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STATEMENT

OF

GENERAL ERIC SMITH  
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

AS DELIVERED TO CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES

ON

THE POSTURE OF THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS



32 Chair, Ranking Member, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the  
33 opportunity to report to you on your Marines and your Marine Corps. Your support in the coming  
34 years will be critical to the Marine Corps' ability to remain our Nation's premier expeditionary  
35 force-in-readiness while simultaneously modernizing for the fights of the future. Together, we  
36 will maintain the Corps' commitment to lethality and our warrior ethos.

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## 38 **Discipline and our Warrior Ethos**

39 The Marine Corps is defined by its singular purpose: to fight and win the Nation's battles.  
40 As a warfighting organization, everything we do is designed to support the infantryman whose  
41 job is to locate, close with, and destroy the enemy.

42 Discipline is the foundation of our warrior ethos. It sharpens our readiness, forges  
43 unbreakable bonds between Marines, and enables us to adapt and overcome in any situation. It  
44 allows Marines to make sound decisions amidst chaos, execute complex tasks under extreme  
45 conditions, and thrive where others falter. Discipline permeates every aspect of a Marine's life,  
46 from the self-discipline required to meet rigorous physical fitness standards to the accountability  
47 needed to ensure we are ready to "fight tonight." Without it, we are a collection of individuals;  
48 with it, we are an unstoppable, cohesive force ready to fight any adversary.

49 The Marine Corps has not and will not lower its standards or change its warfighting  
50 culture. Our standards, developed over hundreds of campaigns and battles, define what it is to be  
51 a Marine. We challenge our citizens to rise to meet these uncompromising standards; combat  
52 offers no second chances, and lapses in discipline cost lives. Marines do not train for comfort,  
53 fairness, or convenience – we train for war.

54

## 55 **Current Operating Environment**

56 As the nation's expeditionary shock troops, forward deployed Marines are a vital element  
57 of the Joint Force—they provide our Nation's leaders with a flexible response option in an  
58 unpredictable global security environment. Chief among these is the threat posed by China,  
59 which seeks to reshape the global order to serve its own authoritarian ambitions. The Chinese  
60 Communist Party's aggressive military modernization, coercive economic practices, and actions  
61 in the South China Sea directly threaten the principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific. With over

62 33,000 Marines forward deployed or stationed west of the international date line—ready to fight  
63 at a moment’s notice—the Marine Corps plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the U.S. and its  
64 allies can deter the Chinese Communist Party’s aggression, protect critical sea lines of  
65 communication, and safeguard U.S. interests.

66 Beyond the Chinese Communist Party’s military ambitions, the Marine Corps stands  
67 ready to address other significant threats to U.S. security and interests. In the Middle East, Iran  
68 continues to destabilize the region by supporting terrorist organizations, advancing its ballistic  
69 missile program, and conducting malign activities through proxy groups. These actors threaten  
70 regional stability and endanger global energy supplies. Meanwhile, Russia’s war in Ukraine  
71 underscores its willingness to destabilize Europe, disregard international borders, and use  
72 cyberattacks as weapons.

73 At the same time, transnational threats such as terrorism, piracy, and the proliferation of  
74 advanced weapons systems further complicate the security environment. Additionally, the  
75 security of the U.S. homeland remains paramount, as porous borders and transnational criminal  
76 organizations pose risks to national safety and stability.

77 These challenges demand a Marine Corps capable of campaigning to deter aggression  
78 and responding to crises on a global scale to defeat adversaries and set conditions for the Joint  
79 Force. From the complexity of the cyber domain to the maritime chokepoints of the Indo-Pacific,  
80 Marines remain committed to being the most ready when the Nation is least ready—a force that  
81 thrives in chaos and delivers victory whenever and wherever required.

82

## 83 **Meeting the Challenge**

84 In order to assist Congress with understanding where your Corps stands today and where  
85 we are headed, I have broken down my posture statement into four areas that are nested with my  
86 Commandant’s Planning Guidance: Amphibious Readiness and Littoral Mobility; Accelerating  
87 Force Design Modernization; Modernizing Barracks and Improving Quality of Life; and  
88 Recruiting, Making, and Retaining Marines. Given my Title 10 authorities to man, train, and  
89 equip the Marine Corps, I am acutely focused on these four areas in this budget cycle as I believe  
90 their achievement will best posture the Corps for both the fights of today and the future.

91

92 **Amphibious Readiness and Littoral Mobility** - Achieving a 3.0 Amphibious Ready Group

93 (ARG)/Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) presence is my top priority. 3.0 ARG/MEU presence  
94 is the Marine Corps' North Star. Three continuous, consistent, and simultaneously deployed  
95 ARG/MEUs provide lethal response options, creates dilemmas for our adversaries, forward  
96 postures forces to deny adversaries decision space and supports campaigning alongside our allies  
97 and partners. At the same time, we will pursue organic littoral mobility options to ensure Stand-  
98 in-Forces—forward, low-signature units that operate inside adversary threat rings to impose  
99 costs across all phases of conflict—can persist and maneuver.

100

101 **Accelerate Force Design Modernization** - The Marine Corps must stay agile to remain ahead  
102 of evolving threats. We are in the implementation phase of Force Design—integrating new  
103 technology, refining organizational structure, and strengthening the Joint Force. We are  
104 committed to accelerating this effort to ensure Marines from across our Marine Expeditionary  
105 Units, Marine Littoral Regiments, and Marine Expeditionary Forces are lethal, survivable, and  
106 one step ahead of the enemy. The character of war is changing and we must continue to  
107 evolve—continued congressional support is essential to sustain this momentum and ensure  
108 Marines evolve at pace alongside the threat.

109

110 **Modernize Barracks and Improve Quality of Life** – Barracks 2030 is the most consequential  
111 infrastructure investment in Marine Corps history, aimed at providing safe, modern living  
112 conditions for our Marines. Quality of life directly impacts readiness, which is why we're also  
113 investing in childcare, spousal employment, and programs that promote total fitness and well-  
114 being. Supporting Marines and their families is essential to retaining a ready and resilient force.

115

116 **Recruit, Make, and Retain Marines** – Maintaining an elite force begins with recruiting and  
117 retaining high-quality individuals. Despite historic challenges, the Marine Corps continues to  
118 meet its recruiting goals without lowering standards—thanks to the dedication and hard work of  
119 our recruiters. We have implemented data-driven initiatives to strengthen these efforts while  
120 upholding our warfighting ethos and caring for Marines and their families.

121

122 The following provides additional details on the four areas I believe we need to focus on to better  
123 inform Congress on where the Marine Corps stands today and where we are headed in the future.

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## **Amphibious Readiness and Littoral Mobility**

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The Marine Corps is, first and foremost, a Naval service. Our identity, ethos, and operational success are rooted in our enduring partnership with the U.S. Navy. Amphibious Warfare Ships (AWS) aren't just a number on a spreadsheet—they're a cornerstone of forward-deployed, expeditionary power that uniquely complements and enhances the Nation's broader strategic arsenal. The ARG/MEU is the Swiss Army Knife of the Joint Force. When on station, the ARG/MEU provides lethal response options to national decision-makers, creates dilemmas for adversaries, and supports campaigning alongside our allies—all without requiring Access, Basing, or Overflight (ABO) permissions. When forward deployed, these ships allow the Navy and Marine Corps team to deter our adversaries, and fight and win should deterrence fail.

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The MEU, as a forward-deployed, flexible, and self-sustaining Marine Air-Ground Task Force, remains a cornerstone in the defense of our Nation's interests and the deterrence of our adversaries in the maritime domain.

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3.0 Amphibious Ready Group / Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) Requirement - My nearly 40 years of military experience—and in my role as a member of the Joint Chiefs—have led to my fundamental conviction that, when on station, the ARG/MEU is the most effective and efficient tool of both the Marine Corps and the Joint Force. It is our premier force offering to support the operational requirements of our Combatant Commanders—providing options within hours, not days or weeks.

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A "3.0 ARG/MEU" refers to the continuous, consistent, and simultaneous deployment of three, three-ship ARG/MEUs—one forward deployed from the East Coast, one forward deployed from the West Coast, and one episodically deployed from Okinawa, Japan. This posture provides our Combatant Commanders with the ability to shape events, respond rapidly to threats, and deter adversaries with forward-deployed, sea-based forces. ARG/MEUs offer unmatched flexibility across the range of military operations, including expeditionary strikes, sea denial, seizure of advanced naval bases, cyberspace operations, and amphibious assaults. Historically, Combatant Commander-registered and Joint Staff-validated requirements have consistently exceeded what the Navy and Marine Corps can provide, even before accounting for maintenance

154 and availability challenges.

155           Achieving and sustaining a 3.0 ARG/MEU with no fewer than 31 AWS will require  
156 significant change—particularly in how we approach amphibious readiness and ship availability.  
157 Regardless of AWS readiness challenges, the Marine Corps will always ensure expeditionary  
158 forces are ready to respond as the Nation’s expeditionary force-in-readiness. But in the long run,  
159 without adequate resourcing of the amphibious warfare fleet, the Joint Force’s ability to  
160 campaign forward, deter adversaries, and respond globally will be seriously diminished.

161  
162 AWS Readiness and Availability Procurement - This is fundamentally an AWS readiness and  
163 availability problem. The Navy and Marine Corps remain aligned on the critical role of  
164 amphibious forces, but the lack of available AWS has put that role—and the 3.0 ARG/MEU—at  
165 risk. Today, AWS readiness hovers below 50 percent, meaning only half the fleet is available to  
166 support training and operations at any given time. This shortfall has already disrupted scheduled  
167 MEU deployments across all three Marine Expeditionary Forces—not because we lack trained  
168 Marines, but because we lack the ships to move them forward. If this trend continues, unit  
169 proficiency will erode, amphibious experience will degrade, and risk—to both training and future  
170 combat operations—will increase. Reversing this decline is essential if we are to meet Joint  
171 Force requirements, sustain global responsiveness, and provide Combatant Commanders with the  
172 ready, sea-based forces they consistently require.

173           AWS delivery delays and shipbuilding constraints further threaten our ability to build and  
174 sustain a 3.0 ARG/MEU over the long term. During the Cold War, LHAs were built on one-year  
175 centers—meaning a new ship entered construction each year, keeping a steady cadence of  
176 production. Today, because of increased complexity and a thinned industrial base, those same  
177 ships are started on four-year centers—and even then, deliveries are behind schedule. Without  
178 on-time construction of AWS and restored readiness across the existing fleet, we will continue to  
179 fall farther behind Combatant Commander requirements and further erode a critical capability of  
180 our National Defense.

181           The Acting Chief of Naval Operations and I have committed to work together to increase  
182 AWS readiness. His recent decision to convene the Amphibious Ship Maintenance Performance  
183 review provided critical insight into actionable steps that can be taken to improve AWS  
184 readiness. We are grateful for the Navy’s recent initiatives to adopt civilian-standard world class

185 planning principles to repair availabilities; employ “signature availabilities” for AWS which will  
186 award contracts for substantial yard periods one-year out, vice A-120; and resourcing a critical  
187 systems acquisition strategy to steam repair for our LHDs and LSDs.

188 I also agree with the Acting Chief of Naval Operations that persistently maintaining,  
189 without replacing, our older AWS is not a sustainable strategy. We are grateful for the President  
190 and Congress’ initiatives to strengthen and maintain the Maritime Industrial Base and to continue  
191 timely procurement of our LPDs and LHAs. The recent decision to execute a multi-ship contract  
192 saves the American people money, gets our Marines forward, and sends a strong signal to  
193 industry. Restoring a 3.0 ARG/MEU presence will not be solved overnight—it will require  
194 sustained commitment and deliberate action over the next two decades. Now is the time to begin  
195 that work in earnest—future generations of Marines depend on us to take action.

196

197 Medium Landing Ship (LSM) - Mobility in the littorals is essential for the maneuver and  
198 persistence of Stand-in Forces. This is especially true as these forces maneuver throughout the  
199 first and second island chains in the Indo-Pacific. Early in the development of Force Design and  
200 the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) concept—which emphasizes temporary,  
201 austere, and operationally relevant positions to support sea control and denial—the Marine Corps  
202 identified a key mobility gap. In partnership with the Navy, it is now pursuing the LSM to close  
203 that gap in the priority theater. Separate from, but complementary to traditional amphibious  
204 ships, the LSM is being designed for mobility, beach access, and sustainment in contested  
205 environments. To accelerate delivery and ensure operational impact, the Marine Corps is  
206 pursuing a three-phased approach: first, a Littoral Maneuver Bridging Solution (LMBS) to  
207 rapidly enhance movement within the First Island Chain; second, LSM Block I as an initial non-  
208 developmental vessel; and ultimately, LSM Block Next—a fully mature, optimized solution.

209

210 Phase 1: Littoral Maneuver Bridging Solution (LMBS) - The LMBS will serve as an  
211 interim capability to support Stand-in Forces in the Indo-Pacific while the LSM program  
212 advances toward Initial Operational Capability. LMBS addresses the urgent need for intra-theater  
213 mobility and tactical maneuver by leveraging a mix of existing platforms, experimental vessels,  
214 and chartered solutions, mitigating the near-term gap in organic littoral mobility and maneuver.  
215 Expeditionary Fast Transports (T-EPF), Landing Craft Utility (LCU) variants, and Maritime

216 Prepositioning Ships are providing critical operational and tactical support for dispersed units  
217 conducting EABO. Experimental and chartered vessels are also being used to refine tactics,  
218 techniques, and procedures, providing valuable lessons for the future LSM program. While  
219 LMBS cannot fully replicate the capabilities of the LSM, it enhances mobility and sustainment,  
220 ensuring Stand-in Forces remain agile and combat-ready in contested littoral environments for  
221 the near future. Absent this bridging solution, the Marine Corps would be accepting unnecessary  
222 operational risk. LMBS gives us a practical way to reduce that risk while gaining insight and  
223 momentum toward future capability. We will deliberately transition away from this interim  
224 capability as LSM Block I becomes available.

225

226 Phase 2: LSM Block I - LSM Block I is the mid-term solution to support the Marine  
227 Corps' shore-to-shore littoral mobility requirement. Originally, the Joint Requirements Oversight  
228 Council (JROC) approved LSM capabilities development document (CDD) proposals were  
229 deemed unaffordable and late-to-need. Due to the threat window, we recognized the need to  
230 balance requirements with cost and schedule. Therefore, the Marine Corps revisited LSM  
231 requirements to ensure capability is delivered within cost and schedule, and we are naming this  
232 effort LSM Block I. While the Navy's initial fielding plan includes 18 ships, the Marine Corps  
233 ultimately needs 35 LSMs. We are thankful for Congress's support in the FY24 NDAA provision  
234 which permits the Navy and the Marine Corps to purchase a non-developmental vessel, which  
235 will lower costs substantially while greatly speeding the time-to-field. As we field LSM Block I,  
236 we will continue to refine requirements for the long-term solution, referred to as LSM Block  
237 Next.

