

Spirit of '76:

'The troops are looking good'

by Gen Louis H. Wilson,

Commandant of the Marine Corps



A briefing to the Congress
from the top Marine.

Over 200 years ago the Continental Congress provided for the establishment of the first two battalions of American Marines; and thus began the long and cherished relationship between Congress and the Corps. It is my privilege to pay my respects to this tradition, and to report to you on my stewardship of the roles and missions of the Marine Corps as assigned by the Congress of the United States.

The primary mission of the Marine Corps is to provide air and ground forces of combined arms for service with the fleets. This mission is meant to provide the fleets with a ready capability to project combined arms combat power ashore.

This primary mission is not an end in itself, nor is it merely traditional. It rests upon a

sturdy foundation of realities concerning this country's political, economic, and geographic relationships with the rest of the world. Oceans separate us from nine-tenths of the world's population and all but two foreign countries. Although there are no threats to our two continental borders, we have extensive overseas interests that are vulnerable. These overseas interests are of vital consequence to the Nation. They are interwoven with our economic well-being, our way of life, and our national security. Moreover, they are essential to our standing as a major power and our influence on the peaceful conduct of world affairs.

If we expect diplomatic efforts to be effective, we must maintain a capability to defend these interests whenever and wherever necessary. Yet we cannot maintain pre-positioned forces in every potential overseas crisis area. It is neither politically nor economically feasible to do so. Nor can we always count on having base rights, overflight privileges, or situations in which we can introduce forces unopposed. This is the principal reason why the United States has a continuing need for its Fleet Marine Forces—instantly ready and highly mobile—to provide the Nation's only major capability for forcible entry. The need for this capability in crisis management and at all levels of conventional conflict is fundamental.

The Marine Corps has additional missions that complement its primary one. Among these is a responsibility to develop equipment, tactics, techniques, and doctrine applicable to amphibious landing forces. We are charged with keeping this aspect of warfare completely up to date in a rapidly changing world.

We also have the mission to provide security detachments worldwide, for selected ships and stations of the Navy and for American embassies.

One more mission is to perform "such other duties as the President may direct." This has often required Fleet Marine Forces to serve for extended periods in campaigns conducted primarily in a land warfare environment.

Considering the demanding and wide-ranging nature of these missions, certain distinguishing characteristics are essential for Marine forces. Efforts to maintain and enhance these characteristics pervade all of our planning and programming efforts. Three of these head the list.

► Our first and paramount characteristic is readiness—a Marine trademark for many decades. We have long held the expectation of being "first to fight." Our role with the fleets ensures that Marine forces will be on or near the scene for timely employment in almost any overseas crisis. However, our relatively small forward afloat-deployed units are not the only ones that must be ready. Their parent divisions and wings must be ready as well, to reinforce by sea or air on short notice.

► A second deeply ingrained characteristic is versatility. Marine forces are optimized for their primary mission with the fleets, but this is done without sacrificing their capability to fulfill a broad range of general purpose missions. Our ground elements are as light as they must be for rapid strategic movement by sea or air and for the ship-to-shore movement in an amphibious assault. This does not mean, however, that Marine forces are lacking in heavy firepower or tactical mobility ashore. A large proportion of our around-the-clock heavy firepower support is provided by Marine aviation forces. For tactical mobility, a nominal division-wing sized assault force has nearly 200 helicopters and 200 tracked troop-carrying vehicles. If appropriate, more of either can be added to a particular division-wing task organization—along with additional tank and artillery units. Thus, when viewed as it is actually employed—as an entity—a Marine air-ground task force, with or without its sea-based naval support, has the combat power to oppose and defeat forces having much heavier ground combat elements. Furthermore, our organization, training, and equipment place emphasis on the capability to work efficiently alongside forces of the other three Services in joint operations. The Marine Corps constitutes a most formidable and unique general purpose force.

► The third salient characteristic is another Marine trademark—the air-ground team concept which we have been perfecting for over five decades. Reflecting our unique mission requirements, Marine air and ground forces are integral parts of a single force. Regular team training at all levels instills that extra degree of confidence which distinguishes a winning team from a mere collection of specialists. We have learned—and experience continues to show—that this degree of combined arms integration produces a force whose total combat power is far greater than the sum of its parts. In attacking enemy armor, for instance, the combined antitank firepower of our high

performance aircraft, attack helicopters, and ground forces can be brought to bear with much greater effectiveness than can be achieved by forces emphasizing only one of these elements, or by forces employing the firepower of air and ground elements separately. From a more general viewpoint, this enhanced effectiveness is measurable in terms of responsiveness to fire support requests in combat and precision delivery of all types of firepower in close coordination with maneuvering ground forces.

Closely related to the missions and key characteristics of Marine forces are their specific contributions to National Defense.

The National Military Strategy supports our foreign policy and reflects our extensive overseas interests. It has been characterized by the Secretary of Defense in his Annual Report to Congress as a forward defense strategy—a strategy which has inherent requirements for power projection, sea control, force presence, and deterrence.

- In terms of power projection, Marine forces can rapidly reinforce pre-positioned U.S. or allied forces overseas. In the likely event that friendly forces find themselves unable to maintain control over all areas of strategic importance, Marine landing forces—operating with other elements of a balanced fleet—provide a major capability for forcible entry at a time and place of our choosing. Moreover, the mere existence of a credible amphibious capability burdens the enemy with a powerful strategic distraction. He is forced either to accept a significant risk or to dissipate his forces in efforts to defend extensive coastal areas against possible attack from the sea.

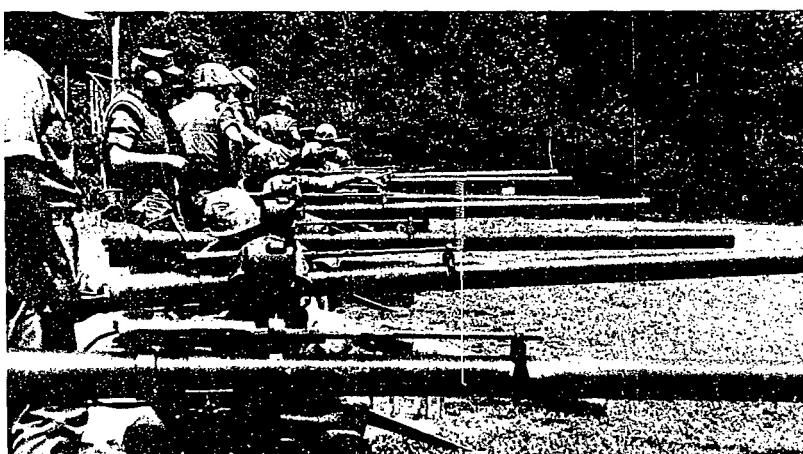
- In terms of sea control, which would be

vital in any overseas conflict, Fleet Marine Forces can be used to seize islands or littorals from which air and naval operations could be conducted to dominate key straits and other vital sea areas.

- In terms of force presence, Marine forward afloat-deployed elements demonstrate U.S. interest and provide effective military support for U.S. diplomacy during periods of international tension. Poised in adjacent international waters where they can maintain complete freedom of action and the exact degree of visibility desired, these forces provide an indispensable tool for use in efforts to dampen crises.

- In terms of deterrence, the varied and ready capabilities of Marine forces are highly credible to potential enemies throughout the world. For this reason, Marine forces can be employed to inhibit crises, encourage negotiated settlements of disputes, and complicate the planning of would-be aggressors.

The geographic extent of our responsibilities has a fundamental bearing on our basic peacetime structure. Because we are a unique air-ground force with a primary naval mission and a maritime perspective, our contingency responsibilities are global. They span two hemispheric ocean areas and their littorals. These circumstances logically suggest that, as a minimum, one division-wing team should be postured in each of the two separate world ocean areas, with forward deployed elements that can be sustained and rapidly reinforced from within the same theater. It follows that a third division-wing team should be positioned in a strategically central location from which it can swing readily to reinforce either of the other two, and that a Reserve division-wing team would be needed to meet urgent wartime



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mobilization requirements. Based on this fundamental logic, our existing basic force structure is appropriately balanced and attuned to existing requirements.

The basic peacetime Marine force structure of three active and one Reserve division-wing teams is carefully studied and revalidated each year in the rigorous processes of the Joint Strategic Planning System and the Defense Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System. These processes have repeatedly verified that this structure is the minimum required to support the National Military Strategy at a prudent level of risk.

All of these considerations, beginning with our primary mission, have had a bearing on the development of the Marine Corps program for FY 1977 and beyond. This program properly considers today's fiscal realities and is designed to support three fundamental policies:

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

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

► The base and logistic structure will be the minimum required to provide sustained support for the combat units, while retaining a training and logistic readiness capability to permit rapid attainment of a fully-structured force if mobilization should become necessary.

ACTIVE FORCE POSTURE

Since disengaging from Southeast Asia, the Marine Corps has maintained a balanced glob-

al posture. While some observers construe this as a new focus on NATO Europe, our NATO role has remained relatively unchanged since the 1950's. Furthermore, we view NATO in maritime rather than strictly continental terms, and in global rather than just regional terms. With this perspective we can envision numerous vital contributions which Marine forces could make in a global conventional war focused in the NATO area. This even includes our forces in the Western Pacific, which in the broadest strategic sense are highly relevant to NATO. It is appropriate that our assigned role in a NATO war is that of a strategic reserve with a wide range of employment options.

