



“Making Marines”

The two most important things the Marine Corps does for America is make Marines and win battles. “Winning battles” is about warfighting, and warfighting is in a state of change. “Making Marines” is about people—and the battles we will face in the future will place increasing demands on the character and courage of those who become U.S. Marines.

Preparing for the Future

The fall of the Soviet Union and breakup of Yugoslavia, the tragedies in Somalia and Rwanda, the conflict in Liberia, all signal a trend of nations dividing along ethnic, religious or tribal lines. This trend not only warns of crises between nations and within nations, but also greater international instability—something we call “chaos”—which will make the strongest demands for values-based character in our Marine warriors.

We've seen it before in places like Somalia, Bosnia and Liberia, and we'll see it again—Marines patrolling embattled cities and towns, experiencing the spectrum of conflict in just three blocks. The Marine who operates in this unpredictable environment must be equipped with the finest weapons America can provide. That's a given. But, to be successful, that Marine must also be equipped with an agile mind and unwavering character.

The Marines who will serve in this uncertain future will

come from a society where fathers, mothers, families, schools and churches are working day and night to instill in their children character and values—those ideals that are, and have been, the bedrock of our nation. They have been doing a great job, but it is a struggle—a struggle the Marine Corps will join, just as we have joined other battles when America has called. We want to take the values that these young men and women have been given by their families and build upon them. Our success in this will determine, in part, the success of our Corps.

The Transformation Process

With this kind of future ahead of us, the Commandant's planning guidance emphasized the importance of making Marines—warfighters who represent that which is good about our nation. From this came an in-depth look at *how* we make Marines, from the first meeting with a recruiter, through recruit training, and onward throughout a Marine's career. To make Marines and win battles in the future, we are enhancing our tried and true methods—methods that build bonds of pride, camaraderie and esprit that have long been central to the success of Marines in combat. We are improving—making tougher—the process by which we “transform” today's young Americans into Marines. It is a comprehensive effort, beginning the moment the young man or woman first meets the recruiter. It will continue

throughout recruit training and on through a Marine's initial assignment. This process will make our Marines tougher—physically, mentally and morally. We will build unit cohesion—reinforcing the principles of selflessness, teamwork, followership and leadership that are central to our traditional ethos. We will also sustain the transformation throughout a Marine's career and beyond. In the end, "making Marines" not only means winning battles, it also means a stronger nation. These are sacred trusts given us by the American people.

The strength of our recruit training will be the foundation upon which we build the transformation. However, the process covers four phases of a typical career—recruiting, recruit training, unit cohesion in the units they are assigned to, and sustainment beyond initial training.

Recruiting. Everything begins with finding the right people. We are placing more emphasis on character in our recruiting process, and we are improving our Delayed Entry Pool Program. Pre-boot camp training will include routine physical conditioning events, study guides for basic military subjects, and introduction to Marine Corps history and traditions. Most importantly, our recruits will be introduced to our core values in preparation for the challenges that begin at Boot Camp.

Recruit Training. Boot Camp has a well-documented history of challenge and intensity—that will not change. Our philosophy, concept and approach to that training have been proven time and time again—in the ultimate test of combat. What we are doing is adding one week to recruit training in order to incorporate a "defining moment" for our recruits. We call this part of the transformation the "Crucible"—events that not only challenge recruits physically and mentally, but which also demand teamwork for success.

The Crucible events will be the last "tough" week of recruit training, completing the transformation that began 10 weeks before. It will be a "rite of passage" in recruit training. The Crucible will be identical—day by day, hour by hour and minute by minute—for both male and female recruits at our recruit depots. The Crucible will build and reinforce teamwork and our core values at every step. Our drill instructors, always vital to recruit training, will see their role take on added meaning during Crucible week—where they pass beyond trainer and teacher, to mentor and teammate.

The Crucible begins with a 0300 night movement that sets the stage for the next 54 hours. There are a number of challenging events designed to develop the team's problem-solving skills, as well as their ability to work together. Core values are reinforced on "warrior stations" that link Marine Corps heroes to the physical and mental challenges of the Crucible events. Each warrior station is named for a Marine hero whose actions demonstrate the values we want recruits to absorb. The Crucible ends on Saturday morning with a demanding hike ending at morning colors, the awarding of the Marine Corps emblem to recruits by their DIs, a warrior's breakfast and a video message from the Commandant.

The 12th and final week provides the "final polish."

Recruits will have increased responsibility in completing this last step in their transformation to "Marine." This week is capped with a family day, base liberty and the graduation parade.

Unit Cohesion. Unit cohesion is the intense bonding of Marines, strengthened over time, resulting in absolute trust and a sense of teamwork and camaraderie throughout the unit. We will improve unit cohesion by forming teams soon after recruit training (at our "skill-producing" schools) and assigning those teams to specific FMF units. Once assigned, those Marines will remain with that unit until the end of their enlistments.

For example, a nine-man team formed upon arrival at the School of Infantry (SOI) would be joined for their last major field exercise at SOI by a squad leader from the rifle company to which they would be assigned. The squad leader would begin that all-important team bonding during that last field exercise and then take that squad to its new home. They would remain together for at least one complete deployment cycle and optimally for their entire enlistments. By cementing teamwork early, and by training and deploying these teams together, we will ultimately increase the combat power of our MAGTFs.

Sustaining the Transformation. Complemented by a renewed emphasis on warfighting, combat leadership and the concepts of responsibility and accountability—"sustaining the transformation" will be a continuous part of all we do as Marines. Our Professional Military Education (PME) schools will educate our leadership—officer and NCO—in "whole Marine" character development. Leaders in the operating forces and supporting establishment will accomplish tasks in ways that support and reinforce our core values as well as team building. Training in our ethos is a shared responsibility for all Marines, and lasts until the day a Marine hangs up the uniform for the last time...and longer.

How we "make Marines"—how we build and sustain the transformation that lasts a lifetime—is our legacy. The U.S. Marine, whose daily performance and conduct reflect that which is good about our nation, is always faithful, always prepared to fight and always wins. The men and women who embody our ethos, our values, our esprit and our ideals are America's Corps of Marines. As it has been in the past, their ability to "win battles" in the future will ultimately depend upon how we transform them into Marines—Marines who are the nation's premier crisis response force...first on the scene, first to fight, first to quell disturbances, first to help.



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