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THE HOUSE ARMED
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MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE

STATEMENT
OF
LIEUTENANT GENERAL RONALD S. COLEMAN
DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
MILITARY PERSONNEL SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
CONCERNING
RECRUITING, RETENTION & COMPENSATION
ON
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Chairwoman Davis, Congressman McHugh, and distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, it is my privilege to appear before you today to provide an overview of your Marine Corps personnel.

Introduction

We remain a Corps of Marines at war with over 31,200 Marines deployed to dozens of countries around the globe. The young men and women who fill our ranks today recognize the global, protracted, and lethal nature of the challenges facing our Nation, and their dedicated service and sacrifice rival that of any generation preceding them.

Thanks to you, Marines know that the people of the United States and their Government are behind them. The continued commitment of Congress to increasing the warfighting and crisis response capabilities of our Nation's armed forces and to improving the quality of life of our Marines and their families is central to the strength that your Marine Corps enjoys today. The Nation is receiving a superb return on its investment in the world's finest expeditionary force.

We know the future will remain challenging, but I am confident that with your continued support, your Corps will remain the Nation's force in readiness and will continue to fulfill its congressionally mandated mission of being *the most ready when the Nation is least ready*.

Right-size our Marine Corps

Active Component End Strength. To meet the demands of the Long War and other crises that arise, our Corps must be sufficiently manned, trained, and equipped. To this end, the Marine Corps plans to grow its personnel end strength to 202,000 Active Component Marines by Fiscal Year 2011. This increase will enable your Corps to train to the full spectrum of military operations and improve the ability of the Marine Corps to address future challenges. This

growth will also enable us to increase the dwell time of our Marines so that they are able to operate at a “sustained rate of fire.” Our goal is to achieve a 1:2 deployment-to-dwell ratio for all of our active forces - for every seven months a Marine is deployed, he or she will be back at home station for at least fourteen months.

Our success in the first phase of this growth – 184,000 Marines by the end of Fiscal Year 2007 – is a great first step toward our ultimate end strength goal. Overall, we ended Fiscal Year 2007 with an Active Component end strength of 186,492 Marines. And we fully expect to meet our second goal – 189,000 Marines - this fiscal year.

Funding. The Marine Corps greatly appreciates the increase in authorized end strength to 189,000 recently passed in the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. As you know, we are funding the end strength in excess of 180,000 through supplemental appropriations. For Fiscal Year 2009, we note that all costs of military personnel are included in the baseline budget.

Compensation. As you know, the vast majority of our personnel budget is spent on entitlements, including compensation. Compensation is a double-edged sword in that it is a principal 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. Competitive compensation authorities aid the Marine Corps in targeting specific areas and provide the capability to access, retain and separate as needed. The extensions of special and incentive pay authorities have demonstrated your continued support of the Marine Corps and its endeavor to reach our ultimate end strength goal. We appreciate the continued

support of Congress in the creation of flexible compensation authorities which afford the Marine Corps with tools that allow us to shape your Corps for the 21st Century.

Military-to-Civilian Conversions. Military-to-civilian conversions replace Marines in non-military-specific billets with qualified civilians, enabling the Corps to return those Marines to the operating forces. Since 2004, the Marine Corps has returned 3,096 Marines to the operating force through military-to-civilian conversions. We will continue to pursue sensible conversions as this will aid in our deployment-to-dwell ratio goals for the force.

Reserve Component End Strength. Our deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have been a Total Force effort – our Reserve forces continue to perform with grit and determination. Our goal is to obtain a 1:5 deployment-to-dwell ratio within our Reserve Component. As our active force increases in size, our reliance on our Reserve forces should decrease – helping us to achieve the desired deployment-to-dwell ratio. Our authorized Reserve Component end strength remains at 39,600 Selected Reserve Marines. As with every organization within the Marine Corps, we continue to review the make-up and structure of the Marine Corps Reserve in order to ensure the right capabilities reside within the Marine Forces Reserve units and our Individual Mobilization Augmentee program across the force.

Recruiting

Our Recruiters continue to make their recruiting goals in all areas in support of our total force recruiting mission. This past year, our recruiting mission was increased as part of a series of milestones to “grow the force” and build an active component 21st century Marine Corps with an end-strength of 202,000. Our focus in Fiscal Year 2008 is to continue to recruit quality men and women into our Corps as we expand our ranks.

To meet the challenges of the current recruiting environment, it is imperative that we maintain our high standards both for our recruiters and those who volunteer to serve in our Corps. The Corps must continue to be comprised of the best and brightest of America's youth. We must also remain mindful that the Marine Corps needs to reflect the face of the nation and be representative of those we serve. Our image of a smart, tough, elite warrior continues to resonate with young people seeking to become Marines.

The Marine Corps is unique in that all recruiting efforts (officer, enlisted, regular, reserve, and prior-service) fall under the direction of the Marine Corps Recruiting Command. Operationally, this provides us with flexibility and unity of command in order to annually meet our objectives. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps achieved 100 percent of the enlisted (regular and reserve) ship mission (accessions). Over 95 percent of our accessions were Tier 1 high school diploma graduates and over 66 percent were in the I-III A upper mental group testing categories. In short, we accomplished our recruiting mission achieving the Commandant's standards and exceeding those of the Department of Defense (DoD). To meet the Marine Corps' proposed end strength increase, annual total force accessions missions will steadily grow from 40,863 in Fiscal Year 2007 to over 46,000 in Fiscal Year 2010. Fiscal Year 2008 total force accessions mission is 42,202. As of 1 February 2008, we have shipped (accessed) 12,597 applicants, representing 104 percent of our total force mission fiscal year to date. Although recruiting is fraught with uncertainties, we expect to meet our annual recruiting mission this fiscal year, to include our quality goals. Additionally, we continue to achieve our contracting goals for this fiscal year which ensures we have a population of qualified individuals ready to ship to recruit training as we enter Fiscal Year 2009. Achieving this success, as always, is dependent on your support for our enlistment incentives. We thank you for this support.

Our Officer Selection Teams were also successful in Fiscal Year 2007, accessing 1,844 Second Lieutenants for 101 percent of their assigned mission. In Fiscal Year 2008, we are continuing efforts to increase the population of Officer Candidates and commission second lieutenants commensurate with our force structure and the growth in end strength. To assist our Officer Selection Officers in meeting their Officer accession missions, we have implemented new programs, such as the College Loan Repayment program, in order to attract prospective candidates and remain competitive in this difficult recruiting environment.

For the Reserve Component, the Marine Corps achieved its Fiscal Year 2007 reserve enlisted recruiting goals with the accession of 5,287 non-prior service Marines and 3,591 prior service Marines. As of 1 February 2008, we have accessed 1,484 non-prior service and 1,660 prior service Marines, which reflects 36 percent of our annual mission. Again, we expect to meet our reserve recruiting goals this year. Officer recruiting and retention for our Selected Marine Corps Reserve units is traditionally our greatest challenge. The Officer Candidate Course-Reserve (OCC-R) introduced in 2007 is helping to address this issue, and we anticipate commissioning 50 to 75 second lieutenants in the Reserve this year. Under this program, individuals attend Officer Candidates School, The Basic School, a Military Occupational Specialty school, and return to a reserve unit to serve. When coupled with the selected reserve officer affiliation bonus, we believe we have established a valid method to address the challenge.

Retention

Retention is the other important part of building and sustaining the Marine Corps. As a strong indicator of our forces' morale, the Marine Corps has achieved unprecedented numbers of reenlistments in both the First Term and Career Force. When examining mental, educational and physical components as quality measures, the Center for Naval Analyses found that the first term

force has improved steadily over the last 8 years and the best Marines continue to demonstrate a higher propensity to reenlist than separate. The expanded reenlistment goal, in which we sought to reenlist over 3,700 additional Marines, resulted in the reenlistment of 31 percent of our eligible first term force and 70 percent of our eligible career force — compared to the 22 percent first term and 65 percent career force reenlistments in Fiscal Year 2006. This achievement was key to reaching the first milestone in our end strength increase – 184,000 Marines by the end of Fiscal Year 2007 - while still maintaining quality standards.

For Fiscal Year 2008, our retention goals are even more aggressive to achieve an end strength of 189,000, but we fully expect to meet them. As of 15 February 2008, we have achieved 6,395 First Term Alignment Plan (FTAP) reenlistments, or 69 percent of the 9,507 goal. Equally impressive, we have achieved 7,331 Subsequent Term Alignment Plan (STAP) reenlistments, or 90 percent of the 8,124 goal. Altogether, we have achieved 13,726 total reenlistments, or 78 percent of the combined goals.

Our continuing retention success will be largely attributable to several important, enduring themes. First, Marines are motivated to “stay Marine” because they are doing what they signed up to do — fighting for and protecting our Nation. Second, they understand our culture is one that rewards proven performance and takes care of its own.

