

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL
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SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
SERGEANT MAJOR MICHEAL P. BARRETT
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
ON
APRIL 9, 2014**

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Sergeant Major Micheal Barrett **Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps**



Micheal P. Barrett was born in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and raised in Youngstown, N.Y. He enlisted in March 1981 and underwent recruit training at 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, Delta Company, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C.

In November 1981, Private First Class Barrett completed Infantry Training School at Camp Lejeune, N.C. He was ordered to 1st Battalion, 4th Marines, Twentynine Palms, Calif., for duty. He served in a variety of billets from Grenadier to Platoon Sergeant.

Sergeant Barrett was transferred in August 1984 to Inspector-Instructor duty with 2nd Battalion, 25th Marines, New Rochelle, N.Y. Outside of his primary duties as an infantry instructor, he was assigned numerous support duties to include; Armorer, Nuclear Biological Chemical noncommissioned officer, and Training Chief.

In September 1987, Sergeant Barrett was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines where he assumed the responsibilities as Platoon Sergeant of the Surveillance Target Acquisition Platoon. Staff Sergeant Barrett deployed forward during the Gulf War with Task Force Papa Bear.

In April 1992, Staff Sergeant Barrett received orders to Drill Instructor School, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif. Upon completion of Drill Instructor School, he was assigned to Company F, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, and Chief Drill Instructor. In January 1994, he was selected as the Battalion Drill Master of 2nd Recruit Training Battalion.

In January 1995, Gunnery Sergeant Barrett was assigned to Scout Sniper Instructor School, Quantico, Va., as the Chief Instructor.

In September of 1996, Gunnery Sergeant Barrett was transferred to Marine Security Company, Camp David, Presidential Retreat, for duties as the Company Gunnery Sergeant and liaison to the United States Secret Service.

Upon completion of his tour at Camp David, First Sergeant Barrett was transferred to 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Twentynine Palms, Calif., where he assumed the duties as India Company First Sergeant from August 1998 until April 2000. He was then assigned to Headquarters and Service Company from April 2000 to March 2001 and his tour culminated as the Senior Enlisted Leader of Weapons Company from March 2001 to June 2002.

Sergeant Major Barrett was then assigned to Recruiting Station Cleveland, Ohio, from July 2002 until May 2005, as the Recruiting Station Sergeant Major.

Sergeant Major Barrett was transferred to 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines in May 2005, where he completed two combat deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (04-06.2 and 06-08.1) in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq.

From October 2007 to May 2009, Sergeant Major Barrett was assigned to Officer Candidates School, Quantico, Va.

Sergeant Major Barrett was selected as the 1st Marine Division Sergeant Major and took his post in June 2009. In December 2009, he assumed the duties as I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) Sergeant Major, and deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom (10.1/10.2) in March 2010. During this deployment, he also became the NATO Regional Command (Southwest) Command Sergeant Major for Nimruz and Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He turned over the 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) and Regional Command (Southwest) in March and April 2011. Sergeant Major Barrett assumed his current post as the 17th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on 9 June 2011.

His personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal with combat "V" and gold star, Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat "V" and three gold stars, Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medal with two gold stars, Combat Action Ribbon with gold star, and the Presidential Service Badge.

Chairman Gillibrand, Ranking Member Graham and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide you an update on the Marine Corps' commitment to our Marines and their families.

The Marine Corps has and will continue to stand ready to face any challenges that need to be conquered to complete our nation's missions. We remain a forward-deployed, forward-engaged force. The Marine Corps is continuing to shape, train, and deter aggression. We are responding to every crisis, conflict, and contingency around the globe. The Marine Corps does this by being prepared---ready and standing at the door of chaos with the tools, the people, and the training necessary to do the nation's bidding and providing our nation's leaders with the time and decision space that they require.

UPDATE ON MARINE CORPS AROUND THE WORLD

The Marine Corps is involved across the world---Afghanistan, the Pacific, and U.S. Embassies. I would like to take a moment and highlight just a few of the great things our men and women in the Marine Corps have been doing to accomplish this nation's missions around the world.

- The Marine Corps was part of the U.S. government humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in the Philippines in the wake of Typhoon Haiyan that impacted more than 4.2 million people across 36 provinces. The Marine Corps and Navy were able to be in the Philippines within hours of the Philippine Government asking for international aid. During "Operation Damayan", the Marine Corps was able to provide search-and-rescue sorties; transport aid

workers; clear roads; evacuate 540 American citizens, 18,767 Philippine citizens and 301 nationals from other countries; and deliver 2,005 tons of relief supplies.