238

239 Phase 3: LSM Block Next - The final phase, LSM Block Next, will incorporate advanced  
240 technologies and lessons learned from LMBS and LSM Block I to further enhance the ship's  
241 capabilities. This phase represents the long-term evolution of the LSM program, ensuring the  
242 platform remains relevant in future operational environments. By continuously refining the  
243 design and integrating new capabilities, LSM Block Next will maximize the platform's  
244 effectiveness as a key enabler of littoral mobility, operational flexibility, and sustained  
245 expeditionary posture in the Indo-Pacific.

246

## Accelerate Force Design Modernization

Now in its sixth year, Force Design is transforming the Marine Corps to meet the challenges of future conflict. This effort has required tough decisions on the part of the Marine Corps, including the divestment of legacy systems and reinvestments within our topline—enabled by Congress’ strong support. Over five budget cycles, we have identified efficiencies, eliminated outdated capabilities, and ensured every dollar advances our lethality and readiness. For the second year in a row, we achieved an unmodified, or “clean,” financial audit—an institutional milestone that reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources. That trust and discipline are what make Force Design possible—every dollar accounted for is a dollar that can be reinvested into modernization, ensuring we deliver a more capable, lethal force for the future fight.

### **Priority Capabilities:**

The service is intensifying experimentation with prototype platforms and leveraging multi-vendor contracts to foster competition and innovation within the defense industry. We have greatly expanded our portfolio of classified investments to remain focused on cutting-edge technology. The integration of advanced sensors, the Family of Integrated Targeting Cells, artificial intelligence, Navy/Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS), and one-way attack drones are greatly improving our ability to sense, make sense, and deliver precision fires. Our Campaign of Learning is a conscious effort to constantly reassess our modernization efforts and make in-stride adjustments when necessary. Bolstered by lessons from the current conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, our Campaign of Learning has sharpened our focus on three critical capability areas that are essential to realizing the vision of Force Design and enabling the Stand-in-Forces:

1. Joint / Coalition Kill Webs and Combined Joint All Domain Command and Control (CJADC2)
2. Organic Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Automated Systems
3. Contested Logistics

Joint / Coalition Kill Webs and CJADC2 – As a member of the Joint Chiefs, I see firsthand how critical it is for U.S. forces to share information and work together in real time—across services,

278 allies, and partners. To win in today's fight, we must link our forces and sensors together so  
279 commanders can make better decisions faster and act decisively.

280         The Marine Corps is doing its part to make this a reality. We're focused on being the  
281 forward edge of the Joint Force—what we call Stand-in Forces. Our role is to sense the  
282 environment first; pass that information up the chain; and help drive faster, smarter decisions.  
283 Just as importantly, we must be able to receive direction from higher headquarters and act  
284 without delay.

285         To support this, we are investing in systems that help build these "kill webs"—the process  
286 of finding, tracking, and engaging targets. Our contributions include:

- 287         • **Advanced sensors** to detect threats early and accurately.
- 288         • **Electronic sensing systems** like Electronic Remote Sensors (ERS).
- 289         • **Improvements to our TPS-80 Ground/Air Task-Oriented Radar (G/ATOR).**
- 290         • **New sensing techniques** such as bi-static and multi-static radars.
- 291         • **A variety of Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) payloads** across  
292 different platforms.
- 293         • **Marine Electronic Warfare Ground Family of Systems (MEGFoS)** to detect and  
294 disrupt enemy electronic signals.

295  
296         We are also making sure that the systems we're building can easily connect and share  
297 data with the rest of the Joint Force. Our systems aren't being built in a vacuum—from the very  
298 beginning they're designed to work with Navy, Army, Air Force, and Allied systems. This "born  
299 Joint" approach avoids stovepipes and ensures the Marine Corps can meaningfully contribute to  
300 the larger fight. Some examples of how we are doing this include:

- 301         • Our electronic warfare systems are tied directly into the Joint Spectrum Services  
302 Framework (SSF), helping all services share information about the electromagnetic  
303 environment.
- 304         • We are moving to a modern data architecture—shifting from Tactical Services Oriented  
305 Architecture to the Tactical Data Orchestration Layer, which plugs directly into  
306 CJADC2's broader data-sharing network.
- 307         • We're integrating proven joint systems like Minotaur and Maven Smart System (MSS)  
308 into our own intelligence platforms so we can contribute to the Joint Force's Common

309 Operational Picture and receive data from it.

- 310 ● We're fielding Family of Integrated Targeting Cells in collaboration with the Navy and  
311 Army—ensuring that targeting data is fused quickly and precisely.

312

313 The Marine Corps is fully committed to making CJADC2 a reality for the Joint Force,  
314 with the Stand-in-Forces as the eyes and ears of an interconnected and interoperable network.

315

316 ISR and Autonomous Systems – The Marine Corps is investing in a family of autonomous  
317 systems—ranging from long endurance ISR platforms to lethal drones—to extend our  
318 operational reach, increase the survivability of our forces, and support distributed operations in  
319 contested environments. These capabilities provide our commanders with enhanced situational  
320 awareness and precision strike options while enabling Stand-in-Forces to impose dilemmas on  
321 the adversary at scale and at speed. Key examples include:

- 322 ● **MQ-9A:** We are employing the MQ-9A extensively in the Indo-Pacific, providing long-  
323 range surveillance and real-time intelligence to forward-deployed forces and the  
324 interagency. These platforms connect Marines in the field with commanders across the  
325 globe. We are now moving to the next phase, Increment II, which adds advanced  
326 capabilities in electronic warfare, edge-based artificial intelligence, and improved  
327 satellite communications. Increment II will be fully fielded by Fiscal Year 26.
- 328 ● **Organic Precision Fires (OPF):** OPF remains a priority effort and is a critical element  
329 of Force Design. It provides an organic, loitering, beyond line-of-sight precision strike  
330 capability to rapidly engage the enemy beyond the range of direct-fire weapons while  
331 minimizing collateral damage and exposure to enemy direct and indirect fires. OPF–  
332 Light, the only funded capability at this time, is the near-term effort to provide platoons  
333 and squads with anti-personnel and anti-material precision effects on the objective or in  
334 an engagement area in a man-packable, dismounted configuration.
- 335 ● **Lethal Drones and the Replicator Program:** The Marine Corps is fully leveraging the  
336 Department of Defense's Replicator initiative as an integrating effort to accelerate the  
337 fielding of lethal drones and autonomous systems at scale. Replicator's focus on  
338 commercially available, scalable systems allows us to rapidly experiment, iterate, and  
339 field capabilities that enable stand-in forces to hold targets at risk across the depth of the

340 battlespace. These systems will enhance the survivability and lethality of Marine  
341 formations by complicating adversary targeting, enabling kill webs, and imposing  
342 unfavorable cost-exchange ratios on potential aggressors. Replicator is also providing  
343 access to a family of loitering and autonomous strike systems across multiple domains  
344 and is informing our Organic Precision Fires portfolio. Furthermore, the Marine Corps  
345 has partnered with the Defense Innovation Unit to expand our options for delivering  
346 massed, precision strike effects while maintaining affordability and operational  
347 flexibility—key attributes for distributed maritime operations.

- 348 ● **Combat Collaborative Aircraft (CCA):** We are experimenting with unmanned aircraft  
349 like the XQ-58 Valkyrie working alongside crewed platforms such as the F-35. Recent  
350 tests validated their ability to conduct electronic warfare, execute autonomous tasks, and  
351 support Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) missions—all of which improve the  
352 survivability and effectiveness of manned Marine aviation in high-threat environments.

353

354 These investments ensure that Marines can operate effectively in contested spaces, while  
355 reducing risk to personnel and increasing the speed and accuracy of decision making.

