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**STATEMENT OF
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HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS AND
RELATED AGENCIES
ON
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Chairman Culberson, Ranking Member Bishop and distinguished Members of this Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to report to you on our ongoing efforts towards an enduring commitment the Marine Corps has made. In this era of shrinking budgets and forces, the Marine Corps will keep faith with our Marines and families, who have sacrificed so much for more than a decade of war. This is my first opportunity to appear before this Subcommittee, and I have much to report regarding our progress in family readiness and care, support to those who have lost a loved one, care for our wounded, ill and injured, effective transition assistance, behavioral health, support to our deployed Marines, and improvements to infrastructure and facilities. The Marine Corps continues its strong record in these areas, and we thank you and the American people for your unwavering support for our most precious assets, our Marines and families.

Keeping Faith through Strong Families

The Marine Corps will keep faith with its Marines and families through enhanced family readiness and family care programs. Family readiness programs strengthen Marines and their families and promote increased socialization and community connection through official unit communication, readiness preparation and information, and referral opportunities. These programs seek to improve their resiliency through training that increases the ability of Marines and families to cope with the rigors of life in the Marine Corps whether at home or deployed.

The Marine Corps has over 400 Family Readiness Officers, who connect Marines and families to critical information and referrals and assist families during all phases of deployments. Family readiness also benefits from dependable but innovative communication tools that help families effectively manage their lives in times of stress. eMarine, a secure website, delivers

readiness information to Marines and their families whether they are on active duty stationed at large installations or in the reserves living in remote locations. It gives family members access to documents, photos and videos, discussion forums, and vital information about their Marine's unit from anywhere in the world, 24/7. The Marine Corps conducted a full review during Fiscal Year 2011 of Marine Corps Community Services programs to ensure they adequately support the mission and operational requirements of the Marine Corps. While our programs conform to the Commandant's guidance and Congressional direction, we are developing program plans and supporting resource requirements to maintain capabilities at appropriate levels.

Family care programs support the care and development continuum of Marine Corps children from birth into their teens. Family care is comprised of our school liaisons, who provide approximately 70 school districts with information about the needs of Marine Corps families and access to beneficial training and counseling services to support teachers and students. Marine parents are comforted by the support of a local education expert, who provides meaningful insight to new transfers and those with questions on local education policies.

Child care services remain a high priority. In Fiscal Year 2011 we provided 15,927 child care spaces, which reflects an 18 percent increase in capacity from Fiscal Year 2010. The Marine Corps opened five child development centers in Fiscal Year 2011 and plans to open five more in Fiscal Year 2012. The Marine Corps also completed a Child Development Program and Facility Master Plan, which reviewed child care capabilities and costs across the Marine Corps. This plan will facilitate efforts to build multi-capable, adaptable services, reexamine structure, and ensure that our programs are prepared to deliver capabilities in an efficient manner to our Marines and their families. We will continue to standardize our processes in Fiscal Year 2012

and will work to enhance child care for Marines and families serving on independent duty or at locations that are isolated from military bases and stations.

Families enrolled in our Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) strongly endorse our focus on providing a continuum of care and the improvements made to their level of support. Two years of increasing enrollments and a reduction in issues experienced by families relocating to new duty stations demonstrates this approval. EFMP had only 4,500 enrolled family members in Fiscal Year 2008; it has over 10,000 today. The Marine Corps continues to underwrite the cost of up to 40 hours of short-term respite care per month for enrolled families, providing more than 450,000 hours of respite care in Fiscal Year 2011. We continue to transform our program, which the Department of Defense (DoD) and our sister services continue to recognize as a premier program. Marine Corps policy ensures that the assignment and relocation process is sensitive to EFMP family needs and allows Marines to remain competitive for promotion while maintaining a continuum of care for exceptional family members.

Keeping Faith with the Families of our Fallen

The Marine Corps Casualty Assistance Program is committed to ensuring that families of our fallen Marines are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity and honor. Always seeking to improve survivor assistance and demonstrating a record of quick, effective action, our Casualty Assistance Program is a 24-hour-per-day operation manned by Marines trained in casualty reporting, notification and casualty-assistance procedures. Casualty Assistance Calls Officers assist the next-of-kin with burial arrangements, applications for benefits and entitlements, contact with benevolent and philanthropic organizations, and obtaining reports of investigation. Within days of the incident, families are connected to representatives from the

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, a nationally-recognized provider of comfort and care to those who have suffered the loss of a military loved one. The Marine Corps reaches out to the next-of-kin approximately 60 days after the loss to help resolve any residual issues and to let the families know that they are still part of the Marine Corps family. We will remain steadfast in our support of our Marine Corps families who have paid so much in service to our Nation.

