

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARRY L. PARKS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
ACTIVE AND RESERVE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PERSONNEL PROGRAMS
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ON
MARCH 2, 2004**

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Chairman Chambliss, Senator Nelson, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to appear before you today to provide an overview of your United States Marine Corps, from the personnel perspective. The continued commitment of the Congress to increasing the war fighting and crisis response capabilities of our Nation's armed forces, and to improving the quality of life of Marines, is central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. We thank you for your efforts to ensure that Marines and their families are poised to continue to respond to the nation's call in the manner Americans expect of their Corps.

OVERVIEW

General

Up front I will highlight a few key points. The Navy-Marine Corps team continues to play a critical role in the Global War on Terrorism, and in the establishment of stability and security throughout the world. During this past year, the Marine Corps, both active and reserve, was engaged in operations from Afghanistan, to the Arabian Gulf, the Horn of Africa, Liberia, the Georgian Republic, Columbia, Guantanamo Bay, and the Philippines. Currently, I Marine Expeditionary Force is deploying 25,000 active and reserve Marines to Iraq as part of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II. Stated succinctly, your Marines are working hard, but the force remains strong.

Our superb recruiters continue to meet their mission, as they have month after month for over eight years. Through their hard work we continue to exceed the goals for quality recruits established by the Department of Defense, as well as the higher standards established by the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Similarly, as has been the case for the past 10 years, we

remain postured to attain our annual retention goal for first-term Marines electing to become members of the career force; this year 5,974 first term Marines will reenlist, 25 percent of the eligible population. We completed the second year of our subsequent term retention plan for the career force, meeting our targets in this category, and are well on our way to meeting the fiscal year 2004 career force retention goal of 5,628 Marines. Finally, last year we achieved a 19-year high in officer retention, with 93 percent of our officers staying in the Corps. Obviously, the support of Congress to ensure appropriate pay and compensation improvements provides the environment crucial to the success experienced to date.

Funding

The fiscal year 2005 budget provides for a total force of 175,000 active duty Marines, 39,600 reserve Marines, and 13,200 appropriated fund civilian Marines. Approximately 59 percent of our Military Personnel funds are targeted toward basic pay and retired pay accrual. Essentially all of the remaining funds address regulated and directed items such as Basic Allowance for Housing, Defense Health Care, Basic Allowance for Subsistence, Permanent Change of Station relocations, and Special and Incentive pays. Only one percent of the Military Personnel budget is available to pay for discretionary items such as our Selective Reenlistment Bonus, Marine Corps College Fund recruitment program, and Aviation Continuation Pay. While this is a manageable amount, it provides little flexibility. Of the few discretionary pays that we utilize, the Selective Reenlistment Bonus is crucial. We take pride in our prudent stewardship of these critical resources. For fiscal year 2005 we are seeking a judicious increase in funding to \$56.7 million, from \$51.8 million in fiscal year 2004. This remains just one-half of one percent of our Military Personnel budget, but it allows us to effectively target our retention efforts. Military Personnel funding, as a whole, represents 60 percent of the U. S. Marine Corps' Total

Obligation Authority, leaving just 40 percent for infrastructure, investment, and operations and maintenance requirements. Similar to our minimal level of discretionary Military Personnel funding, the Marine Corps, with the smallest budget of the four services, has limited flexibility overall to respond to additional unprogrammed mandates.

The Marine Corps appreciates the efforts by this committee to raise the standard of living for our Marines. Being a Marine is challenging and rewarding. America's youth continue to join the Marine Corps, and remain, in a large part because of our institutional culture and core values. However, it is important that the environment – the other factors in the accession and retention decision – remain supportive, to include compensation. Compensation is a double-edged sword in that it is a principle factor for Marines both when they decide to reenlist and when they decide not to reenlist. Private sector competition will always seek to capitalize on the military training and education provided to our Marines – Marines are a highly desirable labor resource for private sector organizations. The support of the Congress to continue reasonable increases in basic pay, eliminating “out of pocket” expenses associated with the Basic Allowance for Housing, and ensuring a sound comprehensive compensation and entitlements structure greatly assists efforts to recruit and retain the quality Americans you expect in your Corps.

RECRUITING

Active Duty

In fiscal year 2003, the Marine Corps realized unprecedented recruiting success, achieving 103.5 percent of enlisted contracting and 100.1 percent of enlisted shipping objectives. Over 97 percent of those shipped to recruit training were Tier 1 high school diploma graduates, well above the Department of Defense and Marine Corps standards of 90 percent and 95 percent,

respectively. In addition, 70 percent were in the I-III A upper mental testing categories; again well above the Department of Defense and Marine Corps standards of 60 percent and 63 percent, respectively. Lastly, for officers, 100 percent of mission was achieved.

Reserve Component

The Marine Corps Reserve, similarly, achieved its fiscal year 2003 recruiting goals with the accession of 6,174 non-prior service Marines and 2,663 prior service Marines. For our reserve component, officer recruiting and retention to fill out the requirements of our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units remains our most challenging recruiting concern. This challenge exists primarily due to the low attrition rate for company grade officers from the active force. The Marine Corps recruits reserve officers almost exclusively from the ranks of those who have first served a tour as an active duty Marine officer. We are exploring methods to increase the reserve participation of company grade officers in the Selected Marine Corps Reserve through increased recruiting efforts, increased command focus on emphasizing reserve participation upon leaving active duty, and reserve officer programs for qualified enlisted Marines.

