments. Our efforts currently focus on Global Combat Support System-Marine Corps (GCSS-MC) post cutover actions, training our supply personnel and maintainers on the new system, and adjusting equipment inventories to the recently approved Training Allowances, and maintaining our equipment in a fully operational status. Continued Congressional support in fully funding our Operations and Maintenance, Marine Corps Reserve maintenance budget is paramount for our continued success.

The top procurement priority of Marine Forces Reserve is the KC-130J Super Hercules. Our second priority is procurement of the RQ-21A Blackjack Small Tactical Unmanned Aircraft System (STUAS).

The Active Component has already fielded the KC-130J, while initial fielding to the Reserve Component began with the arrival of the first aircraft in fiscal year 2014. The remaining KC-130T models are projected to remain in Reserve Component service until fiscal year 2022. The two

aircraft models are composed of distinct airframes, with differing logistic, maintenance, and aircrew requirements. The longer the Reserve Component maintains both aircraft, the longer we must invest in legacy logistics, maintenance, and aircrew training.

The RQ-21A will provide the Marine Expeditionary Force and subordinate commands (divisions and regiments) a dedicated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance system capable of delivering intelligence products directly to the tactical commander in real time. This program is still in low rate initial production - the Active Component began initial procurement in fiscal year 2014, and the Reserve Component is scheduled to receive the RQ-21A in fiscal year 2021. The later procurement of these systems in the Reserve Component creates a significant capability gap between Reserve and Active Component forces.

### ***Training***

During June 2015, Marine Forces Reserve will conduct its third Service-level Integrated Training Exercise, which is an assessed regimental-level live-fire and maneuver exercise featuring reserve component forces as the Marine Air-Ground Task Force elements (i.e., command, ground, air, and logistics). The unique nature of this exercise ensures maximum training benefits for the ground, aviation, and logistics combat elements under the command and control of a regimental headquarters. The Integrated Training Exercise is an indispensable component of our Training and Readiness Plan and serves as an annual capstone exercise, which is the principal mechanism for examining our training and readiness levels, as well as assessing our operational capabilities. Also measured during the exercise is the ability of the Reserve Component to provide a cohesive Marine Air-Ground Task Force that is a trained and ready capability to the Service or combatant commander on a predictable, reliable, and cyclical basis. Conducted aboard Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twenty-nine Palms, California, the

Integrated Training Exercise is a Marine Air-Ground Task Force deployment vice a compilation of numerous annual training events. Units participate based on their future activation potential according to the Marine Forces Reserve Fiscal Years 2015-2019 Training and Readiness Plan. The Integrated Training Exercise provides all Marine Air-Ground Task Force elements an opportunity to undergo a Service assessment of their core competencies that are essential to expeditious forward-deployed operations. Additionally, individuals serving on the regimental command element staff receive valuable training that ensures they are able to seamlessly augment a Marine Air-Ground Task Force and/or a Joint staff. In summary, the Integrated Training Exercise enables improved readiness, more efficient Total Force integration, and faster activation response times at the battalion and squadron level.

At our Reserve Training Centers, we continue to maximize training efficiencies by utilizing simulators wherever possible to preserve fiscal and materiel resources. The Reserve Component Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainers (ISMTs) and other simulation systems safeguard consistent capabilities across the Total Force by ensuring Reserve Marines are trained to the same tasks, conditions, and standards applicable to Active Component Marines. The ISMTs particularly benefit remote site locations that are distant from DoD training ranges by preserving valuable training time and vehicle wear and tear during drill weekends.

While training exercises and simulations serve crucial roles in preparing Marines for the operating environment, language and culture training ensures Marines understand the people among whom they will be operating. This type of training is absolutely crucial for success in today's complex security environment and yields large dividends to Marine Reservists. Through the Marine Corps-wide initiative - the Regional, Culture, and Language Familiarization program - our Marines have a career-long course of study designed to ensure Reserve Marines are regionally

focused and globally prepared to effectively navigate the culturally complex operating environment. To maximize opportunities for participation, the Marine Forces Reserve's culture and language programs are available through live instruction, portable media, and web-based applications. Our language and culture section remains fully operationally capable and supports all units within Marine Forces Reserve with virtual training and required testing.