One of our three active division-wing teams is based on the East Coast where it remains ready to respond rapidly to contingencies in the Atlantic hemisphere—including Europe, the Mediterranean area, and the Caribbean. Another division-wing team is forward deployed primarily in the Western Pacific, prepared for quick response in support of U.S. policy in the Pacific hemisphere and Indian Ocean area. A third division-wing team is based on the West Coast where it can be rapidly deployed to meet contingencies or reinforce in either the European, Atlantic, Pacific, or Indian Ocean theaters.

Among our forward deployed forces, we keep two-thirds of a division-wing team in Okinawa and Japan. This high-readiness force consists of about 23,000 Marines who are on 13-month tours without their families. Portions of this force are continuously deployed afloat in amphibious shipping.

East Coast Marines also maintain forward deployments. Small air-ground task forces are continuously deployed afloat with the Sixth

“... additional tanks will improve the capability of both active and Reserve forces. . .”



Fleet in the Mediterranean, and are intermittently deployed afloat in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

With this global posture, the Marine Corps can meet its worldwide contingency commitments in FY 1976. Our proposed program and budget are intended to insure that, with the help and guidance of Congress, we can meet these commitments in FY 1977 and beyond.

AIR-GROUND TEAM TRAINING

The primary purpose underlying all Marine Corps unit training is to obtain the highest possible yield from our investment in manpower and hardware. Such training is an essential ingredient in our combat effectiveness.

The Fleet Marine Forces will have participated in over 40 major exercises in varied geographical and climatic areas during FY 1976 and FY 19TQ. These include joint exercises with other U.S. forces, such as SOLID SHIELD conducted at Camp Lejeune, involving all four Services, and numerous combined exercises with allied forces in the Mediterranean and Caribbean areas and in Germany, England, Scotland, Thailand, the Philippines, and Korea. In addition to amphibious training in conjunction with U.S. and allied naval forces, our overseas exercises include training in strategic movement by air in partnership with the Air Force's Military Airlift Command.

Marine Reserve units are also participating in a variety of exercises this fiscal year—often in combination with our active forces. These include mountain warfare, desert, and cold weather training. For example, in January of this year Marine Reservists deployed to Alaska and participated in the U.S. Readiness Command's exercise JACK FROST.

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 merge into an efficient and effective fighting force.

As an important further effort to improve our combined arms training, both active and Reserve units are participating in a newly developed standardized training program in the Mojave Desert at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms. This training program exercises all levels of command and control in employing the total combat power of combined Ma-

rine air and ground assets. The benefits of this program will be finally measured in our ability to perform in combat.

INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

In the area of individual training, our efforts are directed toward increasing the efficiency of formal schools with the ultimate goal of providing better trained and educated combat ready Marines.

We are using other Services' formal schools to the extent possible to ensure that our training is cost effective. Over 33% of our student man-years devoted to formal school specialized training is currently accomplished at other Service schools. This is far ahead of the DOD average of 5%.

The Interservice Training Review Organization (ITRO) has consolidated training in several formal school areas to include artillery, tanks, construction equipment, aerial navigation, and some areas of electronics.

Computer based instruction in Marine Corps formal schools is being expanded. Instructional programs in vital skill areas such as Amphibious Support Information Systems, Basic Mechanized Embarkation, Computer Programming, and Electronic Fundamentals are either underway or planned.

Our items of ground simulation equipment are primarily combat oriented, including a field firing and scoring target system, tank gunnery simulation equipment, and a field artillery trainer, to name a few.

Flight simulation is being expanded with the addition of improved trainers for most of our tactical airplanes and helicopters. This includes portable emergency procedures trainers for aviation units. These trainers will enable our aviation units to maintain proficiency in emergency procedures regardless of whether they are home-based or deployed.

Radar target generators are being delivered to Air Traffic Control Units for training on operational equipment. These deployable devices generate radar "blips" to simulate air traffic, thereby providing for continuous and realistic air traffic control training.

MANPOWER

Although the complexity of modern warfare and the means to wage it tend to receive major scrutiny, the area that is receiving the highest visibility in the Corps is that of the individual Marine. As in the past, the individual Marine is the most essential element in the

Corps.

One of my major initiatives since assuming the responsibilities of the Commandant has been to upgrade the quality of personnel in the Marine Corps. To this end we are taking steps to improve the quality of new recruits and of Marines throughout the career ranks. This is not a goal; it is an imperative. Every Marine is expected to perform to established standards. Substandard performance will not be tolerated.