356

357 Contested Logistics - Sustaining Marines in contested environments is just as critical as sensing  
358 the enemy or maintaining command and control. The Marine Corps is shifting from traditional  
359 supply chains to a more agile, resilient sustainment network—one designed to maneuver under  
360 threat, reinforce dispersed forces, and sustain operations across the vast distances of the Indo-  
361 Pacific. This includes investments in mobility and sustainment platforms, prepositioned  
362 equipment and supplies, and strategic sealift capacity.

363

364 Key elements of this effort include:

- 365 ● **Global Positioning Network (GPN):** We are expanding prepositioned stocks and  
366 equipment in key locations across the Indo-Pacific to reduce dependency on long,  
367 vulnerable supply lines and ensure Marines have the resources they need where and when  
368 it matters most.
- 369 ● **Emerging Distribution Technologies:** We are advancing new ways to maneuver and  
370 sustain forces in contested areas, including:

- 371 • **Ultra-Light Tactical Vehicles (ULTVs):** 504 vehicles have been delivered to infantry  
372 battalions and MARSOC.
- 373 • **Tactical Resupply Unmanned Aircraft Systems (TRUAS):** 63 systems have been  
374 fielded across the Fleet Marine Force.
- 375 • **Autonomous Low-Profile Vessels:** Under development with the Navy, Army, and  
376 partners to enhance littoral sustainment.
- 377 • **Expeditionary Manufacturing:** Portable fabrication labs (XFAB and TACFAB) are  
378 being fielded to logistics and maintenance units, enabling in-theater repair and  
379 production.
- 380 • **Expeditionary Medical Support:** We are modernizing medical capabilities to meet  
381 distributed operations requirements, including smaller, mobile surgical teams, patient  
382 holding, and long-range casualty evacuation.
- 383 • **Restoring the Maritime Prepositioning Force (MPF):** Over the past decade, the  
384 Navy’s MPF fleet has been reduced from 16 ships to 7 in full operating status, with 2  
385 additional ships in reduced status. This has created a significant shortfall—our  
386 requirement is 2.1 million square feet of lift; today, we have only 1.3 million. This gap  
387 limits our ability to rapidly deploy and sustain forces in a crisis, removes redundancy, and  
388 increases risk to mission. We are working closely with the Navy to recapitalize this  
389 essential capability.

390  
391 These efforts ensure Marines can maneuver, sustain, and fight in contested  
392 environments—without relying on fragile, unpredictable supply lines. To be clear, supporting  
393 contested logistics at scale is only achievable with the LSM—the LSM is our bid for success.

394  
395 **Additional Capabilities:**

396 Beyond these critical capability areas, the Marine Corps is committed to sustaining other  
397 key priorities outlined below, which underpin our warfighting excellence. Force Design and  
398 modernization efforts are about more than technology – they are about ensuring every Marine  
399 has the tools, training, and support needed to thrive in the future fight. By maintaining this focus,  
400 the Marine Corps will remain the Nation’s most ready, forward-deployed force.

401

402 Long Range Precision Fires (LRPF) - The Marine Corps continues to invest in long-range  
403 precision fires to complement our advanced sensing and reconnaissance capabilities. These  
404 systems are essential to enabling the Stand-in-Force to hold adversary naval and land forces at  
405 risk and, when necessary, strike decisively—all while maintaining a small, agile, and survivable  
406 footprint. Our LRPF portfolio includes several key programs:

- 407 ● **Navy/Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS):** A ground based  
408 anti-ship missile system consisting of a Remotely Operated Ground Unit for  
409 Expeditionary Fires (ROGUE-Fires) carrier equipped with two Naval Strike Missiles  
410 (NSM). NMESIS provides a highly mobile, expeditionary capability to target enemy  
411 surface vessels at extended ranges.
- 412 ● **ROGUE-Fires:** A remotely operated ground vehicle based on the Joint Light Tactical  
413 Vehicle (JLTV) chassis, designed to provide mobility for precision fires systems. In  
414 addition to the NMESIS, we are currently integrating the Multiple Launch Rocket System  
415 (MLRS) Family of Munitions (MFOM) onto the ROGUE-Fires to expand the munitions  
416 that can be employed from that platform and provide additional range and flexibility to  
417 the Service.

418  
419 Together, these capabilities provide the Marine Corps with the ability to complicate an  
420 adversary’s decision-making, disrupt their freedom of maneuver, and impose real costs in the  
421 maritime domain—all from highly mobile, dispersed, and hard-to-target platforms.

422  
423 Counter-Unmanned Aircraft Systems (C-UAS) - The proliferation of Unmanned Aircraft  
424 Systems poses a growing threat to U.S. forces across all domains of warfare. To counter these  
425 challenges, the Marine Corps is fielding a layered defense system with four key programs:  
426 Marine Air Defense Integrated System (MADIS), Light-MADIS (L-MADIS), Medium Range  
427 Intercept Capability (MRIC), and dismantled C-UAS systems.

- 428 ● **MADIS:** Mounted on JLTVs, neutralizes threats from manned aircraft to Group 3-5 UAS  
429 and disrupts Group 1-3 UAS using electromagnetic warfare.
- 430 ● **L-MADIS:** A lighter solution for ULTVs, offers similar capabilities and supports agile,  
431 distributed operations.
- 432 ● **MRIC:** Provides high-end defense, defeating cruise missiles and large UAS. A U.S.-

433 based production facility will ensure a steady supply of interceptors.

- 434 ● **Dismounted C-UAS:** Dismounted C-UAS systems provide individual Marines with low-  
435 size, low-weight, and low-power solutions to counter Group 1-2 UAS. Prototypes are in  
436 use, and accelerated fielding is underway.

437  
438 To address urgent threats, the Marine Corps is deploying commercial solutions while  
439 refining long-term Programs of Record. Enhanced training and tactics ensure the effective use of  
440 organic weapons and sensors to complement these systems. The Marine Corps remains  
441 committed to staying ahead of the evolving UAS threat through rapid fielding and continued  
442 innovation.

### 443 444 **Marine Littoral Regiments (MLR)**

445 The foundation of our Force Design progress is our Marine Littoral Regiments (MLR),  
446 specialized and purpose-built units designed for dispersed, task-organized operations that  
447 integrate advanced command, control, communications, computers, combat systems,  
448 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C5ISR) capabilities. These regiments enhance the  
449 ability to rapidly find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess (F2T2EA) threats in support of  
450 maritime commanders, the Joint Force, and allied partners.

451 The 3rd MLR, based at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, has achieved Initial Operational  
452 Capability (IOC) with the activation of its subordinate units: the 3rd Littoral Combat Team, 3rd  
453 Littoral Anti-Air Battalion and 3rd Littoral Logistics Battalion. In 2024, the 3rd MLR  
454 participated in exercises BALIKATAN, ARCHIPELAGIC COASTAL DEFENSE, and Marine  
455 Aviation Support Activity in the Philippines, validating its capacity to operate in dispersed  
456 maritime environments alongside allies. Similarly, the 12th MLR, stationed in Okinawa, Japan,  
457 has activated its Littoral Logistics Battalion and plans to establish its Littoral Anti-Air Battalion  
458 and Littoral Combat Team by the end of FY25. The 12th MLR has engaged in joint and bilateral  
459 exercises, including RESOLUTE DRAGON and KEEN SWORD, in strategically vital locations  
460 such as the Sakishima Islands, bolstering deterrence and readiness in the Indo-Pacific region.

461

## 462 **Barracks Modernization & Quality of Life**

463 The quality of life of our Marines and their families is inseparable from the readiness and

464 resilience of our force. Marines who are well-supported in their personal lives are better prepared  
465 to meet the demands of the mission. The Marine Corps recognizes that our most valuable  
466 resource is our people, and we are committed to ensuring they have access to safe housing,  
467 reliable childcare, high-quality healthcare, and the resources necessary to thrive.

