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**STATEMENT OF  
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SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND  
RELATED AGENCIES  
ON  
25 FEBRUARY 2015**

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OPENING

Chairman Dent, Ranking Member Bishop, and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide you with an update on the commitment of the Marine Corps to our Marines and their families. Chairman Dent, congratulations on your appointment as Chairman of this important Subcommittee that provides for our Service Members, their families, and veterans.

It is a privilege to sit in front of you today as the eighteenth Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. It is an honor that the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Dunford, chose me to serve as his highest ranking senior enlisted advisor. My focus will be on mission accomplishment and taking care of Marines and their families. I look forward to working with such a great leader in the coming years, leading our Marines through any endeavor that Congress and the American people ask of us.

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***UPDATE ON MARINE CORPS AROUND THE WORLD***

As we continue to drawdown and reduce end strength, the Marine Corps continues to deploy across the world to support those in need, assist in training, and participate in exercises to support our partners and allies in times of need, build partner capacity, and assure access to the global commons. In Calendar Year 2014, the Marine Corps conducted over 30 amphibious operations, 300 theater security cooperation events, and participated in over 130 exercises. Your Marines in Afghanistan concluded six years of sustained combat operations while building the Afghan National Security Force's capabilities under Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). Your Marines supported Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) by reinforcing the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, enhancing the Iraqi Security Forces' combat capabilities, and conducting humanitarian assistance missions. Additionally, your Marines also conducted numerous kinetic strikes in Syria and Iraq

24 to degrade, disrupt, and defeat ISIL and the Khorasan Group. The 13<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>  
25 Marine Expeditionary Units deployed in Fiscal Year 2014 providing operational flexibility and  
26 responsiveness to the geographic combatant commanders for crisis response operations while  
27 support numerous bi-lateral and multi-national exercises globally. Other Marine Corps  
28 operations included, but are not limited to:

- 29 • Operation Onward Liberty, which continued the maturation and professional  
30 development of the Armed Forces of Liberia.
- 31 • Georgia Deployment Program, which assisted in organizing, training, equipping,  
32 deploying and redeploying three Georgian Infantry Battalions to conduct force protection  
33 and Quick Reaction Force missions in support of the Resolute Support Mission in  
34 Afghanistan.
- 35 • Sixteen embassy reinforcement missions were executed by the Marine Security Guard  
36 Augmentation Unit to nine countries around the world. The Marine Security Guard  
37 Augmentation Unit also supported thirteen VIP Presidential/Vice Presidential/Secretary  
38 of State security missions in twelve countries.
- 39 • Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-  
40 AF) forward deployed to the USAFRICOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) in response to  
41 a broad range of military operations on the continent of Africa. SPMAGTF-CR-AF  
42 provided an infantry Company as a crisis response capability to Monrovia, Liberia to  
43 support the U.S. military's response to the Ebola crisis in West Africa as part of  
44 Operation United Assistance.

45 • Additionally, SPMAGTF-CR provided support to Operation OAKEN SONNET  
46 contingency operations in the South Sudan and executed Operation OAKEN LOTUS –  
47 the military assisted departure of U.S. personnel from the U.S. U.S. Embassy and Annex  
48 in Tripoli, Libya.

49 • The Marine Corps stood up Marine Air-Ground Task Force-Crisis Response-Central  
50 Command (SPMAGTF-CR-CC) on 1 October 2014 as part of the “new normal” in the  
51 U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. SPMAGTF-CR-CC was recently  
52 identified to support Task Force Al Asad as part of Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR)  
53 Build Partner Capacity (BPC) mission.

54 The Marine Corps continues to maintain its operational readiness and commitment to the  
55 nation. While remaining fully engaged globally, the Marine Corps continues to execute its end  
56 strength drawdown. We have accomplished this requirement while sustaining the key tenet of a  
57 measured and responsible drawdown– keeping faith with our Marines by minimizing involuntary  
58 attrition, maximizing voluntary actions, while maintaining the right number of Marines in every  
59 grade.

60 To meet the necessary end strength requirements, during Fiscal Year 2014, the Marine  
61 Corps implemented a Staff Sergeant Retention Board to consider for separation Staff Sergeants  
62 between 15 and 18 years of service who were twice passed for promotion. Following the Fiscal  
63 Year 2014 Gunny Sergeant Selection Board, approximately 230 Staff Sergeants were selected  
64 for separation by the Staff Sergeant Retention Board and all were eligible for early retirement.  
65 The Marine Corps will continue to use available force management authorities, maximizing  
66 voluntary separation programs (i.e., Temporary Early Retirement Authority, Voluntary  
67 Separation Pay, Early Release) while using targeted involuntary measures only for individuals

68 who can retire. At this time, the Marine Corps is not seeking any additional force shaping  
69 authorities.

