

Walking tall

**Statement of
General Robert E. Cushman, Jr.,
Commandant of the Marine Corps,
before the
Senate Armed Services Committee
on
Marine Corps Posture**

After nearly two centuries of service, the Marine Corps remains one of our Nation's best means to cope with the unexpected.

The past four years have been ones of remarkable and often unexpected change on the world scene, particularly in the dynamics of international power relationships. We can anticipate that this dynamism and unpredictability will continue in the years ahead.

I believe it to be a certainty, however, that the United States will continue to be a leading power in this changing world—economically, politically, and militarily. In particular—as a free people determined to survive in a world of vigorously competing interests—we must maintain our position as a military power second to none.

The United States is a maritime nation. Accordingly, a vital aspect of our overall military power is the strength of our Naval forces.

Amphibious capability is indispensable to these Naval forces. To selectively project power ashore in support of National policy, we must have this capability.

The Marine Corps, as an integral part of the Navy-Marine Corps amphibious team, has been, is now, and will continue to be one of the Nation's soundest investments. The three active Marine divisions and aircraft wings have been repeatedly validated—together with the Reserve division and wing—by the Unified Commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff for over two decades. As a minimum, we have needed these forces continuously through all the changes in threat estimation and corresponding variations of National Security strategy since the early 1950's. Given the relatively unchanging facts of our insular geography and continuing overseas interests, I expect the need to persist.

Keyed to this assertion, I will highlight those specific Marine Corps characteristics and functions which I believe are most pertinent to our abiding National Security needs.

The preeminent Marine Corps characteristic is readiness. The inherent nature of crisis situations in which amphibious operations may be required demands it. We have long held the expectation of being the "first to fight."

A second time-honored characteristic is versatility. Marine forces are organized, equipped, trained, and readied to cover the widest possible spectrum of crisis situations. This varies from an all-out NATO combat role at one extreme, to a finely tuned reminder of U.S. concerns by means of an off-shore amphibious presence role at the

other extreme. Marines are prepared for varied crises, varied climes, and varied mobility methods. The most general purpose of all general purpose forces, Marine forces have been designed to interface efficiently for joint command and control with forces of the Army, Navy, and Air Force. While we expect our amphibious capability to have the broadest utility, we are capable of deploying to the scene of combat by whatever means of strategic mobility are available and suited to the crisis at hand.

A third characteristic is the unique forcible entry capability of Marine forces. Outside of the Navy-Marine Corps amphibious team, possibly in conjunction with Army Airborne forces, no other combination of forces is presently capable of spearheading a significant opposed operation of this type.

A fourth characteristic might well be termed our trademark: the air-ground team concept that we conceived and have been perfecting for more than four decades. In the Marine Corps, air and ground forces are integrated into a single entity under a single commander, using a single command and control system. Team training at all levels—within and between units—ingrains the shared habits and values that distinguish a team from a mere collection of specialists.

These four characteristics relate primarily to the operational responsibilities of the Marine Corps. There are institutional responsibilities as well. One of these is our advisory function in the joint decisionmaking process. Operating in all three mediums and interfacing smoothly with all other Services, Marines tend to have a unique land-sea-air perspective that has a helpful, sometimes catalytic effect in joint deliberations at all levels.

Another of our institutional responsibilities is the development of joint doctrine, tactics, techniques, and equipment for landing forces in amphibious operations. A laboratory of combined arms integration that is without parallel, the Marine Corps has made numerous innovative contributions to military doctrines, tactics, and hardware that have proven useful to all of our Armed Forces—and to our allies as well. Significantly, many of these contributions have provided "missing links" between the dimensions of warfare of primary interest to the larger Services.

In describing these characteristics and functions of the Marine Corps, I have not just been recount-

ing past history. I am pleased to be able to report again this year that, despite certain problems and resource constraints, the Marine Corps is ready and capable of carrying out all aspects of its role as the Nation's versatile amphibious force-in-readiness.

In consideration of the present world situation and our past experiences, we have developed our FY 1976/1977 force within fiscal realities governed by the following three policies.

► Marine Corps combat forces will be maintained at the highest attainable state of readiness.

► These forces will consist of balanced air and ground combat, combat support, and combat service support units, all of which are capable of rapid deployment and operations in an expeditionary environment.

► The base and logistic structure will be capable of providing sustained support for the combat units, while retaining a training and logistic readiness capability to permit rapid attainment of a fully-structured force.