Recruiter Access

The Marine Corps is grateful to the Congress for the benefits derived from legislation enabling recruiter access to high school student directory information. America's youth can learn about career opportunities in both the public and private sectors now that our recruiters are afforded access equal to other prospective employers. We look forward to your continued support as we strive to meet the increasing challenges of a dynamic recruiting environment.

Fiscal Year 2004

The key tenants of the fiscal year 2004 recruiting strategic plan are to (1) continue long-term recruiting success by placing mission accomplishment above all else; (2) emphasize the benefits of early mission attainment in “quality of life terms” that will influence the recruiter; (3) stress safety in all that we do; and (4) continue to enhance the image of recruiting duty in order to ensure we replace our recruiters with the same high quality Marines who have laid the groundwork for our success.

Accomplishing the Mission

The Marine Corps’ recruiting environment is dynamic and challenging, particularly with regards to market propensity. Nevertheless, for more than eight years in this dynamic environment we have met our mission. We intend to continue this success, in the future, but it will hinge on our ability to overcome our target market’s low propensity to enlist and the increased cost of advertising, while maintaining innovation in our marketing campaign. Marketing by its very nature requires constant change to remain virulent and relevant. While our brand message of “Tough, Smart, Elite Warrior” has not changed in theoretical perspective, the Corps continues to explore the most efficient manner to communicate and appeal to the most qualified young men and women of the millennial generation.

Ensuring young men and women hear and understand the recruiting message requires continual reinforcement through marketing and advertising programs. To do this we continue to emphasize our core competencies of paid media, generating leads for recruiters, and providing the recruiters with effective sales support materials. Quality advertising aimed at our target market provides the foundation for establishing awareness about Marine Corps opportunities among young men and women.

Paid advertising continues to be the most effective means to communicate our message and, as a result, remains the focus of our marketing efforts. As advertising costs continue to increase it is imperative that our advertising budgets remain competitive in order to ensure that our recruiting message reaches the right audience. Marine Corps recruiting successes over the past years are not only a direct reflection of a quality recruiting force, but also an effective and efficient marketing and advertising program.

Quality of Life and Safety

Continuous improvement in quality of life for our personnel is vitally important. 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 numerous support programs adapted for their benefit. One such program instituted in 2003 is *MCCS One Source*, a program offering assistance, advice, and support on a wide range of everyday issues. This 24/7, 365 day-a-year, enhanced employee assistance service can be accessed anytime via toll free numbers, email, or the Internet and is especially useful for remote Marines, such as recruiters.

Marine Corps recruiting remains committed to improving the health and safety of all Marines, Sailors, Civilian Marines, and members of the officer and enlisted entry pools. Operational risk management and traffic safety are emphasized at all levels and involve both on and off duty activities. Our goal is to continue to accomplish the recruiting mission while minimizing risk and the potential for loss of life and equipment.

Recruit the Recruiter

Our success in recruiting hinges on the Marine – our recruiters – whose efforts and dedication to the task provide our institution with its next generation of warriors. Our recruiters

are the Corps' ambassadors to the American public and represent the virtues of the Marine Corps in a single individual.

Because recruiters who volunteer for this demanding duty perform at a higher level and, subsequently, experience a better quality of life, the Marine Corps Recruiting Command has taken cost effective measures to recruit our own recruiters. Through education, media venues, and the Headquarters Recruiter Screening Team process, the Marine Corps Recruiting Command will continue to shape the image of recruiting as a desirable duty that will attract the best and brightest to the recruiting force. As a result of this "Recruit the Recruiter" initiative, our percentage of recruiters who volunteer continues to rise.

RETENTION

A successful recruiting effort is but one part of placing a properly trained Marine in the right place at the right time. The dynamics of our manpower system must match skills and grades to our Commanders' needs throughout the operating forces. The Marine Corps endeavors to attain and maintain stable, predictable retention patterns. However, as is the case with recruiting, civilian opportunities abound for Marines as employers actively solicit our young Marine leaders for private sector employment. Leadership opportunities, our core values, and other similar intangibles are a large part of the reason we retain dedicated men and women to be active duty Marines after their initial commitment. Of course retention success is also a consequence of the investments made in tangible forms of compensation and in supporting our operating forces – giving our Marines what they need to do their jobs in the field, as well as the funds required to educate and train these phenomenal men and women.

Enlisted Retention

We are a young force. Achieving a continued flow of quality new accessions is of foundational importance to well-balanced readiness. Within our 154,600 Marine active duty enlisted force, over 27,000 are still teenagers and 104,000 are on their first enlistment. As noted at the outset, in fiscal year 2004 we will reenlist approximately 25 percent of our first-term Marine population. These 5,974 Marines represent 100 percent of the career force requirement and will mark the tenth consecutive year that we will achieve this objective. To better manage our career force, we introduced the Subsequent Term Alignment Plan in fiscal year 2002 to track reenlistments in our career force. In fiscal year 2003, our second year, this proved to be a huge success as we met our career reenlistment goals and achieved a 94 percent skill match. Given the strong draw from the civilian sector, further emphasis in retention of our career force was achieved by effectively targeting 40 percent of our Selective Reenlistment Bonus program resources to maintain an experience level on par with previous years. As commented before, the Selective Reenlistment Bonus is a powerful tool and we take great pride in our prudent stewardship of these resources. In the aggregate, we are seeking a judicious increase in Selective Reenlistment Bonus funding for fiscal year 2005 to \$56.7 million, from \$51.8 million in fiscal year 2004. While just one-half of one percent of our military personnel budget, it allows us the means to effectively target our retention efforts.

