

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARRY L. PARKS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
BEFORE THE
PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
11 MARCH 2003
CONCERNING
MILITARY PERSONNEL

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE SENATE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairman Chambliss, Senator Nelson, and members of the Subcommittee:

I am honored to appear before you today to provide a personnel overview on the United States Marine Corps. The continued commitment of the congress to increasing the war fighting and crisis response capabilities of our Nation's armed forces and to improving the quality of life of Marines is central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. We thank you for your efforts to ensure that Marines and families are poised to respond to the nation's call in the manner Americans expect of their Corps.

INTRODUCTION

As you well know, Marines are fully engaged around the world proudly meeting our commitments in support of National Security requirements. Today 63 percent of our operating forces are forward deployed. In support of this and other requirements, 15,022 Reserve Marines are mobilized. As with all the Armed Forces, it is a demanding time for the Corps. However, this is what Marines train for and this is why we serve, to be ready to answer our nation's call. As busy as we have been, and are today, indicators for the health of the Corps remain strong.

- Our superb recruiters continue to meet their mission, as they have month after month for the last 7-1/2 years.
- As has been the case for the past 9 years, we are on track to meet our annual retention goal for first term Marines electing to become members of the career force. This year, 6,014 first term Marines will reenlist, 26% of the eligible population.

- Last year we implemented specific targets for subsequent retention within the career force to further manage the health of our Corps; targets we met. We are well on our way to meeting the FY03 career force retention goal of 6,172.
- Last year we achieved an 18-year high in officer retention, 92.8%.

Obviously, the recognition of and support by the Congress to ensure reasonable pay and compensation improvements provides the environment crucial to the success experienced to date.

The end strength increase for the Marines Corps authorized by Congress for FY03, to 175,000, complements the demanding environment we face. By the end of this fiscal year we will essentially complete the “making” of these additional 2,400 Marines, allowing for redistribution of the Marines pulled from other requirements to activate the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism).

The Fiscal Year 2004 Budget funds a force of 175,000 active duty Marines and 39,558 reserve Marines. Roughly 70 percent of our Manpower Personnel budget funds basic pay and retired pay accrual. Essentially all of the remaining funds address regulated and directed items such as Basic Allowance for Housing, Defense Health Care, Subsistence, Permanent Change of Station relocations, and Special and Incentive pays. Only one percent of the Manpower budget is available to pay for discretionary items such as our Selective Reenlistment Bonus, Marine Corps College Fund recruitment program, and Aviation Continuation Pay. While this is a manageable amount, it is one with little flexibility.

The Marine Corps appreciates the efforts by this committee to raise the standard of living for our Marines. Being a Marine is challenging and rewarding. America’s

youth continue to join the Marine Corps, and remain, in a large part because of our institutional culture and core values. However, it is important that the environment – the other factors in the accession and retention decision – remain supportive, to include compensation. Compensation is a double-edged sword in that it is a principle factor for Marines both when they decide to reenlist and when they decide not to reenlist. Private sector competition will always seek to capitalize on the military training and education provided to our Marines – Marines are a highly desirable labor resource for private sector organizations. The support of the Congress to continue reasonable increases in basic pay, eliminating “out of pocket” expenses associated with the Basic Allowance for Housing, and ensuring sound compensation and entitlements will greatly assist efforts to recruit and retain the quality Americans you expect in your Corps.

RECRUITING

In FY02, the Marine Corps realized unprecedented recruiting success, achieving 102.6% of enlisted contracting and 100.1% of enlisted shipping objectives. Over 97% of those shipped to recruit training were Tier 1 high school diploma graduates, well above the Department of Defense (DoD) and Marine Corps standards of 90% and 95%, respectively. In addition, 69.6% were in categories I-III A; again well above the DoD and Marine Corps standards of 60% and 63%, respectively. For officers, over 100% of objectives in all categories were achieved.

The Marine Corps is grateful to the Congress for the legislation enabling recruiter access to high school student directory information. As a result, the number of high schools not providing directory information has decreased 99%. America’s youth can

learn of career opportunities in both the public and private sectors now that our recruiters are afforded access equal to other prospective employers. We look forward to your continued support as we strive to meet the increasing challenges of a dynamic recruiting environment.