Keeping Faith through a Commitment to our Wounded, Ill and Injured

The Marine Corps will continue advocating for better diagnostic and increased treatment options for Marines with complicated injuries including post traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury. In collaboration with the other services, we developed a set of events-based parameters, mandating that our leaders seek out Marines who have experienced a concussive event. This measure no longer relies on identification of impacted service members solely on their willingness to seek help on their own initiative. These protocols are in place now in Afghanistan, and we are already seeing a culture change in the attitude of Marines about being evaluated early for a traumatic brain injury. We have established an in-theater Concussion Restoration Care Center that brings comprehensive concussion evaluation, diagnosis and management as close to the front lines as possible to ensure that appropriate care is available as quickly as possible in an environment that the Marine can easily and comfortably access if they or their comrades have a concern. We are currently developing policy and applications to track traumatic brain injury from “point of injury” to “return to full duty.” These measures will empower commanders with the information they need to monitor the health of a Marine who has suffered a concussive event and intervene appropriately for the duration of a Marine’s career and long after the initial injury.

Marines continue to sustain wounds on the battlefield, are injured in training accidents, fall ill, and experience other tragedies that require non-medical support and care. The Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Regiment (WWR) provides this care. Our wounded warrior care model approach is to return Marines to their parent units as quickly as their medical conditions permit. Wounded, ill and injured (WII) Marines who remain with their parent units are supported by their command structure with the assistance of the WWR. WII Marines with medically acute cases are joined to a WWR element.

Our WWR provides care to the total Marine force. Our Regimental Headquarters in Quantico, Virginia commands the operation of two Wounded Warrior Battalions and multiple detachments in locations around the globe, including at major Military Treatment Facilities and VA Polytrauma Centers. All WWR elements function as a cohesive team to allow for consistent, top-notch services for WII Marines, their family members, and caregivers. Now in its fifth year of operation, we continue to enhance its capabilities to provide needed care and support to WII Marines and their families.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to warrior care and care does not lend itself to a process, but rather, it is a relationship between the Marine Corps and the WII Marine. With this in mind, we have taken steps to ensure that our WWR has the right mix of staff at its locations. We have adjusted our staffing to meet the demand for administrative support which includes, travel facilitation; non-medical attendant orders; and various pays and entitlements. Additionally, we have assigned specially-trained Marine Section Leaders (senior non-commissioned officers) to various locations where WII Marines are joined to maintain good order and discipline and ensure that these WII Marines are provided leadership, mentorship, and encouragement on a daily basis.

In the evolving world of wounded warrior care, properly trained staff is a vital requirement to ensure the needs of our WII Marines are met. Our WWR has launched wounded warrior care-specific computer-based training modules on a wide array of issues. This training will ensure staff is imparting accurate and timely information. The WWR continues to refine its services. Our WWR's fundamental assets and capabilities are described below and are available to WII Marines whether they are joined to the WWR or remain with their parent command. The WWR has a Recovery Coordination Program that provides Recovery Care Coordinators (RCCs) to approximately 1,240 WII Marines. RCCs serve as the WII Marine's central point of contact to help them set and meet their recovery and transition goals. It should also be noted that the WWR's RCCs coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) Federal Recovery Coordinators (FRC), VA Liaisons for Healthcare stationed at DoD Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs), and Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Case Managers to ensure a smooth transition to VA services. Additionally, WWR's Marine Corp Liaison assigned at the VA collaborates closely with the VA Care Management team for assistance with Marine Corp issues or non-medical care management needs. When a Marine is wounded, ill or injured, the WWR works to focus them on their abilities through the Warrior Athlete Reconditioning Program (WAR-P). WAR-P provides activities and opportunities for Marines to train as athletes, while increasing their strength so they can continue with military service or develop healthy habits for life outside of the Marine Corps.

The WWR's Medical Section does not manage WII Marines' clinical care, but rather helps facilitate access to medical programs and care needs that have been identified by the medical system. This staff section works closely with the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and

Surgery to handle the physical and psychological needs of WII Marines and determine the most appropriate course of action. The Medical Section has a small staff of psychological health professionals located in our Call Center and assists WII Marines, their families, and Marine Corps commands with outreach education about medical conditions such as traumatic brain injury, combat operational stress, post traumatic stress, and substance abuse. The WWR's Sergeant Merlin German Wounded Warrior Call Center, a Department of Defense Best Practice, renders various types of resource and referral assistance to WII Marines and Marine veterans. The Call Center not only receives calls on a 24/7 basis, but also conducts outreach efforts to check on the well-being of WII Marines and disseminate information on various issues important to our Marines. Combat-wounded Marines who remain with their parent units are contacted at prescribed intervals based on medical acuity by the WWR's battalion contact cells to determine if they have any needs or issues that require support.