A positive trend is developing concerning our first term non-expiration of active service attrition – those Marines who depart before their enlistment is completed. As with fiscal years 2002 and 2003, we continue to see these numbers decrease. The implementation of the Crucible and the Unit Cohesion programs continues to contribute to improved retention among our young

Marines who assimilate the cultural values of the Corps earlier in their career. The impact of this lower attrition allowed a reduced recruiting mission in both fiscal years 2003 and 2004.

Our enlisted force is the backbone of the Corps and we make every effort to retain our best people. Although we regularly experience minor turbulence in some specialties, the aggregate enlisted retention situation continues to be encouraging. We are segmenting and tracking retention indicators closer than ever and the numbers remain solid. Given the demands on our Corps, we will continue a watchful eye on the numbers.

Primarily because these quality young Marines remain in high demand in the civilian sector, some shortages continually exist in high-tech Military Occupational Specialties that are an important part of our war fighting capability. These highly technical specialty shortages include intelligence, data communications experts, and air command and control technicians. As mentioned, specialty shortages are addressed with the highly successful Selective Reenlistment Bonus program. These funds are targeted 60 percent and 40 percent between first term and career force reenlistments, respectively. The Selective Reenlistment Bonus program greatly complements our reenlistment efforts and clearly improves retention within our critical skill shortages. In fiscal year 2004, the Corps is continuing to pay lump sum bonuses, thus increasing the net present value of the incentive and positively influencing highly qualified, yet previously undecided, personnel. It is a powerful influence for the undecided to witness another Marine's reenlistment and receipt of his or her Selective Reenlistment Bonus in the total amount. And, with the added benefit of the Thrift Savings Program, our Marines can now confidently invest these funds toward their future financial security.

Officer Retention

Overall, officer retention continues to experience great success. Our aggregate officer retention rate reached a nineteen-year high of 93.5 percent in fiscal year 2003. The significant increase in our officer retention rate directly corresponds to a reduction in voluntary separations. Nevertheless, as with the enlisted force, we have some skill imbalances within our officer corps; fixed-wing aviation, intelligence, and command and control.

While fixed wing pilot retention remains a concern, we are cautiously optimistic. Aggregate fiscal year 2003 retention targets for aviators were met, though deficiencies remain in some fixed wing pilot year groups based on attrition from the late 1990's. In the interim these gaps are covered by rotary wing pilots and naval flight officers filling a larger share of staff billets, thereby not impacting the flying squadrons. Retaining aviators involves a concerted effort in multiple areas. Important elements include recent retention initiatives that reduce the time to train, and supplementary pay programs such as Aviation Continuation Pay provide a proactive, long-term aviation career incentive to our field grade aviators. We remain focused on retaining mid-grade aviators – junior majors through lieutenant colonels – and will continually review our overall aviation retention posture to optimize our resources.

Overall, the Marine Corps' officer and enlisted retention situation is very encouraging. With the phenomenal leadership of our unit commanders, we expect to achieve every strength objective for fiscal year 2004, and start fiscal year 2005 poised for continued success. Again, while the Corps is stretched to meet our current operational commitments, this has not negatively impacted our recruiting nor our retention; however, we continue to monitor both very closely.

The Marine Corps remains optimistic, thanks in large measure to the continued support of Congress.

END STRENGTH

The Marine Corps is assimilating the Congressionally authorized increase in Marine Corps end-strength to 175,000. The increase of 2,400 Marines addressed an urgent need to train and maintain additional Marines for the long-term requirements associated with the Global War on Terrorism. It has been particularly important in enabling us to provide the Nation with a robust, scalable force option specifically dedicated to anti-terrorism the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism).

The Marine Corps is expeditionary by nature and therefore accustomed to deploying in support of contingency and forward presence missions. We are structured in such a way as to satisfy our enduring requirements and meet operational contingencies as long as the contingencies are temporary in nature. The question concerning increasing end strength hinges on the duration of our commitments. If the current commitment is short term and represents a spike, then we believe that we can sustain the pace through initiating measures utilizing our current authorizations and flexibilities. Using measures such as increased accessions, expanded cross year extensions, targeted Selective Reenlistment Bonuses, directing non-infantry units such as artillery into a more traditional infantry role, and continued measured use of Reservists will allow us to satisfy our requirements. Further, we are looking at several initiatives to enhance and better target our reserve capabilities. Similarly, we will continue to pursue complementary initiatives, such as military to civilian conversions in order to realign more Marines into the operating forces.

Again, while stretched, we are meeting our challenging international commitments. Our higher operational and personnel tempos have not decreased the propensity of great Americans to either enlist or reenlist.

MARINE CORPS RESERVE

From immediate support on September 11, 2001 to combat operations in Afghanistan in 2002 and Iraq in 2003, the Marine Corps Reserve has demonstrated its ability to rapidly mobilize combat ready Marines to augment and reinforce the active component. In support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, 4,463 reserve Marines were on active duty in March 2002. Just over a year later 21,316 reserve Marines were on active duty in May 2003 to support Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, representing 52 percent of the Selected Marine Corps Reserve. Marine Corps Reserve units and individuals were ready and rapidly integrated into gaining force commands, fighting along side their active component counterparts and making a difference, demonstrating a key core competency emphasized in *Marine Corps Strategy 21*. Of the over 5,400 Reservists currently on active duty, almost 1,300 Individual Mobilized Augmentees, Individual Ready Reserves, and Retirees fill critical joint and internal billets. As of January 2004, the Marine Corps Reserve began activating the approximately 7,000 Marines that will ultimately support some segment of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II. Judicious employment of reserve Marines remains a top priority of the Marine Corps to ensure they retain the capability to augment and reinforce the active component.

