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2 THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
3 SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
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12 STATEMENT OF
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15 MAJOR GENERAL JASON G. WOODWORTH
16 COMMANDER, MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS COMMAND
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19 BEFORE THE
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22 HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
23 SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
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25 ON
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27 A REVIEW OF MILITARY FOOD PROGRAMS
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29 9 APRIL 2025
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48 **Introduction**

49 Chairman Fallon, Ranking Member Houlahan, and distinguished members of the
50 Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of your Marines. The Marine
51 Corps remains focused on readiness and lethality and is steadfast in its commitment to providing
52 Marines and Sailors with healthy and appetizing meals. Readiness also requires accountability
53 of our assets and the fiscal resources provided by Congress. The Marine Corps ensures that every
54 dollar authorized and appropriated by Congress specifically for feeding service members is spent
55 for its intended purpose and is properly and accurately accounted for. Marines continue to
56 uphold the standard, reinforced by our reputation of accountability, discipline, and leadership,
57 and ensuring that a dollar invested in the Marine Corps is a dollar well spent.

58 **Funding, Administration, and Oversight**

59 On average the Marine Corps spends about \$570 per month (\$19 per day) to feed each
60 unaccompanied Marine living in the barracks. This covers the food and the food service contract.
61 In fiscal year (FY) 2024, the Marine Corps spent \$395,000,000 in government owned, contractor
62 operated dining facilities and field feeding. Funding for dining facilities, including operational
63 costs and food procurement, comes from appropriated funds designated for subsistence. The
64 administration of these facilities falls under the purview of the Marine Corps Food Service
65 Program and is overseen by the Marine Corps Installations Command (MCICOM) Food Services
66 Branch. The Marine Corps established standards for the management, operation, budgeting, and
67 administration of dining facilities, that ensure our warfighters have consistent and high-quality
68 food service across all installations.

69 The Marine Corps ensures efficiency and effective oversight of its food service programs
70 through several key mechanisms. MCICOM is responsible for providing food service support to

all commands, offering centralized oversight to guarantee that food programs are carefully managed and ensuring that any issues are quickly addressed. Additionally, MCICOM manages bulk food purchasing agreements, which help reduce costs while ensuring a steady supply of high-quality food items. These agreements promote lower pricing and greater standardization across dining facilities. The Marine Corps Food Management Information System (MCFMIS) and the Defense Agencies Initiative (DAI) serve as the systems of record for requisitioning, inventory management, menu planning, cost control, and processing and retaining food-related financial transactions. These systems play a crucial role in ensuring dining facilities operate efficiently and within budget. Through these strategies and systems, the Marine Corps effectively maintains oversight and standardization of its funding and food service operations.

Quality and Quantity of Food

Ensuring the well-being of Marines and Sailors through proper diet is crucial for warrior readiness and health. The Marine Corps adheres to the DoD's nutrition standards, ensuring that meals are both well balanced and satisfying. MCICOM is responsible to the Commandant and the Congress for providing meals that help prepare Marines to train and be ready when the nation calls. Through oversight of the dining facilities, commonly referred to as "mess halls," collaboration with the Defense Logistics Agency, and regular service member feedback, we continuously improve meal offerings and dining experiences. Our mess halls meet DoD nutritional standards, with ongoing enhancements in menu variety, food preparation, and supply chain efficiency. MCICOM remains committed to providing nutritious and appetizing meals that support the physical performance, readiness, and well-being of our force by engaging with industry to align food offerings with Marine preferences while emphasizing minimally processed

93 foods and fresh ingredients. We want our Marines to want to eat in the mess halls because the
94 food is good, nutritious, and plentiful.

95 **Meal Expenses and Deductions**

96 The Marine Corps provides quality foods through a variety of steps. Basic Allowance for
97 Subsistence (BAS) is one such method the Service uses to meet this intent by offsetting the cost
98 of meals. The Military Personnel, Marine Corps appropriation funds BAS which is disbursed
99 directly to service members as part of their regular pay.

100 With a few exceptions (e.g., initial entry-level training), most active-duty officers and
101 enlisted members, including reserve Marines on active duty, receive BAS. In FY24, the BAS
102 entitlement totaled \$853,975,000. Marines who do not have access to adequate cooking
103 facilities, such as those that live in barracks or are assigned to sea or field duty are typically
104 provided meals through mess halls. These Marines have a portion of their BAS deducted from
105 their paychecks to supplement the cost of their meals at mess halls, in the field, or while
106 embarked on ship.

107 Unaccompanied Marines living in the barracks on one of the duties mentioned above
108 receive roughly \$465 per month for BAS and, on average, have \$399 deducted from their
109 paychecks (approximately \$13 per day). These payroll deductions ensure that enlisted Marines
110 have daily access to nutritious meals three times per day Monday through Friday and twice per
111 day on Saturday, Sunday, and Federal holidays without incurring out-of-pocket expenses. The
112 funds collected are used to cover the cost of food and operating expenses of the dining facilities.
113 These deductions are used solely and exclusively for food services and are not diverted to other
114 programs. Funds collected are used to cover the food service contract, which includes a host of

contract line items. The MCFMIS ensures that the funds intended for subsistence are utilized appropriately to provide our Marines the nutrition they need for optimal performance.

Marines that do not receive a BAS checkage, and elect to eat at base dining facilities, pay for their meals at the standard meal rate. These payments are directly collected by the centralized Service-level food programs account to offset the cost of food items and consumables.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps remains steadfast in its commitment to providing Marines and Sailors with nutritious, high-quality meals; we ensure that our service members are well-fed, healthy, and fit to fight. The Marine Corps puts readiness to fight and win the Nation's battles at the forefront of our culture, and Marines receiving proper nutrition is a cornerstone of this. Additionally, your Marine Corps consistently demonstrates resourcefulness and a tireless pursuit of mission accomplishment and commitment to transparency. Meal deductions from BAS are standardized to supplement the cost of food provided and operational costs associated with dining facilities. There is no diversion of these funds to other programs, and we continuously review our processes to ensure fairness and clarity. This focus on transparent and effective processes is a testament to the importance that all Marines place on accountability. The Service's food service operations and financial management were evaluated during the past two audits and found to consistently demonstrate sound accounting principles. We ensure that every dollar authorized and appropriated by Congress to feed our warfighters is spent for its intended purpose and properly tracked. We appreciate the Committee's continued support and attention to these vital matters and look forward to continued collaboration to enhance the readiness, lethality, and quality of life of your Marines and Sailors.