

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION
UNTIL RELEASED BY
THE HOUSE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF
GENERAL MICHAEL W. HAGEE
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
MARCH 1, 2006**

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Chairman Hunter, Congressman Skelton, distinguished members of the Committee, it is my honor to report to you on the state of your Marine Corps. Now entering the fifth year of what is a long war, your Marine Corps is wholly fixed on this challenge to the Nation. This conflict requires the uniformed services to provide a broader range of capabilities supporting extended global operations, ultimately delivering greater agility, adaptability, and duration of sustainment. While our armed forces continue to predominate in traditional warfare, our current enemy necessitates the adoption of unconventional and indirect approaches throughout the Joint Force.

History reveals a pattern of Marines aggressively adapting to circumstances, and we consider ourselves in the vanguard of instituting the changes required to address the present challenge. The over 30,000 Marines serving on the forward fronts in the Central Command Area of Operations today are a manifestation of transformational advances in manning, training, educating, and equipping to confront this latest threat to our way of life. From force structure revision, to urban training facilities, to cultural and language instruction, to leveraging emerging technologies, our efforts recognize the new character of conflict, and we are delivering both Marines and Marine units that thrive in the uncertainty which will likely define warfare throughout the coming decades.

This war, like any other, is costly, and the essence of this statement outlines the challenges we share in sustaining the caliber of service the Nation has come to expect from its Corps of Marines. Readiness is the enduring hallmark of your Marine Corps, and if this war ended today, we would require continued supplemental budgetary support in order to "reset the force." We also remain committed to providing for your Marines and their families in a manner befitting their dedication and selfless sacrifice.

Marines are grateful for the unwavering support of Congress, welcome the opportunity to report on the present state of the Corps, and consider service to the Nation during this demanding period a distinct privilege.

I. Introduction

Today, Marines are forward deployed in prosecution of the Global War on Terror, as they have been since that fateful day in September 2001. The performance of Marines on the field of battle during these last four years has validated our commitment to warfighting excellence and to remaining the world's foremost expeditionary warfighting organization.

Our bedrock is our warrior ethos and the philosophy that every Marine is first a rifleman. We recruit quality Americans whom we then infuse into a culture that requires individuals to think independently and act aggressively in chaotic and unpredictable environments where information is neither complete nor certain. We rigorously train these young Marines to perform under adverse circumstances, and to accept greater responsibility as part of a team. We educate these Marines and their leaders to prepare their minds for the intellectual component of the clash of wills and chaos inherent to combat. These past four years have further validated our forward deployed posture, our maneuver warfare doctrine, our adaptive logistics backbone, and the unique flexibility and scalability of the combined-arms Marine Air-Ground Task Force construct. Time and again, we have delivered to the Combatant Commander a solution tailored to their joint force requirements.

In an uncertain world, readiness is the coin of the realm. In November 2001, at the direction of the Combatant Commander, we projected the combat power of two Marine Expeditionary Units some 350 miles into the heart of Afghanistan during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. Less than 18 months later, we deployed 70,000 Marines and Sailors in less than 60 days in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. As part of the Joint Force, our 500-mile push from Kuwait, through Baghdad, and up to Saddam's hometown of Tikrit more than doubled our doctrinal expectation for force projection.

After a short respite at home, we again demonstrated the readiness and responsiveness to the Joint Force Commander by deploying 25,000 Marines back to Iraq in March 2004. We are now entering our third year in the Al Anbar province and the servicemen and women of the Multi-National-Force-West have acquitted themselves in such locales as Fallujah, Ramadi, and throughout the Euphrates River valley with valor and distinction.

In 2004, we also provided a combined-arms Marine Expeditionary Unit for the "Spring Offensive" in Afghanistan, significantly reducing the Taliban's influence and setting the stage for the national elections which followed. We continue to provide support in Afghanistan in the form of embedded training teams with the Afghan National Army.

The Nation invests tremendous capital in its naval forces, and this past summer the Navy-Marine team had an opportunity to turn that capability homeward in support of our fellow Americans along the Gulf Coast ravaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Organized as a Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, over 2,500 Marines from both the active and

reserve forces came to the aid of communities across Louisiana and Mississippi. Marines and Sailors welcomed this direct involvement in a domestic humanitarian crisis that further highlighted the strategic flexibility of naval forces in meeting challenges to the Nation both around the world and at home.

The Nation is receiving a superb return on its investment in the world’s finest expeditionary force. Nearly one in three Marines of our operating forces is today forward deployed or forward based protecting America’s interests.

II. Resetting the Force and Preparing for the Next Contingency

The War on Terror has made extraordinary demands on the Marine Corps' tactical equipment. Extended operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere over the past several years have severely tested our materiel. The great majority of our equipment has passed the test of combat with flying colors. However, it has been subjected to a lifetimes’ worth of wear stemming from vehicle mileage, operating hours, and harsh environmental conditions.

We documented this situation last year in an Iraqi Theatre Assessment of Equipment Readiness Report. Figure 1 demonstrates the impact of the operating tempo on both ground and air vehicles. We have responded to enemy tactics and techniques, such as the employment of increasingly destructive improvised explosive devices (IED), by adding armor protection to

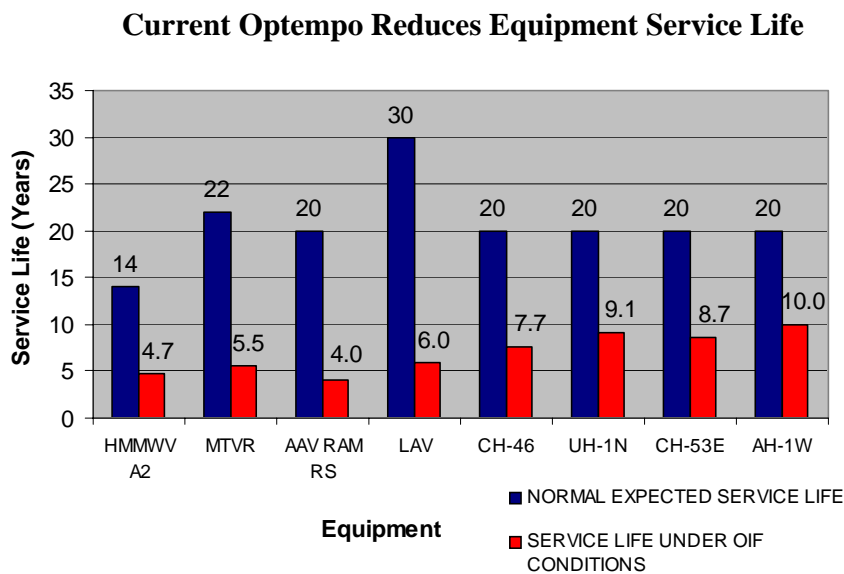


Figure 1

vehicles—thereby increasing their weight and ultimately increasing the wear and tear on frames, axles, and suspension systems. In the case of the HMMWV, for example, its expected “peacetime” service life is 14 years.

Under current conditions, we will have to replace it after less than 5 years of service in Iraq.

