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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
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HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
RELATED AGENCIES
OF THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
ON
QUALITY OF LIFE
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INTRODUCTION

Chairwoman Wasserman Schultz, Ranking Member Carter and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, as I finish my last tour of duty, I want to thank you for this final opportunity to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps and your Marines and their families' quality of life. The Commandant, General Neller, and I are proud of our Marines and their families enduring commitment to the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of our Corps and our commitment to serve this great nation.

Throughout the last 17 years, our Marines and their families have faced many challenges and made great sacrifices. The Marine Corps continues to maintain its operational readiness and commitment to the Nation, remaining forward-deployed and ready to respond to crises around the Globe. In 2018, your Marines executed approximately 245 operations, nine amphibious operations, 143 theater security cooperation events, and participated in 67 exercises. Currently, 39,800 Marines are deployed, equating to 20 percent of the active duty force, with 36 percent of the operating forces engaged in 63 countries in support of Combatant Commander Requirements.

Our families remain resilient and committed to supporting their Marines and our Corps. We continue to remain faithful to them and the sacrifices they make on a daily basis. Ensuring a high quality of life for our Marines and their families is a top priority for me and General Neller. We thank you for your support and leadership, and remain ever faithful to remaining this Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. The Marine Corps is the most ready force, when the Nation is least ready.

OUR PEOPLE

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. They are smart, resilient, fit, disciplined, and able to overcome adversity. Recruiting high quality youth and retaining those whose past service and future potential continues to make the Corps stronger are our highest priorities; they ensure we remain no better friend and no worse enemy.

End Strength

We thank Congress for the increased end strength authorization to 186,100 in the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act, and for the full-year Defense Appropriation. . During this time, the Marine Corps operating forces has continued to average a deployment-to-dwell ratio of 1:2. This tempo is not sustainable over the long term; our optimal deployment-to-dwell is 1:3. Our Marines want to deploy, serve our Nation, and protect our country from threats overseas, but we owe our Marines and their families the appropriate time to reconnect with family, refocus, learn from their most recent deployment, and train for the next deployment or contingency. In the near-term, we have made the decision to fund modernization and recover our readiness to continue to ensure our Marines are fully equipped for today's conflict. However, we must aim for our optimal 1:3 deployment-to-dwell as the new normal.

Marine Corps Integration

Marine Corps Integration is progressing steadily, evidenced by the fact that female Marines are now represented in all previously-restricted occupational fields. Our Marine Corps Integration Implementation Plan assesses the impacts of integration through unit readiness and lethality, individual Marine health and welfare, and overall Service talent management. To support this outcome, the Marine Corps is developing metrics to monitor retention and other career progression trends that may provide insights on long-term health and readiness of the Marine Corps.

Since 2015, 156 female Marines have earned previously-restricted MOSs through entry level training. In FY18, 64 female Marines earned their MOS and the population of those holding a

previously-restricted MOS increased 74 percent. Additionally, FY18 ended with 407 female Marines serving in previously-restricted units, representing a 55 percent increase from the past fiscal year. Clearly articulated and codified gender-neutral standards have enhance our ability to match the best and most fully qualified Marines with the most suitable military occupations while maintaining the lethality of the Marine Air Ground Task Force. The Marine Corps has not, and will not, lower standards as we continue to place emphasis on combat readiness and effectiveness of the force.

TAKING CARE OF MARINES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Taking care of Marines and their families is a key element of overall readiness and combat effectiveness. The adage “we recruit Marines, we retain families” remains as true today as ever. Our comprehensive package of services seeks the holistic fitness and readiness of our Marines and families – body, mind, spirit, and social.

Behavioral Programs

The Marine Corps Behavioral Programs are an integrated community-based service model that includes Community Counseling, Family Advocacy, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, Suicide Prevention, Substance Abuse, and Combat Operational Stress. We provide world-class prevention and counseling services at each installation, and all of our behavioral programs provide free confidential services offered by licensed counselors. These services are available to individuals, couples, families, and children. During FY18, we provided approximately 12,000 assessments and nearly 100,000 counseling hours to Marines and their families.

Because many behavioral issues are inter-related, the Marine Corps is developing a Marine Corps Primary Prevention Strategy that can be implemented across the Marine Corps to address multiple problematic behaviors. The strategy will focus on establishing a primary prevention

capability across the fleet, building skills consistent with primary prevention, and promoting synergy across programs.