70 ***MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE IN CURRENT FISCAL ENVIRONMENT***

71 First and foremost, quality of life for Marines starts with their mission. The 2016  
72 President's Budget supports the Marine Corps' steady state operations around the world, forward  
73 presence, and rapid crisis response. For individual Marines, this means ensuring that the right  
74 training and equipment are provided on time to be ready and accomplish their mission. It also  
75 includes providing the right leadership. The Marine Corps continues to shape its permanent end  
76 strength and continue to drawdown from 202,000 Marines. In this year's budget, our end  
77 strength will be 184,000, which will allow for an assessment of the drawdown on our small unit  
78 leaders in the face of continued high operational tempo before continuing our drawdown to  
79 182,000 in Fiscal Year 2017.

80 As we ensure our force mix of NCOs is right sized, we also must be cognizant of the  
81 fiscal challenges ahead while we maintain our readiness to respond at a moment's notice to  
82 crises around the world. Readiness includes our investment in our facilities and our families.  
83 Our Military Construction and infrastructure sustainment programs support our home station  
84 readiness and support future operational needs in the Pacific and new Aviation platforms. Our  
85 Marine and Family Programs exist to support the health and wellness of individuals as well as  
86 the mission readiness requirements of the Corps.

87

88 ***QUALITY FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE***

89 The Marine Corps continues to strive for a prolonged commitment to facilities and  
90 infrastructure that supports both operations and quality of life for our Marines and their families.

91 The Marine Corps' Military Construction budget for 2016 totals \$719 million for 22 projects.  
92 The Marine Corps is investing in a variety of projects, including the Live-Fire Training Range  
93 Complex in Guam and two Bachelor Enlisted Quarters projects, one at Marine Corps Air Station  
94 Kanehoe Bay and one for the Marine Corps Embassy Security Guard program at Quantico, VA  
95 to house additional students as part of the congressionally directed expansion of the program.  
96 Since 2008, the Marine Corps has invested \$2.67 billion in Bachelor Enlisted Quarters (BEQ)  
97 that will provide over 26,000 bed spaces to house single Marines. These facilities will also  
98 include state of the art Wi-Fi service in all facilities worldwide by the end of 2015. We are  
99 striving to have all Marines in the 2+0 standard to include use of existing facilities that can be  
100 upgraded to the new standard and by replacing facilities that have reached the end of their useful  
101 life with new, modern facilities. The Marine Corps has invested almost \$4 billion in quality of  
102 life projects to include BEQs since 2008. Marines have new fitness facilities, Wounded Warrior  
103 care facilities, and other community support facilities, which greatly improve their readiness and  
104 the readiness of their families.  
105 To keep these new buildings in top shape requires investment in our facilities sustainment  
106 programs. The 2016 President's Budget funds 81% of the OSD facilities sustainment  
107 requirement for the Marine Corps. This is an increase above previous years but short of the OSD  
108 goal is to fund 90% of the requirement. We remain aware that taking risk in facilities  
109 sustainment increases the rate of degradation of Marine Corps infrastructure, which could lead to  
110 more costly repair, restoration and new construction in the future. We are taking strategic risk in  
111 infrastructure sustainment to support operational readiness for deployed forces.

112 Our world-wide family housing inventory is 96% privatized, which has improved the  
113 homes in which our families live and providing community support facilities such as community

114 centers, playgrounds, and “green spaces” that help create neighborhoods and a sense of  
115 community for our Marines and their families. Combined with traditional military construction,  
116 privatized housing will continue to build and improve the homes necessary to supplement local  
117 community housing.

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119 ***PRESERVING STRONG FAMILIES***

120 To ensure that our Marines are operationally ready and able to focus on the mission, they  
121 must first be assured that their families are being cared for. That is why we place the highest  
122 priority on our family readiness programs – because family readiness is a critical component of  
123 operational readiness. Whether through exceptional day care, or programs that ensure quality and  
124 continuity of their children’s education across multiple changes in duty station, or resources to  
125 assist with children and dependents with special needs, we ensure that when Marines deploy,  
126 they do so knowing that their families have a wide network of support. The Marine Corps Family  
127 Care programs provide dedicated services that care for and strengthen the military family unit.

