



SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS

MEMORANDUM



SMMC "Core Values, Not Just Words" Memo July 2021

SMMC MEMO 04-21

"Honor, Courage, and Commitment are not just words; they frame the way Marines are to live and act..." -30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Carl E. Mundy Jr.

Can any organization truly capture all the traits, characteristics, and principles needed to execute sound leadership, while encompassing the diverse needs and experiences of its members into a single set of values?

For the Marine Corps, I believe the answer is yes. For nearly thirty years, with our Core Values, the Marine Corps has identified itself through Honor, Courage, and Commitment. The definitions of these three words continue to describe every aspect of treating one another with dignity and respect, adhering to higher standards of personal conduct, and devotion to professionalism and discipline.

The 30th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General C. E. Mundy Jr., carved out these three supporting pillars from the bedrock of the Marine Corps' illustrious service and sacrifice on and off the battlefield.

He observed that, "almost without exception, those accounts of heroism and service can be described by the words "Honor, Courage, and Commitment,". He believed that these attributes were the foundation stones of what it means to be a Marine and set down a plan for their implementation and sustainment in Marine Corps Order 1500.56. The purpose to "Enhance transformation into U.S. Marines through a rigorous, thorough reaffirmation of Marine Corps Values training and education."

In his "Statement on Core Values of The United States Marines", he succinctly described each attribute. They are:

HONOR. The bedrock of our character. The quality that guides Marines to exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior; never to lie, cheat, or steal; to abide by an uncompromising code of integrity; to respect human dignity; to have respect and concern for each other. The quality of maturity, dedication,

trust, and dependability that commits Marines to act responsibly; to be accountable for actions; to fulfill obligations; and to hold others accountable for their actions.

COURAGE. The heart of our Core Values, courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength ingrained in Marines to carry them through the challenges of combat and the mastery of fear; to do what is right; to adhere to a higher standard of personal conduct; to lead by example, and to make tough decisions under stress and pressure. It is the inner strength that enables a Marine to take that extra step.

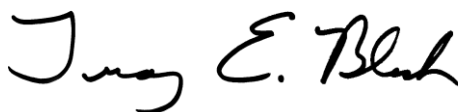
COMMITMENT. The spirit of determination and dedication within members of a force of arms that leads to professionalism and mastery of the art of war. It leads to the highest order of discipline for unit and self; it is the ingredient that enables 24-hour a day dedication to Corps and Country; pride; concern for others; and an unrelenting determination to achieve a standard of excellence in every endeavor. Commitment is the value that establishes the Marine as the warrior and citizen others strive to emulate.

Today, the Marine Corps is the most innovative service in the United States Military. With Force Design, our own Commandant is evolving our Corps to compete against peer threats and win in an era of great power competition.

The need to adapt is key to agility on and off the battlefield, but there are some aspects of our Corps that remain resolute. Our Core Values are first among them. Most importantly, the code of conduct they impart.

In an era defined by change, it is important to reflect on these values, and reaffirm them. On behalf of our 38th Commandant, I ask every leader and each Marine to take a moment to reacquaint ourselves with their meaning and recommit ourselves to the timeless guiding principles provided within. Thank you.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy E. Black". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

TROY E. BLACK

19th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps