

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Marine Corps University
Corporals Noncommissioned Officers Program

CPL 0204
Jan 99 w/ch 1

STUDENT HANDOUT

Leadership Roles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- a. TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE : With the aid of the references, identify the Marine Corps' Leadership fundamentals, per the references. (CPL 23.4)
- b. ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE (CE): Without the aid of but per the reference, identify the following:
 - (1) The definition of role, institutional role, and organizational role. (CPL 23.4f)
 - (2) The interrelationships of the leadership rank structure. (CPL 23.4g)
 - (3) The tasks and duties of officers, NCOs, and peers. (CPL 23.4h)
 - (4) The professional working relationship between ranks. (CPL 23.4i)

OUTLINE

1. GENERAL:

a. Rank Structure: Marines exercise their duties, responsibilities and authority within the Corps' organizational structure. Without organization, the Corps would be a shapeless, ineffective force unable to carry out its assigned mission. In other words, the success of the Corps depends upon each Marine in the organization carrying out his duties and responsibilities to ensure mission accomplishment. This rank structure provides for the following:

- * A set chain of command that provides the "who is in charge" structure required to get things done.
- * Individual authority that allows authority to be given to individuals at the organizational level which gets things going and gets things done.
- * Standardized organizational structure that provides a set or base organization that allows personnel to move from billet to billet within the Corps and still know "what's going on."
- * Lines of communication that establishes the "who needs to know" for the decision making process in the chain of command.
- * Decentralized execution that allows execution of orders at the lowest organizational level directly affected by the decision/action.

b. Definitions:

(1) Role: This is a socially expected behavior pattern that is usually determined by an individual's status in a particular society. It is the proper or customary function of a person; the part to be played by a person; what a person thinks he is supposed to do; or what others think he is supposed to do. The two major roles that a Marine is expected to fulfill are institutional (his role as a Marine professional) and organizational (how he functions in his role in his unit).

(2) Institutional Role: This is a role which is professional in nature.

EXAMPLES: An American fighting man in the Corps.

A Marine serving in his role as either an enlisted man or officer.

A Marine serving in his specific rank.

A Marine serving in his MOS.

A Marine serving as a role model -- as an example for others combining all of the above.

These institutional roles center on the ideals and goals of expected behavior for Marines by the Marine Corps as a professional institution. The leadership traits and principles are examples of institutional behavioral ideals and goals for Marines. Some of the institutional ideals and goals that we are expected to live by are:

- * Adherence to the Code of Conduct.
- * Service to country through mission accomplishment.
- * To be prepared to inflict death or injury to an enemy during war.
- * To comply with the basic customs, courtesies, and traditions of the Corps.
- * To be an example to their Marines in the performance of duty, in the sharing of hardship and danger; and above all in upholding the high standards of moral and ethical behavior.
- * To participate in the unit's and base's social life, such as Family Days, Marine Corps Birthday Celebrations, Mess Nights, and other special events and functions.

(3) Organizational Role: These roles are often linked with or incorporated with institutional roles. These roles include additional expected behavior that goes with a specific unit, such as a member of a disbursing branch, reconnaissance battalion, or an aviation maintenance section. Organizational roles do the following:

- * Enable the individual to identify with the unit.
- * Set the organization apart and give it a special nature.
- * May require the individual to adopt special customs, a different manner of dress, and a general personality characteristic.

EXAMPLE: Our rank in our billet, such as a sergeant section leader or a corporal fireteam leader.

c. Affects on Your Role: Your role is affected by the following:

- * Your understanding of what role you should play.
- * Your subordinates' expectations.
- * Your institutional and organizational roles.
- * Your acceptance of your responsibilities in your rank and position. What you think you're supposed to do.
- * Your subordinates' realization of your responsibility to mission accomplishment. What they think you should do.
- * Your subordinates' recognition that your ability to influence a given situation is limited.
- * The standards and ethics of the Corps and your unit. (Ideally these should be the same, but different leaders have different personalities. They may have different missions and may interpret orders differently, which could result in slightly different standards from one unit to another.)

d. Expectations:

(1) Subordinates' Expectations of Their Leaders:

- * Honest, just, and fair treatment.
- * Consideration due them as mature, professional Marines.
- * A climate of trust and confidence.
- * To accept their errors and use the errors as learning experiences.
- * Personal interest taken in them as individuals.
- * Loyalty.
- * Shielding from harassment from "higher-ups."
- * The best in leadership.
- * That their needs be anticipated and provided for.
- * All the comforts and privileges practicable.
- * To be kept oriented and told the "reason why."
- * A well-thought-out program of training, work, and recreation.
- * Clear-cut and positive decisions and orders which are not constantly changing.
- * Demands on them commensurate with their capabilities--not too small and not too great.
- * That their good work be recognized, and publicized when appropriate.