A strong Inspector-Instructor system and a demanding Mobilization and Operational Readiness Deployment Test program ensure Marine Corps Reserve units achieve a high level of pre-mobilization readiness. Marine Corps Reserve Units continuously train to a C1/C2 readiness

standard, eliminating the need for post-mobilization certification. Ninety-eight percent of Selected Marine Corps Reserve Marines reported for mobilization and only .4 percent requested a deferment, delay, or exemption. For Operation IRAQI FREEDOM the Marine Corps Reserve executed a rapid and efficient mobilization with units averaging six days from notification to being deployment-ready and 32 days from deployment order to arrival in theater. Many reserve units activated were ready to deploy faster than strategic lift was available.

Building on the important lessons learned of the last year, the Marine Corps is pursuing several initiatives to enhance the Reserves' capabilities as a ready and able partner of the Total Force Marine Corps. These pending initiatives include: increasing the number of Military Police units in the reserve component; establishing a Reserve Intelligence Support Battalion that will enhance command and control of reserve component intelligence assets, to include placing Reserve Marine Intelligence Detachments at the Joint Reserve Intelligence Centers; returning some of our Civil Affairs structure to the active component to provide enhanced planning capabilities for operational and Service headquarters; and introducing an improved Individual Augmentee management program to meet growing joint and internal requirements.

CIVILIAN MARINES

Civilian Marines are integral to the Corps' Total Force concept. We have approximately 25,000 Civilian Marines, of which about 13,000 are appropriated fund employees and about 12,000 are nonappropriated fund employees. Our appropriated fund Civilian Marines comprise just two percent of the total Department of Defense civilian workforce, the leanest ratio of civilians to military in the Department. Our remaining Civilian Marines, our nonappropriated fund personnel, are primarily resourced by revenue-generating activities and services such as

exchanges, clubs, golf courses, bowling centers, and gas stations. Our Civilian Marines fill key billets aboard Marine Corps bases and stations, thus freeing active duty Marines to perform their war fighting requirements in the operating forces.

Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan

The Marine Corps' strategic road map to achieving a civilian workforce capable of meeting the challenges of the future is the Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan, a 5-year plan to address the entire life cycle of a Civilian Marine, from recruitment to career development to retirement and separation. We enlisted the active involvement of our Senior Executive Service members as advocates to significantly enhance the management of our civilian workforce. The clear objective is to make the Marine Corps the "employer of choice" for a select group of civilians who are imbued with the Marine Corps values of honor, courage, and commitment and who seek challenging and rewarding careers. We are committed to building leadership skills at all levels, providing interesting and challenging training and career opportunities, and improving the quality of work life for all Civilian Marines.

National Security Personnel System

We look forward to executing the authorities enacted in the fiscal year 2004 National Defense Authorization Act, providing for the National Security Personnel System. We believe this will allow us to be a more competitive and progressive employer at a time when our national security demands a highly responsive system of civilian personnel management. Later this year, following an appropriate training program for supervisors, managers, human resources specialists, employees, as well as commanders and senior management, the Marine Corps, along with the entire Department of the Navy, expects to be in the first wave of implementation.

Military-Civilian Conversions

Military to civilian conversions offer the Marine Corps an opportunity to continue to move more Marines into the operating forces. From fiscal year 2002 to fiscal year 2007 the Marine Corps planned to move 3,019 Marines back to the operating forces through outsourcing and military to civilian conversions. The fiscal year 2005 President's Budget converts an additional 1,372 billets, providing more options to increase manning in the operating forces. The Commandant has directed the Marine Corps to pursue this program aggressively – to get Marines back to the “fleet” and to do what is right for the Corps. We view this as an integral part of our rebalancing the force and end strength determinations.

MOBILIZATION

Since 9/11, the Marine Corps has had to rely on the mobilization of both the Selected Marine Corps Reserve and Individual Ready Reserve Marines in response to both internal and joint operational requirements. The Marine Corps maximized the use of Individual Ready Reserve volunteers to meet these requirements, primarily in the areas of staff augmentation and force protection. As previously mentioned, at the height of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the Marine Corps had 21,316 reserve Marines on active duty. As of February 20, 2004 we had 5,479 Marines mobilized; 4,323 in Selected Marine Corps Reserve units and 1,276 Individual Augmentees, and we have approximately an additional 7,000 Marines that will be mobilized for our Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II requirements.

Since 9/11, we have only had 1,169 Marines activated more than once, of which 387 are currently activated. Furthermore, the Marine Corps “involuntarily” activated 2,063 Individual Ready Reserve Marines for use as linguists, intelligence specialists, and for force protection

requirements. Of these 2,063 only 307 remain activated; 271 have voluntarily extended their activation orders and the remaining 36 asked to complete their existing activation orders, the last the 36 will deactivate in April 2004. Since 9-11, 47 percent of our Selected Marine Corps Reserve Marines, 59 percent of our Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and 5 percent of our Individual Ready Reserve Marines have been activated at least once.

Similar to the active component, the burden of activation for the reserve component has been within the high demand/low density specialties such as Civil Affairs, KC-130, military police, and intelligence. To date, 96 percent of the Civil Affairs, 89 percent of the KC-130, 72 percent of law enforcement, and 69 percent of the intelligence Marines have been activated as compared to 50 percent of reserve infantry Marines. The continuing growing demands being placed on the high demand/low density skills is not a problem unique to the Marine Corps, and is something that we, along with the other Services, will address as we rebalance the force.