Inflation

Inflation has been the single most significant factor impacting on Marine Corps posture this year. With each passing month, our dollars are worth substantially less. This loss in buying power, coupled with outlay control and other budgetary restrictions, has required extensive management actions to insure funding of our most critical requirements. While I realize that every American and every part of the Government is suffering to varying degrees from inflation, I would be remiss if I did not describe its special effects on our stock-in-trade, combat effectiveness and readiness.

In the Operations and Maintenance Appropriation, the major impact of inflation has been to require significant funding realignments and program decrements. An example is the Real Property Maintenance Program. The existing backlog of maintenance is projected to increase significantly through FY 1976 due to erosion of purchasing power, with commensurate impact on mission accomplishment at Marine Corps activities.

In the Procurement Appropriation, the major impact has been to delay the procurement of combat-essential items from current and prior years to the outyears. Such actions degrade our capability to meet in-service schedules that are based on the projected threat, thus creating a potential for serious degradation of readiness in the period ahead.

In the Military Personnel Appropriation, the major impact is the funding realignments forced upon us by inflationary increases in the costs of transportation.

Because the Marine Corps is manpower intensive and lean even in the best of times, inflationary impact has driven us to manpower-related actions earlier than the other Services. For example, we already maintain the highest enlisted-to-officer ratio of any of the Services—approaching 10:1—and have the smallest percentage of enlisted in the top six pay grades. Our promotion cycles, as evidenced by our low percentages of top grade enlisted men and senior officers, are already extended to the maximum extent feasible without seriously affecting morale and performance incentives. Further reductions in average grade or officer strengths would affect the Marine Corps' capability to recruit and retain well qualified individuals—with consequent long-term effects on the quality of our manpower.

In the past two years, we have reduced our PCS program (transfers) below the level required to correct all but the most essential grade and skill imbalances. If allowed to persist, these imbalances can lead ultimately to degradation of our personnel readiness. To rectify this problem, we are requesting funds in the FY 1976 program to return to a normal PCS travel program.

I am happy to announce a number of management and efficiency measures which have resulted in economy and streamlining, taken early last year at a time before the full impact of inflation was realized:

► Restructuring actions, including my decision to eliminate three artillery headquarters, using those manpower spaces to create three new self-propelled artillery batteries.

► Logistics management actions, including my approval of a plan to provide equal or better logistic support at reduced cost. Specifically, this action will:

- Reduce supply levels through increased reliance on DoD integrated materiel managers.

- Consolidate certain management elements within the Marine Corps; and

- Reduce management headquarters and supply storage areas to the minimum required to support the Marine Corps structure.

We have reached a watershed in belt-tightening measures. We are at the point where further cuts in our support structure will sacrifice our capacity for the rapid expansion essential to meet wartime requirements. Short of cutting combat manpower, including the elimination of combat units, there is no remaining potential for further economies of significance. On this score, our non-forward-deployed combat forces have already been thinned out to the limits of prudence. The point of diminishing returns on all other fronts having been passed, we are now at the juncture where further

erosion of funding will slice into vital muscle—our combat battalions and squadrons.

Operations

The initial years of this decade found the Marine Corps disengaging from the war in Southeast Asia and redirecting its primary emphasis from the Pacific towards other areas of the world. For over thirty years, the situation in the Western Pacific required us to focus our efforts in that area. However, with world power relationships in a state of unpredictable flux, the role of the Marine Corps in our National strategy has been watchfully evolving in some new directions.

Subject to my concerns about the potential impact of inflation, I am confident that Fleet Marine Forces worldwide will be able to meet existing commitments in 1975. The division-wing teams on the East Coast and in the Western Pacific are ready to meet contingency plan requirements anywhere in either hemisphere. The division-wing team on the West Coast will not be fully manned, but could be readied for deployment through emergency manpower actions. Marine forces afloat with the Second, Sixth, and Seventh Fleets are maintained at a high state of readiness. It was one of these forces—the Marine Amphibious Unit embarked with the Sixth Fleet—that played a key role in the emergency evacuation of 752 American and foreign nationals from Cyprus during the crisis on that island in July of last year.

