



MCTP 6-10A

Sustaining the Transformation



U.S. Marine Corps

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FOREWORD

Since our 31st Commandant, General Charles C. Krulak, first published Marine Corps Reference Publication 6-11D, *Sustaining the Transformation*, in 1999, the Marine Corps has continued our proud tradition of making Marines, winning battles, and returning quality citizens to society. Like all previous generations, Marines today are committed to our time-honored values of honor, courage, and commitment. Marines of the 21st century are among the finest we have ever forged; it is every Marine's duty to sustain that rich legacy. Our Nation trusts its Corps of Marines—we must always strive to preserve that trust.

The Marine transformation is forever ingrained in our DNA in recruit training and Officer Candidates School and throughout the rest of our lives. The transformation to becoming a Marine is often the defining moment in a person's life. All Marines must possess a clear understanding that our Eagle, Globe, and Anchor is much more than an emblem, and that earning the title "Marine" carries a life-long responsibility to defend our nation, to care for our fellow Marines, and to keep our honor clean.

This publication is focused on one of our key leadership principles: know your Marines and look out for their welfare. It is a companion to Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 6-10, *Leading Marines*, and provides more detail to leaders about how

to take care of their Marines through the transformation process. It is a leadership tool that provides sound examples and methods for success. Sustaining a Marine through this process requires engaged leadership. I encourage you to use this reference as a starting point for discussions among peers, subordinates, and seniors. Your dialogue and application will improve the welfare of all Marines and our institution.

Sustaining our transformation is not a new concept; it has endured for nearly 250 years. The saying, "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" holds true because our transformations have been strengthened throughout our lives. We witness the health of our traditions and legacy in the proud smile of a new private graduating boot camp, or in the hearty handshake and greeting of two seasoned warriors. The Marine Corps family is alive and well, as is our rich heritage.

I remain, *Semper Fidelis*,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric M. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Eric" being more prominent and the last name "Smith" following in a similar style.

ERIC M. SMITH
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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SUSTAINING THE TRANSFORMATION

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Chapter 1.

Our Legacy

HISTORY

In 1775, the second Continental Congress voted to raise two battalions of Marines to support the Navy in the fight for independence against Great Britain. Following the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the Marines were

disbanded, the Navy ships were sold, and both of the services were determined to be unnecessary. It was another 15 years before the Marines were again called upon to defend the

*When we collectively
understand [the history
of those who came before us] we
better appreciate the legacy that
has been passed onto us.*

—Then-Brigadier General Roberta Shea¹

newly formed United States of America. Since then, the Service has gone unbroken; today, Marines stand ready to go forth wherever the mission requires.

Historically, the Marine Corps has been an incredibly adaptive and innovative Service, transforming to constantly meet the Nation's needs. Originally formed to defend ships against pirates and keep Sailors "in line," Marines quickly found other ways to make themselves useful. In the Battle of Nassau in 1776, they left the ships and began rushing to shore to engage in direct conflict.

Marines fighting in World War I were no longer storming beaches, but instead engaging in trench warfare. Shortly after that, Marines found themselves in the South American jungles fighting a rebel militia while also filling interim government positions to create political stability. At the same time, Marines continued to build their stellar reputation during the Boxer Rebellion in China, where Marines earned more Medals of Honor than the Army and Navy combined.

World War II required more adaptation and innovation as Marines conducted island-hopping campaigns through the Pacific region. It continued through the war in Korea, when fierce fighting in the freezing Chosin Reservoir region meant Marines had to adapt yet again. Their relentless fighting spirit was emphasized by Army Major General Frank Lowe when he said, “The safest place in Korea was right behind a platoon of Marines. Lord, how they could fight!”²

By the time the Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in 1990, Marines from the 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade responded from the sea with ground troops, combat aviators, and special operations and combined arms teams supported by Maritime Prepositioning Squadron-2. Marines today continue to adapt and innovate new ways to accomplish the mission, creating new history.

HERITAGE

Nearly two and a half centuries of existence have yielded a broad description of a Marine’s service. Marines have served in times of conflict and in times of peace. They have served within the

borders of the United States and on foreign soil. They have performed their duties on land, at sea, and in the air. Marines fill positions of combat arms, support, intelligence, administration, logistics, and dozens of other roles.

Every Marine's service looks different from others, but the one thing that unites all Marines is the sense of belonging that comes with earning the title. Active, Reserve, or veteran; deployed or in garrison; commissioned or enlisted—all Marines share a sense of belonging to the institution and to each other. It does not take much more than a t-shirt logo or a bumper sticker to connect one Marine with another. The stories told over and over link Marines to their past, remind them of the reputation they have inherited, and inspire them to live up to and maintain that reputation.

Marines are, first and foremost, warfighters; every Marine is trained in the basics of combat and marksmanship. From the rifleman on the front lines to the inventory management specialist in support, every Marine is trained to fight enemy combatants. Each Marine has a mission, and is given the training and education to succeed at that mission and to respond without fail when called. They are not, however, limited to only acting as an offensive force, as demonstrated through the security provided to embassies and humanitarian operations; they respond to whatever the Nation requires.

At some point in their service, most Marines hear some variation of what Lieutenant General Victor Krulak wrote to Commandant General Randolph M. Pate in 1957: "The United States does not need a Marine Corps. However, for good reasons which

completely transcend cold logic, the United States wants a Marine Corps.”³ This sentiment has continued to echo true throughout the decades. The Marine Corps’ existence is not guaranteed. It is earned every day through the actions of those who claim the title.

Much has changed in the Marine Corps. For nearly 150 years, women and minorities were barred from joining the Marine Corps ranks. Today, anyone who meets the standards of service can attempt to earn the title. Although physical, mental, and moral standards have changed countless times, all Marines are expected to uphold them, whether they are enlisted or commissioned, volunteer or drafted.

As the force has changed in size and make-up, and technology and equipment have evolved, some question whether the Corps of today is the same Corps they once knew. It is easy to see the Marine Corps has changed since its inception, but each generation of Marines has raised the standards set before them and pushed into the future. When confronted with the most challenging moral and physical situations, Marines have stepped up and fulfilled the legacy handed down over generations. Marines have always remained faithful to their purpose—to win battles. This standard applies to all who wear the uniform and emblem.

SUSTAINING THE TRANSFORMATION

The title of Marine comes with a responsibility that some may not fully comprehend or appreciate. Focus moves away from the

individual to being part of a team. Once Marines earn the right to wear the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, each one must continue the transition process, each growing in character and abilities as they strive to become more than just someone who meets the requirements to be a Marine, but to be the Marine needed for the future mission. This transformation must be intentional and continuous to ensure the Marine Corps remains a force in readiness.

Marines are ambassadors and representatives for the Marine Corps and the United States. The word “Marine” evokes a picture of a professional, disciplined warrior who stands ready to defend the United States and its allies. This perception is not limited to US citizens, as many around the world consider Marines the pinnacle military force in readiness. Whenever Marines are subject to public attention in a positive or negative light, they are first recognized as Marines, even if it has been years since they last put on the uniform. The Nation holds Marines to a higher standard, in and out of uniform. Marines cannot follow in the footsteps of their predecessors’ successes without acknowledging their predecessors’ failures, and are accountable to their successors for their own success and failures. Marines have proven themselves consistently throughout history and have risen to each occasion with honor and integrity. Although some may stumble along the way, those who have earned the title have taken their place in the halls of history.

Chapter 2.

Preparing for the Future

What battles lie ahead? What mission is next? Where will our country need us in ten years, five years, a few months, or tomorrow? Those are the questions the Marine Corps faces and, as the country's force in readiness, must be prepared to answer. Being prepared is not a new concept to Marines, but many of the threats in this modern and digital age are new. Future battlespaces will be vastly different from those of the past.

Marines must prepare to fight in the next great conflict. This necessitates training in a wide range of environments—to include the jungles, littorals, mountains, and urban landscapes—in all weather conditions. It also means that Marines must be prepared to create or exploit information advantages in all warfighting domains, to include space and cyberspace. As such, training in the future will always differ from that of the past.

It is our obligation to subsequent generations of Marines, and to our Nation, to always have an eye to the future—to prepare for tomorrow's challenges today.

—General James T. Conway⁴

During the two decades of the Global War on Terrorism, Marines were surrounded by sand but far from any beach. After years of honing their capabilities in land-based combat operations, the

entire organization has proven proficient in that particular form of warfare. However, employing the skills that brought them success in the Middle East will not guarantee success in the next conflict. Marines must take the lessons they learned from past conflicts and adapt them to stay ahead of the ever-changing nature of war. However, past victories are just that—in the past; attaining victory on the battlespace of the future will require developing new skills and tackling new challenges.

Almost every piece of equipment and weaponry in the Marines' arsenal undergoes continuous update and advancement. The most crucial pieces of hardware—the bodies and minds of Marines—cannot be neglected. General James Mattis said, “The most important six inches on the battlefield is between your ears.”⁵ The enemies of the United States of America are continuously changing and preparing for their next encounter with Marines. Centuries of existence have brought many changes to the Marine Corps, but the goals—fighting and winning the Nation's wars and making Marines—remain the same.

FIRM GOALS AND FLEXIBLE METHODS

ALL MARINES message 042/00 published *The Vision Statement of the U.S. Marine Corps* and listed making Marines, winning the Nation's battles, and creating quality citizens as fundamental to achieving that vision.⁶ Since then, numerous Marine Corps publications and media have listed those three actions as the most important things the Marine Corps does for the United States. Each task requires continual evolution and innovation. The Marine Corps must regularly adapt to new information and technology, changes in society, the changing goals of various

adversaries, and evolving global politics. To meet the ever-changing demands placed on the Marine Corps, force structure changes are routinely required. Resizing units, reshaping force distribution, and reequipping Marines, while keeping hold of the purpose and mission of the institution, will ensure every demand is met with the required talent and equipment. The types and activities of war may change, but the fundamental nature of it remains the same: two wills clashing. The Marine Corps' role in everything from warfighting to humanitarian disaster assistance will also evolve, and Marines will continue to train for every likely and unlikely scenario.

Today's Marines—not some faceless “them” or “they”—will shape tomorrow's Marine Corps. All Marines are responsible for having the courage and initiative to make necessary changes. Taking an active role in making the Marine Corps a better, more effective organization keeps it functioning at the highest levels.

MAINTAINING OUR REPUTATION

The past 50 years have seen the Marine Corps prove itself time and again against some of the most bitter foes in the most austere locations around the world. Marines prepare for the future by studying history and learning from warfighting successes and failures.

Marines cannot be satisfied with average training, preparation, or performance. Having the reputation as the Nation's force in readiness carries with it specific responsibilities for every Marine, from the highest to the lowest individual level.

The Corps benefits when it attracts, and remains attractive to, Marines from a range of backgrounds, and thus, diverse perspectives and talents. Research in behavioral economics illustrates that teams with diverse perspectives and modes of thinking solve problems faster and more creatively. In this way, diversity provides us a competitive warfighting advantage over our adversaries, particularly those who place a premium on uniformity of thought.

—Talent Management 2030⁷

In garrison environments, Marines should find the connection between their daily habits and the larger operational picture. Tsunamis, terrorist attacks, non-state actors carrying out their malevolent plans, and other events can occur at any moment around the globe. Therefore, it is imperative that each Marine, unit, and command maintain a proactive, forward-thinking mindset regarding training, planning, and current operations. A Marine should ask, “Is my training preparing me for the fight; am I training for the fight in order to fight as I have trained?” Marine leaders might also ask, “Am I mentoring junior Marines and providing novel solutions to problems?”

The focus of the Marine Corps and the embodiment of being a force in readiness is an individual mindset. For example, one Marine’s attempts to increase personal run speed may have a minimal effect on that individual; however, the effect of many Marines improving their run speeds greatly influences unit readiness. Critical factors make the difference between being the victors or the vanquished, between saving a life or losing one,

between watching a family greet their Marine with hugs and kisses after a deployment or watching them receive a folded flag.

The missions, battlefields, and requirements of the Marine Corps continue to change. As the Nation's force in readiness, the Marine Corps has been and must continue to be adaptable—to improve, learn, and adapt to the changes occurring in the United States and abroad. This mission will test the resolve of Marines on all levels of leadership, as the Corps challenges its Marines to become the best versions of themselves, developing both professionally and personally. Such development is continual, through professional military education, off-duty studies, reading, audio books, podcasts, and other media. Every improvement makes the individual and the Marine Corps better. If the Marine Corps is to succeed in future theaters of operation, today's warfighter must be a continually adapting, continually learning Marine.

As Marines gain experience, they pass their knowledge on to others. In his book, *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead*, General James Mattis wrote, “By traveling into the past, I enhance my grasp of the present.”⁸ There is value and purpose in knowing and learning from the past, but where does that leave the future? The Corps that was created in 1775 little resembles the Corps today. Still, despite the changes that have taken place over hundreds of years, the Corps and the individual Marines within it continue to succeed. Through periods of growth and reduction, changing missions, and increasing demands, Marines have adapted to remain relevant and necessary.

It is impossible to say what the Marines in the future will be required to do. Humanitarian aid was not a consideration when

Marines were wading onto the shores of Nassau in 1776. Jungle warfare was not a concept to the Marines marching toward Tripoli. When First Lieutenant Alfred Cunningham convinced the Marine Corps to send him to flight school as the first aviator, no one foresaw jets landing on the decks of ships in the middle of the ocean. Conducting operations in and through the information environment could not have been envisioned prior to the 20th century. However, in every situation that has come to pass, we have seen Marines “improvise, adapt, and overcome.” Former Commandant General Charles Krulak wrote about the importance of this in his article, *The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three-Block War*. In it, he describes a hypothetical situation where a Marine is faced with an increasingly dangerous situation requiring assessment and action of known and unknown threats. Several problems present themselves at once and each requires a different form of response. General Krulak writes:

[Marines] will be asked to deal with a bewildering array of challenges and threats. In order to succeed under such demanding conditions they will require unwavering maturity, judgment, and strength of character. Most importantly, these missions will require them to confidently make well-reasoned and independent decisions under extreme stress—decisions that will likely be subject to the harsh scrutiny of both the media and the court of public opinion. In many cases, the individual Marine will be the most conspicuous symbol of American foreign policy and will potentially influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic levels as well.⁹

Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting* states: “War is both timeless and ever changing. While the basic nature of war is constant, the means and methods we use evolve continuously...Drastic changes in war are the result of developments that dramatically upset the equilibrium of war....”¹⁰

To face new threats, there must be a goal—a vision for the Marine Corps as a whole. After multiple decades focusing on the Middle East our gaze must be drawn to the possibilities of fighting in different, diverse, and austere regions and the capabilities that will be needed for each. The Marines of today and the Marines still to come must be solution-focused, solving problems they come across or anticipating them before they arrive. Marines with a foundation of character based on the institution’s core values and principles will continue to earn the reputation of the Corps and rise to meet the future needs of the Nation.

Chapter 3.

Junior Enlisted Marines

A SOLID FOUNDATION

When building a house, the first step is to lay the foundation. When building up the career of an individual in the Marine Corps, that foundation is laid during recruit training. Entry-level training brings severe culture shock. Civilians arriving at either of the Marine Corps Recruit Depots to the harsh shouts of a drill instructor find themselves facing panic and fear. Dozens of individuals trying to live without their accustomed privacy and autonomy in the first days find themselves weeks later huddled together in the squad bay, each holding an identical Marine Corps emblem in their hand. On graduation day, that same drill instructor's voice bellowing out, "*DISMISSED!*" makes the new Marines stand tall with pride. Their pride allows them to overlook their struggles and minimize the physical, mental, and emotional pain it took to get to that moment.

If the transformation that begins in recruit training is not sustained, the pride and motivation stemming from that accomplishment may wane, and growing pains may overpower it. The transformation process all Marines experience throughout their careers is the first part of a continual cycle of growth, maturation, and personal development bolstered through military

experiences. Marines must ensure they are taking the necessary steps to set themselves up for success by sustaining their transformation or they risk straying from the strong foundation they built. Individuals who join their first unit demonstrating responsibility and discipline (e.g., wearing sharp uniforms or arriving on time to formations) enable the receiving command to continue developing and sustaining individual transformations.