There is no doubt that your Marines’ leadership and technical skills have rendered them extremely marketable to lucrative civilian employment opportunities. To keep the most qualified Marines, we must maintain Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) funding. In Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps spent over \$425M in SRB and Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) to help achieve our end strength increase. With a reenlistment mission of 17,631 in Fiscal Year 2008 — compared to an historical average of 12,000 — the Marine Corps expects to invest \$536M in

reenlistment incentives. This aggressive SRB plan will allow us to retain the right grades and skill sets for our growing force — particularly among key military occupational specialties.

I am happy to report that the Marine Corps continues to achieve our goals for officer retention. We are retaining experienced and high quality officers. Our aggregate officer retention rate was 91 percent for Fiscal Year 2007, which is above our historical average. Current officer retention forecasts indicate healthy continuation rates for the officer force as a whole.

Concerning our reserve force, we satisfied our manpower requirements by retaining 76 percent in Fiscal Year 2007, the sixth consecutive year above our pre-9/11 historic norm of 71 percent. For the current year, reserve officer retention has thus far remained above historical norms. Enlisted reserve retention is currently lower than has been seen in the last two years, and is being monitored very closely. It is important to note that increased opportunity for prior service Marines to return to the active component is affecting reserve retention rates. Additionally, higher planned retention in the active component is reducing the number of personnel transitioning into the Selected Marine Corps Reserve. For these reasons we appreciate the increased reenlistment incentive provided in the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act.

Marine Corps Reserve

This year marks the seventh year that our reserve component has augmented and reinforced our active component in support of the Long War. Thanks to strong Congressional support, the Marine Corps has staffed, trained, and equipped its Reserve to respond to crises around the world. Our Reserve Component possesses capabilities to fight across the full

spectrum of conflicts to support our Marine Air Ground Task Forces. As of 1 February 2008, there have been 56,275 Reserve activations since 9/11.

The Marine Corps Reserve continues to recruit and retain quality men and women willing to serve in our military and help our nation fight the Long War. These men and women do so while maintaining their commitments to their families, their communities, and their civilian careers. The development of our Long War Force Generation Model has greatly improved our ability to provide our Reserve Marines with advance notification of activation. More than 6,100 Reserve Marines are currently on active duty with nearly 5,000 serving in reserve ground, aviation and combat support units, while over 1,100 serve as individual augments in both Marine Corps and Joint commands. Eighty-four percent of all mobilized Reservists have deployed to the CENTCOM area of operations. To support ongoing mission requirements for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the Marine Corps Reserve provides approximately 18 percent of our Total Force commitment.

As previously mentioned, recruiting and retention remain a significant interest as the Marine Corps Reserve continues its support for the Long War. The increased flexibility and funding authorizations you provided in the Fiscal Year 2008 National Defense Authorization Act are valuable assets to assist in our recruitment and retention missions; they not only generate greater interest in reserve reenlistment, but also provide financial assistance during the critical period of transition from active duty to reserve service.

Healthcare remains an essential part of mobilization readiness for our reserve component. TRICARE Reserve Select has helped to ensure that our Selected Marine Corps Reserve members, and their families, have access to affordable healthcare. Increased access and

flexibility to healthcare for these families assists in alleviating one of the most burdensome challenges facing families of deploying reserve Marines.

The dedication and Reserve experience provided by our cadre of full-time support personnel has been a key to success in integrating our Total Force. Likewise, our Marine Corps Total Force pay and personnel System (MCTFS) has ensured and continues to provide a seamless continuum of service for our Reserve Marines.

The long-term success and sustainability of our Reserve Forces in both Operational Support and Strategic Reserve roles is directly related to our ability to prepare and employ our forces in ways that best manage limited assets while meeting the expectations and needs of individual Marines and their families. In an effort to ensure a well-balanced total force and address any potential challenges that may arise, we are constantly monitoring current processes and policies, as well as implementing adjustments to the structure and support of our reserve forces.

Civilian Marines

Civilian Marines continue to provide an invaluable service to the Corps as an integral component of our Total Force. With a population of over 30,000 appropriated and non appropriated funded employees and foreign nationals, Civilian Marines work in true partnership with the active duty and play an important role in supporting the mission of the Marine Corps and the Long War. Our vision for the future not only defines what the Marine Corps will offer to, but what it expects from, its Civilian Marines.

