

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
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SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SENATE
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
ON
30 MARCH 2006**

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Graham, Senator Nelson and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my honor to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps Reserve as a partner in the Navy-Marine Corps team. Your Marine Corps Reserve remains firmly committed to warfighting excellence. The support of Congress and the American people has been indispensable to our success in the Global War on Terror. Your sustained commitment to care for and improve our Nation's armed forces in order to meet today's challenges, as well as those of tomorrow, is vital to our battlefield success. On behalf of all Marines and their families, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Congress and this committee for your continued support.

YOUR MARINE CORPS RESERVE TODAY

The last five years have demonstrated the Marine Corps Reserve is truly a full partner in the Total Force Marine Corps. I assumed the responsibility as the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve on the 10th of June 2005, and I can assure you the Marine Corps Reserve remains totally committed to continuing the rapid and efficient activation of combat-ready ground, air, and logistics units and individuals to augment and reinforce the active component in the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Marine Corps Reserve units, Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees (IMAs), and Retired Marines fill critical requirements in our nation's defense and are deployed worldwide in Iraq, Afghanistan, Georgian Republic, Djibouti, Kuwait, and the United States, supporting all aspects of the Global War on Terror. At home, our Reserve Marines are pre-positioned throughout the country, ready to defend the homeland or assist with civil-military missions such as the type of disaster relief conducted recently in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Reserve Marines understand the price of protecting our constitutional rights to freedom, and even though many have paid the ultimate price in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, they continue to step forward and volunteer to serve their fellow Americans. The Marine Reserve Force remains strong and constant due to the committed Marines in our ranks, our high retention and recruiting rates, and the ever-increasing benefits that Reserve Marines and their families enjoy.

As the tactics and warfighting equipment continue to change and evolve, an ever-increasing level of readiness for future challenges needs to be maintained. Reserve ground combat units, aviation squadrons and combat service support elements are able to seamlessly integrate with their active component comrades in any Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) environment because they attend the same schools and are held to identical training standards. A strong Inspector-Instructor (I&I) system and a demanding Mobilization and Operational Readiness Deployment Test (MORDT) program ensures Marine Corps Reserve units achieve a high level of pre-mobilization readiness. Marine Reserve units continue to train to challenging, improved readiness standards, reducing the need for post-mobilization certification. This ensures that these combat capable units undergo a seamless transition to the Gaining Force Commander.

As we progress into the 21st century, we have seen historic and tragic events that have impacted our country and Marine Forces Reserve in ways that will reverberate for years to come. When hurricanes Katrina and Rita battered the Gulf Coast, Marine Forces Reserve was part of both the evacuation and the relief efforts in the area. Due to the storms, Marine Forces Reserve Headquarters, along with our subordinate headquarters, were forced to evacuate the New Orleans area and set up temporary commands in Texas and Georgia. It was from these locations that we mobilized and deployed units to the affected areas to support the relief efforts. In some cases Marines were serving in their own communities that were devastated by the storms.

As of early February 2006, over 6,400 Reserve Marines were activated in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Horn of Africa operations. Of these Marines, approximately 5,400 were serving in combat-proven ground, aviation, and service support units led by Reserve Marine officers and non-commissioned officers. The remaining 1,000+ Reserve Marines were serving as individual augments in support of Combatant Commanders, the Joint Staff and the Marine Corps. Since 11 September 2001, the Marine Corps has activated over 39,000 Reserve Marines, and more than 97 percent of all Marine Forces Reserve units.

Since the beginning of the Global War on Terror, it has become necessary for the Marine Corps Reserve to increase support required for operations against the backdrop of a rapidly changing world environment accented by asymmetrical warfare and continuing hostilities. As new warfighting requirements have emerged, we have adapted our units by creating Anti-Terrorism Battalions from existing infantry units, as well as provisional Civil Affairs Groups in support of our efforts in Iraq. We continue to refine our reserve capabilities. Through assessment, projection, and careful planning, we shift valuable resources to enhance our ability to provide required war fighting capabilities, intelligence gathering capabilities, Homeland security efforts, and ongoing civil affairs missions.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The Marine Corps is committed to the Total Force Concept as evidenced by the overwhelming success of Marine Reserve units serving in support of the Global War on Terror. Activated Marine Reserve units and individuals are seamlessly integrating into forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Forces and regularly demonstrate their combat effectiveness. Since March 2005, approximately 8,500 Reserve Marines have deployed in support of two troop rotations to Iraq.

The combat effectiveness of all Reserve Marines deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom is best illustrated by the following examples of a few Reserve units:

FORCE UNITS: Marine Forces Reserve has provided Provisional Civil Affairs Units, Air Naval Gunfire Liaison (ANGLICO) Detachments and Counter Intelligence Teams in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The Marine Corps has two civil affairs units and, in 2005, formed two provisional Civil Affairs Groups. The decision was made to expand the Corps' civil affairs capability for the Iraqi conflict by creating a provisional 5th and 6th Civil Affairs Groups of nearly 200 Marines each. The 5th and 6th CAGs were created to ease the deployment cycles of the 3rd and 4th CAGs and to create additional civil affairs assets. Fourth Combat Engineer Battalion from Baltimore provided the nucleus for the 5th CAG, which was established in late 2004. The unit was rounded out by Marines from across the country, to include two previously retired Marines.