Receiving orders to one's first unit represents the completion of the initial entry-level training stage of a Marine's career. It is a physical manifestation of that Marine's initial motivation to meet with a recruiter. It is the time for Marines to start building on the solid foundation that forms the bedrock of the rest of their careers. It is when a Marine's perception about what the Marine Corps is meets the reality of the Fleet Marine Forces. The first days, weeks, and months are critical. Their reception and integration begins to shape how they view their roles in the organization. New Marines can enter a positive command climate that continues to sustain the transformation and helps them understand how their unique skill set contributes to the unit's mission, or they can enter a negative command climate where they are met with dismissal.

Although a junior enlisted Marine's journey begins with extensive education and training before arriving at their first duty station, the time for learning is far from over. All Marines, regardless of rank, continue to accrue expertise that can increase their effectiveness as warfighters and leaders. The expectations placed on junior enlisted Marines are different than those placed on the other ranks in the unit. Junior enlisted Marines are expected to

learn their military occupational specialties (MOSs) to the best of their ability and to maintain the standards and skill sets taught throughout their initial training. Junior Marines can expect their responsibilities to align with their growing level of knowledge and skills while they prove they have the ability and perseverance to hold themselves accountable for the betterment of the team. One of the best things junior Marines can do to start their careers on the path of success is to understand the Junior Enlisted Promotion Evaluation System (JEPES). Junior Marines are directly responsible for 75 percent of the areas in which they are considered for promotion. These scoring areas promote physical and mental discipline, therefore, ensuring superior performance within the JEPES system hinges on personal accountability.

Regardless of their rank or time in service, all Marines are expected to adhere to standards—fitness standards, uniform and grooming standards, or training and performance standards. In recruit training, every minor mistake was corrected without the Marines having to think about them. Instant corrections were made, and instant obedience was expected. With occupational specialty training came more rules to remember, more accountability in adhering to them, and an expectation of self or peer correction when the mark was missed. Leaving the heavily scrutinized schoolhouse environment removed the close supervision and put more responsibility on the Marine to self-correct and maintain the standard. It is important for Marines in the receiving unit—from the commanding officer to the newest noncommissioned officers (NCOs)—to set clear expectations and enforce the standards for the new-join Marines.

Junior Marines are often hesitant to make corrections due to a lack of confidence in their own knowledge, or not wanting to seem like a stickler among their peers. However, adhering to rules and regulations shows that Marines take pride in their service and in the Corps. Some regulations have obvious connections to safety or job duties, but others are about upholding standards. For example, the reason rips and holes are not permitted on Marine uniforms is a matter of pride. As written in the *Marine Corps Uniform Manual*:

*Wearing the uniform should be a matter of personal pride to all Marines. Marines will maintain their uniforms and equipment in a neat and serviceable condition and will, by their appearance, set an example of neatness and strict conformity with these regulations. Marines are not known just for their battlefield prowess, but for their unparalleled standards of professionalism and uncompromising personal conduct and appearance. It is a Marine's duty and personal obligation to maintain a professional and neat appearance. Any activity which detracts from the dignified appearance of Marines is unacceptable.*¹¹

So long as it is done in a constructive manner, correcting peers or junior Marines can have a positive effect on their careers. In this stage of a junior Marine's career, learning these standards and how to stay within them is imperative.

A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING

With the transformation to Marine comes a new sense of identity and community that some Marines may not have previously experienced. Recruit training makes Marines out of people from every walk of life and gives them a common identity. Junior Marines can continue to build and solidify that new identity and sense of belonging within their units by meeting and exceeding clearly communicated expectations from their leaders and peers. Knowing themselves and how this transformation individually affects them is an important part of the transformation. Gunnery Sergeant Charles F. Wolf, Jr. wrote, “To observe a Marine is inspirational. To be a Marine is exceptional.”¹² Most Marines would agree with that statement. The journey of a junior Marine incorporates this new sense of identity.

There is a balance between maintaining individual strengths and traits and embracing the uniformity of becoming a Marine. There are certain times when Marines must let go of individualism and understand they are part of an organization that requires conformity. This can be a difficult adjustment to make in the beginning as personal ego competes with the greater needs of the unit, but there are a few ways to appreciate an organizational identity over that of the individual. The first way is to understand the organizational identity. Most Marines do this without realizing it. What does it mean to be a Marine? It means living up to the reputation created by adhering to high standards. Many in the world see the Marine Corps as a strong, capable force with the highest morals and ethical character, and a symbol of hope and power. Individuals who embrace the organizational identity

take on the reputation set by those who served before them. Most Marines, if they reflect back to their time as a “poolee,” (i.e., one who has enlisted but not yet reported to basic training) admired this reputation. For many, it is what prompted them to be a part of the organization and earn the title of Marine. To abandon that in favor of individualism is to abandon a root motivator for service.

Secondly, one can value the organization’s identity by learning its history of service and the legacy left by prior generations. There are endless stories of Marines who have demonstrated courage, superb judgment, and ingenuity in mission accomplishment. Marines of every background have contributed to the Corps of today.

Finally, Marines can foster their organizational ties by recognizing the contributions of the Marines around them. By observing the selfless actions of their fellow Marines, individuals can better understand their own roles in making the same selfless contributions. In contrast, they can also see the effects of Marines who make selfish decisions and how those decisions ultimately affect the team.

There are times for individuality. Becoming a Marine does not mean giving up independent thought or personality. Instead, each Marine brings unique perspectives, ideas, experiences, and talents to the Corps, thereby creating a diverse organization. Diversity encompasses much more than traits like skin color or gender; it is also about variations of thought, beliefs, and knowledge. A great example of this is found in 1stLt Alfred A. Cunningham’s story.¹³ While most Marines know him as the first Marine aviator,

Cunningham's role in shaping the Corps evolved from his individuality and ideas he brought to the Marine Corps "table." He used his connections with a local flying club to influence Marine Corps leaders to invest in aviation as a new technology. He was personally passionate about flight and believed it could be useful to the armed forces. The Marine Corps, which had no aviation role until that time, sent him to learn how to fly. His contributions launched the Corps' now-robust aviation program.

Every Marine has the ability to shape the future of the Corps, and while they cannot expect the Corps to adapt to each of their individual goals, they can use their personal goals to fit the Corps' needs. The Corps will not pass Marines with failing grades in their military occupational specialty school. They will instead direct those Marines to a field that better aligns with their abilities for the good of the organization. However, Marines who set specific goals and put in the work to rise above their individual shortcomings to accomplish them will strengthen their team and the organization as a whole. The victory and growth comes when challenges are overcome through developing coping skills and perseverance.

Marines can contribute their own unique talents to affect everything from their small unit to the entire Marine Corps. The story of Corporal Riki D. Clement is an example of a Marine's individuality and talents making a unit and organizational difference. When he was still a lance corporal, he reverse-engineered a cord made to connect radios to vehicles and adapted it to attach to a radio tester unit. Each cord would have cost approximately \$64,000 to replace, and his work is estimated to have saved the Marine Corps \$15 million. In addition to the costs,



Corporal Ricki D. Clement

each cord would have taken 6 to 8 months to replace. Now, Marines are able to make the changes within their own shops.¹⁴

TRUST IN LEADERSHIP

Junior Marines begin developing a reputation upon arrival at a new unit. However, the way they are integrated by the unit's members determines the level of trust those Marines have in the unit and the institution. How the unit receives, treats, and leads the new Marines within the first 30 days significantly affects those Marines' performance and morale. A proficient receiving unit sets the conditions for the new Marines to be successful through welcome aboard packages, briefs from relevant agencies,

and involved NCOs. At the same time, the new Marines will be evaluating their surroundings. Does the unit uphold standards? Are Marines tested with fairness? Are the best interests of junior Marines advanced? The answers to these critical questions can foster or erode a Marine's trust in the unit.

Trust within a unit is forged through challenging but fair training, guided by objective training goals. In the absence of their own experience, Marines must rely on the knowledge and experience of others. With proper leadership, junior Marines in a training environment increase their proficiency, gain trust in their own abilities, and gain confidence in their small unit. Marine officers plan and lead unit training, while staff noncommissioned officers (SNCOs) and NCOs supervise, teach, and mentor during training evolutions. Effective Marine Corps leadership fosters trust within the unit through training that builds competency and unit cohesion, removing unnecessary obstacles for Marines, providing clear guidance, and fairly enforcing standards. Noncommissioned officers observe, provide feedback, and are the first line of defense against many of the possible issues that arise. Trust and communication between the NCOs and the junior Marines are crucial elements to sustaining the new Marine's transformation. Unit cohesion instills the sense of purpose and belonging that many Marines sought when they joined the Corps.

CAMARADERIE AND UNITY

Camaraderie and unity are the results of time spent together, whether in garrison or deployed, and both on and off duty. While similar, these two terms hold distinct meanings. Camaraderie is

the mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together. It is forged during the morning hours of the Crucible in the unforgiving swamps of Parris Island or seemingly never-ending hills of Camp Pendleton. It is the driving factor behind a Marine's decision to run out from cover into the indiscriminate wall of enemy fire to retrieve a fallen comrade, overriding all rationality and years of hard-wired self-preservation instincts. It is one of the desired outcomes of entry-level training. By undergoing the transformation from civilian to Marine together, Marines forge the bonds that can sustain them through the hardest times. Unity, on the other hand, is a harmony between two or more people or elements and is what Marines feel when they are sure of their place in a unit. They understand how they fit into the bigger picture, and willingly cooperate with those around them to accomplish the mission. Unity is a key trait of a group of Marines who work efficiently together and achieve a high success rate as a team. The combination of camaraderie and unity is cohesion.

It is possible for a Marine to feel a sense of camaraderie with fellow Marines without feeling a sense of unity with their unit or the Marine Corps as a whole. It is also possible that a Marine feels united with the institution yet lacks a sense of camaraderie. As junior Marines progress in rank, time in service, and experience, the bonds of unity and camaraderie they formed during their first months and years in the Marine Corps evolve in positive and negative ways. The Marine might receive orders and have to leave friends for another duty station—but also to new adventures. A Marine's best friend may marry, and subsequently move out of the barracks to live off base. A fellow Marine may

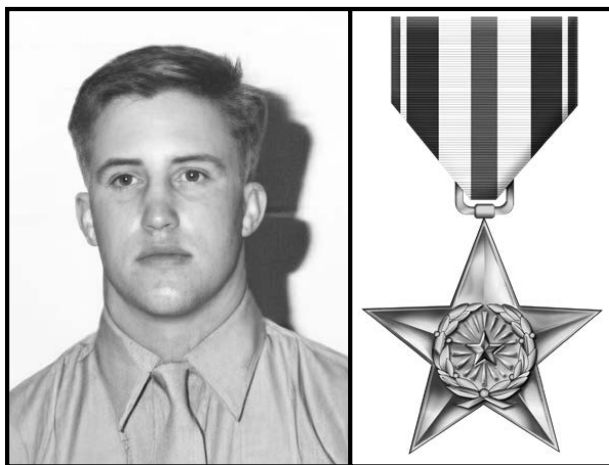
be promoted to corporal, dedicating more time and effort to their new leadership role and its associated responsibilities. Regardless of the reason for change—whether it is temporary additional duty, a new duty station, marriage, or even death—Marines must remember that while familiar faces come and go, the feeling of unity and camaraderie established through good times, tough experiences, and hardship will never truly dissipate. One needs to look no further than an interaction between two long-lost platoon mates at a reunion to see that this is true. Marines must also realize that camaraderie and unity can be found anew at any time. It requires only a willingness to engage with those around them. While a sense of culture established by a unit or specific community may change a Marine's perception, all Marines are unified in the sense that they are working toward a singular goal: defending this Nation.

RESILIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE

Resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficult or negative experiences. Whether it be a negative counseling, a difficult family event, or losing a fellow Marine in combat, there are numerous situations in and out of the Marine Corps that require one to be resilient. However, resilience is only one piece of the puzzle. Marines must also have perseverance. Whether they call it persistence, “stick-to-it-iveness,” or even stubbornness, perseverance is the continued effort to succeed despite difficulties, failure, or opposition. Everyone experiences difficulty throughout their lives; it is a part of the human experience but should not be the entire experience. Overcoming

difficulties and moving through them requires the persistence to pursue solutions and see them through to resolution or recovery. The story of LCpl Kasey A. Krock highlights one Marine's perseverance in battle.

On 6 December 1992, LCpl Kasey A. Krock was presented the Silver Star for his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action" during combat operations against the enemy in Operation DESERT STORM. He was serving as a combat engineer when a line charge fired from his amphibious assault vehicle failed to detonate. Without hesitation, he left the safety of the vehicle and manually armed and detonated the charge. When the second line charge failed, he repeated the daring task a second time. Once the breach was complete, the assault element was able to successfully move through the lane and defeat the opposing forces. Speaking



Lance Corporal Kasey Krock

later about his actions, LCpl Krock stated, “I feel the success of the breaches is a direct result of adequate training and everyone knowing their job. Even though the repetitious training seemed tedious at times, it was definitely worth it. It was the most rewarding feeling I've ever had.”¹⁵

Resilience is not developed by continually being broken, but rather by gathering the tools to repair oneself when it happens. The Marine Corps addresses four types of fitness and how to increase each area for better resilience (see Four Areas of Fitness on page 3-14). Similarly, perseverance is not suffering in silence, but rather maintaining commitment to a better outcome. Great improvements have been made in military mental health services and understanding the all-around needs of individual Marines. Marines must do the preventive work to strengthen their physical, mental, spiritual, and social fitness levels so they are as fully prepared as possible for all contingencies. To do so, they will need to rely upon support systems such as significant others, family, mentors, community groups, and religious groups.

From the early days of training, every Marine learns the Corps' Values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Marines start their careers with only official definitions for these words, but over time they develop personal meanings and applications for them. No longer just terms echoed back to a drill instructor or stenciled on a staircase, each word reminds Marines of a time when they were tested and either succeeded or fell short.

Perseverance is the manifestation of commitment. Developing perseverance is not simply a matter of never quitting anything. If

Four Areas of Fitness

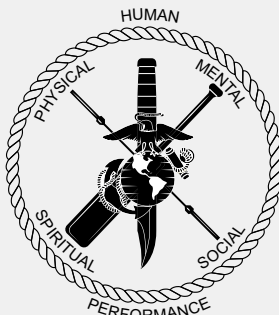
Resilience is an important aspect of a Marine's personal and professional life. It ensures that when faced with the challenges Marines experience in and out of combat, they will be able to meet those challenges, drawing from internal and external sources of strength and support. Marines with a high degree of physical and cognitive performance build and maintain resilience in these four areas of Marine fitness:

Physical Fitness: In addition to regular PT and exercise, this area includes proper nutrition, injury prevention, and recovery to maximize performance.

Mental Fitness: Includes one's mindset, attitudes, and practices that help deal with various stressors that impeded overall performance.

Spiritual Fitness: Identification of personal faith, foundational values, and moral living from a variety of sources and traditions help Marines live out Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment, live the warrior ethos, and exemplify the character expected of a United States Marine.

Social Fitness: Building a solid skillset that fosters cohesion, belonging, and trust in one's personal and professional relationships.¹⁶



that were the case, everyone would marry the first person they dated, stay at their first job, and never move from their first apartment. Instead, it is about following goals and decisions through to their satisfactory completion, even when it may not be easy or comfortable.

Angela Duckworth, an American psychologist, writes extensively about perseverance in her book, “*Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*.”¹⁷ (This book was on the 2019 Commandant’s Reading list.) Duckworth explains that, like any other skill or ability, perseverance must be developed and strengthened over time. This is accomplished by continually pushing through challenges that arise, realizing failure is not final, and maintaining a hope for a better outcome or result. Every Marine has demonstrated perseverance by the simple fact that they earned the Marine title. Those who face the grueling challenge of entry-level training are not guaranteed success. Many people *almost* became Marines, but those who wear the uniform are the only ones who know what it takes to see it all the way through.

Becoming a Marine and learning a new occupational specialty presents challenges beyond the individual’s capabilities. No matter how prepared they may be for the rigors of training, defeat and setbacks are inevitable. Persevering through the challenge—not giving up when it becomes difficult—is the only way to succeed as a Marine. However, that does not mean relentlessly pushing without thought or perspective. Persevering through any mission—following through on promises and following through to the end—should be a well-thought-out endeavor. If one approach does not work, try another. Reach out to other Marines

for guidance and motivation. Bring others on board to ease the burden. There are many ways to see a task or goal to the end, but the most important is to not stop until it is done.

Marines are often challenged and pushed outside their comfort zones, whether in stepping into a new billet, being promoted to a new rank, transferring to a new unit, or laterally moving to a new occupational specialty. Many times, as soon as a job feels well in hand, the situation changes. Other times, Marines may face adversity through their own errors. Poor decisions or other personal shortcomings may lead to administrative or judicial punishment or delay an achievement. No matter the cause, all Marines eventually face failure. In some way, they will not measure up to the standard or expectation they hold for themselves or those held by others. Such events mark pivotal moments when Marines must choose to either drop their packs or tighten the straps and stay committed. Perseverance is choosing the latter.

Perseverance is continuing to move forward despite obstacles, taking each step with thoughtful consideration. No matter the task, it is the individual Marine who must see it through to the end. However, they do not have to do so alone. The key time to reach out to others is when the task at hand feels too difficult. Reach out to a senior leader who has the experience to provide guidance in skillsets. They can often provide a more effective and efficient way to get the job done. Reach out to a supportive family member or friend for motivation and reinvigoration. Lean on peers and fellow Marines who are facing similar challenges for understanding and camaraderie.

When a Marine struggles to see a personal goal or obligation through to completion, perseverance comes from revisiting the “why” behind the commitment. Goals can become distorted as they encounter challenges and setbacks. Marines should identify the greater purpose of the goal to renew the commitment. When focusing on the short-term reasons for pursuing a goal, it is easy to say it is not worth the effort. An easier option will always exist. Why pursue higher education when I have made it this far without it? Why build a savings account when I could just use credit cards? However, the satisfaction and promise of a better future make the more difficult route worth the effort. In the words of Angela Duckworth, “Being a ‘promising beginner’ is fun, but being an actual expert is infinitely more gratifying.”¹⁸ Not only is the end state achieved, but the satisfaction of seeing it through to the end sweetens the reward.

Similar to the “sets and repetitions” used to develop one’s physical fitness, Marines need to establish a routine to develop their mental fitness. Marines who are solution-oriented and find ways to accomplish the mission, even in the presence of challenges and setbacks, can find a greater sense of purpose and pride in overcoming difficulties. Marines who appreciate hard-earned rewards through delayed gratification grow through failure by taking responsibility for their own actions. Continually finding new ways to build and strengthen perseverance has profound effects on sustaining the transformation to Marine.

SUSTAINING SELF

Mental Fitness

Marines take tremendous pride in their service and history. Marines often say, “We stand on the shoulders of giants.” However, they must be careful they do not fall into *riding* on these shoulders. In other words, Marines work to uphold and strengthen the reputation built by earlier generations. Marines at every rank must understand that the Corps’ reputation as an elite force can be lost through *their* actions. The continued existence of the Corps, its reputation, and the trust bestowed upon it by the United States is not guaranteed. Stories of valor in combat are not what keep the Marine Corps thriving, it takes selfless dedication to the core values and institutional ideals. Adhering to the basics in every aspect builds proficiency, which in turn, builds confidence and pride.

Pride is a feeling of self-worth which finds its source in satisfaction from past accomplishments, motivation in present endeavors, and inspiration springing from future aspirations.

—Zell Miller, Retired Marine, Governor, and Senator¹⁹

Junior enlisted Marines jump-start their success by maintaining the skills and character traits they learned during basic training—discipline, adaptability, and professionalism, to name a few. Traits like these guide Marines as they encounter new environments, challenges and opportunities. Through mentorship,

instruction, and repetition, their sense of pride and confidence continues growing through the School of Infantry, MOS school, and at their first unit. Learning, practicing, refining, and growing continue with the added assistance of peers and more experienced Marines. Junior Marines increase their self-confidence and fulfillment through learning and more senior Marines do the same through teaching. In every topic of instruction, the purpose of training events is to build confidence. It requires exposing one's weaknesses and shortcomings in a constructive way to identify where instruction is needed. In a training environment that keeps safety at the forefront, Marines can learn from their mistakes and the mistakes of others. Marines should not be so afraid of failure that they stop trying.

Military Training

Even though it can be intimidating at first, learning a new skill increases self-confidence, fosters future growth, and builds team unity. In the first few years of service, Marines are expected to learn a daunting amount of information; this learning process is progressive and compounding in nature. Each skill or piece of knowledge learned adds to the previous piece, but rarely does it move in a neat and linear path. There will be many moments of doubt; however, the moments when training “clicks” help build confidence. Experiencing small victories along the way is critical. If training is becoming overwhelming or discouraging, return to the basics. Reinforcing the basics and practicing what has already been learned not only reminds Marines of how much they have learned and how far they have come, but that they are capable of getting it right with enough practice. After continued and focused

practice, a skill that was once challenging becomes second nature and the cycle repeats with the next skill. With each new skill, Marines increase their own effectiveness, thereby increasing their unit's effectiveness. It is crucial that Marines continue to engage in learning. Becoming stagnant in the process for any reason can lead to erosion of that confidence, and Marines might begin looking for validation, satisfaction, or recognition in other places—some of which might not be healthy. Marines deeply involved in training and development find a sense of pride and accomplishment and have reason to protect what they've earned. They are, therefore, less likely to engage in behaviors that will cut their careers short and discredit the Corps. Expertise is a lifelong pursuit that helps sustain the transformation from civilian to Marine.

Professional Education

One of the easiest ways to continue learning and gaining confidence is through attending professional military education. For junior Marines this includes the Lance Corporal Leadership and Ethics Seminar, annual training briefs, MOS-specific courses, and their annual tactical training requirements. Learning and adapting in the MOS field is important because they build on new skills. However, a well-rounded education is also necessary. Rank-specific training helps each Marine make the most of their current rank while preparing for their next one. It ensures that they are growing and developing at their current level and helps them broaden their support networks with their fellow Marines.

Aside from the professional military education realm, additional annual training briefs are provided to remind Marines about personal resources available to them and common behavioral pitfalls to avoid. Some of this instruction covers operational security, sexual assault prevention, and suicide prevention and awareness. Revisiting this information reminds Marines of consequences to bad choices and allows leadership to reinforce positive behaviors and practices.



**Marine Corps Enlisted
Professional Military Education Logo**

Marines undergo many different forms of training. All training serves the purpose of sustaining Marines' transformation throughout their service. It is up to each Marine to make the most of the training and education opportunities provided to them. Staying current on basic skills training like the gas chamber, rifle range, water survival and Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) helps reinforce the confidence Marines have in themselves and their fellow Marines. Working with subject matter experts to complete annual training requirements and develop a stronger, faster and more competent Marine in the process, instills a sense of team unity, confidence and lethality in all Marines.

Healthy Lifestyle

Few professions in the world require strict physical standards as a condition of employment. For the military, health and fitness are not just a requirement, they can mean the difference between life and death. A lot of focus is placed on body composition, strength and endurance, but there is much more to being healthy than those metrics alone. Many poolees and recruits admire the Corps for its physical fitness demands, as well as the inherent challenges they present, and aspire to achieve the standards for themselves; however, donning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor does not magically transform Marines into top performers. In or out of uniform, reaching high levels of functional fitness requires hard work and commitment. Although Marines are not required to have a regimented gym schedule or research the nutritional data in every meal, every Marine should make a point to learn about and practicing healthy choices and eating habits to remain within standards and ready for the demands of the job.

Being healthy and fit goes beyond the hour of platoon exercise in the morning or the hour in the gym over lunch. It includes the other 23 hours spent away from it. There are many times when Marines need to function on little sleep. They may have a long patrol mission, a 24-hour duty posting, or a mission to provide operational support throughout the night. For this reason, every Marine should strive for a healthy sleep schedule whenever possible. Chronic lack of adequate sleep can lead to impaired judgment, mood disorders, unhealthy weight gain, and potentially fatal accidents.²⁰ All of these can have long-term effects on Marines, their relationships, and their careers.

Making healthy food choices can also have dramatic effects. A poor diet can lead to key nutrient, vitamin and mineral deficiencies. It may seem simple; however, there is a reason a corpsman's first question is usually, "What have you eaten today?" or, "How much water have you had today?" Dehydration or electrolyte imbalances can cause cramping, dizziness, and fainting. Other nutritional deficiencies put Marines at higher risk of injury or a slower rate of recovery, and they can lead to more long-term illnesses, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. Making healthy nutritional choices ensures Marines perform at their best. Choices regarding alcohol can also have dramatic effects for the individual Marine. For those who are underage, drinking alcohol not only affects their physical and mental state; it can also lead to legal ramifications. Those who are legally able to consume alcohol must develop an understanding of their personal limitations and exercise moderation to develop healthy habits. Exercising good judgment, self-control, and avoiding peer pressure will help Marines maintain a healthy body and serve as an asset to themselves and their fellow Marines.

Be careful whom you associate with. It is human to imitate the habits of those with whom we interact. We inadvertently adopt their interests, their opinions, their values, and their habit of interpreting events.
—Epictetus²¹

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Social Fitness

Social Fitness cannot be underrated. Those progressing through recruit training have little time for developing friendships. Marines moving through School of Infantry and MOS school have more time and opportunity, but their pool of potential friends is limited. At the Marines' first unit, the floodgates open; they meet fellow Marines at work, and they meet others through volunteering or through mutual friends. At this critical juncture, Marines must carefully consider every relationship they engage in, as their relationships can directly affect their level of social fitness. Social fitness is building a solid skillset that fosters cohesion, belonging, and trust in one's personal and professional relationships. Just as Marines are influenced by those with whom they spend their time, they can, in turn, serve a meaningful role in their fellow Marines' careers.

Every Marine is a Leader

Regardless of rank, and in the absence of any other Marines, all Marines are at least leaders of themselves. Marines are rarely alone, though. Every interaction they have with their fellow Marines is a chance to influence and affect behavior. While junior Marines may not have a lot of say or influence in the grand scheme of the unit's operational tempo, they can directly influence others with their attitude, words, and actions. Marines who work to sustain their own transformations in the ways listed in this chapter also have the ability to sustain that same

transformation in others. Intentionally choosing friend groups based on common interests and goals can help Marines keep each other accountable. Whether it is a Marine's goal to achieve a perfect physical fitness score, read a new book each month, better manage emotions, or reach a higher MCMAP belt level, Marines who support each other in their goals are more likely to achieve them. If Marines associate with peer groups who do not support their goals, or worse, discourage them entirely, they can be pulled away from their own success. Whether it be through peer pressure not to pursue a particular goal or to make impulsive decisions, or even to embark on new, positive endeavors, friend groups are among the most significant influences in a young Marine's life. It can be intimidating to walk into a new unit and wonder whom to befriend. The good news is that everyone has something in common from the first day—everyone is a Marine. When new Marines join a unit, it is a chance for everyone in that unit to reach out and welcome them. It is okay to shift friendships as interests and commitment levels change. What matters is that Marines recognize the influence they have in their friends' lives, and the effect their friends have on theirs. Marines are individually responsible for their own successes and failures, and the friends they surround themselves with, both for encouragement and to encourage, are key factors of that outcome.²²

Aside from choosing friends and friend groups, Marines must develop healthy relationships. Whether it be a casual friendship, a professional working relationship, or a potential romantic partner, dysfunctional relationships can wreak havoc on individuals and their units and cause emotional turmoil that can manifest in ways

like lack of focus, outbursts, or feelings of immobilization. Conflict between Marines who work together can break down trust or cause a division of “taking sides,” neither of which is good for unit cohesion. The Marine Corps offers great resources to assist in life skills, such as forming healthy relationships, setting boundaries, improving communication, showing appreciation, and understanding personality differences. There are many courses, classes, and activities available to Marines and their dependents through the Marine Corps Community Services. Marines can take advantage of these courses just as they would schedule time for the rifle range and college classes. As peers,

LIFESKILLS TRAINING & EDUCATION

Is a collection of personal and professional skill building classes that promote improved individual and family functioning at work, home, and in life. LifeSkills Training offers courses in the areas of Communication, Impact, Wellness, and Relationships. To find a lifeskills class near you visit...

www.usmc-mccs.org

DEVELOPING HEALTHY BLENDED FAMILIES

11,262
step children in the Marine Corps
(Total Force Data Warehouse, FY16)

85% SPOUSE & 76% SERVICE MEMBERS report being “extremely happy” with happy “new” at the end of the 2014 Blue Star Report

TOP TIPS FOR BUILDING A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP

- Turn toward each other instead of away
- Consider each other's perspectives and feelings
- Make decisions together
- Solve your problems together

2.6% Overall divorce rate in the Marine Corps (Source: U.S. Military Divorce Statistics (Marine Corps Demographics June 15))

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Top 4 Communication Skills

- Communicate clearly and concisely
- Listen actively
- Stay calm
- Speak confidently

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

U.S. employees spent 385 million workdays dealing with conflict in past hours dealing with conflict

SOCIAL NETWORK SAFETY

More than 12 million people were victims of identity fraud in 2013 due to less security and accessible personal information

BASIC ANGER MANAGEMENT

28% of people say they worry how angry they feel sometimes. (Marine Health Organization Study Report 2008)

BASIC STRESS MANAGEMENT

34% Active Duty Military Spouses and 30% Active Duty Service Members reported feeling “stressed” most of the time. (2014 Blue Star Report)

FAMILY CARE PLAN

Elements of a successful family care plan
Prepare a will and designate a guardian
Ensure guardian has access to necessary funds
Sign up for SGLI or a similar group life insurance

MARINE Corps Family Team Building

Learn. Grow. Lead.

Marine Corps Community Services Offerings

Marines can reach out to Marines who may be struggling and help them resolve conflicts or break contact.

New Marines are eager and excited to arrive at their first duty stations; however, meeting standards, earning promotions, and making new friends can be overwhelming. The transformation that begins in recruit training must continuously be nurtured and tended to be sustained. Marines should take responsibility for their own transformation; however, they should know they are not alone.

Chapter 4.

Noncommissioned Officers

The tiered structure within the United States Marine Corps' enlisted ranks contains meaningful milestones that provide clarity in obligations and responsibilities. After their first experiences in the ranks of private through lance corporal, Marines close a chapter of their service, and reach the milestone of becoming a noncommissioned officer. This transition to a new peer group is a pivotal point in every noncommissioned officer's career. Noncommissioned officers become both mentee and mentor, student and teacher, younger and elder sibling. This is a critical time when NCOs begin developing their own leadership style and accrue additional skills and tools to aid them in their duties. Earning a promotion into the NCO ranks is a significant accomplishment, one that necessitates returning to the reasons for serving and a fresh look at how to forge ahead.

The primary responsibility of junior Marines in the early months of service is to learn by observing and practicing their MOS skills all while becoming accustomed to the Marine Corps way of life. As an NCO, these requirements become less passive (receiving) and more active (seeking). An NCO must take the initiative to seek out leadership and instruction opportunities. This is a time when Marines should seek additional guidance from their mentors and leaders and devote additional time to self-reflection

and learning. Because promotions come at different times for each Marine, there are often conflicting emotions surrounding them. On one hand, the Marine is eager to be promoted and take on additional responsibilities, increased authority, and more opportunities. On the other hand, many of their friends might remain in the junior ranks, making the transition to a professional separation difficult. The separation from junior Marine to NCO is not about cutting off friends or being superior. It creates a new obligation to provide instruction and guidance. Some Marines believe they can continue to act as they always have and that the NCO leadership and conduct mindset will come to them, but they must pursue this; ownership is one of the characteristics that separates a junior Marine from an NCO.

FROM STUDENT TO TEACHER

Becoming an NCO is a transition from student to teacher. Most Marines are promoted to corporal sometime in the second half of their first enlistment contract. They will have accumulated experience and knowledge to pass on to the Marines who are coming behind them.

Junior Marines will emulate their NCOs. An NCO's leadership influences how a junior Marine retains new skills and strengthens character traits obtained during training. Every interaction an NCO has with a junior Marine should stem from the realization that NCOs shape, guide, and mold the Corps. Every conversation, counseling, and correction must foster the warrior ethos within their Marines. To create warriors, NCOs must be warriors themselves. In addition to training, NCOs can earn trust in myriad

ways, like following through on promises, assisting Marines with their personal and professional development, recognizing their achievements, being bold and unflinching in the face of challenging decisions, and being reliable problem solvers.

Taking on the teacher role helps corporals step into their new ranks and distinguish themselves from their previous ranks and the junior Marines around them. During routine work tasks, corporals are given endless opportunities to pass on their knowledge and experience. One example is teaching another Marine an unfamiliar task. In the tried-and-true teaching method, the corporal explains and demonstrates the task before supervising task execution and making necessary corrections. Then the corporal repeatedly observes the Marines completing the task until they fully understand. As a result, the overall skill level of the entire unit is increased.