(2) Leaders' Expectations of Their Subordinates:

- * Fulfill their institutional and organizational roles as expected by their seniors.
- * Be responsible and use initiative.
- * Display loyal behavior to seniors as an example for their subordinates and peers by giving willing and obedient service to seniors' orders, whether they are in agreement or not.

- * If a conflict exists, have the moral courage to bring it to the senior's attention at the proper place and time, and in an appropriate manner.
- * Use their abilities for the good of the mission.
- * Take action even though complete information may not be available.

2. INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF THE LEADERSHIP RANK STRUCTURE: The key goal of this part of the lesson is to determine how the rank structure should be used to enable us to work together as a team to assure mission accomplishment and troop welfare. Our day-to-day contact with one another as professional Marines crosses both unit and organizational boundaries and includes direct and indirect contact during business, social, or other non-social activities. Individuals interrelate in their institutional role as members of the "Marine Team" and the "Band of Brothers;" as Marines in general during their day-to-day inter-personal relationships. Primary in this role is the example you set and the actions you take.

a. The Function and Interaction of Marines within Their Organizational Role: The primary interrelationship is based on your organizational role. Here, operating within the authority of your position and rank, you work to accomplish your mission, and see to your Marines' welfare. Within this role you are a senior, a peer, and a subordinate. Your effectiveness in accomplishing these roles is the result of your ability to function as a link in the chain of command. As a subordinate you provide communication down to your subordinates on unit goals and objectives, disseminate information on policies, and interpret changes. As the senior you provide communication upward to seniors on your subordinates' requirements for resources to accomplish their mission, their goals, and their welfare.

b. Impact for Individual Responsibility Failure:

(1) When a Marine fails in his duties and responsibilities in fulfilling his institutional role, the following happens:

- * He loses his credibility.
- * His overall prestige, respect, trust, and confidence and that of the Marine Corps is damaged.
- * He sets a poor example for seniors, peers, and subordinates.
- * His failure may condone or reinforce the acceptance of lower standards of conduct, professionalism, discipline, morale, and esprit.

(2) When a Marine fails in his duties and responsibilities in fulfilling his organizational role, the following happens:

- * He may be guilty of all those items previously listed under institutional role.
- * He may disrupt the normal functioning of the chain of command and communication flow. These problems may eventually cause seniors to feel the need to provide more supervision, to lose faith in their subordinates, or to make all the decisions themselves.

To some degree all Marines are involved in planning, organizing, coordinating, directing, and controlling. The difference is based on their position in the organizational structure/chain of command. As we move from rank to rank and billet to billet one of the hardest things to understand is how we fit into the system, and what our actual duties and responsibilities are. For each of us to do our part, we must know or be told what our part is and what is expected of us. Therefore, one of the most important tasks a leader has to do is to ensure all his personnel understand their institutional and organizational roles. This "role clarification" and understanding allows each of us to do our part and enhance the team effort.

3. TASKS AND DUTIES:

a. Officers: Some of the tasks and duties normally associated with officers are:

- * General officers provide long rang goals and objectives, general guidance, and acquire the resources necessary to accomplish them.
- * Field grade officers develop the plans and policies to achieve the goals and objectives within the guidance, assign missions to units, and allocate the resources.
- * Company grade officers implement and execute the plans and their assigned mission to accomplish the goals and objectives utilizing the resources provided.
- * Officers exercise command.
- * Officers are accountable for mission accomplishment.
- * Officers are accountable for unit readiness and performance.
- * Officers set standards for unit performance.
- * Officers are responsible for collective unit training (including planning, providing resources, conducting, and evaluating).
- * Officers delegate authority.
- * Officers administer punishment under the UCMJ.
- * Officers are responsible for the development and training of officer, SNCO, and NCO subordinates.
- * Officers establish and maintain professional standards for the officer corps.
- * Officers are expected to support subordinates.
- * Officers are responsible for the promotion system for all Marines.