Combined arms air-ground team training

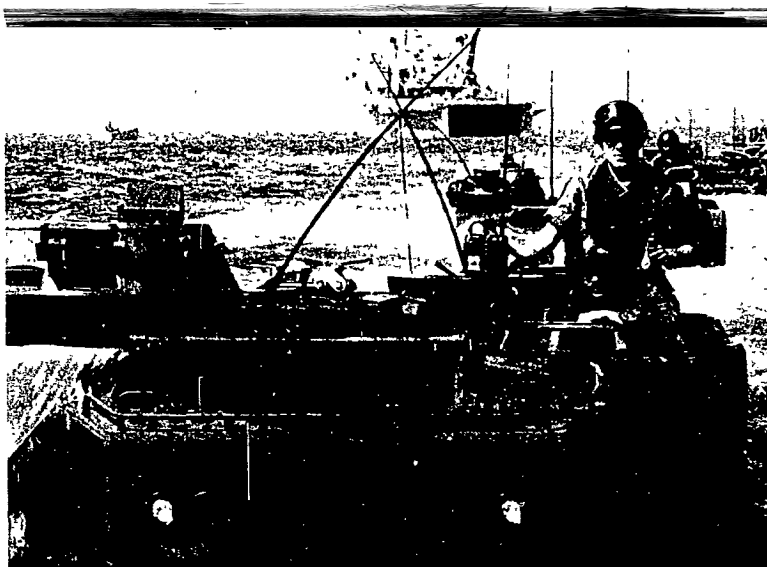
Marine Corps training is mission-oriented, concentrating on programs designed to maintain a

high state of readiness. The Fleet Marine Forces will have participated in over thirty major exercises in varied geographical and climatic areas during FY 1975. These include joint exercises with other U.S. forces, such as Exercise SOLID SHIELD conducted at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, involving all four Services, and numerous combined exercises with allied forces in the Mediterranean, Caribbean, Canada, the Philippines, and Korea.

Marine Reserve units are also participating in a wide range of exercises this fiscal year, often in combination with our active forces. These include mountain warfare, desert and cold weather training. These exercises provide diversified training for our Reserve units, strengthening their capability to operate effectively beside their active counterparts.

I believe that combined active and Reserve exercises provide contributions to readiness that are large in proportion to the expense involved and should be continued. They are the best possible means we have for both improving and testing Reserve responsiveness and the ability of active and Reserve units to combine into an efficient and effective force.

Maintenance of the combined arms air-ground team concept is at stake in our major training exercises. Without these exercises, higher-level command and control functioning would be neglected, along with efforts to grasp and solve the problems of interface between all of the components that make up a modern combined arms force. Although difficult to quantify, there are few activities in which the cost-to-benefit ratio is more favorable than that of our unit training exercises.



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Individual training

In the past year, we undertook an intensive study of all our formal schools to ensure that individual Marines are provided only the instruction they need and that they get it in the shortest time possible. We have continued to explore possibilities for the use of simulators, computer-aided instructional systems, and other innovative training support equipment to assure quality and effectiveness in our instruction at significantly reduced costs. As an example, instructional TV has recently been installed for use in certain training programs at nearly all major commands. Its use is being expanded as promising new training applications are developed through experience.

We persistently emphasize the use of other Services' formal schools wherever these schools meet our requirements and their use is cost-effective. In this regard, we have taken the lead with respect to making use of "other Service" training courses. During the past year, about thirty-one per cent of our total skill training was conducted at Army, Navy, and Air Force schools.

We are continuing our work in the Interservice Training Review Organization, the principal aim of which is to eliminate unnecessary duplication in individual courses of instruction. As a result of our participation in this Organization, the Marine Corps is now conducting some computer programming and operator training for the U.S. Air Force.

During the coming year, we will continue to insure that the training we conduct is essential and efficient. Our training and education programs will undergo further intensive scrutiny from within the Marine Corps to assure a better led, more effective combat-ready force.



"... we are determined not to compromise. ..."

Challenges of the all-volunteer force

An area where the Marine Corps and the Congress share deep concern is in meeting the challenges presented by the all-volunteer force. It has been my opinion that success in achieving the goals of an all-volunteer force would be largely dependent on our ability to develop programs designed to attract and retain Marines of high quality. Toward this end we are determined not to compromise our standards in order to achieve quantitative goals.

Overall, our quality has been improving. Through December of this fiscal year, fifty-four and four-tenths per cent of our non-prior service accessions were either high school graduates or possessed state-issued equivalency certificates. This compares with fifty-three per cent for the same period during FY 1974. Looking at another measure of quality, during the first half of the fiscal year, thirty-four and one-half per cent of our accessions were in the top two mental groups, versus thirty-three per cent last fiscal year. Correspondingly, we were able to reduce our mental group IV accessions to five per cent this year.

