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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
MAJOR GENERAL BRADLEY S. JAMES
COMMANDER, MARINE FORCES RESERVE
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
RESERVE DUTY STATUS REFORM
ON
27 MARCH 2019

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Major General Bradley S. James

In November 2018, Major General Bradley S. James assumed the duties of acting Commander of Marine Forces Reserve.

Major General Bradley S. James is a native of Austell, Georgia and a graduate of Kennesaw State University. After graduating from flight training in 1988, he served at Cherry Point, NC with VMGRT-253 and VMGR-252. He also served at the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Headquarters as the Air Transport Coordination Officer.

Captain James joined VMGR-234 in Glenview, Illinois in 1993 and relocated with the squadron to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth in 1994. During this tenure, he served primarily as the Weapons & Tactics Instructor. Major James served as Officer in Charge for KC-130 Detachments for the 24th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units while deployed in Macedonia and Kosovo. In 1999, Major James transferred to MAG-41 Headquarters.

In 2000, he returned to VMGR-234 as the Operations Officer. LtCol James activated in 2002 as the VMGR-234 Detachment "A" Commander and led a combined detachment under the 13th MEU (SOC) during combat operations in Afghanistan.

He deployed in 2003 to Shaik Isa Air Base, Bahrain as 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Advance Party Officer in Charge and Group Commander for the 319th and 384th Air Expeditionary Wings (USAF) in support of I MEF during Operation Iraqi Freedom. LtCol James assumed command of VMGR-452 in 2003 and deployed to Al Asad, Iraq for OIF II-2 supporting Operation Phantom Fury. In May 2006, LtCol James reported to II Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, NC as the Reserve Integration Division Site OIC and Operational Sponsor for the Individual Marine Augment Program.

As a Colonel, he served as the Deputy Group Commander of Marine Aircraft Group 49, Willow Grove, PA, the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing Assistant Wing Commander in New Orleans, LA, Department Head at Reserve Affairs Quantico, VA and Deputy & Executive Assistant to the Deputy Commandant of Plans, Policy, and Operations at the Pentagon.

From 2016-2018, BGen James served as the Commanding General of 4th Marine Aircraft Wing.

He is a graduate of the Air War College, Joint & Combined Warfighting School, Weapons & Tactics Instructor & Senior Watch Officer Courses, Marine Corps University Senior Planners Course, Reserve Component National Security Course, Joint Interagency Multi-planners Course, Senior Joint Info Operations Course, Joint Force Air Component Commander Course and Leading Innovation Energy Applications Course. He has accumulated more than 5000 flight hours in the KC-130 E/F/R/T variants.

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Speier, Ranking Member Kelly, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to discuss reserve duty status reform.

Since our founding in 1775, Marines have answered our Nation's call, faithfully serving the American people and maintaining a standard of military excellence. Your Marine Corps is, and will continue to be, our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. We are warfighters who are ready to rapidly respond to crises around the Globe to ensure the continued security of the American people and to protect the interests that underpin our Nation. Marines will be *always faithful* to the trust which the American people have vested in them.

YOUR RESERVES

Mission first, people always. Marines are the foundation of the Marine Corps. They are the Corps' most critical resource, and always have been. Your Marines are recruited, trained, educated, and retained to win our Nation's battles.

The vast majority of the Marine Corps Selected Reserve's authorized end strength of 38,500 falls under Marine Forces Reserve. The Selected Reserve is composed of Marines in four categories: Selected Marine Corps Reserve Units, Active Reserve, Individual Mobilization Augmentees, and service members in initial training. Embedded with these Marines are over 1,600 Active and Reserve component Sailors who serve critical roles in the operational, medical, dental, and spiritual readiness of our Reserve Force. The success of Marine Forces Reserve would not be possible without continued support from the U.S. Navy.

In addition to the Marines and Sailors of the Selected Reserve, Marine Forces Reserve administratively controls approximately 61,000 Marines who serve in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). Marine Forces Reserve continues to monitor the mobilization viability of these IRR Marines through the use of muster events at multiple locations across the country. These muster events

allow Marine Forces Reserve to ensure these IRR Marines meet the requirements for mobilization. These events also provide the opportunity to address administrative issues, conduct mental health and post-deployment assessments, review Reserve obligations and new opportunities, and meet with Marine Corps recruiters. During the past year, Marine Forces Reserve conducted 31 muster events, met 5,189 IRR Marines, and contacted and screened 52,000 Marines telephonically.