- 128 ▪ Our **Children, Youth, and Teen Programs** offer access to safe and quality childcare and  
129 youth recreational activities, serving over 28 thousand children and youths in 2014.
- 130 ▪ The **Exceptional Family Member Program** ensures that Marines who care for family  
131 members with special needs are assigned to locations with ready access to medical care  
132 and educational services. It also provides case management services, training and  
133 education, and access to legal services. As of January of this year, over eight thousand  
134 Marines are enrolled in this program, and over ten thousand family members with special  
135 needs are being served. Furthermore, our Semper Fit Certified Inclusion Fitness Trainer

136 and Kids Included Together initiatives ensure access to recreational activities for  
137 individuals with disabilities.

138 ■ Our **School Liaisons** reduce the impact of the military family’s mobile lifestyle on  
139 school-age children, acting as the single point of contact on their educational matters and  
140 performing outreach to local education agencies to create awareness of their unique  
141 needs. The School Liaison Program thus ensures the uniform treatment of military  
142 children transferring between school districts and states in areas such as graduation  
143 requirements and transfer of course credits.

144 Our Family Readiness programs prepare Marines and their families for the challenging  
145 realities associated with life in the Marine Corps. The Family Readiness Officers staffing our  
146 bases provide Marines and their families with valuable information about events and  
147 programs.

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149 ***STRENGTHENING WARRIORS AND FAMILIES***

150 Our Semper Fit and Recreation facilities receive more than 14 million patron visits  
151 annually, offering a series of comprehensive strength and conditioning programs for our active  
152 duty Marines and their families. Together, the Semper Fit and Recreation programs ensure  
153 quality support for Marines through unit driven programs and services in such areas as fitness,  
154 sports, and aquatics.

155 ■ For instance, the High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) and Aquatic Maximum Power  
156 – Intense Training (AMP-IT) programs optimize physical performance and combat  
157 readiness.



- 158       ▪ Operation Adrenaline Rush (OAR) serves Marines reintegrating after a deployment,  
159            using outdoor activities such as white water rafting, paintball, and rock climbing to help  
160            Marines cope with the lingering stress of combat. Begun as a pilot program in 2012,  
161            OAR has expanded to nine installations and has seen over 17 thousand participants.
- 162       ▪ Additionally, our paramobile units, located at Okinawa, Miramar, Camp Pendleton,  
163            Twenty-Nine Palms, Quantico, Camp Lejeune, and Parris Island, allow those with  
164            mobility impairments to participate in a wide variety of recreational activities.
- 165       ▪ The Community Wellness Program is an integral part of Semper Fit and Recreation,  
166            promoting an environment that supports healthy lifestyles throughout our military  
167            community. It offers educational classes, briefs, and seminars designed to maintain  
168            physical, emotional, and psychological resiliency.

169

***CARING FOR OUR FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN***

171           Caring for the families of our fallen Marines is a sacred duty and the highest fulfillment  
172 of our obligation to take care of our own. The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is  
173 committed to guiding them through this difficult time with the utmost compassion, dignity, and  
174 honor. Our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) assist the next of kin with burial  
175 arrangements, applications for benefits and entitlements, contact with benevolent and  
176 philanthropic organizations, obtaining investigative reports, and other pertinent issues. Specially  
177 trained and supported by teams of subject matter experts, these officers are available to the next  
178 of kin 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

179           Once the work of CACOs is complete, the Marine Corps Long Term Assistance Program  
180 (LTAP), serves as an enduring resource for next of kin, ensuring they receive sustained, quality

181 care from the Marine Corps. LTAP connects survivors with a broad range of services such as  
182 grief and trauma support, peer-based emotional support and, if necessary, crisis response and  
183 intervention.

184 As part of its commitment to leave no Marine behind, the Marine Corps continues to  
185 work to return all of our unaccounted-for personnel from past wars: 3,047 from World War II,  
186 650 from the Korean War; 207 from the Vietnam War; and 1 from the Cold War. We also stand  
187 ready to support the efforts of the new Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in fulfilling the  
188 requirement set forth in the FY 2010 National Defense Authorization Act to complete 200  
189 identifications per year of unaccounted-for service members from past years.