We have recently taken several actions aimed at further improving the quality of the young men and women entering the Marine Corps. On 1 July 1974, we began using a new test to screen applicants for enlistment. Effective 1 February 1975, more stringent enlistment standards were placed into effect.

One factor which materially contributed to our recruiting effectiveness during this fiscal year was the implementation of a paid advertising program. The Marine Corps appreciates the funding that enabled us to embark upon this important facet of our recruiting effort. As a result of this program, we are reaching eighty-six per cent of the potential enlistees ten times a month—a marked increase over the previous results of twenty per cent two times a month.

The effectiveness of advertising is ultimately measured in terms of recruiting results. For the first half of this fiscal year, we attained more than 100 per cent of our non-prior service recruiting goals. In addition to improved quality over last year, we are obtaining a slightly higher percentage of four-year contracts. The Expanded Enlistment Bonus Program implemented in June 1974 has been helping to overcome shortages in the highly technical telecommunications and electronic maintenance fields.

In sum, we are receiving a number of very favorable recruiting trends and indications, and I am guardedly optimistic that we will be able to meet all our Fiscal Year 1975 recruiting goals in terms of both quality and quantity.



PLC: "... superb officers for forty years."

Along with the demanding challenge of recruiting quality individuals in an all-volunteer force environment, there is the challenge of retaining them. How each Marine privately views his prospects is a key element in his decision to continue with a military career. In fact, the all-volunteer force was in part founded on a recognition of that principle.

In the course of my visits to various Marine Corps commands, my Marines have been telling me that they consider continuing their education as the most important inducement to a career. They are thus unhappy with reduced associate degree programs, reduced graduate education, and the ending of USAFI.

Most of these actions apparently reflect an intent to reduce benefits that were originally established when low pay scales were in effect. However, such reductions were not anticipated by the man in the field. Accordingly, they are generally perceived as a cut in total compensation, and particularly as a disincentive for first-termers as they consider opting for a service career. To avoid adverse impact on morale and career motivation, it is my view that educational and other benefits should be reviewed not in isolation, but only as part of the Serviceman's total compensation package. Such an overall review is presently being con-

ducted in the form of the Department of Defense's Quadrennial Review of Compensation. This approach avoids the piecemeal tinkering that spawns adverse perceptions among the troops.

I would now like to discuss an area of some concern to me regarding our Platoon Leaders' Class (PLC) program. The PLC program is the keystone of our officer procurement programs. Highly cost-effective, it has provided us with superb officers for almost forty years. We are currently obtaining about thirty-seven per cent of our annual unrestricted officer input from this source and hope in the future to achieve up to one-half of our accessions from it.

The cost effectiveness of the PLC program derives from its low cost and the large number of career officers it provides in comparison with other officer procurement programs used by the Marine Corps. This relationship can be illustrated by the following table:

Source program	Training cost per accession	Proportion of career officer population from each source
U.S. Naval Academy	\$62,518	12%
NROTC (scholarship)	21,770	15%
NROTC (contract)	13,303	3%
PLC (w/maximum financial assistance)	11,369	41%
Officer Candidate School	8,669	29%

In 1970, when faced with an increasing shortage of officer candidates and preparing to move to the all-volunteer force, we requested and obtained legislative authority to pay PLC members a monthly allowance of \$100 during the academic year. This produces a commitment by the student and is competitive with the NROTC contract program. It is therefore highly productive.

The recruiting value of this monthly allowance has been evident from increased PLC accessions in the past three years. We have exceeded 100 per cent of our annual PLC goal throughout this period. However, original authority for the financial assistance provision was granted for a five-year period, with extension subject to later evaluation. The initial five-year period expires 30 June 1976, and we are now facing the problem of being unable to assure students enrolling this year of their eligibility to receive the \$100 monthly payment for the maximum three academic years. Our recruitment effort loses credibility under these circumstances. Furthermore, a total loss of this provision would have serious consequences for our overall officer procurement program. For this reason, we are asking by separate proposed legislation that the temporary status of the financial assistance

feature be removed and that permanent authority be established.

Another important factor affecting our ability to successfully meet the challenges of an all-volunteer force is stability in manpower planning. Sudden and precipitous changes—for example, in authorized strength, grade structure, or manpower funding—will create adverse long term effects. Adjustments to manpower programs can be made effectively only with deliberate, advance planning, normally requiring much more than one year's notice. Frequent, unforeseen changes in manpower objectives and programs create confusion and uncertainty and detract from the readiness of the Corps.