Improvement in the quality of personnel is certain to have an immediate favorable impact on professionalism and readiness for combat. We have reason to believe that it will also have a favorable impact on the number of young Americans who seek service in the Marine Corps. However, having committed the Marine Corps to an across-the-board program to improve personnel quality, I will not relax standards if faced with a choice between quality and quantity.

In response to concern expressed by the Senate Armed Services Committee, I appointed a special board last July to conduct a comprehensive study relating to manpower levels and personnel quality. The results of this study were recently reported to the Committee. The study has confirmed many of the actions we are already taking and I expect it will lead to additional measures which will further the achievement of our quality and readiness goals.

Quality in Recruiting. We have taken a number of steps to ensure continuing emphasis on the quality of recruits. One measure has been to set the minimum requirement for high school graduates in FY 1977 at 75%, requiring the remaining 25% to have completed at least ten years of school. This is an increase from the FY 1976 requirement of 67%.

In another measure, we are revising a number of the high-demand enlistment options to limit participation to high school graduates, thereby strengthening the incentives for quality accessions. These and other actions being taken recognize the fact that completion of standard educational programs is the best overall indicator of quality as measured in terms of retention, trainability, amenability to discipline, and social adaptability.

The recruiting service is in the process of being reorganized. Commanders of the recruit depots at Parris Island and San Diego will assume full responsibility for recruiting in their respective geographical areas. Thus, the com-

mander responsible for converting recruits into Marines at the recruit depots will exercise full authority over the process for obtaining those recruits—including quality control.

Individual recruiter accountability has been strengthened through the development and implementation of a recruiter quality information system. Additionally, the emphasis on quality accessions will provide a better basis for recognizing the true performance of our recruiters.

Quality in the Ranks. We are also taking positive steps to improve performance within our ranks. Post-accession actions will be implemented to upgrade the performance of Marines or, in cases where the Marine is unwilling or perhaps unable to meet our standards, to separate him from the Service.

In accordance with the desires of Congress, we have also implemented an expedited discharge program which permits the commander to separate those not adhering to standards.

The overall response to our performance-oriented initiatives has been overwhelmingly favorable. This reaction has come from Marines, parents and friends of Marines, and from government agencies having an active interest in Marines.

Manpower Stability. Marine Corps person-



“... we are taking steps to improve the quality of our recruits.”

nel assignment policies have been directed toward the goal of reducing turbulence; that is, the rate at which men and women move into and out of the Corps and the rate at which Marines are moved about and reassigned within the Corps. We are aware of the price that turbulence exacts in terms of travel dollars, morale, retention of quality people, and ultimately readiness. With this in mind, we are investigating alternatives to our current individual rotation/replacement system.

The actions already taken and those that are planned will result in increased stability. The continuity of leadership resulting from stabilized assignments will assist in the reduction of unauthorized absences and desertion rates and a further reduction in non-EAS losses.

Resources for Recruiting. The funds requested in the FY 1977 budget to support our recruiting activities represent the minimum amount necessary to accomplish our manpower recruiting goals.

The FY 1977 request for recruit advertising represents an increase over the current year. The purpose is to ensure that we reach sufficient eligible youth to satisfy our manpower requirements in FY 1977.

Vital to the manpower program and its success is a responsive and efficient recruiting service. The Congress last year expressed the belief that the recruiting force might be further reduced in FY 1977 without loss of effectiveness. We believe it would be beneficial to allow the recruiting force to remain stable for a specified period of time in order to permit full penetration of the manpower market and to obtain analysis of the efficiency of that effort. This is especially significant with respect to current plans for reorganization of the recruiting effort.

End Strength. I am requesting an end strength of 196,000 Marines for FY 1977. This continues essentially the same end strength requested last year and is projected to remain stable through the program years. While this level means we must maintain certain combat units in a cadre status, it will enable us to support essential peacetime requirements while providing a minimum acceptable base for rapid expansion in wartime.

Manpower Efficiency. Although our mission makes it necessary for us to be manpower intensive to a large extent, our manpower is exceptionally lean. The Marine Corps' combat-to-support ratio is better than 60-40, re-

flecting a strong orientation toward combat forces. The average grades of both our officers and enlisted men are the lowest of all the Services. Only 46% of all enlisted Marines are in the "Top Six" pay grades, compared to an overall DOD "Top Six" percentage of 61.9%. Our ratio of officers to enlisted Marines is 1:9.56, the leanest among the Services.

In short, we recognize the high cost of manpower, our primary resource, and are doing everything possible to ensure that the Nation gets a combat ready Marine Corps at minimum cost.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Currently we are undertaking a major realignment and reorganization of the logistics support elements within the Fleet Marine Forces. This streamlining will enhance readiness by providing more effective and efficient logistic support for our operating forces.

