

NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION,
VETERANS AFFAIRS, and RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

STATEMENT OF
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DEPUTY COMMANDANT, INSTALLATIONS AND LOGISTICS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,
AND RELATED AGENCIES
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
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Introduction

Chairman Carter, Ranking Member Wasserman Schultz, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee; I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Marine Corps' Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) military construction budget request. Thanks to support from Congress, the Marine Corps continues to improve our installations and bases as power projection locations that train and deploy Marines while providing high quality services and housing for our families.

First, I want to express sincere gratitude for the funding provided for the Marine Corps' FY24 military construction program. These funds will assist in improvements to our barracks and family housing, support Marine Corps modernization initiatives, and continue the rapid growth of our Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) posture. Seven FY24 projects are located west of the International Date Line and within the Second Island Chain. These critical infrastructure projects are necessary for the Marine Corps to meet the challenges presented by current and future threats and enable the movement of Marines from Okinawa to Guam. The Marine Corps projects to save \$1.5B with the Congressional authorization to extend the H-2B Visa "temporary need waiver" through 2029. Thank you for your support of this extension.

Additionally, Congress provided funding for one barracks project in FY24 aboard Marine Barracks Washington; this is in addition to the six barracks appropriated in the FY23 budget. These barracks will improve the living conditions for thousands of our single Marines and make a positive impact on our talent management initiatives. The Marine Corps also thanks Congress for the additional \$15M included in the Department of the Navy's FY24 budget for barracks planning and design to assist in our modernization effort. Finally, Congressional funding for the Hawai'i Water Reclamation Facility in the FY24 budget is critical to supporting environmental stewardship aboard an important installation in our priority theater.

I also want to highlight the recent third-party audit we completed this year. As we invest in new platforms, barracks, and training, it is our responsibility as good stewards of taxpayer funds to continue to prove that when the Corps is provided a taxpayer dollar, we can show exactly where and how it has been invested – a responsibility we take very seriously. Following a rigorous two-year audit, the Marine Corps achieved an unmodified audit opinion, the best possible outcome – and the first time in the Department of Defense's history that any service has received an unmodified audit opinion. These results demonstrate how seriously the Marine Corps takes its stewardship of taxpayer funds and our ability to account for and put to best use every

dollar trusted to the service. This audit supports what we have believed for a long time – when Congress provides the Marine Corps a dollar, we invest it wisely, and we can tell you exactly where and how it was spent to further our Nation’s national security objectives. The Marine Corps worked with Independent Public Accountants to validate budgetary balances and records and to audit physical assets at installations and bases across the globe. These actions included counting military equipment, buildings, structures, supplies, and ammunition held by the Marine Corps and our DoD Partners. The audit’s favorable opinion was only possible through the support and hard work of numerous dedicated Marines, civilian Marines, and many other partners across DoD. Nonetheless, we will not rest on our laurels; the audit report pointed out some areas for improvement, and we will use these recommendations to make our fiscal practices even better.

Marine Corps installations and logistics underpin the Service’s statutory obligations to organize, train, equip, and sustain combat-ready Marine Forces. Installations are the places from which the Marine Corps develops young Americans based on the Service’s legendary ethos and values and generates readiness by preparing units for combat under demanding, realistic training conditions. They provide indispensable positional advantage while assuring allies and deterring adversaries with more than 23,000 Marines living and operating from bases in the Western Pacific. These same bases enable allied, Joint, and interagency capability and interoperability with an array of training venues and support, stock, and maintain mission essential equipment, munitions, and supplies for use in training and contingencies. Installations demonstrate an unshakable commitment to our Marines and their families by providing safe, healthy, and supportive environments in which to live and train, and they foster trust with our local communities. As our Commandant stated in his initial guidance, we will focus on improving our barracks, base housing, gyms, chow halls, child development centers, and personnel policies. These quality of life improvements are direct contributors to a more capable and lethal force.