#### 190 ***SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION AND RESPONSE***

191 The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program continues to evolve by  
192 addressing external influences, such as the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year  
193 2014, which directed the establishment of a Special Victims' Counsel (SVC) and enhanced  
194 reporting requirements among other provisions. The goal is to build upon a victim-centric  
195 framework of supportive services, preventative training, and offender accountability initiatives in  
196 place since 2005. With continued support and guidance, we are confident that we will continue  
197 to see improvement.

198 Since 2012, the Marine Corps has spent more than \$16 million on sexual assault  
199 prevention and response and special victim legal training initiatives, which enabled a 300 percent  
200 increase in full-time SAPR personnel "in the field" and a 144 percent increase in headquarters-  
201 level SAPR personnel to better address victims' needs. As a result of these efforts, the Marine  
202 Corps continues to experience an increase in reporting, which demonstrates an increased  
203 willingness to come forward to report and access supportive services. Additionally, the 2014

204 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey for Active Duty Members conducted by the RAND  
205 Corporation identified that approximately 1,000 fewer Marines experienced unwanted sexual  
206 contact in 2014 compared to 2012, which represents both a 30 percent decrease and the closing  
207 of the reporting gap that exists with the number of incidents not reported.

208         We are fully aware that the Marine Corps has a lot of challenges ahead with regard to  
209 SAPR. Given that the Marine Corps is the youngest and most junior of the Services with the  
210 highest rate of unmarried personnel, we have the largest population comprised of these at-risk  
211 demographics. As detailed in the Department of Defense’s Sexual Assault Prevention and  
212 Response Progress Report to the President of the United States released in December 2014, an  
213 unfortunate truth is our female service members are still experiencing the highest rate of sexual  
214 assault. With this in mind, we have focused our recent preventative training efforts, including  
215 our new, interactive, video-based bystander intervention program for junior Marines called “Step  
216 Up.” In turn, we are seeing an increased willingness to intervene in high-risk situations  
217 according to the Fiscal Year 2014 Defense Equal Opportunity Organization Management  
218 Institute (DEOMI) Command Climate Survey. Of note, 86 percent of our junior enlisted  
219 population, who reported observing a situation they believed was or could have led to a sexual  
220 assault, intervened.

221         The Commandant’s Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Campaign Plan continues to  
222 guide the implementation of other large-scale efforts, and has resulted in several best practices,  
223 including a SAPR training continuum that grows along with our Marines, an Ethical Discussion  
224 Group curriculum that extends beyond annual training requirements, and the monthly SAPR  
225 “Snapshot” newsletter. In addition, our internal advocacy survey inspired the new Department

226 of Defense-wide Survivor Experience Survey, and our SAPR 8-Day Briefs were codified by the  
227 National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 for implementation by all Services.

228 The Progress Report to the President also revealed positive trends within the Marine  
229 Corps, such as a continued increase in the number of victims opting to participate in the military  
230 justice process and an increase in the number of completed investigations. These and other  
231 developments demonstrate the progress that the Marine Corps has made in gaining victims' trust,  
232 whose growing confidence in the response system bridges the way to appropriate offender  
233 accountability.

234 Again, our battle against sexual assault in the Corps is far from over, but the way forward  
235 is clear. While we continue with our current implementation plans, the Marine Corps is  
236 convening a SAPR Operational Planning Team that will assess the work of the past three years.  
237 Throughout 2015 and 2016, we will increase our capacity to implement research-based,  
238 preventative programs. Ultimately, we will continue to empower small unit leaders to act as the  
239 catalyst for positive change, taking responsibility for the successes of our SAPR Program.

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### 241 ***BEHAVIORAL HEALTH***

242 The realities of more than a decade of persistent conflict have manifested in the complex  
243 issues facing our Marines today. The prevalence of delayed-onset symptoms means that the  
244 Marine Corps will need to continue its diligence in the prevention, treatment, and early  
245 intervention well into the future. To address this, the Behavioral Health Program facilitates the  
246 collaborative efforts and resources of all behavioral health elements, including Family  
247 Advocacy, Substance Abuse, Community Counseling, Combat Operational Stress Control, and  
248 Suicide Prevention.

249 The Marine Corps continues to better address the suicide problem that plagues our  
250 institution. Each and every loss to suicide is a tragedy that has a far-reaching impact on families,  
251 friends, and our entire community. While we prevent suicide one Marine at a time, we know that  
252 suicide prevention is not a single act. Prevention efforts consist of a series of actions to foster  
253 hope and connection to those at risk. There are usually warning signs that precede a suicide, and  
254 it is important that everyone in our community both knows those signs and how to help someone  
255 seek appropriate care.

