

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION UNTIL  
RELEASED BY THE  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT OF  
SERGEANT MAJOR CARLTON W. KENT  
SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS  
HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**BEFORE THE**

**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES**

**ON**

**FEBRUARY 4, 2009**

Mr. Chairman, Congressman Wamp, and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to proudly report on the state of your Marine Corps and the well-being of our Marines and their families. To echo the Commandant, our most sacred resource remains the individual Marine, and as we fulfill the assigned missions, we must always keep their well-being in the forefront. Our success as an institution during the Long War is inextricably linked to enabling the readiness of our Marines and their families through our investments in Quality of Life programs. Marines and their families know that their sacrifices are making a difference, that they are part of something much larger than themselves, and that their Nation stands behind them. We are grateful for the undying support of the Congress and American people to address these needs.

As of 1 December, there are over 25,000 Marines forward deployed in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). The vast majority of these Marines are in Iraq; however, we are in the process of drawing down those numbers while increasing the number of Marines in Afghanistan. Nearly 2,600 Marines are deployed to various regions throughout Afghanistan — either as part of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) – Afghanistan or as members of Embedded Training Teams or Individual Augments. Just over 2,800 Marines are engaged in other OEF missions outside Afghanistan.

We also remain very conscious of the need for deployed forces elsewhere. Today, there are roughly 4,900 Marines deployed in the U.S. Pacific Command's Area of Responsibility, including 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), 31<sup>st</sup> MEU, and a 65-man detachment in the Philippines. More than 300 Marines are deployed in support of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa in Djibouti. We expect to meet over 140 requests to conduct Theater Security Cooperation activities in this fiscal year.

### **Grow the Force**

The Marine Corps grew by over 12,000 Marines in Fiscal Year 2008 and is on pace to reach an active duty end strength of 202,000 by the end of Fiscal Year 2009 – two years ahead of schedule. This historic growth can be attributed to three factors: quality recruiting, record retention levels, and reduced attrition. We are currently ahead of Fiscal

Year 2008 in first term enlistments and are on track with our career reenlistments; our recruiting standards remain high, as nearly 98% of our new recruits in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2009 are high school graduates. We established the most aggressive retention goals in our history, and our achievement was exceptional. More than 1 in 3 first-term Marines and more than 3 in 4 careerists chose to reenlist in Fiscal Year 2008. Attrition levels are projected to remain at or below Fiscal Year 2008 rates.

### **Transitioning Marine and Family Support Programs**

Today's Marines and families carry on the long legacy of selfless service to our Nation, and the Marine Corps continues its commitment to care for our Marines and their families. Over the past year, the Marine Corps initiated a multi-year strategy to transition family support programs to a wartime footing. To achieve this, we conducted a series of assessments for the purpose of documenting service levels and evaluating the current state and efficiency of Corps-wide Marine and family support programs and services. We heard the concerns of our Marines and their families, and implemented key reforms at every level of command and aboard each installation. Central to our transformation efforts, we have expanded the depth and breadth of our family readiness training programs and established full-time Family Readiness Officer billets in more than 400 units, who serve as the focal point for the families of our deployed Marines.

As we continue implementing this transition, every program must contribute to the success of the Marine Corps; we can measure the effectiveness of programs through outcomes such as increased recruiting and retention, and evidence such as measurements of satisfaction in our Quality of Life Survey.

The Marine Corps Family Team Building Program (MCFTB) provides a strong support arm to Unit Family Readiness and provides high quality training that supports the lifecycle of the Marine and family through mission, career and life events. We have expanded and enhanced pre, during, and post-deployment training to address the increased demands and potential impact of multiple, sustained deployments on Marines and their families. We have developed an inventory of Lifeskills training courses that specifically address challenges of military life, but also personal and family life. Acknowledging the role extended family members play in fostering personal and family

readiness, we have expanded our family readiness support to include parents of single Marines. Finally, our MCFTB staff provides Unit Command Teams training on the roles, responsibilities and supporting tools that are available to foster personal and family readiness.

We have completed assessments at our remote and isolated commands and initiated substantial improvements to infrastructure and quality of life programming. We have also solidified support to families through the establishment of a School Liaison capability and enhancements to our Exceptional Family Member Program, which I will discuss in more detail.

We learned that effective communications with family members is of paramount importance, and for our families with deployed Marines, a critical quality of life requirement. We have addressed this issue in a number of ways. To enhance our morale and recreation capability on installations, as well as to better connect Marines and their families, the Marine Corps is installing wireless networks and access points at over 230 facilities across the Marine Corps. Full implementation is anticipated by August 2009. We are also testing a Morale-Portable Satellite Communication Suite (M-PSC) that provides an internet and web-cam capability to Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) in Afghanistan where traditional “Internet Cafés” are unavailable. This not only provides Marines with an opportunity to connect to families, but also provides a recreation outlet at these austere and remote locations. Two systems were delivered to our forces in Afghanistan in December 2008, and initial capability tests under these austere, combat conditions in the FOBs have been extremely positive

These initiatives and others not only demonstrate the commitment of the Marine Corps to our Marines and their families, but also underscore the significance of Marine and family support to mission readiness. We have advanced the implementation of these initiatives through the use of much appreciated supplemental funding in Fiscal Year’s 2008 and 2009. Beginning in FY10, the Marine Corps intends to sustain funding for these critical program enhancements in our baseline budget, not through supplementals.

### **Exceptional Family Member Program**

Last year, we reported on our mission to establish a continuum of care for our Exceptional Family Members. Recommendations from a rigorous internal functionality assessment have been implemented and we are actively helping nearly 6,200 families gain access to medical, educational, and financial services that may be limited or restricted at certain duty stations. The program is now fully staffed at both the installation and headquarters level. A new Case Management System is on-line and allows the exchange of necessary information and provides a robust reporting capability to the Program Managers. A Respite Care Program funded by the Marine Corps provides up to 40 hours of care per month to all enrolled families, and can be used in conjunction with the TRICARE Extended Care Health Option (ECHO) benefit. We are obtaining the help of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and TRICARE to resolve access and availability to health care concerns at several bases, and legal counsel is now on staff to advise our exceptional family members on state and Federal entitlements and processes. Since expansion of the program, our EFMP families have frequently extended their appreciation for the support provided by our Case Managers, who have helped them navigate the paths and nodes to obtain services.

Gaining access to services can be most challenging to families who have members diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. We sincerely appreciate the increased reimbursement rate for Applied Behavioral Analysis therapy that Congress approved for Fiscal Year 2009. More families will now be able to exercise their option to use the TRICARE Extended Care Health Option program. However, the highly specialized services these families require are not always available. We are additionally evaluating how the Marine Corps can partner with other organizations to increase the availability of these specialized services in geographic areas where resources are currently lacking.

### **School Liaison Program.**

The education of over 52,000 school-age children of Marine parents directly contributes to the overall state of family readiness within our Corps. We recognize that our children, who are often as mobile as their military parents, face additional challenges associated with frequent moves between schools and educational systems of differing quality and standards. To address these challenges, we established School Liaison billets

at each of the installations to help parents and commanders interact with local schools and districts. The School Liaisons advocate for our school age children, and form partnerships with schools and other agencies, in an effort to improve access and availability to quality education and mitigate education transition issues. School Liaisons are actively involved in efforts to assist school districts in applying for available competitive and noncompetitive grants focusing on issues arising with military school age children. Complimenting these efforts, the Marine Corps is working with the Department of Defense to develop an “Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children” with states to enable reciprocal acceptance of entrance, subject, testing, and graduation requirements.

### **Child Development Program and Meeting Potential Need**

To ensure Children, Youth and Teen Programs continue to transition to meet the needs of our families, a Functionality Assessment was conducted in June 2008 to identify program improvements, such as the development of staffing models to improve service delivery, as well as recommendations to explore and re-define services to meet the unique and changing needs of Marines and their families living both on and off our installations. In addition, the Marine Corps has expanded partnerships to provide long and short-term support for geographically dispersed Marines. We are now providing 16 hours of reimbursed respite care per month for families with a deployed Marine. We are using multiple strategies to increase our care capacity, including expanded hours to address increased operational tempo, as well as through partnerships with Resource and Referral agencies, off-base family child care, and Child Development Home spaces. We are currently providing 11,757 child care spaces and meeting 63.6% of the calculated total need. It is important to note that the Marine Corps has initiated rigorous data collection and analysis improvements. As a result, it will be necessary to correct the 2007 annual summary due to identified reporting errors. Our reported rate of 71% of calculated total need last year is more accurately stated as 59.1%. We are not satisfied with our progress to date, and have plans for 10 Child Development Center Military Construction projects. Two have been approved in 2008, and one has been approved in 2009. These approved projects will provide an additional 915 spaces. We also are considering additional

modular Child Development Centers, subject to more detailed planning and availability of funds. Continued Congressional support will help us provide these needed facilities. As the needs of our families change, our program is committed to grow and adapt to meet these developments.

### **Combat Operational Stress Control (COSC)**

Marine Corps commanders are fully engaged in promoting the psychological health of our Marines, Sailors, and family members. To enable leaders, individuals, and families to prepare for and manage the stress of operational deployment cycles, the Combat and Operational Stress Control Program encompasses a set of policies, training, and tools to recognize stress reactions early and manage them more effectively within operational units. Marine leaders are trained by mental health professionals, with assistance from chaplains in the operating forces, to detect stress problems in warfighters as early as possible, and are provided the resources to effectively manage these stress problems in theater or at home base. This training is also being incorporated in formal Professional Military Education schools for both officers and senior non-commissioned officers, such as the Expeditionary Warfare School and the Staff Non-commissioned Officer Advanced Course. Additionally, through enhanced training tools such as hyper-realistic combat training in environments engineered to simulate the sights, sounds, and smells of combat, Marines and Sailors are taught to be tough and resilient. We have staffed full-time COSC training coordinator positions at each of our Marine Expeditionary Force headquarters. To assist with prevention, rapid identification, and effective treatment of combat operational stress, we are expanding our program of embedding mental health professionals in operational units — the Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) Program — to directly support all active and reserve ground combat elements and eventually all deployed elements of the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. This year we begin to formalize the OSCAR program by making mental health professionals organic to the Divisions and Marine Forces Reserve. By FY11, full OSCAR teams will be fielded to the Infantry Regiment level.

### **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**

The science of diagnosing and treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder continues to evolve. Research studies are underway to identify risk and protective factors to prevent Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other stress-related illnesses such as anxiety disorder or depression. Better screening and referral of at-risk Marines is underway via the OSCAR program and standardized pre- and post-deployment health assessments. This will improve access to care and reduce stigma associated with PTSD. The Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense have collaboratively established comprehensive guidelines for managing post-traumatic stress, which are available to all services.

### **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

We continue to see TBI as a significant challenge, one we are meeting in coordination with the Department of Defense and Veteran's Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). Many new cases represent older injuries that are just now being diagnosed and our expectation is that, with the institution of the Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics (ANAM) for all Marines, we will discover mild Traumatic Brain Injuries more promptly post-deployment.

While the Marine Corps is providing leadership and resources to deal with this problem, we cannot solve all the issues on our own. The Marine Corps continues to work closely with the newly established Defense Center of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury to advance our understanding of PTSD and TBI, and to improve the care of all Marines. We are gratified by your continued support in this arena through funding of several research initiatives that explore ways to better treat our injured Marines.

### **Suicide Prevention**

The loss of any Marine is a tragedy both for the family and for our Corps. We are actively engaged in prevention and early identification of problems that may increase the risk of suicide. Leaders at all levels are concerned about the increase in the number of suicides, up from 25 in 2006, 33 in 2007, to 41 confirmed or presumed incidents in 2008. Understanding that there is no single suicide prevention solution, we are committed to

having an effect on the individual Marine through leadership and proactive command involvement at all levels.

In November, the Marine Corps Executive Safety Board, chaired by the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, reviewed the suicide awareness and prevention program and directed the development of a high-impact leadership training program, targeted at non-commissioned officers, to provide them tools to identify and assist Marines at-risk for suicide

The Marine Corps will continue to aggressively pursue suicide prevention initiatives, to include reevaluating existing programs designed to reduce the stressors most correlated with suicidal behavior, developing and distributing new prevention programs, and refreshing and expanding training materials.

### **Personal Financial Management**

In difficult economic times, our Marines and their families face challenges that are no different than the American population in general, such as taking on too much debt, expenses of a new child and increased housing costs. Our Marines also confront challenges because of their service: unexpected or short notice deployments and extended separations which can compound existing financial difficulties. During the July timeframe, we conducted a Financial Quick Poll to help determine the level of financial stress on active duty Marines and their families as a result of the downturn in the economy. Of the over 9,000 Active Duty Marines that responded to the survey, 15% of enlisted Marines and 5% of officers classified themselves as being in financial distress. Respondents reported that the most frequent financial problems experienced within the past year were increases in utility, rent and insurance costs, and taking on excessive debt. In order to address the payday lender problem, we worked with the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society to establish a quick assist loan program that offers a \$300 interest free loan for emergency basic living expense needs. We also conducted a functionality assessment of our Personal and Financial Management Program in October 2008, and found deficiencies and opportunities for improvement. Anticipating that economic impacts may have become more pronounced, we will continue to monitor the Corps' financial health and the success of our efforts to improve the program with another survey in 2009.

### **Wounded Warrior Regiment.**

Our Nation has a reasonable expectation that Marines will receive the care and support they need and deserve, whether this support is provided by the Marine Corps, the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Service Organizations, or the many local and state governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Taking care of Marines has always been a command responsibility where personal relationships matter, not merely a process or a program in which our wounded, ill, and injured Marines are simply enrolled. The Wounded Warrior Regiment is focused on all aspects of non-medical care management for each Marine and Sailor throughout the recovery process. It starts with our Patient Affairs Teams (PATs) assisting with Invitational Travel Orders for the family to travel to the bedside of their wounded, ill, or injured Marine. It includes direct support in the form of lodging, transportation, and incidental needs to that family while they are at their Marine's bedside. It continues with assistance in pay and entitlements, filing life insurance benefits, navigation of the Medical and Physical Evaluation Boards, facilitating the donations of benevolent organizations, mentoring, and employment counseling and placement.

The highly effective "Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center," established in December 2007, is available 24/7 for Marines and Marine Veterans, and enables the Marine Corps to reach out to the 9,000 Marines who have separated from active duty since 2001 with wounds or injuries sustained in the Long War. In its first year, our Call Center contacted about 80 % of these Marine Veterans and handled more than 35,000 calls, helping wounded, ill, and injured Marines. Our trained staff is primarily former and retired Marines or family members of Marines, who share a common bond with those they serve. The Call Center also gives the Marine Corps the capability and flexibility to make outreach calls targeting specific populations at higher risk for problems or requiring specific information. We are using this capability to advise wounded, ill, and injured Marines of the enhanced benefits and application procedures for the new Servicemembers' Traumatic Group Life Insurance policy. Our commitment to gaining and maintaining contact with all our wounded, ill, and injured Marines, including

those that have returned to full duty, has prompted us to increase our capability by adding Call Centers at Camp Lejeune, NC and Camp Pendleton, CA.

The Marine Corps appreciates the Subcommittee's attention to the critical needs facing both Veterans and Service members returning from OIF and OEF. The Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment has made great strides in achieving a more thorough integration of our military, civilian, charitable, and Veterans Affairs programs to better meet the needs of our Marines, especially those that are injured, and our families. We are particularly dedicated to ensuring our Marines not only survive, but that they thrive – whether they return to duty or reintegrate to their communities. The network of support provided by the Wounded Warrior Regiment will continue to the Marine's hometown via our District Injured Support Cells. Manned by active duty Marines, these cells are established throughout the country to conduct face-to-face visits and telephone outreach to reserve and veteran, wounded, ill, and injured Marines.

### **Infrastructure**

The Marine Corps continues to strive for a prolonged commitment to facilities and infrastructure that support operations and quality of life. The Fiscal Year 2009 program provided by Congress funded an unprecedented \$3.2 billion for construction and infrastructure support. This funding, including over \$230 million in the 2008 GWOT Supplemental, provided critical Military Construction and Facilities support for our active and reserve forces.

For many years, we funded only our most critical facility needs. As a result, our installations are in a poor position to properly house and operate with the additional forces required to meet our planned end strength increase. In Fiscal Years 2007, 2008, and 2009, the Marine Corps received over \$4.2 billion in new construction and planning and design alone. With this funding we accelerated non-unit specific facilities which benefit all those aboard the installation -- such as bachelor quarters, recruit quarters, family housing, ranges, operational facilities, and landfills. Because our manpower expansion is already well underway, we are in the process of completing temporary facility solutions that began in Fiscal Year 2007. The generous assistance from Congress has provided critical support that allows our installations to prepare to support our Grow

the Force plan and puts the Marine Corps on the right path to complete the remaining requirements on time.

The Marine Corps' has four major funding areas where recapitalization and modernization initiatives in infrastructure and facilities are programmed: Bachelor and Family Housing; Facility Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization; Military Construction; and Military Construction, Navy Reserve.

Bachelor Housing. Bachelor housing is the Commandant's top Military Construction priority. The Marine Corps currently maintains 89,925 bachelor enlisted housing spaces worldwide. In Fiscal Year 2009, Congress provided almost \$1.2 billion to support this program and we are working towards constructing over 12,000 new barracks spaces. This investment will provide much needed support toward meeting the additional future requirements brought on by our Grow the Force plan and our effort to have all single Marines adequately housed.

Barracks are a critical element in supporting our warfighters. The Bachelor Enlisted Quarters initiative focuses on our enlisted troops and their quality of life within our barracks. The Marine Corps is the youngest, most junior, and least married of the four military Services. Providing appropriate and comfortable living spaces that positively impact the morale and development of these young men and women just makes sense. We are also committed to funding whole room barracks furnishings on a seven-year replacement cycle and prioritizing barracks repair projects to preempt a backlog of repairs.

The Marine Corps' goal is to provide a 2+0 room standard that allows two junior enlisted Marines (E1-E3) to share a room and bath. We believe that assigning two junior Marines to a room is the correct balance between the privacy desired by the Marines and the Marine Corps' goals of providing companionship, camaraderie, and unit cohesion. This balance provides the atmosphere we believe is necessary to motivate, train and develop Marines, while fostering unit integrity. Noncommissioned officers (E4 and E5) are provided a private room with bath in a 2+0 room. With your continued support, the Marine Corps is on track to obtain our goal to achieve the 2+0 standard for all of our Marines by 2014.

Family Housing. With over 190,000 family members, Marine Corps families are an integral component of readiness. We must always remember that Marines and their families serve out of a sense of duty and loyalty to our country and as they do so, they face the difficulties of the military lifestyle -- frequent relocations often far from extended family and frequent deployments that separate families for months at a time. We have a responsibility to provide adequate family housing to our families.

We continue to increase both the quantity and quality of our family housing inventory through public private ventures (PPVs) and military construction where necessary. In addition to PPV initiatives for family housing, continued support for full funding of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) allows more families to access quality affordable housing in the local community. This is important since more than two-thirds of service members do not live on a military installation. However, many families continue to prefer to live in military or PPV housing for a number of reasons, including economics, safety, schools, and community support. PPV, combined with traditional military construction, will continue to build and improve the homes necessary to supplement local community housing.

We have nearly 23,000 owned, leased, or PPV family housing units worldwide. Thanks to your support, new military housing came on-line last year at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow, California and we commenced our first in a series planned renovations of our housing in Iwakuni, Japan. In 2001 the Marine Corps had close to 17,700 inadequate housing units, with the majority of those units requiring significant revitalization or replacement. Based on contracts in place by the end of Fiscal Year 2007, the Marine Corps will have successfully met the Department of Defense goal to eliminate inadequate housing by 2007 and will complete the build-out by 2014.

The funding provided by Congress in Fiscal Year 2009 provided almost \$300 million for public private venture (PPV) seed money, operations, maintenance, sustainment and restoration for family housing. This request included \$251 million for PPV seed money, \$9 million for traditional military construction and \$37 million for family housing operations. Your support for this request allowed us to continue to address the requirement for additional family housing resulting from Grow the Force increases and sustaining and modernizing our remaining government-owned housing.

This PPV seed money will permit construction of almost 400 deficit-reduction units and a DoD Dependent school at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, construction or purchase of approximately 950 units at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in California, and over 500 units at Marine Corps Base Hawaii. This PPV program continues to allow the Marine Corps to leverage private sector funds. In addition to government financing, the private sector contributes development capital for PPV projects in Fiscal Year 2009. We will use traditional military construction to sustain and restore townhouse units for enlisted Marines at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan.

Public Private Ventures. We have privatized ninety-six percent of our world-wide inventories to date and continue to see success from our PPV projects across Marine Corps installations in Arizona, California, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North and South Carolina, and Virginia. PPVs have not only improved the homes in which our families live, they are also providing community support facilities such as community centers, playgrounds and greenscapes that help create neighborhoods and a sense of community.

With nearly our entire domestic inventory privatized, we will continue to build on our prior successes and use PPVs to help us address most of our remaining housing requirement.

Overseas we are engaged with the Government of Japan in developing a Special Purpose Entity (SPE) for Family Housing on Guam. Similar in concept to our domestic PPVs, this SPE will supply the housing for the families of Marines relocating to the Guam from Okinawa, Japan.

Facility Sustainment, Restoration, and Modernization. Facility sustainment funding is critical to keeping our buildings ready to support the mission and provide an acceptable quality of life. In the past, our infrastructure could not be replaced at an appropriate rate, causing portions of it to deteriorate. As a consequence, the Marine Corps has had to use an increasing percentage of its facility sustainment funds to bind together old, inadequate buildings throughout the course of their service life, rather than maintaining newer, more economical structures resulting in significant numbers of facility sustainment projects being deferred due to a lack of funds. This directly impacted

the living and working conditions in barracks, mess halls, and other facilities, in highly visible and negative ways. In addition, we suffered a "quiet crisis" with respect to less obvious repairs to steam plants, airfields, sewer lines, and roads. These requirements are no longer being ignored.

A few years ago, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) developed a model to determine the amount of funding we need to sustain our facilities. This model continues to be refined and strengthened. Since inception of the model, and because of the funding standards put in place by OSD, we have done very well in programming and execution of sustainment. In fact, in Fiscal years 2006, 2007, and 2008 our sustainment rate is over 100%. In 2009, our sustainment rate drops to 90%. However, thanks to Congressional support of Restoration and Modernization to repair our facilities in order to support additional Marines arriving as a result of Grow the Force living and working conditions will improve for all our Marines.

Military Construction. For the third year in a row, the Fiscal Year 2009 funding provided by Congress represented a significant increase from historical funding levels. In 2009 over \$2 billion in funding will provide facilities that address long-standing requirements at our bases and stations and support the increased end strength across the Marine Corps. It is always a pleasure to visit our installations and hear young Marines talk about the work they perform in these new facilities.

Over \$1.3 billion in our 2009 Military Construction program will support our Grow the Force plan. The remaining \$700 million in Fiscal Year 2009 provides for longstanding improvements required at our installations and for planning support for the Defense Policy Review Initiative recommendation to move approximately 8,000 Marines from Japan to Guam. The addition of a recruit barracks at San Diego Recruit Depot and a lifelong learning center at 29 Palms will enhance the quality of life of our enlisted Marines.

Your generous support in the 2008 GWOT supplemental provided additional recruit barracks at Parris Island Recruit Depot and a child development center at Camp Lejeune. These projects will allow us to increase our throughput and provide family support for our Marines.

Marine Corps Exclusive, Military Construction, Navy Reserve. The Marine Forces Reserve is an integral and vital portion of our Marine Corps total force. Marine Forces Reserve is comprised of almost 39,600 Select Marine Corps Reserve personnel at 185 sites, dispersed throughout 48 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico. As these numbers suggest, maintenance of adequate Marine Corps Reserve facilities presents a considerable challenge. The Military Construction, Navy Reserve program for exclusive Marine Corps construction must effectively target limited funding to address at least \$140 million in deferred construction projects. Over 57 percent of the reserve centers our Marines train in are more than 30 years old and of these, 44 percent are more than 50 years old.

The equipment our Marines use today is bigger, heavier, wider, and longer, creating support requirements that these antiquated facilities cannot meet. The electrical demand on our facilities because of modern equipment has increased significantly. Appropriately constructed or modified maintenance facilities, as well as adequate electrical power and other support infrastructure upgrades, are necessary to maintain combat readiness. We still continue to use facilities built to accommodate manual typewriters, M151 jeeps, and M-48 tanks.

To help us address these challenges, the Fiscal Year 2009 budget approved by Congress for Military Construction, Navy Reserve contained almost \$23 million in appropriations for construction in planning and design. This program addresses two pressing requirements and will provide a new Reserve Training Center and a vehicle maintenance facility in Fresno, California; and a Reserve Training Center in Windy Hill, Georgia.

### **Obtaining Quality of Life Feedback**

The Commandant and I travel extensively to meet with our Marines and their families wherever they may be, to hear their concerns. The Commandant regularly conducts town hall meetings at our installations, which provide the opportunity to address not only individual concerns and issues, but also helps program managers identify systemic issues. In late 2007, the Marine Corps conducted its fourth Quality of Life in the Marine Corps Study (prior studies were conducted in 1993, 1998, 2002). This is the first

study conducted since the start of OIF/OEF, and it measured Marines and their spouses' perceptions and satisfaction with the quality of life across a wide range of issues. As a statement of the morale and character of today's Marine, this most recent study found that despite the Global War on Terror and the high operational tempo, Marines and family members are generally satisfied with their mission and the support provided by the Marine Corps. In fact, the most critical findings from the study were that Marines with a deployment history in support of GWOT actually have a slightly higher overall QOL score than their counterparts without a deployment history. We will continue to evaluate the findings from this important study in an effort to sustain the many QOL improvements and transformation efforts outlined in my statement.

### **Conclusion**

On behalf of all Marines and their families, I thank you for your continued support to address the critical warfighting, infrastructure and family readiness requirements of the Marine Corps. During this period of a Long War and continued sacrifices by all those who serve our Nation so proudly, nothing is more important to the Commandant and me than maintaining the well-being of our Marines and their families. With the continued support of the Congress, I am confident we will succeed in that endeavor.