

PURPOSE, READINESS, QUALITY, PROGRESS

By Gen L. F. Chapman, Jr.

Extracts from remarks made by the Commandant at the annual Navy League Symposium, 17 March 1971.

There are four things I want to stress: purpose, readiness, quality, and progress. These are the principles guiding all efforts in the Marine Corps in 1971. We are well aware of the fact that we have a proud history and a solid present. We are not going to change anything just for the sake of change, because we know that change does not always mean progress, and progress is what we are seeking. That has always been true in the Marine Corps, and it's certainly true now.

Purpose

One thing we are absolutely sure won't change in our Corps is our purpose. Our purpose in 1971 remains exactly what it was in our beginning, nearly two centuries ago. Like the other armed forces of our nation, the purpose of the Marine Corps is the defense of the United States. And reality means facing the fact that the ultimate application of defense is the harsh environment of combat.

For Marines, combat still means facing an enemy on the personal levels of bayonet to bayonet, howitzer to howitzer, and aircraft to aircraft. No one wants this to happen, but we know that it can't be wished away—and that it won't go away by ignoring it. We also know that the safest and best way to meet this possibility is to be ready for it. Every unit and individual Marine must be an element of readiness — conditioned, trained, disciplined, lean, tough, and ready to fulfill our purpose.

If our training is traditionally tough, it's because the application of our purpose is tough, in combat and in being constantly ready for combat. If our discipline is traditionally exacting, it is because discipline is the key to winning and surviving in battle. If we traditionally demand pride in personal appearance and unit integrity, it is because pride gives strength, and we must be strong to serve our purpose.

No, we are not abandoning the old Corps, we are only building a new Corps. And we are building our new Corps in the very best image of the old.

The Tradition of Readiness

The first thing we are doing in building our new Corps, is making every ef-

fort to improve our traditional posture of readiness. One of the assets we have in our efforts in an advantage we had in the Old Corps: size. We are not going to be big.

For more than a decade before our heavy commitment in Vietnam, our Corps kept its strength at around 200,000 Marines. The war, and the need to maintain almost three divisions and a multi-group reinforced aircraft wing in Vietnam, required the Marine Corps to expand to a top wartime strength of 317,000. Now we are down to 238,000 and growing even slimmer. And slimmer is what we want to be.

Quality

After long years of hoping and planning, we have established a Staff Non-commissioned Officers Academy at Quantico. We've always been able to maintain organizational NCO schools to meet the particular needs of the units sponsoring them, but this academy is Marine Corps-wide. I'm very enthusiastic about it. It is, I think, an opportunity to reinforce our proven, experienced noncommissioned officer corps, into a breed of doctrine-trained professionals.

For officers, more will be going to our intermediate level Amphibious Warfare School, and the more advanced Command and Staff College, both at Quantico. And to reinforce these resident schools, our COPE program has been successfully underway for a year.

COPE is an acronym for Continuous Officer Professional Education. COPE is one of the best things that's ever happened to us, and it is a good example of progress.

Progress

Keeping up with modern challenges requires modern training and modern equipment, but it also requires modern facilities for a new breed of Marines. Five years ago the Marine Corps carefully planned a program for ensuring that half of all new construction would be devoted to the comfort of Marines. New barracks, bachelor officers quarters, clubs and recreational facilities are the results. Never dreamed of in the Old Corps, these new accommodations add comfort and dignity to the demands of professionalism and readiness. But we aren't going to stop with what we have.

More are being built, and more are being planned.

Dignity and comfort, and the right tools for the right jobs are clear needs for a solid, professional Marine Corps. But there is more. If we expect each Marine to take pride in himself, to feel a part of the great tradition of his Corps, and to be proud of his mission; he must see himself as more than a well-taken-care-of technician. The outward sign of this is the Marine uniform. And who can think of a Marine without thinking of the Marine dress blue uniform.

Early this year we received authority to issue the dress blue uniform to all Marines graduating from boot camp.

Now, we've had Marines in blues all along. But for the past 21 years only those Marines serving in special units or jobs were issued blues. Within the next two years we hope to have every Marine in the dress uniform of his Corps—the traditional dress uniform of his Corps. And we intend to keep it that way.

And we're getting rid of a uniform, too. As blues come back, the old khaki—or light tan—uniform is on the way out. Beginning this summer the distinctive Marine green service uniform will be optional for Marines the year round.

The new summer-weight greens are actually lighter and cooler than the old tropical worsted khaki. They don't soil as fast either. And of course, there can be no question what service is represented when a Marine wears green, or blue, the whole year. Marines will continue to be issued and wear khaki uniforms until our stocks are gone. But in three years after initial issue, the summer green uniform will not be optional, it will be a regulation fact.

Another item, or I should say *other items* of dress that we have been testing are leather belts. Selected officers have been test-wearing the old over-the-shoulder around-the-waist leather—or in this case corfam—Sam Browne Belt. It has been almost unanimous in approval by the wearers and by the people who have seen them. And certain, selected enlisted Marines have been wearing the old fair leather belt—this is also made of corfam, a little narrower than the Sam Browne, and without the over-the-shoulder strap. This too has met with broad approval. We're considering both items now, and approval or disapproval should be forthcoming.

All of this dressing up has a purpose: to enhance our professional image within ourselves. Professional service to the people of the United States is our goal in everything we do; from the way we think to the way we act; and from the way we know our profession to the way we look. This takes honest, loyal, dedicated service. Marines must continue to be proud of that service and the uniforms they wear.

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