

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

**STATEMENT OF  
LIEUTENANT GENERAL DAVID G. BELLON  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE  
BEFORE  
THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE  
CONCERNING  
THE GUARD AND RESERVE  
ON  
MARCH 3, 2020**

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL RELEASED  
BY THE HOUSE  
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

## **Lieutenant General David G. Bellon**

Lieutenant General Bellon was born in Fort Polk, Louisiana, and raised in St. Louis, Missouri. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1987 and the University of Missouri School of Law in 1990. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1989. Bellon began service as an Infantry Officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. He then served as a Judge Advocate with 1st Force Service Support Group.

In 1997, he left active duty and joined the Selected Marine Corps Reserve serving six years with 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) Battalion in a variety of positions. As a civilian, Bellon founded his own law firm in 1999 located in Oceanside, CA.

After 9/11, he returned to active duty for four combat tours in support of both OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). During OIF I, he served as Operations Officer for 4th LAR with both TASK FORCE TARAWA and TASK FORCE SCORPION. During OIF II, Bellon served as the Intelligence Officer for Regimental Combat Team 1 during its 14 month deployment in and around the City of Al Fallujah, Iraq, participating in both battles for the city. His third OIF tour was in Command of Battalion Task Force 3d Battalion, 23d Marine Regiment, in 2007-2008. The Task Force executed counter-insurgency operations in and around the city of Al Haditha, Iraq.

In 2008, Bellon was selected as the Marine Corps Reserves representative in a full-time student status attending Top Level School at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. While there, he was promoted to Colonel and received subsequent orders for deployment in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Bellon deployed to Afghanistan in September 2009 with the British 6th Division. While in Afghanistan, he served as the Chief of Operations for Southern Afghanistan during NATO's 2010 surge of forces to secure the strategically vital area in and around Kandahar City.

Bellon was promoted to Brigadier General in 2013. His assignments as a General Officer prior to his current billet include Deputy Commander (Mobilization) 1st Marine Expeditionary Force; Deputy Marine Forces Command; Director Reserve Affairs; Commander Marine Forces South; and Director of Strategy, Policy, and Plans (J5) U.S. Southern Command. He was promoted to his current rank and assumed duties as Commander, Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North on 4 September 2019.

## ***Introduction***

Chairman Visclosky, Ranking Member Calvert, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you and provide an overview on the current state of the Marine Corps Reserve.

The United States Marine Corps Reserve stands ready to augment, reinforce, and sustain the Active Component by providing forces for employment across the full spectrum of crisis and global engagement. Over the last year, we have been engaged around the world in theater security cooperation activities and operations, serving side-by-side with our Active Component, and have made tremendous contributions in support of every geographic Combatant Commander. While the Marine Corps Reserve is supporting current service and Combatant Command requirements, we are also participating in the service's efforts to redesign our force and our warfighting capabilities to deter against pacing threats as prescribed by the National Defense Strategy.

I am deeply impressed by the professionalism, competence, and dedication of our Reserve Marines. Like their Active Component counterparts, they serve selflessly to protect our great Nation. I am inspired by the way they balance family responsibilities, civilian careers, and military service. They do so with humility, without fanfare, and with a sense of pride and dedication that is consistent with the great sacrifices of Marines from every generation. Without a doubt, the success of the Marine Corps hinges on the quality of our Marines.

## ***A Total Force***

As an integral part of the Total Force, the Marine Corps Reserve plays a key role in providing that national security force in readiness. 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 relevant, ready, and responsive to meet Combatant Commanders' requirements.

On average in 2019, the Marine Corps Reserve provided approximately 11 percent of the Total Force's forward deployed forces for approximately 5 percent of the Marine Corps' budget. In 2019, 2,624 Reserve Marines mobilized supporting 45 operational requirements in each of the six geographic Combatant Commands. This is approximately a 19 percent increase in personnel deployed and 22 percent increase in operational requirements compared to 2018. Likewise, 9,944 Reservists participated in 43 training exercises, supporting requirements in 21 countries across the globe. The Marine Corps Reserve filled 59 percent of the total service individual augment requirements. We continue to meet the increased demand for use as an operational reserve, though this has begun to challenge readiness to meet strategic requirements.

