

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

STATEMENT OF

MAJOR GENERAL JASON G. WOODWORTH  
COMMANDER, MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS COMMAND

BEFORE THE

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

ON

A REVIEW OF MILITARY FOOD PROGRAMS

9 APRIL 2025

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY  
THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL

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

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

## 81 **Quality and Quantity of Food**

82 Ensuring the well-being of Marines and Sailors through proper diet is crucial for warrior  
83 readiness and health. The Marine Corps adheres to the DoD's nutrition standards, ensuring that  
84 meals are both well balanced and satisfying. MCICOM is responsible to the Commandant and  
85 the Congress for providing meals that help prepare Marines to train and be ready when the nation  
86 calls. Through oversight of the dining facilities, commonly referred to as "mess halls,"  
87 collaboration with the Defense Logistics Agency, and regular service member feedback, we  
88 continuously improve meal offerings and dining experiences. Our mess halls meet DoD  
89 nutritional standards, with ongoing enhancements in menu variety, food preparation, and supply  
90 chain efficiency. MCICOM remains committed to providing nutritious and appetizing meals that  
91 support the physical performance, readiness, and well-being of our force by engaging with  
92 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

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

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

120 **Conclusion**

121 The Marine Corps remains steadfast in its commitment to providing Marines and Sailors  
122 with nutritious, high-quality meals; we ensure that our service members are well-fed, healthy,  
123 and fit to fight. The Marine Corps puts readiness to fight and win the Nation's battles at the  
124 forefront of our culture, and Marines receiving proper nutrition is a cornerstone of this.

125 Additionally, your Marine Corps consistently demonstrates resourcefulness and a tireless pursuit  
126 of mission accomplishment and commitment to transparency. Meal deductions from BAS are  
127 standardized to supplement the cost of food provided and operational costs associated with  
128 dining facilities. There is no diversion of these funds to other programs, and we continuously  
129 review our processes to ensure fairness and clarity. This focus on transparent and effective  
130 processes is a testament to the importance that all Marines place on accountability. The Service's  
131 food service operations and financial management were evaluated during the past two audits and  
132 found to consistently demonstrate sound accounting principles. We ensure that every dollar  
133 authorized and appropriated by Congress to feed our warfighters is spent for its intended purpose  
134 and properly tracked. We appreciate the Committee's continued support and attention to these  
135 vital matters and look forward to continued collaboration to enhance the readiness, lethality, and  
136 quality of life of your Marines and Sailors.