### 256 **CARE FOR OUR WOUNDED, ILL AND INJURED**

257 The Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) mission is an enduring commitment to care for  
258 WII Marines in times of war and peace. Since 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment has  
259 coordinated delivery of resources and services to wounded, ill, and injured (WII) Marines,  
260 Sailors directly supporting Marines, and their families. Additionally, the Wounded Warrior  
261 Regiment administers the Marine Corps' federally mandated Recovery Coordination Program,  
262 which seeks to integrate Marines' medical and non-medical care. The regiment employs a  
263 holistic approach to recovery, delivered through four lines of operation: mind, body, spirit, and  
264 family.

265 Recovery care for our Marines must be multi-faceted and enduring because the injuries,  
266 illnesses and repercussions of more than a decade of war are enduring. Often, the initial phase of  
267 recovery addresses physical injuries. Post-traumatic stress (PTS), traumatic brain injury (TBI),  
268 and other psychological health issues require long-term, often acute, care. Many Marines first  
269 seek treatment for these conditions years after returning from combat when they realize they can  
270 no longer face their symptoms alone. Other transition through the Wounded Warrior Regiment  
271 and find themselves periodically reaching back to the Marine family that guided them through

272 their physical recovery, in need of encouragement and focus. The leaders and staff of the  
273 Wounded Warrior Regiment must remain consistently available to offer their unique capabilities  
274 in support of Marines so that an illness or injury does not preclude the realization of a  
275 meaningful career, cause the mental or emotional breakdown of a family, or worse, end a life.

276 Furthermore, approximately one percent of the total Marine force historically has been  
277 referred into the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) for non-combat related illness  
278 and injuries. A shift in Marines supported by the Wounded Warrior Regiment is already in  
279 place. Currently, approximately 60 percent of the Wounded Warrior Regiment's Marines are  
280 ill/injured outside a combat zone. Of the total numbers of Marines in the IDES, only 22 percent  
281 are affiliated with the Wounded Warrior Regiment. Many of the remaining Marines qualify for  
282 and would benefit from the resources and expertise of the Wounded Warrior Regiment as they  
283 prepare for a successful transition to civilian life or return to the force. The development of  
284 efficient and effective programs allows the Wounded Warrior Regiment to continue expanding  
285 its reach in support of Marines.

286 Wounded Warrior Regiment capabilities are longitudinal and offer access points to  
287 Marines at various stages of recovery and transition in an effort to prevent the types of distress  
288 that lead to suicide. First individual assistance is provided to Marines (depending on acuity)  
289 through Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs), who work with Wounded, Ill, and Injured Marines  
290 and their families to develop and execute their Comprehensive Recovery Plans (CRPs). The  
291 RCCs are part of the Marine's command and medical team and provide essential facilitation to  
292 optimize recovery. Throughout the past year and a half, approximately 1,000 Wounded, Ill and  
293 Injured Marines consistently receive RCC support. RCCs support those Marines by providing  
294 outreach and education; facilitating goals established in the CRP, offering referrals to other

295 Wounded Warrior Regiment programs that may assist them; and generally acting as a conduit to  
296 available resources.

297         Second, an additional 700 Marines are receiving assistance from District Injured Support  
298 Coordinators (DISCs). DISCs are geographically dispersed mobilized reserve Marines who  
299 provide assistance to Marines recovering away from military bases, transitioning from active  
300 duty or reserve duty to veteran status, or medically retired to the Temporary Disability Retired  
301 List (TDRL). The Wounded Warrior Regiment may also reach out to DISCs as a quick response  
302 to Marines in desperate need because of unresolved medical issues, lack of meaningful  
303 employment, or other stressors related to transitioning from active duty service.

304         Third, the Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center provides a continuum  
305 of access by conducting an average of 9,500 outreach calls per month to Purple Heart recipients,  
306 Marines on the Temporary Disability Retired List, and Marine Veterans. The call center also  
307 receives calls for assistance on the average of 1,200 per month, available 24/7. The call center  
308 provides information about benefits, enrollment in the VA, and transition services, as well as  
309 access to licensed clinical social workers who will assist Marines calling in emergency  
310 situations. Additionally, the Wounded Warrior Battalion Contact Centers conduct outreach calls  
311 to Wounded, Ill, and Injured Marines on active duty recovering with their parent commands to  
312 ensure their needs are being met. Total monthly calls average 3,500 placed and 400 received.