In 2020, the Marine Corps Reserve will continue to support the Combatant Commanders by mobilizing in excess of 800 Reservists supporting approximately 27 formations. Over the course of 2020, more than 8,000 Marines will support theater-specific exercises, security cooperation events, and "standing" operations across every Combatant Command. These operations and exercises greatly increase the Reserve Component's interoperability with the Active Component, Joint Forces, our allies, and coalition partners.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to provide daily support to Combatant Commanders in a wide range of roles that include multi-national exercises, such as Dynamic Front 20 in Latvia, New Horizons 20 in South America, and Maple Resolve 20 in Canada. I anticipate the Marine Corps Reserve will continue to deploy across the globe and to integrate with the Active Component in support of high-priority Combatant Commander requirements for the foreseeable future. In

2019, 23 of the 45 formations activated were deployed to the CENTCOM AOR and in 2020, the Marine Corps Reserve will activate an additional eight Reserve formations that will deploy to the CENTCOM AOR. In 2020, the Marine Corps Reserve has also continued to deploy reconnaissance, assault amphibian, and combat engineer units to the Indo-Pacific Area of Responsibility in support of III Marine Expeditionary Force's requirements in Okinawa, Japan.

In addition, the Marine Corps Reserve has recently increased its participation in the Department of Defense's Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) program. This program provides military training opportunity, exclusive to the United States and its territories, which delivers joint training opportunities to increase deployment readiness. Simultaneously, IRT provides key services (health care, construction, transportation, and cybersecurity) with lasting benefits for our American communities. The IRT program has allowed our units to increase deployment readiness by training to mission essential tasks, while also training with their counterparts from different services and making tangible, meaningful impacts in their communities. Utilizing \$1 million from the Marine Corps and \$780,000 from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Marine Corps Reserve supported 7 exercises, a 50% increase from 2018. Examples include diverse construction-training that supported the Girl Scouts at Camp Paumalu, Hawaii; relocating the Village of Newtok, Alaska; and repairing a remote airfield in California. With your continued support of these efforts, we look to expand to 12 exercises that will include construction, medical, and cybersecurity efforts.

In addition to participating in operational requirements across the globe, the Marine Corps Reserve supports the Total Force by dutifully executing the sensitive and crucial mission of providing casualty assistance to the families of our fallen Marines. There is no responsibility that we treat with higher regard than the solemn mission of providing casualty assistance. Inspector-

Instructor and Reserve Site Support Staffs are geographically positioned to accomplish the vast majority of Marine Corps casualty assistance calls and are trained to provide compassionate and thorough assistance to families. Indeed, the majority of Marine Corps casualty notifications and follow-on assistance calls to the next of kin are made by our Marines. During Calendar Year (CY) 2019, our Inspector-Instructor and Reserve Site Support staffs performed 95 percent of the casualty calls performed by the Marine Corps.

The professionalism and compassion of our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) continues well beyond the initial notification. We ensure that our CACOs are well trained, equipped, and supported by all levels of command through the combination of in-person and online training. Once assigned, the CACO serves as the family's central point of contact and coordinates with funeral homes, government agencies, and other organizations. They assist family members with planning the return and final resting place of their Marine and ensure the filing of appropriate documents so families receive all benefits they are entitled. In many cases, our CACOs provide a long-lasting bridge between the Marine Corps and the grieving family.

Additionally, the Marine Corps Reserve units and personnel provide significant support in the form of military funeral honors for our veterans. The Marine Corps Reserve performed 20,416 military funeral honors which represented 93 percent of all funeral honors rendered by the Marine Corps during 2019. As with casualty assistance, we place enormous emphasis on providing timely, compassionate, and professionally executed military funeral honors. Although this comes with a cost to readiness, some Marine Corps Reserve units are executing in excess of 500 funerals per year.

Finally, the Marine Corps Reserve functions as the greatest link between the Marine Corps

and communities across the Nation. We are the face of the Marine Corps to the majority of the American public. With Reserve units located across the country, the Marine Corps Reserve is uniquely positioned to interact with the American public and communicate the Marine Corps story to our fellow citizens; most of whom have little or no contact with the Marine Corps. Last year, Marine Corps Reserve personnel and units conducted more than 500 local and regional public engagement and community relations events across the country.

