



10 November 1988

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

During the past year, you have continued to march throughout the globe asking for so little and doing so much! You are truly an exceptional Corps of Marines. Our Marines and weapons are first rate, as is our supporting establishment. We are, by any worldwide standard of measure, a thoroughly modern fighting force. This reality gives us the unique opportunity to raise, even higher, the level of professionalism throughout our Corps. In my view, it is within our grasp to reach unparalleled heights of peacetime preparedness. We are not going to let this opportunity pass as we strive for total excellence in all that we do. To this end, I intend to continue to emphasize our Corps' traditional values, and to change, where necessary, to reflect those values.

"The Marine Corps has no ambition beyond the performance of its duty to its country. Its sole honor derives from that recognition which cannot be denied to a Corps of Marines who have sought for themselves little more than a life of hardship and the most hazardous assignments in battle." These inspiring thoughts of General Clifton B. Cates, our 19th Commandant, sufficed for generations who fought in Korea, Vietnam, and countless other locations in the succeeding 39 years, and whom we emulate today. The quality of a Marine's performance resides in a state of mind. Only when every Marine understands that he is first a rifleman will we field the combined arms teams capable of deploying to do what the nation demands. We are warriors, first and foremost. Our physical and mental being must be concentrated on enhancing within ourselves what we call the warrior virtues: courage, integrity, intelligence, and concerned leadership. Our predecessors understood and possessed these virtues. If they had not, they would not have triumphed in battle at Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, or throughout the I Corps tactical zone of Vietnam.

As we celebrate the 213th Birthday of your Corps, I would ask that each of us take a moment to reflect on those Marines who have preceded us, and to rededicate ourselves toward achieving and maintaining the higher standard of excellence that the nation expects of her Marines. Happy Birthday to all Marines, to the Sailors who serve with us, to the Civilians who support us, and to our very special Marine Corps Family.

A.M. GRAY
General, U.S. Marine Corps