



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

11TH MARINES
1ST MARINE DIVISION (REIN), FMF
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

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FEB 06 2023

REGIMENTAL POLICY LETTER 2-23

From: Commanding Officer

To: Commissioned Officers, Warrant Officers, and Officers in a Non-Commissioned Status

Subj: GOOD ORDER AND DISCIPLINE – MILITARY APPEARANCE, GROOMING STANDARDS AND CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Ref: (a) The Marine Corps Manual

(b) MCO 1020.34H Marine Corps Uniform Regulations

(c) MCO 5530.15 U.S. Marine Corps Interior Guard Manual

1. **Background.** In war, “technical and tactical proficiency are not sufficient; we must have discipline and standardized conduct for when things get difficult.” This statement was a recent quote from the 1st Marine Division Commanding General who has led Marines in combat, fought and won in combat, lost Marines in combat, and understands the necessity for good order and discipline. Military discipline and the maintenance and enforcement of standards do not exist for their own sake. They help reinforce positive leadership, mission focus and esprit de corps. Conversely, there are a multitude of historical examples such as prisoner mistreatment at Abu Ghraib, the My Lai Massacre, and the desecration of dead insurgents in Afghanistan, where a multitude of underlying causal factors, to include a toxic command climate fostered by weak leadership, set the conditions for a calamity to occur. Witnesses testified that the un-enforced standards and lapses in discipline within these units were key contributing factors to these incidents.

2. For our leaders, adherence to established standards of behavior and conduct, and enforcement of orders and regulations that govern our conduct and appearance, are moral imperatives. Those who choose to divorce routine standards of conduct and discipline from measurements of combat effectiveness are making a grave mistake. Moreover, this deliberate decision is providing our adversaries a competitive advantage on the battlefield, and it is they who will make us pay for our lapses in discipline and judgement. General Barrow, one of our previous Commandants, served as a rifle company commander during the Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. Forty years after that historic campaign, he was delivering a PME when a young lieutenant, who noted the cold, the difficult conditions, and the large numbers of attacking Chinese, asked “How did you do it?” General Barrow simply responded, “I made them shave every day.”

2. **Problem Statement.** My assessment is that our young Marines are joining the Regiment with a lack of training and education in what professional military appearance is, what the proper grooming standards are, and how to execute basic customs and courtesies. This professional unawareness, coupled with failures to correct and educate these deficiencies, has led to a normalized deviation from the standard. This normalized deviation undermines our readiness, tears at our cultural fiber, undermines our sacred charge to protect the history and traditions that previous generations have entrusted with us, and cheats our young Marines out of the experience that they asked for when they walked into a Marine recruiter’s office.

3. **Way Forward.** *There are two types of discipline: self-discipline and externally imposed discipline; the more you have of one, the less you need of the other. The choice of what kind of discipline we have remains with you.* The Regiment will attack the issues outlined in this policy through shared accountability centered on adherence, education, and ruthless enforcement. The explanation, inspection, and enforcement of these basic standards are the business of leaders, particularly our Non-Commissioned Officers and Company-Grade leaders.

a. **Adherence.** All Marines within the Regiment will maintain the discipline and standards outlined in the references daily. This effort includes following grooming standards, wearing serviceable uniforms, rendering appropriate customs and courtesies and expecting reciprocation from seniors, and wearing appropriate civilian attire.

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b. Education. All Corporal's Courses, Lance Corporal Seminars, and New Joins Briefs will institute periods of instruction (POI) on professional military appearance, grooming standards, and customs and courtesies. Instructors will also teach Marines how to correct deficiencies and how to enforce standards through the counseling process. Leaders are encouraged to use anonymous photos in their lessons to provide a visual depiction of violations to orders and regulations. Additionally, units are also encouraged to utilize the timeless technique of uniform inspections to educate Marines and enforce standards. To the maximum extent possible, Company Grade Officers will lead these inspections.

c. Ruthless Enforcement. Our young Marines should receive the benefit of the doubt and leaders should assume Marines are ignorant of the standard when minor violations occur. When leaders observe violations, they will make corrections on the spot and notify that Marine's Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant in a timely manner in order to execute the appropriate step in the counseling process. Unless a formal counseling (6105) or informal counseling (Platoon Commander's Notebook entry) is already on record, a simple documented counseling is recommended for a Marine's first violation.

4. End State (What success looks like). The Marines and Sailors of 11th Marine Regiment are a team of disciplined professionals, led by competent and selfless leaders, who take pride in themselves, their unit, and their Corps. 11th Marines personnel demonstrate these qualities through an unwavering commitment to upholding traditions and standards that have given the Regiment a competitive edge for 105 years. Our Marines are depending on us, and we cannot fail them!



P. F. ELDRIDGE