### ***Personnel***

Marines, Sailors, and our civilian Marines are the foundation of all that we do. The resources we dedicate to sustaining and developing this foundation directly contributes to the success of our institution. The vast majority of the Marine Corps Selected Reserve's authorized end strength of 38,500 falls under the Marine Corps 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 1,641 Active and Reserve component Sailors who serve critical roles in the operational, medical, dental, and spiritual readiness of our Reserve Force. The success of the Marine Corps Reserve would not be possible without continued support from the U.S. Navy.

In addition to the Marines and Sailors of the Selected Reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve administratively controls approximately 61,000 Marines who serve in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). The Marine Corps 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 the Marine Corps 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, to review Reserve obligations and new opportunities, and to meet with Marine Corps recruiters. During the past year the Marine Corps Reserve conducted 25 muster events and met 5,667 IRR Marines. In addition to the musters, the Marine Corps Reserve contacted and screened 48,883 Marines telephonically.

The Marine Corps Reserve strives to retain the very best Marines capable of fulfilling our leadership and operational needs. Marines approaching the end of their current contracts, whether Active or Reserve Component, receive counseling on the tangible and intangible benefits of remaining associated with the Selected Reserve. We educate each transitioning Active Component Marine on opportunities for continued service in the Marine Corps Reserve through the Marine Corps' transition assistance and educational outreach programs.

Recruiting, retaining, and properly aligning high quality Marines is essential to the Marine Corps' ability to answer the call as the Nation's Force in Readiness. Monetary incentive programs have proven to be critical enablers for the Marine Corps Reserve's high levels of affiliation, retention, and alignment. While incentives such as occupational specialty retraining and targeted bonus payments directly support retention, the authorization for inactive duty travel reimbursement of up to \$500 of actual costs for Marines who are required travel in excess of 150 miles from their residence to their drill center has proven to be particularly beneficial in ensuring that the each Marine is assigned to an appropriate billet and filling a valid requirement. In FY19, your support of incentive programs enabled us to maintain our end strength at 99.7 percent of total authorization, while ensuring over 87 percent of our Marines were serving in billets commensurate with their rank and Military Occupational Specialty. Going forward, I ask for your continued support of these incentives as they are vital to our ability to retain and most advantageously utilize the Corps' most precious asset – the individual Marine.

## *Equipment*

Reserve Component units remain highly interoperable with their Active Component counterparts due to the Marine Corps' Total Force approach to equipment fielding and management. Reserve Component Forces are manned, trained, and equipped to standards that facilitate the seamless integrated employment of forces to meet Combatant Commander requirements. Our reserve units and personnel continue to be in high demand, with a similar number of exercises, missions, and operations scheduled this year, as executed last fiscal year.

This high operational tempo places a stress on our ability to maintain our equipment and replenish our deficiencies, however. Most disconcerting is our individual combat equipment deficiencies, specifically ballistic protection and load-bearing equipment. In the event of a large-scale wartime mobilization, to include any sizable call-up of the Individual Ready Reserve, individual combat equipment deficiencies may become a strategic risk to mission.

With regard to maintenance readiness, the Marine Corps Reserve has mitigated risk for many years in two ways. First, risk is mitigated by refining units' Training Allowances, which is that portion of a unit's full Table of Equipment located at Reserve Training Centers. Our goal is to balance the amount of equipment necessary to conduct training with the amount of equipment that can be maintained within personnel, facility, and fiscal constraints. Second, risk is mitigated by leveraging Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) dollars to buy mobile maintenance support teams that augment the limited organic maintenance capacity. Congressional support for the Marine Corps Reserve FY 2021 President's budget request within the National Defense Authorization Act, to include OCO, is paramount to our continued success in sustaining our

equipment and maintenance readiness.

