

*"If a service does not possess a well-defined strategic concept, the public and political leaders will be confused as to the role of the service, uncertain as to the necessity of its existence, and apathetic or hostile to the claims made by the service upon the resources of society."*

Samuel P. Huntington



### **A Strategic Concept for a Corps of Marines**

*"A versatile, expeditionary force in readiness"*

*"A balanced force for a Naval campaign and a ground and air striking force"*

*"Always at a high state of readiness"*

*"Ready to suppress or contain international disturbances short of war"*

*"To be most ready when the nation is least ready"*

Source: The second session of the 82nd Congress, 1952



### **WARFIGHTING**

*The Marine Corps' most important responsibility is to win our nation's battles. We exist because the American people and the Congress expect their Marines to provide a lean, ready, and professional fighting force — a force that guarantees success when committed. Today, we provide such a force. Regardless of how good we are today, the Marine Corps is committed to be better tomorrow. Innovation, ingenuity, and a willingness to continually adapt to changes across the spectrum of conflict will take Marine Corps organizations and operational thinking into the 21st Century. Whatever the future brings, however, one thing will remain constant: we will be ready whenever the nation says "Send in the Marines!"*

### **PEOPLE**

*Our second most important responsibility to the American people is to make Marines. Our ability to win our nation's battles rests, as it always has, on the individual Marine. Regardless of the relentless pace of technology, people, not machines, decide the course of battles. Our basic tenet of "every Marine a rifleman" reflects this firm belief. Because people are our most precious asset, how we recruit them, train them, instill in them our core values, and equip them, will forever be our institutional focus. We take America's young men and women and imbue in them our ethos, our core values, and the skills necessary to win on the chaotic battlefield of the 21st Century -- we transform them into Marines. This transformation process lasts forever. It begins with the recruiter and continues throughout a Marine's time in our Corps, be it four or thirty-four years. And when they leave the Corps, our Marines return to America, better for having been a U.S. Marine.*

### **CORE VALUES**

*The Marine Corps is a force rich in history and traditions, and ingrained with the highest values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. These three core values are at the very soul of our institution. They frame the way that Marines live and act. As a result, Marines are men and women of character, widely recognized for their moral excellence, selfless courage, committed principles, and sound judgments. Strict adherence to these three simple, yet meaningful core values provides Marines with a common "moral compass" that helps them make right decisions even in the shifting winds of adversity. For U.S. Marines, there are no "shades of gray" when it comes to Honor, Courage, and Commitment.*

### **NAVAL CHARACTER**

*The Navy and Marine Corps are inextricably linked. Together, the Sea Services provide a tremendously versatile and unique warfighting capability to the nation. Naval Forces have the ability to go anywhere rapidly, remain on station for indefinite periods of time, project force across any shore and against any foe, while-sustaining ourselves from both sea and land bases. To ensure that this capability is retained, the tactics, techniques, and procedures that have worked so well in the past will be updated and refined to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The bond between the Navy and Marine Corps has never been stronger, and together we will seek innovative ways to increase the value of naval expeditionary forces to the National Military Strategy.*

### **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

*During times of fiscal constraint, Marines have always turned to training and education to help retain the agility of mind and body that sets them apart as a military force. We are expanding the use of simulation, virtual reality, and warfighting games to make our training more effective and, ultimately, less expensive. We are committed to making sure each training dollar brings a solid return on investment. In the same vein, education has always been central to all Marines — not just a select few. A separate Marine Corps University manages a mix of resident and correspondence courses designed to challenge and stimulate the minds of Marines of all ranks. Education and training provides the foundation for a Marine Corps that can adapt to a changing, chaotic world.*

## **The Five Pillars of Our Corps**

**War Fighting**

**People**

**Core Values**

**Naval Character**

**Education and Training**

*Commandant's Planning Guidance*



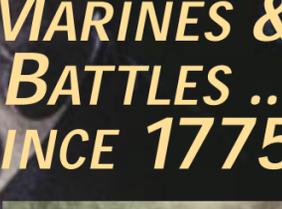
Belleau Wood 1918



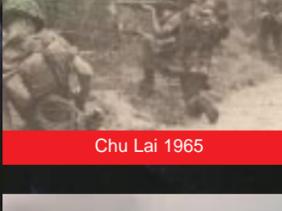
Guadalcanal 1942



Inchon 1950



Chu Lai 1965



Desert Storm 1991

**MAKING MARINES & WINNING BATTLES ... SINCE 1775**

## A Unique Corps of Marines

The five battles pictured on the front cover have two things in common. First, they represent the Marines' initial offensive action in each of the five major wars the United States has fought during this century. Second, they were all victories.

