

NOT PUBLIC UNTIL RELEASED BY THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

**STATEMENT
OF
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BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
MILITARY PERSONNEL OVERVIEW
ON
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I. Introduction

Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Davis, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview on Marine Corps personnel.

Since our founding in 1775, Marines have answered our Nation's call, faithfully serving the American people and maintaining a world class standard of military excellence. Your Marine Corps is, and will continue to be, our Nation's expeditionary force in readiness. We will be ready to rapidly respond to crises around the Globe to ensure the continued security of the American people and to protect the interests that underpin our prosperity. Marines will be *always faithful* to the trust which the American people have vested in them. Already a lean organization, your Marines will continue to give you the best capability that can be squeezed from the resources you allocate for our Nation's defense. Budget austerity presents significant challenges, but our individual Marines are the Corps' most sacred resource, and always will be.

II. End Strength

As we drawdown the Marine Corps' active component end strength from war time levels of 202,000 Marines, we have taken deliberate steps to construct a force that we can afford to operate and sustain in the emerging fiscal environment. Over the past three years, we have undertaken a series of steps to build our current force plan. In 2010, our Force Structure Review Group utilized the then Defense Strategic Guidance and operational plans to determine that the optimum size of the active component Marine Corps should be a force of 186,800. The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, which could be supported by the original constraints of the 2011 Budget Control Act, estimated a force of 182,100 active component Marines. More recently, as we entered into the Quadrennial Defense Review, we came to the difficult understanding that,

under the threat of continued sequestration or some variant, an active duty force of 175,000 Marines (175K) is what our nation can afford. This end strength is purely budget-driven and accepts risk in our ability to carry out major combat operations.

Our current plan is to achieve a 175K end strength by the end of FY17. We are conducting a measured drawdown with a goal to reduce end strength by no more than 7,500 Marines per year. This is to be accomplished primarily through natural attrition, voluntary separation, and early retirement authorities. Involuntary separations will be minimized as much as possible, and we have no plans to conduct a reduction-in-force. Such an approach would no doubt do significant long-term damage to our ability to recruit and maintain a quality force. Our overarching goal is to keep faith with our Marines and their families.

We ended FY13 with an end strength of 195,657, achieved primarily through increased voluntary attrition of junior enlisted Marines as well as through the use of programs such as Voluntary Separation Pay and Temporary Early Retirement, both of which induced additional voluntary attrition from the mid-level enlisted and officer ranks. Our end strength goal for FY14 is 188,800 Marines, and will be achieved primarily through reduced accessions combined with continued emphasis on voluntary attrition.

III. Marine Corps Reserve

Your Marine Corps Reserve is also undergoing a reduction in Selected Reserve end strength in order to better align structure with budget levels. Our plan is to reduce our Selected Reserve end strength from 39,600 to 38,500 Marines by FY17. The reductions will come primarily from the junior enlisted ranks and individual mobilization augmentees (IMAs). The Reserve Component is currently over manned in its junior enlisted ranks and critically undermanned in its senior enlisted ranks. Decreasing new accessions will yield a more balanced

Marine Corps Reserve. Given our reduced Active Component manpower needs over the coming years, the requirement for Reserve IMAs to mobilize with Active Component units is likely to decrease. Overall, our force shaping measures will leave the Marine Corps with a more balanced Reserve Component able to reinforce the Active Component and serve as an integral part of the Marine Corps Total Force in accomplishing its assigned mission as an expeditionary force in readiness.

For FY14 and beyond, we continue to refine the use of incentives and MOS retraining to strengthen unit staffing in specialties and grades where we remain critically short. In particular, we have targeted our incentives toward recruiting and retention of company grade officers, non-commissioned officers (NCO) and staff non-commissioned officers (SNCO) in our Selected Reserve units. Both officers transitioning from the Active Component and recruiting officers directly into the Reserve Component have been the keys to our success. The Reserve Officer Commissioning Program has produced a total of 710 lieutenants for the Marine Corps since its creation in 2006. As a result, our SMCR ground company grade officer strength has increased from 21 to 74 percent.