The key tenants of our FY03 recruiting strategic plan are:

- Exploiting success through focused leadership; selecting the Corps' best for recruiting duty and innovative marketing;
- Achieving the next level of organizational efficiency and effectiveness with a renewed emphasis on fiscal accountability and comprehensive organizational review and restructure;
- Recruiting our own recruiters, by making recruiting duty a place where Marines want to be assigned; and
- Improving safety and quality of life for Marines and families.

Exploiting Success

The Marine Corps' recruiting environment is dynamic and challenging, particularly as regards market propensity. Nevertheless, we have met the challenges of this dynamic environment for 7 ½ years and we plan to "Sustain Success," the motto for our strategy. Our success, as we face the challenges of the future, will hinge on our ability to overcome the low propensity of our target market that enlist and the increased cost of advertising, while maintaining innovation in our marketing campaign. Marketing by its very nature requires constant change to remain virulent and relevant. While our brand message of "Tough, Smart, Elite Warrior" has not changed in theoretical

perspective, the Corps continues to explore the most efficient manner to communicate and appeal to the most qualified young men and women of the millennial generation; our target market.

This year, as in the past, our core programs that generate leads and provide effective sales support materials are augmented with several innovative programs. The new Marines.com website is already attracting attention and recently received a Gold “ADDY” award from the American Advertising Association in the Southeast regional competition. The new Public Service Announcement, “Origins,” was also recognized with a Bronze “ADDY” award in the same competition.

All aspects of our marketing strategy encompass diversity. It is this approach, combined with exploiting success of past years, that will sustain success in FY03.

Achieve the Next Level of Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness

The structure of our recruiting organization is an essential foundation for success, particularly in operating effectively and efficiently. Therefore, we have completed the reorganization of Marine Corps Recruiting Command (MCRC) Headquarters to mirror that of our subordinate commands and other operational commands in the Marine Corps. In FY02, MCRC assumed responsibility for prior service reserve recruiting operations, to truly become a total force recruiting service. Combining Reserve prior service recruiting with regular recruiting produces a synergistic effect, which allows MCRC to “by all means available” seek out and close with our target market, in the face of uncertain economic and world political events.

Recruit the Recruiter

Because recruiters who volunteer for this demanding duty perform better and subsequently experience a better quality of life, MCRC has taken some cost effective measures to recruit our own recruiters. Incorporating some of the marketing techniques and web design that have supported our regular recruiting efforts, we have been able to reach out to the remainder of the Marine Corps with a message capturing the benefits and rewards of recruiting duty. As a result of this “Recruit the Recruiter” initiative, our recruiter volunteer rate in FY02 rose by nearly 10 percent over that realized in previous years.

Safety and Quality of Life

Marine Corps recruiting remains committed to improving the health and safety of all Marines, Sailors, Civilian Marines, and members of the officer and enlisted entry pools. Operational risk management and traffic safety are emphasized at all levels and in both on and off duty activities. Our goal is to continue to attain the recruiting mission while minimizing risk, and the potential for loss of life and equipment.

Continuous improvement in quality of life for our personnel is vitally important as well. Our Marines and families are dispersed throughout America, away from the traditional support systems of our bases and stations. Therefore, we expend great effort to ensure awareness of numerous support programs adapted for their benefit. One such program is a DoD pilot, MCCS One Source, being offered Marine Corps wide. MCCS One Source offers assistance, advice, and support on a wide range of everyday issues. This 24/7, 365 day-a-year, enhanced employee assistance service can be accessed

anytime via toll free numbers, email, or the Internet and is especially useful for remote Marines, such as recruiters.

Our success in recruiting hinges on our recruiters whose efforts and dedication to the task provide our institution with its next generation of warriors. Our recruiters are the Corps' ambassadors to the American public and represent the virtues of the Marine Corps in a single individual.

RETENTION

A successful recruiting effort is but one part of placing a properly trained Marine in the right place at the right time. The dynamics of our manpower system must match skills and grades to our Commanders' needs throughout the operating forces. The Marine Corps endeavors to attain and maintain stable, predictable retention patterns. However, as is the case with recruiting, civilian opportunities abound for our Marines as employers actively solicit our young Marine leaders for private sector employment. Leadership opportunities, our core values, and other similar intangibles are a large part of the reason we retain dedicated men and women to be active duty Marines after their initial commitment. Of course retention success is also a consequence of the investments made in tangible forms of compensation and in supporting our operational forces – giving our Marines what they need to do their jobs in the field, as well as the funds required to educate and train these phenomenal men and women.