Upcoming fielding of the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) and Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) will provide the Reserve Component with the latest generation of combat equipment. Additionally, fielding of programs such as the Ground/Air Task Oriented Radar (G/ATOR) and the Ground Weapons Locating Radar (GWLR) will enhance our ability to fight and win on the modern battlefield. The top procurement priority of the Marine Corps Reserve is the KC-130J Super Hercules. The Marine Corps Reserve has been fielded 11 of 28 aircraft and will not be fully fielded until 2024. This extended fielding timeline forces the Reserve Component to simultaneously operate the KC-130J and the legacy KC-130T aircraft until 1st Quarter, FY22. These two aircraft have vastly different logistics, maintenance, and aircrew requirements, resulting in an increased outlay of resources to maintain the readiness of the Reserve Component KC-130 Squadrons.

### ***Training***

Each year and typically in the summer, the Marine Corps Reserve participates in a number of training exercises both within the United States and overseas to improve combat readiness and enhance our ability rapidly activate and integrate with the Active Component. The service-level Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) is conducted aboard Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California. ITX improves combat readiness, efficiency in Total Force integration, and enables more rapid activation response times at the battalion and squadron level. The exercise consists of two infantry battalions conducting live-fire and maneuver exercises, along with other elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. This is one of the few opportunities that Reserve ground, aviation, and logistics combat elements, under the command of a regimental headquarters, are able to come together and synchronize all warfighting actions to operate as a

Marine Air-Ground Task Force under live fire and maneuver conditions.

The Reserves also took part in a CMC directed Force on Force (FoF) MAGTF Warfighting Exercise (MWX), the first of its kind, designed to challenge the MAGTF against a peer adversary in a free-play environment. Serving as a part of the Adversary Force (ADFOR) with Higher Command responsibilities, the Division employed a Scout Platoon from 4th Tanks that participated in Unit Level Training, Collective Training and MWS.

Additionally in 2019 and in concert with Canadian Allies, Reserve Marines and Sailors participated in Sentinel Edge Vigilant Shield and conducted Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) from Home Training Center (HTC) to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cold Lake, AB to generate and sustain sorties. The exercise demonstrated Long Range Insertion of MV-22s, employment of HIMARS Rapid Infiltration and expeditionary operations with fixed and rotary wing integration.

To preserve fiscal and materiel resources, the Marine Corps Reserve uses training simulators wherever and whenever possible. Reserve units employ Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainers (ISMTs) to maintain combat marksmanship skills and to maximize the use of their most precious resource, time. The ISMTs enable onsite training and eliminate long distance travel to remote DoD areas. Additionally, units capitalize on non-traditional training methods such as online training to mitigate the limitation of 38 training days per fiscal year to complete mission essential tasks and all required DoD and Service annual training requirements. Expanding the use of simulators and online training enhances readiness and enables the Reserve Component to maximize limited training time during drill weekends.

### ***Facilities***

The Marine Corps Reserve occupies facilities in 47 states, the District of Columbia, and the

Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. These facilities include 27 owned and 131 tenant Reserve Training Centers, three family housing sites, one permanent barracks, and one General Officer Quarters. Although some sites are located on major DoD installations, most are situated within civilian communities, ranging from neighborhoods to industrial and commercial districts. We continue to improve the maintenance and security of our facilities to ensure the safety of our Marines and Sailors and to provide an effective training and mobilization location.

Fifty-seven percent of the facilities budget supports the sustainment and maintenance of existing infrastructure and day-to-day operating costs. We have improved the overall readiness of our facilities inventory through the Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) support program and maximized the impact of our budget through divestiture and demolition of excess footprint.

The Marine Corps' Military Construction, Navy Reserve (MCNR) program focuses on providing construction for new and enduring capabilities, as well as recapitalization of our aging facilities. The construction provided by the annual authorization and appropriation of MCNR funding is an important factor in advancing our facilities support mission as we optimize our force laydown throughout the nation. Continued support for our MCNR request is essential as we divest of failing infrastructure and modernize capabilities.

Of most critical importance is the safety of our Marines and Sailors. We have ongoing efforts to improve overall force protection at all of our sites by working with our service partners and the National Guard for joint occupied facilities. Numerous protection assessments and security engineering reports have been conducted at our facilities to assist and develop designs to mitigate protection concerns, specifically physical security. These assessments identify requirements and serve to prioritize enhancements to improve facility security for our Marines and

Sailors.

