

## ***Marine Corps Total Force***

### ***Discussion***

The Marine Corps remains central to the nation's efforts to promote and protect its many interests. There are currently 172,600 Marines on active duty. Of that total, over 114,000 are in the operating forces and nearly 30,500 are forward deployed, forward based, forward stationed, or deployed for training around the world. Key to our total force is the 39,600 men and women of the Marine Corps Reserve stationed at 184 sites throughout the country. In addition to our traditional missions, Marines also provide support to the intelligence community, airlift support to the Executive Branch, and a Chemical/Biological Incident Response Force to the nation as a whole. Marines provide security at key naval installations and guard diplomatic posts at 123 sites, worldwide.

Reserve Marines perform an impressive array of augmentation and reinforcement tasks as part of the Marine Corps total force.

Still others — to include both uniformed Marines and 15,000 “Civilian Marines” — serve in the supporting establishment. Their efforts to recruit, train, retain, administer, and supply today's Marine “total force” directly support the “platforms” from which we launch our forces. Additionally they provide the operating forces the communities that sustain our Marine families. The Corps has recently identified 1,200 Marines in supporting billets that will be replaced by civilians and transferred to the operating forces. This is a resource efficient alternative that allows the Corps to man the operating forces at the highest possible level.

During FY00, the Marines reestablished the middle tier of their expeditionary warfighting capability, the Marine Expeditionary Brigade. These mid-sized MAGTFs can operate independently, subsume the smaller Marine Expeditionary Unit, or enhance the larger Marine Expeditionary Force. Recently the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade participated in Operation Dynamic Mix in Greece and Turkey and 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade participated in Natural Fire/Native Fury with the defense forces of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. These exercises clearly demonstrated the deployability, versatility, sustainability, and economy of the expeditionary brigades.

Marines, active and reserve, participated in operations in the Balkans, East Timor, and in the skies over Iraq in FY00. Marines performed in a wide variety of other missions to include humanitarian relief efforts in Turkey, and in Central and South America. The Corps also provides valuable service here at home through its continued support of counter narcotic operations along the nation's borders and its recent contributions to fire-fighting operations in Montana.

A manpower intensive organization, the Marine Corps continues to believe the individual Marine is our most important and effective weapon. Our emphasis on robust operating forces and lean support forces is visible in

both active and reserve components. Our active component is young and the grade structure is lean. Over 28,000 Marines are teenagers. The average age of enlisted Marines is just 25 years, 67 percent of them are Corporals or below, and 68 percent are in their first enlistment.

The Marine Corps Reserves continue to make an extraordinary contribution, both domestically and abroad. As part of our total force, reserve Marines augment and reinforce the regular component, performing a variety of missions. In FY00, Marine Civil Affairs Detachments were called upon to provide support in Bosnia, Kosovo, and with several forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Units (MEU); reserve KC-130s supported Operation Northern Watch and continue to be called upon to support our MEUs. Infantry, aviation, and combat service support units, and individual reservists routinely participate in exercises around the globe. These have included New Horizons in South America; Cornerstone in Albania; Cobra Gold in Thailand; Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea, Combined Endeavor in Germany; and ASCIET, Rolling Thunder, Kernel Blitz, and various minor exercises in the United States. The Marine Corps Reserve efficiently augments, in both peace and war, the active component effectively creating a seamless total force that is ready when called upon.

The Marine Corps total force includes over 2,300 retired Marines, preassigned to mobilization billets throughout CONUS bases and stations. The capability to call upon a mobilization population of 20,000 retired Marines is included in all pre-mobilization and contingency planning. Their experience and dedication to Corps and country can be counted on in the event of a national crisis.

The total force is not complete without our civilian personnel, who are employed in a wide variety of professional, technical, trade, and administrative functions. These "Civilian Marines" provide essential continuity in their functional areas and are a crucial component of the Marine Corps total force. With a population of approximately 17,000, their manning of the supporting establishment allows Marines to fill billets in operational units thereby enhancing training, readiness, and sustainability.

### ***Marine Corps Position***

The Marine Corps draws upon two hundred and twenty-five years of experience and a proven formula to ensure that every Marine is prepared to meet uncertain and varied challenges. Maintaining our expeditionary readiness depends on high quality active, reserve and civilian Marines. These individuals are the cornerstone of our Corps. Their training, leadership, and quality of life will continue to be of the utmost importance.