To increase awareness of methods for preventing destructive behaviors a communications strategy – “*See Something, Do Something*” - was developed. This holistic communications campaign includes social media, tip sheets, and videos discussing a multitude of topics that impact Marines and their families.

Suicide Prevention

Suicide prevention is one of the Marine Corp’s highest priorities; one death is too many. Preventing suicide has proven to be very challenging given the complex nature of the problem, but we are steady-fast in our commitment to eliminating it.

In CY18, we unfortunately saw an increase in deaths by suicide. The Marine Corps takes the loss of every Marine life very seriously. The Marine Corps does not view suicide prevention as a standalone activity or training. Prevention requires individuals, leaders, units, and the greater community to work together. Tiger Teams have been developed to support commands with technical assistance, suicide prevention planning, training on Marine Intercept Program, and assistance with collaboration and agreements with outside services. This includes utilizing university partnerships to develop strategic messaging to the younger generation pertaining to suicide prevention and utilizing diverse resources to promote the value of behavioral and mental health and improving coping capabilities.

The Marine Corps has integrated data from across the force to identify factors associated with suicide. Study findings indicate that having been an offender in incidents of domestic or child abuse, having a positive drug test, and having had a recent legal or disciplinary action are factors associated with suicide. In addition, our Death By Suicide Review Board is in the process of

analyzing all deaths by suicide, providing strategic and operational recommendations that address multiple Marine Corps strategic suicide prevention goals.

The Marine Intercept Program is targeted intervention for Marines who have experienced a suicidal ideation or attempt. It combines efforts from fellow Marines, commanders, installation counselors, and Marine Corps headquarters elements. The program assists Marines with a suicide ideation or attempt through care coordination, regular telephone outreach by care managers, development of safety plans, and suicide assessments. The program results in Marines receiving assistance faster and keeping their appointments more often.

The Marine Corps DSTRESS Line is a 24/7/365, Marine-specific call center providing phone, chat, and video-telephone capability for anonymous counseling for circumstances across the stress continuum. DSTRESS Line callers can discuss stress, anger management, grief and loss, deployment cycles, parent-child relationships, couples communication, marital issues, relationships, relocations, and suicidal crisis as well as other areas of concern. To date, the DSTRESS Line has enabled 45,000 help sessions with Marines, attached Sailors, and their families and has helped save 39 Marines who were in imminent danger situations.

Sexual Assault Prevention & Response

Protecting Marines and preventing sexual assaults are top priorities for the Corps. We are committed to preventing incidents of sexual assault by increasing awareness, providing victim-centered support and intimidation-free reporting, thorough investigation, and accountability for those who commit sexual crimes. Any Marine who comes forward to report a sexual assault will receive support, even if the sexual assault occurred prior to service.

Based on results from the 2016 Workplace and Gender Relations Survey for Active Duty Service members, sexual assault prevalence in the Marine Corps has decreased by 30 percent since 2014. Conversely, reporting levels have increased. We believe that reduced prevalence together

with increased reporting means we are reducing the number of unreported incidents, ensuring that Marines who experience sexual assault get the support they need.

The Marine Corps is conducting specialized training across all ranks to ensure that leaders have a clear understanding of sexual assault throughout the Marine Corps. One of the goals of this training is to promote leadership action within their scope of responsibility, and ensure ownership of their sexual assault prevention plans. For example, our “*Take A Stand*” training for Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) focuses on leadership specific to NCO roles and responsibilities and building skills consistent with primary prevention, such as effective communication, empathy, and healthy relationships and interactions.

Command Individual Risk and Resiliency Assessment System

The Marine Corps force preservation process is the formalized method used by commanders to identify individual Marine risk factors and to apply holistic risk management measures to improve individual and unit readiness. Each and every day, this process assists leaders across the Corps to identify those in need. However, gaps in knowledge about our Marines has historically limited the effectiveness of the effort. To improve the process, we are developing the Command Individual Risk and Resiliency Assessment System (CIRRAS), which will compile individual force preservation data inputted by small unit leaders, medical officers, and other support staff. By presenting timely, prioritized, actionable information to those who can help Marines, and by protecting unauthorized disclosure through strict access limits and cybersecurity, leaders will be better equipped to reduce destructive behaviors in their units. CIRRAS will achieve initial operating capability in August of this year.

Wounded Warrior Care

The Marine Corps’ Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) continues to execute our Recovery Coordination Program in support of wounded, ill, or injured (WII) Marines and their families, in a

manner that greatly facilitates their recovery and upholds our enduring commitment to “keep faith” with those who have incurred life changing impairments in service to our Nation. Regardless of the origin of illness or injury, our Marines require and genuinely deserve access to the comprehensive recovery care available through the WWR.