b. NCO's: NCO's are primarily concerned with their specific team and its individuals. They execute assigned tasks within a senior's guidance using available resources. The complementary relationship and mutual respect between the commissioned officer and the noncommissioned officer is based on traditional, functional, and legal reasons. Many tasks and duties are overlapping and must be shared to some degree. The leader's ability to clarify who is to do what, to whom, when, and how is an important part of his leadership role. Some specific duties normally performed by NCO's are to:

- * NCO's train subordinates in their MOS and basic military skills.
- * NCO's are accountable for the actions of their squad, section, or team.
- * NCO's enforce standards of military and physical appearance.
- * NCO's ensure supervision, control, and discipline of subordinates.

- * NCO's assist in personal and professional development of Marines.
- * NCO's provide communication link between the individual Marine and the organization.
- * NCO's plan and conduct the routine and day-to-day unit operation within the policies established by the officers.
- * NCO's maintain appearance and condition of unit billeting spaces, facilities, and work areas.
- * NCO's maintain serviceability, accountability, and readiness of assigned arms and equipment.
- * NCO's maintain the established standards of professionalism and job performance for the Marine, the NCO's, the SNCO's and the Corps.
- * NCO's support, follow, and implement policy established by the officers.

c. Peers: Some of the roles and responsibilities of peers are as follows:

- * Peers support and help each other.
- * Peers compete in spirit of enhancing esprit and mission accomplishment, and perfecting individual/unit performance but not to cut each other down.
- * Peers share victories, hardships, and lessons learned.
- * Peers exert a positive influence on their comrades by setting examples of obedience, courage, zeal, sobriety, neatness, and attention to duty.

4. HOW TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL WORKING

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RANKS: As we previously discussed, the basic rank structure establishes the working relationships as seniors, peers, and subordinates. Understanding this should be easy, but because of promotions, transfers, and frequent policy changes many Marines are not really sure what their roles are. Some things you should do are:

- * Understand your role so you can assist your subordinates and seniors.
- * Know the roles of seniors, peers, and subordinates.
- * Ensure your subordinates know and understand their roles and the roles of others round them.
- * Train subordinates to accomplish their role, and be prepared to perform the role of their immediate senior.
- * Provide subordinates feedback on how well they are accomplishing their role, and counsel them to improve their performance.
- * Delegate the necessary authority for subordinates to accomplish their role, and ensure they realize just what they are accountable for.
- * Give them the necessary resources and freedom of action to accomplish their tasks.
- * Give them the respect due their position and require others to do the same.
- * Insist they accomplish their duties and ensure they do the same with their subordinates.
- * Adhere to the standards of the Corps and require all others under you to do the same.
- * Maintain open communication lines and squelch rumors.
- * Ensure subordinates are capable of accomplishing assigned tasks.

REFERENCE: Marine Corps Values and Leadership User's Guide for Discussion Leaders
Krulak, C. C. (1999). The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block
War. Marine Corps Gazette, 83, Quantico VA: Marine Corps Association.

APPENDIX A

The Commandant's Perspective

**THE STRATEGIC CORPORAL:
LEADERSHIP IN THE THREE BLOCK WAR**

by Gen Charles C. Krulak
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Operation ABSOLUTE AGILITY

0611: The African sun had just risen above the hills surrounding the sprawling city and sent its already dazzling rays streaming into the dusty alleyway. Cpl Hernandez felt the sun on his face and knew that today would, again, be sweltering. He was a squad leader in 2d Platoon, Lima Company and had, along with his men, spent a sleepless night on the perimeter. For the past week his platoon had provided security to the International Relief Organization (IRO) workers who manned one of three food distribution points in the American Sector of Tugala the war-torn capital of Orange a Central African nation wracked by civil unrest and famine.

The situation in Orange had transfixed the world for nearly 2 years. Bloody tribal fighting led first to the utter collapse of the government and economy, and ultimately, to wide spread famine. International efforts to quell the violence and support the teetering government failed, and the country plunged into chaos. The United States Finally was compelled to intervene. A forward deployed, special operations capable Marine expeditionary unit (MEU(SOC)) was ordered to assist the efforts of the ineffective Regional Multi-National Force (RMNF) and the host of international humanitarian assistance organizations struggling to alleviate the suffering. The MEU(SOC)'s arrival had stabilized the situation and allowed relief supplies to finally reach the people who needed them most.

