



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

MARINE FORCES RESERVE
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NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70146-5400

IN REPLY TO:
1000
CMD
1 Jun 01

FORCE POLICY LETTER 1-01

From: Commander, Marine Forces Reserve
To: General Officers
Commanding Officers
Officers in Charge
Inspector-Instructors

Subj: COMMANDER'S POLICY LETTER

Encl: (1) Commander's Guidance
(2) Message to Commanding Officers
(3) Message to I-I and Site Commanders

1. As the subject line indicates this intended as the first in a series of Policy Letters to the leaders of Marine Forces Reserve. The attachments contain my "command philosophy" and represent my initial guidance to you all. Please take some time to review them and to think about the message contained. Ensuring that we understand and accept those basic principles will be essential to our mutual success.

2. Enclosure (1) will be sent to all MARFORRES installation with instructions to permanently post it. However, I ask that all commanders find a way to review it with their Marines and sailors to ensure that the full content of the message is delivered. Whether you do this personally, or empower subordinate leaders to do so, I leave to your discretion. My only goal is that each member of the Force participate in a guided discussion with a Staff Non-Commissioned Officer or an Officer to review and discuss my guidance.

3. Enclosure (2) is obviously more personal. Again, please review it and think about the message contained. MSC Commanders are requested to implement means to ensure that all of their subordinate commanders understand the import of this message. I have sent enclosure (3) separately to all I-I and Site Commanders. I ask that each of you meet with your active duty support structure to discuss your respective, and equally important, leadership roles.

4. I begin my tour of duty with a realistic and profound respect for the scope of my responsibilities. However, I have no fear or

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hesitation about those responsibilities because of the confidence I have in each of you as Marine leaders. If you take care of your Marines and Sailors and remain true to your oath of office, Marine Forces Reserve will be Ready, Willing and ABLE.


D. M. MCCARTHY

MARINE FORCES RESERVE
COMMANDER'S GUIDANCE

Marine Forces Reserve must be READY, WILLING, and ABLE.

MARFORRES is comprised of two groups of Marines and Sailors - those who are not currently on active duty, and those who are. The former represent the core of our warfighting strength; the latter are the critical enablers who ensure we are always combat ready. Both groups are essential. Neither group could succeed without the other. We are all members of "the first team." We must all meet "first team" standards.

There is, and can only be, one unit commander. No commander has a "counterpart."

The title "Marine" seldom needs a modifying adjective. Don't be a "hyphenated Marine."

Focus on mobilization readiness. If a task or event makes you and your unit more ready for mobilization and warfighting success, it is worth doing. If it does not meet that standard, look hard to determine if it is really necessary.

Every Marine and Sailor in MARFORRES needs to understand how, and with whom, they will deploy and fight after mobilization. Leaders must make it their business to get this information out to all hands.

Nothing we do in peacetime training is worth the loss of a life. Every Marine is a safety officer at all times. If something seems unsafe, stop the action.

Not all of the things that enhance readiness involve duty in the field. Not all of them are "fun." Family, medical, and administrative readiness are essential. Readiness failures in these areas will be show-stoppers.

Assess and report readiness realistically. Hidden problems don't get fixed. We must be good, not just look good.

If you don't have the people you need - because of recruiting, retention or safety failures - you cannot be ready. The unit commander is singularly responsible for personnel readiness.

Be ready for a MORDT at all times. Don't expect much notice. If you are ready for a MORDT, you will be ready to mobilize.

We are an expeditionary force. That means being frugal with the resources entrusted to us. Live and train as you will deploy and fight.

Make sure that every Marine and Sailor who leaves the Force under honorable conditions does so with a sense of satisfaction and with our thanks.

Enjoy, and take pride in, being an important part of Marine Forces Reserve.

MESSAGE TO COMMANDING OFFICERS

You have been entrusted with the most critical responsibility in Marine Forces Reserve - that of command. It is a singular honor and an awesome challenge. For most of you, it is a responsibility that you must balance with other obligations - to your family, a civilian occupation, and your community. I cannot tell you how to make time for everything, only that you must find a way to do so.

Your unit has only one commander. No one shares the responsibility of command with you. You have no "counterpart." Others can assist you, but you alone are responsible. I will look no further than you to determine what your unit has done or failed to do.