The combined effects of our targeted consolidation, FSRM, and MCNR programs have steadily reduced the number of inadequate or substandard Reserve Training Centers and enabled better support to the Force. As our infrastructure ages, however, our operating costs have steadily increased. In addition, service level efforts to modernize our force and its infrastructure have also increased costs. Continued support to our annual funding request for our facilities program will enable us to improve the overall physical infrastructure that reinforces the operational readiness of our units.

### ***Health Services***

The Marine Corps Reserve Health Service Support (HSS) ensures the health and wellness of the Reserve Marines and Sailors remains at the forefront. We continue to improve medical readiness through a robust Individual Medical Readiness (IMR) Program within the Marine Corps Reserve and by accurate monitoring, identification, and supervision of the unit-level actions necessary to attain readiness goals. Additionally, our Health Services personnel participate in Force Readiness Assistance & Assessment Program (FRAAP) inspections and audits which provide oversight at the unit level and the ability to monitor policy adherence and readiness.

The Reserve Health Readiness Program (RHRP) greatly increased overall medical and dental readiness throughout the Force. This program provides support using contracted civilian medical and dental providers to work with units that do not have organic medical or dental support personnel or are not supported by a military treatment facility. During FY 2019, the RHRP performed 17,769 Periodic Health Assessments (PHAs), 205 Post-Deployment Health Re-Assessments (PDHRAs), 172 Pre-Deployment Health Assessment (PreDHA) Events, 260 Audiological examinations, and 366 Dental Events.

Between deployments, our Health Services priority is to work toward achieving the DoD's goal of a 90 percent medically ready force. During FY 2019, our individual medical and dental readiness rates were 77.6 percent and 86 percent, respectively. The Marine Corps Reserve units rely heavily on RHRP to maintain our medical and dental readiness. Continued support of this program is imperative for maintaining readiness.

### ***Behavioral Health***

In addition to RHRP, the Marine Corps Reserve has implemented a robust behavioral health program, which includes Combat Operational Stress Control, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse Prevention and Family Advocacy programs. Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) training continues to be conducted at all levels and is provided during pre-deployment training to service members deploying for more than 90 days and all commands in garrison. This training provides the requisite knowledge, skills, and tools needed to assist commanders in preventing, identifying, and managing combat and operational stress concerns as early as possible. Each of these tools support the commander in building unit strength, resilience, and readiness as well as keeping Marines in the fight.

The Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) continues to support behavioral health through various independent contracted programs, such as the PDHRA and the Psychological Health Outreach Program (PHOP). The PDHRA places an emphasis on identifying physical, behavioral, and mental health concerns that may have emerged since returning from deployment. The PHOP addresses both post-deployment behavioral health concerns and crisis-related interventions by providing our Marines and Sailors access to local resources through a network of contracted behavioral health programs. These programs are critical to maintaining a resilient force by providing a pathway for Marines, Sailors, and families to seek behavioral health

assistance.

Signs of operational and combat stress may manifest long after a service member returns home from deployment. This delayed onset of symptoms presents unique challenges to Reserve Marines who may be detached from vital medical care and the daily support network inherent in active duty Marine Corps units. Encouraging Marines to recognize and communicate mental health issues is a pervasive challenge facing our commanders. We address the stigma associated with mental health care through key programs, such as the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program (YRRP) and OSCAR. Further, we market all of our behavioral health initiatives and programs through our Marine Corps Reserve portal website and during key Marine Corps forums throughout the year. Your continued support of our behavioral health programs is greatly appreciated.

The Marine Corps Reserve Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) continues to focus on reducing illegal drug use and prescription drug misuse within the Reserve community. The Marine Corps Reserve relies profoundly on its drug-testing program, which acts as a powerful deterrent against drug use. Each Reserve unit conducts monthly drug testing to screen our Reserve Marines for drugs as well as breathalyzer testing to screen for alcohol use while in a duty status. The DDRP staff provides quarterly and on demand education and awareness training on the dangers of misusing and abusing prescription drugs as well as information on the proper disposal of old, unused, and outdated medications. Additionally, the DDRP increases leaders' awareness on the dangers of abusing prescription drugs through annual substance abuse supervisory level training.

