



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
CHEMICAL BIOLOGICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE FORCE
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IN REPLY REFER TO:
CO
21 May 13

From: Commanding Officer
To: All Hands

Subj: PHILOSOPHY OF COMMAND

1. The transition from one leader to the next is never easy for a unit or the individual. Everyone has concerns, doubts, and questions about what lies ahead and is interested in what will change, shift, or simply remain the same. As I take command of CBIRF, some things will undoubtedly change as I apply my personal views and experience and the personnel in this command make suggestions about how to do things better or differently; conversely, many procedures, policies, and methods will remain the same, as this has been a highly successful command since long before my arrival. The following paragraphs outline my broad philosophies of command and are shared here to provide insight into the way I think and fight; as we develop as a team, I will provide periodic commander's guidance and intent to aid in focusing our efforts across the command.

2. **MISSION.** I am a mission-oriented Marine, and mission comes first in everything we will do - we are tasked with responding to a credible threat of a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high yield explosive event in order to assist local, state, or federal agencies and designated Combatant Commanders in the conduct of consequence management operations. Additionally, it is clear that this mission has specified and implied tasks that we all need to consider and understand - some of our implied tasks include representing the United States Marine Corps and ensuring we project a professional, competent, and capable image. I believe in mission-type orders due to my personality, training, and the unique command relationships CBIRF will function under; accordingly, I expect Marines Sailors assigned to CBIRF to be able to understand mission type orders and the implications our decisions have on our ability to complete our mission. You will either accomplish your mission or not - there is no "almost", "basically", or "could have". Don't forget that first and foremost, we are United States Marines and Sailors - Marines have been responding to our Nation's call for over 230 years, not because the United States needs a Marine Corps, but because our great nation wants Marines. As such, we have a responsibility and the mission to represent our Nation and our Corps with honor, courage, and commitment out of respect for those who have made the title "Marine" what it is today. We have inherited the title Marine and all that it implies from those warriors who have gone before, some who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country. We will pass this legacy on to those who come after us, and we need to ensure that our performance, behavior, and actions do nothing to tarnish this legacy and that we continue to build on the great history of our Corps.

3. **AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY.** Everyone in CBIRF is my responsibility everything you do or fail to do rests on my shoulders. Every one of you has some degree of authority delegated to you by me, and this authority ensures that decisions are made at the lowest possible level - don't be afraid to make a decision within the scope of your authority. Communicate your decision up and down the chain of command - if you get it wrong or make a mistake, freely admit it and correct or modify your decision. With few exceptions, we can recover from a bad decision and will be better for it - an individual can't easily recover if one compromises his or her integrity by attempting to cover up a bad decision or

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poor judgment. It is my responsibility to support you in your decisions; your responsibility is to learn how I think and fight, learn rules and regulations, and make measured decisions based on fact and logical thought - not emotion.

4. **INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.** Every individual is responsible for his or her action or inaction at all times - there is nothing that can change or mitigate this simple fact. We are an all-volunteer military, and as such every one of you is here due to a choice you made. I admire and respect each of you for making this decision when our Nation is at war, and I firmly believe that serving in the military is an honor and a privilege. I expect work, hard work, and your very best in every undertaking; the amount of work and effort required from you only increases with promotion to higher grades and billets. There is often a tendency in units where the majority of the personnel are of a similar rank for individuals to hide in the group and develop a "herd" mentality - this is unacceptable. I will treat you commensurate with your experience, rank, and billet and expect performance at that level - again, you are responsible for your actions, both positive and negative. I want you to achieve all your goals and will support you to the best of my ability; I will care for you, but I will not carry you.

5. **AWARDS AND PUNISHMENT.** Everyone deserves to be recognized for exceptional performance and a job well done; I have a very high regard for people who do their jobs day in and day out with steady, stalwart consistency. I dislike those leaders who characterize this as "just doing his/her job". If every one of us did our job - including on and off duty - we could accomplish so much more. The time that is dedicated to remediation, NJP, administrative separations, and so on could be dedicated to positive actions that benefit the individual Marine. As such, I believe in promptly recognizing Marines for their work through awards, increased responsibility, and promotion. Likewise, punishment for offenses will fit the situation and will be used to deter similar acts in the future. I regard non-judicial punishment as a drain on time and resources that could be better spent on positive efforts and dislike how the immature actions of a few can affect the many; every person in this command should be offended when one of your fellow Marines or Sailors commits an offense requiring disciplinary action, as this detracts from the time that can be spent on the vast majority who are doing their job. Accordingly, I will not hesitate to utilize all the tools at my disposal to correct undisciplined behavior, to include NJP and courts martial. That said, leaders at every level need to understand punishment will not be used as a substitute for proactive, intrusive leadership and will not be used as a crutch. I expect leaders to be intimately involved in their subordinates' lives and take an active role in their personal and professional development. Leaders at every level will be held accountable for understanding their subordinates' goals, habits, strengths, weaknesses, and personal situation. I believe that this will ensure a more cohesive unit and reduce the potential for mission failure.

6. In every endeavor, **do the right thing and fear no man**; a clear, conscious decision to do the right thing can eliminate many of the pitfalls we face both inside and outside CBIRF. To take the right action when no one is looking is the definition of discipline, and it requires both courage and personal commitment. I encourage all of you to apply your training, wisdom, and experience in everything you do - the subsequent pride in a job well done will last a lifetime. It is my honor and privilege to serve with each and every one of you.

Semper Fidelis,

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