468 In recent years, we have made substantial progress in improving the quality of life for  
469 Marines and their families. From targeted investments in unaccompanied housing through the  
470 Barracks 2030 initiative to expanded childcare options and enhanced fitness and dining facilities,  
471 we are taking deliberate steps to support the physical, mental, and social well-being of our  
472 Marines. These efforts will remain a top priority as we continue to invest in the programs and  
473 infrastructure that enable our force to remain ready and lethal.

474

#### 475 **Installations:**

476 Barracks 2030 - In December 2024, I directed a generational investment in Marine Corps  
477 barracks infrastructure, known as Barracks 2030. This initiative is a critical step toward restoring  
478 faith with our Marines and Sailors. It aligns with the Department of Defense's Quality of Service  
479 effort and directly responds to enduring challenges in recruiting, retention, and readiness. Our  
480 objective is clear: to provide safe, healthy, and professionally managed living quarters that allow  
481 Marines to rest and recover after demanding training or operational deployments.

482 Marine feedback—captured through exit surveys and direct engagement—consistently  
483 points to poor barracks conditions as a major factor impacting morale, welfare, and retention.  
484 The scale of the problem demands sustained, resourced action.

485

486 Facilities Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization (FSRM) - The Marine Corps continues to  
487 face significant facility challenges within the constraints of available resources. Rising material  
488 costs, inflation, and workforce shortages in the construction sector all impact our ability to  
489 deliver projects on time and within budget.

490

#### 491 **Quality of Life:**

492 Marine Corps Total Fitness - The Marine Corps Total Fitness (MCTF) program is a  
493 comprehensive framework designed to enhance the readiness, resilience, and overall well-being  
494 of Marines, their families, and the broader Marine Corps community. By focusing on four key

495 pillars—physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness—MCTF aims to strengthen individual  
496 performance, sustain long-term force effectiveness, and foster a culture of holistic well-being.  
497 More than just a fitness initiative, MCTF integrates training, support systems, and leadership  
498 engagement to ensure Marines are equipped to thrive in both operational and personal  
499 environments. Through this approach, the Marine Corps seeks to cultivate a force that is not only  
500 physically prepared for the demands of service but also mentally resilient, spiritually grounded,  
501 and socially connected, ensuring sustained readiness and mission success.

502  
503 Military Compensation - Competitive compensation remains essential to sustaining the all-  
504 volunteer force and directly impacts both recruiting and retention. Today, Marine Corps pay and  
505 benefits—including housing, healthcare, bonuses, and tax advantages—remain highly  
506 competitive. According to the 14th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation, officer pay  
507 ranks in the top 24 percent compared to civilian counterparts, while enlisted pay ranks in the top  
508 17 percent. We appreciate Congress’ support in approving a 4.5 percent basic pay increase for all  
509 Marines, and an additional 10 percent for our most junior Marines. Beyond basic pay, we employ  
510 targeted incentives to retain and properly assign Marines based on experience and skill. Selective  
511 Retention Bonuses help shape the force by focusing on critical military occupational specialties  
512 and encouraging lateral moves to meet emerging requirements. We continue to pair monetary  
513 incentives with non-monetary options tailored to individual Marines, ensuring we retain the  
514 talent needed to maintain readiness and warfighting excellence.

515  
516 Spouse Employment - The employment of Marine spouses directly impacts the financial  
517 stability, readiness, and retention of our Marines. We remain committed to supporting career  
518 opportunities for military spouses through programs like the Family Member Employment  
519 Assistance Program, which offers career coaching, job search support, and referrals for education  
520 and employment services. To further assist, we have implemented a Relocation Tool within our  
521 personnel system, enabling spouses employed by Marine Corps Community Services to identify  
522 transfer opportunities in advance of their next move. Additionally, we reimburse eligible spouses  
523 up to \$1,000 for costs associated with professional licensure or business relocation when moving  
524 to a new state—an initiative that has already supported over 500 Marine families. We appreciate  
525 Congress’ recent expansion of this program and continued efforts to help our families thrive.

526  
527 Child Care - Sixteen Marine Corps installations operate Child Development Centers (CDCs), but  
528 five locations—MCB Quantico, MCB Lejeune/MCAS New River, MCAS Beaufort/MCRD  
529 Parris Island, MCB Pendleton, and MCB Hawaii—account for 75 percent of the Marine Corps’  
530 childcare waitlist. Wait times vary based on child age, family type, and care start date, with  
531 Priority 1 personnel (Child Development Program Direct Care Staff, single/dual active duty,  
532 single/dual Guard or Reserve member on Active Duty or Inactive Duty Training status, and  
533 Service members with full-time working spouses) receiving the highest priority.

534 To address these shortages, the Marine Corps is investing in childcare-related MILCON  
535 projects. A \$44.1M CDC at MCB Camp Pendleton (P-2401) is under construction to add 250  
536 childcare spaces, eliminating waitlists for Priority 1 personnel. At NSA Andersen AFB, Guam, a  
537 \$105.2M CDC (P-415) was awarded in May 2024 to support 276 children as part of the Marine  
538 Corps' buildup in the region. Future projects include a \$79.1M CDC replacement at MCB  
539 Quantico (P-732) in FY27, a \$58M investment at MCB Camp Butler (P-309) for two new School  
540 Age Care (SAC) facilities, and an OSD-funded CDC at MCAS Miramar in FY27,  
541 complementing a \$3.2M renovation. Additionally, a \$37.7M CDC (P-250) completed in  
542 November 2023 added 412 new childcare spaces, bringing Miramar’s total capacity to 929  
543 children once the FY27 project is complete. The Marine Corps also provides Military Child Care  
544 in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) fee assistance for families without access to on-base childcare  
545 to alleviate waitlists.

546 These efforts ensure greater access to quality and affordable childcare, directly  
547 supporting Marine families and enhancing overall force readiness.

548

## 549 **Recruit, Make, and Retain Marines**

550 Maintaining an elite force begins with recruiting young men and women of the highest  
551 character, mental aptitude, and physical fitness and retaining the talented Marines who define our  
552 warfighting ethos. Recruiting today is more challenging than it has been in decades, with historic  
553 lows in the number of Americans eligible to serve and a declining propensity to join. Despite  
554 these headwinds, I am proud to report that the Marine Corps has exceeded recruiting and  
555 retention goals without lowering our high standards. I am equally proud of the work our Marines  
556 are doing in recruiting. We select the very best for this demanding mission and reward them for

557 their dedication and success. Their efforts ensure we continue to recruit individuals who meet  
558 and exceed the standards required to earn the title of Marine.

559 Recruiting, making, and retaining the right individuals is essential to our institutional  
560 success and directly impacts our readiness. To this end, the Marine Corps has undertaken several  
561 initiatives to bolster recruiting efforts, improve quality of service, and retain our most talented  
562 Marines. These efforts are guided by a data-driven approach rooted in our enduring ethos as a  
563 warfighting organization and our responsibility to care for Marines and their families. Bottom  
564 Line: We must recruit high-quality people, transform them into Marines, and keep them in our  
565 ranks.

566

567 **Recruiting:**

568 Despite recruiting challenges, we are continuing to meet our recruiting goals. Your  
569 Marine Corps made its recruiting mission in FY24 and is currently on track to meet it again in  
570 FY25. Service as a Marine continues to attract those who meet our standards and aspire to prove  
571 themselves worthy of earning the title. While FY25 is a slightly higher mission, we will  
572 approach it with the same planning factors as FY24 to ensure we recruit to our Military  
573 Occupational Specialty (MOS) needs. The Marine Corps exceeds the minimum Department of  
574 Defense standards for enlistment to send the best Marine possible to the Fleet, and I intend to  
575 keep it that way—the Marine Corps will not lower standards.