The 5th CAG began its tour of duty in Iraq when the commanding officer and sergeant major unfurled the unit's colors at a transfer of authority ceremony with the 4th CAG at Camp Fallujah on March 10, 2005. Col. Steve McKinley, 5th CAG commanding officer, and Sgt. Maj. John A. Ellis stood at attention as the 4th CAG commander and sergeant major cased their unit's colors. Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, I Marine Expeditionary Force commanding general, thanked the CAG Marines and Sailors for their accomplishments during their tour, such as helping to establish the Civil Military Operations Center in Fallujah. The 5th CAG assumed 4th CAG's area of responsibility and operated throughout Al-Anbar Province coordinating civil affairs projects with the goal of restoring critical infrastructure and facilitating the transition into a self-governing people. The 6th CAG, led by Col. Paul Brier and SgtMaj Ronnie McClung, relieved 5th CAG in

September 2005. After a successful 7-month tour, they are redeploying to the United States this month..

In addition to the contribution of Civil Affairs Groups, Marine Forces Reserve has provided detachments from both 3d and 4th Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) – based in Long Beach, CA and West Palm Beach, FL respectively -- in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The last detachment returned mid-December 2005. During its tour, the unit supported the multinational division headed by the Polish Army and consisting of troops from 14 countries. The unit was involved in various missions in the three provinces south of Baghdad. Duties ranged from radioing in fire support for the coalition partners to providing protection for convoys. The Marines were credited with rounding up 390 insurgents and criminals in addition to recovering 50,000 pounds of ordnance.

FOURTH MARINE DIVISION:

The 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines, led by LtCol Lionel B. Urquhart (USMCR) -- a manager for Roadway Transportation Services -- and his senior enlisted advisor SgtMaj Edward C. Wagner (USMCR) supported Regimental Combat Team 2 during Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06.1. During this time, the battalion cleared the city of Hit, establishing two permanent firm-bases there and introduced Iraqi Armed Forces in the city to begin the process of independent Iraqi control. Hit was the only city to be liberated from anti-Iraqi forces control by the 2d Marine Division. In all, the battalion acted as the regimental main effort in 15 named combat operations and provided support to 5 more named operations in an area covering 4,200 square kilometers. The scheme of maneuver entering the town of Kubaysah employed the first heliborne and mechanized combined assault in Area of Operations “Denver”. The battalion’s efforts resulted in 46 detainees being convicted to confinement at Abu Grahb Prison, 160 confirmed enemy killed in action, and 25 confirmed enemy

wounded in action. This battalion—which coalesced from reservists spread across more than seven states—acted as a center of gravity for RCT-2 during Operation Iraqi Freedom 04-06.1 enabling the regiment to achieve it's greatest successes.

Fifth Battalion, 14th Marines (-) Reinforced, commanded by John C. Hemmerling USMCR, an attorney for the City of San Diego, with Sergeant Major Jose Freire, a US Postal Carrier, as his senior enlisted advisor, was assigned the mission as a provisional military police battalion in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. The Marines of 5/14 exemplified the total force concept as it transitioned from a reserve artillery battalion into a composite battalion. The battalion was comprised of fifteen active and reserve units and detachments and integrated active and reserve Marines down to the fire team level that totaled more than 1,000 strong. Furthermore, drawing from its ranks of reservists in civilian law enforcement and active duty military policemen at its core, the battalion was task organized to conduct military police missions of convoy security operations; law and order on the forward operating bases; operate five regional detention facilities; force protection of Camp Fallujah; conduct criminal investigations; recruit Iraqi Security Forces through the Police Partnership Program; and control fifty-seven military working dog teams. The battalion is credited with processing over 6,000 detainees, without incident, consisting of suspected insurgents, terrorists and criminals; safely escorted over 300 convoys throughout the Multinational Force West area of operations; occupied and defended Camp Fallujah and approximately 100 square kilometers of battle space surrounding it; and recruited over 1,000 Iraqi Police candidates.

FOURTH MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP:

4th Marine Logistics Group (MLG) continued to provide the active duty component and combatant commanders tactical logistics support throughout the six functional areas of Combat

Service Support (CSS) and the personnel necessary to sustain all elements of the operating force in multiple theaters and at various levels of war.

4th MLG has a well-established reputation for providing professional, dedicated and highly skilled Marines and Sailors to augment and reinforce the active components in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Enduring Freedom (OEF). During the past year's semi-annual relief of forces, 4th MLG deployed approximately 1,000 reserve Marines and Sailors to conduct tactical level logistics missions.

Additionally, 4th MLG provided the following support to the operating forces when requested by combatant commanders:

- During January of 2005, 4th MLG deployed approximately 130 Marines and Sailors to support Marine Forces Central Command's Logistics Command Element (LCE) located aboard Camp Lemonier, Djibouti. These Marines and Sailors from various 4th MLG battalions provided vital logistical and operational support to a mission focused on detecting, disrupting, and ultimately defeating transnational terrorist groups operating in the Horn of Africa region.

