

An Open Letter From The 31st Commandant

I am deeply honored to be entrusted with the responsibility as your Commandant. There is no military title in the world that carries more respect than "Marine," no finer fighting force in the world, and thus no greater honor that I could be given. Your Commandant has many responsibilities. First, to ensure that the Marine Corps is trained, equipped, and organized to meet the challenges of the 21st Century. Second, that when we fight, we win. Third, that all members of our Marine Corps family—Marines, the civilians who work beside us, and our families—receive fair and equitable treatment. My predecessor—General Carl E. Mundy Jr.—has prepared the way for us. As we take the next step toward the 21st Century, I want to take this opportunity to share with you those things that are most important to me—five key pillars which I believe are integral to the future success of our Corps and which will guide my actions in the months and years ahead.

Our Warfighting: The most important responsibility we have to the American people is to win the nation's battles. We must be ready at a moment's notice to go anywhere, against any foe, to fight and *win!* This is why the American people have a Marine Corps. This is what they expect from their Marines. Today, we are a lean, ready, and professional fighting force. It is our responsibility to remain so in a changing world. This means we have to be able to adapt, to innovate, and to think ahead. My goal is keep our organizations and operational thinking focused on the future so that no matter what the

crisis, no matter what the threat, the nation will have but one thought: "Send in the Marines."

Our People: Our ability to fight and win rests, as it always has, with our Marines—our most precious asset. They deserve fair, scrupulous, and unbiased treatment. We must ensure that these words are matched by our actions. This is my obligation and it is the obligation of each member of the chain of command, from top to bottom. This obligation not only requires commanders to take prompt and vigorous action to correct deviations, it requires that our policies and processes—in recruiting, classification, assignment, promotion, education, reenlistment, separation and retirement—reflect these principles. This commitment to fairness is a hallmark of our Corps. All Marines must be confident that our personnel policies and processes work for them and for the Marine Corps which all so selflessly serve.

Our Core Values: Major General John A. Lejeune wrote that the term "Marine" had come to signify all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue. This cannot change. I expect the behavior of Marines to exemplify that which is good about our nation. I do not intend for honor, courage, and commitment to be just words—I expect for them to frame the way all Marines live and act. There are no shades of gray when it comes to our core values.

Our Education and Training: To ensure that there is a solid return on our investment in education and training, we must take advantage of opportunities in garrison so that

when we go to the field we don't waste time or money. We will do that through the use of simulation, virtual reality, models and warfighting games. Professional Military Education is the foundation for productive training and it will be available to all Marines. Education and training are the keys to ensuring that we remain ready. We will study and train with one goal in mind—to fight and win.

Our Naval Character: The Navy and Marine Corps are a team—an unbeatable team. Together we provide an extremely versatile and unique warfighting capability to the nation. We can project power ashore and we can remain offshore. Always forward deployed, our presence—and the strength and resolve that it implies—speaks for our nation and influences events. We fight, we keep the peace, we help. I will be working closely with the Chief of Naval Operations to strengthen the capabilities the sea services provide to the nation.

I will speak to you in *Leatherneck* often in the months and years ahead. We will be moving out smartly and I will need your help. Your creative ideas are important to me. I need to know what we are doing right, what we are doing wrong, what we are doing that we should not be doing, and what we are failing to do that badly needs doing. This is *our* Marine Corps and I ask each of you to join me as we march toward the 21st Century.

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