576 Despite our success, we must remain mindful of the long-game—recruiting will continue  
577 to be difficult into the future, requiring hard choices and continued investment in personnel and  
578 advertising to ensure future success. While we have achieved the first “Start Pool” increase since  
579 FY22—we are still in a nascent recovery and cannot declare victory. Our 28 percent FY25 Start  
580 Pool is relative to the 20-year historical average Start Pool of approximately 52 percent. Start  
581 Pool continues to be the most significant predictor of mission success.

582

583 **Retention:**

584 Retention is critical to the Marine Corps' ability to maintain a highly trained, experienced,  
585 and ready force. Retaining skilled Marines reduces the need for constant recruitment and  
586 training, ensuring a more capable and combat-ready force. High retention rates preserve  
587 institutional knowledge, enhance unit cohesion, and improve overall effectiveness. Additionally,

588 investing in retention strengthens leadership development as seasoned Marines mentor and train  
589 the next generation. Retention also optimizes personnel investment, reducing recruiting and  
590 initial training costs. By fostering a culture that values professional growth, career progression,  
591 and quality of life, the Marine Corps retains the best talent to meet operational demands and  
592 sustain warfighting excellence.

593  
594 Commandant's Retention Program (CRP), Active and Reserve - The FY25 CRP cohort yielded  
595 over 1,400 reenlistments, accounting for nearly 20 percent of the overall First Term Alignment  
596 Plan (FTAP) mission for FY25. We secured over 7,900 FTAP reenlistments for the Active  
597 Component, achieving 114 percent of our goal. For the inaugural year of the Reserve Component  
598 CRP, we secured 248 reenlistments and drilling obligations from the first-year cohort, reaching  
599 103 percent of our goal. The CRP remains critical in incentivizing the reenlistment of our high-  
600 performing Marines.

601  
602 Multiple-Year Reenlistment Cohorts - Beginning with the FY25 retention campaign, our  
603 expanded FTAP model allows the Active Component to reenlist Marines from the FY24-FY27  
604 retention cohorts simultaneously. The expanded FTAP retention model has yielded a greater  
605 overall retention rate and Primary MOS (PMOS) skillset match. We will continue looking at  
606 ways beyond FY25 to expand reenlistment windows, providing additional agency and decision  
607 space for Marines to achieve their career goals.

608  
609 Lateral Moves - In FY24, incentivization efforts and a streamlined lateral move process led to  
610 1,014 enlisted Marines from the FY24 FTAP and STAP retention cohorts executing a lateral  
611 move with reenlistment. This is a roughly 20 percent increase in lateral moves compared to  
612 FY23. To exploit this success and strengthen MOS health across the force, we will continue to  
613 offer various monetary and non-monetary incentives, as well as earlier submission periods and  
614 active identification of qualified Marines for lateral move opportunities.

615  
616 Dual-Military Assignments - As of November 2024, over 11,000 active-duty and active reserve  
617 Marines are married to other service members. Recognizing the importance of keeping families  
618 together while ensuring Service requirements are met, we are optimizing the assignment process

619 for dual-military Marines. A key enabler in this improved process is our Dual-Military  
620 Coordinator, responsible for maintaining transparent working relationships with service monitors  
621 (active and active reserve) and adjacent service detailers, synchronizing geolocation selection  
622 and timeline execution, and facilitating waivers.

623  
624 Manpower Information Technology Systems Modernization (MITSM) – We have identified the  
625 need to modernize our manpower information technologies and have therefore developed the  
626 Manpower Information Technology Systems Modernization (MITSM) strategy, which seeks to  
627 employ adaptive acquisition pathways to generate rapid prototyping and state-of-the-art  
628 commercial technology. As of September 2024, the MITSM strategy has been the driving force  
629 behind awarding six major contracts across Headquarters Marine Corps. Efforts underway  
630 include an IT/Data Modernization Strategy, a Talent Marketplace—released this year as the  
631 Talent Management Engagement Platform (TMEP)—TFRS 2.0, and Models Modernization.  
632 TMEP is an internally developed prototype intended to increase command input and provide  
633 monitors and their assignable Marines with more accessible and transparent information. Since  
634 May 2024, TMEP has been tested by approximately 12,000 enlisted Marines across 10 MOSs  
635 and released to Active Component Marines in the ranks of second lieutenant through colonel,  
636 consisting of roughly 16,000 Marines. Marines are already seeing some of the initial benefits of  
637 these efforts, including TMEP and TFRS 2.0, both of which Marines helped test and refine  
638 during the development process. Through MITSM, we will remain aggressive in optimizing  
639 analytics to improve institutional decision-making related to personnel-related functions.

640  
641 Performance Evaluation Reform—Aligned with the recent Government Accountability Office  
642 study on “Military Officer Performance,” released November 2024, DC, M&RA is evaluating  
643 and assessing the need for performance evaluation reform to better align Marines' innate  
644 capabilities with the needs of the Fleet Marine Forces. Applying dramatic advancements in  
645 information technology over the past several decades will help us better mentor, evaluate, and  
646 report on our Marines to support their career development and progression.

647 Additionally, we are analyzing our Assignment Incentive Pay (AIP) program and  
648 exploring other ways to incentivize service in geographically challenging locations. Finally, we  
649 are digesting information gleaned from a recent total force incentives Operational Planning Team

650 to identify and optimize current and potential monetary and non-monetary incentives to improve  
651 Fleet Marine Forces readiness.

652

## 653 **Enduring Efforts**

### 654 **Marine Forces Reserve:**

655 The Marine Corps Reserve remains a cornerstone of the Total Force, delivering critical  
656 combat-ready forces and supporting the Active Component (AC) in global operations, joint  
657 training, and community engagement. In FY24, Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES)  
658 expanded its contributions to the Global Force Management Allocation Plan (GFMAP),  
659 increased its participation in Service-Level and Joint Training Exercises, and invested in  
660 facilities and equipment to enhance readiness.

661

662 Global Force Management - In FY24, the Marine Corps activated nearly 600 Reserve Marines to  
663 support Joint Force Commanders across Southwest Asia, South America, Africa, Europe, and the  
664 Pacific. This marked a significant increase in operational tempo compared to FY23. In FY25,  
665 activations are expected to double, with nearly 1,500 Reserve Marines mobilizing to meet global  
666 commitments. These activations include large combat formations such as infantry battalions,  
667 artillery batteries, and aviation squadrons, as well as unique enabler capabilities like civil affairs,  
668 foreign advisors, and other specialized skill sets essential to modern operations.

669

670 Reserve Modernization – As the service continues to rely on its reserve component to fulfill its  
671 role as an operational force provider, I have directed the Marine Corps Reserve to modernize and  
672 grow to maximize its contribution to the Total Force in support of global competition, crisis  
673 response, and conflict. Force Design modernization plans for the active and the reserves balance  
674 the need to maximize “Total Force” lethality and capacity during a period of increased risk while  
675 optimizing resource allocation. Modernization plans include synchronizing reserve and active  
676 efforts to ensure there are no decrements to total force offerings as units undergo modernization.  
677 In coordination with Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Marine Forces Reserve is pursuing a  
678 long-term comprehensive plan for reserve component infantry unit modernization and  
679 distribution across the country in a manner that maximizes recruiting potential, personnel  
680 readiness, facility suitability, and access to training.