Enlisted Retention

Our enlisted force is the backbone of our Corps and we make every effort to retain our best people. Although we are experiencing minor turbulence in some specialties, the aggregate enlisted retention situation is extremely encouraging. Primarily because these young Marines remain in high demand in the civilian sector, some shortages exist in high-tech Military Occupational Specialties that represent an important part of our war fighting capability.

We are a young force, making a continued flow of quality new accessions of foundational importance to well-balanced readiness. Of the 156,912 active duty enlisted force, over 25,000 are still teenagers and 104,000 are on their first enlistment. As noted at the outset, in FY03 we will reenlist approximately 26% of our first term eligible population. These 6,014 Marines represent 100% of the career force requirement and will mark the tenth consecutive year that the Corps will achieve this objective. Prior to FY02, we recognized a slight increase in the number of first term Marines that we needed to reenlist. To counter this rising first term reenlistment requirement, the Corps focused greater attention on retaining Marines during their 6th through 12th years of service. Specifically, in FY02 we introduced the Subsequent Term Alignment Plan (STAP) to focus on retaining experience. The first year of STAP proved to be a huge success meeting our goals and achieving a 96 percent MOS match. A stabilized continuation rate ensures manageable requirements for first term reenlistments. Given the strong draw from the civilian sector, further emphasis in retention of our career force was achieved by effectively targeting 40 percent of our Selective Reenlistment Bonus program resources to maintain this experience level on par with previous years.

A positive trend is developing concerning our first term non-Expiration of Active Service (EAS) attrition. As with fiscal years 2001 and 2002, we continue to see these numbers decrease. The implementation, now nearly seven years ago, of the Crucible and the Unit Cohesion programs is contributing to improved retention among our young Marines who assimilate the cultural values of the Corps earlier in their career. The impact of lower non-EAS attrition allowed a reduced accession mission in both FY02 and FY03.

The Marine Corps fully expects to meet our aggregate personnel objectives, and we continue to successfully maintain the appropriate balance of first term and career Marines. The management of youth and experience in our enlisted ranks is critical to our success and we are pleased with the accomplishments thus far.

Specialty shortages are addressed with the highly successful Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) program. Shortages persist in some highly technical specialties, such as intelligence, data communications experts, and air command and control technicians. The Marine Corps allocated \$51.7M in FY03 toward new SRB payments to assist our reenlistment efforts. These payments, just one-half of one percent of our Manpower Personnel budget, are split 60/40 between first term and career force reenlistments, respectively. The SRB program greatly complements reenlistment efforts and clearly improves retention within our critical skill shortages. In FY03, the Corps continues to pay lump sum bonuses, thus increasing the net present value of the incentive and positively influencing highly qualified, yet previously undecided, personnel. It is a powerful incentive for the undecided to witness another Marine's reenlistment and receipt of his/her SRB in the total amount. And, with the added benefit of the Thrift

Savings Program, our Marines can now confidently invest these funds toward their future financial security.

Officer Retention

Overall, officer retention continues to experience great success. In FY02, our aggregate officer retention rate reached an eighteen-year high of 92.8 percent. The significant increase in our officer retention rate involves a reduction in voluntary separations. This has likely been positively influenced by the terrorist attacks of September 11th and the current economic conditions. As with the enlisted force, we have some skill imbalances within our officer corps, especially aviation, intelligence, and command and control.

Although we are cautiously optimistic, fixed wing pilot retention remains a concern. Fixed wing pilot “take rates” for the FY02 Aviation Continuation Pay plan did not meet retention targets due to an inadequate eligible population resultant from previous years’ losses. We will likely meet the aggregate FY03 retention target for aviators based on “take rates” from the rotary wing and naval flight officer communities. Retaining aviators involves a concerted effort in multiple areas. Recent retention initiatives (i.e., Marine Aviation Campaign Plan, reducing the time to train, and pay reform) provide corrective steps to strengthen the Marine Corps’ position toward retaining aviation officers. Additionally, supplementary pay programs such as Aviation Continuation Pay provide a proactive, long-term aviation career incentive to our field grade aviators. We remain focused on retaining mid-grade aviators (junior majors and

lieutenant colonels) and will continually review our overall aviation retention posture to optimize all our resources.

