



SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS

MEMORANDUM



To stand ready, we cannot stand still

SMMC MEMO 02-22

Today's Marine Corps is the result of a continuing evolution in doctrine, tactics, policy and procedure.

Our legacy is defined not only by grit and valor, but ingenuity, adaptability and resourcefulness. With each conflict, we learned new lessons, tested new concepts and fielded new capabilities.

Today's Marine Corps is a product of the generations that preceded us and their commitment to ensuring future Marines remained capable of fighting in "any clime or place." It was the Marines before us who built a foundation of learning, evolving and improving.

Today's Marines still encompass the same spirit of the generations before us.

Each generation of Marines stands on the shoulders of those who served before them. Each generation is led by senior, more experienced Marines driven by a mandate to constantly improve the Corps. Each generation of Marines leaves its own mark, only to watch with pride as a new generation improves upon their accomplishments.

Building upon lessons learned in battle, those who came before us have successfully leveraged interwar periods to apply the right changes at the right time to ensure our success in future conflict.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked more than 80 years ago, Marines were ready. While their courage gave birth to the legend of the "Teufel Hunden" in Belleau Wood just years before, Marines then knew that a Marine Corps built for trench warfare would be irrelevant in the next fight. Recognizing the need for change, they developed revolutionary amphibious capabilities and added the island hopping campaign of WWII to our illustrious history. When Marines were tasked with liberating Kuwait more than 30 years ago, they were ready. Embracing General Gray's maneuver warfare – a stark change from the warfighting concepts employed in Vietnam – they achieved their mission in a matter of days. And when our great Nation was attacked 20 years ago, Marines were ready. Harnessing our "No better friend, No worse enemy"

mentality, we adapted to meet our Nation's counter-insurgency needs.

This process of continual improvement is how the Marine Corps has maintained its ability to be the most ready when the Nation is least ready. It is how we remain able to answer the Nation's call when she needs her premier fighting force to respond. Through a concerted effort, the Marine Corps continues to build upon its foundation of innovation and continual improvement.

The Marines who served our Nation during the height of the Global War on Terror fill our ranks today. We have a deep and committed experience in counter-insurgency that has added another chapter to Marine Corps legacy. But much like our predecessors from WWI, we recognize the time to evolve is now. And like those earlier generations of Marines, we must look to the future and prepare the next generation of Marines for what it holds.

The Marine Corps has the ability to win our Nation's battles **today**. We are trained, equipped and ready to respond to any threat, anywhere on the globe.

Nonetheless, we must continue to innovate and develop to meet current and future challenges. We must actively work to improve our warfighting organization if we want to remain preeminent on the battlefield of tomorrow.

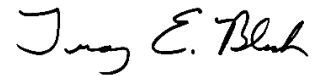
Today, you may be experimenting with Force Design, talking about maturing the force, challenging concepts like expeditionary advanced basing operations or stand-in forces, evaluating talent management proposals, or even recommending new training and education modernization initiatives. Whether some or all of these are true, your input is valuable because each of these ideas contribute to the single and most important factor for our Marine Corps: Warfighting.

To be clear, today's Marine Corps is made up of the finest Marines with the most extensive capabilities our Corps has ever seen.

Today's Marines are more than capable of fighting and winning. We cannot stop there. We must challenge ourselves to prepare for the unknown - the unpredictable. In the words of Winston Churchill, "The farther backward you look, the farther forward you see." Looking back on our own history, it is clear that to succeed moving forward, we must continue to innovate and improve.

We stand as ready today as ever. In order to remain ready tomorrow, **we cannot stand still**. This is how we protect the legacy, honor those who came before us and prepare those who will follow in our footsteps.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Troy E. Black". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'T'.

TROY E. BLACK
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps