



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
2 NAVY ANNEX  
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

MCO 1500.56  
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16 Dec 96

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1500.56

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE CORPS VALUES PROGRAM

1. Purpose. To promulgate guidance for the implementation of the Marine Corps Values Program.

2. Background

a. Since 1775, the United States Marine Corps has served honorably and proudly whenever and wherever our Nation has called. Our history is replete with accounts of Marines who have shown exceptional bravery and made extraordinary sacrifices. Almost without exception, those accounts of heroism and service can be described by the words "Honor, Courage, and Commitment," our Marine Corps core values. Those three words succinctly describe the reason Marines have always been looked upon as a fighting force without equal, capable of exceptional accomplishment in the face of insurmountable odds.

b. While the Marine Corps has a rich tradition of promoting values, these values have historically been communicated in disparate programs or in response to significant events. The Marine Corps Values Program described in this Order will focus and coordinate our efforts and generate a constancy of purpose in promoting our core values.

3. Effective Date. 15 December 1996.

4. Information

a. The world and society have changed significantly over the past two decades, and we as an institution must join the battle with America's families, churches, and schools to help instill fundamental values in today's youth. We must ensure quality young people continue to seek careers and serve proudly in the honor and traditions of the Marine Corps into the next century.

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b. The Marine Corps will implement a coordinated program that will enhance transformation into U.S. Marines through a rigorous, thorough reaffirmation of Marine Corps Values training and education. Our goal is to continue to produce Marines who are exemplary citizens and who will act honorably and intelligently, whatever their situation or level of responsibilities. All Marines are expected to epitomize that which is good about our Nation and to personify the ideals upon which it was founded. Honor, Courage, and Commitment are not just words; they frame the way Marines are to live and act. There is no room in the Marine Corps for situational ethics or situational morality.

c. Exposure to the Marine Corps Values Program will start when a potential Marine first meets the Recruiter and subsequently while in the Delayed Entry Program. Implementation will involve three distinct phases.

(1) Initial Entry Training (Phase I). Every Marine, enlisted and officer, will be formally instructed in Marine Corps Values during entry level training. The preponderance of the training will occur at the Marine Corps Recruit Depots for enlisted Marines, at Officer Candidates School and The Basic School for officers.

(2) Reinforcement Education (Phase II). The lessons of entry level training will be reinforced in Marine Combat Training at the School of Infantry for all enlisted Marines. Reinforcement training will also be presented in military occupational specialty schools for both enlisted Marines and officers. Marine Corps Core Values education will continue at every Professional Military Education school which a Marine attends from the Sergeant's Course through the Marine Corps War College. Additionally, gatherings of Marine leaders, such as the General Officers Symposium, Commanders' Course, and Sergeants Major Symposium will include discussions concerning values.

(3) Sustainment Education (Phase III). Sustainment education will involve not only formal presentation of course material but will encompass awareness of the importance that practicing Marine Corps Core Values has in each Marine's day-to-day life. Marines should be able to see our core values demonstrated in the daily course of events by leaders at all levels from squad to force commander. Honor, courage, and commitment must be a way of life in garrison and in the field, on and off duty. Sustainment is the key to the success of the Marine Corps Values Program. Marines in uniform today have a

moral obligation to the Marines of tomorrow to uphold the time-honored Marine Corps values and continue the proud tradition. Sustainment education is primarily in the hands of commanders and Marine leaders at every level.

5. Action

a. Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command shall:

(1) Implement the Marine Corps Values Program.

(2) Establish a proponent for the publication and maintenance of the Marine Corps Values program and associated tools.

(3) Incorporate Marine Corps Values instruction in all Marine Corps formal schools.

(4) Coordinate with Marine Detachment Commanding Officers, Officers-in-Charge, and Staff Noncommissioned Officers-in-Charge at other service schools, attended by Marine Corps students, to incorporate Marine Corps Values instruction for Marines.

b. The Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower and Reserve Affairs shall incorporate Marine Corps Values into all manpower policies and programs where applicable.

c. The Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command shall incorporate Marine Corps Values into Marine Corps Recruiting Command training programs beginning with the Delayed Entry Program.

d. Commanding Generals, Commanding Officers, and Officers-in-Charge shall:

(1) Establish a program for sustaining Marine Corps Values education as a continuation of the program that was initiated during recruit training.

(2) Establish a command environment in which the leadership, role models, and examples of all that is good about the Marine Corps are provided for both newly joined Marines and more seasoned Marines alike.

(3) Integrate Marine Corps Values training into organizational training plans.

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(4) Publicize and reinforce Marine Corps Values throughout the command using the Plan of the Day, media, and publications, and other appropriate means.

6. Tools

a. To assist Marines at all levels in the implementation of the Marine Corps Values Program, various "tools" have been developed. These tools will be distributed down to the company and detachment level. While not all inclusive, they provide a point of departure for the development of formal lessons in schools and reinforcement and sustainment training in units throughout the Corps. Commanders are strongly encouraged to tailor the Marine Corps Values Program to meet the specific needs of each individual organization.

b. The tools to support the values program include a Discussion Guide for Marine Corps Values, a Marine Corps Values pocket card to be issued to all Marines, and a CMC video. Initial issue to support program implementation will be provided by the CG MCCDC. Resupply will be accomplished by using units as follows:

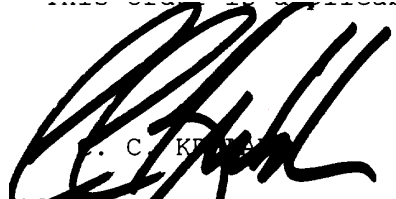
(1) The Marine Corps Values and Leadership Discussion Leader's Guide will be available electronically by 15 December 1996. The CG MCCDC will issue an initial 5,000 paper copies during December 1996. The Guide will be available for reorder through the Marine Corps Publications Distribution System (MCPDS) as a reference publication during the fourth quarter of FY 1997.

(2) Marine Corps Values cards may be requisitioned through the supply system. An initial issue of cards will be made by the CG MCCDC to all units at the battalion, squadron, detachment level and to the Marine Corps Recruit Depots and Officer Candidates School. Cards will be sent to recruit depots and Officer Candidates School during early December 1996 and to the rest of the Marine Corps during January 1997.

(3) Copies of the CMC Values Video will be sent to base/station TAVSC's and may be locally reproduced to address command needs.

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7. Reserve Applicability. This order is applicable to the  
Marine Corps Reserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. C. K.", is written over a rectangular stamp. The stamp contains the text ". C. K." in a serif font.

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