Overall, the Marine Corps' officer and enlisted retention situation is very encouraging. Through the phenomenal leadership of our unit commanders, we will achieve every strength objective for FY03 and expect to start FY04 poised for continued success. Even though managing our retention success offers new challenges – sustaining quality accessions, maintaining the appropriate grade mix, and balancing occupational specialties – we will press forward and effectively manage this process. In this challenging recruiting and retention environment, the Marine Corps remains optimistic and anticipates these positive trends will continue, thanks in large measure to the continued support of Congress.

END STRENGTH

The Congressionally authorized increase in Marine Corps end strength to 175,000 allows us to sustain the increased missions associated with the activation of the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (Anti-Terrorism), in response to the global war on terrorism. As previously noted, we are well along the way in “making” these 2,400 Marines. Yet it will take the remainder of FY03 to complete this process. This additional end strength allows us to replace Marines in the active units that we “borrowed” standing up the Brigade, which not only provides the Nation with a robust, scalable force option specifically dedicated to anti-terrorism, but also a fully mission capable Marine Corps. The timing of the increased end strength could not have been more fortuitous given world events and demand for Marine forces. The increased end

strength, our recruiting success, the strong retention of our first term population as well as the career force, our eighteen-year high retention rate for officers – these factors combine to allow your Marine Corps to be well postured for the uncertain times that lie ahead as we continue to prosecute the war on terror and respond to the call of our nation.

MARINE CORPS RESERVE – PARTNERS IN TOTAL FORCE

The integration of active and reserve components of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) into a Total Force Marine Corps is the foundation of our operational fighting force. We advance this Total Force capability by ensuring the integration of the active and reserve components in all aspects of our training and operations, to include the primary mission of augmentation and reinforcement. Reserve Units and Individual Ready Reserve Marines provided over 1.8 million man-days in FY02 through support at all levels within the Marine Corps and within the Joint communities, to include Joint Task Forces, Combatant Commands, and Interagency Staffs.

Reserve participation in the South American UNITAS exercise, security assistance at Guantanamo Bay, KC-130 support of the 13th MEU (SOC) in Afghanistan, “on call” forces to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s role in homeland security and support of Joint Task Force 6, and Joint Interagency Task Forces – East and West in our nation’s continued counter drug effort are but a few examples of our Reserve’s involvement and commitment to the Total Force effort.

The Marine Forces Reserve will retain their current basic structure. However, we are currently working to transform this structure and create new capabilities through a

Comprehensive Review designed to adapt the Reserve force to the changing demands of the war on terrorism and conflicts of the future.

Active Duty Special Work

The Active Duty Special Work (ADSW) Program funds short tours of Active Duty for Marine Corps Reserve personnel. This program continues to provide critical skills and Operational Tempo Relief for existing and emerging augmentation requirements of the Total Force. The demand for ADSW has increased in order to support pre-mobilization activities and will be further challenged during post mobilization. In FY02, the Marine Corps executed 907 work-years of ADSW. Continued support and funding for this critical program ensures our Total Force requirements are fully met.

Reserve Recruiting

As presented earlier, FY02 marked the first year that Marine Corps Recruiting Command assumed responsibility for recruiting prior service Marines. The synergy achieved by placing all Reserve recruiting within Marine Corps Recruiting Command will keep our Reserve Force strong and manned with the proper MOS distribution. The FY02 recruiting goals were met, accessing 5,904 non-prior service Marines and 4,213 prior service Marines. FY02 success in prior service accessions is significant as our Active Component retention rates are at historic highs, reducing the number of Marines leaving active duty and concurrently reducing the pool for prior service recruiting. This

successful accession rate reflects the professionalism of our Marine Forces Reserve, a professionalism that attracts these individuals.