With our Marines deploying around the globe, we also access and leverage a variety of other sources for language and cultural training, such as the Marine Corps' Center for Advanced Operational Culture and Language, the Defense Language Institute, and Regional Language Centers. These enhanced language and culture learning opportunities enable our core competencies and posture Marine Forces Reserve for success. This initiative is a critical way that we maintain ourselves as a regionally-focused, ready and responsive force.

Marine Forces Reserve continues to integrate safety programs with a wide variety of training to reinforce force preservation. The benchmark of an effective safety culture is the reduction of mishaps. The Culture of Responsible Choices, which began in 2011, ensures all members of the force, both military and civilian, focus on safety – both personal as well as others. Leadership at every level continues to stress the basic tenets of personal responsibility and accountability for decision-making and behavior – not only during work, but at home, in leisure activities, and in our personal lives. This engaged leadership empowers our personnel to get involved at any time when something is just not right.

No program can eliminate all hazards. Auto accidents are the leading cause of death among our personnel. Accordingly, we continue to focus on motor vehicle safety. Our training center at Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base, New Orleans, is a tangible example of how we incorporate training to fully support our Culture of Responsible Choices initiative. Personnel receive training

in the safe operation of their motor vehicles, both cars and motorcycles. From fiscal year 2013 to 2014, fatal motorcycle mishaps and automobile/truck fatalities continue to remain at an extremely low rate, well below the national average.

### ***Facilities***

Marine Forces Reserve occupies facilities in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These facilities include 27-owned and 133-tenant Reserve Training Centers, three family housing sites, a Bachelor Enlisted Quarters, and General Officer Quarters A in New Orleans, Louisiana. Although some Reserve Training Centers are located on major DoD bases and National Guard compounds, most of our centers are located openly within civilian communities. Therefore, the condition and appearance of our facilities informs the American people's perception of the Marine Corps and the Armed Forces throughout the nation.

The largest part of the facilities budget simply sustains the existing physical plant, focusing on infrastructure maintenance that enables Marine Forces Reserve to meet Service and combatant command operational requirements. Costs of maintaining the physical plant steadily increase with the age of the buildings. We have improved the overall readiness of our facilities inventory and corrected some chronic facility condition deficiencies through Marine Forces Reserve Facilities Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization (FSRM) support.

The Marine Corps' Reserve Military Construction program focuses on new footprint and recapitalization of our aging facilities. The construction provided by the annual authorization of Military Construction, Navy Reserve (MCNR) funding has been an important factor in moving Marine Forces Reserve forward in its facilities support mission. The combined effects from our targeted consolidation, FSRM, and MCNR programs have steadily reduced the



number of inadequate or substandard Reserve Training Centers. Continued annual funding for our facilities program will enable Marine Forces Reserve to improve the physical infrastructure that supports and reinforces mission readiness of our units.

In an attempt to lessen some of the burden on the energy budget, and in accordance with national mandates, Marine Forces Reserve completed energy assessments at our owned sites and continues to implement the recommendations from those assessments as funds are available. Priority is given to sites that are the biggest energy users nationally and those projects which offer the best return on investment. Environmental stewardship continues to be a major success in ensuring MARFORRES Facilities sites and units continue to avoid any fines or penalties due to violations of national, state, and local laws

#### ***Health Services and Behavioral Health***

Our focus on Marines, Sailors, and their families remains our highest priority. Therefore, we are keenly attentive to maintaining their health and total fitness. During dwell, our health services priority is to attain and maintain the DoD goal of 75 percent Fully Medically Ready. In Fiscal Year 2014, Marine Forces Reserve individual medical and dental readiness rates were 73 percent and 87 percent respectively. We aggressively worked towards improving medical readiness by effective utilization of Medical Readiness Reporting System capabilities to enable accurate monitoring and identify unit-level actions necessary to attain readiness goals. Supporting efforts will focus on advocating funds and tailoring support for various Reserve Medical/Dental Health Readiness Programs including utilizing to the fullest extent possible a combination of programs to significantly aid in sustaining our total readiness, such as our Reserve Health Readiness Program contract services, Post-Deployment Health Reassessment,

Reserve TRICARE Medical and Dental Programs, and the Psychological Health Outreach Program. Additionally, our personnel participate in Force Readiness Assistance & Assessment Program unit inspections. These inspections provide oversight for the current health status of the Force, specifically at unit levels that provides an ability to monitor compliance requirements, policy adherence, and meeting unit goal initiatives.