Any proposals to make immediate short range changes impacting on our manpower management should be avoided. Such actions may appear to generate small, short-term savings, but in fact may often result in large, hidden long-term costs.

We recognize that today's manpower costs are high. We are looking for better ways to remain within current fiscal constraints. At the same time, we will continue to seek savings where possible. In manpower as in other areas, I believe we have a deserved reputation as diligent, frugal managers of the taxpayers' dollars entrusted to us. We are making every effort to see that those dollars buy the maximum measure of security and deterrence—meaning, of course, combat forces.

Our efforts have resulted in a program for FY 1976 calling for only four per cent of all DoD dollars to go to the Marine Corps. Considering that we provide nine per cent of all DoD uniformed personnel, while our air and ground forces with associated support forces will represent sixteen per cent of the Nation's general purpose forces, I believe I am safe in saying that the Marine Corps is an excellent buy for the money.

Marine Corps Reserve

In line with the present strategy emphasizing rapid response to deter conflict, and in recognition that this is a time of fiscal austerity, the Marine Corps Reserve has assumed greatly increased significance.

To insure that our Reserves are fully ready to meet today's challenges, we have focused our efforts on forging the Reserve division-wing team into an effective complement to our active forces. As a result, this Reserve force can provide the additional capabilities required by the strategy but not programmed in the active forces.

We are working in accordance with Congressional directives to further improve the effectiveness and readiness of our Reserve forces. Specifically:



“... better ways to remain within current fiscal restraints.”

► We recently concluded a study evaluating the mission, structure, and organization of the Marine Corps Reserve. Our findings indicate that our present division-wing team structure and augmentation concept are sound, though some “fine tuning” is needed.

► We are seeking ways to improve Reserve training through increased participation with U.S. active forces and allied forces.

► We are continuing to provide Reserves with the same modern equipment provided to our active forces.

► We are systematically reviewing our entire Reserve organization to insure that our Reserve units are located in those communities across the nation that can most effectively sustain them.

The main factor endangering the readiness of our Reserve forces has been our difficulty in procuring non-prior service personnel. With the end of our Vietnam involvement and elimination of the draft, the enlisted strength of our Selected Reserve had declined by approximately 10,000 by the end of FY 1974. This downward slide started from a 31 December 1972 high of 36,817. However, an aggressive attack on declining strength was begun immediately. This is now showing success, and for the first time in several years we have gained in strength rather than declined. Since 30

June our Organized Reserve has increased in strength by some 1,200 Marines.

We are continuing our orderly buildup to our required strength and we expect to reach our total Reserve personnel requirement by end FY 1978.

Modernization

Of the several dimensions of balance that are essential to an effective Marine Corps, one is the balance between readiness today and readiness in the future. The way to insure our future readiness is through modernization. At relatively low cost, our modernization programs stress utility for a wide variety of possible future situations.

To insure that we will have the best possible management of our weapons systems acquisition programs, two high level acquisition review committees review these programs and recommend decisions at critical milestones. As a result of this review process, some programs have been cancelled, reoriented, or suspended pending further evaluation. As in the past, we take a close look at all unilateral programs to assure that our efforts are not duplicating those of other Services.

The ground combat weapon systems within our modernization program that I would like to highlight here today are the Dragon, TOW, and M60A1 Tank.

To meet today's armored threat, we are in the process of upgrading our antitank capability. The TOW and Dragon systems are capable of defeating any existing armor at ranges much greater than are possible with our present antitank weapons. We began a five year procurement program of TOW with the FY 1974 supplemental budget. We plan to equip both active and Reserve divisions with this system.

We commenced procurement of Dragon with the FY 1975 budget and expect to complete the program in 1979. Dragon will be assigned to each of our active and Reserve infantry battalions.

Since June 1974, the FY 1976 procurements for both programs have experienced a cost growth due to inflation—fourteen per cent for the TOW, thirty-eight per cent for the Dragon. Nevertheless, they remain the most cost-effective antitank systems that can be obtained for our ground combat units.

To improve our armored capability, we are programmed to have all active forces outfitted with the M60A1 tank by end FY 1976 and to have all Reserve forces equipped by end FY 1977.