Our most challenging recruiting and retention issue is manning our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units with qualified company grade officers – Lieutenants and Captains. The Marine Corps recruits Reserve officers almost exclusively from the ranks of those officers who have first served an active duty tour. This practice ensures our Selected Marine Corps Reserve unit officers have the proven experience, knowledge, and leadership abilities when we need them the most—during mobilization. However, at the same time, this limits the recruiting pool we can draw from to staff our units. We are attempting to improve Reserve participation of company grade officers through increased recruiting efforts, greater command focus on reserve participation upon leaving active duty, and Reserve officer programs for qualified enlisted Marines.

Marine for Life

The Marine For Life Program is an initiative reinforcing the value of honorable service and commitment to our ethos “Once A Marine, Always A Marine.” Annually, we transition back to society nearly 27,000 Marines who have served honorably. The Marine For Life Program enhances the transition support for these Marine citizens and utilizes our Marine Corps Reserve serving in local communities around the country to act as Hometown Links. These links build relationships with veteran Marines and Marine-friendly organizations that have a desire to help transitioning Marines. We realize that we will all spend more time as Marines out of uniform than we will spend in uniform. Marine For Life embraces this reality, to the benefit of Marines and society.

MOBILIZATION

Since the tragic attacks of 9/11, the Marine Corps judiciously activated Individual Ready Reserve (IRR) Marines in response to both internal and joint operational requirements. The Marine Corps maximized the use of volunteers to meet these requirements, primarily in the areas of staff augmentation and force protection. In addition, Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) units were activated for force protection requirements in support of homeland security. In late February 2002, the Marine Corps reviewed requirements and reduced the number of Reservists on active duty from a high of 4,445 to approximately 3,900. We held this prudent course until early in this calendar year. Due to the emerging requirements associated with the war on terrorism, it was necessary to involuntarily recall some IRRs beginning January 17, 2003. As of March 5, 2003 we have 15,022 Marines mobilized; 13,189 SMCR, 1,132 IRRs, 668 Individual Mobilization Augmentees, 25 voluntary retired recalls, and 8 SMCR ADSW-Contingency Operations. For further specificity, we have 404 volunteer IRR Marines in their second year of mobilization.

The Marine Corps sincerely appreciates the support of the public and private sector employers of our men and women serving in the Reserve Component. Their sacrifices and commitment to these special men and women are exceptional, and often at levels that far exceed their mandates. Without this supportive environment it would be difficult to envision the ability to properly man our critical Reserve Forces.

STOP LOSS

As we did with mobilization, the Marine Corps consciously exercised judicious use of its Stop Loss authority. Between September 11, 2001 and January 15, 2003, the Marine Corps retained only 337 Marines beyond their end of active service. At any point in time this number averaged approximately 100. However, driven by prudent planning and a dynamic situation, on January 15, 2003, the Marine Corps instituted Stop Loss across the Corps to meet the emerging requirements associated with the expanding war on terrorism. Stop Loss was initiated to provide unit stability/cohesion, sustain small unit leadership, maintain unit readiness, meet expanded force protection requirements, and to reduce the requirement to activate IRR personnel. We will ensure judicious use of this authority and continue to discharge Marines for humanitarian, physical disability, administrative, and disciplinary reasons. We have instructed our general officers to continue to use a common sense approach and have authorized them to release Marines from active duty if it is in the best interest of the Marine Corps and the Marine. Currently, we have 1,566 active and 2,668 reserves on Stop Loss. Only 197 of the reservists on Stop Loss have been mobilized.

MANAGING TIME AWAY FROM HOME

(PERSONNEL TEMPO – PERSTEMPO)

The Marine Corps is in compliance with PERSTEMPO legislation, and continues to maintain the OSD tracking and reporting criteria. We remain committed to maintaining the proper balance between operational deployments and the quality of life of our Marines and their families. Having said this, Marines join to train and deploy, and

we do not disappoint them. Service in the Marine Corps requires deployments for readiness and mission accomplishment. The existing PERSTEMPO legislation is inconsistent with the Marine Corps' expeditionary, forward deployed nature and could have adverse effects on our unit cohesion, stability, training, and readiness. We support changes that retain the original intent of the legislation, better balance the needs of the Services with the needs of the service members and their families, and provide compensation to members for excessive deployments that is better aligned with similar payments for burdensome duties. Currently, we have 382 Marines in excess of the 400-day threshold identified in the original legislation.