Barracks 2030, Family Housing, and Child Development Centers

In February 2023, the Commandant of the Marine Corps directed the Service to review our barracks portfolio and identify opportunities to improve the quality of life for our Marines. From this review, we began our Barracks 2030 initiative, the most consequential barracks investment plan we have ever undertaken, and identified three areas to focus our efforts—management, modernization, and material.

First, we will professionalize our barracks management workforce with the addition of 347 fulltime civilian employees. They will streamline and improve oversight processes and decrease collateral duties for Marines who lack the required training to execute these responsibilities effectively. We will also implement a resident advisor program, like a college dormitory, to allow senior non-commissioned officers to reside in each barracks. This will provide mentorship and leadership to young Marines navigating their transition from home to the Marine Corps.

Next, we will modernize our infrastructure through the levers of repair, reconfiguration, recapitalization, and right sizing the number of barracks in our portfolio. Service wide, 17% of our barracks are in poor or failing condition. To right size the number of barracks in our inventory, we will first determine the required number at each installation and begin targeted demolition to remove buildings not suitable for long-term investment. While new construction will contribute to our plan, a greater need will be in leveraging restoration, modernization, and demolition of our existing inventory. For example, we currently renovate about nine barracks annually. Under our new process, we will now mirror private industry practices and begin in-stride room renovations instead of waiting 15-20 years to renovate the entire building.

Finally, we will prioritize available funds to provide functional and updated furnishings for barracks rooms. We will do this by taking advantage of the current centralized procurement contract currently in use by the Army and Navy. Previously, furniture acquisition varied by region and limited our economies of scale. By changing to this centralized mechanism, we will improve our refresh cycle to ten years and estimate a 20% cost savings through enterprise procurement.

While we implement this plan, the Marine Corps is already acting. In March, we concluded our 100% wall-to-wall Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) inspections of every barracks room to establish the baseline conditions of habitability. Of the over 58,000 rooms inspected, we directed the immediate relocation of 118 Marines due to EHS concerns. Overall, more than 50% of the rooms inspected had deficiencies requiring corrective actions which we are addressing. The deficiencies found are in line with the September 2023 GAO report and underscore the importance of addressing the problem now.

These inspections will inform and refine our Barracks 2030 initiative. By improving the barracks through professionalizing management, modernizing infrastructure, and providing

better furnishings, the Marine Corps will deliver its warfighters with a home appropriate to the professionalism and readiness we demand. While we improve the barracks for our single Marines, we will continue to emphasize the importance of our families, particularly through the Family Housing portfolio.

This year, the Marine Corps requested over \$205M in family housing construction and operations for FY25. This request sustains funding for the 169 Base Housing Management professionals, who provide the necessary oversight of over 23,000 PPV homes in CONUS and Hawai'i for our Marine families. To ensure our partners are meeting the requirements to a level we expect, the Marine Corps will complete third-party inspections of PPV homes this fiscal year. These inspections hold our housing partners accountable and provide our Marines and their families with safe, livable homes. We are reviewing the results of the initial third-party inspections to develop corrective action plans for implementation in FY25. The Marine Corps continues to identify specific areas to focus on in conjunction with the partner to improve the family housing inventory. For example, our West Coast partner executed a \$34M recapitalization project to provide 60 new homes at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, AZ. Providing quality homes is one pillar to our quality of life investments for our families. Another important pillar is childcare facilities.

High-quality childcare is a family-readiness priority for the Marine Corps. The adage “we recruit Marines, we retain families” remains as true today as ever. In FY23, our child development programs served more than 30,000 children across the globe. The Marine Corps has 57 childcare facilities (38 Child Development Centers [CDCs] and 19 School Age Care facilities) at 16 installations. To meet the rising demand for childcare, the Marine Corps will begin construction on two new CDCs at MCB Camp Pendleton, CA and Guam. These new facilities will serve 350 children and provide relief to waitlists in those locations. The service's biggest challenge with respect to CDCs remains the ability to obtain and retain a stable workforce for these facilities.

