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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
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ASSISTANT DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER & RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
MILITARY PERSONNEL OVERVIEW
ON
MARCH 6, 2012

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SES Sheryl E. Murray,
Assistant Deputy Commandant, Manpower
and Reserve Affairs Department



Mrs. Murray assists the Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (DC M&RA) in the operation and management of the M&RA Department, its programs, plans, policies and studies, ensuring integration of all its diverse functions towards accomplishment of the Marine Corps mission. The M&RA Department involves a broad range of functions important to active and reserve component Marines, family members, and Civilian Marines. The M&RA divisions are: Reserve Affairs, Personnel Management, Manpower Plans and Policy, Personal and Family Readiness, Manpower Management Information Systems Support, and the Wounded Warrior Regiment.

Prior to this appointment, she served 34 years as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Marine Corps. Her first assignment was as the Assistant Depot Adjutant and then as a Series Commander, Woman Recruit Training Command, Parris Island, SC. Throughout her military career, she held Manpower and Personnel assignments at myriad Marine Corps commands including: Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii; Marine Corps Air Station, Okinawa, Japan; Marine Corps Base, Quantico, VA; Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, NC; Second Marine Aircraft Wing, and 3d Force Service Support Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan.

As a colonel, her assignments included Inspector/Assistant Chief of Staff, G-7, Marine Forces Pacific; Head, Promotion Branch, M&RA; and Deputy Director, Division of Public Affairs. In 2000, she was assigned to the Joint Staff, as the Chief, Personnel Services Division, and then as the Vice Director, J1/ Manpower and Personnel. In 2003, she was assigned as the Deputy Director, Reserve Affairs, M&RA, HQMC. She served as a Military Representative to the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Service and from 2001 to 2003 she was the U.S. Delegate to the Women in NATO Committee.

Her command tours include Commanding Officer, Education Center Company, Quantico, VA; Commanding Officer, 4th Recruit Training Battalion, Parris Island, SC; and Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Forces Pacific. She retired from the Marine Corps in 2006. Mrs. Murray was appointed to her current grade in 2007.

Her civilian education includes a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Huron University, and a Masters of Science, Business Administration, Boston University. She graduated from the Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Her personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit with two gold stars, Meritorious Service Medal with two gold stars, Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal, and Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Davis, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview on Marine Corps personnel.

I. Your Marines

The Marine Corps is our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. We are ready to respond to today's crisis - with today's force – TODAY! At any given time, approximately 30,000 Marines are forward-deployed in operations supporting our Nation's defense. Our individual Marines are the Corps' most sacred resource, and the quality of our force has never been better.

The young men and women who fill our ranks today recognize the global, protracted, and lethal nature of the challenges facing our Nation, and their dedicated service and sacrifice rival that of any generation preceding them. Marines and their families know that their sacrifices are making a difference, that they are part of something much larger than themselves, and that their Nation stands behind them.

II. End Strength

New strategic guidance issued by the President and the Secretary of Defense provides the framework by which the Marine Corps will balance the demands of the future security environment with the realities of our current fiscal environment and the lessons learned from ten years of combat. The new strategy includes a reduction in our Active Component end strength from 202,100 beginning this fiscal year to 182,100 by the end of FY16, while maintaining our Reserve Component at 39,600 Marines. Although reshaping the Marine Corps to a force of approximately 182,100 Marines entails some risk relative to current and anticipated capacity requirements, we believe that it is manageable. Your new Corps will have fewer infantry

battalions, fixed wing, aviation squadrons, and general support combat logistics battalions than we had prior to 9/11. However, it adds cyber warfare capability, special operators, wartime enablers and higher unit manning levels—all lessons gleaned from recent combat operations.

Our intent will be to conduct our drawdown in a measured way beginning in FY13. Our plan is to reduce our end strength by approximately 5,000 Marines per year and will be accomplished by some accession cuts, natural attrition, and voluntary separation and retirement authorities. The drawdown cannot be accomplished by accession cuts alone – that is a lesson learned from the last drawdown in the 1990s. In addition, we have no plan to conduct a reduction-in-force (RIF) our Marines; they will be allowed to complete their current period of service. Our all-volunteer system is built upon a reasonable opportunity for retention and advancement; wholesale cuts undermine the faith and confidence in service leadership and create long-term experience deficits with negative operational impacts. Such an approach would no doubt do significant long-term damage to our ability to recruit and maintain a quality force.

Our overarching goal must be to keep faith with our Marines and their families.

III. Marine Corps Reserve

Our Reserve Component continues to make essential contributions to Total Force efforts in Overseas Contingency Operations. In 2011, we continued to refocus our recruiting and retention efforts on meeting our Reserve Component authorized end strength. These efforts included increases to the non-prior service recruiting mission, lowering rates of attrition, and discreet targeting of those Marines eligible to receive an incentive. As a result, we achieved over 99.8 percent - 39,527 - of authorized end strength in FY11 (not including reservists who served on active duty at least three of the prior four years).