The Marine Corps strategy for achieving this vision is detailed in the Civilian Workforce Campaign Plan (CWCP) designed to create, develop, acculturate, reward and maintain an innovative and distinctive Civilian Marine workforce responsible for providing exceptional

support to the Nation's premier expeditionary "Total Force in Readiness." Marine Corps Senior Executives have been charged with overseeing implementation of the CWCP by providing developmental opportunities and career management for assigned communities of interest.

The Marine Corps is also committed to the successful implementation of the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). NSPS will assist us in achieving the goals and objectives of the CWCP by enabling us to better support the warfighter and provide a civilian workforce that is flexible, accountable, and better aligned to the Marine Corps mission. The first group of Marine Corps organizations converted approximately 1,900 general schedule civilian employees to NSPS in January and February 2007, and we just completed this month the conversion of approximately 4,200 more employees across all remaining Marine Corps organizations, including overseas and field activities. We are actively participating with the Department of Defense in the development and implementation of NSPS. Partnering with the Services, we are working to ensure our civilians are provided opportunities for training and support for successful transition to NSPS. Our goal is high operational performance while supporting successful implementation of the system.

Information Technology

Ensuring accurate, timely pay is supported by our continued efforts to transform our manpower processes by leveraging the benefits of the Marine Corps Total Force System (MCTFS), the Department of Defense's only fully integrated personnel, pay, and manpower system. MCTFS seamlessly serves our active, reserve, and retired members; provides total visibility of the mobilization and demobilization of our reserve Marines; and ensures proper and timely payments are made throughout the process. MCTFS provides one system, one record — regardless of an individual's duty status. According to the most recent Defense Finance and

Accounting Service's "Bare Facts" report, MCTFS continues to achieve a pay accuracy rate of over 99 percent for both our Active and Reserve Components. MCTFS has enabled the Marine Corps to move its pay and personnel administration to a predominately self-service, virtually paperless, secure, web-based environment. In Fiscal Year 2007, individual Marines and their leaders leveraged MCTFS' capabilities to process more than 1.6 million paperless transactions.

Taking Care of Our Marines and Our Families

Marines take care of their own – period. Never has this ethos been more relevant than during time of war. As Marines continue to perform magnificently around the globe, serving in harm's way, their dedicated families contribute to mission success by managing the home front. Oftentimes, with their contribution comes great sacrifice. We realize that families are the most brittle part of the deployment equation and it is our moral imperative to ensure Marines and families are provided the right tools to secure their family readiness.

Putting Family Readiness on a Wartime Footing. Last year, at the Commandant's direction, the Marine Corps set out to ensure our family programs have fully transitioned to wartime footing in order to fulfill the promises made to our families. Many of our family and installation support programs underwent rigorous assessments, and actions are underway to refresh, enhance, or improve family support programs in five key areas: unit family readiness programs and Marine Corps Family Team Building, the Exceptional Family Member Program, the School Liaison Officer Program, remote and isolated support, and installation and infrastructure support.

Unit and Installation Family Readiness Programs. Through our assessments, we found that our Marine Corps Family Team Building Program and unit family readiness program, the centerpiece of our family support capability, were based on a peacetime model and 18-month

deployment cycle and largely depended on volunteer support. As our deployment and operational tempo increased, we now know that we overburdened our dedicated volunteers. While our compassionate volunteers performed magnificently, the Marine Corps must take action to establish an appropriate division of labor. This will be accomplished by increased civilian staffing within our programs and the establishment of primary duty family readiness officers at the regiment, group, battalion and squadron levels. We will additionally procure technology to improve outdated processes and reduce manual functionality.

To implement and sustain our identified family readiness program improvements, the Marine Corps budget supports a \$30M sustained funding increase. These improvements, currently under aggressive implementation, include:

- Formalizing the role and relationship of family readiness process owners to ensure accountability for family readiness;
- Expanding programs to support the extended family of a Marine (spouse, child, and parents (70 percent of Marines in their first enlistment are unmarried));
- Establishing primary duty billets for Family Readiness Officers (FROs) (84 civilian FROs for Regiment/Group and higher and 302 primary-duty military FRO billets for Battalion/Squadron level);
- Increasing Marine Corps Community Services and Marine Corps Family Team Building installation personnel at bases and stations (we are hiring 138 new full-time staff);
- Enhancing methods of communication between installation programs to better synergize support to individual commands;
- Refocusing and applying technological improvements to our official communication network between commands and families; and

- Developing a standardized, high-quality volunteer management and recognition program.