NATIONAL CALL TO SERVICE

The Marine Corps is working with DoD to establish implementation guidance for the National Call to Service (NCS) requirement contained in the Bob Stump Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003. We desire to link active and reserve service periods together to meet the needs of the Corps, primarily in the homeland security areas. Marines accessed via the NCS program would serve their 15 months of active duty with the 4th MEB AT Battalion, Chemical Biological Incident Response Force, Marine Security Forces, or base/station AT/FP units. Reserve service would be aligned to the counterpart units of the active component. We are also considering providing a limited number of the NCS accessed Marines with training in high demand/low density reserve MOSs, such as intelligence, linguists, and aerial navigation. These Marines would spend their active duty period primarily in training, but then would be assigned to SMCR units where their skills could be readily utilized. We anticipate commencing the recruiting for this program in October 2003.

IT INNOVATION

To properly manage the resources entrusted to us, it is necessary to have and maintain capable tools. Planning for and managing manpower requirements – including addressing mobilization challenges, determining Stop Loss requirements, and tracking PERSTEMPO information mentioned previously – requires effective and relevant automation and IT systems for manpower modeling, manpower management, and personnel servicing. When competing with weapons systems and near term resource requirements, it is easy to bypass proper investment in these management systems. However, though not perfect, we are proud of the portfolio in place to support our Manpower processes and are committed in the budget to continuing appropriate reinvestment.

The Marine Corps benefits from a fully integrated pay and personnel system. This system, the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), incorporates all Active, Reserve, and Retired pay and personnel records. Having an integrated Total Force system minimizes difficulties for our reserves as they are mobilized. The MCTFS serves as the foundation for ongoing re-engineering of our administrative occupational field into the Total Force Administration System (TFAS). This TFAS will execute a web-based, virtually paperless self-serve capability for all Marines via our web portal, Marine On-Line.

We have also integrated data via MCTFS by leveraging the information contained in the Operational Data Store Enterprise and the Total Force Data Warehouse to create the foundation of a shared data environment. This allows full integration of our digitized

personnel files with the Marine Corps promotion board process, giving us the most advanced and comprehensive promotion process among the Services.

In addition, the Marine for Life and Civilian Marine web sites provide valuable tools to our uniformed and Civilian Marines. Marine for Life provides an electronic reach back to those Marines who honorably leave the Corps as they return to civilian life. The maturing Civilian Marine web site will provide a “one-stop” site to allow our Civilian Marines to manage their careers from their desktops.

CIVILIAN MARINES

Civilian Marines are integral to the Corps’ Total Force concept. We have approximately 25,000 Civilian Marines, of which 13,000 are appropriated fund (APF) employees and about 12,000 are nonappropriated fund (NAF) employees. Our APF Civilian Marines comprise just 2 percent of the total DoD civilian workforce. The Marine Corps has one APF Civilian Marine per 12 active duty Marines. The remaining half of our Civilian Marines, our NAF personnel, are primarily resourced by revenue-generating activities and services such as exchanges, clubs, golf courses, bowling centers, gas stations, and dry cleaners. Our Civilian Marines fill key billets aboard Marine Corps bases and stations, thus freeing active duty Marines from supporting establishment responsibilities to perform their war fighting requirements in the operating forces.

This past December we introduced our Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan, covering the period 2002 - 2007, that outlines the Corps’ strategy to enhance civilian workforce management and development. As with the challenge faced across the federal government, 30 percent of our APF Civilian Marines will be retirement eligible within

the next five years. Though we project that just 25 percent of those eligible will retire, our growing retirement eligible population further necessitates prudent planning and consideration. By investing up front in our Civilian Marine workforce, we believe we can recruit, develop, and retain quality workers in both the near and long term.

To increase the technical expertise and improve career opportunities for our Civilian Marines, we have established 21 Civilian “Communities of Interest” with a senior civilian heading each community. Similar to our military occupational fields, these career communities have identified job competencies and training requirements, and defined career paths. Through a corporate approach to attract, develop, and retain an expert civilian workforce, and with the concentrated effort of the general officers and senior executives in our Corps, we will successfully ensure the needs of the Marine Corps and our Civilian Marines are met.

