

A message from the Commandant

# the challenge of leadership

by Gen Robert E. Cushman, Jr.



**E**arly this year, in my statement to the Congress concerning the posture of the Marine Corps, I made the point that our traditional insistence on quality includes *quality of spirit*. In this regard, I have been impressed by the displays of drive and enthusiasm I have seen on my trips to the field—attitudes which affect not only our operational performance, but our internal harmony as well.

We must continue to set the moral tone and example at the highest level. We must continue to see quality leadership from officers and NCO's down through the chain of command—and we must continue to place the highest priority on identifying the young Marines who show the aptitude and desire to fill the leadership billets at the lowest levels. We must:

- ▶ Train them;
- ▶ Back them up;
- ▶ Let them lead; and
- ▶ Make them lead.

The need for strong leadership from the ground up has never been greater, as we face the task of maintaining constant combat readiness in an increasingly austere environment.

The *challenge* to our leaders has never been greater, for they must inspire a new breed of Marines—the newest—who are quick to follow someone they believe in . . . and quick to tune out anyone they don't. The real leader believes in *them* . . . and shows it.

And the *opportunity* for effective leadership has never been greater, with the Marine Corps devoting unprecedented amounts of time, attention, and resources to provide the tools for knowledgeable, enthusiastic leaders to bring out the best in their units.

It is heartening to see the beneficial effects of our Human Relations training program spreading throughout the Corps, reinforced by such command-sponsored programs as FMFPAC's "PEOPLE." Marines are beginning to really talk to each other . . . and *listen* to each other. The insights developed during the twenty-hour training sessions can become the keys which open the way to an *esprit de Corps* which is stronger than ever. It's an exciting prospect.

The final effectiveness of these programs, of course, will be a measure of the degree of personal involvement and vigorous, confident leadership at all levels. Heightened awareness of and concern for the needs of all Marines must be carried beyond the classroom and become a matter of daily practice—a clear demonstration of the John A. Lejeune type of leadership which truly "looks after our own."

Creating this understanding, concern and good leadership is a project for all hands. Reluctance to participate, whatever the cause, is unacceptable. Those who would hang back are reminded of Theodore Roosevelt's words:

*It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong men stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena.*

After all, this re-emphasis of strong leadership is not such a new idea . . .

It is as old as the Corps.

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