Warrior Family Support. Optimally, we would like to keep our families at the bases and installations when their Marines are deployed. We have found that families find better support being surrounded by others who understand the nature of deployments and the Marine way of life. Accordingly, the Marine Corps has dedicated \$100M in the Fiscal Year 2008 GWOT Supplemental for Warrior Family Support.

At installations across the Marine Corps, to include remote and isolated locations, we are making quality of life program and services upgrades to include child care availability and support, playground equipment, youth sports equipment, fitness center equipment, bike paths, and facility improvements. These enhancements will further promote the sense of community required to form strong bonds among our Marine families that contribute so greatly to readiness.

Exceptional Family Member Program (Respite Care). Parental stress can be heightened for Marine families who are also caring for one or more family member with special needs. To focus on this specific need, the Marine Corps offers our active duty families enrolled in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) up to 40 hours of free respite care per month for each exceptional family member. This care is intended to provide the caregiver intermittent breaks while giving their family member(s) with special needs a nurturing and developmentally appropriate environment. We also seek to provide a “continuum of care” for our exceptional family members. In this capacity, we are implementing EFMP improvements to provide a continuum of care for EFMs that will ensure appropriate access and availability to medical, educational, and financial services. We will utilize assignment processes to stabilize the family or Marine as necessary. Finally, we will work with federal or state agencies to ensure a continuity of care for EFMs as they relocate and change duty stations.

School Liaison Officers. The education of over 41,000 school age children of Marine Corps parents is a quality of life priority. Our Marine children are as mobile as their military parents. As they relocate from duty stations, they encounter academic and extra curricular differences that directly impact learning and development achievement. To address these education challenges, we are establishing a School Liaison Officer capability at every Marine Corps Installation to help parents and commanders interact with local schools and help resolve education transition issues. This issue is especially important to our EFMs. Working with commanding officers, Marines, and families, our School Liaison Officers will seek to optimize the educational experience of elementary, middle, and high school students.

Our intent for all family support programs is to build trust between the Marine Corps and our families, enable and empower Marines and their families to advocate and seek help as need from support programs available at installations and through on-line technology, and ensure a continuum of care through the lifecycle of a Marine and his mission, career and life events.

Remote and Isolated Support. We are additionally taking action to improve quality of life at remote and isolated installations that need infrastructure or expanded programs to appropriately sustain Marines and their families. Actions underway include updating programs and services to appropriately support the needs of our Millennial Generation Marines and families who have experienced multiple deployments. We plan to conduct focus groups at installations across the Marine Corps to target these “Generation Y” Marines and families to determine their specific support requirements, particularly in view of the operational tempo. We will use the results to ensure that our program transformation meets the needs of the future leaders of your Marine Corps and generations of Marines and their families to come.

Once fully implemented, the recommendations will yield an extensive network of revitalized family support programs to sustain Marines into the future. Moreover, the enhanced family readiness programs will better empower Marines and families to effectively meet the challenges of and thrive in today's military lifestyle.

Combat Operational Stress Control. Marines train to fight. Their training includes preparedness that hardens them physically and instills mental readiness for the stressors of battle. Commanders bear primary responsibility for Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC) in the Marine Corps. They also bear responsibility for leading and training tough, resilient Marines and Sailors, and for maintaining strong, cohesive units. We teach commanders to detect stress problems in warfighters and family members as early as possible, and to effectively manage these stress problems anywhere they occur – in theater or at home.

At the center of our COSC Program is a combat/operational stress continuum model, recommended by our Marine Expeditionary Forces Commanding Generals, that indicates that stress responses and outcomes occur on a continuum, from stress coping and readiness at one end of the spectrum, to stress injuries and illnesses at the other end. These stress responses are color-coded as green (for "Ready"), yellow (for "Reacting"), orange (for "Injured"), and red (for "Ill"). Marine leaders promote green-zone resiliency and mental readiness in their Marines, Sailors, and families, and this is done primarily through training, leadership, and unit and family cohesion. Training and education in COSC knowledge, skills, and attitudes is a priority not only for units preparing to deploy, but throughout deployment cycles, as well as in formal career schools for all Marines.

We also continue our collaboration with sister Services, the Department of Veterans Affairs' National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and external agencies to determine best practices to better support Marines and their families.

Casualty Assistance. Your Marines proudly assume the dangerous but necessary work of serving our Nation. They selflessly accept their mission and perform magnificently around the globe. Some Marines have paid the ultimate price, and we continue to honor them as heroes who contributed so much to our country. Our casualty assistance program has and continues to evolve to ensure the families of our fallen Marines are always treated with the utmost compassion, dignity, and honor. Our trained Casualty Assistance Calls Officers provide the families of our fallen Marines assistance to facilitate their transition through the stages of grief.

Last year, Congressional hearings and inquiries into casualty next of kin notification processes revealed deficiencies in three key and interrelated casualty processes: command casualty reporting, command casualty inquiry and investigation, and next of kin notification. These process failures were unacceptable. As soon as we discovered these process failures, we ordered an investigation by the Inspector General of the Marine Corps and directed remedial action to include issuing new guidance to commanders — reemphasizing existing investigation and reporting requirements and the importance of tight links between these two systems to properly serve Marines and their families. Additionally, effective December 2007, the Headquarters Marine Corps Casualty Section assumed responsibility for telephonic notification of the next of kin of injured/ill Marines from the commands. The Casualty Section is available 24/7 to provide status updates and support to family members. The Marine Corps will continue to monitor our processes, making every effort to preclude any future errors and ensure Marines and families receive timely and accurate information relating to their Marine's death or injury.

Wounded Warrior Regiment

In April 2007, the Wounded Warrior Regiment was activated to achieve unity of command and effort in order to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach to Wounded Warrior care. The establishment of the Regiment reflects our deep commitment to the welfare of our wounded, ill, and injured. The mission of the Regiment is to provide and facilitate assistance to wounded, ill, and injured Marines, Sailors attached to or in support of Marine units, and their family members, throughout all phases of recovery. The Regiment provides non-medical case management, benefit information and assistance, and transition support. We use “a single process” that supports active duty, reserve, and separated personnel and is all inclusive for resources, referrals, and information.

There are two Wounded Warrior Battalions headquartered at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and Camp Pendleton, California. The Battalions include liaison teams at major military medical treatment facilities, Department of Veterans Affairs Poly-trauma Centers and Marine Corps Base Naval Hospitals. The Battalions work closely with our warfighting units to ensure our wounded, ill and injured are cared for and continue to maintain the proud tradition that “Marines take care of their own.”

The Regiment is constantly assessing how to improve the services it provides to our wounded, ill, and injured. Major initiatives of the Regiment include a Job Transition Cell manned by Marines and representatives of the Departments of Labor and Veterans Affairs. The Regiment has also established a Wounded Warrior Call Center for 24/7 support. The Call Center both receives incoming calls from Marines and family members who have questions and makes outreach calls to the almost 9,000 wounded Marines who have left active service. A Charitable Organization Cell was created to facilitate linking additional wounded warrior needs with

charitable organizations that can provide support. Additionally, the Regiment has strengthened its liaison presence at the Department of Veterans Affairs Headquarters. These are just some of the initiatives that reflect your Corps' enduring commitment to the well-being of our Marines and Sailors suffering the physical and emotional effects of their sacrifices for our great Nation.

Thank you for your personal and legislative support on behalf of our wounded warriors. Your personal visits to them in the hospital wards where they recover and the bases where they live is sincerely appreciated by them and their families. Your new Wounded Warrior Hiring Initiative to employ wounded warriors in the House and Senate demonstrates your commitment to and support of their future well-being. We are grateful to this Congress for the many wounded warrior initiatives in the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act. This landmark legislation will significantly improve the quality of their lives and demonstrates the enduring gratitude of this Nation for their personal sacrifices. I am hopeful that future initiatives will continue to build upon your great efforts and further benefit the brave men and women, along with their families, who bear the burden of defending this great country.

We are at the beginning of a sustained commitment to care and support our wounded, ill and injured. As our Wounded Warrior Program matures, additional requirements will become evident. Your continued support of new legislation is essential to ensure our Wounded Warriors have the resources and opportunities for full and independent lives.

Conclusion

As we continue to fight the Long War, our Services will be required to meet many commitments, both at home and abroad. We must remember that Marines, sailors, airmen, and soldiers are the heart of our Services – they are our most precious assets – and we must continue to attract and retain the best and brightest into our ranks. Personnel costs are a major portion of

both the Department of Defense and Service budgets, and our challenge is to effectively and properly balance personnel, readiness, and modernization costs to provide mission capable forces.

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, quality of life, and moral guidance to carry our proud Corps forward. With your support, a vibrant Marine Corps will continue to meet our nation’s call!

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.