The significant distances in the Al Anbar Province, which is approximately the size of the state of Utah, exacerbates the demand on equipment. The extended distances, enemy tactics, and continuous nature of operations have placed extraordinary demands on Marine engineering equipment as well. We maintain roads and infrastructure across the Al Anbar province to accommodate the heavy logistics support demanded by coalition forces. Control points and compounds require round-the-clock power generation for vital communications, equipment repairs, and hospitals. These requirements place a heavy demand on the existing inventory of Marine Corps' engineering equipment such as power generators, tractors, forklifts, and road construction vehicles.

Our expansive area also requires our headquarters' elements to perform the command and control functions normally held by the next higher command in traditional tactical and operational settings (e.g., battalion headquarters often function like a regimental headquarters). The Marine Expeditionary Force in Al Anbar has command and control requirements that far exceed the existing organizational tables of equipment.

The Equipment Readiness Report also noted that the types of missions we are conducting in Iraq require an increase in the number of some weapons contained in the units' Table of Equipment allowance. For example, most infantry, logistics, and security battalions are employing twice the number of .50 caliber, M240G and MK19 machineguns they normally rate.

Supplemental funding (Figure 2 below) is essential to address "Reset the Force" and wartime contingency costs since our annual baseline budget procurement averages approximately \$1.5-\$2.0 billion.

Where there are equipment shortages, we equip units preparing to deploy at the expense of our non-deploying units. Maintaining the readiness of our forward deployed units remains our top priority, and their readiness remains high. The equipment shortages experienced by non-

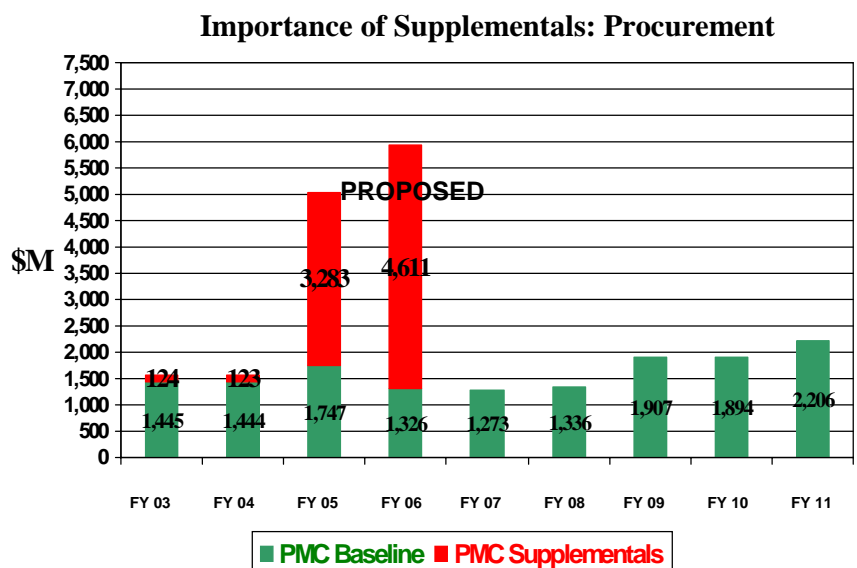


Figure 2

deploying forces are exacerbated by the requirement to source the Iraqi Transition Teams (advisors). Although the overall readiness of our remain-behind units is suffering, it will improve when sufficient quantities of equipment procured via supplemental funding becomes available. Until then, sustaining the Corps' readiness requires that our remain-behind units continue cross leveling equipment with each force rotation.

Reset of Strategic Prepositioning Programs. Equipment from the Marine Corps' two strategic prepositioning programs (the Maritime Prepositioning Force and Marine Corps Prepositioning Program—Norway) has been employed in support of the Global War on Terror. Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadrons 1 and 3 are fully reconstituted. The majority of Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron 2's equipment was employed during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM II. This squadron will complete its initial reconstitution in April 2006, but will only be partially mission capable until all ground equipment is delivered. The Marine Corps Prepositioning Program—Norway currently possesses approximately 35 percent of its ground equipment, and the other classes of supply are at 98 percent or better. The majority of the other Maritime Prepositioning Ships squadron capabilities range between 92-100 percent.

III. Preparing for the Future: The Last Year

Recent Modernization and Transformation Initiatives

Componency. Over the last year, we have restructured our service components to meet the requirements of the *Unified Command Plan*, National Strategy, and Combatant Commanders. This effort has resulted in four major changes to our componency construct. First, we established Marine Forces Command as the Marine Corps component to the Joint Force Provider, U.S. Joint Forces Command. Secondly, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Central Command is now a stand-alone component staff of approximately 100 active duty Marines. Third, the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve and his staff have assumed the Service Component responsibilities for U.S. Northern Command. Finally, on 24 February 2006, we established a Marine Component within Special Operations Command (MARSOC). The new Marine Component will provide approximately 2,600 USMC/Navy billets within U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), lead by a Marine major general. The MARSOC will provide additional capability and capacity to SOCOM by adding forces that will conduct direct action, special reconnaissance, counterterrorism and foreign internal defense.

Force Structure Review Group. In 2004, we conducted an extensive Total Force Structure Review recommending approximately 15,000 structure changes to improve the Marine Corps' ability to meet the long-term needs of the Global War on Terror and the emerging requirements of the 21st Century. This effort was end strength and structure neutral—offsets to balance these increases in capabilities come from military to civilian conversions and the disestablishment and reorganization of less critical capabilities.

We are currently implementing these changes. Additionally, we will stand up a Capabilities Assessment Group in the first part of March 2006 to take a focused look at our operating forces in order to ensure we have properly incorporated lessons learned on the battlefield, QDR guidance, and the MARSOC standup.

The Marine Corps continues to examine other opportunities to augment needed capabilities. For example, we are assigning each artillery regiment a secondary mission to conduct civil military operations (CMO). To do this, each regiment will be augmented by a reserve civil affairs capability. By assigning a secondary CMO mission to artillery units, we have augmented our high-demand/low density civil affairs capability while retaining much needed artillery units. We will continue to look for additional innovative ways to maximize our capabilities within our existing force structure.

Regionalization of Bases and Stations. The Marine Corps is transforming its bases from singularly managed and resourced entities to ones strategically managed in geographic regions. With the exception of our recruit training depots, our bases and stations will fall under the purview of five Marine Corps Installation Commands with the majority of the installations under the oversight of Marine Corps Installation Command—East and Marine Corps Installation Command—West. Regionalization goals include providing optimal warfighter support, improving alignment, enhancing the use of regional assets, returning Marines to the Operating Forces, and reducing costs.

Programmatic and Organizational Developments

MV-22. VMX-22 completed Operational Evaluation in June 2005, and the Operational Test report was completed and released in August 2005. The report found the MV-22 Block A to be operationally effective and suitable. All Key Performance Parameters met or exceeded threshold requirements, and on 28 September 2005, the V-22 Program Defense Acquisition Board approved Milestone B and authorized the program to begin Full Rate Production. Twenty-

nine Block A aircraft have been delivered and are supporting training at Marine Corps Air Station, New River, North Carolina. The first CH-46E squadron stood down in June 2005 to begin transition to the MV-22 and is scheduled to deploy in the fall of 2007.