We recognize that the factors contributing to suicide are numerous and complex. Risk factors can include depression, family history of suicide, and substance abuse. Common precipitating stressors include relationship challenges and legal, financial, and disciplinary

problems. Typical warning signs may include talking about suicide and expressing hopelessness. We mitigate these factors using a multi-dimensional and multi-level approach. Small unit leadership is encouraged to foster a sense of belonging for Marines. Commanders employ responsible messaging to discourage suicide related behavior and conduct Force Preservation Councils to identify risk factors and stressors in order to provide a course of action to mitigate destructive behavior. Once a possible behavioral health issue has been identified, the command implements intervention and reintegration strategies to lower risks, encourage Marines to ask for help when needed, and restrict access to lethal means (firearms, etc.) for those at risk for suicide. In keeping with “Protect what you’ve earned” messaging, Marines are taught coping skills. A culture shift is taking place to show that it is a sign of strength to seek/ask for help early, when problems are most manageable. Finally, all Marines are taught to recognize suicide warning signs, to get help for their fellow Marines, and that we never leave a fellow Marine behind.

The PDHRA program specifically focuses on identifying issues that emerge after our Marines and Sailors have returned home from deployment. The PHOP secures behavioral health screenings, psychological treatment referrals, and provides essential follow-up treatment to ensure our service members’ behavioral health needs are met.

Similarly, Care Management Teams focus on support through the Department of Veterans Affairs Transition Care Management Program. Our Marines are assigned a Care Manager who oversees the referrals and follow-on care of the Reserve Marine’s individual health care needs. Marine Intercept Program (MIP) is an evidence-informed targeted intervention for service members who have had an identified suicide ideation or suicide attempt. MIP includes a series of telephonic voluntary caring contacts in which a counselor reaches out to the Marine and assesses them for risk, encourages the use of a safety plan, and identifies and addresses any barriers to

services. The MIP counselors then incorporate these caring contacts into the counseling process. These services are also provided to our Reserve Marines through the PHOP.

Our Marines have proven their strength in enduring unique issues, such as frequent moves, deployments, and separations from loved ones. To help with these struggles, our Marines, Sailors, and family members are able to access behavioral health programs at Marine Corps installations through Marine Corps Community Service (MCCS) while on active-duty orders. The Marine Corps DSTRESS Line is another resource available to all Reserve Marines and family members regardless of duty status. DSTRESS is a 24/7/365, Marine-specific anonymous crisis call and support center that provides phone, chat, and video-teleconferencing for non-medical, short-term, solution-focused counseling. Additionally, we continue to be supportive of Military OneSource, which provides confidential, non-medical counseling, resources, and support to service members and their families anywhere in the world.

### ***Sexual Assault Prevention & Response***

Sexual assault remains a complex and challenging matter that is often interrelated with other readiness challenges, behavioral health issues, and destructive behaviors. For the Marine Corps Reserve, addressing the continuum of destructive behaviors and fostering a culture of dignity and respect are top priorities toward the goal of reducing and ultimately eliminating sexual assault within our ranks. To accomplish this goal, we execute a Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR) with seven full-time employees who provide supportive services across our geographically-dispersed force. In addition to the Force-level Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), each Major Subordinate Command within the Marine Corps Reserve has a SARC who serves as a Special Staff Officer to their Commanding General and manages their SAPR Program from our headquarters in New Orleans. Together with the SARCs, two

professional civilian victim advocates provide support to our Marines, Sailors and their families by traveling to provide in-person advocacy services, training, and unit-specific program guidance as needed. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to work diligently to improve our victim response, outreach, and prevention.

Our SAPR staff trains up to 160 Victim Advocates each year at our headquarters in New Orleans. After completing our 40-hour training course, these potential Victim Advocates submit an application for credentialing through the DoD's Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program. Once credentialed, the advocates are officially appointed by their commanders to serve at their respective Reserve Training Centers. In total, the Marine Corps Reserve maintains an active roster of more than 250 Victim Advocates across the country.

Our SAPR personnel respond to Marines, Sailors, and adult dependents who request support services related to a report of sexual assault. Our SARCs and SAPR Victim Advocates screen for potential safety issues and develop individualized safety plans as needed. They offer advocacy services and referrals and maintain a data base of nationwide resources for victims of sexual assault who may not reside on or near a military installation.