Our consistent success in "first battles" is the result of a special institutional ethos. This ethos springs from five attributes unique among our armed forces.

First, we are the **only service specifically tasked by Congress to be able to operate combined arms in three dimensions: air, land, and sea.**

The requirement for mutually supporting multi-dimensional operations demands a self-contained air-ground fighting force unlike any other in the world.

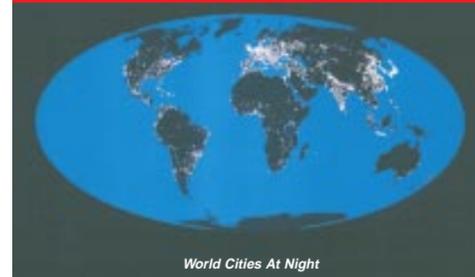
Second, although we are a multi-dimensional force, Marines share a common operational mindset. This mindset is at once captured by a simple, powerful credo: **"Every Marine a rifleman."** In other words, every Marine, regardless of specialty, is fundamentally the same. All are forged from a common experience, share a common set of values, and are trained as a cohesive air-ground team from the moment they join the Corps.

Third, we employ a versatile and flexible organizational approach. We **task organize** Marine Air-Ground Task Forces, or MAGTF's, to flexibly tailor our forces for specific missions. In this way, we can emphasize whatever capability required to accomplish the task at hand -- combat or support, land or air, light or heavy.

Fourth, we are **soldiers of the sea.** Our operations are inextricably linked with those of the U.S. Navy. For most of our country's history, integrated

Navy-Marine expeditionary forces have been routinely forward-deployed around the world. As a result, we possess extraordinary strategic reach and our daily operations touch the

## The Urbanization of the Littorals



Copyright 1997, Reuters/Map & Image

majority of the world's peoples. Indeed, as the above picture of our globe suggests, 70% of the world's population lives within 200 miles of a coast, and 80% of the world's capitals are located within 300 miles of a coast. This urbanization of the world's littoral regions means that operations from the sea provide the nation with an enduring means to influence and shape the evolving international environment.

And fifth, no other service is tasked, by law, to be the **"most ready"** when the nation is generally least ready."

## A National Force in Readiness

Our unique institutional attributes are distinctly suited for the role envisioned us by the 82nd Congress. The Marine Corps wins battles, not wars. Certainly we have and will continue to play an important part whenever our nation commits itself to war. But winning wars is the primary responsibility of the Army, the Air Force, and the Navy. Our historic mission has been to be ever-ready to respond to the international brushfires of disaster, emergency, crisis, and when necessary, war.

Pursuant to this role we have been

called *"Teufel Hunden"* -- Devil Dogs -- by German defenders at Belleau Wood in World War I; as *"Faresta"* -- Sea Angels -- by Bangladeshi flood victims in 1991; or simply as "heroes" by Captain Scott O'Grady, the Air Force pilot who was shot down over Bosnia in 1995 and then rescued by U.S. Marines.

The origin of such praise, spanning this century and the spectrum of response, is simple. Marines have always had a global perspective which is not focused on any particular threat. Instead, we have focused only on our role -- to be the **nation's premier crisis response force.** Here, crisis is defined as ranging from a military attack against our nation or interests, to acts of political violence against Americans abroad, to *"operations other than war"* such as disaster relief or evacuation of American citizens. In these areas, Marines train to be first on the scene, first to fight, first to quell disturbances, and first to help. For as our experience has taught us, the only common denominator for missions assigned a national force in readiness is a firm commitment to be ready for instantaneous world-wide action 365 days a year.

Consider the accompanying two maps. The first indicates the location of each of the 139 Marine Corps responses to assignments from the National Command Authorities (NCA) during the Cold War.