The Reserve Health Readiness Program (RHRP) is the cornerstone for individual medical and dental readiness and Marine Forces Reserve has benefited from increases in overall readiness as a result of this program. This program funds contracted medical and dental specialists to provide services to units that do not have direct medical or dental support personnel assigned and are not supported by a military treatment facility. During Fiscal Year 2014, the RHRP performed 20,036 Periodic Health Assessments, 15,057 in combined Post-Deployment Health Reassessments/Mental Health Assessments, and 13,945 Dental Procedures. In addition, TRICARE offers for voluntary purchase both a medical and a dental program to our Reserve Marines, Sailors, and their families (TRICARE Reserve Select for medical coverage and TRICARE Dental Program).

In addition to RHRP, the Marine Corps' robust behavioral health program addresses issues ranging from substance abuse, suicide, operational stress, domestic violence, and child abuse. These programs work in conjunction with Navy Medicine programs to address behavioral health issues.

With regard to specific fitness efforts, Marine Forces Reserve has instituted Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) training at all levels. This training is provided during pre-deployment training to service members of units that are deploying for more than 90 days. This purpose of this training is to provide the requisite

knowledge, skills, and tools to assist commanders in preventing, identifying, and managing combat and operational stress concerns as early as possible.

Navy Bureau of Medicine continues to support behavioral health through various independent contracted programs, such as the Post-Deployment Health Reassessment/Mental Health Assessments and the Psychological Health Outreach Program. The Post-Deployment Health Reassessment places an emphasis on identifying mental health concerns that may have emerged since returning from deployment. The Psychological Health Outreach Program addresses post-deployment behavioral health concerns and crisis-related interventions through social worker contractors. These social workers provide an array of referral services in the community to include follow-up with service members. These programs have proven effective in the overall management of identifying Marines and Sailors in need of behavioral health assistance and have provided an avenue to those service members who seek behavioral health assistance.

Signs of operational and combat stress can manifest long after a service member returns home from deployment. Delayed onset of symptoms presents particular challenges to Reservists who can be isolated from vital medical care and the daily support network inherent in Marine Reserve unit. Encouraging Marines to acknowledge and vocalize mental health issues is a ubiquitous challenge facing our commanders. We address the stigma associated with mental health care through key programs, such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. Further, we market all our behavioral health initiatives and programs through our Marine Forces Reserve portal website and during key Marine Corps forums throughout the year. Your continued support of these programs is greatly appreciated.

Suicide prevention continues to remain a priority effort for Marine Forces Reserve and we

will continue to leverage all of the resources needed to address this heartbreaking issue. Marine Forces Reserve focuses its suicide prevention efforts on five initiatives: In-theater Assessments, Post Deployment Health Assessments, Psychological Health Outreach Program, Care Management Teams, and Unit Marine Awareness and Prevention Integration Training. The In-theater Assessment targets Reservists exhibiting or struggling with clinically significant issues, and ensures evaluation by competent medical authorities for post-deployment treatment with follow-up decisions made prior to the return home. The Post Deployment Health Reassessment seeks to identify issues that emerge once Reservists have come home from deployment. Identified issues are immediately evaluated and referred for treatment by the clinician interviewer, to include referral recommendations based on available local resources, such as the VA or private mental health providers. The Psychological Health Outreach Program is an essential program for treatment referral and follow-up to ensure our service members are receiving the appropriate behavioral health services. Through the Care Management Teams, the VA assigns a primary care manager who is responsible for referral and follow-up to any Reservist who has a health care issue.

Another layer of prevention being incorporated throughout Marine Forces Reserve is the distribution of gun locks made available by the Defense Suicide Prevention Office. These locks were obtained in an effort to encourage Marines and Sailors to practice personal weapon safety with an emphasis on suicide prevention. Locks can buy critical time needed to allow someone contemplating suicide to stop and think, and instead seek help. During calendar year 2014, over 5,000 gun locks were distributed to more than 49 sites.

Any Reservist and their family can access Marine Corps installations' behavioral health programs through Marine Corps Community Services programming while they are on any type

of active-duty orders. When not on active-duty orders, Military OneSource provides counseling, resources, and support to Reserve service members and their families anywhere in the world. The Marine Corps' DSTRESS Line is also available to all Reserve Marines, Sailors, and family members regardless of their activation status.

