

— COMMANDANT'S REPORT —

Extract From the Annual Report Of the Marine Corps to Congress

by Gen James L. Jones

The following material appeared as Part V of the subject report under the title 'Our Direction: New Capabilities for a New Century.'

We have a well-ordered plan to manage the transition of today's Marine Corps to a 21st century sea-based force. With the continued strong support of the Congress, Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, by the end of this decade, will offer a greater range of flexible and potent military capabilities to U.S. leadership. We have begun to build the doctrinal and educational foundation of the future Marine Corps. We are in need of your support to complete the task.

Recruiting the Force

While we have met or exceeded our recruiting goals for the past 55 months, we do not take this success for granted. With 68 percent of Marines on their first enlistment, we are always the "youngest" of the four services. Although it is not widely known, we must annually recruit more young men and women into

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our enlisted ranks than does the Air Force. This year, our goal is to recruit 39,343 Marines for the Total Force, while next year this figure will rise to just over 41,000.

Given those factors, we are concerned about the diminishing numbers of young Americans available



for military service and their demonstrated low propensity to enlist. Competition from a strong economy exacerbates this trend, as does the higher percentage of youths who are able to attend college with the financial assistance of non-military related programs. The extent of the recruiting challenge can be quantified by recruiting costs. Today, the Marine Corps spends over \$6,000 to complete a single enlistment contract—a "bargain basement" amount—and that figure is rising continually.

The unpredictable demands of modern conflict and the increasingly complicated technology we employ require that the Marine Corps seek out young men and women of character who are physically fit and intellectually prepared. The surest source of such high-caliber recruits is from among the ranks of the graduates of America's high schools and colleges. Accordingly, our recruiting program relies on our ability to reach the

largest possible range of qualified young Americans. Unfortunately, our recruiters are not only experiencing a decline in access to school directory information, but in many cases, schools are denying them permission to conduct campus visits. Some school districts allow their individual administrators to establish and enforce restrictive policies. While these take many forms, it is the denial of directory information that is most damaging to our recruiting efforts. If this trend continues, it will not only have a negative impact on Marine Corps recruiting, but it will also threaten the viability of the All-Volunteer Force. Those who restrict the access of recruiters to their schools would probably be the first to object to a return of the draft. I believe that all services would benefit from assistance in getting our na-

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tion's high schools and community colleges to support military recruitment efforts. Therefore, I ask for your support in ensuring that school systems benefiting from federal funding reciprocate with access and directory information for our military recruiters.

Retaining the Force

The Marine Corps is very mindful of retention issues. As one might ex-

pect, retaining Marines who are trained in some technical skills presents a great challenge. Although officer retention appears to be experiencing a modest increase over last year, we remain watchful with regard to the retention of our fixed-wing aviators.

Over the past several years, we have discharged about 8,000 first-term Marines per year prior to the end of their first enlistment. In fiscal year 1999, we achieved a 22 percent reduction in such early attrition, and it appears that this positive trend is carrying over this year. If we can sustain this effort, we can ease accession requirements for our recruiters. This is a task that has the attention of Marine leaders of all grades. While only a few can be "recruiters," we are all "retainers."

Recent quality of life enhancements have done a great deal to assist us in meeting our retention goals, and we thank you for your support. The "compensation triad" of pay raises, Pay Table Reform, and REDUX elimination is having a positive impact in the Operating Forces. We must continue to invest in this area. Secretary Cohen's recent initiative to further improve Basic Allowance for Housing rates to cover 100 percent of the normal costs of housing by 2005 is exactly the kind of message we need in our retention efforts.

On the list of needed improvements that influence retention, military health care ranks very high. Military families are faced with frequent moves as a condition of the profession. When faced with limited health care availability, poorly informed support staff personnel, and the out-of-pocket expense of today's TRICARE system, frustration is palpable. The retired military community feels this problem, as well, and their best efforts to settle near large military medical facilities are no guarantee of reliable access to health care. To them, adequate health care is part of a commitment made by the nation for their past service. We have a moral obligation to support our retired and disabled veterans. They, more than any other group in the 20th century, shaped our nation for the bright future we envision. In this time of unprecedented econom-

ic surplus, it seems to be both reasonable and fair to suggest that we should seize the moment to take care of them.

Staffing the Force

We are reviewing our practices in order to try to narrow the gap between our Operating Force structure and the manpower available to fill that structure. Through privatization or consolidation of functions, we can redistribute manpower to meet our most pressing needs. To date, we have identified almost 2,100 Marines who, beginning in fis-

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cal 2001, will be returning to billets in the Operating Forces. We are actively reviewing more billets for similar consideration. Still, we might not be able to narrow the structure-to-staffing gap sufficiently, and as we review our force structure, we might yet determine a need for more Marines.

Your support in fiscal year 2000 for an increase in the end strength of the Corps by 370 Marines will make possible a significant improvement in the breadth and depth of our support for the Department of State, through the Marine Security Guard program. When this increase comes to fruition, we will be able to better protect our overseas diplomatic posts. While there is more work to be done in this area, the additional manpower allocation is an important step in the right direction.

