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**ORAL STATEMENT OF
SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER T. CHANDLER
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
MARCH 3, 2005**

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Sgt Chris T. Chandler
Bn Chief Scout
1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion
1st Marine Division

Good morning Chairman McHugh, Congressman Snyder and distinguished members of the Military Personnel Subcommittee. My name is Sergeant Chris T. Chandler, United States Marine Corps.

I was born in Denver, Colorado on August 27, 1980 and graduated from Gateway High School in Aurora, Colorado in May of 1998. Following graduation, I began the process of becoming a United States Marine, as I stepped onto the yellow footprints at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego on July 12th, 1998.

On December 16, 2001, while in support of security operations at Quandahar International Airport, I stepped on a landmine, blowing off the lower portion of my left leg and sustaining massive injuries to my left arm.

The initial treatment that I received after sustaining my injury was from our Corpsman. He proceeded to stabilize my wounds until help could arrive. From the accident site I was flown to Oman, Saudi Arabia to a field hospital where they proceeded to clean my wounds and further stabilize my condition. After the field hospital in Oman, I was transferred to Landstuhl, Germany and then to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C.

The overall care that I received at Walter Reed Hospital was good. The physical therapists and occupational therapists were very professional and knowledgeable in their jobs. They would always go above and beyond their duty to help out my family and me. They were also very personable. The therapists would explain everything that they were doing and the reasons for what they were doing. Both the physical therapists and the occupational therapists genuinely cared for my family and me. The nursing staff was also very personable. The nursing staff would cater to my, as well as my families, personal needs at all hours of the day and night. Never once did they say that they couldn't get something for us that we needed. When my parents couldn't stay in the hospital room anymore, the nursing staff showed them that they could stay in the Fisher House that was still on the Hospital grounds only a short distance away. This is just one example of how the nursing staff helped us out. The only major problem that I had was pain control. For about a week I was under no kind of pain control, whatsoever. My complaints were dismissed as being merely phantom pains that would pass with time.

As far as family and friends are concerned, Walter Reed supplied them with all the information, food, and accommodations that they required. The key wives group was also very helpful with providing information, so that my family always knew what was going on and why. Congressmen Bill Young and his wife, Beverly Young, went out of their way to see to it that I was being taken care of through my whole hospital treatment, follow-ups, and even to this day they both still check on me and my family. Former

Commandant General Jones, and former Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, SgtMaj. McMichael, also played a big role in helping me and my family out by ensuring that we all were being taken care of to the degree that we rated.

As soon as I was injured, because of the nature of my wounds, I was immediately placed on a physical evaluation board. The first time the Board results came back to me, I was found unfit for full duty, and I rebutted this. A couple months later, after I had recovered enough and re-expressed my interest to be retained on active duty in my current Military Occupational Specialty as an infantryman, I re-submitted my package to the Performance Evaluation Board, and was found fit for full duty. The next step that I had to do was run a formal Physical Fitness Test, in order to show that I was still capable of passing. I ran a Physical Fitness Test and received a score of 200, which was a passing score. The next thing I had to do was run the obstacle course to show that I could still complete it. I also ran and passed the obstacle course. The completion of these events put me back on a "fit for full duty" status in the Marine Corps. Shortly after, I re-enlisted and returned to my current M.O.S. as an infantryman.

In my particular case, being retained for active duty was met, at first, with reasonable questions concerning whether I was going to be able to perform in my current M.O.S. Even with these questions there was never any hesitation from any Marine to help me out in any way that I needed. Any time that I needed any help ranging from simple questions, to helping set up a time and place to run a Physical Fitness Test, there was always, always a Marine standing by to help me out. Nobody ever told me that it couldn't be done. In fact, they all said that if I wanted it bad enough it could be accomplished. The Marine Corps is a brotherhood and I could not have accomplished anything if my fellow Marines weren't there by my side.

Several months later my name was submitted to attend Jump School in Ft. Benning, GA. In order to attend I had to pass the physical and medical requirements of the school. No special treatment was given to me and I was evaluated like any other service member trying to get into the school. I passed the physical fitness test and shortly after I passed the medical portion. When I arrived to check in at Jump School I had to run another physical fitness test and was examined again to double check that I was capable of attending this school. I graduated number one in my class and was made honor grad.

After graduating Jump School, I went back to 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and was attached with Alpha Company. Shortly after arriving we were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. We returned on Oct. 9th 2004, and upon returning I was made Company Chief Scout, and shortly after I was made the Battalion Chief Scout.

My immediate plans are to take on this new billet of Battalion Chief Scout and prepare new training packages for the Scouts in my unit. In the long term, I would like to pick up Staff Sergeant and get my own line platoon. After doing another rotation I would like to become a Marine Security Guard. I was inspired to join the Marine Corps by the

ideals and image that the Marine Corps projects. I have been inspired by many Marines along the way and have formed close bonds with all of them.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today. This concludes my statement and I am pleased to answer your questions.