KC-130J. In February 2005, the KC-130J attained initial operational capability (IOC). The aircraft has been continuously deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM since IOC and has provided the warfighter a state of the art, multi-mission, tactical aerial refueling, and fixed wing assault support asset that has exceeded expectations. The introduction of the MV-22, combined with the forced retirement of the legacy aircraft due to corrosion, fatigue life, and parts obsolescence, significantly increases the requirement for the accelerated procurement of the KC-130J. The Marine Corps is currently in a multi-year procurement program with the Air Force to procure a total of 34 aircraft by the end of FY08. This number is 17 aircraft short of the inventory objective of 51 necessary to support the Marine, Joint, and Combined forces.

M777A1 Lightweight Howitzer. The new M777A1 lightweight howitzer replaces the M198 howitzers. The howitzer can be lifted by the MV-22 tilt-rotor and CH-53E helicopter and is paired with the Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement truck for improved cross-country mobility. The M777A1, through design innovation, navigation and positioning aides, and digital fire control, offers significant improvements in lethality, survivability, mobility, and durability over the M198 howitzer. The Marine Corps began fielding the first of 356 new howitzers to the operating forces in April 2005 and expects to complete fielding in calendar year 2009.

High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) fulfills a critical range and volume gap in Marine Corps fire support assets by providing 24-hour, all weather, ground-based, indirect precision and volume fires throughout all phases of combat operations ashore. We will field 40 HIMARS systems (18 to one artillery battalion of the active component, 18 to one battalion of the Reserve component, and 4 used for training/attrition). When paired with the acquisition of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System rockets, HIMARS will provide a highly responsive, precision fire capability to our forces in conventional as well as unconventional operations.

Expeditionary Fire Support System. The Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS) will be the principal indirect fire support system for the vertical assault element of Marine Air-Ground Task force executing Ship-to-Objective Maneuver. The EFSS is a rifled-towed 120mm mortar paired with an internally transportable vehicle, which permits the entire mortar/vehicle

combination to be internally transported aboard MV-22 and CH-53E aircraft. EFSS-equipped units will provide the ground component of a vertical assault element with immediately responsive, organic indirect fires at ranges beyond current infantry battalion mortars. Initial operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2006 and full operational capability is planned for Fiscal Year 2010.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Equipment Modernization. Explosive Ordnance Disposal equipment is undergoing major configuration changes and modernization. Our current modernization focus is towards neutralization and render-safe of unexploded ordnance/improvised explosive devices. The following robotic systems were tested and approved for Joint Explosive Ordnance Disposal usage: Bombot, Manual Transport Robotic System, Remote Ordnance Neutralization System, and RC-50.

Force Service Support Group Reorganization. The Force Service Support Groups were re-designated as Marine Logistics Groups in August 2005 as the initial step in the Logistics Modernization effort's reorganization initiative. The Marine Logistics Group will be reorganized/realigned with standing Direct and General Support subordinate units and include the Combat Logistics Regiment Forward, Direct Support Combat Logistics Regiment, and General Support Combat Logistics Regiment. Reorganization to the Marine Logistics Group facilitates rapid and seamless task organization and deployment operations, experienced logistics command and control, operations and planning support, and strong habitual relationships between supported and supporting units.

Equipping Marines

Force Protection. Unable to match our conventional force in like fashion, our enemies have resorted to asymmetric tactics such as the Improvised Explosive Device. Thanks to your support, we completed the installation of the Marine Armor Kits (MAK) on all A2 HMMWV last year. We will complete the transition to an all M-1114 fleet by July 2006. The Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement Armor System for our 7-ton trucks is scheduled for completion in May 2006. Additionally, we continue to bolster our force protection capabilities through explosive device jammers, additional vehicle armoring efforts, personal extremity protective equipment, and a host of unmanned ground vehicles.

Tactical Wheeled Vehicle Armor. We have joined with the U.S. Army to look at the M-1151/2 as a mid-term replacement for our base HMMWV and A2 models that have reached

the end of their service life. The M-1151/2 is the bridge to the next generation of combat tactical vehicle. The Joint Light Tactical Vehicle Program will define this next generation vehicle. This program is a Joint Army-Marine effort to establish the requirement and way-ahead for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2008 Program Objective Memorandum. The design of this vehicle will incorporate the recent lessons learned from Iraq and technical advances in survivability, energy management, and network operations to provide the survivability, mobility and tactical flexibility.

Individual Marine Initiatives. We have been able to address the highest priority capability gaps of our deploying forces associated with the individual Marine. The issue of protection, however, must be balanced with agility, weight and heat retention. An infantryman going into today battle carries nearly 100 pounds of equipment and ammunition—much of this for individual protection. This is too much. In combat lives can just as easily be lost due to an inability to move swiftly across a “kill zone,” or from mental and physical fatigue, as from bullets and shrapnel. We will never stop searching for ways to better protect the warrior of tomorrow by taking advantage of emerging technologies, but we must strike a balance between individual protection and mission accomplishment.

The Lightweight Helmet provides improved ballistic protection capability over the existing helmet while reducing weight by one-half pound and introducing an improved suspension system to increase comfort. We have fielded over 74,000 Lightweight Helmets to date, and we plan to procure 43,145 more in Fiscal Year 2006. The Enhanced Small Arms Protective Insert (E-SAPI) provides increased ballistic protection over the existing SAPI plate. The plates weigh approximately 1.5 pounds more than the standard SAPI per plate depending on size. Delivery of E-SAPI plates began in September 2005. In addition, the procurement of side SAPI plates further enhances the warfighters’ protection, survivability and armor options. In April we will complete delivery of 37,000 side SAPI plates.

The QuadGard (QG) system was designed to provide ballistic protection for arms and legs in response to blast weapon threats and combat casualty trends in OIF. This system is an additive capability that integrates with existing armor systems. We procured 4,500 QG systems with initial delivery beginning in 1st Quarter, Fiscal Year 2006. The Individual Load Bearing Equipment (ILBE) is a direct replacement for the Modular Lightweight Load Bearing Equipment

system that integrates an assault pack and hydration system. We have fielded over 96,000 ILBE packs to date and this effort continues.

Transforming Training and Education

One of our fundamental tenets—*every Marine a rifleman*—continues to prove its worth in the Global War on Terror. This serves as the solid foundation for all of our training, and provides the common core that defines every Marine. Over the past year, we have refined our training and education programs. Our goal remains the same, to prepare and sustain Marine Air-Ground Task Forces enabled by small-unit leaders directing small, enhanced units, which have a bias for action, are more lethal, and are better able to operate across the spectrum of conflict.

Culture and Language. An individual understanding of local culture and languages is a force multiplier in irregular operations, such as those we are conducting in Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa. Our cultural awareness and language training programs accomplished several milestones this past year. The Marine Corps graduated its first class of new lieutenants with formal training in the operational aspects of foreign cultures. During February 2005, we opened our new Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning, and it is already proving its value. The Center has distributed its first basic tactical language training programs, preparing individuals to serve in Iraqi Arabic and Pan-Sahel French cultures (*Pan-Sahel French is a predominant language in the former French colonies of Northwest Africa*). The Center also provided training to our newly established Foreign Military Training Unit, as well as to Marines selected to serve as advisors to the Iraqi security forces and Afghan National Army. In the future, we look to build a permanent facility to house the Center as well as establishing satellite sites for sustaining language and culture training in our career force.