### ***Sexual Assault Prevention & Response***

Eliminating sexual assault throughout Marine Forces Reserve is a top priority. Efforts toward this goal have continued with increased momentum. Marine Forces Reserve continues to increase victim services and improve victim response capabilities; we have added five professional full-time civilian positions to our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response staff at our headquarters office. Together, along with our Marine Forces Reserve Headquarters Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, they manage the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program at all Marine Forces Reserve sites throughout the United States. In addition to civilian staff, more than 300 Marines and Sailors achieved certification through the DoD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program. Once certified, they were appointed by their commanders to be Uniformed Victim Advocates at their respective Reserve Training Centers. Our prevention strategy is holistic, and emphasizes setting the example of discipline from all levels of command. I, along with the four commanding generals of our major subordinate commands, have again provided in-person Sexual Assault Prevention and Response training to all of our colonel-level commanders. The focus of this two-day training is on Marine Corps ethos and core values, highlighting the inconsistency of sexual assault with our values. In addition to this training, multiple all-hands training events are held throughout the year. All non-commissioned officers continue to receive additional "Take a Stand" bystander intervention training and all junior Marines participate in the "Step Up" bystander intervention training.

## *Quality of Life*

Whether we are taking care of our Marines in the desert or families back home, quality of life support programs are designed to help all Marines and their families. Because Marines and their families make great sacrifices in service to our country, they deserve the very best support. Our Marines and families are dispersed throughout America, away from the traditional support systems of our bases and stations. Therefore, we expend great effort to ensure awareness of the numerous support programs adapted for their benefit. Family Readiness Officers are a critical component to ensuring young Marines and their families receive the help needed to ensure they can continue to serve this great Nation.

This year we have worked as the advocate for the Reservist to ensure they are included in tri-service-level discussions with DoD and the VA to ensure service treatment records reach VA with a clear of chain custody. Because every Marine leaving active duty with a remaining military service obligation transitions to the IRR, and every Marine mobilized over 30 days must have his or her medical history documented, Marine Forces Reserve has a large stake in ensuring this process is sound and that follow-up medical care is assured.

Following approximately seven years of program expansion to achieve wartime footing, Family Readiness Programs are being adjusted to meet current and future needs to OPFORs, Marines including Reservists, and their families. The Marine Corps will be assessing to ensure that programs are stabilized, focused on core requirements, and providing support in critical areas such as deployment. Our result is a ready and resilient Force, well-equipped to achieve success. We continue to leverage modern communication technologies and social media, such as the e-Marine website, to better inform and empower family members - spouses, children and parents - who have little routine contact with the Marine Corps and often live considerable distances

from large military support facilities.

Our Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) programs offer preventative education and family readiness training to our Marines, Sailors, and family members. MCFTB training events are delivered in person and through interactive webinars at Marine Corps units across the United States.

The Marine Corps Personal and Professional Development programs continue to provide educational information to service members and their families.

Reservists also take advantage of our partnership with tutor.com, which offers access to our Marines, Sailors, and their families to 24/7 no-cost, live online tutoring services for K-12 students, and Reserve component college students, and adult learners through the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Yellow Ribbon Program. Active and Reserve Marines and their families are also provided remote access to language courses through our Marine Corps General Libraries Transparent Language Online program. This program supports more than 90 languages and delivers English as a Second Language. Additionally, the Marine Corps' partnership with the OSD supported Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course helps Marines build math and verbal skills to excel on the job, pass an exam, advance in a career, or continue education. This program assesses the current level of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math skills and teaches the concepts and skills needed to increase proficiency in each of these academic areas. This course is accessed through the Military One Source or Navy Knowledge Online and provided at no charge for service members and their families.

Our Semper Fit program remains fully engaged in partnering with our bases and stations to provide quality, results-based education and conditioning protocols for our Marines and Sailors. The High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) program includes hands-on strength

and conditioning courses, online physical fitness tools, and a mobile application for service members to access anywhere at any time, and recorded webinars, as well as instruction on injury prevention, nutrition, and weight management. Our Marines' and Sailors' quality of life is also increased through various stress management and *esprit de corps* activities, such as unit outings and participation in competitive events. These programs are key to unit cohesion, camaraderie, and motivation.