681  
682 Community Engagement and Facilities Investments - MARFORRES maintains a vital presence  
683 in communities nationwide through initiatives like Toys for Tots and Military Funeral Honors  
684 (MFH). In FY24, MARFORRES distributed over 25.5 million toys to more than 10.3 million  
685 children and conducted over 20,400 MFHs—demonstrating the Marine Corps’ enduring  
686 commitment to "Once a Marine, always a Marine." Additionally, facility investments totaling  
687 over \$45 million in FY24 improved training environments, enhanced unit morale, and supported  
688 retention efforts.

689  
690 Personnel, Training, and Equipment Challenges - Despite these achievements, MARFORRES  
691 faces readiness challenges in personnel, training, and equipment. With a shortage of 3,764  
692 Marines—most notably in the reserve infantry community—only 41 percent of SMCR units  
693 meet the 85 percent personnel readiness threshold. To address this, MARFORRES is  
694 implementing retention incentives, MOS retraining programs, and adjustments to unit locations  
695 to align with shifting population centers. Training remains constrained by the authorized 48  
696 Inactive Duty Training periods and 15 annual training days, limiting opportunities to keep pace  
697 with evolving tactics and technology. To mitigate this, units maximize volunteer training and  
698 extend active-duty support, particularly for pre-activation units.

699       Equipment disparities also hinder integration with Active Component counterparts.  
700 MARFORRES relies on National Guard and Reserve Equipment Allocation (NGREA) funding  
701 to close this gap but has received less than 1.5 percent of total NGREA allocations since 2016.  
702 Advocacy efforts continue to secure a larger share of these funds to enhance readiness. Despite  
703 these challenges, MARFORRES remains an indispensable component of the Total Force,  
704 strengthening the Marine Corps through strategic investments, innovative training, and  
705 community engagement.

706

### 707 **Training and Education Command (TECOM) Initiatives:**

708       The Marine Corps is transforming training and education to ensure Marines are prepared  
709 for the complexities of modern warfare. Through a combination of Professional Military  
710 Education (PME) modernization, integration of lessons learned from recent conflicts, and

711 cutting-edge training initiatives, the Marine Corps is strengthening its ability to develop  
712 adaptable, decisive warfighters. Lessons from Ukraine and Gaza have reinforced the need for  
713 integrated fires, dispersed operations, and resilience in contested environments, shaping updates  
714 to both training exercises and curriculum development. At the same time, Project Triumph,  
715 Project Trident, and Project Tripoli are revolutionizing how the Marine Corps trains, educates,  
716 and prepares forces for future conflicts.

717  
718 Project Tripoli - Project Tripoli is the Marine Corps' initiative to establish a persistent, globally  
719 accessible, all-domain, and all-echelon live, virtual, and constructive training environment (LVC-  
720 TE). The project is in the execution phase with the deployment of the Marine Training Enterprise  
721 Network (MTEN), fully integrated with the Navy Continuous Training Environment (NCTE) and  
722 Joint Training and Experimentation Network (JTEN). The Joint Live Virtual Constructive  
723 (JLVC) Federation, featuring 16 advanced simulations, enhances multi-echelon Command Post  
724 Exercises (CPX) and other constructive training capabilities. Key developments include the  
725 deployment of 250 Marine Common Virtual Platforms (MCVP), providing tools for fires,  
726 Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TC3), maintenance, ISR emulation, and decision-making. The  
727 Marine Corps plans to complete procurement of the Marine Corps Tactical Instrumentation  
728 System (MCTIS) in 2025, alongside a Contracted Logistics Support (CLS) contract to sustain  
729 comprehensive training events and maintenance at fielded locations. Continued testing will  
730 further integrate MCTIS into the LVC-TE, while prototyping efforts for MCTIS-Vehicle and  
731 Weapon Surrogate programs and Small UAS remain ongoing to enhance training realism.

732  
733 Project Trident - Project Trident enhances combat readiness by integrating all-domain fires and  
734 effects into individual and unit-level training. A key milestone is the designation of Commander,  
735 Pacific Fleet, as the Maritime Fires Executive Agent (MFEA), with Commander, Marine Forces  
736 Pacific, serving as Deputy MFEA, which strengthens Naval Service integration. Service-Level  
737 Training Exercise (SLTE) enhancements now incorporate non-kinetic effects and maritime  
738 operations, featuring real-time electronic warfare, cybersecurity, and signals intelligence  
739 adversary forces to refine multi-domain warfare execution. Looking ahead, Project Trident will  
740 expand formal instruction in all-domain fires through new courses such as the Littoral Targeting  
741 and Fires Course, Naval Expeditionary Operations Planners Course (NEOPC), and Advanced

742 Fires and Effects Course (AFEC). Additional training in Maritime ISR, expeditionary  
743 communications, and MAGTF fires will ensure seamless Navy-Marine Corps integration,  
744 preparing Marines to execute and sustain complex, all-domain operations in support of naval and  
745 joint forces.

746  
747 Project Triumph - Project Triumph modernizes training and education by shifting to an  
748 outcomes-based, learner-centric model that enhances warfighter proficiency and instructor  
749 effectiveness. Emphasizing critical thinking, adaptability, and decision-making under stress, this  
750 approach ensures that Marines are prepared for the challenges of modern warfare. A key  
751 initiative, the Instructor Development and Recognition Program (IDRP), standardizes instructor  
752 training across all levels, improving professional development, evaluation, and retention. Early  
753 results show Infantry Marine Course (IMC) graduates demonstrating greater combat proficiency  
754 than those trained under previous methods. Looking ahead, Project Triumph will expand IDRP,  
755 integrate AI-driven adaptive learning, simulations, and digital tools, and enhance instructor  
756 incentives and professional development. Pilot programs at the Basic School (TBS) and School  
757 of Infantry (SOI) are refining these methods for force-wide implementation, ensuring Marines  
758 are highly capable, adaptable, and ready for future conflict.

759  
760 Professional Military Education - The Marine Corps is modernizing Professional Military  
761 Education (PME) to develop adaptive, strategic leaders capable of operating in multi-domain  
762 environments. Enlisted PME is being restructured to align with warfighting requirements,  
763 incorporating maneuver warfare, leadership under stress, and joint operations, with the new Staff  
764 Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO) Leadership Course enhancing leadership development. The  
765 College of Distance Education and Training (CDET) is expanding AI-driven adaptive learning to  
766 personalize coursework. Marine Corps University (MCU) has expanded its curriculum to include  
767 advanced wargaming, threat-based scenario planning, and an increased focus on naval  
768 integration, ensuring alignment with the Joint Warfighting Concept and service concepts. The  
769 introduction of the Joint All Domain Officer (JADO) Program at Command and Staff College is  
770 to bridge current education gaps that lack classified, real-world capability and can address  
771 modern threats with agile, cross-domain education. The Commandant's Research Fellows  
772 Program strengthens ties with top civilian institutions and expanding international PME

773 partnerships foster interoperability with allies. These initiatives ensure PME remains rigorous,  
774 relevant, and fully aligned with modern warfare, preparing Marines to excel in future conflicts.

775

776 **Personnel Readiness:**

777 Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Program (SAPR) - The Marine Corps remains  
778 committed to fostering a culture of safety and respect, ensuring that all Marines feel secure in  
779 their units and that sexual assault is not tolerated. We take a data-driven approach to preventing  
780 sexual assault within our ranks while providing comprehensive response services to those  
781 affected by this horrible crime. In FY24, the Marine Corps received 1,239 reports of sexual  
782 assault—similar to recent years. Clearly, this is not where we want to be. The only acceptable  
783 number of sexual assaults is zero. Through data-informed training and leadership engagement,  
784 the Marine Corps remains dedicated to preventing sexual assault. We hold leadership  
785 accountable for further reductions in the occurrence of these crimes and for ensuring that every  
786 Marine can engage assistance and recovery services as desired.

