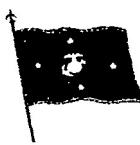


MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT



Marines,

One of the most honored hallmarks of our Corps is the tradition that "Marines take care of our own." More than just words, this tradition reflects our unique esprit and defines the attitudes and actions which demonstrate our concern for each other. Taking care of our own is something we do both as a Corps and as individual Marines. As we fulfill our responsibilities and commitments to the nation, all Marines must have complete confidence that their chain of command, and the Marines around them care about them and will look out for them in peacetime just as they would in war. This is not just ensuring that they get hot chow on the objective, that their pay is correct or that their SRB is updated, but also by providing the personal concern and advice that cannot be found in a regulation or field manual. All Marines must have the certain knowledge that they can count on each other for support, encouragement, and assistance—that if he or she has a problem, fellow Marines will do everything within their power to help, and will continue to help, until that problem is corrected.

Our concern for each other goes beyond just making sure we show up for work. It means giving a damn—it means *caring*. We must show the same commitment to take care of our own that we have to mission accomplishment—in going the extra mile and making the extra effort. Just as we are prepared to fight in any clime and place, Marines must be prepared to help a fellow Marine anytime and anywhere—on and off duty—on and off base. The Marine Corps is a family and we take care of our own just as a family does. This demands that we all show a genuine concern for every aspect of a Marine's life.

Every Marine counts. No matter how skilled or experienced, every Marine is a part of the team, with an important role to play. In a formation of Marines there are no strangers. There may be some who have never met, but because they wear the uniform of United States Marines they should *know* they have people they can count on.

Our motto, "Semper Fidelis," embodies the creeds we live by as Marines: loyalty to our Nation, loyalty to our Corps and our leadership, and loyalty to each other as Marines. "Taking care of our own," is not just a saying, it is a way of life which all Marines must adopt as their own and continuously practice. The true strength of the Marine Corps has never been a matter of numbers or equipment. For over 220 years, the strength of our Corps has been that bond of trust between Marines whose lives depend on each other. There is no more important task for any Marine than living up to this sacred trust.

Semper Fidelis,

C. C. KRULAK
General, U.S. Marine Corps