- Over the last year, the Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response (SPMAGTF-CR) has been busy in non-combatant evacuation operations (NEOs) such as in South Sudan and providing reinforcement to U.S. Embassies when needed as in the case of Libya.
- In Afghanistan, the Marine Corps Security Force Assistance Advisory Teams (SFAATs) (first deployed in 2012) have continually advised and assisted operations alongside Afghan National Security Forces. Additionally, the Marine Corps continues to conduct counterinsurgency (COIN) operations throughout the country.
- The 31st and 13th Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) have been afloat as a forward-deployed, rapid-response force capability providing stability in their area of operational responsibility (AOR).
- Throughout the year, the Marine Corps participated in hundreds of Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities with the armed forces of more than 50 partner nations supporting all six Combatant Commands (COCOM).
- The U.S. Marine Corps spearheaded a maritime domain awareness demonstration at the Philippine Coast Guard Headquarters as part of the first Philippine-US initiative to enhance Philippine security and defense capabilities in January 2014.

Whether it is deploying to Afghanistan, assisting in humanitarian relief efforts in the Philippines, or working with less due to sequestration and government shutdown; the Marine Corps has not faltered in its operational readiness or commitment to the task at hand. The Marine Corps remains committed to being the most ready force our nation can afford.

Recently, the Commandant of the Marine Corps and I have led an effort to “reawaken the soul of the Corps” in order to remind and reconfirm who we are, what we do and what America expects from her Marines. This reawakening will impact our programs to ensure that quality of life is at the levels our Marines and their families deserve. As we draw down in Afghanistan and move toward our role as crisis-response, force-in-readiness, we are laser focused in areas of discipline, faithfulness, self-excellence, and developing committed engaged leaders. The challenge in our efforts is the fiscal burden and the uncertainty over the next few years.

Sequestration and fiscal constraints, global engagements, force shaping, and many other environmental conditions impose challenges and opportunities. In Fiscal Year 2015 and beyond, we are beginning to realize the effects of budget cuts. As our landscape changes, regardless of the funds available every dollar must yield positive return and contribute to the readiness of the Marine Corps. We will continue to monitor readiness across our *Five Pillars of Readiness*: High Quality People, Unit Readiness, Capability and capacity to Meet the Combatant Command Requirements, Infrastructure Sustainment, and Equipment Modernization. To protect our readiness under current funding levels, we can only do this at the cost of infrastructure sustainment and equipment modernization, as well as, assessing the various programs and resources we provide to Marines and their families and where savings can be realized. The decisions were carefully made for the current fiscal climate to still meet the needs of the Marine

Corps, but over time degradation to facility sustainment, restoration and modernization and unnecessary negative impacts to the force and our families will ultimately suffer.

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 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. Under the constraints of the 2011 Budget Control Act, we estimated that a force of 182,100 active component Marines was realistic. 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 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 175,000 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, early retirement authorities, and limited use of involuntary separations. 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 must be 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 ranks. Our end strength goal for FY14 is 188,800 Marines, 167,823 of whom are enlisted, and will be achieved primarily through reduced accessions, selective reenlistment, and a continued emphasis on voluntary attrition.

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 Non-commissioned officers (NCO) and staff non-commissioned officers (SNCO) in our Selected Reserve units.

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.

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 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.

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.

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 (SRBs) allow us to shape our career force. SRBs target critical MOSs and supports lateral movement of Marines to these MOSs.

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.

While the Marine Corps' enlisted ranks are quite diverse from the standpoint of race and ethnicity, we understand there is a need to broaden opportunities for women. Efforts are underway to further integrate both female enlisted Marines and officers into the Air Ground Task

Force. Regardless of race, ethnicity and gender, when our enlisted Marines look at their officers and see themselves reflected among them, their level of commitment, their aspirations and their performance can be impacted in a positive manner. Thus, the Marine Corps has established increased diversity in officer recruiting as a priority in our recruiting efforts.