Our incentives budget is \$5.4 million in FY12, and we project an end strength of 39,254, approximately one percent below our authorized level. For FY12 and beyond, we have refined the use of incentives to strengthen manning in specialties and grades where we remain critically short. In particular, the recruitment of company grade officers and aviators remains most challenging. Targeted incentives and transition assistance outreach programs help us to attract junior officers who are leaving the Active Component. While transitioning officers from the Active Component provide the bulk of our company grade officer leadership, we have had considerable success commissioning officers directly into the Reserve. The Reserve Officer Commissioning Program, which includes Officer Candidate Course – Reserve (OCC-R), has produced a total of 410 lieutenants for the Marine Corps since its creation in 2006 and has increased company grade officer fills from 21 to 45 percent. More importantly, it enables the Marine Corps Reserve to place officers in critical small unit leadership positions at the platoon and company level.

To complement outreach efforts and the use of incentives, and to address the challenges of geographic constraints, we offer occupational specialty retraining and partial travel reimbursement. Inactive duty training travel reimbursement is a critical tool that allows us to compensate specific Reserve members for some of the costs incurred during travel between home and their assigned training center. This reimbursement authority aids us tremendously to fill Selected Marine Corps Reserve units that have been chronically short of critical leadership. We thank this Subcommittee for supporting continued authority for this program. The Prior Service Military Occupational Specialty Retraining Program is also crucial in our efforts to join enlisted Marines to units that are located in areas of the country where it is geographically

challenging to recruit. Both programs have helped us to build positive trends with respect to recruiting and retention and are integral to our future success.

This year we increased efforts to fully staff Reserve aviation squadrons. To achieve this goal, we developed a number of Reserve aviation manpower initiatives designed to encourage transitioning Active Component aviators to affiliate with Reserve units. Since there are a limited number of Reserve squadrons, the use of travel reimbursement, incentives, and aviator retraining programs are critical to achieving our staffing goals. Altogether, these programs, combined with our prior service recruiting efforts, should provide for at least 90 percent manning of critical combat arms and company grade officer billets by September 30, 2015, with Reserve squadrons reaching this mark one year later.

IV. Recruiting

The Marine Corps is unique in that all recruiting efforts (officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior-service) fall under the direction of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Operationally, this provides us with tremendous flexibility and unity of command, allowing us to meet accession requirements.

Our professional recruiting force continues to achieve recruiting goals in support of our Total Force with a focus in recruiting quality men and women with character, commitment, and drive. To meet future challenges in the recruiting environment, it is imperative that we maintain our high standards both for our recruiters and those who volunteer to serve in our Corps. Recruiting quality youth ultimately translates into higher performance, reduced attrition, increased retention, and improved readiness for the operating forces. Our actions, commitment, and investments today in recruiting ensure a high state of readiness in our Corps tomorrow.

In FY11, we achieved over 100 percent of our enlisted and officer recruiting goals for both the Active and Reserve Components. On the enlisted side, we accessed over 99 percent Tier 1 high school diploma graduates and over 74 percent in the upper Mental Groups of I-IIAs, both exceeding Department of Defense quality standards. Our FY12 Mission for enlisted Marines is 28,500 regulars (active component) and 5,450 reservists. In FY12, we expect to meet our annual recruiting mission to include all quality goals. Additionally, we expect to have a strong population of qualified individuals ready to ship to recruit training as we enter FY13. The FY13 Mission forecast is 28,500 regulars and 5,700 reservists.

The Marine Corps seeks to reflect the diversity of the Nation and be representative of those we serve. Diversity remains a strategic issue that raises our total capability by leveraging the strengths and talents of all Marines. In FY11, a tremendous amount of effort and resources was placed into communicating the Marine Corps diversity message through community outreach, recruit marketing, training and education. This enduring challenge requires the Corps to strategically evaluate our current efforts in order to drive toward improved capabilities.

Our officer accessions mission has continued to decline over the past two years in light of a planned drawdown of forces. Our FY12 accession officer mission is 1,450 active duty and 125 Reserve officers. Historically, the Active Component has been the exclusive source of lieutenants and captains for the Reserves. As previously noted, filling company grade officer billets for our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units is traditionally our greatest challenge, but the success from the OCC-R program is proving to help in remedying this shortfall.

Our recruiting command is taking a hard look at its advertising budget, evaluating critical areas. It is imperative that we maintain the momentum within a competitive media environment and still provide the basic awareness level when reaching out to an increasing number of critical

audiences (prospects and their influencers, officer candidates, and multicultural audiences) to include our diversity outreach. It is imperative that we acknowledge that today's successes are dividends from the investments made in recruiting and advertising four to five years ago.

Our greatest asset is the individual Marine and recruiting remains the lifeblood to the Corps and our bedrock to "Make Marines, Win Battles, and Return Quality Citizens." We thank you for the generous support you have provided to us and look forward to working with you to ensure continued success in the future.

V. Retention

In FY11, the Marine Corps achieved both its accession and retention missions and completed the year with a 201,497 Active Component end strength (including 340 Reservists who served on active duty at least three of the prior four years). For FY12, we will continue to assess all recruiting and retention missions, enabling the Marine Corps to successfully meet our mission requirements and poise the force for the impending drawdown.

Even with our successes in recruiting, retention, and overall end strength, the Marine Corps must continue to shape our force to meet continuing mission requirements and fill critical military occupational specialties (MOSs) with the most qualified Marines. Incentive pays remain critical to this effort, allowing the Marine Corps to fill hard to recruit positions, such as crypto linguists and reconnaissance. Enlistment bonuses also allow us to ship new recruits at critical times to balance recruit loads at the depots and meet school seat requirements. It is important to note that only eight percent of new Marine Corps recruits receive an enlistment bonus; the Marine Corps budget for enlistment bonuses has decreased from \$75 million in FY08 to \$14.7 million in FY12.

Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs) similarly allow us to shape our career force. SRBs target critical MOSs and allow us to laterally move Marines to these MOSs. There are currently 14 of 205 occupational specialties where the on-hand number of Marines is less than 80 percent of what is required. Our SRB funding has decreased from \$468 million in FY09 to \$108.6 million in FY12.

VI. Women In Service Review

As directed by the Fiscal Year 2011 National Defense Authorization Act, the Marine Corps, alongside the other Services, conducted a review of the laws, policies and regulations that may restrict the service of female members. The findings were delivered to Congress last month. The Marine Corps requested an exception to policy that would allow for the assignment of Active Component female company grade officers and staff noncommissioned officers (E-6 and E-7) into select Ground Combat Element (GCE) units (Artillery, Tanks, Assault Amphibian, Low Altitude Air Defense, Combat Engineer and Combat Assault) down to the battalion level, in military occupational specialties (MOSs) already open to female Marines. This will open 97 officer billets and 274 Staff Non-Commissioned Officer billets for assignment of female Marines during 2012.

Concurrent with the exception to policy, the Marine Corps will conduct responsible research to generate data that can be used to make informed decisions and potentially develop appropriate gender neutral tests to screen males and females prior to assignment to the GCE. We must ensure that all Marines assigned to the GCE have the required physical aptitude. This research will include a force survey and a research study that will assess the potential impact on recruiting, MOS classification, entry level training, and promotions in order to inform future

assignment decisions. We will report back to the Secretary of Defense with an initial assessment in November 2012.

The Marine Corps is committed to utilizing the skills and abilities of our Marines to achieve the highest levels of unit readiness and focus on mission accomplishment. We are proud of the contributions that women make across the Marine Corps and want to ensure female Marines continue to have opportunities to be successful.

VII. Diversity

The Marine Corps is committed to attracting, mentoring and retaining the most talented men and women who bring a diversity of background, culture and skill in service to our Nation. In both representation and assignment of Marines, diversity remains a strategic issue. Our diversity effort is structured with the understanding that the objective of diversity is not merely to strive for a force that reflects a representational connectedness with the rich fabric of all the American people, but to raise total capability through leveraging the strengths and talents of all Marines.

We are near completion of a new comprehensive campaign plan to focus our diversity effort in areas where improvement is most needed and anticipate release of this roadmap this year. This is an effort facilitated through our standing Diversity Review Board and a Diversity Executive Steering Committee chartered to establish the foundations for diversity success in the Total Force. In addition, since 2010, we have conducted leadership seminars that introduce diverse college undergraduates to Marine leadership traits and leadership opportunities in the Marine Corps; we are actively seeking new communities within which to continue this effort.

The Marine Corps has established minority officer recruiting and mentoring as the highest priority in our recruiting efforts. Because we acknowledge the accession and retention of

minority officers has been a challenge for our Corps, we are committed to taking steps to further facilitate the mentoring and career development of all our officers with emphasis on our minority officers in order to encourage the retention of our best officers no matter their background.

Overall, we seek to communicate the Marine Corps diversity mission through community outreach and recruit marketing; to ensure continued opportunities for merit based development and advancement; and to optimize training and education to increase the understanding for all Marines of the value that diversity brings to the Total Force.

VIII. Taking Care of Marines, Sailors and Families

Marine families are America's families and a model for the Nation. The Marine Corps will continue to take care of its Marines and families through enhanced family readiness and family care programs. Marine communities are a team, and our programs promote increased socialization and community connection through official unit communication, readiness preparation and information, and referral opportunities. These programs seek to improve resiliency by training Marines and families how to cope with the rigors of life in the Marine Corps, whether at home or deployed.

Family Readiness. The Marine Corps has almost 400 Family Readiness Officers, who connect Marines and families at the grassroots level to critical information and referrals and assist families during all phases of deployments. We recently completed an overhaul of all 78 modules of our Marine Corps Family Team Building Training to ensure we are providing relevant, standardized and timely support and information to our families. In Fiscal Year 2011, we provided 5,869 Marine Corps Family Team Building training sessions (16 percent more than Fiscal Year 2010) helping 189,276 participants (10 percent more than Fiscal Year 2010).

Family readiness also benefits from dependable yet innovative communication tools that help families effectively manage their lives in times of stress. eMarine, a secure website, delivers readiness information to Marines and their families whether they are on active duty stationed at large installations or in the reserves living in remote locations. It gives family members access to documents, photos and videos, discussion forums, and vital information about their Marine's unit from anywhere in the world, 24/7.

The Marine Corps conducted a full review during Fiscal Year 2011 of its Family Readiness programs to ensure they adequately support the mission and operational requirements of the Marine Corps. While our programs conform to the Commandant's guidance and Congressional direction, we are developing program plans and supporting resource requirements to maintain capabilities at appropriate levels.

Family Care. Family care programs support the care and development continuum of Marine Corps children from birth into their teens. Family care includes our school liaisons, who provide approximately 70 school districts with information about the needs of Marine Corps families and access to beneficial training and counseling services to support teachers and students. Marine parents are comforted by the support of a local education expert, who provides meaningful insight to new transfers and those with questions on local education policies.