The food distribution point manned by 2d Platoon serviced over 5,000 people daily. The Marines, at first, were shocked at the extent of the suffering, by the constant stream of malnourished men and women, and by the distended bellies and drawn faces of the children. The flow of food and medical supplies, however, had a dramatic impact. The grim daily death tolls slowly began to decrease, and the city began to recover some sense of normalcy. Within a month the lives of the Marines assumed a sort of dull routine.

0633: Cpl Hernandez removed his helmet and rested his head against the mud wall of the house in which his squad was billeted and waited for his MRE to finish heating. Reflecting for a moment on the mission, he felt satisfied that he and his fellow Marines were making a difference. Suddenly, the dust and rumble of a half dozen 5-ton trucks pulling into the market square caught his attention. Escorted by Marines, the convoy brought with it food and medical supplies that meant life or death to the inhabitants of the devastated neighborhood. With it also came word of life beyond the confines of this small corner of Orange and useful intelligence concerning the disposition of the opposing factions that wrestled for its control.

Today, the convoy commander had disturbing news for the platoon commander, 2dLt Franklin. Members of the OWETA faction, led by renegade warlord Nedeed, had been observed congregation near the river that divided the capital in half and marked the boundary separating

the turf of OWETA from that of its principal rival. Nedeed had long criticized the presence of the RMNF and had frequently targeted its personnel for attack. While he had strenuously denounced the presence of U.S. forces, he had, so far, refrained from targeting American personnel. As starvation became less a concern, however, tensions had begun to rise, and there were growing fears that open hostilities would breakout again and that direct attacks on RMNF and MEU(SOC) personnel were increasingly likely.

Lt Franklin passed the report to his company commander and then gathered his squad leaders together to review the developing situation. 1st Squad was ordered to move about 400 meters north and man a roadblock at Checkpoint (CkPt) Charlie. Cpl Hernandez returned to his position, reluctantly disposed of his uneaten MRE, and prepared his Marines to move out. The movement to the road intersection at CkPt Charlie was uneventful and took less than 10 minutes. The squad had manned the post before and was familiar with the routine. Prestaged barricades were quickly moved into place to secure the street to vehicular traffic and a triple strand of concertina was strung in order to control pedestrian movement. Cpl Sley and his fire team moved 100 meters north and established an observation post (OP) on the roof of a two-story building that afforded excellent fields of view. By 0700, the squad was in position. At that hour, the city was still quiet, and except for the intel report concerning OWETA activity, there was no evidence that this day would be any different from the previous. The Marines of 1st Squad settled in for another long hot day of tedious duty.

0903: The normal large crowd, mostly women and children with baskets in hand, had gathered to await passage through the checkpoint. The Marines orders were clear; they were to deny access to anyone carrying a weapon and to be alert for any indications of potential trouble. Their rules of engagement were unambiguous; anyone observed with an automatic weapon was considered hostile, as was anyone who intentionally threatened Marine personnel. The MEU(SOC) commander had made this policy clear in meetings with each of the warlords in the early days of the deployment. His directness had paid dividends, and to date, nobody in the MEU(SOC) had been wounded by small arms fire. The factions had kept a low profile in the American sector and had not interfered with those convoys accompanied by Marines. Such was not the case, however, in adjacent sectors, where RMNF personnel had frequently been the target of ambush and sniper fire. The Marines had stayed on their toes.

0915: Cpl Sley reported from his position on the rooftop that the gathering crowd was especially large and included an unusually high proportion of young adult males. He sensed an ominous change in the atmosphere. Less than a mile away, he could see the vehicles of Nedeed's gang gathered at the farside of the bridge spanning the river that separated the OWETA and Mubasa factions. He passed his suspicions on to his squad leader, "Something big is about to happen." The day now promised a break from the routine.