WWR Recovery Care Coordinators, in coordination with medical providers and unit leaders, help WII Marines develop and execute their individual Comprehensive Recovery Plans, which provide the road map for a successful transition. WII Marines with complex care coordination needs are assessed for post-separation support requirements. When appropriate, those Marines are transferred to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) designated Lead Coordinator prior to their medical discharge to ensure seamless support.

WWR maintains faith with our Marines through our District Injured Support Coordinators, who are geographically dispersed around the country and provide one-on-one support as needed, and the Sergeant Merlin German Call Center, which conducts outreach calls to Marines and receives and responds to calls for assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Since our WWR was established in 2007, thousands of WII Marines and family members transitioning from active service have benefitted from a full spectrum of support services that begins with physical recovery needs and increasingly focuses on post-service employment and education opportunities as they heal. Marines and their families, members of Congress, and the public at large can be assured that the Marine Corps, through the WWR, will continue to expertly provide recovery care coordination support at all times.

Casualty Assistance

Regardless of the circumstances causing the loss of life, the Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is committed to ensuring that families of our fallen Marines are always treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor. Our Casualty Assistance Program actively seeks

opportunities to improve survivor assistance and has a demonstrated record of taking quick, effective action as needed.

Our Casualty Section is a 24-hour-per-day operation manned by Marines trained in casualty reporting, notification, and casualty assistance procedures. Next-of-kin (NOK) are notified in-person by a Marine in uniform - Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) - and a chaplain whenever possible. Notifications are typically completed within four hours of receipt of the casualty report. Marine CACOs are there for the NOK - to assist with burial arrangements, applications for benefits and entitlements, contact with benevolent and philanthropic organizations, and obtaining reports of investigation.

Within days of the incident, families are connected to representatives from our longtime affiliate, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), a nationally recognized provider of comfort and care to those who have suffered the loss of a military loved one and are experts at ``taking care of the heart.`` TAPS services are no cost and available 24/7. Sustained support is provided to our NOK through the Marine Corps Long Term Assistance Program (LTAP). Approximately 60 days following the death, the NOK are contacted by a representative from LTAP to identify and resolve any residual issues. LTAP provides guidance to the NOK, reconnects him/her with the CACO if necessary, or takes direct action to resolve any outstanding issues. LTAP follows-up again with the NOK at the one year mark. LTAP's enduring mission is to assist and attend to the needs of Marine Corps Survivors indefinitely.

Personal and Professional Development

Our Marine For Life Cycle is a career-long process that helps Marines prepare for transition to civilian life. The Marine Corps provides a continuum of tangible learning or experienced-based

opportunities at nine different action points with specific emphasis at the Marine's first permanent duty station, promotion to Corporal, and the Transition Readiness Seminar.

At their first permanent duty station, Marines complete the Personal Readiness Seminar within 90 days of arrival to the installation. This seminar provides an overview of Personal and Professional Development services to include Voluntary Education, Career Technical/Credentialing, Personal Financial Management, and Family Member Employment Assistance; the seminar also emphasizes financial readiness awareness.

Approximately 12-14 months prior to separation, or 24 months prior to retirement, Marines complete the Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS). The week-long program includes a mandatory standardized core curriculum followed by three two-day track options to align with future goals and aspirations - Accessing Higher Education, Career and Technical Training, or Entrepreneurship.

No later than 90 days prior separation, Marines meet with their commanding officer for Capstone. During Capstone, the commanding officer will validate whether the Marine has met their career readiness standards and ensures the Marine's readiness for transition. If a Marine does not meet their career readiness standards or have a viable transition plan, a warm handover will be provided to Department of Labor or Veterans Affairs partner agencies for additional post-transition assistance. In FY19 Veterans Opportunity to Work Act compliance increased from 56.3 percent in FY17, to 91.6 percent in FY18, and is currently at 96.4 percent.

The mission of Marine Corps Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) is to prepare Marines for postsecondary education, 21st century careers, and leadership skills in a global economy by helping them receive transferable credit for their military skills and work experience. COOL links Marines with civilian certifications related to their military occupational specialties. It is a public website accessible to all current Marines, as well as veterans, spouses, potential employers, enterprises, credentialing agencies, and associations. A credential translates Marine Corps technical

skills into marketable language recognized by employers. The Marine Corps will pay for examination fees and annual maintenance for enlisted Marines to earn civilian/industry credentials closely aligned with their occupational specialty. In FY18, 768 COOL vouchers were issued for Marines.