Child care services remain a high priority. In Fiscal Year 2011, we provided 15,927 child care spaces, which reflects an 18 percent increase in capacity from Fiscal Year 2010. The Marine Corps opened five new child development centers in Fiscal Year 2011 and plans to open five more in Fiscal Year 2012. The Marine Corps has completed a Child Development Program and Facility Master Plan, which reviewed child care capabilities and costs across the Marine Corps. This plan will facilitate efforts to build multi-capable, adaptable services, reexamine

structure, and ensure that our programs are prepared to deliver child care in an efficient manner. We will continue to standardize our processes in Fiscal Year 2012 and will work to enhance child care for Marines and families serving on independent duty or at locations that are isolated from military bases and stations. We are also expanding our staffing model to include nurses at our Child Development Centers and behavioral health specialists at our installations across our family programs.

Families enrolled in our Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) strongly endorse our focus on providing a continuum of care and the improvements made to their level of support. Two years of increasing enrollments and a reduction in issues experienced by families relocating to new duty stations demonstrate this approval. EFMP had only 4,500 enrolled family members in Fiscal Year 2008; it has over 10,000 today. The Marine Corps continues to underwrite the cost of up to 40 hours of short-term respite care per month for enrolled families, providing more than 450,000 hours of respite care in Fiscal Year 2011. We continue to transform our program, which the Department of Defense (DoD) and our sister services continue to recognize as a premier program. Marine Corps policy ensures that the assignment and relocation process is sensitive to EFMP family needs and allows Marines to remain competitive for promotion while maintaining a continuum of care for exceptional family members.

Personal and Professional Development. We recognize and encourage all Marines and their spouses to pursue and achieve their life goals while serving in the Marine Corps or beyond as veteran Marines. Our Personal and Professional Development (P&PD) Program supports Marines and their spouses with their education, employment, financial fitness, and transition readiness goals. This program integrates the efforts of several formerly-disparate programs (education services, transition assistance, spouse employment support, personal financial

management, relocation assistance, library programs and the Marine For Life network) to ensure we provide our Marines and spouses holistic education and support.

One of our most significant initiatives is to revise and improve our Transition Assistance Management Program (TAMP) to better meet the needs of our transitioning Marines and their families. TAMP is being integrated and mapped into the lifecycle of a Marine from recruitment, through separation or retirement, and beyond as veteran Marines. A revised and improved Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) has already been piloted at five separate installations with full implementation scheduled this month. The week-long TRS includes a mandatory standardized core curriculum along with four well-defined military-civilian pathways: (1) university/college, (2) vocational/technical training, (3) employment, or (4) entrepreneurship. A Marine will choose the pathway that best meets his or her future goals and will have access to individual counseling services within each pathway. This tailored approach will target the individual circumstances and needs of Marines and facilitate a practical learning experience with specific transition readiness standards that are effective, relevant and beneficial.

The integration of our Marine For Life program in the P&PD Program has improved our ability to work with the civilian community to find opportunities for our transitioning Marines and their spouses. Marine For Life also provides an avenue for Marine veterans to reach back for assistance or to volunteer their services to assist transitioning or veteran Marines in their communities.

Regarding spouse employment opportunities, we see that tying these programs more closely with formerly Marine-focused programs, such as transition assistance and on-base education, creates significant synergy. Many of the same employers who seek Marine veterans are also interested in employing Marine spouses. We look forward to working with the Joining

Forces Initiative, which seeks to streamline certification and licensure procedures for Marine spouses. We also support parallel efforts to qualify Marines for certifications based upon military training and experience.

Our P&PD Program provides a variety of classes and tools to help Marines and their families such as relocation assistance and libraries that provide resources that our Marines and families require. Our personal finance counseling efforts are enabling Marines to make responsible financial decisions that help them improve their lives. We have created a new personal financial management curriculum that covers 34 major topics including saving and investing, credit and debt management, and smart home buying, selling and renting. These efforts help ensure that we are not focusing solely on those in financial distress but also on preparing Marines and their families to be financially stable and prepared.

Bringing all of these programs together to offer an integrated set of personal and professional development services will enable Marines and their families to be more effective, and more ready, while serving on active duty. At the same time, these services will help Marines be better prepared to make the transition back to civilian life after a four year enlistment or a 30-year career.

Behavioral Health Integration. The integration of our behavioral health programs seamlessly weaves our efforts in sexual assault, suicide, combat and operational stress, substance abuse and family advocacy/domestic violence into the larger support network of command structures and the health and human services across the Marine Corps. We focus on evidence-based practices to ensure we are providing effective support in these critical areas and utilize our Behavioral Health Information Network, which is a web-based clearinghouse for the latest information on behavioral health. This integration further benefits from our Behavioral Health

Advisory Committee, a committee chartered for the purposes of examining promising practices and making recommendations on our behavioral health programs. A Universal Training module, which is in development, will consolidate all behavioral health risk and protective factors into a single training package. This integration effort will help us to institutionalize resiliency in order to strengthen Marines and families by increasing their ability to cope with the stress of combat operations and the challenges of life in the Marine Corps, whether at home or forward deployed.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. Our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program follows a holistic approach to prevention and response, utilizing a top-down leadership message of support and an emphasis on bystander intervention. Marines have an inherent responsibility to step up and step in to prevent sexual assault. Our priority is to reduce the number of incidents as well as reduce the number of unreported sexual assaults by utilizing a consistent and focused emphasis on command climate. The Marine Corps has revitalized our curriculum for Non-Commissioned Officers to include a new video-based bystander training, entitled “*Take a Stand,*” designed to reduce stigma by stimulating conversation and engaging Marines with a more personalized message about sexual assault prevention.

