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ALMAR 454/96

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TO ALMAR

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MSGID/GENADMIN/CMC MP//

SUBJ/UNIT COHESION--COMMANDANTS INTENT//

RMKS/1. WE MUST DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ENHANCE THE TRANSFORMATION OF YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN INTO THE MARINES THAT OUR CORPS NEEDS TO WIN BATTLES. I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT UNIT COHESION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS. MARINES MUST POSSESS AND FEEL THE ABSOLUTE TRUST, SUBORDINATION OF SELF, THE INTUITIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE COLLECTIVE ACTIONS OF THE UNIT, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK.

2. MY PLANNING GUIDANCE TASKED DC/S M&RA TO REVIEW MANPOWER POLICIES TO ENHANCE UNIT COHESION AND STABILITY OF OUR OPERATING FORCES.

AFTER EXAMINING MANY OPTIONS, I HAVE FORMALLY APPROVED TWO INITIATIVES--TEAM INTEGRITY AND SYNCHRONIZATION. AS A START, THESE INITIATIVES WILL BE IMMEDIATELY APPLIED TO INFANTRY MARINES AND UNITS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE "CRUCIBLE EVENT" AT THE RECRUIT DEPOTS. INFANTRY IS JUST THE FIRST STEP--MY VISION IS TO APPLY THESE INITIATIVES ACROSS THE CORPS.

3. THE FIRST OF THE TWO INITIATIVES, TEAM INTEGRITY, IS FOCUSED ON TEAMING MARINES AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE. THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF POSITIVE BONDS AMONG MARINES, TEAM INTEGRITY WILL PROVIDE A MEDIUM FOR CARRYING TEAMS OF MARINES FROM THE CRUCIBLE THROUGH THE MOS PRODUCING SCHOOLS AND TO THE FMF WITH THEIR MARINE ETHOS INTACT. BY FORMING TEAMS EARLY, KEEPING THE TEAMS TOGETHER, AND ASSIGNING THE TEAMS TO A UNIT, WE WILL ENHANCE UNIT COHESION. THIS ADDED COHESION WILL RESULT IN INCREASED FIGHTING POWER, PROVIDE POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE, AND REINFORCE OUR CORPS VALUES AS HONOR BECOMES DOMINANT OVER SELF-INTEREST. THESE TEAMS WILL TRAIN TOGETHER, GARRISON TOGETHER, DEPLOY TOGETHER, AND FIGHT TOGETHER.

4. WE WILL BEGIN WITH THE INFANTRY MARINES WHO ENTER SOI IN JANUARY. THESE TEAMS WILL TRAIN TOGETHER, BE ASSIGNED TO THEIR FIRST INFANTRY BATTALION TOGETHER, AND, AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF SYNCHRONIZATION, REMAIN IN THE SAME INFANTRY BATTALION FOR THE DURATION OF THEIR FIRST ENLISTMENT. COMMANDERS ARE DIRECTED TO ASSIGN THESE TEAMS OF MARINES TO THE SMALLEST LEVEL OF UNIT POSSIBLE, OPTIMALLY THE SAME SQUAD. IF ASSIGNMENT TO THE SAME SQUAD IS NOT POSSIBLE THEN ASSIGNMENT TO THE SAME PLATOON OR THE SAME COMPANY WILL TAKE PLACE. AGAIN, THE SMALLEST UNIT POSSIBLE IS WHAT I DESIRE. THIS CONCEPT ALSO PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL UNIT LEADERS TO BE MATCHED TO THEIR TEAMS AND PROVIDE LEADERSHIP/MENTORING AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY. MOREOVER, I EXPECT SMALL UNIT LEADERS TO CONTACT THEIR TEAMS OF MARINES BEFORE THEY GRADUATE FROM SOI.

5. THE SECOND INITIATIVE WILL SYNCHRONIZE UNIT DEPLOYMENT SCHEMES AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF THE TEAMS. CURRENTLY, THE DEPLOYMENT CYCLES OF OUR INFANTRY BATTALIONS ARE DIFFERENT THROUGHOUT THE REGIMENTS AND DIVISIONS, WHILE THE SERVICE COMMITMENT AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THE TIME A MARINE HAS LEFT ON HIS CONTRACT AFTER COMPLETING SOI (USABLE LIFE OF A MARINE, 42 MONTHS) REMAINS CONSTANT. SYNCHRONIZATION WORKS WITHIN THE KNOWN CONSTRAINTS OF THE USABLE CONTRACT LENGTH OF A FIRST-TERM MARINE AND THE DATES OF DEPLOYMENTS TO MATCH THE AVAILABLE PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO DEPLOYMENTS IN A MANNER THAT:

A. FULFILLS FORWARD PRESENCE REQUIREMENTS

B. FITS DEPLOYMENTS INTO THE 42 MONTH PERSONNEL CYCLE OF A MARINE

C. ENABLES STRUCTURED PROGRESSIVE TRAINING WITH UNITS BEING FULLY STAFFED 8-16 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPLOYMENTS

6. WE ARE ALREADY COORDINATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEAM INTEGRITY TO ENSURE THE FIRST CRUCIBLE FORGED MARINES ARE TRANSFERRED TO AN INFANTRY BATTALION AS A TEAM. A MESSAGE CONTAINING THE MECHANICS OF HOW WE WILL MAKE TEAM INTEGRITY A REALITY IS FORTHCOMING. THE FIRST STEP IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SYNCHRONIZATION WILL REQUIRE CLOSE

COORDINATION BETWEEN HQMC AND THE MARFORS. AS SUCH, I AM DIRECTING DC/S PP&O AND DC/S M&RA TO ORGANIZE AND SCHEDULE A PLANNING MEETING AND DEVELOP AN EXECUTION PLAN. I EXPECT THE EXECUTION PLAN TO BE PUBLISHED IN FEB.

7. UNIT COHESION IS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS THAT WILL GUARANTEE THE CORPS A RICH LEGACY: MARINES FULLY PREPARED TO FIGHT ON THE "MISSION DEPTH" BATTLEFIELD OF THE FUTURE AND WHOSE DAY-TO-DAY PERFORMANCE REFLECTS THE HIGH STANDARD OF THE MARINE CORPS AND THE IDEALS OF THE NATION IT SERVES. LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS. WE WILL BE FACED WITH MANY CHALLENGES AS WE MAKE THIS MUCH NEEDED TRANSITION--I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT THE INVESTMENT WILL REAP ENORMOUS DIVIDENDS. EXPECT SOME INITIAL TURBULENCE DURING IMPLEMENTATION, BE FLEXIBLE, PROACTIVE, AND MAKE IT WORK--WE CAN AFFORD NO LESS.

8. C. C. KRULAK, COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS.//
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