



Annual Report of the Marine Corps to Congress

by Gen A. M. Gray
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Based on a clear and forthright assessment of the national and international environment that serve to define our defense requirements, the Commandant maps the direction he intends to take the Corps so it can provide the greatest service to the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee:

This is my first annual report to Congress and the Nation. With your permission I would like to share with you my assessment of the current state of the Corps and, more importantly, my vision of its future.

The Corps is sound and fit for service. During the defense buildup over the last seven years, the American people made a major investment in the Marine Corps. As directed by Congress and the Secretary of Defense, we devoted our efforts to making improvements in four areas: readiness, sustainability, modernization, and force structure. We have improved logistics sustainability and enhanced our tactical mobility. We are completing the modernization of our command and control equipment, aviation, and infantry weapons.

As we move into an era of constrained federal spending, it is important to remember that, in terms of equipment, the Marine Corps is a modern force. We appreciate the help of Congress, and particularly

of this committee, in bringing this modernization about. We are counting on your continued support in order to ensure that our capabilities and equipment will not be permitted to atrophy. The public investment in our total force capability over the past years more than justifies this requirement.

Our people complement the high quality of our equipment. In accordance with the will of each Congress since the 93d Congress, the Marine Corps has scrupulously adhered to the highest recruiting standards possible. Ninety-eight percent of our recruits are high school graduates; our officer programs are full; and our Marines, officer and enlisted, want to stay in the Corps. In short, the Corps is ready to face the difficult challenges of the approaching turn of the century.

I would like to devote the remainder of this statement to my vision of the future for the Marine Corps. In order to bring this view into reality the Marine Corps will reaffirm its historical relationship with

Congress. We invite your thoughts and continuing involvement.

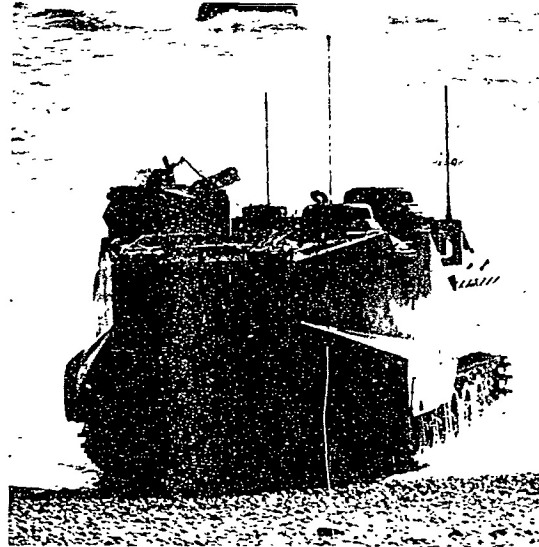
There are three areas I want to discuss with you today: our purpose in supporting the Nation's security, the way we intend to fight, and our view of ourselves as Marines. Each is central to what the Marine Corps is all about: the ability to win in combat when we are called upon by the Nation to fight. Everything we do must derive from that focus. Anything that does not relate to it is something we probably shouldn't be doing. We will continue to eliminate anything that works against our ability to win. That includes too much reporting and paperwork in our combat units. We will complete the streamlining of our headquarters and create conditions that develop the initiative of our junior leaders.

Supporting National Security

The Marine Corps responds to the needs of the Nation. However, there have been periodic examinations of our utility, particularly during the past decade. The question has often been asked: Do we primarily fight in Europe or Korea, or are we primarily an expeditionary force? My view is clear: We have a contribution to make in each. That is to say, we are a naval expeditionary force. We do have a mission in Europe and Korea, in supporting a naval campaign. Our commitment to the defense of both the northern and southern flanks of NATO illustrates the aggregate usefulness of our maritime forces. The battle of the North Atlantic can be lost in the North Norwegian Sea by failing to establish advanced amphibious naval bases to deny the Soviets access to Norwegian air bases necessary to achieve their goal. Additionally, sea lines of communication cannot be guaranteed without amphibious forces. This is operationally significant to the fleet and reflects the value of the Marine Corps as a sustainable landward extension of naval power. Let it be clearly stated that the Marine Corps is prepared for general war should that eventuality arise. As such, these are appropriate missions for us.

While we are fully prepared for the most *challenging* conflict, your Marine Corps must also stand ready for the most *likely* conflict—that in the Third World. The reason the Nation has a Marine Corps is to project power into areas where we do not have forces stationed in peacetime. Our amphibious capability, our seaborne mobility, and our expeditionary nature make us uniquely suited for the task; this is the major contribution we provide the Nation.