We are developing a Command Team training module, updating our annual training and enhancing our training for all first responders. We have staffed our installations with subject matter experts, positioned to have the greatest impact on victims and victim care. In addition, 24/7 Helplines are available at all major installations and reserve headquarters to provide resources and advocacy for victims. These Helplines are answered by victim advocates who are trained to provide immediate services to victims of sexual assault.

We continue our focus on accountability for those who violate the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The Marine Corps Trial Counsel Assistance Program (TCAP) trained 118

Judge Advocates in sexual assault investigation and prosecution best practices in Fiscal Year 2011. TCAP will continue this training in Fiscal Year 2012 and plans to train approximately 125 Judge Advocates and 75 enlisted paralegals. The DoD-wide release of the Defense Sexual Assault Incident Reporting Database will enhance current case management capabilities.

Suicide Prevention. In Calendar Year 2011, we lost 33 Marines to suicide and we recorded 171 suicide attempts. While we have seen two consecutive years of decreased suicides and evidence of change in Marine attitudes toward behavioral health, we still have much work to do. Leaders prevent suicide by strengthening all Marines and encouraging Marines to engage helping services early, when problems are most manageable. We continually encourage Marines to recognize, acknowledge and seek help for stress reactions, and we deploy evidence-based prevention practices such as peer-to-peer suicide prevention training. The Marine Corps will work closely with the DoD Suicide Prevention Office to implement recommendations of its Joint Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide. Our award-winning “*Never Leave a Marine Behind*” suicide prevention program, which is peer-led and continually updated to reflect emerging evidence-based practices, is tailored to reflect the culture and values of the Marine Corps. We will continue to forge strong relationships with Federal agencies, academia, and private industry in order to further our understanding of suicide prevention.

Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC). COSC helps Marine leaders maintain their warfighting capabilities by addressing the negative impacts of stress. COSC enhances force preservation, readiness and the long-term health and well-being of Marines and their families. Every battalion or equivalent unit across the Total Force will have an Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) team by mid-2012. OSCAR teams are comprised of mentors (selected unit Marines and leaders), extenders (unit medical and religious personnel), and mental health

professionals, who provide a network of support. As of January 2012, the Marine Corps had trained over 5,000 Marines as OSCAR mentors, who help reduce stigma and act as sensors for the commander by noticing small changes in behavior and taking action early before stress becomes a medical issue. COSC is incorporating lessons learned into new courses in COSC fundamentals for all levels of enlisted professional military education.

Our DSTRESS Line, which will have a global capacity by mid-2012, addresses the full spectrum of behavioral health needs, whether they are problems arising from the everyday stressors of life or a suicidal crisis. DSTRESS Line is a “by Marine/for Marine” counseling center for Marines, attached Sailors, and families, who can call, chat online, or Skype with a veteran Marine, Fleet Marine Force corpsman, or Marine Corps family member.

We will also initiate an alcohol abuse prevention campaign across the Total Force in Fiscal Year 2012. Alcohol misuse continues to have an impact across the spectrum of behavioral health including suicide, sexual assault and family advocacy/domestic violence. Our campaign plan includes input from Marines and substance abuse experts from the Federal government and outside sources, and it initiates courses of action that will reduce the alcohol-related problems faced by Marines and their families.

Marine Total Fitness. In Fiscal Year 2012, we will also continue to develop our Marine Total Fitness concept to develop Marines of exemplary physical, psychological, spiritual and social character. Marine Total Fitness will insert resilience-based information and concepts into all aspects of a Marine’s training and readiness. It will also position the Marine Corps to properly support the Department of the Navy’s 21st Century Sailor and Marine concept. This concept is a set of policies and objectives across the spectrum of wellness that seeks to maximize

the personal readiness of our Sailors and Marines in order to hone the most combat-effective force in the Department's history.

Casualty Assistance. The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is committed to ensuring that families of our fallen Marines are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity and honor. Always seeking to improve survivor assistance and demonstrating a record of quick, effective action, our Casualty Assistance Program is a 24-hour-per-day operation manned by Marines and civilians trained in casualty reporting, notification and casualty-assistance procedures. Casualty Assistance Calls Officers assist the next-of-kin with burial arrangements, applications for benefits and entitlements, contact with benevolent and philanthropic organizations, and obtaining reports of investigation. Within days of the incident, families are connected to representatives from the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, a nationally-recognized provider of comfort and care to those who have suffered the loss of a military loved one. The Marine Corps reaches out to the next-of-kin approximately 60 days after the loss to help resolve any remaining issues and to let the families know that they are still part of the Marine Corps family. We will remain steadfast in our support of our Marine Corps families who have paid so much in service to our Nation.

IX. Semper Fit & Exchange Services

I want to thank Congress, especially this Subcommittee, for your continued support for our Marine Corps Semper Fit and Exchange programs. In the FY12 National Defense Authorization Act, you and your colleagues included a provision which allows us to access credit for business operations through the Federal Financing Bank and thereby lock-in the best possible interest rates. Thank you for your hard work on that bill.

The Commandant continues to stress that the Marine Corps will keep faith with our Marines, our Sailors, and our families. We repeat this theme in all that we do as we strive to deliver capability-based programs all the way down to the unit level.