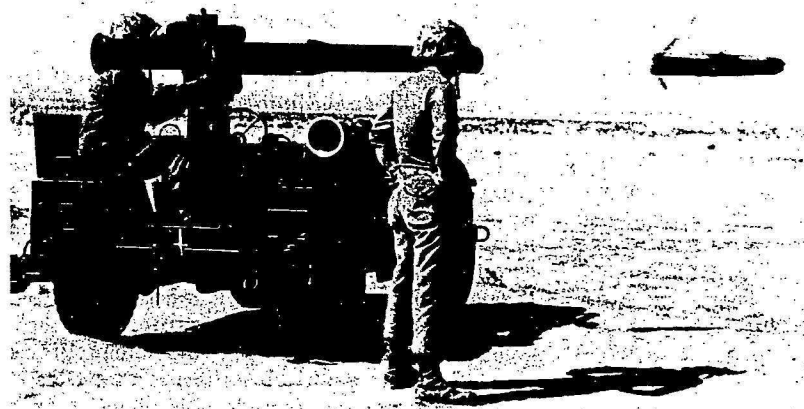
We are conducting our M60A1 tank training with the Army. This has made it possible to reduce our total procurement by twenty tanks, achieving an investment savings of eight and six-tenths million dollars not to mention the savings in training and other costs.

If the present eighteen per cent inflation rate of the M60A1 tank worsens, it may be necessary to accept delays in the present procurement schedule. Considering the known and projected threat, any such delays will entail significantly increased risks.

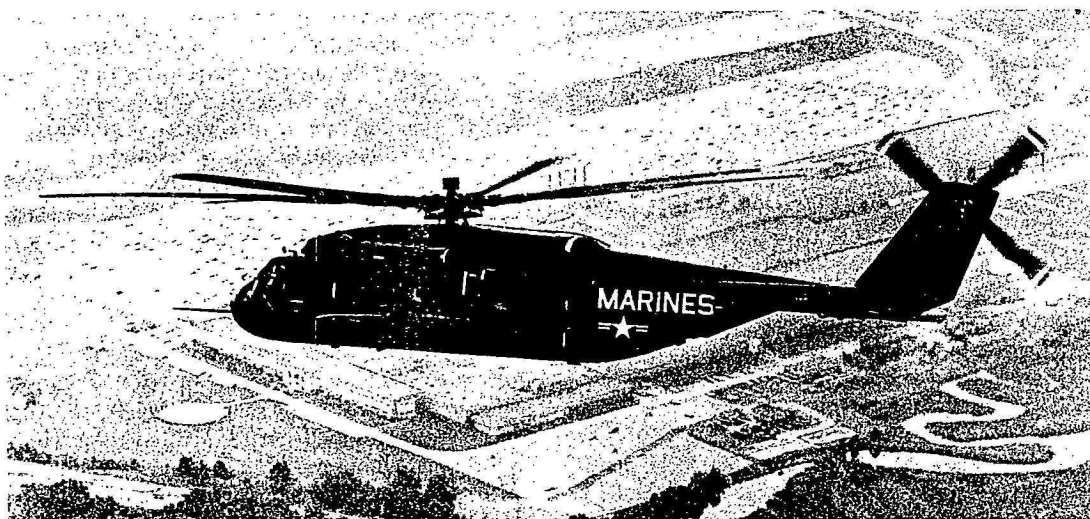
Aviation modernization and procurement

Marine Aviation is comprised of an optimal mix of the minimum required fixed wing fighter and attack aircraft, helicopters, and antiaircraft missiles, integrally managed by a real-time Marine air command and control system. It is designed to provide around-the-clock all weather support for the Marine on the ground. While it has a proven capability as an expeditionary land or sea based part of Naval Aviation, it is also a force for augmentation of the total National aviation assets when required. Ongoing modernization and procurement efforts seek to ensure the continuance of this versatile capability.

Our air defense capability is moving toward a much improved position. This December will



"... we are in the process of upgrading our antitank capability."



"The CH-53E will double our capability to lift heavy equipment."

mark the introduction of the F-14 to the team as the first squadron becomes operational. For a proper perspective of air defense, however, it is necessary to consider more than just the fighter aircraft. Acquisition of the improved Hawk missile system and employment of the Redeye platoon will enhance close-in protection as well as protection in depth. All of these air defense elements are linked to each other and to the other elements of Marine Aviation by a semi-automated tactical air command and control system. This Marine system is inter-operable with systems of the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

Positive steps are also being taken to improve our close air support capabilities. The three AV-8A Harrier squadrons provide us with a V/STOL capability to operate from amphibious ships or austere landing sites. They make possible the ultimate in forward basing and siting for immediately responsive expeditionary air support. Currently, the Marine Corps has AV-8A aircraft forward deployed in both the Mediterranean and Western Pacific. These highly successful deployments, coupled with expected technological advances, add emphasis to our interest in the development of a follow-on V/STOL aircraft starting in the early 1980's. To maintain the authorized light attack active and Reserve force levels until introduction of an advanced V/STOL, the FY 1976 budget includes an additional increment of A-4M's.