Command of MARFORRES units includes several unique features. On the ground side, we have Inspector-Instructor staffs who perform many missions in direct support of Division and FSSG units. I-I's and CO's work closely together, but they do not share responsibilities. I say again, a unit has only one commander. Within the 4th MAW, we have a system of Site Commanders. In both cases, active and reserve leaders must forge a professional relationship which acknowledges unity of command while taking full advantage of the unique resources the I-I or Site Commander and his staff can deliver. This relationship must be one of trust, mutual respect, and continuous communication. You cannot succeed separately. Since the active duty staff is in direct support of the unit, the staff's role may seem subservient. This is absolutely not the case, and would be no more appropriate than to call the role of a supporting artillery battery "subservient." By the same token, however, the active duty staff exists primarily to aid the unit in mission accomplishment. If the unit fails to succeed, the I-I and his staff have most likely failed in their mission as well. I want you to sit down with your I-I or Site Commander and discuss the content of this letter. Make sure you have a meeting of the minds as to what each of you must do.

People are your most important resource. You must take care of them in every way you can. Your first obligation to them is rigorous training. Training that is well planned, free from unreasonable danger, and challenging will keep your Marines coming back. No one joined the Marine Corps to sit around the Training Center. Your Marines live for challenge. Give it to them, and they will respond enthusiastically and will want to stay with you.

You must also look to the well-being of your Marines and their families. This can be a daunting task because you may have little or no contact with your Marines except during training. Find innovative ways to stay connected - a Key Volunteer Network, a newsletter, Family Day activities. Make sure your subordinates

stay in close touch with their Marines throughout the month. Leadership is personal.

While you are caring for others, do not neglect your own spiritual, mental and physical well being. You must stay in shape - in every way - if you are to lead from the front.

Finally, prepare yourself and your Marines for mobilization. Consider it a real possibility every day. Do not allow anyone to fall prey to the thought that the Marine Corps Reserve will not be called on your watch. None of us know when it will happen, but all must know that it will. You owe it to your outfit to be prepared in every way.

Assumption of command should be the best day of your career. Enjoy each subsequent day you are privileged to lead Marines. That is the only way to prepare for that day when you must relinquish command to the next fortunate Marine and move on to other challenges.

Thanks for your willingness to assume this responsibility.

Semper Fidelis,
D. M. McCarthy

MESSAGE TO INSPECTOR-INSTRUCTORS
AND SITE COMMANDERS

You are engaged in one of the most challenging assignments to which Marine Officers are assigned. You are commanders of "non-FMF" organizations, which cannot be compared to any other organizations in the Marine Corps, and which are placed in direct support of "FMF" organizations. You are a "base commander," and CMC's representative to your community. You do not exercise command authority over the organizations you support, and yet you are expected to be a mentor, instructor, maintainer of standards, and a multitude of other things as well. Even though you lack command authority for the supported unit, you have a great impact on its success or failure. You must also command, lead and motivate active duty Marines who serve with you in this challenging environment.

As I said, you have a very tough job. But I can assure you of one thing - others have done this job before, and done it very well. Because of them, our Corps has one of the finest - if not the finest - Reserves in the world. Other Services have tried to adopt some or all of our system. They have recognized that the costly investment we make in active component support to the Reserve pays huge dividends.

Those of us who have served in this system know that, despite its complexities and inherent difficulties, it is the best way for us to train and prepare our Reserve units for mobilization.

Could we use a different - more "conventional" - system? Certainly we could. Could we simply assign the same number of active duty personnel to a Reserve unit, integrate them all into the T/O of the unit, assign command to the senior active duty officer present? Unquestionably, yes. Could we nominally assign Reserves to various leadership billets, but give the real authority to the I-Is? Yes, we could.

However, to do any of those things would produce a situation like that found by many organizations at the start of World War II. Officers and NCOs who had "led" units in pre-War years were summarily removed from those organizations upon mobilization and replaced by Regulars. The destructive impact was felt for years. What "leader" worthy of the title would want to serve under such circumstances? What unit member would ever have confidence in those entrusted with command?

I trust by now you have seen my letter to commanders. It says they must be in command, because they alone are responsible. Do not have any doubt that I mean that. The same direction is true for you - you command a unit for which you are responsible. You are also in direct support of one or more other units. Your mission is as important as that of anyone providing supporting arms. Having myself been an I-I, and having served at other

times with some great ones, I confidently believe that if you accomplish that mission you, and the Marines and Sailors you command, will find tremendous satisfaction.

Marine Forces Reserve will support you every step of the way.

Semper Fidelis,

D. M. McCarthy