313         Finally, the Wounded Warrior Regiment leaders and staff develop a unique perspective  
314 on the lives and challenges of Wounded, Ill and Injured Marines, which they will use to improve  
315 the Marines' futures. The Wounded Warrior Regiment will continue to facilitate communication  
316 between the Marine Corps and Department of Veterans Affairs in order to ensure successful

317 transition of individual Marines as well as ongoing progress in service coordination. Wounded  
318 Warrior Regiment transition specialists consistently work to advance job placement programs  
319 and efforts, contributing substantially to the successful recovery of Marines and families.  
320 Through the Wounded Warrior Regiment's survey and analysis capabilities, it is able to  
321 continually assess the needs to the Marines and families it serves and adjust efforts accordingly.

322         The mission of the Wounded Warrior Regiment endures whether in combat or relative  
323 peace, and the goals of the Wounded Warrior Regiment broaden as Marines express needs not  
324 previously understood. The Wounded Warrior Regiment maintains the personnel, expertise, and  
325 commitment essential to caring for Wounded, Ill, and Injured Marines and will continue to stand  
326 ready to support Marines who sacrifice for our Nation.

327                                   ***TRANSITIONING MARINES INTO QUALITY CITIZENS***

328         As our focus is to train civilians and make them Marines, in turn it is important that when  
329 our Marines are ready to leave the Corps that they are ready to move into the civilian sector -  
330 whether that is to find a job, pursue educational and technical opportunities, or start their own  
331 business. In Fiscal Year 2014, the Marine Corps continued to be VOW compliant. In addition,  
332 the Marine Corps launched at the start of Fiscal Year 2015, Credentialing Opportunities Online  
333 (COOL). COOL is a credentialing awareness, information and resource capability for all  
334 Marines to ensure that they have access to civilian credentialing and licensing information  
335 related to their Military Occupational Specialties. These men and women have been trained to  
336 be the best in their specialty and often those positions translate to licensed or certified civilian  
337 jobs. It is imperative that we ensure that Marines are prepared to make that transition by having  
338 their license or certification in place.



339           The Marine Corps believes that it is vital to incorporate a life cycle approach to transition  
340 preparation, ultimately allowing Marines to meet most Career Readiness Standards well in  
341 advance of Transition Readiness Standards. Through the Marine For Life approach, Marines  
342 will gain awareness of career readiness preparations throughout their military career to include  
343 initial interview with their Career Planner at first permanent duty station and the development of  
344 an Individual Transition Plan. On October 1, 2014, the Marine Corps began to implement the  
345 Personal Readiness Seminar, a four-hour seminar that is to be delivered to all incoming Active  
346 Duty Marines upon check-in at their first duty station. This seminar provides an overview of the  
347 Marine For Life cycle model, including Personal and Professional Development Programs and  
348 services and introductory personal finance topics.

349           The Marine Corps continues to support the personal decision of our Marines to seek  
350 additional training and education. Whether this is pursuing an undergraduate, graduate or  
351 technical degree, the Marine Corps works to ensure that Marines have access to the resources  
352 available to them. This may be through helping them prepare for college using the services of  
353 Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES); work toward  
354 apprenticeship using the United States Military Apprenticeship Program; obtain academic credit  
355 from passing College Level Exam Programs (CLEP); or pursue education endeavors successfully  
356 through the Leadership Scholar Program, Montgomery GI Bill, Post 9/11 GI Bill, or tuition  
357 assistance.

358           The Marine Corps has and will continue to deliver all facets of our voluntary education  
359 program. In September 2013 and December 2014, the Marine Corps updated requirements for  
360 the implementation of tuition assistance that successfully ensures that Marines focus on their  
361 Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) requirements and are making informed decisions on the

362 use of their tuition assistance to allow them to meet their personal education and training goals  
363 for when they transition to civilian life.

364 ***CONCLUSION***

365 In closing, we are a proud Corps. We take care of our own -- including our families.  
366 Whether we are discussing recruiting and retaining high quality people, unit readiness,  
367 equipment modernization, infrastructure sustainment, or providing capability and capacity to the  
368 geographical combatant commanders, as our Commandant, General Dunford, stated in his  
369 Planning Guidance, our commitment to our Marines and families is unwavering. I appreciate the  
370 Congress' support to Marines around the world and look forward to working with you to ensure  
371 the Marine Corps remains the Nation's force in readiness.