As an integral part of the Total Force, Marine Corps Reserve plays a key role in providing a national security force in readiness. The Marine Corps Reserve's critical capabilities increase the lethality of the Corps and contribute to the competitive advantage with potential adversaries. Over the past year, the Marine Corps Reserve supported Combatant Commanders by providing forces focused on combat operations, crisis prevention, crisis response, and theater security cooperation. Global deployments, along with participation in Service, Joint, and multi-national exercises, develop the depth of experience of the Reserve Force, ensuring the Marine Corps Reserve is ready and responsive to meet Combatant Commanders' requirements for highly trained forces.

In 2018, 2,135 Reserve Marines mobilized supporting 35 operational requirements in each of the 6 geographic combatant commands. Likewise, nearly 14,000 Reservists participated in 76 training exercises, supporting requirements in 41 countries across the globe. Additionally, 754 Reserve Marines volunteered to serve as individual augmentees, providing support to Combatant Commanders and Service Staffs. The demand for Marine Forces Reserve to meet requirements as an operational reserve has increased 263 percent since 2017. We continue to meet the high demand, though it has begun to challenge our readiness to meet strategic requirements. For historical perspective, the Marine Corps deployed 8 reserve formations in 2001, compared to 35 reserve formations in 2018.

DUTY STATUS REFORM

Given the current operational requirements and high demand for the Marine Corps Reserve, it is critical to have an efficient, streamlined approach to accessing, training, deploying, and separating members of the Reserve Component. The current Reserve Component duty status construct fails to keep pace with our modern use of the Reserve Component. It is a complex system that is the result of incremental changes over the years. The current system negatively impacts the Reserve Component and Combatant Commanders' ability to effectively leverage Marine Reserve assets. For example, pay and entitlements differ depending on which of the 27 current mobilization authorities are utilized when orders are issued. This complexity can cause gaps in benefits and concerns for the inequities amongst our Marines.

The Marine Corps has been able to mitigate these pay and personnel challenges through the use of the Marine Corps Total Force System. It is a fully-integrated pay and personnel system and services all Marines, regardless of component or rank. However, even our "gold standard" pay and personnel management and administration system will benefit from a simpler, updated duty status system.

Over the last several years, with the full support of Congress, the Department of Defense began to earnestly address these concerns beginning with the recommendations of the Military Compensation Retirement Modernization Committee in 2015. As a result of these recommendations, the Department has led a sincere and painstaking effort to streamline and modernize mobilizations authorities to address the following challenges:

1. Pay and Benefits Inequities - Under the current system, pay, allowances and benefits differ depending on the type of order a member is issued. As a result, members performing duty for the same mission or requirement may receive different pay and benefits.

2. Disruption in Pay and Benefits - A disruption in pay and benefits can occur within personnel and pay systems when a member transitions from one duty authority to another as required under the current system.

3. Programming and Budgeting - The budgeting process is based on duty authorities and purposes. There is a perception that such justification of requirements complicates the allocation of resources and obscures the understanding of the work and training actually being performed.

4. Accessibility - The specific requirements and restrictions for ordering Reserve Component members to duty make it difficult for operational commanders to access the force. Likewise, when requirements are emergent rather than programmed, accessibility to Reserve component Service members may be limited.

5. Complexity - Multiple authorities produce complex rules and procedures that are highly inefficient, inhibit volunteerism, and increase the difficulty of accessing reservists to perform operational missions. The complexity impacts reservists and operational commanders alike.

Based on these challenges, the Office of Secretary of Defense is seeking to simplify the system for ordering Reserve Component members to duty and address the challenges of the current construct, while retaining the appropriate level of flexibility and accountability. These changes will fundamentally redesign and simplify the current reserve duty status construct. By streamlining the authorities, the DoD can better align benefits across those duty categories to provide consistency,

clarity and continuity for our Marine Corps Reserve Service members and their families, thus reducing the impediments to training and accessing the Reserve Component. The Marine Corps fully supports these efforts.

CONCLUSION

The Marine Corps Reserves provides individual Marines and units to the Active Component as part of the Total Force. We are forward deployed supporting Combatant Commanders' requirements, and participate in multiple exercises at our training centers and around the world. Given the current operational requirements and high demand for the Marine Corps Reserve, it is critical to update the Reserve duty statuses for an efficient, streamlined approach to accessing, training, deploying, and separating members of the Reserve Component. The Marine Corps fully supports DoD efforts to reform Reserve duty status. With your support, we will remain ready to augment, reinforce and sustain the Active Component. Thank you again for the opportunity to present this testimony.