In those areas of likely conflict, we can protect American interests through the deterrent value of naval forces, and if deterrence fails, we can launch and win an expeditionary campaign. For this purpose, we maintain forward deployed Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) with a wide range of special operations capabilities. The availability of amphibious forces and their capability to respond across the spectrum of conflict make them the forces of choice in crisis response. These forces complement our national military strategy, provide on-scene assets in fast developing crises, and are fully interoperable with the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The inter-Serv-



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ice cooperation in developing a needed response to a very real threat has been a success story of significant proportions. The Marine Corps' capability gives the Nation another option when faced with complex developments, such as terrorist incidents, and when time-distance and clearance factors complicate the employment of other specialized forces. Likewise, our forward-deployed special-operations-capable MAGTFs are trained and equipped to supplement or even reinforce these specialized units when they are committed. The continuing forward deployment of these forces as freedom's frontline contributes to deterring our adversaries while providing a visible warning of our ability to respond across a broad spectrum of conflict.

The Marine Corps' contributions to national security depend greatly upon amphibious shipping. I do not believe that we have enough amphibious ships to accomplish all that is required. Amphibious warfare is crucial to the striking fleet's ability to carry out all its tasks within the context of the maritime strategy. Without this capability, the Navy cannot protect the sea lines of communication or project credible and sustainable power ashore. The needs of the Nation require that we have amphibious lift for two Marine expeditionary forces, one from each coast.

It will come as no surprise to this committee to know that we have spent considerable time examining our Marine security guard commitment to our embassies around the world. I have spoken personally with the Secretary of State on this subject, and your Marine Corps and the Department of State are working together to meet existing challenges. I hold myself accountable for the performance of our Marines in their sensitive assignments. We have restructured the selection process with modern evaluation techniques. We are providing our Marines with additional cultural and language training. We are also redoubling our training efforts to ensure that they can take care of themselves and their demanding duties. The Marine Corps and the State Department are

Our training is going back to basics to emphasize battlefield orientation.

Photo by PHC Chet King



adopting joint inspection techniques, thereby working more closely together than ever before to identify and rectify problem areas as early as possible. I meet with all Ambassadors before they assume their duties to discuss issues of mutual concern regarding their Marines. Finally, when possible on my trips abroad, I inspect my Marines personally and report my findings to the Secretary of State. We have a new and vigorous program with regard to this mission, and I am optimistic as to its probability for success.

The Marine Corps provides another security function for the Navy that we are also improving: the protection of selected ships and installations by the Marine Corps security force battalions. We have reorganized the existing forces reducing administrative overhead, and provided a larger, better trained, and more effective force. We believe that this measure contributes materially to enhanced security in the fleet and, in particular, has given the fleet commanders a more responsive force.

How We Fight

The second area where I want to share my thoughts with you is how we fight. I want to make my view clear. The Marine Corps of the future will fight a high tempo, fluid, combined arms, maneuver-oriented conflict. Our goal will be to collapse our opponent, destroying his ability to fight as a cohesive, organized force; this is the way to obtain quicker results with fewer casualties. In battle, our principal advantage will be our ability to fight in such a way as to disrupt our opponent's decision process. That is to say, our advantage will be due less to equipment than to our excellence at tactics and the operational art.

Let me tell you frankly that we need some improvements before we can claim tactical and operational excellence on the level of my expectations. Accordingly, we are raising standards. It is essential that the entire Marine Corps, Active and Reserve, train the way it will fight. Military forces use campaign plans in wartime to conduct operations and engage the enemy. We need to bring the same cohesive thrust to our peacetime training actions. There-

fore, we are creating a Marine Corps Campaign Plan that gives the necessary impetus to our training and exercise. These actions will assist all our operating forces and the supporting establishment in preparing for combat by focusing our efforts on selected operational situations and objectives throughout the Corps during the fixed period of time. We will ensure that all elements of our Corps progress together. Our effectiveness depends on being able to task organize forces from both the Atlantic and Pacific. We will create "one Marine Corps" with uniform warfighting doctrine and common operating procedure.

We will continue to emphasize increased opportunity for live-fire training. The focus of our training for combat will be on free play and force-on-force exercises that replicate the uncertainty and rapid change of the battlefield.