Semper Fit & Recreation. Our Semper Fit and Recreation programs support the readiness, resiliency, and retention goals of your Marine Corps. Our efforts are primarily focused on the areas of fitness, sports, health promotion, and recreation, as they are essential in maintaining a fit Marine. We recently introduced High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT), a comprehensive strength and conditioning program geared towards optimizing physical performance and combat readiness. HITT is designed to reduce the likelihood of injury while in theatre; initial feedback from Marines is positive and Corps-wide rollout of the program, including use in Afghanistan, is planned for early 2012.

Social resilience is linked with unit cohesion and we are identifying unit-driven recreational activities to provide at Marine Corps installations. Operation Adrenaline Rush, currently offered at two installations, assists Marines in reintegration by empowering small unit leaders, maintaining combat readiness, and reinforcing unit cohesion. The program offers opportunities for outdoor recreation activities such as whitewater rafting and deep sea fishing.

Overall, Semper Fit makes every effort to deliver high quality programs and services to Marines and their families. Our programs are vital to the continued success and development of your Marines and your Corps.

Marine Corps Exchange and Temporary Lodging Facilities. The Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) is inextricably linked to our mission of taking care of Marines and their families and is an important part of the overall non-monetary benefits package. Our success is measured on the program's value and contributions to the readiness and retention of our Marines,

as well as our ability to provide unparalleled customer service, premier facilities, and valued goods and services at a savings. With MCX, unlike any other retail store, Marines can rely upon a high quality product at a fair price and know that the proceeds are returned to their community, creating a stronger Marine Corps. Like other Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) facility master planning efforts, MCX is executing branding strategies, and our aggressive re-investment into our main stores is near completion. We are also expanding the branding strategies to focus on our Marine Marts and Temporary Lodging Facilities (TLFs). All Marine Corps design standards are focused on energy efficiency and sustainability.

Deployed Support. Deployed support is one of the most important services we provide. Our Exchange, Recreation and Fitness, Communication, and MCCS Amenity Wi-Fi services not only boost and maintain morale, but also help to reduce mission-related stress.

Exchange. Ongoing missions in Afghanistan include the operation of two Direct Operation Exchanges Tactical at Camps Leatherneck and Dwyer, one Tactical Field Exchange at Camp Delaram II, one Imprest Fund Site at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Edinburgh, and numerous Warfighter Express Services Teams operating out of Camps Leatherneck, Dwyer, and FOB Edinburgh.

Recreation and Fitness. We assist in providing sports, recreational, and fitness equipment to units throughout Helmand Province. This transportable equipment includes sports/recreation cooler kits filled with sports gear and board games, electronic game kits, Theater-in-a-Box kits, and functional fitness equipment for use in austere environments. Reading materials, both electronic and paperback, are also available.

Communication. Morale Satellite services are available to forward operating bases, combat outposts, and other austere locations. We have delivered 13 satellite communications

systems to units in Afghanistan. Each system has two phones which each provide 6000 free minutes per month and five laptops that allow internet access, social networking, and chat/video capabilities to deployed Marines. In 2011, we provided over a half-million minutes of telephone air time. In addition, approximately 23,683 Marines were able to use the Morale Satellite services at several different FOBs/COPs, including over 2,100 telephone calls over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

MotoMail, supported by Marine and Family Programs and first offered in December 2004 is another form of communications support which continues to serve Marines and families. MotoMail allows friends and family members to submit letters and pictures online to deployed Marines and a Marine will receive their letter within 24 hours of submission. Since implementing this free service, over 4.1 million letters have been created and delivered.

MCCS Amenity Wi-Fi Solution. The Marine Corps Community Services Amenity Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) Solution program deploys Wi-Fi capability at no cost to Marines and families. This morale and welfare initiative helps Marines stay in contact while separated from their families. The Wi-Fi is conveniently located at temporary lodging facilities, exchange food courts, libraries, education centers, child and youth centers, clubs, and Wounded Warrior Program facilities. Since its inception, our Wi-Fi program has been popular with Marines and their families. As of the first of this year, the program is available on 19 Marine Corps installations with 240 buildings receiving Wi-Fi coverage.

X. Wounded Warrior Regiment

The Marine Corps is grateful for this Subcommittee's recognition of the service and sacrifices of wounded, ill, and injured (WII) Marines and their families. Your Marines continue to sustain wounds on the battlefield, including catastrophic injuries that present significant

quality of life challenges. Marines also continue to be injured in training accidents, become ill, and experience other tragedies that require a wide range of interconnected non-medical care. Through our Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR), we provide this care - from the point of injury or illness through return to duty or reintegration to civilian communities.

Our WWR is a single command with a strategic reach that provides non-medical care to the total Marine force. The Regimental Headquarters in Quantico, Virginia, commands the operation of two Wounded Warrior Battalions (at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California) and multiple detachments in locations around the globe, including at major Military Treatment Facilities and Department of Veterans Affairs Polytrauma Centers. All WWR elements function as a cohesive team to allow for consistent, top-notch services for WII Marines, their family members, and caregivers.