MARINE CORPS MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE IN CURRENT FISCAL ENVIRONMENT

Regardless of the decisions that are made regarding the budget, the Marine Corps remains acutely aware of the critical relationship between quality of life and Marine Corps readiness. Marines can face the enemy on the frontline, because of the care and support we provide on the home front. Our commitment to the Marine is during their entire lifecycle, from boot camp through separation or retirement, and beyond. The Marine Corps will continually ensure the long-term stability of Marine and Family Programs by using evidence-based practices; ensuring our programs meet all credentialing and accreditation to ensure consistency of care across the Marine Corps; continually assessing our programs; and ensuring that we are strategically communicating to our Marines and families so they are aware of all resources available to them.

As we continue to draw-down our efforts in Afghanistan and reduce our end strength to 175,000, we remain committed to a continuum of care by ensuring family readiness and care; supporting families of the fallen; caring for our wounded, ill, and injured; providing behavioral health services; assisting our Marines transition to being successful civilians; and continuing to make improvements to infrastructure and facilities. In the current and upcoming fiscal years, we remain committed to our mission.

The future of Marine and Family and Quality of Life in the Marine Corps will not be served by “the way it’s always been” mentality or returning to pre-combat environments. With changing demographics, mission, and environment at hand, the Marine Corps will continue to be good stewards of our resources, always be taking and making assessments, and improve our efforts where we can for those we serve.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PREVENTING SEXUAL ASSAULT

The Marine Corps continues to take steps to eradicate sexual assault among our ranks. Sexual assault is a shameful and disgusting crime that has no place in the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps three-phase Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Campaign Plan (Strike, Implement and Sustain) outlines our efforts to reduce, with a goal to eliminate, sexual assaults. Since its inception in June 2012, the Marine Corps has addressed sexual assault in multiple areas by driving a tremendous infusion of training, restructuring our oversight organizations, and assisting senior leadership efforts. Our SAPR efforts thus far have seen a continued rise in reporting. In FY13, reports of sexual assault in the Marine Corps increased by 86%, continuing a trend started in FY12, which saw a 31% reporting increase. In addition, 20% of all FY13 reports were made for incidents that occurred prior to the victim joining the Corps; 17% were made for incidents that took place over one year ago. With sexual assault being an under-reported crime, we believe that these trends speak directly to the trust and confidence that Marines have in their immediate commanders and the overall Marine Corps program. These encouraging developments suggest that our efforts are working to increase awareness of SAPR resources and to establish a healthy environment of respect and dignity where victims feel

confident in coming forward. As we speak to our Marines about their commitment to being guardians of our Core Values, part of that is to continue strengthening our victim care programs and offender accountability. Now that Phase I is completed, Phase II is designed to continue our positive trends ensuring the sustainment of the energy and momentum of the Campaign Plan, while further implementing large-scale institutional reform, emphasizing prevention through training, and having more deliberate involvement by our senior leaders.

To date, we have put in place initiatives including a General Officers SAPR Symposium, SAPR training at Sergeants Major Symposium, Command Team Training, "Take a Stand" for non-commissioned officers, and "All-Hands" training. We have also customized Corps-wide SAPR training programs according to the rank and level of responsibility of Marines. Additional SAPR initiatives include the development of Sexual Assault Response Teams (SARTs), new Command Climate Surveys, and mandated credentialing requirements and continuing education in advocacy for all SAPR personnel.

Between FY2012 and FY2013, the Marine Corps has seen an increase in reporting with a corresponding increase in prosecutions for sexual assault. In anticipation of this increased caseload of more complex prosecutions, the Campaign Plan also restructured our entire legal community to ensure we have the right assets to prosecute these complex cases. New Regional Trial Counsel (RTC) offices provide consolidated resources, including experienced field-grade complex trial counsel (CTC), a civilian highly qualified expert (HQE) in sexual assault prosecution, embedded investigators, a legal administrator, and support staff. The RTC can pull from these resources to assign the right counsel, on the right case, in the right location.

In addition to the restructuring of the legal community, on January 1, 2014, the Marine Corps' Victims' Legal Counsel Organization (VLCO) became fully operational. The VLCO

provides legal representation to all victims of sexual assault, and also to victims of other crimes. The new VLCO, along with our continued SAPR efforts, show that engaged, committed leadership remains the key as we reawaken the Corps sense of tradition and ethics, and reinforce the values that make us America's expeditious force in readiness.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PREVENTION, TREATMENT, AND RESILIENCY

The Marine Corps firmly believes that readiness of the Corps is a direct result of maintaining individual Marine fitness. The Marine Total Fitness (MTF) concept is a holistic model focused on fitness of body, mind, spirit, and social relationships. This framework for holistic development is supported by a unified approach to improve resiliency and through engagements across the force. This approach will improve performance of Marines, their leaders, and their families. .