The Marine Corps Reserve maintains a Sexual Assault Support Line that is manned by the professional SAPR staff 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The Marine Corps Reserve also actively publicizes the DoD Safe Helpline which is an additional resource that offers crisis support services for members of the DoD community. The DoD Safe Helpline is available 24/7 worldwide with "click.call.text" user options and can be used anonymously for confidential support.

Our prevention strategy is holistic and integrated with other programs that work toward the eradication effort, such as the Equal Opportunity Program, Deployment Resiliency, Safety, Spiritual Readiness Initiatives, and Behavioral Health. The Marine Corps Reserve continues to set

the example of discipline and respect by supporting a zero-tolerance policy related to assault and a retaliation-free command climate. Leaders at every level are encouraged to actively engage with our Marines and Sailors to learn what can be done to further support a positive environment that is free from attitudes and behaviors that are incompatible with our core values. All Marines and Sailors receive SAPR training every year to ensure widespread knowledge about our program to include prevention and response.

### *Quality of Life*

The Marine Corps Reserve remains dedicated to ensuring an appropriate balance and effective performance of our quality of life programs, which are designed to help all Marines, Sailors and their families, whether they are deployed or on the home front. Our force is dispersed throughout the country and away from traditional brick and mortar support resources available at our major bases and stations. Taking care of our Marines and their families is a key component to overall readiness and combat effectiveness. In addition to personnel, equipment, training, and facilities, we focus on other important aspects of readiness, such as family strength, education, professional development, financial health, transition assistance, and behavioral health. Our Deployment Readiness Coordinators, along with MCCA, help ensure our families get the support they need before, during and after our Marines deploy. MCCA and our Deployment Readiness Coordinators provide a vital link to ensure support reaches those who need it.

The Marine Corps Reserve tracks the submission of medical service treatment records to ensure Reserve Component Marines receive timely access to Department of Veterans' Affairs health care services. Working across all 158 sites, we aggressively target our performance for submission timeliness to ensure our Marines are able to submit timely disability benefit claims.

Marine and Family Readiness Programs remain flexible, constantly adjusting to meet the

needs of our geographically dispersed Marines and their families. A resilient force is primarily achieved by providing robust, relevant, and standardized training to our commanders, Family Readiness Command Teams, Marines, and their families. Our Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) program enhances readiness and maintains resiliency through proactive, non-clinical, preventative education, professional training, and community building support to service members and their families throughout mission, life, and career events. MCFTB training events are delivered both, in person, and through interactive webinars, at our 158 sites. During FY 2019, the Marine Corps Reserve conducted 162 training events at which 10,422 Marines and family members received valuable information to prepare for and thrive during deployments and to achieve a positive post-deployment reintegration experience.

A key component to our quality of life and resiliency is the religious ministry support provided by 222 Religious Ministry Team (RMT) members. As Uniformed Members, RMTs support Marines and their families across the full spectrum of military life including combat and humanitarian engagements. Currently, 125 RMT personnel are embedded in 46 Marine Corps Reserve units and 97 are integrated in Navy Reserve religious support units that directly support Active Component Marine Corps units. This support includes developing the Commandant's spiritual readiness initiatives, providing divine services across the spectrum of faith communities, advising on spiritual and ethical matters, and delivering pastoral care in a safe, confidential environment. Chaplain support is provided in numerous Funeral Honor Details for our Marines, Sailors, and families. The Chaplains provide spiritual guidance at the service and follow on care as needed, providing a source of healing for family members.

One signature program is the Chaplain Religious Enrichment Development Operations (CREDO) program. The CREDO program provides transformational workshops: the Marriage

Enrichment Retreat (MER), the Personal Resiliency Retreat (PRR), and the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) class. The MER and PRR equip Marines, Sailors, and their families with practical relationship and communication tools that strengthen marriages and individual resilience. The PRRs help Marines and Sailors set personal goals, make good decisions, deal with stress, and live lives with greater purpose and satisfaction. During FY 2019, fourteen MERs and one PRR were conducted with 665 participants. In response to suicidal events, the CREDO Program has been offering ASIST training. ASIST trains individuals on how to intervene in suicidal ideations and keep individuals safe until they can receive follow on care. 118 personnel have been trained at 8 ASIST classes since March 2019, providing commands with resources to offer positive outcomes in unit readiness.