- In April 2005, on short notice, 4th MLG deployed 13 maintenance personnel in support of Marine Corps Systems Command (MARCORSYSCOM) to a forward operating base in Iraq to assist with the installation of armor kits on tactical vehicles. Their mission proved invaluable in mitigating the personnel and equipment loss attributed to an emergent IED threat.

- During May of 2005, 4th MLG provided health services support consisting of 20 Sailors from 4th Medical Battalion to II Marine Expeditionary Force (II MEF) for detainee operations in Iraq that included medical services for personnel in temporary detainee facilities; maintenance of medical supplies and equipment; health and sanitation inspections, pre and post interrogation health assessments; and coordination of medical evacuations in accordance with the Geneva Convention.

- June 2005 saw 4th MLG provide the nucleus staff for the provisional 6th Civil Affairs Group.

Regardless of the mission, the Reserve Marines and Sailors of 4th MLG have proven to be both responsive and flexible. Their level of professionalism and training enabled them to easily integrate with their active duty counterparts. Their contributions and sacrifices in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) are a testament of their value to our great nation.

FOURTH MARINE AIRCRAFT WING:

4th Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) units participated in a wide variety of operations in locations across the country and around the world in support of the Global War on Terror.

Operation Iraqi Freedom activations consisted of units in their entirety, detachments, as well as individual augments providing invaluable support to the Active Component in the conduct of these operations. Marine Fighter/Attack Squadron 142 deployed twelve F/A-18 A+ Hornet aircraft in support of OIF, where they accomplished 100% of their tasking sortie requirements. These assets were the first 4th MAW F/A-18's to deploy in support of OIF and the first Marine F/A-18's to deploy the Advanced Targeting Pod (LITENING) in a combat environment. Marine Medium Helicopter squadrons 764 and 774 deployed to Iraq in support of OIF for their second tour. The deployment of these units required the transfer of 19 aircraft from east to west coast to facilitate training of the unit that was CONUS based while the other deployed. This monumental task was accomplished safely and efficiently. Marine Light Attack Squadron (HMLA) 775 returned from Iraq and immediately went to work accepting (16) AH-1N and (9) UH-1N aircraft from 3rd MAW. Immediately upon acceptance, they transferred (6) of the AH-1Ws and (4) of the UH-1Ns to HMLA-775 Detachment A, which then repositioned all aircraft to Johnstown, PA. Additionally, Heavy Marine Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 772 was chosen to conduct the initial NVG flight

training evolution designed for Navy MH-53E aircrew, allowing them to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This marked the first time Navy CH-53 pilots were trained on NVGs in a desert environment. Marine Air Control Group (MACG) 48 provided numerous detachments, including Air Traffic Controllers, to support the OIF. Marine Wing Support Group (MWSG) 47 provided continual ground refueling support to OEF. They continue to provide detachments of engineers, refuelers, and firefighters to OIF.

Hurricane Katrina made landfall on 29 August 2005 east of New Orleans. As a result of the ensuing devastation to the gulf coast region, HMH-772 was the first Marine squadron to participate in the rescue efforts in New Orleans on August 31, 2005. The unit deployed four aircraft, which transported 348,000 lbs of cargo, 1053 passengers, and 720 evacuees. Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadrons (VMGR) 234 and 452 and their KC-130 aircraft provided direct support to Special Purpose Marine Air/Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) Katrina in the form of troop, cargo lift and humanitarian assistance to the gulf coast region. 1,562 passengers and 1.5 million pounds of cargo were transported during 263 sorties totaling 535 hours. They also performed the same mission during the aftermath of Hurricanes Rita and Wilma. In addition to HMH-772, HMLA-773 provided direct support to SMAGTF Katrina in the form of civilian evacuation and humanitarian relief, operating out of Eglin AFB and JRB Belle Chasse. MACG-48 and MWSG-47 brought their own specialized assistance in the form of aircraft controllers and logistical support. 4th MAW continued to support Katrina relief efforts until October 2005.

ACTIVATION PHILOSOPHY

Sustaining the force has been consistent with Total Force Marine Corps planning guidance. This guidance continues to be based on a 12-month involuntary activation with a 7-month deployment, followed by a period of dwell time and, if required and approved, a second 12-month

involuntary reactivation and subsequent 7-month deployment. This force management practice has provided warfighting and sustainment capability within Marine Forces Reserve with well-balanced and cohesive units ready for combat. This activation philosophy has proved to be an efficient and effective use of our Reserve Marines' 24-month cumulative activation time limit.