An important component of MTF is to proactively address the complex issues facing our Marines and their families after over a decade of persistent conflict. Even as the Marine Corps moves into a post Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom environment, there will be a significant need of services to support Marines and families facing a potential delayed onset of symptoms, which requires diligence in prevention and early intervention. To address these needs, the Behavioral Health Program acts as an integrated service delivery model that facilitates the collaborative efforts and resources of all behavioral health elements including Family Advocacy, Substance Abuse, and Community Counseling, which includes Combat Operational Stress Control and Suicide Prevention. Our mental health surge capacity is based on

implementing strong strategies for commanders and installation staff, and investing in evidence-based practices and delivery methodology. The purpose of the surge is to enhance mission readiness and welfare of Marines and their families, by providing capacity for rapid identification of behavioral health issues and for expediting referrals to resources and assistance, which also promotes the resilience of our Marines and their families

Part of reawakening the Corps is to continue to stress that all Marines have a responsibility to look out for one another and to assist anyone who might be struggling. Our Marine Awareness and Prevention Integrated Training (MAPIT), that is beginning to be implemented in Fiscal Year 2014, will train the entire force on behavioral health issues. The MAPIT initiative will provide education and skill-based peer-to-peer training consistently across a Marine's career. MAPIT, in conjunction with our more selective training program, Operation Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR), use other evidence-informed prevention tools to deliver the right prevention tools to the right Marines at the right time. These include giving Marines the skills to prevent and mitigate stress injuries in themselves and their fellow Marines, as well as, giving commanders support in building unit strength, resilience, and readiness. Additionally, the DSTRESS line continues to provide anonymous, 24/7 counseling services to any Marine, attached Sailor, or family Member. Enhanced resilience, achieved through training and improved physical, spiritual, social, and psychological fitness, can mitigate post-traumatic stress, affect incidents of undesirable and destructive social behaviors, and lead to greater likelihood for future good health.

Behavioral Health Programs are now focused on prioritizing services to target Marines and improve our program capacity at the installation and unit level through enhanced professionalization of our workforce, accreditation oversight of the programs, and surge capacity

to address access to care issues. One component of this approach has been to substantially increase the number of trained behavioral health personnel available to provide non-medical counseling services and treatment. The result has been to develop community counseling capabilities to improve screening, prevention, and counseling services through our Community Counseling Program at installations. Additionally, we have expanded Military and Family Life Consultant Program (MFLC) to provide confidential care in a unit or installation setting. In Fiscal Year 2014, Behavioral Health will be implementing the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Prevention Program, which aims to improve the implementation, fidelity, and evaluation of behavioral health prevention initiatives across the operating forces.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH TRANSITIONING MARINES INTO QUALITY CITIZENS

As our priorities shift from wartime requirements to post OEF, a key focus is on Marines transitioning out of the Marine Corps. Transitioning Marines need the right preparation to reach personal goals and effectively translate their military experience to a successful civilian life. Transition is a process, not an event. Beginning at recruitment, the Marine Corps strives to ensure that we are providing a continuum of tangible learning, training, or experiences that makes every Marine transition ready throughout their career.

The Marine Corps Transition Readiness Seminar (TRS) must be completed by Marines within 12 months of separation or within 24 months of retirement, but no later than 180 days prior to separation or retirement. TRS is a week-long program that includes a mandatory standardized core curriculum including briefings from Veteran Affairs and Department of Labor and an introduction to their choice of entrepreneurship, career and technical training, or higher

education. After TRS, interested Marines attend one of three additional two-day tracks that are in line with their future goals and objectives subject to their ability to meet Career Readiness Standards: (1) College/Education/University delivered by Marine Corps staff; (2) Career/Technical Training delivered by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs staff; or (3) Entrepreneurship delivered by the Small Business Administration. Additionally, the Marine Corps involves leadership in the transition process through Capstone, where the separating Marine sits with the Commander or the commander's representatives no less than 90 days before separation to verify the Marine has met career readiness standards. In Calendar Year 2014, the Marine Corps will incorporate a life cycle approach to transition preparation that will allow Marines to meet Career Readiness Standards well in advance of the Transition Readiness Seminar.