The Marine Corps emphasizes the importance of readiness for Marines and family members in many areas of life. Personal and Professional Development programs continue to provide training and educational resources to our Marines, Sailors, and their families in a variety of areas. One key program that assists commands, Marines, and family members with readiness is the Command Financial Specialist Program (CFS). The CFS provides assistance on a wide array of financial issues to include budgeting, savings, investing, insurance, Survivor Benefit Program (SBP), Veteran benefits, retirement, and financial counseling to all members of our dispersed forces.

Our Transition Readiness Program emphasizes a proactive approach that enables Marines to formulate effective post-transition entrepreneurship, employment, and educational goals. A virtual transition readiness seminar remains available for Reserve Marines and Sailors that are unable to travel to attend an installation-based transition course. The Marine for Life Network links our Marines to employment, education, and community resources in their home town areas to

support their overall life goals. Tutor.com offers our children access to 24/7 no-cost, live tutoring services for K-12 students. Our Marines are provided with remote access to language courses through Mango Languages. This program supports over 70 languages to include English as a Second Language (ESL). Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course helps Marines build math and verbal skills to excel on the job, pass an exam, and advance in their career or continued education.

Our Semper Fit program continues to be fully engaged in partnering with our bases and stations to provide fitness education activities that promote physical and mental readiness, develop healthy positive self-esteem, and develop healthy lifestyles. The High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) program focuses on physical resiliency, combat readiness, and injury prevention and provides hands-on, science-based strength and conditioning courses and online physical fitness tools to include instruction on injury prevention, nutrition, and weight management. Our Marines' and Sailors' quality of life is also enhanced through team building and esprit de corps activities, such as unit outings and participation in competitive events. These programs are crucial to unit cohesion and camaraderie.

The Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program is an invaluable part of our resiliency efforts. Since its inception in 2010, we have held more than 900 training events for more than 49,000 Marines, Sailors, and family members. In FY 2019, we conducted 19 events with 2304 participants.

Our Marines, Sailors, and their families, who sacrifice so much for our Nation's defense, should not be asked to sacrifice quality of life. We remain a steadfast advocate for flexible Family Programs and Services that evolve and adapt to the changing needs of our Marines, Sailors, and

their families. The combined effect of these programs and services are critical to the readiness and retention of our Marines, Sailors, and their families, and your continued support is greatly appreciated.

### ***Supporting our Wounded, Ill, or Injured Marines and their Families***

The Marine Corps ensures the availability of full spectrum care to all wounded, ill, or injured (WII) service members, whether they are Active or Reserve, through the Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR). The Marine Corps Reserve ensures Reserve Marines' unique challenges are addressed through a WWR Liaison Officer who provides subject matter expertise and special coordination with the WWR staff.

The WWR staff includes the Reserve Medical Entitlements Determinations Section, which maintains specific oversight of all Reservists requiring medical care for service-incurred and duty-limiting medical conditions. Reservists facing complex care and recovery needs have access to WWR's network of 45 Recovery Care Coordinators who provide one-on-one transition support and resource identification for WII Reservists and families often living long distances from military installations. WWR also has medical advocates at the regimental staff who are available to assist Reservists in need of medical care coordination and advocacy. District Injured Support Coordinators dispersed throughout the country also coordinate with Reserve units to ensure we keep faith with all Marines.

The Marine Corps Reserve will not forget the sacrifices our Marines have made for this great Nation and we will continue to work with the WWR to establish resources and programs that address the unique and ongoing needs of our Reserve population.

### ***Conclusion***

The Marine Corps Reserve is manned, trained and equipped to provide individual Marines and units to the Active Component as part of the Total Force. We are forward deployed supporting Combatant Commanders' requirements, participating in multiple exercises at our training centers and around the world, and often the face of the Marine Corps to our local communities. Along with our Active Component, we are focused on force design, readiness and manpower to maintain and enhance our ability to increase the capacity of the Service's ability to deter against pacing threats. Given a worthy mission and a clear signal that their individual contributions are valued by the service, your Reserve Marine will continue to answer their "irrational call to service." With your continued support, we will remain ready to augment, reinforce and sustain the Active Component. Semper Fidelis!