Among its many great reforms, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 took aim at the size of service headquarters staffs. Legislation in 1991 directed a four percent reduction per year from fiscal year 1991 through fiscal year 1995. The Marine Corps complied with that legislation and follow-on legislation, and as a result we will have achieved a 27 percent reduction in our headquarters staff by 2001. We pride our-

selves on being as "lean" as possible in this area, and we continually seek opportunities to transfer force structure from our Supporting Establishment to our Operating Forces. I do not, however, endorse further reductions in our service headquarters staff as mandated by Congress in 2000. The legislated reduction—15 percent between fiscal year 2000 and fiscal year 2002—will greatly limit the ability of our headquarters to fulfill its Title 10 and operational responsibilities. I respectfully request Congressional review of this mandate, and I ask the Congress to craft legislation that more fully considers the impact of reductions on each service and department.

Amphibious and Naval Surface Fire Support for the Force

The provision of funding for LHD 8 in the fiscal year 1999 and 2000 budgets will be used to finance this ship, which is programmed in fiscal year 2005. LHD 8 and succeeding ships that will replace the rest of the aging *Tarawa*-class will be used extensively along with those of the *San Antonio*-class (LPD 17). Simply put, there are no underutilized amphibious ships.

We support the achievement of a 3.0 MEB [Marine expeditionary brigade] amphibious lift capability. Current plans will bring the United States up to a fiscally constrained 2.5

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MEB-lift capability by fiscal year 2008. Dedicated amphibious forces have proven their worth in peace as a deterrent, and in war as a combat force multiplier. Such forces represent an invaluable and irreplaceable capacity to represent sovereign U.S. interests, whether operating independently or as part of a Naval Expeditionary Force. The forcible entry capability of modern amphibious

forces simply cannot be replicated.

The recent funding of the acquisition and conversion of the USNS *Soderman* to become part of the Maritime Prepositioning Force will offer Commanders in Chief a substantial increase in capability. The *Soderman*, along with its two predecessors in the Maritime Prepositioning Force Enhancement program, brings a unique set of naval construction and expeditionary airfield options to remote theaters of operation. The next generation of maritime prepositioning ships will further extend our ability to project and sustain U.S. military power in the world's littorals.

A credible naval surface fire support (NSFS) program is a critical component of forcible entry from the sea. Under current plans, the Navy will begin construction in fiscal year 2005 of the DD 21-class ships, each to be equipped with two 155-millimeter naval guns. Additionally, the Navy has committed, in the interim, to installing the 5-inch/62 caliber naval gun on 27 new DDG 51-class destroyers and retrofitting 22 CG 47-class cruisers with the same system. Firing the Extended Range Guided Munition (ERGM), this gun will measurably improve our near-term NSFS capability. We have been at considerable risk in naval surface fire support since the retirement of the *Iowa*-class battleships. This situation will continue until the DD 21-class destroyers join the fleet in strength. This program must be accorded a high priority of effort.

Sustaining the Force

We must undertake the wisest possible course to conserve our real property and, when necessary, to ac-

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quire any additional property that is mission critical. The Blount Island facility in Jacksonville, Florida is truly a national asset that must be purchased to ensure its availability over the long

term. Its peacetime mission of support to the Maritime Prepositioning Force has been of exceptional value to the Marine Corps, while its wartime capability to support massive logistics sustainment from the continental U.S. gives it strategic significance. In 2004, our lease of this facility will expire. In the near term, we request \$35 million to secure the necessary easements in order to prevent further encroachment against the facility, but our long term national strategy should be to purchase this key facility outright. Independent studies—including one completed in 1997 for the J-4 Directorate of the Joint Staff—have confirmed the importance of maintaining complementary Army and Marine Corps prepositioning maintenance sites and have highlighted the strategic value of Blount Island's throughput and follow-on sustainment capabilities.

Command and Control for the Force

We have entered an era of increasing reliance on high-end intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems and their associated communications suites. With new technologies introduced on a daily basis, our systems can quickly become obsolete. Our warfighting Commanders in Chief desire to field forces with the highest capabilities in this regard, but they will come at a significant cost.

Two recent situations illustrate this trend. First, during combat operations in Kosovo in the spring of 1999, the Marine Corps planned to deploy two F/A-18 Hornet squadrons to Hungary to help fulfill the NATO operational plan. Unfortunately, these Hornet squadrons operated the early “A” model of the aircraft, and had not yet been upgraded with the technology provided by the Engineering Change Proposal 583, which would have enabled our F/A-18As to operate more effectively with the NATO air command and control system in the theater. As a result, the Marine Corps was forced to substitute two F/A-18D squadrons in place of the two F/A-18A squadrons, and this in turn caused a great deal of extra wear on these already frequently de-

ployed aircraft and their personnel.