With the significant reduction in end strength of the Marine Corps over the next few years, it is vital that our commitment to our Marines includes adequate preparation to leave the Marine Corps with all the resources and advantages to be able to translate being a Marine to civilian life.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH PRESERVING STRONG FAMILIES

During Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, Marine and Family Programs increased support to family programs to reduce the impact of stressors; 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. We have seen that increasing support to these programs has had a positive impact on quality of life. In support

of strong families, the 2012 Quality of Life Study found significant increase in satisfaction in three life domains: Residence, Income, and Standard of Living, and in Marines relationships with their children. Findings from the 2012 Quality of Life Study specific to Marine and Family programs indicated a majority having the training necessary to deal with the stress of deployment and/or combat, and being satisfied with military support services overall.

The Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program and Marine Corps Family Team Building Program are both designed to strengthen and fortify Marines and their families. Our civilian Family Readiness Officers are an asset in ensuring Marines and their families receive official communications, readiness and deployment support, information and referral services for support services and volunteer management. With our shift in wartime requirements and volume of previous years' investments into various family readiness requirements, we are postured to continue priority support to operating forces units and universal access to all for information and referral services. Specifically, the Marine Corps is continuing to leverage technology, such as eMarine for communication with over 285,000 subscribers, as well as other training and support webinars. Since implemented in April 2013, over 14,000 registered users have participated in Marine Corps Family Team Building online courses, which include courses on stress management, anger management, and emergency preparedness. The Marine Corps will continue to tap into this technology and others to provide resources for our deployed and returning Marines and families.

Our Family Care programs provide programs that support the care and development of Marine Corps children from birth to their teens. Through our Children, Youth and Teen Programs (CYTP), the Marine Corps has served 33,621 children, youth, and teens in Fiscal Year 2013.

We have more than 11,000 family members with special needs. In Fiscal Year 2013, 405,000 hours of respite care was reimbursed under the Exceptional Family Member Respite Care Reimbursement Program. This program provides respite care benefit for those Marines whose family members have moderate to severe special needs. Our Exceptional Family Member Program coordinators will continue to work to partner with local, state and private organizations to help Marines and their families access the care and support they require.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARING FOR OUR FAMILIES OF OUR FALLEN

The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program remains committed to ensuring the families of our fallen Marines are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor. The loss of a Marine is always difficult, especially for the family and we are always seeking to improve survivor assistance. Caring for the families of our fallen is not just an immediate challenge, but one that is long term. The Marine Corps Long Term Assistance Program is a permanent resource for the next of kin, ensuring they receive sustained quality assistance from the Marine Corps.

The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is a 24 hour-per-day operation manned by Marines and Civilian Marines trained in casualty reporting, notification, and assistance procedures. Our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs) are responsible for notifying next-of-kin, assisting them with burial arrangements; applying for benefits and entitlements, obtaining reports of investigations, as well as assisting Survivors in contacting benevolent and philanthropic organizations. Our CACOs go through an initial training program followed up

with continual training and assistance when needed. Shortly after the funeral, families are connected to representatives from the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS). This nationally recognized provider, at no cost and available 24/7, provides our families a full range of support, crisis intervention, casework as well as, grief and trauma support.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARE FOR OUR WOUNDED, ILL AND INJURED

The Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) continues to function as a central pillar of the Marine Corps' 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 stands ready to provide 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 staff and the Marine and his or her family members. This bond allows all parties to be vested in a common purpose: ensuring the WII Marine and their family members smoothly and successfully meet their identified goals.

Ensuring Wounded, Ill and Injured (WII) Marines' Future Success

History confirms that the majority of WII Marines who receive care from the WWR will not return to duty. Knowing this, it is a paramount goal of the WWR to help WII Marines reintegrate to their communities with the confidence to focus on their abilities and fully recognize that their best days are still to come.

Following injury and case review, a WII Marine's path to success typically begins with a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA). The Marine Corps' Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs) are assigned to WII Marines (based upon case acuity) and are responsible for conducting initial and ongoing CNAs which are used to develop the Marine's Comprehensive Recovery Plan (CRP). Once the Marine's CRP is established with identified actions, the RCC begins coordination with all internal and external stakeholders to help the Marine and family realize their goals. At any given time, there are approximately 1,000 Marines (along with their family members) receiving the support of an RCC.