ACTIVATION IMPACT

As of December 2005, the Marine Corps Reserve began activating approximately 2,200 Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) Unit Marines in support of the next Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation and 290 SMCR Unit Marines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Even with judicious use of our assets and coordinated planning, the personnel tempo has increased. As the members of this committee know, Reserve Marines are students or have civilian occupations that are also very demanding, and are their primary careers. In total, approximately 4,790 Reserve Marines have been activated more than once; about 1,875 of whom are currently activated. We also know that, as of February 2006, approximately 65 percent of the current unit population and 72 percent of the current Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA) population have been activated at least once. About 1.5 percent of our current Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) population has deployed in support of OIF/OEF. If you include the number of Marines who deployed in an active or SMCR component and have since transferred to the IRR, the number reaches 61 percent. This is worth particular note as the IRR provides us needed depth – an added dimension to our capability. Volunteers from the IRR and from other Military Occupational Specialties, such as artillery, have been cross-trained to reinforce identified critical specialties such as civil affairs and linguists.

Although supporting the Global War on Terror is the primary focus of the Marine Corps Reserve, other functions, such as pre-deployment preparation and maintenance, recruiting, training, facilities management and long term planning continue. The wise use of the Active Duty Special

Work (ADSW) Program allows the Marine Corps to fill these short-term, full-time requirements with Reserve Marines. For example, as of this month we have almost 4,600 Marines on active duty under this program. Continued support and funding for this critical program will enhance flexibility thereby ensuring our Total Force requirements are met.

RECRUITING AND RETENTION

Like the active component, Marine Corps Reserve units primarily rely upon a first term enlisted force. Currently, the Marine Corps Reserve continues to recruit and retain quality men and women willing to manage commitments to their families, their communities, their civilian careers, and the Corps. Recruiting and retention goals were met in FY 2005, but the long-term impact of recent activations is not yet known. Despite the high operational tempo, the morale and patriotic spirit of Reserve Marines, their families and employers remains extraordinarily high.

At the end of FY 2005, the Marine Corps' Selected Reserve was over 39,600 strong. Part of this population is comprised of Active Reserve Marines, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and Reserve Marines in the training pipeline. Additionally, nearly 60,000 Marines serve as part of the Individual Ready Reserve, representing a significant pool of trained and experienced prior service manpower. Reserve Marines bring to the table not only their Marine Corps skills but also their civilian training and experience as well. The presence of police officers, engineers, lawyers, skilled craftsmen, business executives, and the college students who fill our Reserve ranks serves to enrich the Total Force. The Marine Corps appreciates the recognition given by Congress to employer relations, insurance benefits, and family support. Such programs should not be seen as "rewards" or "bonuses," but as investment tools that will sustain the Force in the years ahead.

Support to the Global War on Terror has reached the point where 70 percent of the current Marine Corps Reserve officer leadership has deployed at least once. Nevertheless, the Marine

Corps Reserve is currently achieving higher retention rates than the benchmark average from the last three fiscal years. As of January, the OSD attrition statistics for Marine Corps Selected Reserve officers is 8.4 percent compared to the current benchmark average of 11.7 percent. For the same time period, Reserve unit enlisted attrition is 6.2 percent compared to 8.5 percent average.

In FY 2005, the Marine Corps Reserve achieved 100 percent of its recruiting goal for non-prior service recruiting (5,921) and exceeded its goal for prior service recruiting (3,132). For our reserve component, junior officer recruiting remains the most challenging area. We are expanding reserve commissioning opportunities for our prior-enlisted Marines in order to grow some of our own officers from Marine Forces Reserve units and are exploring other methods to increase the participation of company grade officers in the Selective Marine Corps Reserve. We are also developing some bold new changes in our junior officer accession programs and expect to incorporate some of the changes during FY 2007 and plan to fill 90% of our company grade officer billets by FY 2011. We thank Congress for the continued support of legislation to allow bonuses for officers in the Selective Marine Corps Reserve who fill a critical skill or shortage. We are aggressively implementing the Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus program and expect it to fill fifty vacant billets this year, with plans to expand the program in the coming years. We appreciate your continued support and funding of incentives such as this, which offset the cost that officers must often incur in traveling to billets at Marine Corps Reserve locations nationwide.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Our future success will rely on the Marine Corps' most valuable asset – our Marines and their families. We believe it is our obligation to arm our Marines and their families with as much information as possible on the programs and resources available to them. Arming our Marines and their families with information on their education benefits, available childcare programs, family

readiness resources and the health care benefits available to them, provides them with unlimited potential for their quality of life.

EDUCATION

Last year, you heard testimony from my predecessor that there were no laws offering academic and financial protections for Reserve military members who are college students. I am glad to see that there is movement in Congress to protect our college students and offer greater incentives for all service members to attend colleges. I appreciate Congress's efforts in protecting a military member's college education investments and status when called to duty.

More than 1,300 Marine Forces Reserve Marines and Sailors chose to use Tuition Assistance in FY 2005 in order to help finance their education. This Tuition Assistance came to more than \$3M in FY 2005 for more than 4,200 courses. Many of these Marines were deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, and took their courses via distance learning courses. In this way Tuition Assistance helped to mitigate the financial burden of education and maintained progress in the Marine's planned education schedule. We support continued funding of Tuition Assistance as currently authorized for activated Reserves. I fully support initiatives that will increase G.I. Bill benefits for Reserve and National Guard service members, as it is a key retention and recruiting tool and an important part of our Commandant's guidance to enhance the education of all Marines. The 2005 National Defense Authorization Act included a new education assistance program for certain Reserve and National Guard Service members. I heartily thank you for this initiative and its implementation by the Department of Veterans Affairs, as it has positively impacted the quality of life for Marine Reservists and other service members.

CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Marines and their families are often forced to make difficult choices in selecting childcare, before, during and after a Marine's deployment in support of the Global War on Terror. We are deeply grateful for "Operation Military Child Care," a joint initiative funded by the Department of Defense and operated through cooperative agreements with the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. Without the fiscal authorization provided by the Senate and House, these programs could not have been initiated or funded. These combined resources have immeasurably contributed to the quality of life of our Marines' and their families. I thank you all for your support in the past and the future in providing sufficient funds for these key initiatives.

FAMILY READINESS

Everyone in Marine Forces Reserve recognizes the strategic role our families have in our mission readiness, particularly in our mobilization preparedness. We help our families to prepare for day-to-day military life and the deployment cycle (Pre-Deployment, Deployment, Post-Deployment, and Follow-On) by providing educational opportunities at unit Family Days, Pre-Deployment Briefs, Return and Reunions, Post-Deployment Briefs and through programs such as the Key Volunteer Network (KVN) and Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.). We also envision the creation of Regional Quality of Life Coordinators, similar to the Marine Corps Recruiting Command program, for our Reserve Marines and their families.

At each of our Reserve Training Centers, the KVN program serves as the link between the command and the family members, providing them with official communication, information and referrals. The Key Volunteers, many of whom are parents of young, un-married Marines, provide a means of proactively educating families on the military lifestyle and benefits, provide answers for

individual questions and areas of concerns and, perhaps most importantly, enhance the sense of community within the unit. The L.I.N.K.S. program is a spouse-to-spouse orientation service offered to family members to acquaint them with the military lifestyle and the Marine Corps, including the challenges brought about by deployments. Online and CD-ROM versions of L.I.N.K.S makes this valuable tool more readily accessible to families of Reserve Marines not located near Marine Corps installations.

Military One Source is another important tool that provides Marines and their families with around-the-clock information and referral service for subjects such as parenting, childcare, education, finances, elder care, health, wellness, deployment, crisis support and relocation via toll-free telephone and Internet access.

The Peacetime/Wartime Support Team and the support structure within the Inspector and Instructor staff uses all these tools to provide families of activated or deployed Marines with assistance in developing proactive, prevention-oriented steps such as family care plans, powers of attorney, family financial planning, and enrollment in the Dependent Eligibility and Enrollment Reporting System.

All of these programs depend on adequate funding of our manpower and O&M accounts.

MANAGED HEALTH NETWORK

Managed Health Network, through a contract with the Department of Defense, is providing specialized mental health support services to military personnel and their families. This unique program is designed to bring counselors on-site at Reserve Training Centers to support all phases of the deployment cycle. Marine Forces Reserve is incorporating this resource into Family Days, Pre-Deployment Briefs and Return & Reunion Briefs and further incorporating them in the unfortunate event of significant casualty situations. Follow-up services are further scheduled after

Marines return from combat at various intervals to facilitate on-site individual and group counseling.

TRICARE

Since 9/11, Congress has gone to great lengths to improve TRICARE benefits available to the Guard and Reserve and we are very appreciative to Congress for all the recent changes to the program. Since April 2005, TRICARE Reserve Select has been providing eligible Guard and Reserve veterans with comprehensive health care. This new option, similar to TRICARE Standard, is designed specifically for reserve members activated on or after September 11, 2001 who enter into an agreement to serve continuously in the Selected Reserve for a period of one or more years. Participation in the program has greatly benefited those Reserve Marines who have served and who continue to serve. This provides optional coverage for Selected Reserves after an activation, at the rate of one year of coverage while in non-active duty status for every 90 days of consecutive active duty. The member must agree to remain in the Selected Reserve for one or more whole years. Also, a permanent earlier eligibility date for coverage due to activation has been established at up to 90 days before an active duty reporting date for members and their families.

The new legislation also waives certain deductibles for activated members' families. This reduces the potential double payment of health care deductibles by members' civilian coverage. Another provision allows the DoD to protect the beneficiary by paying the providers for charges above the maximum allowable charge. Transitional health care benefits have been established, regulating the requirements and benefits for members separating. We are thankful for these permanent changes that extend healthcare benefits to family members and extend benefits up to 90 days prior to their activation date and up to 180 days after de-activation.

Reserve members are also eligible for dental care under the Tri-Service Dental Plan for a moderate monthly fee. In an effort to increase awareness of the new benefits, Reserve members are now receiving more information regarding the changes through an aggressive education and marketing plan. These initiatives will further improve the healthcare benefits for our reserves and National Guard members and families.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE

One of the most significant responsibilities of the site support staff is that of casualty assistance. Currently, Marine Forces Reserve conducts approximately 93 percent of all notifications and follow-on assistance for the families of our fallen Marine Corps brethren. In recognition of this greatest of sacrifices, there is no duty that we treat with more importance. However, the duties of our casualty assistance officers go well beyond notification. We ensure they are adequately trained, equipped, and supported by all levels of command. Once an officer or staff noncommissioned officer is designated as a casualty assistance officer, he or she assists the family members in every possible way, from planning the return and final rest of their Marine, counseling them on benefits and entitlements, to providing a strong shoulder when needed. The casualty officer is the family's central point of contact, serving as a representative or liaison with the media, funeral home, government agencies or any other agency that may be involved. Every available asset is directed to our Marine families to ensure they receive the utmost support. This support remains in place as long after the funeral and is maintained regardless of personnel turnover. The Marine Corps Reserve also provides support for military funerals for veterans of all services. The Marines at our reserve sites performed more than 7,500 funerals in calendar year 2005.