We continue to face challenges in manning our SNCO billets in the SMCR. As the Active Component grew its end strength to 202K, many of our junior Marines and NCOs left the Reserves for the Active Component. Had they remained in the Reserves, many of those same Marines would have been promoted and filled our SNCOs requirements today. While we have directed incentives toward retaining our best Marines, the SMCR is still critically short SNCOs. This SNCO shortage will take approximately six years to fix as our post-202K accessions reach the necessary time to be considered for promotion.

IV. Recruiting

All recruiting efforts for the Marine Corps (officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior-service) fall under the purview of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Operationally, this provides us with tremendous flexibility and unity of command, allowing us to meet accession requirements.

Last fiscal year, we successfully achieved all enlisted and officer recruiting goals for both the Active and Reserve Components. Our current mission for enlisted Marines is 25,000 regulars (active component) and 5,523 reservists. We expect to achieve our annual recruiting ‘shipping’ mission (i.e. new accessions sent to recruit training) and quality goals, but budget reductions may impact our contracting efforts and capacity to achieve success in FY15. The FY15 mission forecast is 28,370 regulars and 5,280 reservists.

Our officer accessions mission for FY14 is 1,360 active duty and 150 Reserve officers. Historically, the Active Component has been the exclusive source of lieutenants and captains for the Reserves. As previously noted, filling company grade officer billets for our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units is traditionally our greatest challenge, but the success from the OCC-R program is helping to remedy this shortfall.

To meet future challenges in the current recruiting environment, it is imperative that we maintain our high standards both for our recruiters and those who volunteer to serve in our Corps. Recruiting quality youth ultimately translates into higher performance, reduced attrition, increased retention, and improved readiness for the operating forces. Our actions, commitment, and investments today in recruiting ensure a high state of readiness in our Corps tomorrow.

V. Retention

For FY14, the Marine Corps is on track to achieve its end strength target of 188,800 Active Component Marines (and approximately 150 Reservists who have served on active duty at least three of the previous four years). It is vital during our drawdown that the Marine Corps continues to shape our force to meet continuing mission requirements and fill critical military occupational specialties (MOSs) with the most qualified Marines. Incentive pays remain critical to this effort, allowing the Marine Corps to fill hard to recruit positions, such as cyber security technician and counter intelligence specialist. Enlistment bonuses also allow us to ship new recruits at critical times to balance recruit loads at the depots and meet school seat requirements. It is important to note that only eight percent of new Marine Corps recruits receive an enlistment bonus. Similarly, Selective Reenlistment Bonuses allow us to shape our career force by targeting critical MOSs and supporting lateral movement of Marines to these MOSs.

VI. Civilian Marines

Our Civilian Marines support the mission and daily functions of the Marine Corps and are an integral part of our Total Force. They exemplify our core values; they embrace esprit de corps, teamwork, and pride in belonging to our nation's Corps of Marines. Our civilian appropriated funded workforce remains the leanest of all services, with a ratio of one civilian to every ten active duty Marines. Our civilian labor represents less than five percent of the Marine Corps' total O&M budget, demonstrating that our "best value" for the defense dollar applies to our civilians as well as our Marines.

Over 95 percent of our civilians work at bases, stations, depots, and installations across our Nation. Sixty-eight percent are veterans who have chosen to continue to serve our Nation; of

those, thirteen percent are disabled veterans. Our civilian workforce steadfastly continues to provide vital support to our Marines, reserve Marines, their families, and our wounded, ill and injured.