0921: Cpl Hernandez promptly relayed Sley's report and concerns to his platoon commander and learned from Lt Franklin that Nedeed's chief rival-Mubasa-was moving east toward CkPt Charlie. Mubasa's intentions seemed clear; his route would bring him directly to CkPt Charlie and an ultimate collision with Nedeed. 1st Squad's position astride the two roads placed them squarely between the rival clans. Lt Franklin directed Hernandez to extend the roadblock to cover the road entering the intersection from the west and indicated that he and Sgt Baker's 2nd Squad were en route to reinforce. Cpl Hernandez could feel the tension grow. The crowd had become more agitated, aware that Mubasa's men were near and concerned that the vital food distribution might be disrupted. The young men had begun to chant anti-U.S. slogans

and throw rocks at the startled Marines. Cpl Hernandez felt the situation slipping out of control and decided to close the road completely. With great difficulty, the barriers were shifted and the concertina was drawn back across the narrow access point. The crowd erupted in protest and pressed forward.

0931: Overhead, the whirring blades of a low flying IRO UH-1 were heard, but failed to distract the crowd. Their curses and chants, however, were drowned out for an instant by the sound and shock wave of an explosion. The helo had apparently been hit by ground fire, and had burst into flames corkscrewing to the ground several blocks east of the OP. Sley had observed the crash from his vantage atop the building and saw, to his relief, that at least two survivors had struggled from the flaming wreckage of the IRO helicopter. His relief, however, was short-lived. In the distance, he could see Nedeed's men rushing across the bridge. Sley urgently requested permission to immediately move to the assistance of the downed helo crew.

0935: While Cpl Hernandez considered the feasibility of a rescue attempt, the situation took another serious turn; three vehicles loaded with Mubasa's men and followed closely by an INN film crew arrived on the scene. Brandishing automatic weapons and RPG's, they forced their vehicles through the crowd until the bumper of the lead truck rested against the barricade. With their arrival, the already agitated crowd abandoned all restraint. The occasional rock had now become a constant pelting of well-aimed missiles. One had hit LCpl Johnson in the face. The resulting wound, although not serious, bled profusely and added to the rising alarm. Somehow the sight of the bright red blood streaming down the face of the young Marine fed the crowd's excitement and heightened the panic growing within the squad. What had started out as another routine day of humanitarian assistance was rapidly becoming something else entirely. A Molotov cocktail crashed into the position injuring no one, but contributing further to the confusion. The Marines of 1st Squad looked from man to man and then stared questioningly at Cpl Hernandez. He reassuringly returned the gaze of each man, knowing better than any of them that the fate of the squad, of the wounded IRO personnel, and perhaps, of the entire multinational mission, hung in the balance. In the span of less than 3 hours he had watched a humanitarian assistance mission turn terribly wrong and move ever closer to outright disaster. Cpl Hernandez was face to face with the grave challenges of the three block war and his actions, in the next few minutes, would determine the outcome of the mission and have potentially strategic implications.

The Three Block War

The fictional mission described above-Operation ABSOLUTE AGILITY-is similar to many that have been conducted around the world in recent years and represents the likely battlefield of the 21st century. It also represents, in graphic detail, the enormous responsibilities and pressures that will be placed on our young Marine leaders. The rapid diffusion of technology, the growth of a multitude of transitional factors, and the consequences of increasing globalization and economic interdependence have coalesced to create national security challenges remarkable for their complexity. By 2020, about 85 percent of the world's inhabitants will be crowded into coastal cities-cities generally lacking the infrastructure required to support their burgeoning populations. Under these conditions, long simmering ethnic, nationalist, and economic tensions will explode and increase the potential of crises requiring U.S. intervention. Compounding the challenges posed by this growing global instability will be the emergence of an increasingly complex and lethal battlefield. The widespread availability of sophisticated weapons and C4I systems will

“level the playing field” and negate our traditional technological superiority. The lines separating the levels of war and distinguishing combatant from “noncombatant” will blur, and adversaries, confounded by our “conventional” superiority, will resort to asymmetrical means to redress the imbalance. Further complicating the situation will be the ubiquitous media whose presence will mean that all future conflicts will be acted out before an international audience.

“The Corps has described such amorphous conflicts as-the three block war-contingencies in which Marines may be confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of a few contiguous city blocks.