MARINE FOR LIFE

Our commitment to take care of our own includes a Marine's transition from honorable military service back to civilian life. Initiated in FY 2002, the Marine For Life program is available to provide support for the approximately 27,000 Marines transitioning from active service back to civilian life each year. Built on the philosophy, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine," Reserve Marines in over eighty cities help transitioning Marines and their families to get settled in their new communities. Sponsorship includes assistance with employment, education, housing, childcare, veterans' benefits and other support services needed to make a smooth transition. To provide this support, the Marine For Life program taps into a network of former Marines and Marine-friendly businesses, organizations, and individuals willing to lend a hand to a Marine who has served honorably. Approximately 2,000 Marines are logging onto the web-based electronic network for assistance each month, and more than 30,000 Marines have been assisted since January 2004. Assistance from career retention specialists and transitional recruiters helps transitioning Marines by getting the word out about the program.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Members of the Guard and Reserve who choose to make a career must expect to be subject to multiple activations. Employer support of this fact is essential to a successful activation and directly effects retention and recruiting. With continuous rotation of Reserve Marines, we recognize that the rapid deactivation process is a high priority to reintegrate Marines back into their civilian lives quickly and properly in order to preserve the Reserve force for the future. To that end we enthusiastically support the efforts of the National Committee of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) and have joined with them in Operation Pinnacle Advance, which seeks to further develop personal relationships with our Marines' employers.

EQUIPMENT

Our readiness priorities continue to be the support and sustainment of our forward deployed forces and, secondly, ensuring units slated to deploy in follow-on rotations possess adequate levels of equipment for training. Currently, the Marine Corps has approximately 30 percent of its ground equipment and 25 percent of its aviation equipment forward-deployed. In certain critical, low-density items, this percentage is closer to 50 percent. This equipment has been sourced from the active component, Marine Forces Reserve, Marine Corps Systems Command procurements, the Maritime Prepositioned Force as well as equipment from Marine Corps Logistics Command stores and war reserves. Our contributed major items of equipment (principally communications equipment, crew-served weapons, optics and a reserve infantry battalion's equipment set) remain in theater in support of rotating Marine forces, which fall in on these assets in-theater.

Maintaining current readiness levels will require continued support as our equipment continues to age at a pace exceeding peace time replacement rates. The Global War on Terror equipment usage rates average eight-to-one over normal peacetime usage due to continuous combat operations. This high usage rate in a harsh operating environment, coupled with the weight of added armor and unavoidable delays of scheduled maintenance due to combat, is degrading the Corps' equipment at an accelerated rate. If this equipment returns to CONUS, extensive service life extension and overhaul/rebuild programs will be required in order to bring this equipment back into satisfactory condition prior to re-issue to an operating force.

As we continue to aggressively train and prepare our CONUS-based Marines for possible future deployments, we have maintained ground equipment readiness rates exceeding 90 percent. The types of equipment held by Reserve Training Centers are the same as those held within the active component. However, as a result of the aforementioned movement of equipment into theater

as well as the Marine Corps' efforts to cross-level equipment inventories to support home station shortfalls (both Active and Reserve), Marine Forces Reserve will experience some equipment shortfalls of communication and electronic equipment. This specific equipment type shortfall will be approximately 10 percent across the Force in most areas, and somewhat greater for certain low density "big-box" type equipment sets. However, communications equipment procured by HQMC (FY-05 supplemental funding) and National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriations (NGREA FY-05) are currently being fielded and mitigate many communications equipment shortfalls. Although the equipment shortfalls will not preclude sustainment training within the Force, this equipment availability is not optimal.

STRATEGIC GROUND EQUIPMENT WORKING GROUP

Due to GWOT demands on the entire Marine Corps equipment inventory, Headquarters Marine Corps established a Strategic Ground Equipment Working Group (SGEWG) with the mission to best position the Corps equipment to support the needs of the deployed GWOT forces, the Corps' strategic programs, and training of non-deployed forces. My staff has been fully engaged in this process and the results have been encouraging for Marine Forces Reserve, leading to an increase in overall Supply Readiness of approximately 5 percent in most equipment categories. The efforts of the SGEWG, combined with the efforts of my staff to redistribute equipment to support non-deployed units, have resulted in continued training capability for the Reserve forces here at home.