Another way to teach junior Marines is through professional military education. Corporals can take the initiative to lead periods of instruction (commonly called “hip pocket classes”) and teach skills before the need to perform them arises. This may be related to training and readiness tasks or ancillary tasks like filling out Navy and Marine Corps (NAVMC) forms, record keeping, standing operating procedures, and troubleshooting. For example, the time to teach a private first class the concept of “tap-rack-bang” is not during urban combat; infantry Marines should be taught remedial actions and given the opportunity to conduct drills during close-quarters battle training. If a Marine struggles in one aspect, developing and devoting time to that shortcoming strengthens the whole Marine. In the end, owning

one's successes and failures and learning from them strengthens and empowers young leaders to improve not only themselves, but their units as well. However, Marines cannot teach what they do not know. Noncommissioned officers must continue to learn, seeking knowledge where they are lacking. Learning can come from a multitude of sources. Senior NCOs, SNCOs, and officers will provide guidance and education from their positions of greater experience. Frequently referencing manuals, orders, policies, and MARADMINs (or Marine administrative messages) helps NCOs understand current Marine Corps rules and regulations. By treating every moment as an opportunity to learn, they continue to develop their own mental fitness, credibility, and knowledge, which they can pour into the Marines around them.

Corporals can continue their mentorship roles during the off-duty hours. Junior Marines need education on and off the job. Corporals should understand their position as role models for appropriate conduct. Many

junior Marines are away from home for the first time. They have most likely left their families and friend groups, hobbies, and activities, and may struggle to settle into the new Marine Corps life. A corporal can take the initiative to reach

You are responsible for the accomplishment of your assigned mission and for the safety, professional development and well-being of the Marines in your charge.

—NCO Promotion Warrant

out to new Marines and welcome them into the unit, the base, and the area. There are plenty of ways to do this without crossing the bounds of fraternization. When new Marines check in, a corporal

should step up to make sure they know where to get the basic necessities. Does the new Marine know where the messhall is and the hours they are open? Did any of their luggage get lost at the airport? Do they know where the nearest exchange is? Do they have sheets, pillows, and blankets on their beds? This is particularly important for Marines who check in to the barracks on a weekend. Even with the ease of access to web searches, food delivery, and ride sharing companies, NCOs should ensure that junior Marines feel welcome and their immediate needs are met from the start.

Corporals are in the perfect position to establish themselves as a leader, mentor, and trusted member of the new Marine's unit. After seeing to their immediate physical needs, the corporal can then introduce them to a peer Marine or two who can provide social connection. Noncommissioned officers can facilitate a connection to other reliable Marines who will set the new Marine on the right path. Corporals who know their Marines will be able to connect Marines over shared hobbies or interests, similar hometowns, common faiths, or other similarities that can make a new Marine feel welcomed and create a sense of belonging. While this can be accomplished by any Marine at any rank, the corporal is near enough to the new Marines to be accessible but has the authority and seniority to influence action. That corporal becomes a trustworthy source for future assistance to those new Marines and quickly gains their respect.

SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

The obligation to serve as a teacher does not end with corporals. By the time Marines are promoted to sergeant, they should be well-established as NCOs. It is expected that they grow past the loyalties to friendships in the junior ranks and begin looking at the larger Marine Corps picture. Increased responsibility, experience and training, as well as involvement in unit operations means the sergeant begins to see how the Marine Corps functions at a higher level. This expanded view should include all the areas of influence previously discussed in this chapter, but also build on the way they lead, teach, and make decisions about their own service and attaining the next rank.

As an NCO, sergeants have the continued responsibility of teaching the Marines in their charge, particularly serving as mentors to the corporals stepping into the role of NCO for the first time. Since they typically have more time in service and a wider variety of experiences, sergeants can see the bigger picture of how they, their Marines, and their unit contribute to the greater Marine Corps mission. With this knowledge they can lead and teach with perspective.

Noncommissioned officers are translators of the commander's intent. They must speak two languages: the commander's language, and the junior Marines' language. Noncommissioned officers serve to take the task and purpose from the commander and present it to their Marines in such a way that every Marine knows their role and how to accomplish their assigned task. As junior Marines, they may have been able to influence those

around them through their actions, and now they are also able to influence through the authority conferred by their rank. “Leading by example” is a principle used commonly when talking about how Marine leaders should conduct themselves. Noncommissioned officers should conduct themselves in

*I am the backbone of the
United States Marine Corps.*

*I am a Marine
Noncommissioned Officer.
I serve as part of the vital
link between my commander
(and all officers) and
enlisted Marines.*

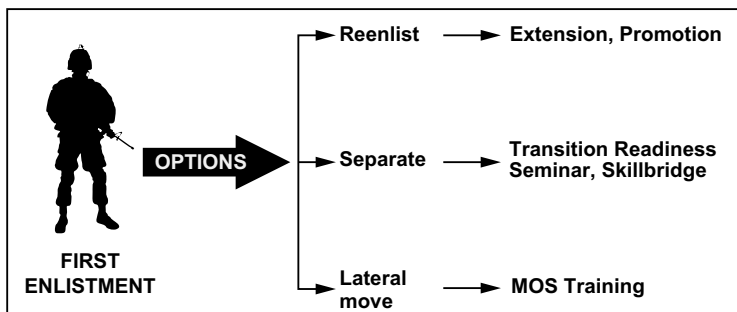
—NCO Creed

a manner that drives and motivates others to reach the highest standard. This merging of leadership and personal accountability contributes to command climate and instills small-unit leadership values among those junior Marines who are watching.

CONSIDERING REENLISTMENT

Do I stay or do I leave? Choosing the next step in service is a turning point in a young Marine’s career. By the nature of the enlistment contract, Marines eventually face the decision of whether or not to reenlist. This decision should prompt a significant amount of reflection on the past, present, and future.

Marines should not assume they know which path they will take without giving the decision careful thought and consideration. Revisiting not only why they joined, but also why they might want to stay, is important to the decision-making process. There is no single answer to the question; however, each Marine should take time for introspection, as well as seek guidance from a



Options After the First Enlistment

mentor. Mentors who are further along in their military careers can help a young NCO examine all sides of the equation.

Below are some questions Marines can answer for themselves or discuss with a mentor as they consider their options for the future:

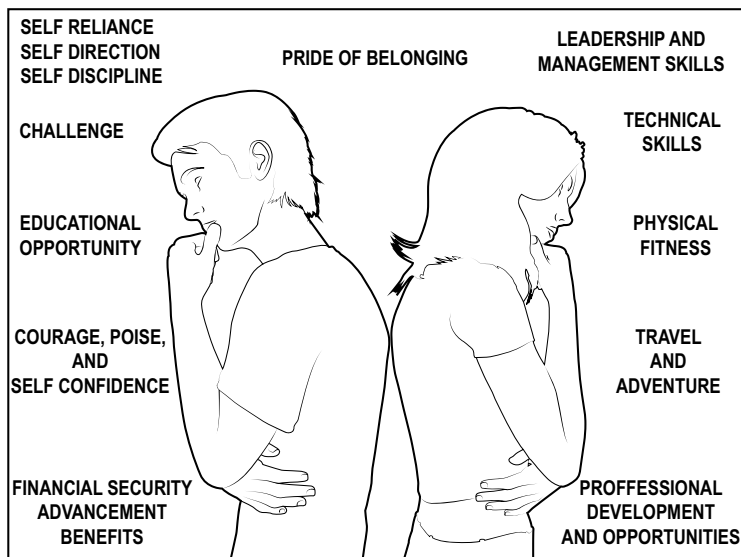
- What do I want to contribute to the Marine Corps and have I accomplished that already?
- Do I provide valuable service to the Corps, and does the Corps continue to serve me well?
- Have I left it better than I found it?
- If I were to get out tomorrow, would I be satisfied with that decision?
- Are there goals I still want to accomplish in the Marine Corps?
- Are there goals I want to accomplish outside the Marine Corps that will be impeded by another enlistment?

Throughout the deliberation process, a Marine will eventually have to answer two core questions: “Will other Marines benefit

from me staying in?” and, “Will I benefit from staying in?” For many young Marines deliberating for the first time, it is natural to think that the second enlistment will be a repeat of the first. They may be hesitant to re-commit based on experiences with senior leaders, entry-level training, or the culture shock of their initial transformation from civilian to Marine. Some Marines feel as if “the grass is greener” on the civilian side when it comes to obligations, benefits, or lifestyle choices. However, with a new enlistment comes a new duty station, new billets, new ranks, and new opportunities. No two enlistments are alike because of these influencing factors. The paragraphs below dive deeper into some of the questions listed above.

Why Did I Become a Marine?

Every Marine has different reasons for joining the Marine Corps. Some of those reasons are tangible, such as physical fitness, pay, and benefits. Other reasons are more intangible, such as pride of belonging, courage, and self-confidence. Most Marines remember going through the “benefit tags” (i.e., reasons to enlist) with their recruiter during their first meeting. Some Marines may join for the tangible benefits, but later discover that the intangible benefits matter more to them. Others may join for intangible benefits, then later find stability and security in the tangible ones. Looking into why we pursued the title in the first place may help us understand whether reenlistment is the logical next step.



Reasons to Become a Marine

What Did I Hope to Achieve? Have I Done it? If Not, Why Not?

Whether or not our original goals were achieved, it is expected that our personal and professional goals and motivations will change over time. Reevaluating these areas can produce strong indications of whether reenlistment would be the right choice.

Marines should remember their original reasons for joining without judgment, cynicism, or resentment towards their pre-service selves. Some Marines may judge themselves harshly, criticizing their lack of understanding surrounding military

service as a civilian. The goals and desires expressed for service were set with pure intentions, not ignorance. Whether those goals were achieved or not can be assessed without bias. For example, a Marine who joined with the intent to pursue educational opportunities may choose to leave active service to take advantage of the educational benefits they've earned. Another Marine, who joined to build self-confidence, may choose to stay to continue building the confidence of others. Some Marines may have joined with one goal in mind, but found a new goal to pursue along the way. Marines who make an open and honest assessment of whether or not they have reached their goals can more easily determine whether continued service would benefit themselves, their Marines, and the institution.

What Role Have I Played in My Successes and Failures?

If, after assessing their needs, motivators, goals, and priorities, Marines decide they have missed the target, it might be time for further reflection. How much of that outcome was their responsibility? Many Marines leave the Service after one enlistment because they feel disappointed in unmet expectations. Marines must take an honest assessment of their roles in their own experiences. If they wanted education, did they take the initiative to enroll in classes? If they wanted to belong, did they participate in events and organizations that would help them build a network? If they wished to travel, did they make themselves competitive and available for training and deployment? Many times, Marines have a projected image of what it will look like to accomplish their goals, and if it does not unfold exactly as they imagined, they consider it unsuccessful. College does not always

look like a semester on a campus with lecture halls and classmates. World travel is not limited to long vacations in distant locations. A sense of belonging can begin with something as simple as sharing an evening around a fire pit. It is up to the Marine to take advantage of available opportunities.

Marines who believe their goals and desires were not accomplished could re-examine the role they may have had in the pursuit. Perhaps the traditional expectation for meeting goals did not materialize. Would another enlistment help see those ambitions through, or do they have new goals to pursue outside military service? Table 4-1 offers some alternative methods of reaching goals through military opportunities.

Table 4-1. Considerations for Attaining Goals.

Goal	Traditional Expectation	Military Alternative
Higher Education	Formal classes taught in classroom setting	Online classes, on-the-job training certification, college equivalency exams (DANTES/CLEP), credit for military training
World Travel	Vacations in far-off locations	Local tourism, TAD assignments, deployments
Sense of Belonging	Frequent social engagement	Support through shared hardship, mutual accountability, encouragement through challenges, membership in military organizations

SUSTAINING SELF

Mentorship

Stepping into the role of an NCO for the first time, a Marine may be at a loss regarding how to start. This is where a mentor can help. Mentors come in many forms. Whether a first-term Marine planning to leave the Corps, or one who is choosing to make it a career, finding an appropriate mentor is vital to success in all areas of life. Finding a mentor starts with two questions: “Where would I like to see myself?” and, “Who is a role-model I would like to emulate?” After answering these questions, the process of finding a mentor may still take some time. Everything from our personality, to goals, access, and leadership style can sway the choice. It is helpful to have multiple mentors for different parts of life. A professional mentor can give advice on the next steps for a Marine’s career. A spiritual mentor can provide support and accountability. A financial mentor can give insight and provide suggestions for managing assets and making financial goals.

For those looking for a mentor, it can be intimidating to seek out someone above one’s respective peer group. However, those are exactly the individuals whom we should reach out to. If they have achieved something we want to achieve, what better way to get there than to learn from someone who has done it?

Whether a Marine sits down and speaks to a mentor face-to-face on a weekly basis or calls monthly, each relationship will differ. Mentorship is ever evolving, and one can have many mentors over time. Additionally, it is okay to find a new mentor if the current relationship changes, if life circumstances change, or if the relationship is not a good fit. Junior Marines may have mentors to help them navigate the early years of their careers, whereas senior NCOs may find a veteran mentor to assist in their transition out of the Marine Corps. An important factor to consider in mentorship is keeping an open mind. Mentors can be found in unexpected places, and may not be like us at all, except that they've accomplished what we'd like to accomplish. A good mentor may be of a different faith, a different gender or race, in another branch of Service, or not in the military at all. Marines should evaluate their own biases to keep from missing out on valuable guidance and mentorship. Just as each Marine's service looks different, the mentor-mentee relationship is also uniquely individual.

Mentorship is beneficial at every level. In the process of finding one's own mentor, remember that a good NCO may also mentor junior Marines. Junior Marines may select an NCO mentor for many reasons, such as anticipating their own transition to the NCO ranks, trying to improve physical fitness, or trying to improve their MOS-specific tasks. The NCO may also deem it beneficial to find a mentor who can teach them how to mentor.

Creating Quality Goals

Marines' goals change over time. Taking time to review, assess, and update goals periodically will help Marines sustain their transformation for many years. When creating their goals, Marines should try to answer the five "W" questions: What do I want to accomplish? Why is this goal important? Who is involved? Where will it take me? Which resources or limits are involved? The goal should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based (more commonly referred to as "SMART" goals). They should be—

- Specific. Provides clarity for the desired end state.
- Measurable. Tracking one's progress keeps an individual motivated and focused.
- Attainable. Reasonable goals that challenge the boundaries of one's current position or abilities, increase wisdom, experience, and personal growth.
- Realistic. Underestimating the effects of schedules, interruptions, and military priorities can diminish enthusiasm and jeopardize chances of success.
- Time-Based. By setting time limits and mile markers individuals can more easily recognize whether or not the desired end state has been achieved.

Goals for the Marine beginning entry-level training typically center on performance and achievement. Initial goals include completing recruit training as the honor graduate, achieving a first-class physical fitness score, and completing an associate's degree during one's first enlistment. Beyond that, as Marines

grow in their careers and commit to greater responsibilities, their goals will also evolve. Well-defined and thought-out ambitions help Marines sustain their transformation by keeping their heads in the game. Noncommissioned officers should strive to hold themselves to higher standards and reach outside their comfort zones for their next goal. Additionally, they should step back and look at the bigger picture to see how their goals might help them, their Marines, their family and friends, the Marine Corps, and the world around them.

Many Marines have a goal to deploy at some point. While obtaining deployment orders is beyond one's control, an NCO who has not yet had the chance to deploy can set MOS-relevant goals to be ready when the opportunity arises. That could mean learning to be a squad leader, earning relevant certifications, or gaining experience through unit exercises. The first step should be the training and readiness manual for the Marine's individual MOS, their occupational field, and Marine Corps common skills. Developing proficiency makes Marines competitive for deployment and prepares them for whatever will be asked of them while they are forward. Marines should also prepare in their personal lives to be ready for deployment, particularly in the following areas:

- Financial Stability. A deployment will usually mean reduced access to financial systems and resources, and liberty can spur a change in spending habits. They should strive to automate bill paying to the greatest extent possible before departure, minimize debt and allocate savings to be set aside for emergencies. The Service Member's Civil Relief Act can provide some assistance with contractual obligations, but it is

on the individual Marine to ensure they do not return home from deployment to foreclosures, repossessions, or collections claims due to unpaid bills. A Marine with dependents is responsible for their well-being. That means making sure they have the financial resources to provide the necessities and maintain their standard of living.