This environment of prolonged budgetary uncertainty is increasing employee stress, morale is declining and, at some point, productivity will begin to suffer. Although we began right sizing our workforce in 2011, in preparation for these current events, we are still facing additional civilian reductions of 10% or more, which includes the 20% reduction to our Management Headquarters Activities. We are actively seeking ways to achieve these goals through attrition and various voluntary workforce-shaping flexibilities; our intent is not to conduct a reduction in force (RIF). Additional budget reductions will hit in FY15 creating further stress to our workforce, both in size and in the support our civilians depend on to conduct their work and improve their skills.

During these challenging times, it is imperative that we continue to keep faith with our civilian workforce. With additional furloughs and overall pay insecurity, we risk losing enormously talented and dedicated professionals. As commitment to federal service wanes, military missions will suffer.

VII. Diversity

The Marine Corps is committed to attracting, mentoring and retaining the most talented men and women who bring a diversity of background, culture and skill in service to our Nation. In both representation and assignment of Marines, diversity remains a strategic issue. Our diversity effort is structured with the understanding that the objective of diversity is not merely to strive for a force that reflects a representational connectedness with the rich fabric of the

American people, but to raise total capability through leveraging the strengths and talents of all Marines.

The Marine Corps is working toward completion of a landmark diversity initiative which centered around four diversity task forces: Leadership, Mentoring and Accountability; Culture and Leading Change; Race and Ethnicity; and Women in the Marine Corps. Three-star general officer executive sponsors provided guidance and oversight of each 12 – 15 member task force. The Task Force initiative focused on identifying vital recommendations in the areas of culture and leadership and to improving the attraction, development and retention of both women and minority officers. The task force concept represents a significant philosophical shift—from ignoring human variations to a quest to understand them in order to drive actions.

The Marine Corps has established minority officer recruiting and mentoring as a priority in our recruiting efforts. We acknowledge the accession and retention of minority officers has been a challenge for our Corps and are committed to further facilitating the mentoring and career development of all our officers with emphasis on our minority officers in order to encourage the retention of our most talented people.

The Marine Corps aims to emphasize the operational necessity of diversity by educating Marines on how diversity can be a force multiplier. We also seek diversity through strategic community outreach and recruit marketing. To ensure continued connectedness with the Nation, we continue to conduct strategic community outreach and recruit marketing and ensure quality opportunities for merit-based development and advancement for all Marines.

VIII. Marine and Family Programs

To optimize and influence the health and wellness of the 21st Century Marine, Marine Total Fitness (MTF) establishes a framework and methodology for understanding, assessing, and

maintaining individual Marine Fitness in support of unit combat effectiveness. This holistic focus includes four cords of fitness: Body, Mind, Spirit, and Social. The goal of MTF is to proactively address the complex issues facing our Marines and their families after more than a decade of persistent conflict.

Caring for our Families. During Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), a surge occurred in the areas of family programs to mitigate the impact of stressors due to deployments, enable quick acclimation to the Corps, build deployment knowledge and skills, and improve access to care and official information for Marines and families to ensure operational readiness. This action resulted in having a positive impact on the quality of life of our Marines and their families. The 2012 Quality of Life Study indicated a majority of Marines received the training necessary to deal with the stress of deployment and/or combat, and were satisfied with military support services overall.

Post OIF/OEF, we must ensure our programs and services remain relevant to the requirements of the Corps. We must be flexible enough to surge and retract to support future missions and training requirements. With 47 percent of Marines being married and 32 percent having children, our Family Care and Family Readiness Preparedness directly supports operational readiness of the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps ensures the long-term stability of Marine and Family Programs meets all credentialing and accreditation quality assurance objectives. We ensure consistency of care across the Marine Corps, by implementing and training staff to evidence based practices. Programs will be assessed for ways to more effectively and efficiently improve delivery of care and services, while strategically communicating to our Marines and families to increase awareness of all the available resources, support, and services.

Behavioral Health Support. The Behavioral Health Program acts as an integrated service delivery model that facilitates focus of effort for prevention and intervention on suicide, substance abuse, combat operational stress, and family advocacy. When addressing behavioral health care requirements, we typically see clients with multiple stressors or conditions.