INDIVIDUAL COMBAT CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT, INDIVIDUAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

In order to continue seamless integration into the active component, my ground component priorities are the sustained improvement of Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment, Individual Protective Equipment and overall equipment readiness. I am pleased to report that every member of

Marine Forces Reserve deployed over the past year in support of the Global War on Terror, along with those currently deployed into harm's way, were fully equipped with the most current Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment and Individual Protective Equipment. Your continued support of current budget initiatives will ensure we are able to properly equip our most precious assets – our individual Marines.

CRITICAL ASSET RAPID DISTRIBUTION FACILITY

In order to ensure equipment is available to our deploying forces, we created the Marine Forces Reserve Materiel Prepositioning Program and designated my Special Training Allowance Pool (which traditionally held such items as cold weather gear) as the Critical Asset Rapid Distribution Facility (CARDF). The CARDF has been designated as the primary location for all newly fielded items of Individual Clothing and Combat Equipment for issue to Marine Forces Reserve. Equipment such as the Small Arms Protective Insert, Improved Load Bearing Equipment, Lightweight Helmet and Improved First Aid Kit has been sent to the CARDF for secondary distribution to deploying units. This system worked extremely well, and we plan to continue its use for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, as tactical clothing and equipment requirements continue to emerge, we have expanded the CARDF's inventory to stock additional OIF-related individual issue equipment items such as WILEY-X Ballistic goggles, Ballistic hearing protection, and balaclavas to better equip our deploying forces.

TRAINING ALLOWANCE

The total wartime equipment requirement for Marine Forces Reserve is called the Table of Equipment (T/E). For MARFORRES, the T/E consists of two parts: a Training Allowance (T/A) and In-Stores assets. The T/A is the equipment MARFORRES units maintain at their training sites. Marine Forces Reserve units have established Training Allowances that is on average

approximately 80 percent of the established Table of Equipment. This equipment represents the minimum needed by the unit to maintain the training readiness necessary to deploy, while at the same time is within their ability to maintain under routine conditions. The establishment of training allowances allows Marine Forces Reserve to better cross-level equipment to support CONUS training requirements of all units of the Force with a minimal overall equipment requirement. The amount of T/A each unit has is determined by training requirements, space limitations, and staffing levels at the unit training sites. Of course, this concept requires the support of the service to ensure that the “delta” between a unit’s Training Allowance and Table of Equipment is available in the event of mobilization and deployment. The current Headquarters Marine Corps policy of retaining needed equipment in theater for use by deploying forces ensures that mobilized Marine Forces Reserve units will have the Primary End Items necessary to conduct their mission.

MODERNIZATION

The Marine Corps Reserve remains currently engaged in a two-pronged programmatic requirement strategy – fine tuning Force Structure while simultaneously determining the corresponding equipment requirements. Our main effort consists of resetting today’s Force with today’s equipment while seeking to determine future equipment requirements – all with the goal of building the most lethal, and best protected, Marine and Marine Corps. I am extremely pleased to report to you that your Marine Reserve Component continues to evolve and adapt to best prepare and face the full spectrum of threats.

As with all we do, our number one focus is the individual Marine and Sailor. Our efforts to equip and train our most valued resource have resulted in obtaining the most appropriate individual combat and protective equipment: M4 rifles, Advanced Combat Optic Gunsight (ACOG) 4X32 scopes, Lower Body Armor, and Night Vision goggles, to name a few.

Our most noteworthy structure-related accomplishments are those associated with the Marine Corps Force Structure Review Group (FSRG). As part of a Total Force effort, the Marine Corps Reserve is transforming under-utilized legacy units into new units with higher threat-relevant capabilities while providing operational tempo relief in high-demand areas: Intelligence, Anti-Terrorism, and Light Armored Reconnaissance. In last year's testimony we reported the results of the 2004 Force Structure Review Group, which called for decreasing artillery and tank capability while increasing civil affairs, intelligence, mortuary affairs and light armored reconnaissance capabilities within the reserve component over a three year period (FY05-07). With FY05 actions largely complete and FY06 actions well underway, the reserve component is better postured to sustain the long war while simultaneously achieving a greater irregular warfare capability.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE EQUIPMENT APPROPRIATION

The National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA) continues to provide invaluable procurement support to your Guard and Reserves. In Fiscal Year 2005, NGREA provided \$50M (\$10M for OIF/OEF requirements, and \$40M for Title III procurement requirements), enabling us to robustly respond to the pressing needs of the individual Marine, Total Force and Combatant Commanders. Fiscal Year 2006 NGREA provided \$30M, which enabled us to craft a FY06 procurement plan consistent with those of FY05: tactical communications/ power generating devices and training enhancements.

Specifically, FY06 NGREA will procure four Virtual Combat Convoy Trainers – Marine (VCCT-M) and two LAV Combat vehicle training simulators. These simulators provide realistic convoy crew training and incidental driver training to your Marines. Two of these systems will be deployed to Camp Lejeune and two will be reserved for units in the pre-deployment pipeline.

Additional items identified for FY06 NGREA procurement include: the Integrated Intra Squad Radio, the Ground Laser Target Designator, Intransit Visibility Management Packages, the Defense Advanced GPS Receiver, Marine Expeditionary Power Distribution Systems, and PRC-148 Radios. Each year, NGREA enables us to gain the necessary ground needed to establish and maintain inter-operability and compatibility with the Active Component.