The Marine Corps approach to wounded warrior care is to return recovering Marines to their parent units as quickly as their medical conditions permit. Allowing Marines to “stay in the fight” is what makes our care model unique and successful. When WII Marines remain with their parent units, they are supported by their regular command structure with the full assistance of our WWR’s comprehensive assets. WII Marines with medically acute cases (typically when their recoveries are more complex and medical treatment or rehabilitation is expected to exceed 90 days) are joined to a WWR element where they are enrolled in programs to not only heal them medically, but also strengthen their mind, body, spirit, and family during recovery and rehabilitation.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to warrior care. Each case is unique based upon the Marine’s phase of recovery, their location and family situation. Care does not lend itself to a process, but rather, it is a relationship between the WWR and the WII Marine. With this in

mind, we have taken steps to ensure that our WWR has the right mix of staff at its locations. Over the past year, our WWR has adjusted its staffing model to meet the heightened demand for administrative support that is a key component of wounded warrior care. Administrative support includes, but is not limited to, travel facilitation, non-medical attendant orders, and various pays and entitlements, such as Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, Special Compensation for Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (SCAADL), and transition assistance. With regard to SCAADL, in addition to ensuring payment to qualified Marines immediately following release of the Department of Defense Instruction, our WWR is currently working with the Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy to provide our SCAADL-qualified Marines access to caregiver training materials. As leadership is an integral part of the healing process, our WWR assigns specially-trained Marine Section Leaders to various locations where WII Marines are joined to maintain good order and discipline and ensure that these WII Marines are provided leadership, mentorship, and encouragement on a daily basis.

Assets and Capabilities. Now in its fifth year of operation, our WWR continues to refine its programs and services. Many program improvements are based upon sound feedback from WII Marines, their family members and caregivers. Our fundamental assets and capabilities are available to WII Marines whether they are joined to the WWR or remain with their parent command.

Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs). We currently provide RCCs to approximately 1,240 WII Marines, 60 percent of whom are joined to the WWR and 40 percent remain with their parent command. Our 49 RCCs are located at 14 sites and serve as the WII Marine's central point of contact to help them set and meet their recovery and transition goals. RCCs work in coordination with other members of the Marine's recovery team (Marine leadership, medical

case managers, non-medical case managers, and others) to ensure recovery and transition actions are fully coordinated. Recent improvements to the RCC program include standardizing Comprehensive Recovery Plans (CRPs), the WII Marine's "life map," by implementing a quality assurance program for consistent CRP development and documentation. We have also developed a robust training program that provides RCCs with the critical skills necessary to identify WII Marines' needs, translate those needs into concrete goals, and then provide actionable steps to help the Marine meet their goals. To facilitate a smooth transition process, the RCCs have instituted a practice whereby they hand-off cases of Marines who leave the Marine Corps to other WWR assets for post-transition monitoring and to provide for any ongoing or residual care coordination requirements. Our RCCs coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Federal Recovery Coordinators (FRC) on cases where WII Marines have been assigned an FRC to ensure a smooth transition to VA services.

Warrior Athlete Reconditioning Program. When a Marine is wounded, ill or injured, our WWR helps focus them on their abilities through the Warrior Athlete Reconditioning Program (WAR-P). WAR-P provides activities and opportunities for Marines to train as athletes, to increase their strength so they can continue with military service or develop healthy habits for life outside of the Marine Corps. WAR-P, which is mandatory for Marines joined to the WWR, does more than help WII Marines maintain a healthy body; it counters declining self perception, depression and stress that may be associated with their injury. Under WAR-P, WII Marines have more than 20 activities to choose from, including swimming, cycling, running, wheelchair basketball, and strength and conditioning.

Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center. The Marine Corps continues to honor its commitment to keep faith with WII Marines through our WWR's Call Center, a

Department of Defense Best Practice, which renders various types of resource and referral assistance to WII Marines and Marine veterans. Our trained Call Center staff includes retired Marines and Marine veterans or family members of Marines augmented by a small staff of psychological health professionals. They not only receive calls on a 24/7 basis, but also conduct outreach efforts to check on the well-being of WII Marines. Combat-wounded Marines who remain with their parent units are contacted at prescribed intervals to determine if they have any needs or issues. If needs are identified, the Marine is referred to a non-medical care manager for resolution. These calls can result in assignment to a Wounded Warrior Battalion or the assignment of a Recovery Care Coordinator, or both. This Call Center also serves as the WWR's hub for its new social media efforts, which includes Facebook, Twitter, and a new WWR App.

Strategic Communication. Clear, consistent, and accurate information regarding services and eligibility must reliably reach WII Marines, their family members and caregivers. To address this need, the WWR continually disseminates information on its programs and services to various audiences, including Marine Corps leaders, to ensure the total Marine Corps force, including all wounded warriors and commanders are aware of the WWR's services.

Community Reintegration. As the vast majority of WII Marines reintegrate to their communities, our WWR has taken steps to ensure they are highly competitive in a difficult job market. We provide specialized transition support through Transition Cells, located at WWR Headquarters and Wounded Warrior Battalions. Transition coordinators, both Marine Corps and civilian employees (including representatives from the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs), work closely with Marines to reach their employment and education goals. Based on the WII Marine's ultimate goals, the transition coordinators determine their needs, develop

pathways, provide coaching and resources, and help network for employment and careers. For WII Marines who are joined to the WWR, their transition to civilian life begins as soon as their medical conditions allow (typically at outpatient status). They must start an education program, participate in an internship, or return to work (ideally in a military occupational field commensurate with their established goals).