The Kosovo operation further highlighted our dependence on satellites in modern warfare. The conflict there, involving an American force that was approximately 7 percent the size of our DESERT STORM force, re-

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quired an astounding 184 percent increase in military satellite communication bandwidth over that of Operation DESERT STORM. The benefits of our command and control systems to our warfighters are tremendous, but we are experiencing difficulty in keeping up with growing requirements for fast, secure, and reliable bandwidth. The complexity of these systems and their networks adds to the challenges. Your continued support of highly capable ground, sea, and space-based command and control systems is critical to our success in modern warfare.

Training the Force

The need for the preservation of key training bases and ranges is a major issue involving the rights and responsibilities of our citizenry. Our citizens who live outside the gates of military training facilities generally gain immediate economic benefit from the military's presence. There is no guarantee of such benefit at every facility, however, because some—most notably, those at which live-fire training is conducted—were chosen specifically because of their relative isolation from large population centers. Economics can only be an ancillary part of the relationship. In the main, we rely upon the patriotism of our citizenry to support the training needs of our nation's military.

Our bases are an integral part of community life across the country and overseas. Here at home, they enjoy broad community support. In a profession that can be rootless at times, bases often provide our strongest connection to the society we are sworn to

defend. For servicemen and women without families of their own, their involvement in local school, church, and charitable activities is an important quality of their lives.

As befitting the actions of good neighbors, we will continue to do everything within our ability to address the legitimate concerns of local communities regarding noise, environmental, and other issues. We must, however, retain our ability to conduct core training in an efficient and effective manner, and we must conserve our precious maneuver areas against encroachment. Our record of stewardship demonstrates that Marines are responsible resource custodians, and strong supporters of the environment. We must work with civilian leaders to achieve a reasonable balance between our training requirements and our conservation efforts. At stake in this issue are mission accomplishment and the very survival of our servicemen and women in combat, both of which our nation demands.

Modernizing the Force

The Marine Corps' continued success through this century will rest upon our modernization effort. Even if every other concern regarding the preparedness of the Operating Forces is rectified, within a few years, we will be at risk of sending our men and women into combat with outmoded equipment. For this reason, we place great importance on modernization, and we have developed a plan to achieve our goals. It calls for upgrades and replacements for a number of aging legacy systems.

The Advanced Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAAV) is our highest-priority ground modernization program. It will provide extraordinary mobility, high water and land speed, increased firepower, and improved protection to assaulting Marines, thereby enhancing our already robust forcible entry capability, and extending the flexibility of our forces.

A recent internal review of our

ground-based fire support systems suggests that our post-Cold War reductions in artillery left us with serious deficiencies in that area. Our ultimate objective is to develop an appropriate mix of cannon and rock-

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et artillery systems, in order to improve our ability to provide timely, accurate, and effective fire support for Marines. Our envisioned family of weapons is a triad of systems: the lightweight 155-millimeter howitzer (LW 155), a very lightweight cannon, and a mobile rocket system. Together, these weapons will provide our forces close and continuous fire support in any environment, across the spectrum of conflict.

The Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacement (MTVR) will form the backbone of our ground transportation, providing greater capacity, mobility, and reliability to our forces. Paired with the second-generation High Mobility, Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), the MTVR will fulfill the great majority of transportation requirements for many years.

Aircraft modernization is critical to our overall effort. The MV-22 Osprey program has been a great success by any measure, with 30 aircraft in existence or under construction and 16 requested in the FY01 budget. After a model development and testing program, the Osprey is being delivered at the budgeted cost, within specifications, and with a high degree of customer confidence. Production is currently slated to increase to 28 aircraft per year in 2003, but we believe that a goal of 36 per year is more efficient in the long run because of the increasing cost of maintaining the CH-46E and CH-53D aircraft during the long transition period.

Our aircraft now in development—the Joint Strike Fighter, the AH-1Z, UH-1Y—will join the Osprey to form a Marine aviation combat element of impressive power, capability, and flexibility. The Joint Strike Fighter represents the future of Marine fixed-wing aviation. Its design is so promising that we decided to await the advanced technology it offers. The plan to build 3,500 of these aircraft will make it the

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workhorse of the joint fighter fleet, and it will serve well into the future at an affordable unit cost. As the first truly joint aircraft, it deserves your enthusiastic support.

The AH-1Z and UH-1Y programs will provide significantly improved performance and reliability for our attack and utility helicopter fleets. By rebuilding existing aircraft, we will deliver to the Operating Forces helicopters that are virtually new, but at a very low cost.

Given our success with the MV-22, the development of a four engine, or “quad,” tilt-rotor (QTR) aircraft is of particular interest to the Marine Corps as a component of a future aviation fleet. The QTR might also have great potential in filling the Joint Common Lift (JCL) requirement in the future.

The future offers remarkable promise and progress to those who can turn vision into reality. Our modernization plan is sound, and the initial steps are already underway. However, due to our projected funding levels, I remain concerned about the pace of our modernization efforts. The additional resources that are required to finish the task will undoubtedly be viewed as a wise investment by our children and grandchildren, many years from now.



Quote To Ponder

Structuring the Forces

“It was always my understanding that the Marine Corps is the tip of the spear and the Army is the spear. We don’t need two tips and we don’t need two spears.”

Commenting 10 February during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

—Sen Pat Roberts, R-Kansas