Modern crisis responses are exceedingly complex endeavors. In Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia the unique challenges of military operations other than war were combined with the disparate challenges of midintensity conflict. The Corps has described such amorphous conflicts as-the three block war-contingencies in which Marines may be confronted by the entire spectrum of tactical challenges in the span of a few hours and within the space of a few contiguous city blocks. The tragic experience of U.S. forces in Somalia during Operation RESTORE HOPE illustrates well volatile nature of these contemporary operations. *Blackhawk Down*, author Mark Bowden’s superb book about the 3 October 1993 battle in Mogadishu, is a riveting, cautionary tale and grim reminder of the unpredictability of so-called operations other than war. It is essential reading for all Marines.

The inescapable lesson of Somalia and of other recent operations, whether humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, or traditional warfighting, is that their outcome may hinge on decisions made by small unit leaders, and by actions taken at the lowest level. The Corps is, by design, a relatively young force. Success or failure will rest, increasingly, with the rifleman and with his ability to make the *right* decision at the *right* time at the point of contact. As with Cpl Hernandez at CkPt Charlie, today’s Marine will often operate far “from the flagpole” without the direct supervision of senior leadership. And, like Cpl Hernandez, they will be asked to deal with a bewildering array of challenges and threats. In order to succeed under such demanding conditions, they will require unwavering maturity, judgment, and strength of character. Most importantly, these missions will require them to confidently make well-reasoned decisions under extreme stress-decisions that will likely be subject to the harsh scrutiny of both the media and the court of public opinion. In many cases, the individual Marine will be the most conspicuous symbol of American foreign policy and will potentially influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic levels as well. His actions, therefore, will directly impact the outcome of the larger operation; and he will become, as the title of this article suggests-the *Strategic Corporal*.

“In many cases, the individual Marine will be the most conspicuous symbol of American foreign policy and will potentially influence not only the immediate tactical situation, but the operational and strategic levels as well.... he will become, as the title of this article suggests-the *Strategic Corporal*.

The Strategic Corporal

Regrettably, the end of the Cold War heralded not the hoped for era of peace, but rather, a troubling age characterized by global disorder, pervasive crisis, and the constant threat of chaos.

Since 1990, the Marine Corps has responded to crises at a rate equal to three times that of the Cold War on average, once every 5 weeks. On any given day, up to 29,000 Marines are forward deployed around the world. In far-flung places like Kenya, Indonesia, and Albania, they have stood face to face with the perplexing and hostile challenges of the chaotic post-Cold War world for which the “rules” have not been written. The three block war is not simply a fanciful metaphor for future conflicts-it is a reality. Like Cpl Hernandez, today’s Marines have already encountered its great challenges and they have been asked to exercise an exceptional degree of maturity, restraint, and judgment.

Marines, of course, have always shone most brightly when the stakes were highest. The NCOs that led the bloody assaults on the German machinegun positions at Belleau Wood intuitively understood the importance of their role. The Marines of 2d Battalion, 28th Marines, who scaled the fire-swept heights of Mount Suribachi needed no one to emphasize the necessity of initiative. The Marines of the Chosin Reservoir, of Hue City, and of countless other battles through the years did not wait to be reminded of their individual responsibilities. They behaved as Marines always have, and as we expect today’s Marines and those of the future to behave-with courage, with aggressiveness, and with resolve. The future battlefields on which Marines fight will be increasingly hostile, lethal, and chaotic. Our success will hinge, as it always has, on the leadership of our junior Marines. We must ensure that they are prepared to lead.

How do we prepare Marines for the complex, high-stakes, asymmetrical battlefield of the three block war? How do we develop junior leaders prepared to deal decisively with the sort of real world challenges confronting Cpl Hernandez? The first step of the process is unchanged. Bold, capable, and intelligent men and women of character are drawn to the Corps, and are recast in the crucible of recruit training, where time honored methods instill deep within them the Corps’ enduring ethos. Honor, courage, and commitment becomes more than mere words. Those precious virtues, in fact, become the defining aspect of each Marine. The emphasis on *character* remains the bedrock upon which everything else is built. The active sustainment of character in every Marine is a fundamental institutional competency-and for good reason. As often as not, the really tough issues confronting Marines will be moral quandaries, and they must have the wherewithal to handle them appropriately. While a visceral appreciation for our core values is essential, it alone will not ensure an individual’s success in battle or in the myriad potential contingencies short of combat. Much, much more is required to fully prepare a Marine for the rigor of tomorrow’s battlefield.