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) Support. The Marine Corps supports the current IDES process as it enables the recovering service member and family to continue to receive our support and transition smoothly to VA benefits from active duty status. While not a universal concern, some Marines have expressed dissatisfaction with the IDES process due to the variance in their final DoD compensation package and their VA compensation based on the same VA disability rating determination. This is because DoD compensates for medical conditions that are determined to be military unfitting by the service Physical Evaluation Board (PEB), whereas VA compensates for all disabling medical conditions incurred or aggravated during a period of active duty. Although the Marine Corps does not own the IDES process, we own the Marine and it is our responsibility to be their advocate. Over the past year, we have taken several actions to improve IDES performance. These actions include:

- providing Marine Corps leadership with detailed IDES case processing information, resulting in their ability to work closer with the Regional Medical Commanders on specific issues impacting IDES performance;
- enhancing the PEB administrative staff and bolstering manning to perform field-level counseling and case processing assistance;
- providing Marine Corps disability evaluation attorneys with a list of Marines entering the IDES process for proactive advocacy prior to the Medical Evaluation Board (MEB) referral; and
- ensuring all Marines referred into the IDES receive a pocket-sized information pamphlet on the IDES process which provides detailed information on the establishment of the DoD and VA compensation based on the VA determined disability rating. It also

identifies all actors (PEBLOs, VA Military Service Coordinators, DES Attorneys, and Independent Medical Reviewers) in the IDES process and describes how the Marine can work with that actor to achieve a better outcome. Also, Marines appointed a Recovery Care Coordinator receive additional counseling and support through the process.

These initiatives have positively impacted case backlogs and improved case processing timeliness in the MEB and improved customer satisfaction as evidenced in DoD's Quarterly IDES Performance Survey reports.

Program Assessment. The WWR recognizes the importance of sound data to measure program effectiveness and inform changes in the way we serve WII Marines and their families. Since the WWR was established in 2007, several surveys have been conducted. The most recent survey was administered to WII Marines joined to or supported by the WWR and posed questions relating to our various care coordination assets: Section Leaders, Recovery Care Coordinators, the Wounded Warrior Call Center and Battalion Contact Cells, Family Readiness Staff, and District Injured Support Coordinators. Findings from the 2012 Care Coordination Survey reveal that satisfaction levels have increased for Marines injured prior to 2007 and are now consistent with WII Marines injured post 2007. Much of this equalization can be attributed to the reach-back capability that the Wounded Warrior Call Center possesses, conducting outreach calls to offer assistance. There was also an increase in satisfaction levels in the following areas: WWR personnel; the level of information provided / ability to provide information; and ability to provide support to family members. One of the most important data points from the survey: 81 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that WWR personnel do a good job of coordination with each other to make things easier for them.

Our WWR has also been assessed by the Department of Defense Task Force on the Care, Management, and Transition of Recovering Wounded, Ill, and Injured Members of the Armed

Services. We are pleased to point out that we were recognized for several best practices, including our Hope and Care Centers, customization and delivery of the *Keeping It All Together Handbook* to families at detachments, and our *IDES Pocket Guide for Marines*.

WII Marines and their family members and caregivers have sacrificed much and I can assure this Subcommittee and Congress that we will fully honor their sacrifices by continuing to provide them quality care and support to posture them for success, whether they return to duty or transition back to civilian life.

XI. Civilian Marines

Our Civilian Marines support the mission and daily functions of the Marine Corps and are an integral part of our Total Force.

In recognition of the need to study and clearly define our civilian workforce requirements in light of civilian labor budget reductions, we proactively conducted a full review of the Total Force in late 2010. This measure resulted in a self-imposed hiring freeze from December 2010 to December 2011, but prioritized requirements within affordable levels and aligned resources with capabilities. It also ensured the civilian labor force was shaped to support the mission of the Corps today and for the future. As a result of our efforts, the Marine Corps avoided drastic reductions of civilian personnel and was able to reduce its workforce from approximately 21,000 direct funded Full Time Equivalencies (FTEs) to 17,501 without drastic downsizing impacts.

Our FY13 civilian personnel budget reflects efforts to restrain growth in direct funded personnel. By establishing budgetary targets consistent with current fiscal realities, we will be able to hold our civilian labor force at FY10 end-of-year levels, with some exceptions for critical workforce growth areas such as acquisition, intelligence (National Intelligence Professionals),

information technology, security (Marine Corps Civilian Law Enforcement Personnel), and cyber.

The civilian labor budget represents less than 5 percent of the Marine Corps' FY12 budgetary submission, demonstrating that our "best value" for the defense dollar applies to our civilians as well as our Marines.

XII. Health Care Efficiencies

The Marine Corps supports the reforms in military compensation programs included in the President's fiscal year 2013 budget. The President's budget acknowledges the reality that military pay, allowances, and health care costs cannot be ignored in our comprehensive effort to achieve savings. The compensation reforms are sensible. Modest pay raises continue—no reductions, no freezes. TRICARE care enrollment and deductibles fees increase for retirees, but they are comparatively moderate and tiered based on retirement income. Pharmacy co-pays trend toward market rates and encourage the use of generic drugs and mail-order delivery. In all cases, costs remain substantially less than those in the private sector.

XIII. Conclusion

To continue to be successful, we must always remember that our individual Marines are our most precious asset, and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Marines are proud of what they do. They are proud of the "Eagle, Globe, and Anchor" and what it represents to our country. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our Nation's call.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.