Even as the Marine Corps moves into a post OIF/OEF environment, we expect a surge of support needs from Marines and families facing a potential delayed onset of symptoms. To address care requirements, we have established a memorandum of understanding with Navy Medicine to enable comprehensive care and have taken action to increase our community counseling capacity. Over 250 Military Family Life Consultants have been deployed to provide confidential care in unit or installations settings and augments existing installation based behavioral health and resource services. Additionally, through our Community Counseling Program, we are enhancing our screening and prevention capabilities, and also increasing access to non-medical counseling services. Finally, Behavioral Health is implementing the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level prevention capabilities to provide resources and training for operational commands along with providing technical assistance across behavioral health initiatives.

Our efforts will continue to ensure that Marines seek and are provided effective care when needed. All Marines have a responsibility to look out for one another and to assist anyone who may need care. Through programs like Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training and Operation Stress Control and Readiness, Marines receive the right prevention tools at the right time to provide them with skills to prevent and mitigate stress injuries in themselves, and their fellow Marines. Additionally, these programs provide commanders support in building unit strength, resilience, and readiness. Finally, the Marine Corps is increasing our capabilities

to follow-up and monitor Marines identified with suicidal ideation or suicide attempts.

Sustaining the wellness and readiness of Marines and their families remains the top priority of the Marine Corps.

Transition Assistance. As the Marine Corps looks at lowered end strength in the upcoming years, more of our Marines and their families will be making the transition to civilian life. It is imperative that we ensure that they have the right preparation to reach personal goals and effectively translate their military experiences to a successful civilian life. Transition is a process, not an event. Beginning at the point of recruiting, the Marine Corps strives to provide a continuum of tangible learning or experienced based opportunities to ensure that every Marine is transition ready throughout their career so they can accomplish their personal or career goals.

The Marine Corps Transition Readiness Seminar is a week-long program that includes mandatory standardized core curriculum followed by the choice of one of three additional two-day tracks that is in line with their individual future goals and objectives. The Marine Corps has also put into place pre-separation counseling to help Marines translate their military skills for the civilian workforce.

Our next phase will enhance outreach to those who require localized support through our Marine for Life Program and its representatives. Additionally, our Personal and Professional Development Program will continue to focus on spouse employment, access to education and professional development courses, and effective management strategies. The Marine Corps is committed to not only making the best Marines, but that the Marine and their families have the tools and resources to successfully transition and reintegrate back into civilian life.

IX. Sexual Assault Prevention & Response

Sexual assault damages lives, corrodes the trust between Marines, degrades unit readiness and morale, and undermines our war-fighting mission. The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program has been enhanced to reinforce our training and advocacy efforts, while holding fast to the fact that one incident of sexual assault is too many. Our three-phase SAPR Campaign Plan was launched in June 2012 and continues to guide the phased implementation of large-scale institutional reform, emphasizes prevention through training, and directs senior leadership involvement. Potentially a promising result of the effort, thus far, has been the continued rise in reporting. With sexual assault being a highly under-reported crime, this increase appears to reflect an increased level of trust and confidence that Marines have in their immediate commander and overall Marine Corps SAPR Program.

Commander involvement and constructive dialogue among Marines, to include bystander intervention, will continue to be one of our greatest weapons against sexual assault. Engaged leadership remains the key to establishing a culture that is non-permissive to any misconduct or crime, especially sexual assault. As the Marine Corps continues to reawaken its sense of tradition and ethics, and reinforce the values that have made it the finest expeditionary force in history, we will also continue to strengthen our prevention and victim care efforts and to ensure that the highest standards of discipline are maintained. Collectively and persistently, we will ensure that every Marine knows it is his and her inherent duty to step up and step in to stop this crime.