Pre-deployment Training Today. We have embarked on a concerted effort to improve our pre-deployment training. At the center of these efforts is our revised Pre-Deployment Training Program conducted at the Marine Air Ground Combat Center, at Twentynine Palms, California, at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona, and at the Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California. The real-time and continuous connectivity with forward forces enables our units in training to apply combat lessons learned directly into their pre-deployment training. During this past fiscal year over 21,000 Marines received combined arms and urban operations training at Twentynine Palms. In addition, over 4,000 Marines and coalition partners trained in the mountain operations course at Bridgeport, and another 11,000 Marines participated

in the adjacent Desert Talon exercise series at Yuma. The success of our Marines in Iraq and Afghanistan is due in large measure to the demanding training that they experience at these three sites.

Modernization of Training Ranges. In the past two years, and again taking advantage of combat lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan, we have initiated an unprecedented investment in our training range capabilities. We built a robust urban and convoy operations training program at our major desert training base at Twentynine Palms, California. Marine Corps battalions deploying to Iraq are provided a realistic training venue to hone their urban and convoy skills and to heighten their awareness of both improvised explosive devices and the complexities of stability operations.

To better prepare your Marines for this “graduate level” training at Twentynine Palms, we are also providing essential building block capabilities in urban warfare at their home stations. Camp Lejeune, North Carolina has recently completed fielding a suite of urban and convoy training systems on their ranges and with your continued support, we hope to do the same at Camp Pendleton, California and the Marine Corps bases in Hawaii and Okinawa. We also intend to upgrade our aviation urban training facility at Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma and to provide an enhanced aviation urban training environment.

Infrastructure

Encroachment Partnering. In Fiscal Year 2005, the Marine Corps completed six projects to acquire development rights over 1,227 acres at a cost of \$8 Million, which was split between the Marine Corps and our partners.

The Marine Corps continues to use legislation that allows the Secretary of the Interior to accept Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans as suitable substitutes for critical habitat designation to protect and enhance populations of these species while continuing to conduct essential training.

Public Private Venture Family Housing. Our efforts to improve housing for Marines and their families continue. Thanks to previous Congressional action that eliminated the budgetary authority cap on Public Private Venture investments in military family housing, the Marine Corps will have contracts in place by the end of Fiscal Year 2007 to eliminate all inadequate family housing.

Military Construction. Our Military Construction plan now focuses on housing for our single Marines. Barracks are a significant critical quality of life element in taking care of single Marines. We are committed to providing adequate billeting for all unmarried Marines by 2012. We tripled the amount in bachelor housing from Fiscal Year 2006 to 2007. We will triple it again in Fiscal Year 2008. We are also committed to funding barracks' furnishings on a seven-year replacement cycle and prioritizing barracks repair projects to preempt a backlog of repairs.

Energy Efficiency in Transportation. The Marine Corps has exceeded the Energy Policy Act requirements for the past five years and has been a leader in the Department of Defense and among other Federal Agencies in the adoption of alternative fuels. Through use of biodiesel neighborhood electric vehicles, we have reduced petroleum use 20 percent from a 1999 baseline, and are expanding the deployment of hybrid vehicles in our garrison fleet. We are also supporting future use of hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicles with the establishment of a refueling station aboard Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California.

IV. Manning the Force and Quality of Life

Though we embrace the advances of technology, we believe that the most important asset on any battlefield is a well-equipped, well-trained, and well-led United States Marine—our people make the difference. We hold that today's Marines are unique and special individuals, and the character of their service throughout the Global War on Terror has rivaled that of any preceding generation. Recruiting and retaining a force of this quality requires the dedicated efforts of our recruiters, career retention specialists, manpower experts, and leaders throughout the Corps. Ours is a force of active duty, reserve, and civilian Marines, as well as thousands of Marine families who share in the sacrifices to our Nation. Though the mission must always come first, we continue to search for opportunities to improve the experience of serving as a Marine both during and after their active service—*once a Marine, always a Marine*.

Retention. Retaining the best and the brightest Marines is a top manpower priority. Our future officer and staff non-commissioned officer ranks are dependant on our successful accomplishment of this mission.

We have two enlisted retention measures to ensure healthy service continuation rates. The First Term Alignment Plan (FTAP) involves the first reenlistment of Marines and we consistently achieved our goals over the past thirteen years. The Subsequent Term Alignment

Plan (STAP) involves the subsequent reenlistments of Marines, those who likely remain in the Corps for a career, and we have consistently attained our goals since creating the STAP in 2002. In Fiscal Year 2005, we exceeded the FTAP requirement by achieving 103 percent of this retention mission, with notable success in the infantry community; we also exceeded the STAP retention mission. The substantial increase in the infantry reenlistment rate during Fiscal Year 2005 was influenced by higher Selective Reenlistment Bonuses (SRBs).

Certain Military Occupational Specialties (MOS') perennially suffer high attrition, such as those involving highly technical skills or extensive security clearances. Contributing factors include lucrative civilian employment opportunities for those Marines who attain these specialized skills and qualifications. We address this challenge by targeting these military specialties with higher SRBs. Retaining high quality and the proper skills in our ranks necessitates military compensation that is competitive with the private sector. Sustainment of SRB funding remains a crucial element to our ongoing efforts to retain these valuable skills.

The retention forecast for the officer corps in the near term is positive and consistent with our historic average of 90.8 percent. The close of Fiscal Year 2005 saw officer retention at 91.3 percent. The Marine Corps has active programs in place, both monetary and non-monetary, to ensure that officer retention remains high. All of these programs provide incentives to officers for continued service even in the face of significant operational tempo, while allowing flexibility for Manpower planners to meet requirements across the Marine Corps Total Force.

Selected Reserve enlisted retention for Fiscal Year 2005 continued to be strong at 79.5 percent, well above our historical norm. Reserve officer retention of 80.1 percent was also above the historical norm of 75.3 percent

Recruiting. An equally important factor in sustaining a viable force is continuing to recruit tremendous young men and women with the right character, commitment, and drive to become Marines. In Fiscal Year 2005, the Marine Corps overcame unprecedented recruiting challenges and achieved over 100 percent of our active component accession goal with no degradation in quality.

The Marine Corps Reserve achieved 101 percent of its enlisted recruiting goals. We achieved our officer accessions goals as well, but reserve officer numbers remain challenging, as our primary accession source is from officers that are leaving active duty. We appreciate the continued authorization for a Selected Reserve Officer Affiliation Bonus in the Fiscal Year 2006

National Defense Authorization Act. It continues to make a significant contribution in this critical area.

We anticipate that both active and reserve recruiting will remain challenging in Fiscal Year 2006, and we welcome the continued support of Congress for a strong enlistment bonus and other recruiting programs, such as recruiting advertising, which will be essential to us in meeting these challenges.

Reserve Marines. To date, more than 37,500 Reserve Marines have served on active duty in the Global War on Terror. As part of an integrated Total Force, our Reserve Marines and units receive the same pre-deployment training and serve alongside their Active Component counterparts. Currently, over 7,000 reserve Marines are on active duty, and the Marine Corps Reserve expects to provide approximately 4,250 Marines in support of operations in Iraq in 2006. Overall, our Reserves provide personnel for a wide-variety of operations and activities, including Iraq military transition, Afghan National Army embedded training, civil affairs, and personnel recovery and processing. They also perform anti-terrorist and humanitarian duties in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Central America, and the Caribbean. The strength of integrating our Active and Reserve components into a Total Marine Corps Force epitomizes the warrior concept of "one team, one fight."