Looking forward, my top modernization priorities as described in the Fiscal Year 2007 National Guard and Reserve Equipment Report and other documents, remain the procurement of Light Armored Vehicles, tactical communications, Initial Issue equipment, and training enhancement devices.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Marine Forces Reserve is and will continue to be a community-based force. This is a fundamental strength of Marine Forces Reserve. Our long-range strategy is to retain that strength by maintaining our connection with communities in the most cost effective way. We are not, nor do we want to be, limited exclusively to large metropolitan areas nor consolidated into a few isolated enclaves, but rather we intend to divest Marine Corps-owned infrastructure and locate our units in Joint Reserve Training Centers throughout the country. Marine Forces Reserve units are currently located at 185 sites in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico; 34 sites are owned or leased by the Marine Corps Reserve, 151 are either tenant or joint sites. Fifty-four percent of the Reserve centers we occupy are more than 30 years old and of these, 46 are over 50 years old. The FY 2007 budget fully funds sustainment of these facilities and we are working through a backlog of restoration and modernization projects at centers in several states.

The age of our infrastructure means that much of it was built before Antiterrorism/Force Protection (AT/FP) was a major consideration in design and construction. These facilities require

AT/FP resolution through structural improvements, relocation, replacement or the acquisition of additional stand-off distance. We appreciate the Congressional support provided for our Military construction program in FY 2006 as it provided for construction to replace the Reserve Center in Charleston, South Carolina, a complex of buildings dating to 1942, and joint construction with the Alabama Army National Guard in Mobile, Alabama. While two Marine Corps owned Reserve centers, Lafayette, Louisiana and Galveston, Texas, sustained very minor damage from the Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the hurricanes' impact on construction costs in the South has negatively affected our ability to award these two FY 2006 projects. Absent fiscal relief, final completion of these projects will be delayed significantly.

Maintaining adequate facilities is critical to training that supports our readiness and sends a strong message to our Marines and Sailors about the importance of their service. With the changes in Force structure resulting from the Marine Corps Force Structure Review in 2004, extensive facilities upgrades are required at a few locations. Our top priority sites are San Diego, California; Windy Hill (Marietta), Georgia; and Camp Upshur (Quantico), Virginia.

BRAC 2005

BRAC 2005 moved us toward our long-range strategic infrastructure goals through efficient joint ventures and increased training center utilization without jeopardizing our community presence. In cooperation with other reserve components, notably the Army Reserve and the Army National Guard, we developed Reserve basing solutions that further reduce restoration and modernization backlogs and AT/FP vulnerability. Twenty-three of the 25 BRAC recommendations affecting the Marine Corps Reserve result in joint basing of our units. Implementation of these recommendations will be a challenge across the Future Year Development Plan. Of the other two, the Federal City in New Orleans appears both promising and challenging. We look forward to

working with the state and local governments in this unique venture. The final BRAC-recommended move is from a Navy-hosted facility in Encino, CA, to a Marine Corps Reserve-owned facility in Pasadena, CA.

CONCLUSION

As I have stated in the beginning of my testimony, your consistent and steadfast support of our Marines and their families has directly contributed to our successes, both past and present, and I thank you for that support. As we push on into the future, your continued concern and efforts will play a vital role in the success of Marine Forces Reserve. Due to the dynamics of the era we live in, there is still much to be done.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to be a vital part of the Marine Corps Total Force Concept. Supporting your Reserve Marines at the 185 sites throughout the United States, by ensuring they have the proper facilities, equipment and training areas, enables their selfless dedication to our country. Since 9/11, your Marine Corps Reserve has met every challenge and has fought side by side with our active counterparts. No one can tell the difference between the active and reserve – we are all Marines.

The consistent support from Congress for upgrades to our warfighting equipment has directly affected the American lives saved on the battlefield. However, as I stated earlier, much of the same equipment throughout the force has deteriorated rapidly due to our current operational tempo.

Although we currently maintain a high level of readiness, we will need significant financial assistance to refresh and/or replace our warfighting equipment in the very near future. Also, as the Marine Forces Reserve adjusts its force structure over the next two years, several facilities will need

conversions to create proper training environments for the new units. Funding for these conversions would greatly assist our warfighting capabilities.

As I have stated earlier, NGREA continues to be extremely vital to the health of the Marine Corps Reserve, assisting us in staying on par with our active component. We have seen how the NGREA directly improved our readiness in recent operations, and we look forward to your continued support of this key program.

My final concerns are for Reserve and Guard members, their families and employers who are sacrificing so much in support of our nation. Despite strong morale and good planning, we understand that activations and deployments place great stress on these praiseworthy Americans. Your continued backing of “quality of life” initiatives will help sustain Reserve Marines in areas such as education benefits, medical care and family care.

My time thus far leading Marine Forces Reserve has been tremendously rewarding. Testifying before congressional committees and subcommittees is a great pleasure, as it allows me the opportunity to let the American people know what an outstanding patriotic group of citizens we have in the Marine Corps Reserve. Thank you for your continued support.