

## OUR WARFIGHTING FLAME

Warfighting—no other word in our vocabulary better captures what Marines are all about. It is our heritage, the ultimate nature of our business today, and our dominant priority as we prepare for the future. Warfighting is the reason we exist—to win our country's battles.

Much talk today centers on warfighting technology—"smart" weapons, Global Positioning Satellites, digital communications and other wizardry have all become part of how we talk about warfighting. Indeed, we have made important warfighting improvements with the introduction of new technologies and systems.

However, the foundation of our warfighting capability is not technology. As it has been since 1775, the hard "steel" of our warfighting capability is the individual Marine. This is our ethos. You see it in our recruiting posters.

Wars are fought by people, and our Corps is a warfighting organization; therefore, people—Marines—are the foundation of our capabilities. The individual Marine is our greatest warfighting asset, and thus it is here that we will make our greatest effort for the future. Ultimately, the individual Marine will sway the tides of conflict in our favor—ultimately, the individual Marine will determine how the Marine Corps wins its battles.

A famous author once said that Marines possessed an "almost mystical spirit," and noted that spirit in her own brother as he endured the hardships of boot camp and combat experience in Europe. There might be many reasons for that spirit, but its light shines partly from the warrior flame that has always burned in the hearts of Marines. Young men and women do not merely "become" Marines; they are transformed—in mind, in body and in spirit. Marines are forged in the rigors of initial training, strengthened by bonds of shared hardship, sharpened by training and education, and honed to a fine edge by innovation and ingenuity. In each Marine a warrior flame is lit—stoked from the sparks of a common desire to serve America, and a sense of duty to ideals like patriotism, honor, valor and fidelity. This warrior flame has burned in the hearts of Marines since 1775. As we consider the



future ahead of us, let's also remember this flame and rekindle its light—it is the spark of our transformation and the torch of our warfighting spirit. It brightens the pathway to the future and is our bond with the past. At our core, the warrior flame sparks us as warfighters. Even as we expand our minds through education, hone our bodies through regular fitness regimens, and equip our Marine Corps with more sophisticated technologies, the warrior flame should drive and sustain us as we move our warfighting capabilities into the future.

The Marine Corps remains the nation's naval, combined arms, expeditionary force in readiness.

While we stand ready to perform "such other duties as the President may direct," the reason we exist is the same as it has always been—warfighting. In the future, we will explore technologies that improve our speed, protection, mobility and lethality. However, the Marine Corps will weigh technology not only in terms of capability, but also in terms of its benefits to our people—our Marines—the warfighters.

We have no more important a responsibility than to win the nation's battles. Our ability to do so rests squarely on our warfighting capability. This capability is built not only upon technology, but most importantly upon a smarter, stronger, disciplined, motivated and dedicated warfighter—the Marine. As it does today, the Marine Corps of the future will give our nation an unbeatable force, composed of highly capable warfighters, equipped with the best technology, bound by the unbreakable bond of a unique esprit, and imbued with a singular focus—to serve the nation as its force in readiness.

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