We continue to make strides in how we recognize the value of our civilian workforce and its contributions to the success of the Corps. From the symbolic, such as our Marine Corps Civilian Service Pin, to the investment we are making in civilian career and leadership development, our efforts will support our positioning to be the employer of choice.

CARING FOR MARINES AND FAMILIES

The Marine Corps cultivates an ethos of taking care of Marines and their families. Our continuum of care begins with the “yellow footprints” at basic training and continues throughout the life of a Marine. Marines are Marines for Life. Legendary hallmarks of “Once A Marine, Always A Marine” and “Semper Fi” prove our long-term commitment

and provide convincing testimony from Marines that they are forever changed and a part of a society that is sustained through self-perpetuation and shared culture.

Beyond the superb quality of our recruiters, accomplishment of our recruitment mission is enhanced by our study and knowledge of the demographics of the American public – the potential market for our Corps. As it is with recruiting, our ability to sustain or take care of Marines and their families is based on a thorough understanding of Marine Corps demographics. Consider the following facts that outline the Marine Corps as the youngest, most junior, and least married of the four Military Services.

- 66 percent of Marines are 25 or younger.
- 27 percent of Marines are under 21.
- 42 percent of Marines are Lance Corporals (pay grade E3) or below.
- 40 percent of Marine spouses are age 25 or younger.
- Average Marine is 23 years old at the birth of his/her first child.
- Only 5,300 Marines are single parents.
- Average age of a married enlisted Marine is 28.
- 44 percent of active duty Marines are married.
 - Among Privates and Lance Corporals, 19 percent are married.
 - Among Corporals and Sergeants, 51 percent are married.
 - Among Staff Non-Commissioned Officers, 84 percent are married.

Understanding these Marine specific demographics helps us effectively identify needs and target support. It also orients our program planners and ensures we balance the support provided between groups, younger versus older, and married versus single. In this way, we stay connected and maintain our leading edge.

Quality of Life (QOL) in the Marine Corps has been studied for over 10 years. Our third administration of the *Marine Corps Quality of Life Study* was conducted in 2002 and we are now beginning the hard work of in-depth analysis. The results of this Study and our subsequent work are important given the qualitative and quantitative link between QOL satisfaction and recruitment, retention, and readiness. Over the last decade, the Marine Corps, through Congressional support, invested resources designed to increase income and standard of living, revitalize housing, and enhance community services for our Marines. The living conditions for our Marines and families have been objectively improved by almost any measure. Yet, a significant finding from the 2002 study was an “across-the-board” decrease in the QOL satisfaction of Marines when compared to measurements from the 1998 QOL Study, most substantial for junior enlisted Marines (Sergeant and below).

The reasons for this decline will be closely examined. However, one important finding identified that “expectations” are a relevant dynamic to QOL satisfaction. When measuring QOL satisfaction, we in large part measure the delta between what the Marine Corps provides and the internal expectations Marines and their families have as they compare themselves to peers, civilian counterparts, or family members.

Understanding what drives expectations and determining the appropriate response is clearly a challenge in taking care of Marines and their families. We accept the challenge and believe that our efforts will help shape the future of QOL support. We expect to gain knowledge of the influence of generational and societal changes on the Marine Corps and the subsequent impact to QOL support and the manner of service delivery. This knowledge will assist with better definition of the “benefit package”

provided by the Corps. Additionally, we will assess the relationship of QOL to other human resources strategies to ensure we are achieving our goals.

While it is important to plan for the future of Marine Corps QOL, it is equally important to evaluate the current state. With 63 percent of our operating forces forward deployed, our “taking care” mission is both expeditionary to support them, and fixed at needed levels aboard Marine Corps bases and stations to sustain the Marines and families left behind. Depending on the intensity and duration of the deployment or contingency, deployment recreation support kits (“mount out blocks”) are provided to meet operational command requirements and can include fitness equipment; sports equipment; electronic equipment; and leisure items. In addition, Tactical Field Exchanges, “theaters in a box,” and miscellaneous books and recreational supplies may also be provided to embarked or “in-country” Marines depending on the operational command requirements. By February of this year, five Marine Corps Exchange/Army Air Force Exchange Tactical Field Exchanges had been established in Southwest Asia.