Civilian Marines. Civilian Marines continue to provide an invaluable service to the Corps as an integral component of our Total Force. Working in true partnership with Marines, Civilian Marines will continue to play an important role in supporting the mission of the Marine Corps and the Global War on Terror. Our commitment is to define for them what the Marine Corps will offer its Civilian Marines, and what the Corps expects from this select group who support our Marines.

Military to Civilian Conversions. The Marine Corps continues to pursue sensible military-to-civilian conversions in support of Marine Corps Warfighting initiatives. These conversions are important because they increase the number of Marines in the operating force and help reduce stress on the force. Funding remains a critical issue to the success of this initiative. Congressional cuts in both the Fiscal Year 2005 Appropriations Bill (\$35 million) and Fiscal Year 2006 Appropriations Bill (\$20 million) has impacted our ability to execute our planned Fiscal Year 2005 program and will reduce our planned Fiscal Year 2006 conversions.

National Security Personnel System. The Marine Corps is committed to successful implementation of the National Security Personnel System and creating and maintaining an innovative and distinctive Civilian Marine workforce capable of meeting the ever-changing requirements of today and the challenges of tomorrow. The Marine Corps is actively participating with the Department of Defense in the development and implementation of this new personnel system. Following an intensive training program for supervisors, managers, human resources specialists, employees, commanders and senior management, we will begin implementation.

Quality of Life for Our Marines and Their Families

For Marines, success has always been measured first on the battlefield, but part and parcel to this is the health and welfare of Marines and the families who support them. As an expeditionary force, Marines are accustomed to frequent deployments, yet the current environment contains increased elements of personal danger and family risk that must be addressed with appropriate and timely support. We have been careful to monitor our programs to ensure our Marines and their families receive the necessary care to sustain them throughout the deployment cycle. In this regard, our Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) organizations' combined structure of Family Services, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Programs, Voluntary Off Duty Education, and Exchange operations has positioned us to efficiently and effectively leverage and direct community services assets to help Marines and their families meet the challenges associated with the Marine Corps lifestyle and current operational tempo.

For Marines in theater, few things are more important than staying in touch with their loved ones at home. To keep communication open between deployed Marines and their families, we provide phone service, mail service, and our Internet-based mail service, "MotoMail," which has created more than half a million letters since its inception in December 2004.

Combat and Operational Stress Control. While our Marines and their families have proven to be resilient "warriors," combat and operational stress is not an uncommon reaction. We closely interact with Marines and their families to reassure them; we provide many services and programs for help and urge service members and their families to seek the help they require.

To integrate our combat and operational stress control (COSC) programs and capabilities properly, we have established a COSC Section within our Manpower and Reserve Affairs department. To gain clarity of mission, we instituted a tracking system that allows Commanders

to monitor COSC training and decompression requirements. As a component of COSC, we created a web-based information and referral tool that leaders at all levels can readily access. The “Leader’s Guide for Managing Marines in Distress” provides specific guidance on 40 distress areas.

The Marine Reserves, through their Chaplain Corps, have developed Marine and Family Workshops (MFW), which are a post-deployment program designed to assist Marines and their family members with return and reunion stressors and adjustment difficulties. The goals and objectives of the workshop are to: 1) provide an opportunity for Marines and their family members to strengthen their coping skills; 2) mitigate the impact of traumatic events and war zone stressors; 3) accelerate the normal recovery process; and 4) identify those who might need additional help and provide resources.

Casualty Support. Our support and dedication to the families of our fallen Marines and their survivors is especially strong. Casualty support is a duty and honor. It is also a human process requiring a measured and thoughtful engagement by our Casualty Assistance Calls Officers (CACOs). As with our other deployment-related programs, our casualty process has evolved and improved significantly. Our CACOs monitor the survivor’s transition through the grief process—from casualty notification, to burial, to ensuring survivors receive the appropriate benefits. CACOs connect families needing extended support to a Long-Term Survivor Case Manager who personally monitors and communicates with them to ensure they receive the support they need for as long as it is required.

Critical Incident Stress Management Teams. In cases of mass casualties experienced by a command or unit, whether combat, natural disasters, training, or missions, we use a Department of Defense sponsored Managed Health Network capability where trained Critical Incident Stress Management teams provide crisis management briefings to family members and friends of the unit. During the briefings, Marine Corps personnel, Chaplains, and Managed Health Network counselors provide information and answer questions concerning the casualties. These crisis response teams provide support at remote sites throughout the country, making them highly useful in situations where Reserves are involved. In particular, after Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Marines experienced mass casualties in Iraq last summer, crisis management briefings were conducted at various cities in Ohio where questions about the unit were answered,

briefs were provided on helping children cope, individual counseling was offered to family members, and materials on support services were distributed.

Marine for Life—Injured Support. Built on the philosophy "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" and fulfilling our obligation to "take care of our own," the Marine For Life program offers support to approximately 27,000 honorably discharged Marines transitioning from active service back to civilian life each year.

Leveraging the organizational network and strengths of the Marine for Life program, we implemented an Injured Support program during January 2005 to assist combat injured Marines, Sailors serving with Marines, and their families. The program essentially seeks to bridge the gap that can exist between military medical care and the Department of Veterans Affairs, providing continuity of support through transition and assistance for several years afterwards.

The program recently assigned two full-time Marine Corps liaison officers to the Seamless Transition Office at the Veterans Affairs. These liaison officers interface between the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the Marine Corps on individual cases to facilitate cooperative solutions to transition issues.

Additionally, the Injured Support program conducts direct outreach to injured Marines and Sailors via phone and site visits to the National Naval Medical Center, Walter Reed, and Brooke Army Medical Centers. On average, 30 percent of our seriously injured Marines requested and received some type of assistance.

Lastly, the program continues to work closely with Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) on Marine Corps-related injury cases. Information sharing between the program and OSD contributes to developing capabilities for the Military Severely Injured Center (formerly known as The Military Severely Injured Joint Support Operations Call Center).

Healthcare. Marines receive high quality, state of the art care from a worldwide Military Health System. We enjoy the lowest disease, non-battle injury rates in history and our Marines know that if they are injured or wounded in action they have an unprecedented better than 97 percent survival rate once they arrive at one of our Forward Resuscitative Surgical units. The Military Health System provides a superb care and health benefit program for our Marines, their families, and our retired population—services we must sustain. Unfortunately, at its current rate of cost growth, the program is unsustainable. We fully support changes in legislation that would allow the Department of Defense to "renorm" the cost of health care.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response. The Marine Corps has maintained vigilance in engaging Marines to prevent sexual assault, to care for the victims, and to punish offenders. Our actions included establishing a Sexual Assault Prevention Office to serve as the single point of contact for all sexual assault matters, such as victim support and care, reporting, training, and protective measures. We have also instituted extensive sexual assault awareness training into all entry-level officer and enlisted training, provided procedures to protect a victim’s privacy, and trained hundreds of Uniformed Victim Advocates to support our deployed Marines. Lastly, to ensure victims receive appropriate and responsive care with timely access to services, we have appointed command level sexual assault response coordinators to serve as the single point of contact for sexual assault matters.