A significant part of the CRP is employment and education support. To address this need, the WWR has a Transition Cell. Transition Cell Specialists, located at WWR Headquarters and Wounded Warrior Battalions at Camp Pendleton, California and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, work with WII Marines and families to assist them with the development of their career and education plans. Utilizing career assessment tools and leveraging the resources of Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Counselors, Marines along with their WWR Transition Specialists, develop a plan to reach their career goals. Types of WWR transition assistance include: career exploration (employment, education, training, and entrepreneurship), resume development, education applications, interview skills, and coordinating federal internships.

The WWR does not utilize a "fire and forget" mentality. We recognize that most recently-transitioned WII Marines will require some degree of continuing assistance. To address this requirement, the WWR continues to employ District Injured Support Coordinators at various sites (aligned with Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Integrated Services Networks) around the country to provide face-to-face assistance when required. DISCs provide a multitude

of services to include ensuring Marines are registered with the VA, providing information on various community resources, and linking WII Marines in need back to the WWR for assistance.

Additionally, a key component of the WWR's transition assistance includes the provision of 90 days of post-service support to bridge the gap in services between DoD and VA during a WII Marine's transition. Focused areas of support include: Combat Related Special Compensation, Concurrent Receipt Disability Pay, housing, VA benefits, employment and education referrals, family support, and follow-on medical care (TRICARE, VA Healthcare). More than 1,800 Marines have received or are currently receiving post-service support.

Outreach and Staying Connected

The Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center is not a typical call center in purpose or function. It is an outreach and contact center that actively maintains contact with and tracks an assigned population of WII Active, Reserve, Retired and Veteran Marines throughout their life. It includes two Contact Centers at the Wounded Warrior Battalions (Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune), which track active duty WII Marines who are recovering with their parent commands. While the Call Center averages 9,500 outreach calls per month to Purple Heart recipients, Marines on the Temporary Disability Retirement List and Marine Veterans, it also allows the Marine Corps great flexibility to focus on specific emergent at-risk populations. For example, during natural disasters, such as last year's floods in Colorado or the tornados in Oklahoma, the Call Center conducted outreach to WII Marines and families in those surrounding areas to provide information on relief efforts, emergency shelters, and food bank locations.

The Call Center also serves as the WWR's center of activity for social media and rapid action polls. The social media capability (Facebook, Twitter, and mobile app) enables the

continual flow of relevant care information to WII Marines and families and the polls allow the Regiment to gain important feedback for program improvement.

Future of the WWR: Care Continues

Marines and their family members, 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 and flexible, the WWR will endeavor to expand and contract depending upon requirements. The WWR will always stand ready to support Marines who sacrifice for our Nation.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS THROUGH CARING FOR OUR MARINES IN THE FIGHT

Deployed support is one of the most important services we provide. Our Exchange, Recreation, Fitness, and Communication services boost morale and reduce mission-related stress.

- ***Exchange.*** Ongoing missions in Afghanistan include the operation of a Direct Operation Exchanges Tactical (DOX-T) at Camp Leatherneck, one Tactical Field Exchange at Living Support Area 13, and numerous Warfighter Express Services Teams (WEST) operating out of Camp Leatherneck. We also have two Marine Corps

Exchange (MCX) Mobile Tactical Field Exchange (MTFE) Trailers, which can serve as fully functional retail stores. Equipped with a diesel generator, the MTFE can operate on site for up to 72 hours and can provide indefinite operations when accompanied with a resupply container and connected to municipal power. The trailer can be used to support tactical field exercises, disaster relief, and special events requiring retail support. The MTFEs are road-ready and are based at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune.

- ***Recreation and Fitness.*** We provide sports, recreational, and fitness equipment to units throughout Helmand Province. This transportable equipment includes sports/recreation cooler kits filled with sports gear and board games, electronic game kits, Theater-in-a-Box kits, and functional fitness equipment for use in austere environments. Reading materials, both electronic and paperback, are also distributed. Our award-winning libraries provide online tools for research, recreation and professional development. Several libraries offer private webcam meetings so families can stay connected with their deployed Marines.
- ***Communication.*** Morale satellite services are available to deployed Marines. We have delivered 13 small satellite communications systems to units in Afghanistan. Each system has two phones that provide 6,000 free minutes per month and five laptops that allow internet browsing, social networking, and chat/video capabilities to deployed Marines.