MANAGING TIME AWAY FROM HOME

The Marine Corps remains committed to maintaining the proper balance between operational deployments and the quality of life of our Marines and their families. Having said this, Marines join to train and deploy, and we do not disappoint them. Service in the Marine Corps requires deployments for readiness and mission accomplishment.

As a result of the current operational requirements, the Personnel Tempo (PERSTEMPO) of our Marines has increased. Currently, there are 1,959 active component Marines and 2,079 reserve component Marines who have exceeded the 400-day PERSTEMPO threshold as compared to 331 active component Marines and 891 reserve component Marines at this same time last year. Additionally, we have 42,721 active component Marines and 17,099 reserve

component Marines who have accumulated between 182 and 399 PERSTEMPO days, as compared to 29,831 and 6,199 one year ago, respectively. The significance and impact of the increased numbers of Marines with high PERSTEMPO numbers remains to be seen. The Marine Corps benefits by being largely composed of first term Marines, whose retention is less affected by increased operational requirements. Of primary concern, then, is the impact on our Career Force, especially the officers and the staff non-commissioned officers in the 8 to 12 year range. Whether increased levels of PERSTEMPO adversely affect the retention of our Marines, to what extent, and whether they are sustainable, depends upon the duration of the increased PERSTEMPO. To date, there is no evidence that this has adversely affected the retention of Marines.

Each individual Marine is different, but all are influenced to some degree by intangible factors such as the quality of leadership and the care and concern shown for family members who must endure long separations. In general, Marines are recruited based on these intangibles and they will accept greater hardships and longer deployments as leaders inspire trust and link them personally to the fulfillment of national and strategic goals.

CARING FOR MARINES AND FAMILIES DURING OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENTS

This has been a very busy year for the Marine Corps, and the Marines who marched into Baghdad certainly rose to the challenge. In support of these warfighters, the installation commanders and Quality of Life program managers also rose to the challenge providing outstanding support at home and abroad. As an expeditionary force, the Marine Corps must provide quality of life support to deployed Marines based on the duration and intensity of the operation. Programs for those deployed are designed to provide health and comfort with a touch

of home during a mission. The Marine Corps also must continuously take care of Marines and families left behind on the home front. As they carry out their mission, Marines trust us to see that their families are part of a community that takes care of its own. Programs and services for those on the home front are designed to provide a sense of community, and to proactively address potential areas of concern for the Marine and his or her family.

Casualty Reporting

The most challenging time to provide support is after the death of a beloved Marine. The Marines and Civilian Marines performing casualty assistance duties are truly special people. One of the challenges faced last year during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, and that we will continue to face moving forward, involves the “CNN effect” – the expectation for instant information in a 24-hour news society. We must balance the public’s desire for immediate information with the military’s responsibility to “get it right” and focus on the family’s needs. During Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, next of kin notification occurred within the eight hour Department of Defense goal, and generally within two to four hours. Based on our lessons learned, we are using a new set of software tools to enhance our deployed commanders capability to communicate with the Headquarters Marine Corps Casualty office, and to track an injured/ill Marine throughout the entire medical process.

Tactical Field Exchanges

Deployed Marines are provided “all the comforts of home” through tactical field exchanges that provide everything from health and comfort items, to movies, CD’s and snack foods. For Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, the Marine Corps successfully partnered with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. We provided Marines to run the tactical field exchanges in Iraq at Camps Edson, Bush Master, Viper and Chesty; in

Kuwait at Camps Fox, Marine Land, Commando, and Coyote; and in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. Mobile tactical field exchanges were also operated off the back of seven-ton trucks to provide service to front line camps. This partnership will continue for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II.

Postal Support

It is no great surprise that one of the best morale boosters for any deployed service member is receiving mail from loved ones at home. Postal Marines delivered nearly 7.5 million pounds of mail to Marines deployed to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Delivery times averaged between 10 to 14 days. While we know of some complaints about delays in mail delivery, it occurred largely during the offensive phase when commanders asked that mail be held due to the fluidity of the battle, limited convoy operations, and security issues.

As 66,000 Marines were deployed away from their home installations at the height of operations last year, program managers carefully captured lessons learned, such as the “CNN effect” and the subsequent desire for immediate information, and the overwhelming generosity of the American people in providing gifts to deployed Marines. By incorporating lessons learned, we will ensure quality of life programs continue to meet the needs of deployed Marines and families who remain at home. We are very proud of our success on the battlefield and greatly appreciate the support and concern for deployed Marines and their families displayed by the Congress and the American people.

Other Deployed Support

In addition, support for deployed Marines can include open-air or make-shift fitness centers; telephones to call home; miscellaneous recreation supplies such as sports equipment, games, books, and camcorders; and voluntary education opportunities while afloat. For longer

deployments and in areas where electricity can be sustained for some period of time, commanders can have access to Internet cafes, Playstation game systems, VCRs/DVD players, and more extensive fitness equipment. As an example, current facilities/programs in Djibouti include a 24-hour per day, 7 day per week operation that includes a recreation center, two fitness centers, a library, a running trail, an outdoor swimming pool, scuba certification classes, USO entertainment, and cultural tours of the local area.

Taking Care of the Families of Deployed Marines

While Marines are focused on the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan and other places around the world, back at home, Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) has been established at our major bases and stations to not only support Marines and their families in their daily lives, but also during deployments.

As I mentioned, one of the key issues for families of Marines deployed last year was the 24-hour news cycle, replete with embedded reporters and continuous images of operations, creating uncertainty for our families. An immediate need for information became the expected norm. Community and Family Assistance Centers were established at Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, Miramar, Yuma, and Twentynine Palms, and operated 24/7 as necessary to provide information and referral services related to deployed Marines and their family members, and others who support and care for Marines. At the height of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, these centers were receiving an average of 150-300 calls per day.