V. Capabilities Development

For 230 years, the Marine Corps has answered the Nation's call to arms without fail, but we do not intend to rest on those laurels. To remain the world's foremost expeditionary warfighting organization and preserve our tradition of being most ready when the Nation is least ready, the Marine Corps is steadfastly focused on the fundamental tenants of our success—a maneuver warfare mindset and a warfighting construct built around combined-arms air-ground task forces. We are forwarding and expanding these capabilities through aggressive experimentation and implementation of our Seabasing and Distributed Operations concepts. These transforming concepts will increase our agility and tempo in operations, from cooperative security to major combat, and perpetuate the unrivaled asymmetric advantage our Nation enjoys in its ability to project and sustain power from the sea.

Warfighting Concepts

Seabasing. Seabasing is a national capability for projecting and sustaining power globally, using the operational maneuver of sovereign, distributed, and networked forces operating from the sea. Seabasing will provide unparalleled speed, access, persistence, and is recognized as the “core of naval transformation” (*Naval Transformation Roadmap*). Seabasing breaks down the traditional sea-land barrier, allowing us to use the sea as maneuver space. It enables us to rapidly deploy, assemble, and project joint and combined forces anywhere in the world, sustaining these forces during operations and reconstituting forces for employment elsewhere. Seabasing assures access by leveraging the operational maneuver of forces from the

sea and by reducing dependence upon fixed and vulnerable land bases. This concept will provide our combatant commanders with unprecedented versatility in operations spanning from cooperative security to major combat. Seabasing also represents a present capability that can be tailored and scaled to meet a broad range of requirements.

The Nation invests tremendous resources with the full understanding that the ability to project power from the sea is a prerequisite for defending our sovereignty. As demonstrated by the Navy/Marine Corps response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Seabasing is a relevant and adaptive capability possessing the flexibility to meet our countrymen's needs around the world and at home. Marines and Sailors embarked from such platforms as the USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) provided an asymmetric and sustainable solution to the storm ravaged Gulf Coast, and in several hundred instances saved the lives of their fellow Americans. In short, Seabasing is both a real-world capability and a transformational future concept. Realization of the future Seabasing potential is dependent upon an investment in ships and other Seabasing platforms.

Distributed Operations. The attributes of sea power are extremely useful to the Combatant Commanders. However, this operational capability must also be matched by increased tactical capabilities that enhance the effectiveness of our "boots on ground" to enable operational maneuver and to create stability, especially in irregular and counter-insurgency operations. After a quarter century of unwavering commitment to our maneuver warfare philosophy, we are harvesting a generation of junior officers and noncommissioned officers who are better prepared to assume much greater authority and responsibility than traditionally expected at the small-unit level. As a complementary capability to our Seabasing concept, Distributed Operations describes an operating approach that will create an advantage over an adversary through the deliberate use of separation and coordinated, interdependent, tactical actions enabled by increased access to functional support, as well as by enhanced combat capabilities at the small-unit level. The essence of this concept lies in enhanced small units gained through making advances on the untapped potential of our Marines and the incorporation of emerging technologies which will support them.

Once implemented, a networked Marine Air-Ground Task Force operating in a Distributed Operations manner will disperse or mass to exploit opportunities the enemy offers. The integration of new doctrine, force structure, training, equipment, personnel policies and

leader development initiatives will afford our tactical and operational commanders a significantly enhanced weapon in the increasingly sophisticated Global War on Terror.

Experimentation, Technology and Concepts. The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory develops innovative concepts and conducts concept-based experimentation in support of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command's mission. By examining future warfighting concepts, the Lab identifies capability shortfalls and matches them with potential solutions that can be effectively addressed by the experimentation process. In support of current operations and the global war on terrorism, the Lab rapidly identifies transformational solutions in the areas of training, equipment, organization and doctrine needed to resolve critical short falls and gaps. Experiments have resulted in modified and new tactics, training, and procedures for Marines operating in Iraq.

The Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory is specifically developing methods to defeat improvised explosive devices, provide superior body armor, improve vehicle armor, counter the urban sniper, and to counter attacks with rockets and mortars. The Marine Corps exploits the investment of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), other Services, and industry while focusing our Marine Corps unique investment to mature Marine Corps combat development and future materiel needs. This effort is highlighted by the Lab's interaction with DARPA in the successful testing and assessment of improved armor, small-unmanned aerial vehicles, and the deployment of extended user assessment in Iraq of small numbers of acoustic sniper location systems. These successful programs will result in early deployment of systems that will contribute to force protection and survivability.

Sea Viking 06 Advanced Warfighting Experiment. The Sea Viking 06 Advanced Warfighting Experiment culminates years of planning, study, and experimentation. With a focus on Marine infantrymen, the experiment aims to revolutionize Marine Corps warfighting capabilities. By testing and examining our current training, organization and equipment against new warfighting initiatives (e.g., *Distributed Operations*), rooted in real-world lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan, we have adapted and overcome deficiencies, allowing the Marine Corps to actualize its experiment data and outcomes. Results have produced changes in, training, equipment and responsibilities of infantry small unit leaders. Such innovation has inspired the establishment of the Distributed Operations Implementation Working Group, which socializes

the changes and implements the changes across the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel and facilities pillars.

Because of Sea Viking 06's first Limited Objective Experiment, Training and Education Command (TECOM) developed new courses and curriculum to formalize the training culture of Marine infantry non-commissioned officers. TECOM and the Lab collaborated to establish "Mobile Training Cadres" to institute a Train the Trainer Course and a Tactical Small Unit Leader Course to support company level leaders in the development of their small unit leaders, as they will always remain our most critical assets in the Global War on Terror. Concurrently, Marine Corps Systems Command, through its project managers and Marine Expeditionary Rifle Squad program at the forefront, remains acutely attuned to all equipment aspects of the Sea Viking experiments, ensuring that our Marines have the best equipment available. These same innovations, when applied Marine Corps wide, will ensure that Marine Forces remain the force of readiness in response to our Nation's future needs.

Countering Irregular Threats. Consistent with the emerging challenges laid out in the National Defense Strategy, we are developing new concepts and programs to address the rising salience of irregular threats to our security especially that posed by protracted, complex insurgencies and terrorism. The rise of irregular and catastrophic challenges to international order could potentially include the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors seeking to blackmail U.S. leaders and foreign policy. Exploring this challenge is a major aspect of our annual Expeditionary Warrior wargame this year.

Enabling Programs

Amphibious Warfare Ships. Amphibious ships are the centerpiece of the Navy/Marine Corps' forcible entry and Seabasing capability, and have played an essential role in the Global War on Terror. Not only must our Naval forces maintain the ability to rapidly close, decisively employ, and effectively sustain Marines from the sea, they must also respond to emerging GWOT requirements, crisis response and humanitarian assistance missions on short notice. The Nation would be hard pressed to satisfy both requirements with separate forces. Fortunately, we possess the ability to conduct both forcible entry and persistent global engagement with the same naval force package.

