

PREPARATION*

BY MAJOR GENERAL COMMANDANT JOHN A. LEJEUNE

MY subject to-day is: "In Time of Peace Prepare for War." This subject is a hackneyed one and has been worn threadbare during the years immediately preceding our entry into the World War. In fact, its discussion continued for some time after its expiration. Of late the public has lost interest in it to a great extent and many of our people have concluded that wars are over for all time, so far as this country is concerned. Nevertheless, it is still a subject of vital importance to the military and naval services. In fact, it constitutes our profession.

I will not discuss the matter in its larger aspects. These concern questions of national policy over which we can hope to have little, if any, influence—whether we are to have compulsory military training; whether we are to accumulate great resources of cannon, munitions and other war material; whether we are to have a puissant fleet complete in all its parts; whether the air service is to be developed to a maximum strength are all important topics, but do not pertain to us personally. We are, however, both as individuals and as officers deeply interested in and affected by all questions pertaining to the Marine Corps.

It is within our province and within our power to have a great influence on its destiny. We can make it or mar it. Each of us can do a large part in making it strong in numbers and in preparing it in all respects to meet any emergency that may arise. How these things can be done is the subject I will endeavor to discuss. In the final analysis the size of the Marine Corps will be determined by the American people. We must consider, therefore, how we can retain and if possible increase the affection and esteem in which the Marine Corps is now held by the American people. How can this be done? The answer is threefold:

- (a) Administer the affairs of the Marine Corps economically and efficiently;
- (b) Keep our officers and men usefully employed;
- (c) Make the Marine Corps the most efficient military organization in the World.

Sensing the will of the American people, shortly after assuming the office of Commandant, I issued an order urging economy. It

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was rather a strange doctrine then. All of us were accustomed to liberal spending; but little by little economies were effected and expenses came down. Our officers have responded wholeheartedly to this policy everywhere.

Quantico has been an experimental laboratory and ways were discovered to save huge sums. The Headquarters Staff has coöperated fully. Commanding Officers and Post Quartermasters have joined in the crusade. The excellent results are already apparent. The Corps has established a reputation for economy. This year there will be no deficiency. The Members of Congress who write the Appropriation Bills have become convinced that the Marine Corps is wedded to the policy of economy. It is well that this is true, because the American people have determined on economy in public expenditures, and woe betide the organization, civil or military, that does not conform to this policy. I dwell on this because I believe it will have great bearing on the decision to be made by Congress, this year and each year following, concerning the size of the Marine Corps.

EMPLOYMENT IN USEFUL WORK

The American people, and therefore Members of Congress, are apt to believe that the officers and men of the military and naval establishments are tax eaters and non-producers; that their time is spent in idleness.

This belief we must combat by engaging in useful work. We can not deceive the public; it must be work that is actually useful. I have little to say in this regard, because I feel that the Marine Corps, more than any other military organization, is engaged in useful work. In Haiti and Santo Domingo two small brigades, each equivalent to about one-half of a World War Regiment, are carrying out the policy of our Nation by maintaining peace and tranquility and giving their inhabitants an opportunity for peace, prosperity and happiness. That work is worth while, as is all work done for the benefit of another people.

The guards at all navy yards, ammunition depots, naval bases, etc., consist of Marines. They are protecting and rendering secure billions of dollars worth of government property. At Parris Island and Mare Island we are training young Americans to be better men physically, mentally and morally; and this process is continued here, on board ship, and wherever they may go during their enlistments.

At Marine Barracks, Washington, the Marine Corps Institute is engaged in unobtrusive but vitally important task, which is

having a far-reaching effect in popularizing our Corps and in increasing the fitness of the enlisted men.

Finally, at Quantico you have been able to witness many concrete examples of useful work. This post has been vastly improved by the labor of enlisted men, and hundreds of civilians have been replaced by them. Fortunately, Quantico is near Washington, and as we do not believe in hiding our light under a bushel, our good friends in Congress have seen with their own eyes the evidences of our activities. We must continue our efforts in this direction everywhere.

MILITARY EFFICIENCY

But let us not forget the object of our existence, which is to make and keep the Marine Corps a great fighting machine—the greatest on earth, bar none. The successful accomplishment of this mission involves many things. It means building up and maintaining a high *Esprit de Corps*. Every officer and every man should have it. Each one of us should use all his strength to add to it.

It is a sacred thing. It is our priceless heritage from the past. It has come to us from the heroic dead. *Esprit* can not exist very long in an untrained mob. Discipline must be maintained; military punctilio observed; but there is also the obligation to deal justly, fairly, kindly, and honorably with those who are under our command; and to serve loyally and faithfully those who command us. This obligation is mutual.

We must also devote our energies and our talent to training the units we may command in the noble profession of arms. It is a noble profession because its ideals are high; because to attain real success in it, its devotees must practice the great military virtues, I mean of self-control,—industry energy, fidelity, unselfishness, honor, courage, and self-sacrifice.

Finally, to teach the profession of arms we must first learn it ourselves. That is why the Marine Corps Schools have been established; this is why I am so earnestly endeavoring to extend our educational system throughout the Corps.

You have here the opportunity to prosecute your studies undisturbed by any other duties. I believe that you are making good use of your time, and that when you leave here you will be filled with the desire to impart to others the knowledge you have acquired.

In that way only can you show your high appreciation of the earnest, painstaking and intelligent efforts of the School Staff.

I thank you all.