Other initiatives are leading to further economies. A consolidation of functions of the Marine Corps Supply Activity in Philadelphia with those of our Supply Center in Albany, Georgia will be accomplished by the end of this Fiscal Year and will result in more cost-effective management of logistic personnel and material resources.

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE

The Secretary of Defense and Secretary of the Navy have highlighted aviation maintenance and supply support funding problems in their Annual Reports to the Congress. The inadequate funding to which they refer is a matter of major concern to the Marine Corps. Funding for aviation spare parts and depot level repairs should be kept in a balanced relationship with authorized aircraft flying hours. A reduction of support funding without a corresponding reduction in flying hours will necessarily degrade the materiel condition of the aircraft. The consequence is a serious loss of combat readiness.

MARINE CORPS RESERVE

The Total Force Policy established by the Secretary of Defense in 1973 has brought about a welcome increase in the significance of the Marine Corps Reserve. This has led to closer coordination with the active forces and steady progress in Reserve readiness, training and recruiting.

If the rapid response envisioned by the Total Force Policy is to be attained, there must

be compatibility between the active and Reserve forces in equipment as well as in manpower and organization. To ensure this, we are continuing to request the most modern equipment for our Reserve forces.

During the past year the Reserves acquired the F-4, A-4E, A-4F and KC-130 aircraft, and present programming schedules them to receive the A-4M aircraft in FY 1978.

A careful look at all factors has warranted a decision to maintain a strong armored capability in the Reserve. Accordingly, we will retain the existing two tank battalions, and will equip them with the M60A1 tank during the coming year. The TOW antitank weapon is scheduled for introduction in FY 1978.

The emphasis on active/Reserve coordination has been especially evident in Reserve training and management. Our goals are to provide better training at less cost and to increase our readiness with improved response capabilities.

Several approaches are being taken to achieve these readiness goals. We are increasing our training time in the field and expanding the use of mobile active duty training teams in order to keep all Reserves fully trained in the latest doctrine and techniques. We are also arranging for more joint training with the Reserves of other Services, a measure which should save money and add new dimensions of effectiveness and motivation.

The forthcoming centralization of responsibility for ground Reserve activities under the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division will end the present dispersion of responsibility among the Directors of the six Marine Corps Districts. This action should measurably improve training management and combat effectiveness of the Division as a whole.

Recent years have provided many challenges for our Reserves, but none so compelling as in the area of recruitment. There is now solid evidence that this challenge is being successfully met.

New recruitment programs initiated during the past year to support an all-volunteer Reserve force are apparently enjoying success, and Reserve strength has continued to improve. For example, as a result of emphasizing the recruitment of non-prior service personnel, 60% of all accessions were obtained last year from that category. We are planning to build on this success by placing even greater emphasis on quality standards.

Beginning in FY 1977, we will require at least 75% of our non-prior service recruits to be high school graduates.

Some of our Reserve units are still under-strength. However, our gradual buildup continues, with emphasis on quality rather than numbers. By selective manning and a restructuring of some units, we will increase our combat to support ratio. In addition, we will ensure that those personnel who cannot be trained productively in a peacetime status are not maintained in a drill-pay status.

By the end of the coming year we expect to have a Marine Reserve which is once again at a satisfactory level of overall strength.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In satisfying Marine Corps needs for research and development, our budget request for FY 1977 amounts to \$41.9 million. This does not include Basic Research and Exploratory Development funds expended by the Navy in support of Marine Corps objectives, nor funds for Marine Corps aviation systems developed with monies appropriated to the Navy.

It is my intention to use the limited funds available to the Marine Corps primarily for programs in support of our statutory development responsibility—i.e., landing force requirements for amphibious operations. We will also give added emphasis to joint R&D efforts. As a matter of policy, the Marine Corps pursues unilateral development only when planned developments of other Services will not meet Marine Corps requirements.

Full details of the Marine Corps R&D program and budget are included in the Navy's Research, Development, Test and Evaluation program request.

MODERNIZATION

Force modernization programs concentrate on improved operational capabilities that are essential to continued combat readiness and effectiveness. As in the past, Marine Corps programs addressed in this year's request are modest in cost and contain no frills. These programs selectively increase capabilities necessary to operate effectively in potential high threat environments, while retaining fundamental characteristics as the Nation's force-in-readiness. Continuing emphasis is placed on force readiness, responsiveness, and mobility to insure prompt reaction to the full range of contingency requirements. Accordingly, our formula is to maintain lean but fast-

moving, hard-hitting expeditionary forces, each consisting of a single integrated system of modern:

- Ground delivered firepower;
- Air-delivered firepower;
- Tactical mobility; and
- Countermeasures.