Another improvement in our close air support capability is the ongoing replacement of the A-6A with the A-6E. This is being achieved by a limited new procurement together with a cost-effective modification program. Used in conjunction with the radar beacon for forward air controllers, the

A-6E provides us with a quantum improvement in our night and all-weather attack capability.

An even further improvement will occur with our planned procurement of the AN/TPQ-27 Radar Course Directing Central now under development. Its improved accuracy, range, and reliability will allow all Marine fixed wing attack elements to improve their night and all-weather bombing performance.

Turning now to helicopters, the FY 1976 budget introduces long-lead funds for a FY 1977 procurement of the CH-53E. The CH-53E will double our capability to lift heavy equipment, making over ninety per cent of a Marine Division's combat-essential equipment helicopter transportable. The helicopter program also calls for procurement of the UH-1N utility helicopter and the AH-1J (Improved) attack helicopter with provisions for the TOW antiarmor missile system. With its ordnance load increased threefold, the improved AH-1J will provide close-in fire support for transport helicopters in the assault. In addition, survivability is measurably improved by inclusion of infrared suppression devices. The FY 1976 budget also supports the continuation of updating the CH-46 medium assault helicopter.

Procurement of four KC-130 refueler aircraft will fill inventory shortfalls, modernize the active force, provide the older KC-130's to the Reserves to replace the long-obsolescent C-119's, and, of prime importance, provide the Reserves with an aerial refueling capability.

In sum, Marine Corps Aviation is on a steady course towards an improved posture. The foregoing modernization and procurement programs are designed to positively influence that course. Our present aviation force level is essential if we

are to have a strong and balanced Marine Corps air-ground team.

Navy programs

As a recurrent theme, I have stressed the value of the team concept along with the importance of a balanced force posture. In keeping with this theme, and in recognition of the fact that the Navy-Marine Corps amphibious team is essentially a single entity, it is appropriate for me to express my strong support for certain Navy programs of mutual importance to the Marine Corps and the Nation as a whole.

It would be tempting for me to focus only on those Navy programs that relate exclusively to amphibious warfare. Concern about balance requires, however, that I consider the Naval system as a whole—not just a subsystem, no matter how crucial that subsystem may be.

I share the Secretary of the Navy's and the Chief of Naval Operations' desire to see an early reversal in the general decline of Navy force levels that has occurred in recent years. It is, after all, a prerequisite for an amphibious assault that we have more than a tenuous command of the sea—including the surface, subsurface, and air—in the objective area as well as en route thereto. Accordingly, I have strongly supported the Secretary of the Navy's and CNO's appeals for a larger Department of the Navy share of the Defense budget in order to deal with this critical aspect of our National Security.

With these thoughts serving to place my views in the proper context, I will now discuss the specific Navy programs that are of critical Marine Corps interest.

The first of these programs concerns the timely procurement of the eight-inch Major Caliber Lightweight Gun for naval gunfire support of the landing force until its organic artillery is in operation ashore. The continued absence of this support is a major shortfall.

I look forward to the operational availability of the five LHA's—General Purpose Amphibious Assault Ships—under construction at Pascagoula, Mississippi. In addition to their considerable operational improvements, for the first time in years the introduction of these ships will provide the Navy-Marine Corps team with the minimum acceptable level of amphibious lift.

A significant qualitative improvement for our amphibious forces, the Amphibious Assault Landing Craft, is now in latter stages of development. This high speed craft will provide a capability to launch the landing force from safer positions farther to seaward, to assault across beachlines not traversable by present craft, and to attain a more



"... funding in support of 196,303 Marines."

rapid force build-up ashore. In short, it will provide the greatest advance in amphibious capabilities since the advent of the helicopter.

The declining numbers of Navy ships of all kinds has all but eliminated ships designed and dedicated for sweeping mines in advance of landing operations. As a result, the Navy is expecting to use amphibious ships as platforms for airborne mine countermeasure operations. This mission cannot be accomplished concurrently with the primary role of these ships. Therefore, I firmly support the Navy in its efforts to obtain a dedicated system for mine countermeasures.