For WII Marines, their family members and caregivers, communication and information is a critical element of a successful recovery. To address this need, the WWR strategically disseminates information on its programs and services to various audiences, including Marine Corps leaders, to ensure the total Marine Corps force, including all wounded warriors and commanders are aware of our WWR's services. As the vast majority of WII Marines reintegrate to their communities, we have taken steps to ensure they are highly competitive in a difficult job market. The WWR provides specialized transition support through its Transition Cells, located at our Regimental Headquarters and Wounded Warrior Battalions. Transition coordinators work closely with Marines to reach their employment and education goals. Specific services provided to Marines in a one-on-one setting include comprehensive career assessments; development of education and career plans; career coaching through the entire transition process; identification

of education, internship and training opportunities; and networking, mentoring, and transition activities, such as job fairs.

Marine Corps leadership fully recognizes that the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) can be difficult for some Marines to navigate. To help all Marines through this process, the Marine Corps uses Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officers (PEBLOs) and Wounded Warrior Attorneys to assist WII Marines in understanding the IDES process, from the Medical Evaluation Board through the Physical Evaluation Board processes, including appeals. We also provide IDES self-help tools, such as an IDES Pocket Guide and Fact Sheet. Through the WWR's website, WII Marines and their family members can access an IDES Toolkit with quick links to resources and information on IDES. We are pleased to report that WII Marines are realizing the benefits of the WWR's Hope and Care Centers. These centers provide a one-stop-shop for services including counseling, physical therapy, education and training. The center at Camp Pendleton, California opened in October 2011 and the center at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina is scheduled to open in June of this year.

WII Marines and their family members and caregivers have sacrificed much and the Marine Corps can assure this Committee and the Congress that it will fully honor their sacrifices by continuing to provide them quality care and support to posture them for success, whether they return to duty or transition back to civilian life.

Keeping Faith by Returning Quality Citizens

The Marine Corps makes Marines, wins our Nation's battles, and returns quality citizens. We focus on the personal and professional development of Marines and provide services in areas

such as personal financial counseling and transition assistance in order to accomplish the mission of returning quality citizens to our Nation.

We are working to revolutionize our Transition Assistance Management Program so that it is fully integrated and mapped to the lifecycle of a Marine - from recruitment through separation or retirement. Transition will not just be an event at the end of a Marine's career; it will rather be a continuous and integrated part of a Marine's service to the Nation. The first change will be to our Transition Readiness Seminar, which will give Marines a choice of focusing on one of four pathways during this program: going to college; attending vocational or technical training; finding a job; or starting a business. The seminar will require Marines to complete assignments beforehand in order to maximize the seminar's efficiency and effectiveness. This tailored approach will reduce information overload and will target individual needs of the Marine.

We will continue to improve the outreach capabilities of our Marine for Life program so veteran Marines can contact us if they need assistance or utilize a reliable network of Marine-friendly individuals, employers and organizations. We stand with them to ensure they know their Marine Corps family will be there to help them. The Marine Corps will also continue to assist its families with employment support. The Family Member Employment Assistance Program helps Marine families achieve employment goals through educational workshops, career counseling and assessment, and resume and interviewing techniques. Recent Congressional authorities regarding apprenticeship programs and spouse employment counseling will greatly improve the transition experience. During their active duty careers, leaders advise Marines on the benefits of using tuition assistance to achieve their future goals.

The Marine Corps provides a variety of classes and tools that help Marines and their families make responsible decisions in personal finance including one-on-one financial counseling, workshops, and information and referral. We assist Marines and family members in financial distress and promote “Military Saves” week that reinforces healthy financial management decisions to save. We have created a new Personal Financial Management curriculum, which covers 34 major topics including saving and investing, credit and debt management, and smart home buying, selling and renting. In an effort to determine the state of financial readiness and the effectiveness of these financial services, we conducted financial health surveys of Marines and families throughout the Total Force in 2008, 2009 and 2011.

Bringing the totality of these tools to bear on the critical issue of transition will assist Marines and their families to effectively translate their military skills and experience to the civilian world. These tools will also help Marines and their families enjoy the lasting fruits of effective transitions of quality citizens from military service.

Keeping Faith through Prevention, Treatment and Resiliency

The integration of our Behavioral Health programs seamlessly weaves our efforts in sexual assault, suicide, combat and operational stress, substance abuse and family advocacy into the larger support network of command structures and the health and human services across the Marine Corps. This integration also institutionalizes resiliency training, which strengthens Marines and families by increasing their ability to cope with the challenges of combat and the rigor of life in the Marine Corps whether at home or forward deployed. The Marine Corps will improve its resiliency efforts through our Behavioral Health Advisory Committee, which makes

recommendations on our programs, and universal training, which will consolidate all behavioral health information into a single training session that focuses on common risk factors.

Our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program follows a holistic approach to prevention and response, utilizing a top-down leadership message of support and an emphasis on bystander intervention. Marines have an inherent responsibility to step up and step in to prevent sexual assault. Our priority is to reduce the number of incidents as well as reduce the number of unreported sexual assaults by utilizing a consistent and focused emphasis on command climate. The Marine Corps has revitalized our curriculum for Non-Commissioned Officers to include a new video-based bystander training, entitled "Take a Stand," designed to reduce stigma by stimulating conversation and engaging Marines with a more personalized message about sexual assault prevention. Command Team training emphasizes the importance of a command climate that does not condone sexual assault and reinforces the message that senior leaders will take appropriate actions when reports are made. In addition, 24/7 helplines are available at all major installations to provide resources and advocacy for victims. Full-time Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates provide a coordinated effort among first responders.

In Calendar Year 2011, 33 Marines died by suicide and 171 attempted suicide. In Calendar Year 2010, 37 Marines died by suicide and 172 Marines attempted suicide. While there is evidence that Marine attitudes toward behavioral health are changing, we still have much work to do in this area. Leaders prevent suicide by strengthening all Marines and encouraging Marines to engage helping services early, when problems are most manageable. We continually encourage Marines to recognize, acknowledge and seek help for stress reactions, and we deploy evidence-based prevention practices such as peer-to-peer suicide prevention training. The Marine Corps will work closely with the DoD Suicide Prevention Office to implement

recommendations of the DoD Joint Task Force on the Prevention of Suicide. Our award-winning “Never Leave a Marine Behind” suicide prevention program, which is peer-led and continually updated to reflect emerging evidence-based practices, is tailored to reflect the culture and values of the Marine Corps. We will continue to forge strong relationships with federal agencies, academia, and private industry in order to further our understanding of suicide prevention. We will expand the use of proven tools such as DSTRESS, which is a “by Marine/for Marine” counseling center for all Marines, attached Sailors, and families, who can call, chat online, or Skype with a veteran Marine, Fleet Marine Force corpsman, or Marine Corps family member. DSTRESS, which will have a global capacity in 2012, addresses the full spectrum of behavioral health needs, whether they are problems arising from the everyday stressors of life or a suicidal crisis.

Combat and Operational Stress Control (COSC) helps Marine leaders maintain their warfighting capabilities by addressing the negative impacts of stress. COSC enhances force preservation, readiness and the long-term health and well-being of Marines and their families. Every battalion or equivalent unit across the Total Force will have an Operational Stress Control and Readiness (OSCAR) team by mid 2012. OSCAR teams are comprised of mentors (selected unit Marines and leaders), extenders (unit medical and religious personnel), and mental health professionals, who provide a network of support. As of January 2012, the Marine Corps had trained over 4,000 Marines as OSCAR mentors, who break stigma and act as sensors for the commander by noticing small changes in behavior and taking action early before stress becomes a medical issue. COSC is incorporating lessons learned into new courses in COSC fundamentals and will continue to enhance its Behavioral Health Information Network, which is a web-based

clearinghouse that provides the latest information, free of charge, concerning behavioral health to Marines and their families.

Keeping Faith with our Marines in the Fight

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

- ***Exchange.*** Ongoing missions in Afghanistan include the operation of two Direct Operation Exchanges Tactical (DOX-T) at Camps Leatherneck and Dwyer, one Tactical Field Exchange at Camp Delaram II, one Imprest Fund Site at Forward Operating Base Edinburgh, and numerous Warfighter Express Services Teams (WEST) operating out of Camps Leatherneck, Dwyer and FOB Edinburgh.
- ***Recreation and Fitness.*** We provide sports, recreational, and fitness equipment to units throughout Helmand Province. This transportable equipment includes sports/recreation cooler kits filled with sports gear and board games, electronic game kits, Theater-in-a-Box kits, and functional fitness equipment for use in austere environments. Reading materials, both electronic and paperback, are also distributed. Our award-winning libraries provide online tools for research, recreation and professional development. Several libraries offer private webcam meetings so families can stay connected with their deployed Marines.
- ***Communication.*** Morale satellite services are available to deployed Marines. We have delivered 13 small satellite communications systems to units in Afghanistan. Each system has two phones that provide 6,000 free minutes per month and five laptops that allow internet browsing, social networking, and chat/video capabilities to deployed Marines. Motomail continues to serve deployed Marines with over 4.1 million letters sent since December 2004.
- ***MCCS Amenity Wi-Fi Solution.*** The Marine Corps Community Services Amenity Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) Solution program began in October 2008. The main purpose of the program is to acquire, deploy, administer, and support Wi-Fi capability at no-cost to Marines and Families. This morale and welfare initiative helps Marines stay in contact while separated from their families. Wi-Fi is conveniently located at temporary lodging facilities, exchange food courts, libraries, education centers, child and youth Centers, Clubs, and Wounded Warrior program facilities.

Keeping Faith through Quality Facilities and Infrastructure

The Marine Corps continues to strive for a prolonged commitment to facilities and infrastructure that supports operations and quality of life for our Marines and their families.

- The Fiscal Year 2013 budget request includes \$3.9 billion (military construction, family housing construction and operations, sustainment, base operating support, and restoration and modernization), which continues our efforts to operate, maintain, and improve our infrastructure. This funding provides critical Military Construction and Facilities support for our active and reserve forces.
- In Fiscal Years 2009 - 2012, the Marine Corps received \$8.8 billion in new construction and design. With this funding, we are providing new quality of life facilities, improved operational and training facilities, and more up-to-date utility infrastructure systems.
- The Marine Corps has three major funding areas where recapitalization and modernization initiatives in infrastructure and facilities are programmed: Bachelor and Family Housing; Facility Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization; and Military Construction.

The Marine Corps currently maintains over 100,000 bachelor enlisted housing spaces worldwide for permanent party and trainees.

- From Fiscal Year 2008-2012 the barracks construction projects were planned to replace inadequate facilities, provide a consistent 2+0 standard across the Marine Corps, and eliminate space deficiencies by 2014. These projects were programmed to meet 90 percent of the requirements with a 202,000 force and are now projected to meet just under 100 percent of the requirement for a reduced force.
- Fiscal Year 2013 and future Barracks Projects are primarily related to specific force relocations and student/training needs, not the previous Barracks Initiative. The Fiscal Year 2013 MILCON request includes two barracks projects that are not part of the BEQ initiative; these will provide space for our Marines at Naval Weapons Station Yorktown and at The Basic School for student officers.
- 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 makes sense.
- 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.

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, 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.

- 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, we have over 24,000 homes worldwide for the many families who prefer to live in military or Public Private Ventures (PPV) housing for a number of reasons, including economics, safety, schools, and community support. PPVs, combined with traditional military construction, will continue to build and improve the homes necessary to supplement local community housing.
- Our Fiscal Year 2013 family housing budget request of \$49 million includes \$20 million to sustain and restore 44 mid-rise homes and to construct site amenities in support of new units being constructed by the Government of Japan at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan and for the operations, maintenance, and leasing of 1,100 units located worldwide.

We have privatized over 97 percent of our world-wide inventories to date and continue to see success from our PPV projects across Marine Corps installations. 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 for our Marines and their families.

As resources overall and military construction funds in particular become more constrained, the Marine Corps will continue to rely on the sound stewardship of existing facilities and infrastructure to support our needs. In Fiscal Year 2013, we will again program facilities sustainment funding at 90 percent of the DoD Facilities Sustainment Model, resulting in a facilities sustainment budget of \$651 million. Even this relatively strong commitment could result in some facilities degradation, according to the model. Since Fiscal Year 2004, we have been able to execute over 90 percent of the DoD Sustainment Model each year and it is possible that such opportunities to exceed our initial programming objectives for facilities sustainment will again arise in Fiscal Year 2013.

Funding in recent years has provided facilities that address long-standing requirements at our bases and stations 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. Our Fiscal Year 2013 budget request of \$741 million continues to support our Marines. Funds are being requested to support Bachelor Enlisted Quarters, Joint Strike Fighter and MV-22 support facilities, quality of life improvements, such as a mess hall at Quantico, utilities and infrastructure improvements, and training and professional military education facility improvements.

Keeping Faith with our Marines and Families

In these times of transition, the Marine Corps is committed to remaining focused on our responsibilities here and around the globe. We must lean forward and be ready to answer the call to duty in any clime or place. As we remain constantly vigilant to the external threats to our Nation, we will stay focused on our internal responsibilities to the Marines and families that form our ranks. We have a young force and an almost equal number of active duty Marines and

family members. We will be fiscally responsible and will critically assess the needs of our family members and prioritize resources. We will do so, however, in a manner that recruits, retains, and sustains the world's finest fighting force while keeping faith with our Marines and their families. We owe them no less. Thank you for your lasting support.