- ***MCCS Amenity Wi-Fi Solution.*** The Marine Corps Community Services Amenity Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) Solution program acquires, deploys, administers, and supports Wi-Fi capability at no-cost to Marines and Families. This morale and welfare initiative helps families stay in contact while separated from their Marines. Wi-Fi is conveniently located on 19 installations and 250 facilities such as, temporary lodging facilities, exchange food courts, libraries, education centers, child and youth centers, Clubs, and Wounded Warrior program facilities.

Marine Corps Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) activities support the readiness, resiliency and retention goals of Marines. Semper Fit and Recreation programs align to support the social and physical well-being of Marines and Sailors, to encourage healthy lifestyles and enhance quality of life and to amplify the Marine Corps' focus on mission and readiness. The comprehensive strength and conditioning programs, High Intensity Tactical Training (HITT) and Aquatic Maximum Power – Intense Training (AMP-IT), serve to optimize physical performance and combat readiness for all active duty and reserve Marines. In 2013, "For the Leathernecks", a social recreation event, reached over 20,000 single Marines, many of which recently returned from a deployment or training exercise. These shows enrich esprit de corps and unit cohesion to support the 21st century Sailor and Marine, and Marine Corps Total Fitness strategies. Semper Fit and Recreation expanded Operation Adrenaline Rush (OAR), which has reached over 8,000 Marines since the pilot program began in FY12, to eight installations last year. OAR assists Marines in reintegration after deployment by maintaining combat readiness, and reinforcing unit cohesion through high adventure outdoor activities like white water rafting, paintball, or rock climbing.

The Marine Corps resale system is also pleased to support the physical and financial health of Marines, Sailors, and their families. Through a variety of programs related to the Secretary of the Navy's 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative, our resale system supports physical health. The Commandant recently issued a memorandum regarding alcohol sales. It instructs all Marine Marts adjacent to barracks to remove distilled spirits. Additionally, the memo limits alcohol sales times to 8:00 AM thru 10:00 PM, and dedicated floor space to no more than 10 percent of the total retail space. Another significant step to support 21st Century Sailor and Marine came in 2012 when MCX instituted tobacco price parity. This effort complements the initiatives that Semper Fit has taken in training and education of tobacco cessation. Further, MCX offers tobacco cessation items at cost for patrons as part of our value program, "Xtreme Value." This program supports the financial readiness of Marines and their families and offers items such as diapers, formula, baby food, bread, and milk at cost. Additionally, MCX offers a variety of both branded and private label products from clothing to cosmetics to electronics to toys to home furnishings to serve as a "one stop shop" for Marines and families. Our Xtreme Value program offers the brands and products important to our customers at the best price possible. MCX is committed to supporting initiatives like the White House's Joining Forces Initiative to employ veterans and family members. As a member of the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program, MCX helps to provide jobs to military family members who may be worried about finding a job at their next duty station. Currently, nearly 30 percent of MCX employees are military family members.

REAWAKENING THE SOUL OF THE CORPS

During a time in which we, as a nation, have been continuously engaged in 12 years of fighting, we are doing so with a voluntary force. No other time in our country's young history have we fought this long. Less than half a percent of Americans voluntarily wear the uniform of one of our military services. These men and women have chosen to put on the cloth intuitively knowing the joy and sense of purpose that only comes through great challenges and subordination at a cause greater than themselves. These men and women---our neighbors, brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, and loved ones---know what it means to keep company with the finest men and women in a world under the toughest conditions. Living their lives right and to the fullest, while providing a vital function to society. Their sacrifices ensure the safety of not just communities, but the nation, our lifestyle, and our liberties.

A statement often attributed to our first Commander in Chief, perfectly sums up what this nation is facing when it comes to their military, which I would like to leave with you today. "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of early wars were treated and appreciated by our nation." I say this to you today to reiterate that your decisions now will have an impact that will go well beyond these conflicts and the current men and women voluntarily serving. Uncertainty in whether they will be able to continue a career in the military due to drawdown; what services and resources will be available to them and their families when serving; and what will happen to any retirement when they get out----all are having an impact on our current force and the young men and women that will be considering serving in the future. We cannot jeopardize our liberty.