Congressional funding and authorities in support of various workforce initiatives are critical to help recruit and retain the best employees. As an incentive tool, civilian staff receive a 50% discount on childcare fees for their first child enrolled at the CDC and a 20% discount on subsequent children. Beginning in FY23, we added over \$100M to the Child and Youth portfolio to hire more employees at increased wages to help retain a professional workforce. We

are proud to highlight that 40% of our staff is comprised of military spouses, which is possible through our non-competitive childcare employee military spouse transfer program. Additionally, to provide additional options for our families, the Marine Corps offers community-based childcare fee assistance to families stationed at installations with extensive waitlists. In FY23, families enrolled nearly 1,600 children in the fee assistance program at a cost of over \$6.1M.

For the FY25 budget, the Marine Corps is requesting \$133M in Child and Youth Program funding to sustain these initiatives and account for increased participation. We thank Congress for their continued support in building, staffing, and maintaining high quality childcare facilities for our Marines and their families.

FY25 Military Construction Budget Request

To posture ourselves in the best manner to serve the Nation, the Marine Corps has requested \$1.2B for military construction projects and \$149M for family housing construction projects in FY25. This budget request supports the National Defense Strategy, SECNAV's Strategic Guidance, and our Commandant's direction. It is a balanced approach and includes the following investments:

- Important infrastructure in Guam to include a new Youth Center for the families of our Marines, and Earth Covered Magazines to store modern weapons systems and ordnance.
- A new aircraft hangar on Marine Corp Base Hawai'i identified in the recent Environmental Assessment to support the home basing of KC-130J and MQ-9 aircraft.
- Modernized maintenance facilities and aircraft hangar space at MCAS Cherry Point, NC. This includes a sustainment center to accommodate F-35 aircraft, maintenance and storage space, and secure data network areas. Additionally, a Composite Repair Facility will provide a depot-level facility for advanced composites and rotor blade repair.
- A new Parachute Survival Training Facility at Joint Base Lewis-McCord for our reserve units in the state of Washington. This facility provides maintenance, repair, and storage of parachutes, and storage and maintenance of arms for USMC Forces Reserve.
- Significant investments to our infrastructure in Darwin, Australia in support of the Marine Rotational Force-Darwin. This includes maintenance support facilities and an aircraft maintenance hangar to provide maintenance, storage, and other support functions.

Today, more than 31,000 Marines are forward-deployed or stationed across 42 countries. More than 23,000 of those Marines are currently forward-postured west of the International Date Line and positioned to respond to activity by our pacing threats. To reaffirm our commitment in the Indo-Pacific, the FY25 MILCON budget includes five projects in the region, valued at over half a billion dollars. One example of a significant quality of life investment is the Youth Center in Guam, which is a part of a larger investment designed to accommodate the first phase of Marines and their families moving from Okinawa to Guam beginning in CY24. Funding modern and resilient infrastructure and homes in the Pacific is critical to posture Marines in a fighting stance for campaigning and crisis response.

As stated earlier, barracks are among the most clear-cut quality of life investments we can make for our single Marines. The Marine Corps possesses 658 barracks with approximately 155,000 bed spaces. In FY22 and FY23, we renovated 30, improving the quality of life of 8,116 Marines. In FY24, we will renovate 13 barracks to improve the living conditions of 3,517 Marines. We are leveraging a tier-based readiness approach to lifecycle management to prioritize investments for the most critical facilities. Every dollar spent will be targeted to where it will have the greatest impact. The PB25 budget does not reflect the full Barracks 2030 planning strategy. However, it is the starting point. The Marine Corps allocated \$274M in FY25 (an additional \$61M above previous years) to address barracks modernization, and if additional funds are made available, the Marine Corps can execute additional FSRM requirements of \$230M for FY25.

Installation Resilience and Environmental Stewardship

We must properly maintain our facilities and infrastructure to prevent degradation of our capability to train and generate readiness for global employment to support mission-essential tasks. The complex contested operating environment we face today challenges our ability to perform these tasks effectively from our installations. Natural and human-caused events can disrupt or degrade key operating and support capabilities, presenting an omnipresent risk to unrestricted operations, both at home and abroad. Addressing the risks to preserve tactical and strategic advantage is essential for Marines to remain a ready, relevant force.