The current Defense Department force-sizing construct requires the capability to respond to two major "swiftly defeat the efforts" events—each of which could require a minimum of 15

capable amphibious ships. One of these crises may further necessitate the use of a Marine Expeditionary Force requiring 30 operationally available amphibious ships. Ten of these ships should be large-deck amphibious ship capable of supporting the operations of the air combat element of a Marine Expeditionary Force. Today's 35 amphibious warships can surge the required 30 operationally available warships and provide the peacetime rotation base for Marine Expeditionary Units in up to three regions.

In part due to the recognized flexibility of these platforms, as well as the projected need to enhance their power projection capabilities to support stability operations and sustained counter-terrorism efforts, many of our coalition partners are planning to acquire amphibious shipping with the capacity to support both surface and aviation maneuver elements. Such efforts acknowledge the great utility of a robust amphibious capability in the face of growing anti-access threats.

Amphibious Transport Dock (LPD). The LPD 17 *San Antonio* class of amphibious ships represents the Department of the Navy's commitment to a modern expeditionary power projection fleet and will assist our naval forces across the spectrum of warfare. The lead ship was successfully delivered in January 2006. The LPD 17 class replaces four classes of older ships—the LKA, LST, LSD 36, and the LPD 4—and is being built with a forty year expected service life. The LPD 17 class ships will play a key role in supporting the ongoing Global War on Terror by forward deploying Marines and their equipment to respond to crises abroad. Its unique design will facilitate expanded force coverage and decreased reaction times of forward deployed Marine Expeditionary Units. In forcible entry operations, the LPD 17 will help maintain a robust surface assault and rapid off-load capability for the Marine Air-Ground Task Force far into the future.

Amphibious Assault Ship (Replacement) (LHA(R)). Our Tarawa-class amphibious assault ships reach the end of their service life during the next decade (2011-2015). An eighth Wasp-class amphibious assault ship is under construction and will replace one Tarawa-class ship during Fiscal Year 2007. In order to meet future warfighting requirements and fully capitalize on our investment in the MV-22 and Joint Strike Fighter, ships with enhanced aviation capabilities will replace the remaining LHA ships. These ships will provide increased jet fuel storage and aviation ordnance magazines, and an enhanced hanger to support aviation maintenance. The first ship, designated LHA 6, is a transitional ship to the succeeding ships in the class that will be

transformational in capability and design. This lead ship is on track for a detailed design and construction contract award in Fiscal Year 2007 with advanced procurement funds provided in the Fiscal Year 2005 and 2006 budgets.

Maritime Prepositioning Force. Our proven maritime prepositioning force—capable of supporting the rapid deployment of three Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEBs)—is an important complement to this amphibious capability. Combined, these capabilities enable the Marine Corps to rapidly react to a crisis in a number of potential theaters and the flexibility to employ forces across the battlespace.

Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future). In addition to the 30 operationally available amphibious ships needed to employ a MEF during a forcible entry operation, the Maritime Prepositioning Force (Future) (MPF(F)) is the key enabler for Seabasing, providing support and sustainment for early entry Marine Expeditionary Brigades. MPF(F) enables four new capabilities: (1) at-sea arrival and assembly of the Sea Base echelon of the MEB; (2) projection of one surface and one vertically delivered battalion landing team in one 8-10 hour period of darkness; (3) long-term, sea-based sustainment; and (4) at-sea reconstitution and redeployment. These capabilities will be invaluable in supporting joint forcible entry operations, forward engagement, presence, and relationship building operations with allies and potential coalition partners by our forward deployed forces, as well as support of disaster relief and humanitarian operations. Additionally, this flexible asset can remain in support of post-conflict activities and forces ashore from a relatively secure location at sea. Each future Maritime Prepositioning Squadron will include one LHD, two LHA(R), three cargo and ammunition ships (T-AKE), three fast logistics ships (T-AKR), three Mobile Loading Platform ships, and two legacy maritime prepositioning ships. This mix of ships will be capable of prepositioning critical equipment and 20 days of supplies for our future MEB.

High Speed Connectors

High-speed connectors will facilitate the conduct of sustained sea-based operations by expediting force closure and allowing the persistence necessary for success in the littorals. Connectors are grouped into three categories: inter-theater, intra-theater, and sea base to shore. These platforms will link bases and stations around the world to the sea base and other advanced bases, as well as provide linkages between the sea base and forces operating ashore. High-speed

connectors are critical to provide the force closure and operational flexibility to make Seabasing a reality.

Joint High Speed Sealift. The Joint High Speed Sealift (JHSS) is an inter-theater connector that provides strategic force closure for CONUS-based forces. The JHSS is envisioned to transport the Marine Corps' non self-deploying aircraft, personnel, and high demand-low density equipment, as well as the Army's non self-deploying aircraft and personnel, and Brigade Combat Team rolling stock and personnel, permitting rapid force closure of this equipment. Additionally, the JHSS will alleviate the need to compete for limited strategic airlift assets, and reduce closure timelines by deploying directly to the sea base rather than via an intermediate staging base or advanced base. The JHSS program is currently in the early states of capability development and has merged with the Army's Austere Access High Speed Ship program. Current fielding of the JHSS is projected in Fiscal Year 2017.

Joint High Speed Vessel. The Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) will address the Combatant Commanders' requirements for a forward deployed rapid force closure capability to support the Global War on Terror. The JHSV will enable the rapid force closure of fly-in Marine forces to the sea base from advanced bases, logistics from pre-positioned ships to assault shipping, ship-to-ship replenishment, and in appropriate threat environments, maneuver of assault forces to in-theater ports and austere ports. Army and Navy programs were recently merged into a Navy-led program office with an acquisition strategy intended to leverage current commercial fast ferry technology, and acquisition of a modified non-developmental item (NDI). Contract award for new vessels is expected in Fiscal Year 2008, with delivery in 2010. To meet the current and near-term Combatant Commanders' requirements, the Department of the Navy continues to lease foreign built vessels until the JHSV is delivered.

WESTPAC EXPRESS (WPE) is providing support to III MEF and other Okinawa-based forces, enabling III MEF to expand off-island training and engagement while reducing battalion-training days spent off island. Additionally, WPE played a key role supporting the Indian Ocean tsunami relief effort. HSC-2 "SWIFT" (picture below) provides a test bed for research and development prototypes as well as an operational platform in support of current real world requirements. Most recently, HSC-2 played a key role in support of JTF Katrina, providing high-speed delivery of supplies, equipment, and personnel to ships and ports along the US Gulf Coast.



HSV 2 (SWIFT)

Joint Maritime Assault Connector. The Joint Maritime Assault Connector (JMAC), previously known as the sea base to shore connector, will replace the venerable legacy landing craft air cushion (LCAC) as a critical tactical level platform supporting Marine Corps assault forces, as well as joint forces operating within the Sea Base. In comparison to the LCAC, the JMAC is envisioned to have many enhanced capabilities, such as the ability to operate in higher sea states, increased range, speed, and payload, increased obstacle clearance, and reduced operating and maintenance costs. The JMAC is planned for fleet introduction in Fiscal Year 2015.