Ground Forces Modernization. The principal ground combat weapon systems in our modernization program are the Dragon, TOW, M60A1 Tank, and improved artillery weapons.

The TOW and Dragon systems can defeat any existing armor at ranges much greater than were possible with the antitank weapons they are replacing. We began a five-year procurement program of TOW with the FY 1974 supplemental budget. A procurement program for Dragon began last year and will be completed in FY 1979. Both active and Reserve forces will be equipped with these systems.

To improve our armored capability, 406 M60A1 tanks will have been procured for our active and Reserve tank battalions by the end of FY 1976. Based on a careful review of our requirements, we are requesting authority to procure an additional 150 M60A1 tanks during FY 1977-1980. These additional tanks will improve the capability of both active and Reserve forces to meet contingencies involving armor-heavy adversaries.

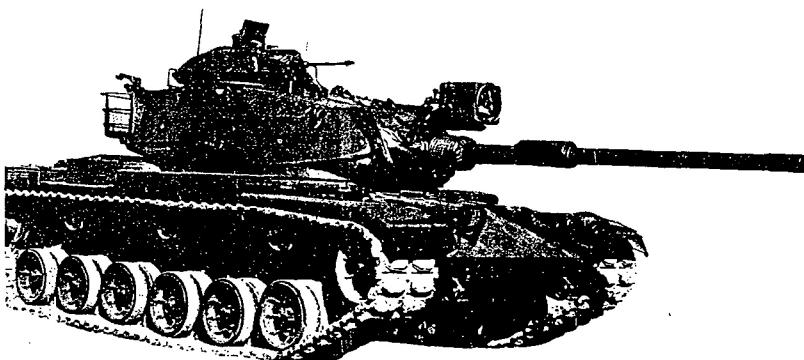
The Marine Corps is benefitting from the Army's artillery modernization program. Our aging 105mm and 155mm towed howitzers are scheduled for replacement with new and greatly improved weapons during a four-year procurement period beginning in FY 1978. By FY 1978, we will also complete a program to upgrade our eight-inch howitzers with a new cannon assembly in order to obtain extended range.

Aviation Modernization. Our aviation modernization program includes advances in fixed wing fighter and attack aircraft, precision guided missile delivery systems, attack and transport helicopters, surface-to-air missile systems, countermeasures aircraft and systems, and control systems.

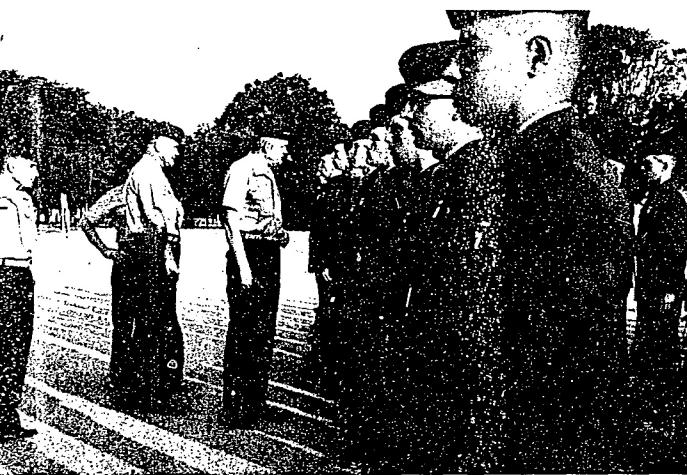
Marine air defense and close support firepower will be enhanced with improvements to the F-4 weapon system and modifications to the airframe which provide improved maneuverability. In FY 1980 the F-18 fighter is scheduled for introduction to supplement and eventually replace the dwindling and aging inventory of F-4s.

A most important aviation modernization effort during the five-year program period will be the development of the AV-8B as the planned eventual replacement for the AV-8A and A-4M light attack force. This second generation V/STOL attack aircraft will dramatically improve our operational flexibility and ability to provide responsive, effective close air support. Our experiences with the successful AV-8A have shown that V/STOL aircraft enhance one of the most significant unique attributes of Marine aviation: the capability to phase high performance aircraft ashore rapidly during an amphibious assault—without having to rely on existing airfields. This flexibility increases the chance of achieving surprise by widening the choice of assault beachheads. It also enables Navy aircraft carriers to regain full mobility or redeploy for other missions at an early stage in the operation.

The Marine Corps will continue using the A-6 aircraft as the best available for all weather close air support and attack missions. By end FY 1978, the force will consist entirely of the A-6E, which has significantly improved reliability and maintainability over the original A-6A. FY 1978 will also mark introduction of



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"The troops are looking good."

the A-6E Target Recognition and Attack Multisensors (TRAM). The TRAM weapon system will continue to ensure viable all-weather attack capabilities into the mid-1980s.