An institutional commitment to lifelong professional development is the second step on the road to building the *Strategic Corporal*. The realignment of the recruit training and Marine combat training programs of instruction reveal our reinvigorated focus on individual training. Those programs remain the most important steps in the methodical process of developing capable Marines. Our formal schools, unit training, education programs, and individual efforts at professional education build on the solid foundation laid at recruit training and sustain the growth of technical and tactical proficiency and mental and physical toughness. The common thread uniting all training activities is an emphasis on the growth of integrity, courage, initiative, decisiveness, mental agility, and personal accountability. These qualities and attributes are fundamental and must be aggressively cultivated within all Marines from the first day of their enlistment to the last.

Leadership, of course, remains the hard currency of the Corps, and its development and sustainment is the third and final step in the creation of the *Strategic Corporal*. For 223 years, on

battlefields strewn across the globe, Marines have set the highest standard of combat leadership. We are inspired by their examples and confident that today's Marines and those of tomorrow will rise to the same great heights. The clear lesson of past is that success in combat, and in the barracks for that matter, rests with our most junior leaders. Over the years, however, a perception has grown that the authority of our NCOs has been eroded. Some believe that we have slowly stripped

“Every opportunity must be seized to contribute to the growth of character and leadership within every Marine. We must remember that leaders are judged, ultimately, by the quality of the leadership reflected in their *subordinates*. We must also remember ... that the *Strategic Corporal* will be, above all else ... a leader of Marines.”

from them the latitude, the discretion, and the authority necessary to do their job. That perception must be stamped out. The remaining vestiges of the “zero defect mentality” must be exchanged for an environment in which all Marines are afforded the “freedom to fail” and with it, the opportunity to succeed. Micromanagement must become a thing of the past and supervision, that double-edged sword, must be complemented by proactive mentoring. Most importantly, we must aggressively empower our NCOs, hold them strictly accountable for their actions, and allow the leadership potential within each of them to flourish. This philosophy, reflected in the 1 June 1998 *Navy Times* interview as “Power Down,” is central to our efforts to sustain the transformation that begins with the first meeting with a Marine recruiter. Every opportunity must be seized to contribute to the growth of character and leadership within every Marine. We must remember that simple fact, and also remember that leaders are judged, ultimately, by the quality of the leadership reflected in their *subordinates*. We must also remember that the *Strategic Corporal* will be, above all else ... a leader of Marines.

Conclusion

And what of Cpl Hernandez? While his predicament is certainly challenging, it is not implausible. What did he do? First, he quickly reviewed what he knew. He was certain that Lt Franklin and 2d Squad would arrive within a matter of minutes. He knew that the crash site was located within the adjacent RMNF unit's sector and that it manned checkpoints astride Nedeed's route to the downed helo. He knew that any exchange of gunfire with Mubasa's gunmen would likely lead to civilian casualties and jeopardize the success of the humanitarian mission. Second, he considered what he did not know. He was uncertain of either Nedeed's or Mubasa's intentions, or of the feasibility of a rescue attempt. Based on these considerations and myriad other tangible and intangible factors, he completed a rapid assessment of the situation -and acted. Cpl Sley was directed to maintain his position atop the building and continue to monitor Nedeed's progress and the status of the casualties. Hernandez then switched frequencies and contacted the Marine liaison with the adjacent RMNF unit and learned that they had already dispatched medical personnel to the helo crash site, but were unaware of Nedeed's movement and would now because of Hernandez's warning reinforce the appropriate checkpoints. By the time that transmission was completed, Lt Franklin had arrived with the additional squad. With them came a neighborhood leader who had previously acted as an interpreter and mediator. Mubasa's men, apparently uncomfortable with the shift in odds, began to slowly withdraw. The mediator, a

recognizable and respected figure in the community, was handed a bullhorn and addressed the crowd. Within minutes the situation was diffused: Mubasa's men had departed, the crowd was calmed, and RMNF personnel had reached the crash site. For a few tense minutes though, the fate of both 1st Squad and the overall mission had hung in the balance and on the actions of a young Marine leader. As would be expected, our *Strategic Corporal*-firmly grounded in our ethos, thoroughly schooled and trained, outfitted with the finest equipment obtainable, infinitely agile, and above all else, a leader in the tradition of the Marines of old-made the right decision.