- Relationships. Long distances, months of separation, reduced communication, and the worry of safety and well-being can strain relationships. Whether it is a significant other, a relative, or some other close connection, Marines need to ensure they can be focused on the job required of them while forward-deployed. Relationship conflicts back home can distract Marines and reduce their ability to perform the job their team is relying on them to do.
- Resilience. The Marine Corps is engaged in various operations around the world. As discussed in previous sections, Marines must be prepared for anything from combat to humanitarian aid to evacuations. Deployments can bring life-threatening unknowns or frustration-inducing monotony. Knowing how to identify one's own stress responses—and reduce any negative effects from them—is an important skill to develop before entering a high-stress environment.

Another quality goal Marines can set for themselves is improving their physical fitness level. Marines should challenge themselves beyond annual physical fitness and combat fitness tests. Increasing one's belt levels in MCMAP opens the door to becoming an instructor and instructor-trainer. The associated courses are not only physically demanding, but also require a mental toughness that will serve the Marines who excel and their

units. Earning certifications as a high-intensity tactical training (HITT) level-1 or -2 instructor, or a force fitness instructor can help Marines expand their personal fitness abilities while increasing their knowledge and understanding of human performance. For those who enjoy team sports and athletics, each Marine base provides ample opportunity for leagues and organized competitions. The annual HITT competition is an event that brings the top Marine athletes from each region to be challenged on both their mental and physical capabilities. The events include strength and conditioning activities that mirror the seven foundational movements within the HITT program. These combined events develop Marines while simultaneously making them more versatile and impactful within their units.

Marines seeking greater challenges and opportunities to expand their experiences might consider applying for a special duty assignment as a recruiter, drill instructor, or embassy guard. (See Special Duty Assignments in Chapter 5 for more information).

Marines seeking greater leadership responsibilities, opportunities to influence decision making at higher levels, and the education and financial stability that comes with such responsibility, may want to consider setting a goal to transition to the officer ranks. The Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program provides NCOs an opportunity to complete Officer Candidates School, attend college funded by the Marine Corps, and obtain a bachelor's degree. Upon meeting the requirements, they commission as a second lieutenant. The Enlisted Commissioning Program allows Marines of any rank who have already completed a 4-year degree to attend Officer Candidates School and earn a commission.

Support Network (Friends, Family, and Influencers)

Each enlistment brings highs and lows, challenges and successes, failures and victories. These may be small moments or entire seasons that require growth and adaptation in unforeseen ways. Through each of these events, it is important to exercise social fitness by building, maintaining, and relying on a strong support network, aside from mentors. A support network consists of friends, family, peers, and leaders who can share tears and laughter. Thanks to technology, a support network can include people living nearby and at great distances. Today's Marines can use a cell phone to vent frustrations or celebrate a victory with their support network. A support network is the scaffolding that keeps a Marine upright despite the winds that may blow around them.

There are only two kinds of people who understand the Marines: Marines and the enemy. Everyone else has a second hand opinion.

—General William Thornton²³

Bonds inevitably form among Marines who serve together. Lifelong friendships are forged in recruit training and in the dark of a midnight fire watch. The demands of life as a Marine can sometimes be understood only by fellow Marines. Having peers in one's support network can help sustain the transformation when uniquely Marine Corps-related challenges arise. Peers share an understanding of achievements that may not directly translate to the civilian sector. However, support can come from anywhere, and that includes those who were present before one's

transformation to a Marine, such as relatives, high school teammates, youth group pastors, former co-workers, etc.

With a support network, a Marine does not have to face any day alone. Many cultures and religious works have some version of the phrase, “Grief shared is grief divided. Joy shared is joy doubled.” Others phrase it as “Your joy is my joy; your sorrow is my sorrow.” No matter how it is said, these speak to the importance of having a support network that can empathize with the experiences of military service and life in general.

Off-Duty Education

General James Mattis is quoted as saying, “If you haven't read hundreds of books, you are functionally illiterate, and you will be incompetent, because your personal experiences alone aren't broad enough to sustain you.”²⁴ His emphasis on education was well known, and many previous Marine Corps leaders have emphasized its importance as well, such as Major Hazel Benn. In 1955, Major Benn was head of the Education and Information Section in the Headquarters, Marines Corps Special Services Personnel Department. A principal architect of the Serviceman's Opportunity College, she helped develop the concept that removed the traditional academic barriers in the areas of residency, transfer of credit by examination, and acceptance of Service schools and Service experience for academic credit. She opened the path to college degrees for countless Marines. Major Benn received the Legion of Merit upon her retirement in 1975 for formulating innovative educational programs for Marines. In 2019, the college path she established became the DoD Voluntary



Major Hazel Benn

Education Partnership, which continues today, providing education benefits for active duty and veteran Service members.²⁵

The Marine Corps' 29th Commandant, General Alfred M. Gray established the Marine Corps University in Quantico in 1989. The university combined five different warfare and leadership schools from across the Marine Corps. Continuing education has been encouraged throughout the years and continues to grow in importance with each generation. Whether on- or off-duty, learning is just one more way Marines can improve their overall mental fitness and sustain their transformation throughout their service. Higher education allows for incremented rewards of

achievement, increased opportunities, and higher levels of competence in many fields. Whether Marines pursue a military-related education or a subject of personal interest, education will help sustain them.

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Sense of Purpose

The NCO Creed calls corporals and sergeants “*the backbone of the Marine Corps*.” The “backbone” is the support—the framework that keeps everything else in place. As small-unit leaders, they identify and clearly communicate to Marines their purpose within the unit and the mission. Noncommissioned officers, as fire team leaders, squad leaders, or platoon sergeants, interact with their Marines on a regular basis and should be closely familiar with each one’s particular skills, personality, and shortcomings. They should know what each Marine brings to the team and help them realize their value within it. Additionally, they can help Marines identify and understand their greater purposes in life. This can be accomplished by starting with a few questions, such as:

- What makes your day worth getting up for?
- When you are away, what do people miss about you? What is left undone because of your absence?
- What would the biography of your ideal life say?
- What would you do for no pay? What would you pay to do?

Every Marine should have a reason for putting on the uniform and embracing their purpose as a Marine. Periods of rest and recovery and leisure time are necessary for a healthy life. Noncommissioned officers can help ensure Marines sustain their transformation by helping them maintain a healthy work-life balance and by reminding them of their purpose as a Marine.

Leadership Traits

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| • Judgment | • Dependability | • Bearing | • Loyalty |
| • Justice | • Tact | • Unselfishness | • Endurance |
| • Decisiveness | • Initiative | • Courage | • Empathy |
| • Integrity | • Enthusiasm | • Knowledge | |

Influencing the Next Generation

Just as recruiters and drill instructors are entrusted with making the first impression on those aspiring to become Marines, the NCOs around the Corps set the example and establish expectations for those in their sphere of influence. Everything they do or do not do can influence the next generation of Marines. Noncommissioned officers who are positive influences in the unit uplift the entirety of the team. Conversely, a negatively influencing NCO can degrade the unit's trust and confidence in its leadership. Many Marines who stay in the Corps can pinpoint positive and negative leaders they had throughout their enlistment. This shapes Marines' outlook on the future when they ask themselves questions such as, "Do I want to be like my NCOs

because they empowered me? or, “Do I want to be a better leader than my NCOs, because I feel they failed me?”

Positive and negative attitudes are equally infectious in the workspace. Marines who believe they have little-to-no influence on the Marine Corps as an institution should focus instead on their ability to affect those they come in contact with every day. Through positive influence, an NCO might help a Marine struggling to adapt, to learn their MOS, or otherwise settle into their Marine Corps role. There is power in being able to identify gaps and fill them, and to turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one.

The best way to influence Marines is to lead by example. The last sentence of the NCO promotion warrant reads:

You will lead your Marines with firmness, fairness, and dignity while observing and following the orders and directions of your senior leaders and enforcing all regulations and articles governing the discipline of the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Through trial and error, and the example of their own leaders, NCOs expand their arsenal of leadership qualities. As they develop a baseline rhythm of communication, discipline, expectations, and technical proficiency, NCOs refine their personal leadership style to not only achieve mission accomplishment but to maintain a high and consistent level of *esprit de corps*. Working on improving oneself, whether in the Corps for four years or twenty years, shows a level of commitment and dedication Marines will want to emulate.

Chapter 5.

Staff Noncommissioned Officers

Staff noncommissioned officers exemplify a heightened level of commitment that comes with multiple reenlistments and a long-term vision as a career Marine. A promotion to staff sergeant also brings a new level of engagement with Marine Corps leadership. Just as there is a separation between junior Marines and NCOs, the promotion to staff sergeant opens the door to a new peer group with new responsibilities. The primary role of senior enlisted leadership is to shape the future of the Corps. It is their responsibility to contribute to the betterment of the institution for the sake of the Marines around them. At the same time, they must continue improving themselves to remain current and retain their value. Some of the main areas of balancing personal advancement with servant leadership are investing sacrificially, avoiding the expectation of entitlement in their position, and supporting the institution.

BALANCE PERSONAL

ADVANCEMENT WITH SERVANT LEADERSHIP

As Marines advance through the ranks, the balance of their focus gradually shifts. The scope of junior Marines is almost entirely directed on themselves—learning their job, improving their MOS

proficiency, and adapting to their new life as a Marine. While all Marines look out for the welfare of their fellow Marines, it is important for new Marines to focus on developing themselves and filling their roles within the team. The transition from junior Marine to NCO forces a division of time and effort between the newly promoted NCO and the Marines in their charge. Noncommissioned officers must spend a fair amount of time improving and growing individually, while also upholding the responsibilities of their new leadership role by allocating time and energy to other Marines. For SNCOs, the scale tips more heavily toward others and away from themselves, but they cannot abandon their own development and advancement entirely. Marines who focus too much on giving to the next generation without receiving will become depleted. Like water passing through a creek, learning must flow in to flow out; leaders must continually learn to be able to continually teach. Leaders who do not improve themselves will see that creek dry up. Although opportunities exist for SNCOs to create enterprise-level change, most SNCOs will find the greatest opportunities to mold the future of the Corps at the individual level—specifically in the routine interactions with their Marines.

Marines must find the right balance between taking care of themselves and taking care of others. While easy to view peers as being in competition, they are mutually supporting elements that work together as a team toward both individual and unit accomplishment. Personal and professional endeavors are continually overlapping, each reinforcing the other for better. Formal education helps Marines improve their writing, thereby improving their ability to convey orders and ideas to their

subordinate Marines and those in higher command. Athletic competitions feed into a Marine's health, longevity, and job performance. Leadership training that improves communication and conflict management between Marines can be taken home to improve those areas among family members. As a SNCO, taking a holistic approach to development allows for both personal advancement and servant leadership.

Most Marines can think back on a SNCO who shaped their career in some way. Drawing on that influence, SNCOs should also take the time to recognize the position of influence in which they now find themselves. It can be humbling to realize that they no longer look to "The Gunny" for motivation and *esprit de corps*, but instead they *are* The Gunny. As long as there are still years to serve, it is in the interest of the individual and the Corps that every Marine puts forth their best effort and is proactive with their time. This reduces complacency, it renews a motivated spirit, and it sets a positive example for young Marines just learning how to set their own goals.

Invest Sacrificially

A sacrifice is the act of giving up something of value for the sake of something else regarded as more important. An investment is the act of devoting time, effort, means, or energy to a particular undertaking with the expectation of a worthwhile result. To sacrificially invest in a Marine means to devote valuable time and energy into that Marine, expecting those efforts to pay off for both the individual and the Corps. Because of the transient nature of Marines, often the SNCO does not get to see the results first-

hand, but invests anyway. This can be seen when the SNCO takes time during off-duty hours to create a training plan for Marines who struggle with fitness, then meets them in the early morning hours to train. Another example is writing an award for a Marine who has performed above and beyond their peers. Gathering evidence and writing a summary of action requires substantial time and effort, but the recognition received by that Marine will make them feel appreciated and reinvigorated to continue working hard. Finally, leading Marines of different backgrounds, cultures, belief systems, and personalities is no easy task. The SNCO who reads books on leadership, communication, and psychology to better understand their Marines is selflessly setting the next generation up for success.

By nature of their years of service, multiple duty stations, deployments, special duty assignments, PME certifications, and other additional training events, SNCOs' knowledge of how the Marine Corps operates as an institution allows them to teach from a position of broader understanding. For example, an NCO may be able to teach a junior Marine how to perform a task more efficiently or more accurately, but a SNCO may be able to tell that Marine of a time when being able to perform that task saved their life or the life of a fellow Marine. Marines do not need to wait for the war stories of veterans to be published in books to learn from each other's experiences. Staff noncommissioned officers' experiences may not be thrilling or award-worthy but can be used to teach and train the next generation. This is a vital role that the SNCO fills for their Marines, but they must be willing to give their time and energy to passing on those lessons. Investing in a better Marine Corps will almost always require sacrifice.

Avoid the Expectation of Entitlement

Marines at every rank are familiar with training events for “staff and officers,” or social events for “SNCOs only,” or billets available to “E-6 and up.” Staff noncommissioned officers have an increased expectation of responsibility and accountability, as well as increased access to privileges. Whether it’s front-of-line privileges in certain lines or being able to transport a weapon in a personally owned vehicle to the range, there is potential for a sense of entitlement to creep in. Entitlement, the belief that one is inherently deserving of privileges or special treatment, is the antithesis of the selfless leadership expected from Marines. With the wrong attitude, certain privileges that have been granted due to a blanket expectation of trust and respect have the potential to be abused. It is important for SNCOs to understand that the authority, privileges, and allowances entrusted to them are about exactly that—trust. The organization believes they can be trusted because of their proven years of service. It is incumbent upon each individual Marine to continue to validate this trust every day. If they develop a sense of entitlement associated with the privileges, they degrade the rank they wear and the respect of their peers, seniors, and juniors alike. Those SNCOs who continue to sustain their transformation will draw the line between responsibility and entitlement.

Support the Institution

As NCOs, Marines begin to see the bigger picture of how their unit fits into the organization. That awareness lays the groundwork for their promotion to the SNCO ranks, where they

will see how the Marine Corps fits in to the global picture. A healthy appreciation for the Corps' worldwide influence brings a sense of custodial responsibility. Adhering to expectations, requirements, and standards, not just as a Marine but as a SNCO, supports the entire institution from top to bottom and takes the initiative to make improvements when

opportunities arise. The SNCOs who regularly sustain their transformation understand the potential positive and negative implications of their actions.

*I carry myself with
military grace, unbowed
by the weight of
command, unflinching in
the execution of lawful
orders, and unwavering
in my dedication to the
most complete success of
my assigned mission.*

—SNCO Creed

An example of this sustainment is Gunnery Sergeant Bill Miller. In 1956, he implemented the first martial arts training plan at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, SC, and taught it to all new recruits. Years later, Master Sergeant Jim Advincula combined his adolescent martial arts training with his experiences in Vietnam to teach lethal and non-lethal hand-to-hand fighting techniques.

Together, these SNCOs created the foundational elements of today's MCMAP. While they may not have been able to predict their work becoming an official training curriculum in 2001, they knew the importance of Marines being able to fight with and without weapons. As leaders, they recognized a gap in training and took the initiative to close it.



Recruiting Duty



Drill Instructor Duty



**Marine Security
Guard/Embassy Duty**

Special Duty Assignments

SPECIAL DUTY

Most Marines who rededicate and commit themselves to multiple reenlistments, regardless of MOS, will complete a special duty assignment. This is another way SNCOs help shape the Marine Corps. Special duty assignments, often times referred to as independent duties, require high levels of moral, mental, and physical resilience. The three special duty assignments in the Marine Corps are recruiting duty, drill instructor duty, and Marine security guard.

The Marine Corps' story of making Marines begins with recruiting duty. Recruiters return to the civilian environment from which they enlisted and are tasked to integrate with and become a trusted member of the community. Recruiting requires the Marine

to interact with the civilian population in various settings and be faced with many different situations. During this duty they may interact with a veteran who regrets leaving the service, a neighbor who respects their commitment to duty, an outspoken individual who insults the Marine's service, or any other number of individuals' beliefs and backgrounds. While these experiences may challenge or bolster the Marine's commitment to service, the Marine is required to always uphold the core values and respond professionally to any interaction. The one consistent experience for all recruiters is that of speaking to a young adult about potentially becoming a Marine; they can be reminded of their own recruitment experience. Recruiters typically recall the fears and concerns, the excitement and anticipation, and the pride and confidence that comes throughout the process. It is impossible for a recruiter to not feel a shared sense of pride when they see an individual earn the title of Marine and know they played an integral part in that new Marine's transformation. Simultaneously, their own transformation is sustained by that experience. Three years as a recruiter will bring countless expected and unexpected ways for a Marine's transformation to be sustained.