To improve our close air support capability and our aircraft survivability in a mid or high intensity conflict, we have programmed all Marine Corps fighter and attack aircraft to be capable of delivering electro-optical and laser precision guided stand-off weapons. These "smart weapons" can quickly destroy targets which are impervious to anything but direct hits, and can be safely delivered as close to friendly troops as the lethal radius of the ordnance permits.

FY 1977 aircraft procurement includes the first 15 of 24 programmed AH-1T attack helicopters configured with the TOW anti-armor missile system. These attack helicopters will be capable of performing several vital missions, including helicopter escort, close-in fire support, and stand-off attack against enemy armor and hard targets.

The Redeye missile system is presently the only close-in low-altitude air defense system in the Marine Corps inventory. The current active Redeye force structure consists of two active Forward Area Air Defense Platoons. In FY 1977 a third platoon will be fielded. An improved Stinger missile weapon system under engineering development is scheduled to replace the Redeye toward the end of the five-year program period.

The first ten CH-53E heavy lift helicopters are programmed for procurement during FY 1977. With its 16-ton lift capacity and extend-

ed range, this aircraft will be able to lift 93% of the equipment items organic to our divisions, to include towed artillery, prime movers, and engineer equipment. It will also provide a capability to retrieve nearly every type of Marine aircraft, including another CH-53E.

Additional improvements to our helicopter force include the updating of CH-46D/F helicopters to the CH-46E configuration in lieu of new procurement. Also included are the procurement and installation of external fuel tank kits and elastomeric rotor heads for CH-53D helicopters, and the continued development and procurement of infrared suppression and jamming devices for all our helicopters to decrease their vulnerability to heat-seeking missiles.

The EA-6B Tactical Electronic Warfare Aircraft is scheduled to replace the EA-6A during the program years. This weapon system will enhance survivability of our other aircraft in today's sophisticated, electronically controlled antiaircraft environment. It will also provide Marine commanders with an improved tactical electronic intelligence gathering system.

The Marine Corps close air support capability will be further strengthened by the introduction of the AN/TPQ-27 Radar Course Directing Central, now in limited production. The technological improvements included in this new system will provide for more precise night and all-weather positioning and control for tactical aircraft attacking ground targets and for support aircraft performing medical evacuation and resupply missions.

NAVY PROGRAMS

The Navy and Marine Corps forces which share the amphibious mission are parts of a single system which must be balanced and complete in order to assure success. I strongly support those programs involving Navy amphibious force structure.

In a broader sense, however, the Navy-Marine Corps amphibious team is an integral part of a yet larger entity—the total naval force. It is, after all, a prerequisite for an amphibious assault that we have more than a tenuous command of the sea—including the surface, sub-surface, and air—in the objective area and in the sea approaches thereto. Obviously, achievement of these prerequisites requires strength in many types of naval forces. Accordingly, I share the desire of the Secretary

of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations for a balanced fleet and increased Navy force levels.

I strongly support all Navy programs designed to provide increased firepower in support of landing forces during the assault phase of amphibious operations. One such program involves the timely procurement and installation of the 8-inch Major Caliber Lightweight Gun on suitable ships, along with successful development of the 8-inch Laser-Guided Projectile. The degraded level of naval gunfire support available to the landing force until its organic artillery is established ashore continues to be a serious Marine Corps concern. On the aviation side, I also support the Navy's requirement for the Condor Missile System. This weapon will significantly improve the capability of Navy carrier air wings to isolate amphibious objective areas, conduct deep strike interdiction, and provide general support to landing forces.

A significant qualitative improvement for our amphibious forces—The Amphibious Assault Landing Craft (AALC)—is now in latter stages of development, with two prototypes under construction. This high-speed craft will provide a capability to launch landing force elements in surface assault from less vulnerable positions farther to seaward, to assault across shorelines not traversable by present landing craft, and to attain a more rapid force buildup ashore. The speed of the AALC will greatly reduce exposure time of troops in the ship-to-shore movement. Technologically, it shows promise of being the greatest advance in amphibious capabilities since the advent of the helicopter.

Another program of great interest to the Marine Corps is the acquisition of amphibious assault shipping. To meet the requirements of the National Military Strategy at a prudent level of risk, amphibious shipping sufficient to transport the assault echelon of two division-wing sized landing forces is required. The Marine Corps looks forward to a step-by-step attainment of this force level within the context of an overall balanced fleet structure. A key step along the way will be the completion in FY 1979 of the five LHAs—General Purpose Amphibious Assault Ships—now under construction. During the 1980s, however, the service life of the LSD-28 class of amphibious ships will begin to expire. Retirement of these ships without replacement would cause a critical shortage of amphibious lift. To avoid such

a shortfall, I strongly support the Navy program to develop and procure the LX as a timely replacement for the aging LSDs.