During deployments, Marine families bear the burden of waiting, and the added responsibility of keeping the family together and functioning as normally as possible. Just as described for our recruiters, *MCCS One Source* is a valuable asset that provides Marines and their families with helpful information before, during, and after deployment in support areas

including parenting and childcare, education services, financial information and advice, legal, elder care, health and wellness, crisis support, and relocation. Available Corps-wide beginning January 2003, over 26,000 calls and emails had been received by the end of fiscal year 2003, with about 80 percent of the usage occurring online. *MCCS One Source* is especially useful to quickly acclimate our activated reserve Marines and their families to the requirements and procedures associated with utilization of military programs such as TRICARE and other benefits and services, in addition to off-base customers like the recruiters I mentioned earlier.

At each of our bases or stations, the Key Volunteer Network Program serves as the official communication link between the deployed command and the families. Additionally, the Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.) Program is offered to new Marine spouses to acquaint them with the military lifestyle and the Marine Corps, including the challenges brought about by frequent deployments. We have recently developed an online and CD-ROM version of L.I.N.K.S, which makes this valuable tool more readily accessible for working spouses or those located away from Marine Corps installations. Families of deployed Marines can also receive assistance in developing proactive, prevention oriented plans such as family care plans, powers of attorney, family financial planning, and enrollment in the Dependent Eligibility and Enrollment Reporting System. The Family Readiness Officer and the support structure within the Marine Corps Family Team Building staff play a key role in this area. Additional services are provided to those who need respite childcare, assistance coping with separation, or specialized support in areas such as spiritual guidance, coping and social skills. Our deployed commanding officers have confirmed the importance of this family readiness support while they were away and as part of their homecoming.

Local Community Support For Our Deployed Marines and Their Families

Local communities outside our installations' gates are significantly impacted by Marine deployments, not just because local businesses experience sales and revenue declines, but because Marines and family members often immerse themselves in the local community by volunteering as coaches, scout leaders, and fire fighters, to name a few. Feeling the loss and an overwhelming desire to support our Marines and families, local Chambers of Commerce and other civic leaders at Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, Twentynine Palms, Miramar, and Yuma, for example, made a special effort to interact and engage with those who remained. We sincerely appreciate their specific support and the outpouring of love from all the others who took the time to write a letter, send a package, or keep us in their prayers.

Return and Reunion

Separation is one of the challenges of the military lifestyle. We specifically program help to meet this challenge. For the deployed Marine and his or her loved ones, the return home is especially emotional and highly anticipated. In recognition of the importance of the transition home after deployments for both Marines and their families, the Marine Corps developed standardized return and reunion aids such as warrior transition briefs and counseling for the returning Marine, and a return and reunion guidebook to help Marines and family members prepare for and enjoy their reunion.

EVERYDAY SUPPORT FOR MARINES AND FAMILIES ON INSTALLATIONS

When deployments are over for Marines, and their families are settling into their "normal" or more daily lives, our bases and stations serve as home. We strive to provide them hometown services and support that contribute to their need for "normalcy." Along the way,

through these hometown services, we also seek to improve personal and family readiness in recognition of the important role that military families play in mission readiness by focusing on the following six goals: (1) increase family readiness; (2) help Marines and families live healthy lifestyles; (3) help to develop and return responsible citizens after military service; (4) connect Marines and families with America and the Marine Corps way of life; (5) help Marines and families pursue lifelong learning goals; and (6) provide valued goods and services to Marines and their families.

Family readiness programs, such as the Key Volunteer Network and L.I.N.K.S. programs already mentioned, support families in a manner that allows the Marine to focus on their duty, which enhances the mission readiness of their unit. As an example, the Marine Corps provides for the children of Marines so that the Marine parent is more mission ready because they are confident that their children are in a safe, quality, affordable childcare setting. The Marine Corps provides childcare at 24 Childcare Development Centers, 577 Family Child Care Homes, and 15 School Age Care Programs. In addition, there are 17 Youth Programs serving over 125,000 youth and teens. An example of the additional support we will be providing with FY04 supplemental funds is a new initiative to provide enhanced extended childcare. The Marine Corps is piloting this program for 36 months at Camp Lejeune, Camp Pendleton, and Twentynine Palms to provide extended childcare free of charge for eligible patrons when they have an unanticipated emergency or mildly ill children and their regular childcare arrangements are not available. We plan to begin the pilot this quarter.

Healthy lifestyles are important not just for Marines who must meet the physical challenges of duty, but also for family members. Our Semper Fit program meets these needs with quality fitness centers and health promotion efforts. Recreation activities like sports

programs, bowling centers, marinas, and theatres along with leisure activities like block parties, concerts, picnics, parties, and information fairs complement the Semper Fit program by providing wholesome, affordable, and quality leisure and recreation time.

Lifelong learning is achieved through a variety of educational programs valuable to the development of Marines. Library services on bases and deployed with Marines, as well as distance learning opportunities, make continuing education available to Marines regardless of their location. In addition, tuition assistance is available for those Marines interested in pursuing continuing education opportunities. During fiscal year 2003, there were 25,662 Marines enrolled in almost 80,000 courses with the help of the tuition assistance program.