Resilience rests in the ability to maintain critical functions, such as a reliable power grid, access to safe drinking water, and redundant communications capabilities, as well as the ability to train and equip Marines, and care for Marines and their families. We must ensure our

installations can continue to operate effectively in the face of all hazards and threats to include changing environmental conditions. In October 2023, the Marine Corps published the *Installation Campaign Plan for Environmental Resilience and Energy Readiness*, framing our approach to plan, build, and sustain climate-resilient installations and outlining three primary objectives: Promote Environmental Resilience; Achieve Energy Readiness; and Build Partnerships and Rally Support.

One part of this solution includes programs like the Office of the Secretary of Defense-managed Readiness Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program. For every dollar committed by the REPI program, outside partners provide a nearly equal match. The Marine Corps encroachment partnering program protected nearly 113,000 acres of land from FY05 through FY23 by leveraging nearly \$165M in DoD funds and nearly \$147M in conservation partner funds. The Marine Corps consistently has highly rated REPI proposals and has used REPI effectively to safeguard our missions by improving installation resilience to extreme weather events and fluctuating climatic landscapes, promoting compatible land use, and preserving critical habitats and natural resources near our installations. We are also partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering with Nature (EWN) program, a collaborative effort across Federal, state, and local agencies with input from the public, to use nature-based solutions to mitigate the effects of severe weather. In places like the Carolinas and Hawai'i, the Marine Corps is planning to leverage EWN to develop wetland and dune restoration, artificial reef construction, and stormwater management and erosion control. We will continue these efforts to build long-term and sustainable solutions at these and other installations.

In terms of energy resilience, or the ability to withstand and recover rapidly from power disruptions, Marine Corps installations will operate and maintain effective energy infrastructure to avoid and recover from anticipated and unanticipated energy disruptions to sustain mission essential functions and critical installation services. Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany, GA became the first Marine Corps Net Zero Installation in 2022 and continues to be the gold standard for energy resilience. To build on this achievement, we are leveraging lessons learned from Albany and multiple authorities to build resilient bases. For example, the Marine Corps is successfully utilizing congressionally authorized third-party financing to accelerate the delivery of energy resilience and utilities infrastructure modernization projects in support of critical

missions. In FY23, Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, NC completed a \$47M utility energy services contract (UESC) project to enhance energy security with a focus on installation electrical and wastewater system upgrades. This state-of-the-art project, in partnership with the local utility company, took two years to complete and is projected to deliver more than \$2.2 million in annual energy cost savings. Additionally, this year's budget request includes the F-35 Sustainment Center at MCAS Cherry Point, NC. This net zero emissions project will incorporate passive design for load reduction, electrification, sustainable materials, and efficiency to mirror the benefits found at MCLB Albany, GA.

Finally, I want to highlight the Marine Corps' work to adhere to the FY20 NDAA direction to phase out aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) at our installations. The Marine Corps is working with USACE on task orders to remove, rinse, and dispose of AFFF from all facilities, tactical vehicles, and non-tactical vehicles. Our current plan is to complete the contract with USACE by the end of FY24. We intend to implement water fire suppression systems where we can, and use the replacement fluorine-free foam only where necessary to protect the safety of our personnel and mission critical assets.

Conclusion

The Marine Corps' significant transition in how it is organized, trained, and equipped, to meet current and evolving threats from our adversaries, cannot be accomplished without Congressional support. The foundation of these efforts starts at home. Our Barracks 2030 initiative is instrumental in improving the quality of life of our Marines, while improving the quality of family housing and childcare facilities are important for Marines and their families. Evolving threats demand evolving capabilities and improved resilience, and your Marines are ready for the challenge. The Marine Corps will continue to modernize our infrastructure to ensure we are postured to support our Nation's interests. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and for your oversight, input, and support as we make the necessary changes to best position the Marine Corps for mission accomplishment. I look forward to working with you to improve the lives of our Marines and to maintain the fighting stance of the Marine Corps to be ready at a moment's notice.