Our training is going back to basics to emphasize battlefield orientation. In today's environment, there are no rear areas; every Marine must know how to fight as a rifleman. All Marine training will be based on that concept. The length of recruit training won't change; content will. We are incorporating "Basic Warrior Training" that will develop and hone combat skills in all Marines. Our leaders will be trained to be self-reliant and capable of independent decisions on the battlefield. Our overall training will stress physical and mental toughness. Whenever you see a Marine, there is one thing of which you can be certain; he'll be ready to fight, right then and there, if necessary. He also may be an outstanding mechanic, administrator, driver, or cook, but first and foremost, he'll be a Marine.

We are turning on the brain power to ensure we are using what we've got to our fullest potential. We have established the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Quantico to teach Marines how to think in, and about, war. We are resurrecting Quantico as the intellectual center of the Corps, where innovative and conceptual study will ensure proper attention to the conduct of military operations. At the heart of our intellectual preparation lies military history, which we will use as our laboratory for combat, drawing on the positive and negative ex-

periences of a variety of nations and forces at war. Military history will form an integral part of the education and continuing development of our officer corps. Innovative thought will stand above normal bureaucratic lobbies that often interfere with clear vision.

A major effort is being dedicated to studying our force structure. We want to put more Marines into infantry battalions, light armor units, and aviation squadrons. Those assets that are used mostly in general war, such as some of our heavy armor and certain engineer and logistics functions, may be considered for transfer to the Reserves. We want to combine reconnaissance, surveillance, remotely piloted vehicles, and selected intelligence functions into a single unit. Because of the electronic and information revolutions, we must achieve a new level of technical excellence in a field known as "command, control, communications, computers, information, and intelligence." Only in this way can we turn enemy miscues into tactical actions on our part to achieve operational success. A Headquarters Marine Corps publication, *Concepts and Issues*, also provides some insight into how we are planning for the future.

In order to put more "fight" into our combat units as well as in meeting fiscal constraints, we are streamlining and reorganizing our supporting establishment. Marine Corps Headquarters is being reduced, and unnecessary levels of bureaucracy are being eliminated. At Quantico, we are combining critical functions previously divided between a number of locations. The new Marine Corps Combat Development Command will link our doctrine, combat development, and training. For the time being, we have accommodated this reorganization in existing facilities, with little or no increase in personnel. Acquisition is also being consolidated under the Marine Corps Research, Development, and Acquisition Command. This reorganization is intended to reduce the time and cost of fielding combat equipment.

Self-Perception

The third area I would like to talk about is our view of ourselves as Marines. Our strength is that we

see ourselves first and foremost as Marines, not as members of some subgroup or specialty. We put first, in all situations, the Marine Corps' main goal: the ability to win if called upon to fight. If that means that our particular area of expertise—aviation, infantry, logistics, whatever—has to take a back seat to some other element in a situation, or has to do with fewer resources, then we'll adapt. Our concern is for the Marine Corps as a whole. I intend to build on our strength, to make it something all Marines share, without exception. Battles and wars are won by people more than by equipment. I intend to make a number of changes in our policies toward people. In a number of cases I shall need your help.

First, I intend to fill Marine Corps ranks from the bottom up, with the first priority going to specific combat units. In the future, when I visit operational commands, I will expect to see those units fully manned.

Second, I intend to have cohesive, stable units. In my view, our level of personnel turbulence and turnover undermines combat effectiveness. It shatters small unit cohesion and makes effective training impossible. I have personally charged our Force Structure Study Group with addressing this problem and providing solutions. I may need your assistance in achieving this goal.

Finally, I need your help with a specific problem of great importance to our Marines and their families having to do with adequate medical care. Specifically, there are too few doctors and corpsmen. I know this problem is not new to this committee, but it has not been resolved adequately. The Secretary of the Navy has made this problem one of his top priorities. I urge your support of his efforts in this critical area. The impact on our combat readiness and the quality of care we provide our families in peacetime is significant.

The Marine Corps' direction is clear. We will be prepared to do whatever has to be done to protect and ensure national interest globally, where permanent defenses cannot be maintained. And in the lean times to come, we'll take what you give us, do what is required—and more.

USMC

Our requests are as follows:

<u>Appropriation Table</u> (\$ millions)	<u>FY87</u>	<u>FY88</u>	<u>FY89</u>
Military Personnel, Marine Corps	\$5438.8	5542.8	\$5716.2
Reserve Personnel, Marine Corps	277.3	295.4	315.7
Operations and Maintenance, Marine Corps	1841.4	1795.3	1792.0
Operations and Maintenance, Marine Corps Reserve	64.0	69.5	77.5
Procurement, Marine Corps	<u>1438.5</u>	<u>1295.6</u>	<u>1157.3</u>
Total	\$9060.0	8998.6	\$9058.7

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