Educational Opportunities

The Marine Corps offers educational opportunities both during and after service. The Marine Corps Voluntary Education Program provides high quality educational advising along with exposure and access to opportunities for education services to assist Marines in achieving their personal goals as Marines and citizens. Tuition Assistance (TA) is one component of the program and, in FY18, 16,691 Marines – primarily Sergeants and below - enrolled in TA funded courses.

To further assist Marines with post-transition education, the Marine Corps Leadership Scholar Program (LSP) provides Marines a conduit to the most elite colleges and universities, offering admission assistance during transition from active duty to the private sector. From 2010-2017, 739 Marines utilizing the LSP were accepted to highly-selective colleges and universities, including all eight Ivy League Institutions. Currently 212 Marines are awaiting acceptance decisions for applications to LSP Partner Schools.

To provide Marines the opportunity to gain experience in the private sector prior to transition, the Marine Corps participates in the DoD Skillbridge program. Participating businesses gain early access to highly-skilled servicemembers as prospective employees before they leave service. Skillbridge has programs that allow Marines to continue to receive their military pay and benefits while participating in apprenticeships, internships, and credentialed training. Currently Microsoft, BMW, Amazon Web Services, and Onward to Opportunity are some of the partner organizations participating in Skillbridge.

The Marine Corps continually collaborates with the other services, the Department of Labor, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and Veterans Service Organizations to improve our transition programs. The Marine Corps is working to implement the changes from the FY19 NDAA to ensure compliance and continue to improve the transition process for all Marines from uniform to meeting their goals in the civilian sector.

Strengthening Our Marines

The Marine Corps creates opportunities to promote and improve the balance of the social, physical, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional well-being of individuals and encourages optimal health where people live, work, and play. Our Semper Fit and Recreation programs strengthen resilience and contribute to military effectiveness by promoting and maintaining the mental and physical well-being of Marines and their families through physical activities, prevention through healthy alternative recreational activities, and safe environments. Semper Fit and Recreation facilities and programs receive more than 14 million patron visits annually, providing seven types of programs and services that encompass more than 100 total programs and services, and utilize 550 facilities/recreational areas across the Marine Corps.

Our physical Fitness Program consists of fitness education activities to promote physical and mental readiness, develop healthy lifestyles, develop positive self-esteem, and assist in discovering positive use of leisure time. The Marine Corps' holistic approach to wellness includes a variety of offerings for a healthy lifestyle. Our Fitness Program encompasses 57 fitness centers and 38 pools.

Specific to active duty Marines, the High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) program focuses on physical resiliency, combat readiness, and injury prevention. The Marine Corps has six standalone HITT centers and 70 HITT lockers. Further focusing on Marines physical fitness is the Military Aquatics Training program which includes military lap swimming, water survival training, and physical fitness training. Our comprehensive approach to fitness provides Marines the

opportunity to strengthen their physical well-being and engage with their families during recreational activities on their installation.

These supportive environments provide the greatest potential for producing lasting behavior change to support military readiness and sustainable health for military personnel, beneficiaries, and Department of Defense civilians. With nearly 61 percent of Marines unmarried, the Marine Corps' Single Marine Program focuses on providing a network that enhances the single Marine and Sailor's ability to affect change and improve morale, living environment, off-duty opportunities, personal growth, and leadership development. Key components of this program include advocacy, recreation, and community involvement, which had 34,377 volunteers and 136,577 logged volunteer hours in FY 2018.

Our Marine Corps Families

Marine Corps families support our Marines and caring for them is an integral part of ensuring a Marine's operational readiness. Our families make countless sacrifices and serve our Nation alongside their Marines by providing support and care which our Marines and the entire Corps rely on. We strive to keep faith with our families by providing them with programs to support their career goals, provide high quality childcare, opportunities for community involvement, and deployment support.

Spouse Employment

The Marine Corps Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP) emphasizes a proactive approach for military spouses and other dependent family members to formulate informed career and educational choices. It provides employment related referral services, career and skill assessments, career coaching, job search guidance, portable career options, and education center referrals and guidance. FMEAP provides coaching and training on interviewing techniques, resume and cover letter writing, the Federal application process, salary negotiations, one-on-one

career coaching, volunteering, and entrepreneur business opportunities. In FY18 more than 22,000 spouses and family members attended the nearly 600 FMEAP workshops and briefs.