The drill instructor takes over the duties from the recruiters in shaping and molding civilians in their transition to Marine. Their efforts shape the Marine Corps by creating a trained Marine through discipline and direction. Although a recruiter is responsible for screening and evaluating individuals to ensure they meet the requirements for recruit training, drill instructors cannot screen or choose the members of their platoon. They must work with the individuals sent to them from across the country. In

a platoon of 65 individual personalities, backgrounds, belief systems, physical and mental capabilities, and motivations, the Marine drill instructor must find a way to impart everything it means to be a Marine. One of the primary ways they do this is through their own conduct. They are expected and required to set the example for the recruits. Their physical appearance, the way they speak, and the character they present create an ideal for the recruit to emulate.

For Marine drill instructors, these factors can challenge their own transformations. A Marine who was a top performer at a previous duty assignment may find a renewed sense of pride and satisfaction in seeing recruits emulate them, and a mediocre performer may realize the impact of their conduct when they see the same conduct from their platoon. Every 13 weeks, the drill instructor is faced with a new set of recruits who bring unique challenges. With each training cycle, the Marine drill instructors sustain the transformation within themselves while creating transformation in the Marines they train. The drill instructor's influence resonates throughout Marines' service and lifetimes. The story, First Salute, on page 5-10, exemplifies one drill instructor's unique impact.

Embassy duty is unique to the Marine Corps because Marines are the only service entrusted with guarding US embassies and consulates around the world. The Marines selected to this duty are afforded the opportunity to serve in various countries around the world. By the nature of their work, they could be the only Marine an individual outside the United States interacts within their lifetime. By their conduct, one Marine can shape a person's

First Salute



SSgt Ebony Tatum (l) and 2ndLt Christina Valentine

Newly appointed 2ndLt Christina Valentine chose to receive her first salute from one of her sergeant instructors, SSgt Ebony Tatum. It is common for new lieutenants to ask one of their sergeant instructors to render them their first salute, in recognition of the impression that instructor had on them during their training. However, Tatum's influence on Valentine didn't begin during the 10 weeks at Officer Candidate School—it began nearly three years earlier, when Tatum was one of Valentine's drill instructors at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina. Valentine said that Tatum's unique training style during recruit training prepared her to make the transition to become an officer. "Something that is very important about SSgt Tatum is her ability to force you to figure things out," Valentine said. "That's something that really stuck with me throughout my career."²⁶

perception of the entire Marine Corps, the US military, and the United States as a whole. This is a tremendous responsibility to bear, and it must be taken seriously. SNCOs, as detachment commanders, are responsible for the training and conduct of their watch standers. It is up to them to reinforce the importance of these interactions, as small as they may seem.

While it can be easy to become complacent in holding high standards or to be unprofessional during an irritating interaction, Marines must understand it is not about them. They maintain their personal appearance to project an image of trustworthiness and confidence to those who rely on them. They treat everyone with respect and courtesy because the United States relies on the alliance of nations around the world for support and cooperation. As a Marine security guard, there is a higher expectation and scrutiny in the job because there are far-reaching consequences for failing to meet those standards. These posts offer an opportunity for a Marine to experience foreign cultures, gain insight into how Marines are perceived, and realize they either help or hinder that reputation by their individual actions. Additionally, they gain a greater appreciation for other cultures which can shape their conduct in future combat, noncombat, or humanitarian missions. Ultimately, Marines who fill this SDA sustain their transformation by gaining a global perspective of the title they have earned.

Marines filling special duty assignments are the gatekeepers of the Corps' core values. No matter which SDA a Marine fills, such duties will uniquely challenge their own transformation. As representatives of the entire Marine Corps, Marines serving in

these assignments must uphold the highest standards of personal conduct, morality, and professional skill.

SUSTAINING SELF

The SNCO ranks create a gradual progression toward retirement. The journey through the ranks, MOS advancement, and continuous self-improvement in the early years gives way to concluding a career, which means transitioning to civilian life. Whether that be a second career, a focus on family, or genuine retirement, it is only natural for senior Marines to start considering their transition out of the Corps. Continuous development not only reinvigorates the SNCO, but it also sets them up for success in their post-Corps life.

Advanced and Higher Education

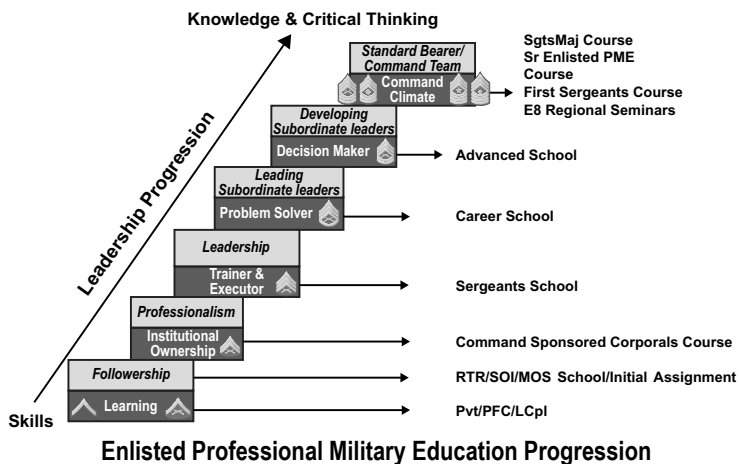
While many Marines take advantage of the education benefits attached to their service, not every Marine does. Some plan to use their benefits after they leave the service, but those who remain committed through multiple enlistments should not put it off. By pursuing on- and off-duty education Marines sustain their own transformation in various ways. Using the education benefits of tuition assistance, scholarships, waived fees, and more, allows the Service member to reap the rewards of the sacrifices they have made over the years. Not using these benefits is akin to depositing money in an account and never taking it out. Education also contributes to their ability to mentor Marines. By expanding their knowledge base, they are better able to relate to

others up and down the chain of command. An effective SNCO intellectually matches or surpasses those who look to them as an example and are therefore better able to mentor junior enlisted Marines and help advise junior officers to start on the right foot. With every instance of helping others, one finds purpose and fulfillment. The knowledge gained through formal education can also help them become more effective in their jobs, accomplish the mission more efficiently, or solve problems before they arise. Advanced education, at every level, is important to pursue.

Professional Military Education

There is no point, personally or professionally, where one “knows it all.” Professional military education continues through every rank and is purposefully designed to challenge and teach Marines at their respective levels. The progression of education by rank is depicted in the figure on page 5-14. As Marines mature in the force, increasing both their understanding and influence, professional military education courses will give them the tools they need to lead.

Marines are life-long learners, expected to continue accruing education regardless of years of service or rank. These courses, schools, and symposiums are not checks in the box for promotion or retention, they offer an opportunity for Marines to reassess their own performance and interact with their peers. With every interaction, there is the potential for renewed motivation, new insight to an old problem, or a reinvigorated love of the Corps. Every Marine at every rank should remain open to these interactions. Novelist Amelia Barr said, “There are no little



events in life, those we think of no consequence may be full of fate, and it is at our own risk if we neglect the acquaintances and opportunities that seem to be casually offered, and of small importance.”²⁷

Through continued education of any kind, each Marine becomes a better leader, a better mentor, and a better teacher to the Marines in their charge. In this way they are able to sustain their own transformation, but also the transformation of their Marines. This is emphasized in Gunnery Sergeant Jose Flores’ education journey, as told on pages 5-15 through 5-16.

Training is Continuous; So is Education

How feasible is getting a college education in the military? According to Gunnery Sergeant Jose Flores, chief drill instructor for Fox Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, not only is it possible, but doing so will benefit Marines in and out of the Marine Corps. Flores has been pursuing higher education for more than 10 years now, because when he was 17, his mother signed his enlistment paperwork on the promise that he would get a degree.

After earning his bachelor's degree, Flores didn't stop pursuing an education. He went back and enrolled in his first class toward a Master's degree. "I fell in love with it," said Flores, "The Marine Corps [gave] me all the tools I needed, and the lessons learned allowed me to get smarter over time." While taking classes on-line, Flores served as a recruiter in New York from 2013-2017. Despite the demanding recruiter's schedule, Flores earned his Master's degree in business in 2014. "I used that as my best selling point—utilize the Marine Corps as that stepping stone to get that education, minus all the debt that normally comes with it," said Flores.

Flores became a drill instructor in 2019. While making Marines, Flores took on-line and on-campus classes to earn his Doctorate in education. "At the end of the day, you are physically exhausted, and the first thing you want to do is rest," said Flores. "I would dedicate another two hours toward my studies...every day that I did stay up and do assignments, I knew I was getting that much closer to my degree."

Continued...



Gunnery Sergeant Jose Flores

College has also helped Flores with professional writing, to his subordinates, his peers, and his superiors. “[Marines] do a lot of writing; it has helped me articulate, communicate, write, take care of the Marines under me, and help guide those above me,” said Flores.

Flores’ advice for those who are thinking of getting a college education is to get started, even if you don’t know how or where to start. He said admissions personnel know some people have been out of school for a while. “They are going to build you up gradually. Get started, take that first step.”

He also recommends developing good time management. “If you were to eliminate Marines’ excuses and break down their time, you could see how much time they are on their phone or on social media, or watching TV...” He encourages reflecting on how to better use that time wisely. College while serving can be intimidating, but the Marine Corps offers many resources to help better each individual.

“Ultimately, the mission of the Marine Corps is to return quality citizens back to society,” said Flores.²⁸

Develop Quality Goals

Staff noncommissioned officers are in a position to have tremendous impact on the organization while also planning for their eventual transition to civilian life. As they mature personally and professionally, their goals must follow suit. If their short-, mid-, and long-term goals resemble the goals set by their junior Marines, it would benefit the SNCO to reach out to a mentor to help them develop goals more aligned to their roles.

For example, a junior Marine might set a goal to read one book from the Professional Reading List every other month. The SNCO should have already created a habit of reading and set a more mature goal like, “write an article for submission to a Marine Corps publication.” This would mean taking the books they read a step further into the realm of analytical thought and idea development. As another example, a junior Marine might set a goal to increase their annual PFT and combat fitness test score by 10 points. The SNCO should already have developed a habit of keeping physically fit and set a more mature goal such as, “reduce my platoon’s rate of training injuries by 10 percent.” This taps into the bigger picture of increasing mission readiness and decreasing risk. It can also have broader effects than merely within their local unit. If every SNCO aimed to reduce their Marines’ rates of injury by 10 percent it could reduce injuries across the organization. Regardless of the goals, they should all be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time based.

Goal setting provides an opportunity to communicate with one’s command. Communicating personal and professional goals to

ones' leaders opens the door for them to provide support. A staff sergeant, by informing the platoon commander of a goal to reduce the platoon's injury rate, might inspire that leader to recommend sending the Marine to attend the Force Fitness Instructor Course. Similarly, if a master sergeant is pursuing a degree in business administration with a focus in organizational leadership, their command can dedicate space in the training, exercise, and evaluation plan for that Marine to attend Lean Six Sigma courses on base. Counseling sessions are perfect for reassessing goal progress, asking for recommendations on achieving next career steps, and requesting support for steps along the way.

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Mentorship and Instruction

The journey does not end when the deed is complete, but after sharing lessons learned along the way. The burden falls upon the senior enlisted ranks to pass along their lessons learned and allow others to benefit from their journey in the hopes that the same fight need not be fought twice. Staff noncommissioned officers are the only ranks called upon to mentor junior enlisted Marines, NCOs, and new junior officers. This creates mentorship up and down the chain of command, and also highlights the tremendous impact one SNCO can have—good or bad. Their knowledge, wisdom, and experience will be drawn upon to help a majority of the force.

Newly enlisted Marines will look to their leaders as examples and come to them for guidance and support as they navigate their careers. As SNCOs engage with new Marines, it is particularly

important to be the Marine they needed as a mentor when they were young. This is not the time to dismiss Marines with remarks of generational differences. While there may be a decade or more of time between their positions, there are timeless truths that can be referenced as needed. Some of these include the need for structure and discipline, empathy and understanding, and safety and trust. Noncommissioned officers will look to them for personal and professional advice about reenlistments, relationships, and other major life events. While still young, NCOs seeking mentorship are more seasoned than junior Marines and may need guidance with more complex issues. Staff noncommissioned officers should keep themselves well-informed of the resources available to assist Marines, as well as any relevant changes in policy or regulations.

Newly commissioned officers will rely on SNCOs' seasoned professionalism to help guide them to make the right decisions as new leaders. The officers they mentor bear accountability for the decisions they make and should be provided with relevant written orders and policies, whenever possible. The SNCOs should use their personal experience and wisdom to amplify rather than replace official policy and doctrine.

Staff noncommissioned officers who are not prepared to meet the needs of those who depend on them create a ripple effect of negativity. By contrast, SNCOs who effectively mentor Marines through all stages of their careers sustain generations of Marines to come. Mentorship is an abstract relationship predicated on personal development and growth. Mentors do not teach, train, or instruct as much as they inspire, motivate, and encourage.

The mentor/mentee relationship is a personal one and SNCOs cannot mentor every single Marine they meet. However, they may take on a formal teaching position in a schoolhouse, PME course, or other Marine Corps educational program. They may volunteer to teach informal classes and seminars within their unit. They may take advantage of ad hoc teaching moments as they arise during other training. Regardless of the setting, SNCOs can sustain the transformation of other Marines by teaching and instructing them wherever needed. An adaptation of Loren Eiseley's essay, *The Star Thrower*, tells the story of a young girl throwing starfish into the ocean after a storm has washed them up on the sand. The narrator looked up and down the shore, seeing hundreds of scattered star-shaped bodies. He told her she will not be able to return them all to the water before they die, as there are too many starfish to make a difference. The little girl replies, "It makes a difference to that one."

So it is with opportunities to teach other Marines. There are far too many teachable moments to be able to use them all, and no one Marine will be able to teach every Marine in the Corps. However, a SNCO who takes a single Marine or a classroom full of them and imparts wisdom honed from years of experience will make a lasting impact on those Marines. It will make a difference to them.

Chapter 6.

Warrant Officers

Most Marines go through their entire careers as either enlisted Marines or commissioned officers. A select few enlisted earn their commission somewhere along the way. An even fewer number make up the ranks of warrant officers. The warrant officer program gives sergeants and SNCOs an opportunity to remain in their MOS and assume a greater level of responsibility, while allowing them to continue providing their technical expertise to the Corps. (A chief warrant officer serving as an infantry weapons officer also carries the title “Marine gunner,” which does not replace their rank. However, a Marine gunner replaces the chief warrant officer insignia on the left collar with a bursting bomb insignia.) Warrant officers are a crucial part of the officer corps and have a unique understanding of what it means to sustain the transformation as a Marine.

Warrant officers benefit from the transformative experiences that took place when they were enlisted Marines. During those years of enlisted service, they gained an appreciation for the work required for a specific warfighting capability to accomplish its mission. As enlisted leaders, they developed a deeper understanding of Marine Corps doctrine, programs, orders, regulations, and traditions. After being selected into the warrant officer program, they received officer training

comparable to lieutenants as they attend the Warrant Officer Basic Course and an MOS-producing school within their respective occupational fields.

The distinguishing characteristic of Marine warrant officers is their dedication and passion for their occupational specialty. Unlike enlisted poolees who select an occupational field based on qualifications and preference, or lieutenants who are assigned an occupational specialty based on class ranking, prior contract, or preference, warrant officers maintain their occupational specialty as they progress into their new roles. It is through their unique technical expertise that they are able to sustain the transformation in themselves and others.

SUSTAINING SELF

Mission Accomplishment

Warrant officers serve as technical advisors to a commander and are sought for their expertise in their specific fields. Their role traces back to the origin and history of the rank. Warrant officers are selected from the ranks of enlisted members who have accumulated enough experience to become experts in their field. In the early days of the US military, longevity of service (and the expertise that came with it) was difficult to find. The rank of warrant officer served as a form of bestowing reward and appreciation upon an individual. The warrant officer rank also granted authority and seniority to the member, filling a crucial leadership gap among officers without experience. Today, warrant officers bring an invaluable combination of authority

and experience. This is the reason some enlisted Marines choose to become warrant officers. The love of their craft drives them to seek new opportunities for enhancing their own capabilities and the abilities of those around them. Finding fulfillment in the satisfaction of a job well done is one of the ways warrant officers can continue to sustain the transformation within themselves. Whether it be overseas or stateside, taking their training and education into real-world execution allows the warrant officer to see their work in action. They should frequently seek opportunities to employ their expertise outside of training.