Finally, the continuing prospects for minimum numbers of amphibious ships require that we rely on the Military Sealift Command and other strategic mobility assets to lift our follow-on forces and resupply. Their ability to achieve a modern and adequate ship force is vital to Navy and Marine Corps capabilities.

Funding by major categories

Our FY 1976 and FY 197T budget request by appropriation is as follows:

	(\$ Millions)		
	FY 1975	FY 1976	FY 197T
Personnel	1,762.3	1,828.3	467.9
Reserve			
Personnel	65.5	72.7	28.9
Ops & Maint	459.5	507.3	129.4
Ops & Maint (Reserve)	11.7	12.1	3.5
Procurement	214.6	285.8	43.8
Totals	2,513.6	2,706.2	673.5

Active duty personnel funding is requested for pay and allowances, clothing, subsistence, permanent change of station travel, and related expenses in support of 196,303 Marines in FY 1976 and 196,498 in FY 1977.

Reserve personnel funding is requested for pay and allowances, clothing, subsistence, travel and related expenses in support of 32,911 Marine Corps Reserves in FY 1976 and 33,284 in FY 1977.

Operations and Maintenance funds are requested to support Fleet Marine Force requirements for supplies, maintenance, and training, and to provide civilian personnel man-years of 16,868 and an associated end strength of 16,376.

Reserve operations and maintenance funds are again requested to support training and maintenance and to provide supplies and civilian personnel man-years of 75 with an attendant end strength of 77.

Procurement

Procurement funding is requested for ammunition, weapons, and tracked vehicles, guided missiles and equipment, communications and electronics equipment, support vehicles, and engineer and other equipment.

These requests represent a minimum requirement developed with full realization of our Nation's economic difficulties. We are requesting, as in the past, no luxury items, no items not in our best judgment considered essential to a well balanced and combat ready Marine Corps. Barring unexpectedly excessive inflationary price increases, I feel confident that the funding requested will continue to provide the American people with essential combat strength at the least possible cost.

FY 1977 authorization requests

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, our FY 1977 Authorization Requests are highlighted as follows:

Active Duty End Strength	197,646
Selected Reserve Average Strength	34,699
Civilian Personnel End Strength	18,111
Average Military Training Student Load, Active	25,993
Average Military Training Student Load, Reserve	2,935
Procurement Requiring Authorization	\$69.9 million

Conclusion

This year is a significant one for the Marine Corps. On 10 November, we will round out two

centuries of service to our Country.

This is also a significant year for me, for I will round out my fourth and final year as Commandant and my fortieth year as a Marine.

I have seen many changes in the Corps over those forty years, but one aspect remains unchanged. It is the pride and self-confidence—drawn from steadfast adherence to high standards of performance—which must abide at the heart of any great military organization. It is instilled in each recruit who meets the challenge of becoming a Marine and, under proper leadership, is nurtured in every unit throughout the Corps.

The key to the continued pride, self-confidence and vitality of the Corps is the leadership performance of our junior officers and non-commissioned officers—troop leaders in direct, day-to-day contact with our young Marines. Their task is not easy. In many ways, peacetime leadership is more difficult than the combat variety, where personal differences and personal problems are often submerged in the face of shared danger—only to resurface when that danger passes. Positive leadership of young Marines has also been made difficult by the shifting attitudes of youth and of society at large, over the past decade.

But the task of these troop leaders has never been easy. The young officers and non-commissioned officers have always carried the greatest burden in times of greatest danger or adversity. The response of today's young leaders to the challenges they face has generally been superb, and I have the greatest faith in their continued success.

I have endeavored to back them up wherever possible. From the outset of my tenure as Commandant, I have placed the highest priority on maintaining a quality Marine Corps. That too, has been no easy task. I feel strongly, however, that our traditionally high standards of discipline and performance of duty are essential if we are to retain the institutional self-confidence required to meet the challenges of an uncertain and turbulent world.

My goals have been to maintain our multi-dimensional balance and to "make the Marines stay the Marines":

☉ In terms of our institutional values.

☉ In terms of our readiness posture.

☉ In terms of our versatility, as a key component of the Navy-Marine Corps amphibious system.

We have been developing and honing this system for the full span of my career. It has served the United States well through a full range of contingencies. It remains one of this Nation's best means to cope with the unexpected.

It is a sound and indispensable National investment.

USMC