The Spouse Transition and Readiness Seminar (STARS) was created to address the transitional challenges and opportunities specifically for spouses. STARS goal is to empower military spouses and alleviate stressors such as employment, finance, transition, and education associated with the military culture to ensure a seamless and successful transition for the entire military family back into civilian life. To date, 204 STARS seminars were conducted with 1,630 spouses attending.

The Marine Corps leverages the DoD Spouse Education and Career Opportunities program, which includes Military Spouse Employment Partnership (MSEP) – a partnership where employers agree to offer transferrable, portable career opportunities to relocating military spouse employees. MSEP currently has 360 partners, to include MCCA, and has hired over 120,000 military spouses.

Finally, Military Spouse Career Advancement Account (MyCAA) Scholarship provides up to \$4,000 for military spouses to pursue licenses, certificates, certifications or Associate Degrees necessary for gainful employment in high demand, high growth portable career fields and occupations.

Child and Youth Programs

The Child and Youth Programs (CYP) provides eligible families with high quality, accessible, and affordable programs and services for children six-weeks to 18-years of age. Services are offered aboard Marine Corps installations and through contractual partnerships. One part of CYP is our Child Development Programs (CDP), which include nationally accredited child care services for eligible children from six-weeks through 12-years of age. In FY18, CDP served 41,385 participants at 14 installations in 66 facilities. For those outside a 15 mile radius of a military installation or on an installation waitlist, we offer Off-Base Child Care Fee Assistance,

which provides eligible Marines with assistance paying for private childcare. In FY18, this program served 1,298 participants across 38 states.

Exceptional Family Members

For families with special needs members, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) helps ensure Marines are assigned to duty stations where the required medical services and educational support are available for their family needs. This allows Marines to focus on the mission, benefiting their individual, family, and unit readiness. The Marine Corps maximizes family support funds to provide critical EFMP care services that include (1) Effective assignment of Marines and Exceptional Family Member (EFM) continuum of care; (2) Individualized family case management support, including Needs Assessments and Service Plans; (3) Care navigation training for EFM Advocates (parents/sponsor); and (4) Access to legal services. In FY 2018, there were 8,568 Marines enrolled in EFMP with 10,981 family members with a special medical and/or educational need. Approximately 70 percent of enrollees are dependent children and 30 percent are dependent adults.

EFMP completed a study to analyze individual career progression of EFMP-enrolled Marines compared to non-enrollees to determine if EFMP enrollment negatively impacts career progression and promotion and found career length of EFMP enrolled Marines is, on-average, slightly longer than non-EFMP Marines and EFMP enrollment has no impact on achieving a high grade. In fact, EFMP enrolled Marines achieved their highest grade in the same or shorter amount of time than their non-EFMP enrolled peers.

Deployment and Community Support

Deployments, whether to a combat zone or a Marine Expeditionary Unit, take their toll on our family members. Deployment support is emphasized by civilian staffing to support implementation of the Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program, which provides family

members with deployment support, official communication, readiness and resource support, and volunteer management. Throughout the operating forces civilian Deployment Readiness Coordinators (DRC) are staffed at O-6 level commands and assigned at the commanding officer's discretion to O-5 level commands where their support can be focused on the needs of the units. Supporting establishment and Training and Education Command units are supported by Uniformed Readiness Coordinators to ensure their families are supported during non-deploying tours of duty.

The Marine Corps is collaborating with Military and Veteran Service Organizations, along with the other services, to continue looking for ways to support our servicemembers and their families. In 2018, the Marine Corps began hosting a roundtable with reputable organizations to ensure all possible support systems are available to Marines, on-and-off their installations. This collaborative effort is in its beginning stages and we look forward to continuing to work with our community partners to provide Marines and families what they need to remain ready and resilient.

Marine Corps Business and Support Services

The Marine Corps delivers many of its quality of life programs via an integrated Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) construct that combines Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR); Marine Corps Exchange (MCX); Warfighter and Family Services; and Child Development Programs. This integrated model is unique within DoD and provides many operating efficiencies, including consolidated non-appropriated fund back-office support, e.g., human resources, finance and accounting, procurement, construction, and information technology. Our focus on efficiency continues today with transformation and innovation pursuits, such as a shared services center for all MCCS NAF transactional accounting functions; we are expecting a significant cumulative NAF benefit over a 10 year period.