The second indicates the location of our 62 crisis responses since the Berlin Wall came down. Several key points stand out.

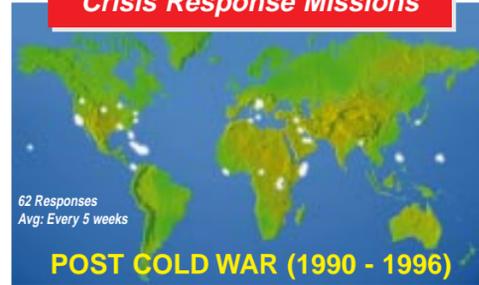
The Marine Corps never was a "Cold War," Soviet-oriented force. In keeping with our legislated role, we were used, and continue to be used, worldwide in response to a variety of threats to our national interests, including disaster relief in the United States.

The world in which we live requires a Marine Corps now more than ever. Consider that during the Cold War, Marines were called upon to protect our nation's interests on an average of once every 15 weeks. Since 1990, Marines have responded once every 5 weeks, *an increase in taskings by a factor of three.* We sometimes forget how dangerous the world is. Aggressive nationalism, terrorism, the international drug trade, refugee problems, conflicts over resources, and outright aggression present our leaders with a bewildering array of threats to our interests. The net result is that U.S. forces now operate at a higher peacetime tempo than at any time in our history.

Finally, the enduring wisdom of the



## World-wide Marine Corps Crisis Response Missions



82nd Congress is apparent. A ready force, capable of simultaneous air and ground action, with unimpeded access to potential trouble spots around the world, is the "force of choice" -- in the past, now, and in the future. Why is

this so?

## A "Rheostat" of National Crisis Response Capabilities

Marines embarked aboard Navy ships are unique in the range of options they provide for the NCA. By using the oceans both as a means of access **and** as a base, forward-deployed Navy and Marine air, land, and sea forces provide the NCA with a rheostat of national crisis response capabilities

Naval expeditionary forces are a self-contained -- and self-sustained -- air, land, and sea striking force, *operating from a protected sea base,* that can be tailored to meet any contingency. Whether that means deterring a threat through presence, ensuring that sea lines of communications remain open for trade, conducting disaster relief or evacuation operations, or fighting in major regional contingencies, naval forces offer options to the NCA across the conflict spectrum.

Additionally, because Navy-Marine forces can operate from sea bases, they are unencumbered by the political constraints often encountered by forward based forces. The only invitation they require to operate in a troubled region is an order from the President -- who can turn up or down the "power setting" of his naval rheostat as necessary to achieve national goals.

This broad-based global crisis response capability was exactly what the 82nd Congress had in mind when they legislated the role of the Marine Corps. No other nation on earth



possesses the politically and operationally flexible rheostat of national response capabilities offered by Marines embarked on Navy shipping.

## Joint Warriors. . .From the Sea

The role of the Marine Corps is also precisely suited to this age of joint warfare. With our experience in coordinating the multi-dimensional elements of our air-ground task forces and our close inter-service relationship

with the Navy, Marines instinctively understand the need for, and the logic behind, joint operations. As a result, we have proven to be able and

capable joint warriors. During Desert Storm, the 2nd Marine Division attacked into Kuwait with an attached Army armored brigade. We routinely embark fixed wing squadrons onboard Navy aircraft carriers. And we operate today side-by-side with Air Force, Navy, and coalition squadrons in Aviano, Italy and the Adriatic in support of operations over Bosnia.

**"Sea-based power projection forces -- namely, carrier battle groups, and amphibious groups embarked with Marines -- offer to decisionmakers military power that is multifaceted in capability and deployable around the world."**

Dick Cheney  
Former Secretary of Defense

More importantly, as our nation's "first to fight," we often enable the introduction of follow-on joint forces. Marines take steps to ensure that these joint forces can deploy as quickly and safely as possible. These steps include extensive reconnaissance, destruction of enemy forces, and the seizure of required ports and airfields, as required. So important is this forcible entry capability to our national military strategy that it is considered a joint "core competency."