X. Wounded Warrior Regiment

The Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) continues to function as a central pillar of our pledge to "keep faith" with those who have served. Whether a Marine is wounded in combat, suffering from a chronic unresolved illness, or injured in a training accident, the WWR remains committed to providing comprehensive recovery care. For the Marine Corps, recovery care is not a process. Care coordinated through the WWR is soundly based upon an authentic relationship between care providers and the Marine and his or her family members. This bond allows all parties to be vested in a common purpose: to ensure our Nation's wounded, ill and injured (WII) Marines and their families are well positioned for their future endeavors.

Since our WWR was established in 2007, thousands of WII Marines and family members have benefitted from this Command's care coordination capabilities. These capabilities include Recovery Care Coordinators to help WII Marines develop and execute Comprehensive Recovery Plans; a medical section to provide medical subject matter expertise, advocacy, and liaison to the medical community;; District Injured Support Coordinators, the Marine Corps' representatives for WII Marines in their civilian communities; the Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center and Wounded Warrior Battalion Contact Centers to conduct outreach to WII Marines and receive calls for assistance; and a liaison to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to enhance coordination between the organizations.

In sum, WII Marines and their family members receive customized support, based upon their assessed needs, from the point of injury or illness, through rehabilitation, and finally as they return to duty or reintegrate to their hometowns. Also, the Marine Corps does not utilize a "fire and forget" mentality. Recognizing that most WII Marines will require some level of assistance

after they leave the Corps, the WWR provides a minimum of 90 days post-service support to those previously supported by a Recovery Care Coordinator. This is accomplished through our DISCs or case managers at our Call Center.

Marines and their families, the Congress, and the public at large can be reassured that the Marine Corps, through the WWR, will continue recovery care in times of war and in peacetime. Irrespective of the global security environment, recovery care support must be enduring in view of issues resulting from the current decade of war: catastrophic injuries requiring massive amounts of acute care, traumatic brain injury, and psychological health problems. These conditions are not solved by short-term care and will require continuing services, *an enduring commitment*. Just as the Marine Corps is strategically agile, the WWR will endeavor to expand and contract depending upon future requirements.

XI. Semper Fit & Exchange Services

Semper Fit and Recreation programs align to support the social and physical well-being of Marines and their families, encourage healthy lifestyles, enhance quality of life, and to amplify the Marine Corps' focus on mission and readiness. For example, comprehensive strength and conditioning programs, High Intensity Tactical Training and Aquatic Maximum Power – Intense Training, serve to optimize physical performance and combat readiness for all active duty and reserve Marines. Another program, located at eight installations, Operation Adrenaline Rush (OAR), combines Combat and Operational Stress Control principles with an outdoor recreation adventure activity to aid in mitigating high risk behavior for Marines who have recently returned from deployment. OAR assists Marines with reintegration by empowering small unit leaders, maintaining combat readiness, and reinforcing unit cohesion.

The Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) is an important part of the overall non-monetary benefits package and the Marine Corps mission. Consistently ranked by Marines and families as one of their most valued benefits, MCX provides not only a value for Marines and families when they shop, but also returns dollars to the Marine Corps community. MCX success is measured on the program's value and contributions to the readiness of Marines, as well as our ability to provide unparalleled customer service, premier facilities, and valued goods and services at a significant savings.

Semper Fit and Recreation and our Exchange system continue to provide direct support to forward deployed Marines through recreation/fitness/sports equipment and MCX services. Deployed support is one of the most important services we provide; our robust Exchange, Recreation and Fitness, Communication, and MCCS Wi-Fi services programs not only boost and maintain morale, but also help to reduce mission-related stress. Moving forward we are committed to increasing efficiencies within our business and support models as part of our culture of transformation and maintaining relevance to the Marine Corps Mission.

XII. Conclusion

To continue to be successful, we must always remember that our individual Marines are our most precious asset, and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Marines are proud of what they do. They are proud of the "Eagle, Globe, and Anchor" and what it represents to our country. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our Nation's call.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.