787

788 Suicide Prevention – According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the  
789 U.S. is experiencing its highest suicide rate since 1941, with increases in both 2022 and 2023.  
790 The Marine Corps, like the rest of the nation, continues to confront this challenge. Preliminary  
791 Calendar Year (CY) 24 data shows a slight decrease from the CY23; however – official rates will  
792 not be released until the official Annual Report on Suicide in the Military is published later in  
793 2025. The Marine Corps continues to track suicide deaths daily to monitor the health of their  
794 Marines.

795 The Marine Corps is committed to a public health approach to primary prevention,  
796 leveraging the Command Individual Risk and Resiliency Assessment System (CIRRAS) to  
797 facilitate communication across all levels of command, helping identify risk factors early. The  
798 Force Preservation Council develops mitigation strategies and connects at-risk Marines with  
799 resources before issues escalate. Additionally, the Marine Intercept Program (MIP) provides  
800 voluntary support for Marines experiencing suicidal ideations or who have attempted suicide.  
801 The program offers periodic outreach, care coordination, ongoing risk assessment, coping skill  
802 development through personalized safety plans, and communication with the individual's  
803 command. Through these efforts, the Marine Corps remains focused on early intervention,

804 support, and prevention to safeguard the well-being of its Marines.

805  
806 Substance Assessment and Counseling Program (SACP) – Formerly the Substance Abuse  
807 Program (SAP), SACP provides training, education, and non-medical counseling to reduce  
808 substance misuse. SACP includes three areas: The drug demand reduction program (DDRP),  
809 alcohol misuse prevention, and non-medical counseling services. The Drug Demand Reduction  
810 Program (DDRP) utilizes targeted urinalysis testing to deter illicit drug use and prescription drug  
811 misuse. In FY24, the Marine Corps recorded 2,138 unique positive results for wrongful drug use,  
812 representing a measurable decrease from the 2,370 cases reported in FY23. This data reflects the  
813 effectiveness of current deterrence and accountability measures across the force.

814  
815 **Materiel Readiness:**

816 Amphibious Combat Vehicle (ACV) - The ACV remains an essential element of our Corps’  
817 modernization. By May 2025, it is anticipated that 278 of the planned 632 ACVs will be fielded  
818 across the force. This includes three ACV companies at I MEF, one ACV company at II MEF,  
819 and one ACV platoon at III MEF, as well as training assets at the Assault Amphibian School.  
820 Additionally, test articles will be retained by the Program Manager Advanced Amphibious  
821 Assault (PM AAA) and the Amphibious Vehicle Test Branch (AVTB). Of these, 263 will be  
822 personnel variants (ACV-P), while the remaining 15 will be command variants (ACV-C). The  
823 ACV recently made its inaugural deployment with the 15th MEU, demonstrating its role in  
824 strengthening the Fleet Marine Force while enhancing capabilities for the Joint Force. This  
825 program remains on schedule and on budget, playing a critical role in ship-to-shore movement  
826 capability. We continue to collaborate with industry and the supply base to improve readiness  
827 and sustainment.

828  
829 F-35 - By May 2025, the Marine Corps had 202 F-35s in the fleet, including 168 F-35Bs  
830 and 34 F-35Cs. To align with evolving operational requirements, we have updated our F-35  
831 procurement profile to expand the number of F-35C squadrons. As part of the TACAIR  
832 Transition Plan, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 (VMFA-232) and VMFA-323 will  
833 transition to F-35C squadrons. The program of record remains at 420 total aircraft, comprising  
834 280 F-35Bs and 140 F-35Cs, supporting 12 F-35B squadrons and 6 F-35C squadrons. While

835 these figures reflect the current plan, the mix of F-35B and F-35C aircraft will remain adaptable  
836 to accommodate future adjustments. Additionally, I want to express my appreciation for  
837 Congress's continued support of AN/APG-85 radar development and production. Delivering a  
838 fully functional radar in sufficient quantities as quickly as possible is critical to ensuring the F-35  
839 remains a dominant force in the battlespace.

840

841 MV-22 - In service since 2007, the MV-22 has completed 109 operational deployments and  
842 accumulated over 630,000 flight hours, maintaining a strong safety record with a Class A mishap  
843 rate of 3.04 per 100,000 flight hours—consistent with other military aircraft performing similar  
844 roles. However, the grounding of the MV-22 from February to August 2024 prevented new  
845 students from entering training and disrupted essential flight operations, which are crucial for  
846 maintaining proficiency and readiness. Following extensive engineering analysis, NAVAIR has  
847 certified the V-22 as safe to fly with caveats, and all pilots and crew have undergone retraining,  
848 including comprehensive maintenance checks, emergency procedures, and flight operations.

849

850 CH-53K - The Marine Corps remains committed to fielding and integrating the CH-53K King  
851 Stallion to meet its heavy-lift requirements, fully replacing the CH-53E Super Stallion by FY32.  
852 Since the establishment of HMM-461—the first operational CH-53K squadron in FY22—the  
853 platform has demonstrated unmatched heavy-lift assault support capability, interoperability,  
854 survivability, reliability, and maintainability in distributed maritime and expeditionary  
855 environments. The first deployment of the CH-53K is anticipated in FY26. Due to fiscal  
856 reduction, the Marine Corps is currently reviewing plans to procure a total of 200 CH-53Ks, but  
857 the distribution plan across the fleet currently remains unchanged: 6 active squadrons x 16 CH-  
858 53K; 1 reserve squadron x 16 CH-53K; 1 fleet replacement squadron x 17 CH-53K; 1  
859 operational test detachment x 2 CH-53K; and 1 developmental test detachment x 2 CH-53K.

860

861 **Marine Special Operations Forces (MARSOC):**

862 MARSOC continues to modernize in alignment with the Interim National Defense  
863 Strategic Guidance and Combatant Command priorities, ensuring readiness for complex, multi-  
864 domain operations. Integrated with Naval forces, allies, and interagency partners, MARSOC  
865 remains agile, resilient, and ready to transition rapidly to conflict. Innovations like the RAIDER

866 Spectrum Analysis tool—developed with the Marine Corps Software Factory—enhance force  
867 protection and planning through advanced communications analysis. Task Force AYUNGIN has  
868 bolstered regional security in the South China Sea by uniting key Special Operations Force  
869 elements to address rising tensions. MARSOC’s emphasis on sensor tech, intelligence fusion,  
870 and joint fires keeps it ahead of emerging threats and reinforces its role as a Stand-in-Force  
871 accelerator across the Special Operations Community.

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## **Conclusion**

874 The Marine Corps will be ready to respond to any crisis or contingency in the future, just  
875 as we have in the past. I remain committed to ensuring the Marine Corps remains our Nation’s  
876 force-in-readiness. We will never lower our standards or sacrifice the reputation associated with  
877 our sacred title, “Marine”—and will remain innovative and agile in our approach to warfighting.  
878 After five budget cycles under the “divest-to-invest” approach, we have identified efficiencies,  
879 eliminated outdated capabilities, and ensured every dollar spent directly supports our mission to  
880 build a more lethal, capable force. Our commitment to transparency and accountability is evident  
881 in achieving a second consecutive unmodified—or “clean”—financial audit, with Ernst &  
882 Young’s ranking the Marine Corps as comparable to a “top 120” large company in the U.S. in  
883 financial management.

884 With your help, we will ensure your Marines are provided with world-class training,  
885 improved quality of life, and the capabilities required to win our Nation’s battles against any  
886 adversary. Every dollar invested will deliver the greatest return in lethality, readiness, and the  
887 well-being of our Marines and their families. I thank the Committee for your continued advocacy  
888 and support for your Marines. Semper Fidelis.