Aviation Transformation

Marine aviation will undergo significant transformation over the next ten years as we transition from 13 types of legacy aircraft to seven new platforms. We developed a new transition strategy to better balance numbers of assault support and TacAir aircraft based on operational requirements. This strategy supports our Seabasing concept and enables Ship-to-Objective Maneuver utilizing the Joint Strike Fighter, MV-22, and Heavy Lift Replacement, recently designated CH-53K. At a distance of 110 nautical miles, a squadron of MV-22s will lift a 975 Marine battalion in four waves in under four hours. Similarly, the CH-53K will replace our aging, legacy CH-53E helicopter, lifting more than twice as much over the same range and serving as the only sea-based air assault and logistics connector capable of transporting critical heavy vehicles and fire support assets. An Assault Support Capability Analysis is underway to determine the optimal mix of MV-22 and CH-53K aircraft required to support Ship-to-Objective

Maneuver and Distributed Operations. Similarly, the Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing variant of the Joint Strike Fighter represents a transformational platform that will generate 25 percent more sorties and provide a multi-spectral engagement capability for the Expeditionary Strike Force.

Ship-to-Shore Mobility

CH-53K. The CH-53K is our number one aviation acquisition priority. Consequently, the CH-53K received full funding in 2005 and has reached "Milestone B" status—initiation of system development and demonstrations. Our current fleet of CH-53E Super Stallion aircraft enters its fatigue life during this decade. The CH-53K will deliver increased range and payload, reduced operations and support costs, increased commonality with other assault support platforms, and digital interoperability for the next 25 years (Figure 3).

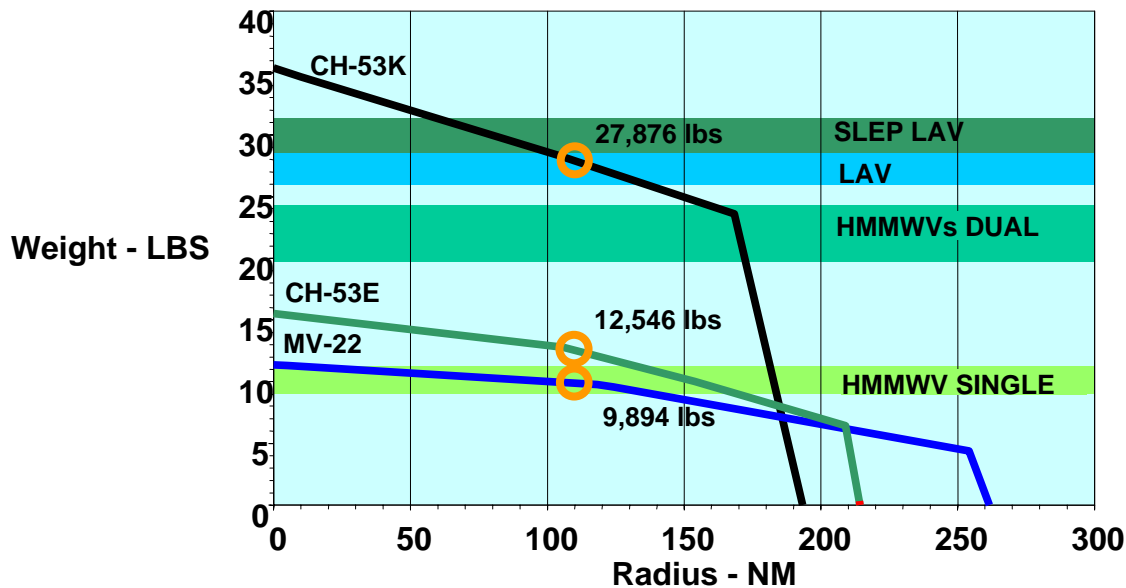


Figure 3

The CH-53K program will both improve operational capabilities and reduce life-cycle costs. Commonality between other Marine Corps aircraft in terms of engines and avionics will greatly enhance the maintainability and deployability of the aircraft within the Air Combat Element. The CH-53K will vastly improve the ability of the MAGTF and Joint force to project and sustain forces ashore from a sea-based center of operations in support of EMW, Ship-to-Objective Maneuver, and Distributed Operations.

Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle. The Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) is our number one ground acquisition program, and it replaces the aging Assault Amphibious Vehicle

(AAV) that has been in service since 1972. It will provide Marine surface assault elements with better operational and tactical mobility both in the water and ashore, and will exploit fleeting opportunities in the fluid operational environment of the future. Designed to launch from amphibious ships stationed over the horizon, it will be capable of carrying a reinforced Marine rifle squad. The EFV will travel at speeds in excess of 20 nautical miles per hour in a wave height of three feet. This capability will reduce the vulnerability of our naval forces to enemy threats at sea and ashore. Our surface assault forces mounted in EFVs will have the mobility to react and exploit gaps in enemy defenses ashore. Once ashore, EFV will provide Marines with an armored personnel carrier designed to meet the threats of the future. The EFV has high-speed land and water maneuverability, highly lethal day/night fighting ability, and enhanced communications capability. It has advanced armor and nuclear, biological, and chemical collective protection. These attributes will significantly enhance the lethality and survivability of Marine maneuver units.

Supporting Capabilities

Logistics Modernization. Logistics Modernization is the largest coordinated and cross-organizational transformation effort ever undertaken within Marine Corps logistics. It is a Marine Corps-wide, multi-year, three-pronged improvement and integration initiative focusing on Marine Corps *people, processes* and *technology* dimensions. This will produce a far more effective and efficient Logistics Chain Management process to include: supply, maintenance, and distribution processes, integration of emerging information technology, and the introduction of new occupational specialties to support these advancements.

Global Combat Support System—Marine Corps. Global Combat Support System—Marine Corps (GCSS—MC) is the Marine Corps' member of the overarching Global Combat Support System Family of Systems as designated by the Joint Requirements Oversight Council and the Global Combat Support System General Officer Steering Committee. GCSS—MC is designed to provide logistics information technology capabilities to satisfy the Marine Air Ground Task Force and Combatant Commander/Joint Task Force requirements, as well as support the Marine Corps Logistics Modernization strategy. The goal of GCSS—MC is to provide modern, deployable Information Technology tools for both supported and supporting units. Achieving this goal requires the establishment of a shared data environment so that GCSS—MC data and information may be shared across the Marine Corps enterprise and with

other services and agencies. GCSS—MC is being implemented in phases, or "blocks". Block 1 provides logistics chain management and basic planning tools, while Blocks 2 and 3 will see the expansion of Block 1 capabilities and provide major upgrades to the Oracle software. The focus will be on logistics planning, command and control, and asset visibility.

VI. Conclusion

Your Marines are fully dedicated to serving and protecting this Nation. Their bravery, sacrifice, and commitment to warfighting excellence have added new chapters to our Corps' rich legacy. We recognize we have an essential mission, and that we have the solid backing of the American people. The Marine Corps fully understands that our greatest contribution to the Nation is our high-level of readiness across the spectrum of conflict. That readiness is predicated upon your sustained support, for without it your Marines will not enter the coming battles as the well-equipped, well-led, and well-trained fighting force you have come to expect. We face the unprecedented reality of overlapping and competing fiscal priorities—resetting the force from an extended war while undertaking a comprehensive modernization plan to prepare for the challenges of tomorrow. Marines and their families greatly appreciate the unwavering support of Congress, which is material to achieving our high level of success and securing the Nation's interests.