Most warrant officers see deployment as an opportunity to apply their skillset. In challenging situations, austere conditions, and under demanding circumstances, warrant officers can lead Marines toward mission success. With their depth and breadth of expertise and knowledge, they are able to guide Marines through high-stakes situations. In these times they can see how their involvement contributes to sustaining operations, shaping the battle space, or even saving lives. Through these experiences they are able to renew their purpose for becoming a warrant officer and reinvigorate their commitment to their craft. Read “Marine Awarded Hulbert Trophy” on pages 6-4 and 6-5 to see how Chief Warrant Officer Anthony Viggiani made a difference with his experiences and expertise.

Marine Awarded Hulbert Trophy

The Marines' top general selected Chief Warrant Officer-3 Anthony Viggiani as the next Hulbert Trophy recipient one decade after the gunner's leadership on the battlefield earned him the nation's second-highest valor award.

Viggiani received the Gunner Henry Lewis Hulbert Trophy for Outstanding Leadership for his contributions at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-West, where he trains Marines responsible for creating the next generation of infantrymen. The annual accolade is presented to the infantry weapons officer who "most exemplifies outstanding leadership, courage and technical, tactical and doctrinal expertise within the Marine gunner community," according to the award criteria.

Viggiani earned top praise from staff noncommissioned officers and officers at the school after he enhanced two dozen programs of instruction at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion.

Despite his hesitancy to talk about himself, Viggiani's passion for his profession is evident when he speaks of training the Corps' next infantrymen. His advice is direct: Know your craft and learn from your leaders.

"There is no one thing that outweighs the other, especially when dealing with the techniques, tactics and procedures," Viggiani told Marine Corps Times. "Amateurs train until they

Continued...



CWO-3 Anthony Viggiani accepts the Hulbert Trophy from then-Commandant, General Robert B. Neller.

get it right; professionals train until they can't get it wrong. Never stop learning your craft. This is a profession, not a job."

Viggiani said serving as a squad leader, platoon sergeant, and company gunny helped him hone his tactical skills and informed the leadership skills he now instills in others. He credits his earning the Hulbert Trophy to Marines who have influenced his career along the way.

"I would not be here without the support of my family, as well as the staff NCOs and officers at [the School of Infantry] and throughout my career," said Viggiani.²⁹

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Inspirational Leadership

A warrant officer's knowledge is important in the development of Marines, both those in the enlisted and officer ranks. In addition to leading Marines in their occupational fields, warrant officers are often called upon when shaping operational planning, directing the employment of weapons or technical equipment, reviewing policy, and editing technical publications. The impact they make in their field is vast and can be felt for years to come.

Technical expertise, coupled with officer leadership training, allows the warrant officer to fill a unique position within the Corps. As both a teacher and a leader, they experience the hands-on involvement of the day-to-day job, and the broad scope influence of developing their field. Where the warrant officer truly sustains the transformation of others, however, is through their passion and commitment to their skillsets. Many warrant officers can say their inspiration for joining the ranks is the example set by another warrant officer. Beyond that, warrant officers inspire Marines to learn more, be more creative, practice more, and find their own passion for their work. They are a force multiplier for commitment and dedication to mission accomplishment.

Chapter 7.

Company-Grade Officers

Uniquely within the Department of Defense, all Marine officers start their careers with a rigorous six-month program of infantry leadership training. Regardless of their assigned MOS, the Marine officers' six months of training at The Basic School sets the foundation that enables them to lead in every clime and place. The role of a junior officer lies between the reality of inexperience and the expectation of leadership. Throughout an individual's time in the Marine Corps, different ranks, roles, and responsibilities will determine what missions a Marine will execute. However, each Marine officer is a leader from the start. Whereas "every Marine a rifleman" is the credo of the enlisted ranks, "every Marine officer is a rifle platoon commander" is the professional expectation of the officer corps. Articulating and translating knowledge from the officer training pipeline into action is part of the transformation for the junior officer.

The decisions they make as leaders will have outcomes, intended and unintended, that will affect the lives of the Marines they lead. As they learn from the outcomes of their own decisions, they will develop their own experience and wisdom for accomplishing the tasks before them. It is not enough to be a technical expert in one's specialty. Emotional intelligence, temperament, and the ability to work with Marines through their personal and

professional problems are part of being an officer. Unit culture is established at the highest level by the commanding officer, reinforced by junior officers and SNCOs, and exercised by all Marines throughout the unit. A junior officer must engage in these actions while exercising thoughtfulness, good judgment, and humility.

LEADING WITH HUMILITY

Marine officers must have the courage to lead in combat, the empathy to counsel a distressed Marine, the integrity to enforce unpopular decisions, and the humility to accept correction from more experienced enlisted Marines. Leaders are expected to be and do many things; most notably, they make decisions. By the nature of a military organization, subordinate Marines follow the lawful orders of their leaders. Without humility, young officers may become caught up in their own authority and lose touch with their moral obligation to their Marines.

Although final decisions are an individual Marine's sole responsibility, the deliberation is not. Junior officers are encouraged to consult with their nearest enlisted leader, solicit input from more experienced officers, and learn from the mistakes others have made before them before making a decision. There may be an assumption that when a junior officer asks for advice they are looking for the answer to the problem, thereby taking the perceived "easy" path. This is a fallacy, where the belief is that wisdom is only gained through one's own mistakes. By demonstrating humility and an open-minded willingness to

learn, the Marine officer shows respect for their fellow Marines, and respect for the responsibilities they bear.

There are no easy shortcuts to becoming a good officer. It takes a nose-to-the-grindstone dedication every day. No one leader has all the answers. Humbly seeking knowledge is a proactive, continuous process that requires pulling information from myriad sources. As leaders of Marines, junior officers can look to successes and failures they experience personally or learn from others as they adapt their own leadership styles and improve themselves and their Marines. One of the leadership principles the Marine Corps teaches is “know yourself and seek self-improvement.” The mantle of leadership weighs heavily on the shoulders of every officer and demands that each strengthen themselves to bear the load. Marine officers must persevere in providing discipline and leadership for their Marines, but also for themselves.

CONFIDENCE WITHOUT EXPERIENCE

Junior officers may have prior enlisted experience or may have attended a military academy, but most were college graduates commissioned through an Officer Selection Office or Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Regardless of their commissioning source, each officer brings with them a unique background and various life experiences. The new officer may be inexperienced as a lieutenant, but rarely is inexperienced in life. Individuals can commission at any age between their early 20s and mid-30s. Officers may be single or married, with or without children, and come from many backgrounds. Some

officers have performed on national stages, traveled around the world, or owned a business. Each commissioning class creates officers of different religious beliefs, sexual orientations, ethnicities, and races. A common question college students ask officer selection officers is, “Do I need to have a certain major or degree to become a Marine officer?” The answer is no, meaning the Corps is full of leaders who are educated in fields of psychology, criminal justice, business management, journalism, and many others. Their individual circumstances combined with the training received as a candidate or cadet will influence how they lead a platoon of Marines. They lean heavily on their mentors and senior officers to help them in the profession of arms, but they may also use past and present life experiences to shape their decisions. Briefing skills can be drawn from experience in the performing arts, aggression in tactical engagements can be honed from competitive sports, and interpersonal conflict resolution can be recalled from coaching or advising.

Young officers who find their confidence waning due to a perceived lack of experience should not discount their own knowledge, experience, and skills; they can draw on times in the classroom, playing field, or conference room that required courage, discernment, or discipline. Additionally, although the ultimate responsibility for any decision made, and accountability for the outcome, will always fall on the officer, when time and circumstances permit, the officer should solicit advice and guidance from as many trusted sources as possible. “Marine Awarded Medal for Combat Valor” on page 7-5 tells the story of 1stLt Rebecca Turpin being faced with an enemy attack. Through

Marine Awarded Medal for Combat Valor

As a supply officer in 2009, 1stLt Rebecca Turpin, from Combat Logistics Battalion-3, led an 18-vehicle convoy between forward operating bases in Afghanistan. What should have been a one-day trip became more than 50 hours of attacks by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), small arms, and rocket propelled grenades. She called in air strikes and directed machine gunners through waves of attacks. She navigated IEDs, performed vehicle repairs, coordinated support with explosive ordnance disposal, conducted sweeps, gathered intelligence, redirected the convoy multiple times, and used Cobra pilots as eyes in the sky as she led her Marines to safety. Arriving at their destination (Forward Operating Base Musa Qala), Lt Turpin and her Marines began their real mission: supply distribution and vehicle maintenance to the Marines. She was awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with "V" device for heroism or valor in combat.



1stLt Rebecca Turpin

"Throughout the mission, Lieutenant Turpin led by example and set the standard of calm under fire. She ensured that her Marines effectively fought their way out of dangerous situations and completed her logistics resupply mission. Her efforts ensured the delivery of vital combat logistics support to [Forward Operating Base] Musa Qalah while eliminating several enemy threats along the way." —LtCol Michael Jernigan, Commanding Officer, CLB-3³⁰

the ordeal, she embraced her role as a leader while maximizing the skillsets and experience of those around her.

The Marine Corps identifies, screens, and trains officers through a combination of aggressive leadership, strong character, and sound judgment. The individual's unique character and personality will allow them to make the role their own. Positive traits must be cultivated and provided the opportunity to flourish in order for the new officer to sustain their transformation.

SUSTAINING SELF

Staff Noncommissioned Officer/Officer Relationship

Upon arrival at their first unit, junior officers will have subject matter experts around them to assist with developing in their new role. As they grow, they will build professional and personal relationships with those around them. Most notably is their relationship with the SNCO. It is among a SNCO's duties to mentor and train young officers. This mentorship is not just for the sake of the officer, but for the sake of the junior Marines whose lives the officer's decisions ultimately effect. As young officers find their foothold in the early years of their career, they can turn to the seasoned SNCO for support and guidance to sustain themselves through the harder times. The SNCO provides guidance from experience where the junior officer has none. The junior officer looks to the SNCO to help them make the right decision and to build their confidence through experience.

It is one thing to seek out a relationship and another to establish one and sustain it over time. Every relationship is different, based on the individuals involved and the scope of their responsibilities. There is no easy answer and there are no magic words to create the perfect relationship, but it is most easily started with open communication. An honest and genuine conversation sets the foundation for the relationship and for the officer's transformation from that of a student in training to a strong Marine leader. The SNCO will see the officer's desire to not just make the easy or popular decisions, but the right decisions. Marine officers who are eager to learn open themselves up to endless opportunities for training and growth, sustaining themselves through continual transformation.

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Command Climate

As leaders, junior officers have the responsibility for ensuring the well-being of their subordinates. What is not always understood is that they also have the responsibility of

“To all Marine officers into whose keeping the Corps is year by year entrusted....”

—The Marine Officer's Guide

looking after the future of the Corps. This may require making hard decisions that result in Marines being separated from the Corps, or easy decisions that allow individuals who have the potential for future leadership to be put into positions where they can continue to grow. It is important to continue developing those future leaders who will take up the responsibility after their

superiors move onto the next assignment. It is incumbent on officers at every level to create an environment in which their Marines will thrive, perhaps drawing inspiration from the Corps' 26th commandant, General Louis Wilson (see inset below), who set the ultimate example for creating a good environment. Small

General Wilson's Personnel Campaign

After the Vietnam War, the Corps had to address problems with drug use, lack of discipline, and low morale. General Louis Wilson, for which the headquarters building of Officer Candidates School is named, made it his agenda not only to purge the ranks of drug users and other non-performers but also vowed to improve the quality of Marines and equipment in the Corps, even, he said, if the only Marines who remained were himself and the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.



Gen Louis Wilson

He called on “all Marines to get in step and do so smartly,” then launched his campaign, discharging underperformers and promoting leaders. He changed recruiting standards, requiring that all enlisted Marines be high school graduates (which at the time was unprecedented in the Services), established the Air-Ground Combat Center at Twenty-nine Palms, California to improve training opportunities, and acquired new equipment, specifically the F/A-18 Hornet, which served the Corps for the next 50 years. Wilson's tenure also saw the commandant's billet given full membership as one of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.³¹

acts of encouraging and rewarding initiative will go a long way in instilling the responsible mindset needed for these future leaders to come into their own.

MCDP 7, *Learning*, provides key insight into the role of learning and leadership, positing that in order “to continuously improve, Marines take a focused, self-disciplined approach to career-long learning and instill a culture of learning throughout our Corps.”³² Marine officers must not only instill a culture of learning throughout the Corps, but they must also cultivate one within themselves. A Marine officer can never cease to exercise critical thought, sound judgment, and a deep-rooted commitment to leading Marines. The lives and welfare of enlisted Marines are at stake, and anything less than complete and total commitment to serving as a military officer within the profession of arms is a disservice to oneself, the Corps, and ultimately, the Marines under one’s charge.

Lead by Example

Every Marine officer accepts the substantial burden of leadership upon accepting their commissions. Officers without prior enlisted experience are in the unique position of being brand new to the organization, but also in charge of its members.

“It is not enough that you merely know a leader’s qualities and not enough that you proclaim them; you must exhibit them. To exact discipline, you must first possess self-discipline, and to demand unsparing attention to duty, you must spare none yourself.”

—The Marine Officer’s Guide

Marine officers are held to the highest standards of ethics because they must be trusted to make the right decision when it matters. Sustaining the transformation is not just about looking like a Marine in uniform but living up to what it represents. When in doubt, go back to the motto *Ductus Exemplo*—lead by example. Marines are not looking to their lieutenants for depth of experience. They look to them to be the embodiment of the standards of a Marine. Learning how to balance the uncomfortable pressure of high expectations while displaying the utmost respect for enlisted Marines' welfare, time, and morale is a foundational element of being a junior officer. Marine officers who demonstrate the standards they expect of their Marines sustain the transformation of those around them. They establish themselves as trustworthy leaders who embody the ideals of the institution.

Chapter 8.

Field-Grade Officers

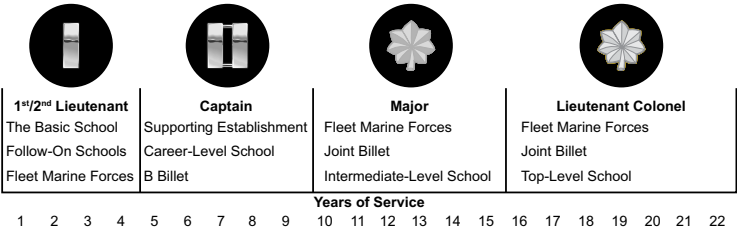
Field-grade officers represent the small percentage of individuals selected for the next level of Marine Corps officership. With even more academic and professional experience under their belts, field-grade officers serve as the bridge between general officers and junior officers. They work at the strategic level, participating in higher-level operational planning teams, while still dominating at the tactical level, directing young captains and lieutenants in tasks that they, themselves, have mastered. The value of the field-grade level lies in diversity of experience. They have the maturity and wisdom to lead the Corps into the future. To this point, these officers should seek continued growth in their leadership abilities, avoid complacency, and pursue higher education, all while influencing and shaping the future Marine Corps.

CONTINUED GROWTH AS A LEADER

For many officers, the decision to remain in the service or return to civilian life is made in the early years. Influenced by their experiences, mentors, individual goals, and their own performance, they choose one path or another for their future. Other times, the path is chosen for them, such as when the institution determines they have not met the desired criteria of a Marine leader. For those whose service comes to an end, they have done what few could accomplish: held the impressive title of Marine and gained the valuable experience that comes with it.

They did their part and will continue to serve their country as a citizen. Those who decide to remain in the Marine Corps add a layer of maturity, drive, and knowledge to the officer corps. Unlike their enlisted counterparts, there is no longer time requirement for any obligated service. They can no longer say, “I am trying it out” or, “We will see how it goes.” They have made a conscious decision to accept each new assignment, indefinitely.

As Marine officers gain experience in the Corps and earn promotions, their responsibilities increase. As responsibility increases, the potential effect officers can have on Marines does, too. Instead of a new lieutenant affecting a small section or platoon of Marines, a major can influence an entire battalion, squadron, regiment, or group. There may also be the opportunity to lead more than just Marines. Joint environments bring other Services and civilians under their responsibility, which requires adaptability in leadership style. The potential influence a field-grade officer can have on the institution demands that officers approach their own growth and development with gravity and sincerity. The figure below shows some of the potential areas for growth in an officer’s career.