Quality and responsible citizenship traits begin in childhood and are fostered and further developed throughout life. Programs like the Single Marine Program help the approximately 60 percent of our enlisted Marines that are single develop into productive, responsible citizens. The Single Marine Program provides needed recreational and stress outlets that are wholesome and support development of social skills, and opportunities for Marines to support the local community. Through the Single Marine Program council meetings, single Marines make recommendations for improvements to: hours of operations; access to computers and the Internet; parking lots; safety issues related to intersections, sidewalks, crosswalks, and barricades; and television options such as cable, satellite, and digital for the barracks. Single Marines also donate thousands of hours of volunteer labor each year involving community support efforts such as Special Olympics, Toys for Tots, adopt a school programs, chaplains' community programs, food drives, beach cleanups, veterans and nursing home visits, local youth programs/events, and other volunteer organizations that teach the rewards that come from service to others.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a very serious matter throughout the world, and the Marine Corps is actively engaged in developing family advocacy programs and initiatives that help Marines and their family members prevent incidents of violence to the extent possible, and treat them when necessary. I was privileged to co-chair the Defense Task Force on Domestic Violence, which for three years assessed the military services domestic violence prevention and response mechanism. The Task Forces' nearly 200 recommendations are being implemented across the Department of Defense, to include within the Marine Corps. I am happy to report that domestic violence in the Marine Corps continues to decline. We attribute much of this decrease to outreach preventative services and programs, such as the Mentors in Violence Prevention Program and the New Parent Support Program. The Mentors in Violence Prevention Program was established to encourage the participation of male Marines in efforts to prevent rape, battering, sexual harassment, and all forms of male violence against women. This program is a "Marines helping their fellow Marines" program, which encourages Marines to become involved when they see abusive situations. The New Parent Support Program educates and supports families with children up to 6 years of age. This program consists of home visitation, classes and outreach through Play Morning, Single Parent Support Groups, Mom's Basic Training, Parenting Classes, and Daddy's Baby Boot Camp. We believe this program has helped successfully reduce the number of child abuse/neglect cases.

Sexual Assault

Similar to domestic violence, sexual assault is a very serious matter, and the Marine Corps is actively engaged in policies, training, and programs for both the prevention of sexual assault and the treatment of victims. Rape and other sexual assaults are violent crimes that

violate human dignity and deeply held values of the Marine Corps and the military as a whole. Sexual assault is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The Marine Corps is fully engaged in the Department of Defense's 90-day review of this issue. We will continue to expand our current training initiatives on sexual assault and prevention at all levels. For example, during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II, deployed Marines will have the same level of support available in theater as they would have at their home station. This will include selected medical and religious support as well as Marines who have received Victim Advocate Training, to allow them to perform the role as victim advocates. The Marine Corps deployed a total of 3,439 females out of the total of Marines supporting of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, and we are aware of seven allegations of sexual assault. Of these, two Marines have been found guilty and received punishment, and the remaining five are awaiting conclusion of investigations. Of the Marines scheduled to deploy for the upcoming Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II-1, approximately 750 will be female.

Suicide

For the Marine Corps, losing one Marine to suicide is too many. In a year of combat stress in addition to the common stressors of military life, the Marine Corps is focused on improving our Suicide Prevention Program through strategies that include: (1) developing a Leaders' Quick Reference Guide to help leaders quickly and effectively react to Marines in distress; (2) reducing the stigma associated with seeking help; (3) improving the coordination of prevention and intervention services at installations; (4) integrating mental health resources into Marine Divisions through the Operational Stress Control and Readiness program; and (5) improving deployment cycle screening and treatment as part of our Return and Reunion program. From 1993 to 2003, the Marine Corps suicide rate per 100,000 has been gradually

declining. Even with the stresses associated with Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, the overall Marine Corps suicide rate remained relatively stable from calendar year 2002 to calendar year 2003, rising slightly from 12.6 to 13.2 per 100,000. The Marine Corps will continue to strive to improve its prevention programs to further reduce this tragic and unnecessary loss of our most valuable asset, our Marines.

Other MCCS Services

MCCS connects Marines and families to military installations through services that provide the top to bottom information necessary to quickly acclimate to new duty stations. Relocation assistance also helps to equip Marines and families in transition with kitchen kits or other necessary services. Transition Assistance and Family Member Employment Assistance Programs help Marines and their families prepare for a new life in civilian communities by providing briefs, sponsoring job fairs and workshops, and providing employment referrals.

Last, but certainly not least, the Marine Corps Exchange, 7-Day Stores, Barber Shops, Dry Cleaners, Uniform Shops, vending operations, Auto Skill Centers, clubs, and recreation centers are filled with outstanding Civilian Marines who are providing valued goods and services that are competitively priced, and in the case of low or fixed income individuals or families, depended upon for basic standard of living needs.

QUALITY OF LIFE – THE EXPECTATIONS FACTOR

One final component of quality of life that cannot be overlooked is the effect of demographics and expectations on the ultimate success of a vibrant quality of life program. The Marine Corps is comprised of the youngest, most junior, and least married members of the four Military Services. Our most recent demographic data shows that 66 percent of Marines are 25 or

younger, 27 percent of Marines are 21 years old, 42 percent of Marines are Lance Corporals (pay grade E3) or below, and 60 percent of enlisted Marines are single. As with American society as a whole, the pool of young people from which we recruit have increased levels of expectations because they were raised in an environment that provides many things for them.