When deployed, Marines depend upon the Corps to support their families. Our major bases and stations provide the needed comfort and support specifically designed to address the challenges of the military lifestyle. Supporting Reservists on active duty provides an added challenge as their families are spread throughout America. The Key Volunteer Program serves as the official communication link between the deployed command and the families. To build awareness of life in the Marine Corps, our Lifestyle Insights, Networking, Knowledge and Skills (L.I.N.K.S.) Program is provided to new Marine spouses to acquaint them with military lifestyle and the Marine Corps. We are currently preparing an online and CD-ROM version of L.I.N.K.S., which we expect to

make available early this summer. Special deployment support links have been built on Marine Corps web sites to connect families and provide information. Finally, we are proud to be the Department of Defense pilot for implementation of an enhanced employee assistance program. *Marine Corps Community Services One Source* is a 24/7, 365 day-a-year, information and referral service designed to reach both active duty and reserve families wherever they may be located. It can be accessed anytime via toll free numbers, email, or the Internet. The support includes parenting and childcare, education services, financial information and advice, legal, elder care, health and wellness, crisis support, and relocation. The Corps just implemented its pilot program across the United States and overseas in December 2002. We are excited about the possibility of extended support capabilities and how that will contribute to the well being of Marines and their families.

For Marine families, Marine Corps Family Team Building (MCFTB) and other Marine Corps Community Services programs provide support for the whole family: the Marine, the spouse, new parents, and children. General counseling, personal financial management assistance, family advocacy programs, and substance abuse avoidance are just some of the support programs available.

Every day, regardless of duty assignment or mission, the Marine Corps takes care of Marines and their families. We work hard to provide program support that is relevant to the QOL improvement of Marines and their families. In addition, taking care of Marines and their families through QOL and community services programs contributes to readiness and thus is relevant to the operating forces. As the Marine Corps is

predominantly comprised of young, single, junior Marines, we have specifically built programs to support their development and growth.

The Single Marine Program provides needed recreation and stress outlets that are both wholesome and support development of social skills. Just as importantly, the Single Marine Program stresses the responsibility that young single Marines have to identify solutions to QOL issues and resolve them through working with the chain of command.

Many young Marines joined the Corps for a challenge. This desire for physical and mental challenge is met through our world-class health and fitness program, Semper Fit, and our Lifelong Learning program. Tuition Assistance is part of the Lifelong Learning program and in FY02, approximately 20,000 Marines enrolled in almost 60,000 courses.

Within the Corps taking care of Marines and their families is a point of pride and constancy. As the Commandant has charged all Marines, we will proceed with boldness, intellect, and confidence in our mission. Today, we know more than we ever have about the demographics and needs of Marines and their families. We will use our knowledge of Marines and their families to properly frame expectations and forge an even stronger compact that continues to support the legacy of taking care of our own.

CONCLUSION

Through the remainder of FY03 and into FY04 our Nation will likely remain challenged on many fronts as we conduct the Global War on Terrorism. Services will continue to be pressed to meet commitments, both at home and abroad. Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers are the heart of our Services, our most precious assets, and we must

continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Transformation will require that we blend together the “right” people and the “right” equipment as we design our “ideal” force. Manpower associated costs are a major portion of the DoD and Service budgets, and our challenge is to effectively and properly balance personnel, readiness, and modernization costs to provide mission capable forces. The DoD is undertaking numerous studies in the area of human resources strategy designed to support an integrated military, civilian, and QOL program, within which we must balance the uniqueness of the individual services. In some cases a one-size fits all approach may be best, in others flexibility to support service unique requirements may be paramount. Regardless, we look forward to working with the Congress to “do what’s right” to maintain readiness and take care of your Marines.

The Marine Corps continues to be a significant force provider and major participant in joint operations. Our successes have been achieved by following the same core values today that gave us victory on yesterday’s battlefields. Our Active, Reserve, and Civilian Marines remain our most important assets and with your support, we can continue to achieve our goals and provide what is required to accomplish assigned tasks. Marines are proud of what they do! They are proud of the “Eagle, Globe, and Anchor” and what it represents to our country. It is our job to provide for them the leadership, resources, QOL, and moral guidance to carry our proud Corps forward. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our nation’s call as we have for the past 227 years! Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.