The Marine Corps' partnership with Child Care Aware of America continues to provide great resources for Marines and their families in selecting child care before, during, and after a deployment. Our off-base child-care subsidy program helps families of our Marines locate affordable child care that is comparable to high-quality, on-base, military-operated programs. This program provides child-care subsidies at quality child care providers for our Reservists who are deployed in support of overseas contingency operations and for those active-duty Marines who are stationed in regions that are geographically separated from military bases and stations.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) has been incorporated into the Marine Corps Unit, Personal, and Family Readiness Program at every command level with civilian and Active Duty Deputy Family Readiness Officers (FRO). Since its inception in 2010, the YRRP has held more than 550 training events with more than 34,000 Marines, Sailors, and family members attending. The responsibility of executing Yellow Ribbon - in accordance with the legislation and Marine Forces Reserve policy, resides with the individual unit commander. This ensures commanders remain engaged with the challenges and issues facing their Marines, Sailors, and families, and is in line with Force Preservation efforts.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is enduring. Marine Forces Reserve continues



to explore, with our Marine Corps Family Team Building staff, innovative methods for program delivery that will be sustainable in any fiscal or deployment climate. This includes developing webinars, mail-outs, personal deployment briefs designed to meet the individual needs of the service member and family, and working with the Family Readiness Officers to leverage local resources at no cost to the government.

We continue to be supportive of Military OneSource, which provides our Marines, Sailors, and their families with an around-the-clock information and referral service via toll-free telephone and internet access for counseling and on subjects such as parenting, child care, education, finances, legal issues, deployment, crisis support, and relocation. In fiscal year 2014, 5,222 of our Marines, Sailors and family members utilized their services.

Our Marines, Sailors, and their families, who sacrifice so much for our Nation's defense, should not be asked to sacrifice quality of life. We will continue to be a faithful advocate for these programs and services and to evolve and adapt to the changing needs and environments in order to ensure that quality support programs and services are provided to our Marines, Sailors and their families. The combined effect of these programs is critical to the readiness and retention of our Marines, Sailors, and their families, and your continued support of these programs is greatly appreciated.

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

Marine Forces Reserve's commitment to our wounded Marines, Sailors, and their families is unwavering. Through the Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR), the Marine Corps ensures one standard of care for all wounded, ill, or injured (WII) service members - whether they are active or reserve. Marine Forces Reserve requested and received a liaison in 2013 that coordinates with the WWR to provide the subject matter expertise concerning the unique

challenges faced by Marine Reservists and facilitate necessary support. The WWR staff – includes the Reserve Medical Entitlements Determinations Section -- which specifically maintains oversight of all cases of reservists who require medical care beyond their contract period for service incurred and duty limiting medical conditions. Additionally, the WWR dedicated five reserve-specific Recovery Care Coordinators to provide one-on-one transition support and resource identification required to support WII reservists and families who are often living in remote and isolated locations.

We are intimately involved in the support provided to wounded, ill, and injured Marines through the mobilization of Reserve Marines who serve as District Injured Support Coordinators (DISCs), Section Leaders and support staff. The DISCs focus primarily on reaching out to the reserve and veteran population to ensure the Marine Corps promise to keep faith is upheld.

While the Marine Corps' reduced presence in Afghanistan will result in fewer combat casualties, non-combat injuries and illnesses will likely remain stable. In addition, instances of PTS and TBI will likely continue to increase due to delayed onset as well as the tendency by Marines to postpone seeking help. Regardless of the global security environment, recovery care support must be enduring. Marine Forces Reserve will not forget the sacrifices our Marines and Sailors 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 population.

### ***Conclusion***

The Marine Corps is our Nation's crisis response force and will continue to be most ready when our Nation is least ready. As part of the Marine Corps Total Force, Marine Forces Reserve must remain manned, trained, and equipped to provide forces to the Active Component

to respond across the operational spectrum from disaster relief, to embassy evacuation, to full scale combat operations. We live in a world challenged by competition for natural resources, violent extremism, natural disasters, social unrest, cyber-attacks, regional conflict, and the proliferation of advanced weaponry and weapons of mass destruction. The future operating environment will continue to be characterized by challenges that will stretch the employment capacity of the U.S. military and demand a force-in-readiness with global response capabilities. With your continued unwavering support, Marine Forces Reserve will continue to serve as the crucial shock absorber to the Active Component. Semper Fidelis!