## A Cost-Effective Force . . . Now, and in the Future

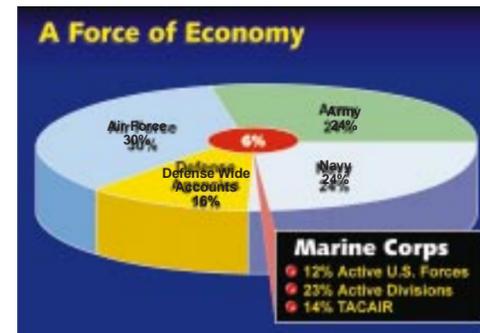
Considering the broad range of capabilities that the Marine Corps offers the nation -- both as a naval service and as the tip of a joint spear -- no other force offers more "bang for the buck." Right now, the 6% of the Defense Budget allotted to the Corps buys 12% of active U.S. forces, 23% of active ground divisions, and 14% of all available tactical aircraft!

Equally important savings accrue because the cost of naval crisis response operations is often already included in the "sticker price" of naval expeditionary forces. Navy-Marine forces are organized specifically to be forward deployed as part of their normal mission. This means that emergency responses by forward deployed, on-the-scene naval forces often require no additional operational funding. At a minimum they are more cost effective than conducting the operations by deploying forces from the United States.

Consider a recent, real-world example involving the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable). On 15 June 1996, this forward deployed Marine Air-Ground Task Force of only 2,200 Marines and Sailors simultaneously employed small

Marine forces in *eleven* locations in ten countries across Europe and Africa, spanning an area larger than the total area of the continental United States. Each of the units was precisely sized to accomplish a specific mission. The cost of deploying eleven different units from the United States to accomplish the same missions would have been much more expensive.

Our cost effectiveness is also reflected



in our infrastructure. The Marines have the leanest enlisted rank structure in terms of seniority of any of the four services, making its force, in relative terms, the least expensive. Also, as the next charts show, the Marine Corps has the lowest officer to enlisted ratio (1 to 9). Moreover, it also has the lowest civilian to military ratio (1 to 10), partly because of its integration with the Navy. Truly, the Marine Corps is,



and will remain, the nation's "force of economy," both now and in the future.

## A Force of Vision and Innovation

Being cost-effective reflects our commitment to fight smart, and to wring the most out of every possible resource. So it is for the future. To save future resources and blood -- to be ready for whatever challenges we might face in the future -- the Marine Corps traditionally has ignored "conventional" wisdom and experimented with new concepts and technologies.

In the 1920s and 1930s, we developed amphibious doctrine, key to winning the war in the Pacific and in western Europe. In the 1930s and 1940s, we were the first to perfect close air support; now no one fights without it. In the 1950s we pioneered the use of the helicopter, which revolutionized battlefield tactical mobility and operations. In the 1970s we pioneered the use of Vertical/Short Takeoff and Landing aircraft to provide quick response close air support to front-line troops. In the 1980s and 1990s, we introduced global prepositioning of

equipment on ships, allowing us to respond more quickly to crises around the world. And at the dawn of the 21st Century, we are ushering in tiltrotor aircraft -- a unique combination of helicopter and aircraft technology -- which promises to revolutionize battlefield mobility once again.

This pattern of vision, experimentation, and innovation is a hallmark of our Corps. It continues today. For example, our *Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force* is a new, one-of-a-kind unit that provides America a better ability to respond to the consequences of chemical-biological terrorism.

In fact, so fundamental is our commitment to the future that we have recently established a new Warfighting Laboratory that is responsible for developing and field testing future operational and technological concepts. Sea Dragon is the Marine Corps' name for the laboratory's process to foster rapid military innovation. We intend to "ride the dragon of change" into the 21st Century, and continue to take advantage of the opportunities it brings.

## Your Marine Corps: Ever-Ready to Respond

The more things change, the more they remain the same. The Marine Corps remains America's Legion -- forward, capable, and cost effective. The Marine Corps will continue to make Marines, and continue to win our nation's battles. And regardless of the

**"We must not be lulled into complacency because we have always been ready, relevant, and capable. What might be ready, relevant and capable today, may be less so the day after tomorrow. We must anticipate change, adapt to it, and foster it. We will remain relevant only if we are willing to meet future challenges and adapt to new needs."**

Charles C. Krulak  
Commandant of the Marine Corps