The MCX is an integral self-sustaining business component of MCCS, delivering products and services in garrison and expeditionary environments, while producing an invaluable NAF

dividend to our MWR and family programs. Marines and their families can count on real savings when they shop at the MCX. The 2018 market basket survey showed an average savings of approximately 27 percent. Further, the MCX is proud to employ military family members who represent approximately 34 percent of our workforce.

Transformation and innovation are the fabric of MCCA as we continue to assess and implement new delivery models by leveraging technology, partnerships, and sponsorships. The Marine Corps is also an active participant in DoD Business Reforms that encompass many of the programs and services within the MCCA portfolio. We are committed to seeking efficiencies across the Department while preserving our highly effective MCCA organization that is best attuned to meeting Marine Corps operational requirements.

Where We Live and Where We Train

We start and finish the fight at home. Our installations are where we generate and sustain our combat power, providing three critical force enabling functions:

- Deployment platforms from which our expeditionary forces fight and win our Nation's battles
- Training facilities required for our Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) to train and hone their combat readiness
- House our Marines and families

Where we previously enjoyed the shelter of the homeland, the evolving operating environment has eroded that sanctuary. Whether it's destructive acts of nature, or the increasing threat from our near-peer adversaries, our bases and stations are at greater risk of disruption or intrusion. This reality has led to an increased sense of urgency to harden our installations and infrastructure. We are looking to new and emerging technologies, organizational adaptations, and processes to create more resilient installations to enable the next generation MAGTF.

We take care of our own - including our families - and it begins with our Installations. The entire military community thrives when our bases and stations deliver exemplary installations support; increasing unit and family readiness. Thus, improving the current state of our facilities is the single most important investment to support training, operations, and quality of life. Proposed investments in military construction and facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization will help us to maintain our infrastructure in average condition, but long-term funding of our requirements is necessary to ensure our installations and infrastructure is built to last. We will continue the momentum generated by the infrastructure reset strategy as we develop the operating concept for the next generation installation.

In order to maintain the Marine Corps' near-term unit readiness, we have placed/accepted risk in long-term warfighting modernization and facilities sustainment. The Marine Corps has historically accepted risk in facilities funding to protect near-term readiness and service-level training; exacerbated in the recent years of fiscal austerity. With proper investment, we must ensure our infrastructure, both home and abroad, is resilient against attacks, and long-range precision strikes while modernizing to support future capability integration and training facilities needed to hone our warfighting skills.

Unfortunately, Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael had devastating impacts on Marine Corps installations and families. Although the hurricanes made landfall months ago, impacts to operational readiness and quality of life continue to be felt by the Marine Corps community.

The Marine Corps plans to reprogram funding to mitigate further deterioration of building while deferring repairs and reconstruction into future fiscal years.

Hurricane Michael damaged approximately 100 structures at Marine Corps Logistics Base Albany and Hurricane Florence compromised roughly 800 buildings across Marine Corps Base

Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River, and Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. About 500 of the buildings impacted by Hurricane Florence were severely damaged, several of which are incapable of being occupied. Due to the number of buildings damaged and lack of available space to relocate Marines, we have continued to order and establish temporary trailers to ensure missions are completed. Replacement projects at the impacted bases will focus on each building's resilience and lean on the Marine Corps' Infrastructure Reset Strategy, which aims to modernize Marine Corps installations at large.

Apart from facilities, nearly 70 percent of the 6,200 homes at these bases sustained some level of damage from Hurricane Florence. Families have been relocated to temporary lodging facilities and previously vacant homes. Some families are able to remain in their homes as repairs are being planned and conducted. We have advised Marines to not move their families to the area since we have a shortage of available homes. The Marine Corps is working closely with the privatized housing partner and Navy Facilities teams to advocate for our Marines, Sailors, and their families. Remediation efforts are taken on a case-by-case, house-by-house basis.

Although Marines adapt and overcome challenges on a regular basis, recovering from Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Michael will take years to complete.

Conclusion

The Marines of our Corps represent the individuals of our Nation who have stepped forward to become one of "the Few and the Proud." By ensuring that we take care of all Marines and their families we will enhance the quality of our Corps and our overall combat effectiveness, and fulfill our responsibility to keep faith with the honor, courage, and commitment they have so freely given.

Our individual Marines are our most precious asset. They are proud of what they do. They are proud of the "Eagle, Globe, and Anchor" and what it represents to our Nation. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our Nation's call. Thank you for your

sustained support in caring for our Marines and their families and your fidelity to the United States Marine Corps.