Typical Officer Career Progression

MCDP 7 *Learning* states—

*As Marines rise in rank and position, continuous learning and developing our professional skills are a professional expectation. We must make the most of every learning opportunity, fostering our subordinates' learning while continuing our own.*³³

Learning takes place in different ways for different individuals. Learning can take place in a classroom through continuing graduate education studies, or in the field through training exercises and practical application. It takes place through professional military education and collaboration with peers, and potentially in every conversation and experience that occur during the mundane hours of the day. The quickest way to experience transformative learning is through challenge. It may be taking on new physical challenges beyond the Marine Corps standards or being professionally challenged with a more senior assignment. In times of challenge and struggle, the mind is forced to use creativity, innovation, and out-of-the-box thinking to find a solution; the ego is forced to face humility; and character is developed through determination and persistence. All of these experiences are not only beneficial, but essential, for the Marine leader's growth. The point at which an uncomfortable task or activity becomes comfortable is the indication that the Marine has mastered that ability and it is now time to seek out the next challenge and opportunity to learn. Continued personal development throughout a Marine's career helps fuel professional development, sustaining their transformation as a Marine.

By the time Marines become field-grade officers, certain actions are second nature. Requirements like understanding acronyms, briefing during a command and staff meeting, organizing battalion formations, understanding the material readiness brief, communicating with the monitor, or grading a fitness report are no longer daunting. What seemed like an impossible mountain to climb at first is now a scalable wall. They may have been through deployments, integrated training exercises, mountain warfare training exercises, jungle warfare exercises, weapons tactics instruction, and other testing events. Their knowledge base is high, and their abilities have steadily improved. However, an increase in competence is not an excuse for complacency. In every grade, Marines must remain engaged and committed to excellence.

Avoiding Complacency

Over time, developing confidence in themselves and their abilities can lure individuals into a false sense of security. They are not bound by a date on a calendar or a renewed oath of commitment. The threat of apathy and complacency is always just around the corner. Field-grade officers are responsible for avoiding complacency within themselves and discouraging it in those around them. They can do this by renewing their commitment with each new duty station or assignment.

Complacency comes from the comfort zone. During the early years of service, the comfort zone is nowhere to be found because tasks and activities are new, exciting, daunting, and challenging. Just when Marines feel they are starting to get the hang of something, they are given new billets, taught new skill sets, or

sent to new training environments. There is no time or opportunity to become complacent because it would mean the end of all they've worked for. Once they've settled into a new position and become adjusted to the day-to-day operations of their role, the comfort zone returns. Rote familiarity with standing operating procedures, mastered skills and abilities, and reduced performance competition can signal the start of leniency in training and mission accomplishment.

“One definition of complacency is a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, while unaware of some potential danger, defect or the like; self-satisfaction with an existing situation, condition, etc. Another less lofty definition is failure to pay attention to details; failure to conduct an adequate risk assessment resulting in negligence, bodily harm and destruction to property.”³⁴

—Gen Mark A. Milley

The effects of complacency have been seen all too often in every area of the Corps. Some of the biggest lessons are unfortunately learned through tragedy. Every Marine, but particularly those in positions of authority, must study these stories and compare them to their own actions. Have you allowed yourself to become complacent? Below are some of the ways complacency has manifested throughout Marine Corps history:

- Marines Killed in Beirut, Lebanon, 1982-1984: Marine senior leaders assumed force protection and security procedures were adequate and being handled by forces outside their command.

Their failure to assess the capabilities and limitations of both friendly and enemy forces resulted in a deadly enemy attack.

- Marines Killed in Training Event, 2013: Leaders at multiple levels failed to ensure Marines had received adequate training prior to participating in a night exercise. Human error while conducting standing operating procedures resulted in multiple Marines being killed.
- Marines Killed in Accidental Weapons Discharges: Negligent discharges occurred during weapons cleaning or function testing due to complacency with weapons handling and safety. These mishaps have resulted in numerous deaths, disfigurements, and permanent disability.

In 2021, the Marine Corps created a “mishap library,” which is available through MarineNet. This allows all Marines the ability to review cases of often-preventable tragedies and learn from them. At the very least, complacency creates low morale and missed opportunity. At worst, it costs lives. To remain vigilant in warfighting as well as in garrison is vital to adaptability in the modern fighting force. Apathy dulls the senses to subtle opportunities for growth and justifies self-absolution of the responsibility of leadership. Sustaining the transformation as a Marine staves off complacency by requiring the pursuit of excellence and advancement at every level and every stage of their careers.

SUSTAINING SELF

Higher Education

For the field-grade officer, continuing education is necessary to maintain warfighting capabilities. Earning master's degrees or doctorates, or attending institutions like the Marine Corps Command and Staff College will not only expand their library of knowledge, but will also expose them to individuals of different backgrounds and ideas. Field-grade officers should make a concerted effort to frequently reengage in educational opportunities to attain fresh ideas and perspectives. Research and development in the areas of technology, psychology, leadership, and tactics are continuously evolving and leaders need to remain engaged in these changes.

In Ian Leslie's book, *Curious: The Desire to Know and Why Your Future Depends On It*, (a book in the Commandant's Reading List archive) the author, a human behavior specialist, addresses ignorance in two ways. In the first, he describes the "ignorant but happy" effect: "When people are confident that they have the answers they become blithely incurious about alternatives."³⁵ As in the past, the Marine Corps of the future will demand much from its field-grade officers. Like the seasoned SNCO, they are in the prime of leadership—they possess years of accrued experience and time to use it. Neither the individual nor the organization can afford to have ignorant leaders. The continual pursuit of higher education, and the application of the knowledge gained, will help Marines stay engaged, relevant, and effective, thereby sustaining their transformation.

Ian Leslie also states, “Ignorance as a deliberate choice, can be used to reinforce prejudice and discrimination.”³⁶ Refusing to continue one’s education results in a narrow scope of knowledge and understanding. Engaging in intellectual debate, hearing the insights of others, and being exposed to new ideas all help the Marine officer relate to others. On a global scale, it improves their relationship with allies and partners. On a professional level, it allows them to better train and understand their Marines. On a personal level, it creates a greater sense of satisfaction in performance and interpersonal relationships. A well-rounded education is a key component of a well-rounded Marine.

Numerous educational opportunities are available for Marine officers and can be found through the Marine Corps or civilian institutions. The flyer on page 8-9 highlights one of these opportunities at the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare. For the most proficient field-grade officers, joint duty or cross-service education is a possibility. Successful selection on any one of a variety of military educational boards can provide PME opportunities for their next rank, joint service experience, or a master's degree in their chosen field of study. This not only sets them up for success in the Marine Corps but makes them more competitive upon their eventual departure from the Marine Corps. Marine officers are never satisfied with being average, and education continues to set them apart from their peers in and out of the Marine Corps.

Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare

Mission

Inspired by its namesake, the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare enables an interdisciplinary approach to complex problem solving, fosters an environment that enhances our collective warfighting capability, and facilitates and encourages novel solutions to current and future warfighting challenges in order to expand the Corps' competitive edge and improve our warfighting effectiveness.

Non-Resident Fellows Program

The Krulak Center is a think tank at the Marine Corps University focused on creating enhanced educational opportunities for students and faculty engaged in professional military education. Our mission is to enable an interdisciplinary approach to support all students and faculty through complex problem solving, fostering an environment that enhances the collective warfighting capability, and facilitating and encouraging novel solutions to current and future warfighting challenges to expand the Corps' competitive edge and improve our warfighting effectiveness. Krulak Center non-resident fellows support the mission of the Krulak Center as needed and able.

Non-resident fellows participate in the annual Innovation Summit; support instruction at the university by visiting the campus; virtually contribute to Krulak Center events, and support writing competitions. All Krulak Center non-resident fellows can collaborate with MCU staff, faculty, and the Marine Corps University Foundation; participate in wargames; and support staff rides.³⁷

SUSTAINING OTHERS

Shaping the Corps

Being a field-grade officer means using the experiences and skills accrued throughout the first few years of service to benefit the organization. Those who have the mentality of “working for the Marines” build the Marine Corps to even higher possibilities of greatness.

As the executors of orders and policies, field-grade officers now also create them. They understand the “why” behind decisions they may not have understood before and are reinforcing those decisions to ensure they work. However, as officers progress higher in rank, they also become more removed from enlisted Marines. Focusing on the operational and strategic levels of war has many positives when it comes to broadening one’s scope and military prowess; however, losing touch with the troops on the ground can have a negative effect on a unit’s readiness and mission. A leader’s decisions can direct how Marines spend the hours of their lives, and the quality of that time. Because of this, field-grade officers must occasionally recalibrate their leadership compasses to validate their approach to leading Marines and ensure serving the institution is not just in line with the Marines’ and unit’s mission, but also with their own personal standards. As field-grade officers, majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels shape the present and future Marine Corps upward through policies and Corps-wide directives, and downward through direct

interaction with their Marines. As with SNCOs, the tremendous influence of this intermediate position should not be taken lightly or underestimated.

For officers serving as commanders and directors, the options for shaping the Corps are widely varied. Captains often serve as company commanders, officer selection officers, and TBS instructors. Majors can hold billets as battalion executive officers, recruiting station commanders, and regional affairs officers. As a lieutenant colonel, they may fill the role of squadron commander, Marine expeditionary unit executive officer, or schoolhouse director. By the time they are colonels these Marines are assigned to positions like regimental commander, Commandant of Midshipmen at the United States Naval Academy, or chief of staff. Whether leading Marines, training aspiring Marines, interacting with the international community, or influencing Corps directives and policies, their decisions and actions have far-reaching effects every day. It is with this in mind that one's thoughts and behavior should be under strict scrutiny and discipline. Corrections not made become standards now accepted—for others and self. On the battlefield, the senior officers make strategic decisions about who to send into the fray. A young lieutenant may lead the charge, but it was the lieutenant colonel who decided to send that company to face the enemy. Marines from the most junior private to the most senior general must be able to trust in the judgment and integrity of those making life and death decisions. Accountability is key as others look to senior officers to be paragons of morality and virtue and uphold the standards they prescribe.

The opportunities to create policies, testify to Congress, or lead in battle are in small proportion to the one-on-one interactions had on a regular basis. For example, a large boulder when dropped into a pond creates one large circle of ripples, but a handful of small pebbles create a multitude of them. Though individually smaller, these ripples mesh with each other, creating new patterns and affecting each other even after the original pebble was thrown. So it is with the leadership of field-grade officers: they have the opportunity and access to direct consequential “large boulders,” but also carry a “handful of pebbles” each day that may have a greater affect on their Marines.

One of these “pebbles” that can affect myriad others is mentoring junior officers. Field-grade officers welcome new Marine officers at their units and remember how they felt on their first assignment. It is up to them to

“If something small that I do helps or makes a difference, tell me what it is and I’ll do more of it.”

—BGen Lorna Mahlock³⁸

step in, create a positive first impression, and establish a solid relationship. Whether or not they had this for themselves, shaping this moment in a new officer’s career might establish a positive tradition, which that officer, in turn, can pass on to future officers. Mentoring new officers helps reaffirm their commitment to the Marine Corps, reinforces unit culture, and supports them during the beginning of their career. Doing this builds the Marine Corps to be a better organization.

A second “pebble” is taking the lead on upholding the core values and leadership traits and principles. Even though times of close

and personal interaction with lower-ranking enlisted Marines becomes less and less frequent as the officer rises in rank, this only raises the importance of those interactions. In each conversation, unit formation, ceremony, or disciplinary action, Marines scrutinize the words and actions of their leaders. Treating others with respect whether or not they are present, keeping a neat and presentable uniform, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, being proficient and knowledgeable in their work, and holding themselves to the same standards they hold their Marines are some of the ways leaders influence those around them on a daily basis. As the old adage goes, “Actions speak louder than words.” Seeing the integrity of their leaders inspires other Marines to do the right thing. By contrast, hypocrisy in leaders creates the space for misconduct to seem excusable. It is the small ripples of momentary interactions that influence scores of Marines for years to come, ultimately shaping the future of the entire Marine Corps.

Chapter 9.

Conclusion

Each Marine is entrusted with the legacy of the Marine Corps. The Corps' legacy is honored through tradition and ritual, however the best way to honor the Corps is to add to its illustrious history. Time-honored rituals are not just reminders of past glory, but an invitation to all Marines to display their commitment to the country, Corps, and one another.

Somewhere in the Corps, a junior officer is leading a platoon on a successful raid, inspiring an enlisted Marine to seek their commission; a first sergeant is mentoring a junior Marine in distress, providing assistance in their hour of need; and, in a small community, a Marine is coaching a youth sports team and their example will inspire their players to become the next generation of Marines. Every day, around the world, Marines are sustaining the transformation in themselves and others. While this publication has touched on several ways sustainment is attained, there are endless opportunities to find a renewal of *esprit de corps*.

As the future of the Corps is yet to be determined, it is up to each Marine wearing the uniform to help shape it. As in the past, the fights yet to be fought will demand a smart, capable, and willing force. The standards must be upheld, the training must be relevant, and leaders' ethics and morals must be above reproach.

Success does not happen by accident; it comes from every Marine taking initiative and being actively engaged.

No matter their position or location, whether in uniform or after completing one's service, Marines are held up around the world as the embodiment of leadership. Each Marine will preserve and enhance the legacy of our Corps with their deeds. The mission continues for all Marines as they offer their very best to our republic and its citizens.

All Marines would do well to remember the final words from the NCO Creed:

"I must give the very best I have for my Marines, my Corps, and my Country for though today I instruct and supervise in peace, tomorrow, I may lead in war."

Notes

Chapter 1

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2. Quote attributed to Major General Frank E. Lowe, US Army, Presidential observer on Korean War, Washington Daily News (26 January 1952). <https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/Brief-Histories/Korean-War-Commemoration/Quotes>. (Last accessed 8 November 2023.)

3. A letter from Lieutenant General Krulak to Commandant General Randolph Pate as quoted in Robert Coram’s, *Brute: The Life of Victor Krulak, U.S. Marine* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2010), pp. 246–47.

Chapter 2

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6. ALMAR 042/00, *The Vision Statement of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters US Marine Corps, May 2008) paragraph 5.

7. “Talent Management 2030,” (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, US Marine Corps, November 2021). Talent Management 2030 and all updates can be found at <https://www.marines.mil/Talent-Management/>. (Last accessed 8 November 2023.)

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9. General Charles Krulak, USMC, 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three-Block War,” *Leatherneck* (January 1999) Vol. 82, Issue 1, p. 14.

10. MCDP 1, *Warfighting* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1997) pp. 1-15 to 1-16.

Chapter 3

11. MCO 1020.34H, *Marine Corps Uniform Regulations* (Washington D.C.: Headquarters, US Marine Corps, May 2018) p. 1-1 of enclosure (1).

12. SemperToons creator, GySgt. Charles Wolfe, Jr., as quoted in one of his drawings.

13. “Lieutenant Colonel Alfred A. Cunningham” (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps University, Marine Corps History Division). <https://www.usmcu.edu/Research/Marine-Corps-History-Division/People/Whos-Who-in-Marine-Corps-History/Abrell-Cushman/Lieutenant-Colonel-Alfred-Austell-Cunningham/>. (Last accessed 8 November 2023.)

14. Paraphrased from October 2016 III Marine Expeditionary Unit article found at <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/212934/experimental-innovation-houston-marine-save-corps-15-million>. (Last accessed 8 November 2023.)

15. Paraphrased from article by Sergeant Ray Sears, “Lance Corporal Receives Silver Star” MARINES Magazine (February 1992), Vol. 21, Issue 2, p. 24.

16. The Human Performance Branch website provides more information on the Four Areas of Fitness at <https://www.fitness.marines.mil/Resilience/>. Visit this site for more information and tools for Marines and leaders.

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Chapter 5

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Chapter 8

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35. Ian Leslie, *Curious: The Desire to Know and Why your Future Depends on it* (New York: Basic Books, 2015) p. 40.

36. Ibid, p. 101.

37. For more information on the programs provided by the Brute Krulak Center for Innovation and Future Warfare visit, <https://www.usmcu.edu/Academic-Programs/Brute-Krulak-Center-for-Innovation-and-Creativity/>.

38. Quote taken from interview with Brigadier General Lorna Mahlock in a video by Cpl Michael Parks and Cpl Troy Saunders, Defense Media Activity—Marines. (15 March 2019.) “USMC Black History Month 2019: Lorna Mahlock” <https://www.dvidshub.net/video/665671/usmc-black-history-month-2019-lorna-mahlock>. (Last accessed 16 November 2023.)