Since 1992, three surveys have been administered to determine how Marines' perceptions of, and satisfaction with, quality of life have changed over the past 10 years. The results of our third survey in 2002 revealed a decline in the satisfaction of Marines relative to quality of life in the Corps. The decline was not substantial in practical terms but confirmed the relationship of "elevated expectations" and quality of life satisfaction. As a force comprised primarily of those under the age of 25, we are particularly interested in the role of "expectations" in relation to our holistic approach. Although quality of life is important to all ages, those under 25 have expressed increased expectations for their quality of life. American youth are naturally exuberant, but the urgency and expectation for their quality of life is increasing according to our results. Therefore, we know that we must maintain our efforts to improve the objective quality of life – the "standard of living" of Marines and families. But, when new Marines enter the Corps we must also help them to better understand what to expect in the military lifestyle, so our continued efforts at improving quality of life gain more traction (i.e., more quickly close the gap between expectations and reality). Our understanding of expectations and the relationship to quality of life satisfaction will be further studied as we continue to pulse the attitudes and concerns of Marines and families relative to their quality of life expectations and concerns into the future.

Whether we are taking care of Marines in the desert or families back at home, quality of life support programs are designed to help all Marines and their families, which in turn helps to

ensure continued readiness, retention and recruitment success. Marines and their families make great sacrifices in service to their country. The Marine Corps prides itself on the legacy of rewarding that sacrifice by taking care of its own.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION

To properly manage the resources entrusted to us, it is necessary to have and maintain capable tools. Planning for and managing manpower requirements – including addressing mobilization challenges and tracking PERSTEMPO information mentioned previously – requires effective and relevant automation and information technology systems for manpower modeling, manpower management, personnel servicing, and joint requirements. When competing with weapons systems and near term resource requirements, it is easy to bypass proper investment in these somewhat bland information systems. However, though not perfect, we are proud of the Manpower Automated Information System portfolio in place to support our Manpower processes and are committed in the budget to continuing appropriate reinvestment.

The Marine Corps benefits from a fully integrated pay and personnel system. This system, the Marine Corps Total Force System, incorporates all active duty, reserve, and retired pay and personnel records. The Marine Corps has now developed an interface between this system and the Standard Accounting, Budgeting and Reporting System. This interface of pay and personnel data with the accounting and budgeting data provides the Marine Corps with a truly one-of-a-kind integrated pay, personnel, manpower, and accounting system, able to streamline budget execution and reconciliation. Having an integrated Total Force system has been a key to minimizing difficulties for our reserves as they are mobilized. The Marine Corps Total Force System serves as the foundation for ongoing re-engineering of our administrative

processes into the Total Force Administration System. This new system will provide a web-based, virtually paperless self-serve capability for all Marines via our web portal, Marine On-Line. This year, we will not only increase our individual self-serve capability, but will automate many unit capabilities such as leave, morning reports, and promotion recommendations. For the first time commander's will have the flexibility to decide at what level information is input into our Marine Corps Total Force System. In a tremendous advance, Marines at all levels will access Marine On-Line to view information on themselves and the Marines in their charge.

We have created the foundation of a shared data environment by leveraging the data contained in the Marine Corps Total Force System via the Operational Data Store Enterprise, our database of current personnel information, and our Total Force Data Warehouse, our database of historical personnel information. This shared data environment allows full integration of our digitized personnel files with the Marine Corps promotion board process, giving us as advanced and comprehensive a promotion process as there is among the Services.

Marine for Life

The commitment to take care of our own includes a Marine's transition from active service back to civilian life. The Marine For Life Program's mission is to provide sponsorship for our more than 27,000 Marines who honorably leave active service each year. The program was created to nurture and sustain the positive, mutually beneficial relationships inherent in our ethos, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine." In cities across the United States, reserve Marines help transitioning Marines and their families get settled in their new community. Sponsorship includes assistance with employment, education, housing, childcare, veterans' benefits, and other support services needed to make a smooth transition.

To provide this support, Marine For Life taps into the network of former Marines and Marine-friendly businesses, organizations, and individuals that are willing to lend a hand to a Marine who has served honorably.

Initially begun in fiscal year 2002, the program will reach full operational capability in fiscal year 2004. In addition to 110 reserve Marines serving as “Hometown Links,” an enhanced web-based electronic network, easily accessed by Marines worldwide, will support the program. The end state of the Marine For Life Program is a nationwide Marine and Marine-friendly network available to all Marines honorably leaving active service that will improve their transition to civilian life and ensure that no Marine who honorably wore the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor is lost to the Marine Corps Family.

CONCLUSION

Through the remainder of fiscal year 2004, and into fiscal year 2005, our Nation will likely remain challenged on many fronts as we prosecute the Global War on Terrorism. Services will be required to meet commitments, both at home and abroad. Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers are the heart of our Services – they are our most precious assets – and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Transformation will require that we blend together the “right” people and the “right” equipment as we design our “ideal” force. Manpower associated costs are a major portion of the Department of Defense and Service budgets, and our challenge is to effectively and properly balance personnel, readiness, and modernization costs to provide mission capable forces. We are involved in numerous studies in the area of human resources strategy designed to support an integrated military, civilian, and quality of life program, within which we must balance the uniqueness of the individual services.

In some cases a one-size fits all approach may be best, in others flexibility to support service unique requirements may be paramount. Regardless, we look forward to working with the Congress to “do what’s right” to maintain readiness and take care of your Marines.

The Marine Corps continues to be a significant force provider and major participant in joint operations. Our successes have been achieved by following the same core values today that gave us victory on yesterday’s battlefields. Our active, reserve, and civilian Marines remain our most important assets and, with your support, we can continue to achieve our goals and provide what is required to accomplish the requirements of the nation. Marines are proud of what they do! They are proud of the “Eagle, Globe, and Anchor” and what it represents to our country. It is our job to provide for them the leadership, resources, quality of life, and moral guidance to carry our proud Corps forward. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our nation’s call as we have for the past 228 years! Thank you for the opportunity to present this statement.

Semper fidelis.