As a part of the general decline in numbers of Navy ships of all kinds, ships designed and dedicated to sweep mines have been almost completely eliminated. As a result, the Navy must use amphibious ships as platforms for helicopters conducting airborne mine countermeasures operations. The mine clearance operations in North Vietnam and in the Suez Canal were two instances in which the LPH, an amphibious assault ship, was used as a mine countermeasures platform. Such employment of these ships denies their availability to the amphibious forces for deployment and necessary training, and would drastically reduce amphibious capabilities and flexibility in time of war. Accordingly, I would firmly support the Navy in efforts to obtain a dedicated system for shallow water mine countermeasures—a system which will complement rather than degrade our amphibious assault capability.

Finally, the continuing prospect for limited numbers of amphibious assault ships requires that we rely on the Military Sealift Command and commercial shipping assets to lift our follow-on forces and resupply. The ability of the Military Sealift Command to achieve a modern and adequate ship force is vital to the Navy-Marine Corps capability to project power ashore at the force level required in certain major contingencies. Also vital is the near-term development of ways to fully utilize commercial ships in the absence of fully modernized port unloading facilities.

FUNDING BY MAJOR CATEGORIES

Our FY 1977 budget request by appropriation is displayed with last year's request for comparison as Figure 1.

Active duty personnel funding is requested for pay and allowances, clothing, subsistence, permanent change of station travel, and related expenses in support of 196,000 Marines in FY 1977.

Reserve personnel funding is requested for pay and allowances, clothing, subsistence, travel and related expenses in support of 33,500 Marine Corps Reserves in FY 1977.

O&MMC funds are requested to support Fleet Marine Force requirements for supplies, maintenance, and training, and to provide civilian personnel man-years of 15,956 and an associated end strength of 16,028.

	FY 1976	(\$ Millions) FY 19TQ	FY 1977
MPMC	\$1,869.6	\$480.0	\$1,883.9
RPMC	72.4	28.9	76.1
O&MMC	520.3	131.0	580.4
O&MMCR	12.0	3.4	14.8
PMC	281.0	40.4	337.7
 Totals	 \$2,755.3	 \$683.7	 \$2,892.9

Figure 1

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 76.

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 our minimum requirement, and in my judgment, contain only those items 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 1978 AUTHORIZATION REQUESTS

In accordance with the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, our FY 1978 Authorization Requests are highlighted as follows:

Active Duty End Strength	196,000
Selected Reserve Average Strength	33,500
Civilian Personnel End Strength	17,346
Average Military Training Student Load, Active	24,882
Average Military Training Student Load, Reserve	3,523
Procurement Requiring Authorization	\$134.3 Million

In summary, it should be noted that our total effort in organizing, equipping, training, and deploying our Fleet Marine Forces is devoted to the strengthening of their unique contributions to the National Strategy. Since the end of World War II, international crises at the average rate of one a year have driven our strategy and related force structuring efforts through at least six identifiable evolutions. Yet throughout this period of flux, the utility

of the Fleet Marine Forces, as highly mobile and ready general purpose forces with amphibious expertise, has remained high. Operating with the fleets, they represent this country's only self-sustaining force with a combined air, land, and sea combat capability—a capability that is especially well suited to the security needs of a maritime power that is separated by seas from some of its most vital interests.

Our current drive to attain and maintain maximum readiness of our combat units—across the board—reflects our continuing expectation that we will be "first to fight". To date, I am extremely pleased with the strong actions taken by our Fleet Marine Force commanders to enhance readiness, and by the spirited efforts of the Marines under their command. The main area of continuing concern is the material readiness of our aircraft stemming from funding deficiencies with respect to aviation spare parts and depot level repairs.

True readiness ultimately rests upon the quality of our people. Each year we must find and recruit about 50,000 young men and women to maintain the full range of skills we need. We are generally succeeding at this difficult task. We will continue. Quality standards will not be sacrificed for quantity to the detriment of true readiness.

Ultimately, readiness is a state of mind as well as one of physical preparation. A great deal rests upon the attitudes of the individual Marine—his professionalism, his pride, and his sense of purpose. Strength in these areas has been characteristic of the Marine Corps for two centuries, and today is no exception. Tens of thousands of today's Marines are as good or better than any who have ever worn the uniform: smarter, stronger, well-motivated and well-led. In a word, *the troops are looking good.*

They are ready.

And we intend to keep them that way.

