



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
MARINE CORPS RECRUITING COMMAND  
3280 RUSSELL ROAD  
QUANTICO, VA 22134

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
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CGOF

From: Commanding General  
To: All Hands

Subj: COMMANDER'S GUIDANCE AND INTENT

1. Team MCRC. This paper describes my guidance and intent. As we begin our relationship together, it's important for you to understand my expectations, how we will do business, and what you should expect from me and your leadership. All hands are *expected* and *required* to read this paper closely and understand its contents completely. Ask questions if you don't. I look forward to discussing it with you in the weeks and months ahead because, as in the past, we face challenging times. But challenges also bring tremendous opportunities!

2. Commander's Battlespace Area Evaluation

a. Centers of Gravity

(1) Strategic. MCRC's *strategic center of gravity* is the American peoples' mystical faith in the high quality, character, and capabilities of the *individual Marine*. The war-fighting ethos and core values of our Marines has sustained the Marine Corps throughout our long history. We are who we recruit, and the American peoples' steadfast belief in their Marine Corps is reinforced daily by the Marine Recruiters who they see in their communities -- Marines who radiate pride in who they are and what they do, and represent vitality, fitness, ethics, and strong core values. *The American people deeply believe in their Marines.*

(2) Operational. MCRC's *operational center of gravity* are the command teams of the Recruiting Districts and Stations who turn the American peoples' belief in their Marine Corps into a consistent stream of young men and women of character arriving on the yellow footprints of San Diego, Parris Island and Quantico. The command teams of MCRC's Recruiting Districts and Stations ensure our foundation always stays strong by practicing highly ethical, standards-based recruiting: *Highest Performance with the Highest Ethics!*

b. Critical Vulnerabilities

(1) Strategic. MCRC's *strategic critical vulnerability* is an erosion of the American peoples' trust and confidence in their Marine Corps, compounded by a slow degradation of our ability to attract and inspire young men and women of character to become Marines.

(2) Operational. MCRC's *operational critical vulnerability* is the mounting stress and pressure placed upon our Marine Recruiters compounded by insufficient training, numerous reliefs, and increased likelihood of recruiter misconduct.

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(3) Risk. Our *most dangerous risks* are twofold: (1) a challenging recruiting environment elevates conditions for widespread fraud, which can infect a command and ultimately impact the ability to make mission, and (2) our training fails to prepare our Marines for a dynamic recruiting environment that causes us to lose territory for a generation. Our *most likely risk* is that MCRC sustains an unsustainable number of reliefs and/or prolonged mental health problems that: 1) undermines Marines' general faith in the goodness of recruiting duty, and 2) degrades MCRC's ability to attract and inspire our best Marines to undertake this challenging duty. In this same vein, we must become experts at mitigating the *most likely* continuing challenge of inspiring and motivating the force to perform in an ethical manner when the environment has become more challenging and the process more time consuming.

3. Vision and Mission. This is an exciting time to be a Marine. Our *vision* is that we are a flexible and adaptable organization that consistently meets Marine Corps accession needs by quantity and quality, while consistently seeking improvement and facilitating the personal and professional development of our people. Our *mission statement* is: MCRC is responsible to the Commandant of the Marine Corps to find, attract, and recruit qualified individuals for the active and reserve components, both officer and enlisted, to achieve Total Force accession requirements.

a. Purpose. These objectives (in priority order) will guide our every action and be the basis for our daily decision-making:

(1) Reinforce and expand the trust of the American people in their Marine Corps.

(2) Enable our Marines and their families to be happy and successful (personally and professionally).

(3) Positively shape the future of the Marine Corps.

b. Method. We will achieve these objectives by creating and maintaining a positive environment in which ethical behavior rises to the top. I expect our *Warrior Ethos* (how we treat and take care of one another) and our *Core Values* (Honor, Courage, Commitment) to be a daily discussion between leaders and led. My priorities are as follows:

(1) First, we will make an *immediate* and *relentless commitment* to training, training, and more training. We will develop, execute, and deliver creative, dynamic, exciting, and anticipatory training that prepares our Marine Recruiters to excel in this environment. Our training should turn our Marine Recruiters into a *magnetic force* that attracts high quality people. Our National Training Team (NTT) will provide reinforcement and assistance. All hands will ensure our adherence to the tenets of systematic recruiting. Our commitment to training will: 1) enhance Marines' individual skills, 2) improve command climates, 3) prepare our force to operate effectively in high schools, and 4) fully employ the components of systematic recruiting. *I will be personally involved with planning, executing, and supervising this training.*

**“Training = Confidence = Victory.”**

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(2) Second, we will work closely with DC M&RA to apply immediate relief to the force by leveraging all available manpower levers to reinforce RS's through Recruiter Aide / EAD Recruiters, command recruiters, and by incentivizing second tour 8411's to return to recruiting duty. This effort is already underway. We will continue to engage senior leaders across the Marine Corps to build shared situational awareness, develop initiatives for more Marines to help, assess the effectiveness of "boot leave," and educate the force on ways they can better support MCRC.

(3) Third, we will work closely with DC P&R to ensure our advertising is funded adequately while also scrupulously looking for our return on investment (ROI). We will also work closely with DC M&RA and DC CD&I to develop a "recovery plan" for MCRC in the near-term and to determine if MCRC's manning and T/O is correct for the future operating environment in the long-term.

(4) Fourth, we will implement a new "metric" developed by the Center for Naval Analysis to ensure we are structured properly. With declining demographics across the country, we cannot afford to have even one Marine placed in a sub-optimal fighting position. We will be flexible, agile, and adaptive across the force, and place our Marines in fighting positions where they have the greatest chance of success in attracting and inspiring high-quality applicants (as defined by the new "metric"). We will not sacrifice long-term mission effectiveness for short-term, transitory success.

c. End State. Our goals are ambitious but achievable:

- (1) MCRC has the best-trained, best-led recruiting force in the world;
- (2) MCRC makes mission consistently by focusing on quality;
- (3) MCRC reduces the number of recruiter reliefs by at least one half;
- (4) MCRC grows and develop an average of 70 Career Recruiters per year;

(5) MCRC leaves behind a lasting and positive impression of the Marine Corps with the American people (external vice internally focused).

4. Execution. The four interconnected areas described below will enable the accomplishment of our objectives and achievement of our end-states:

a. Culture. Culture is the collective behavior of the command's leadership. Three areas I view as crucial to a positive command culture are: 1) professionalism, 2) personal discipline, and 3) physical fitness. First, professionalism. Being part of a profession means we take an elevated tone in all we do. We are respectful and considerate of others; we listen carefully to understand, not to respond; we understand the power of inquiry over advocacy; and we understand what it takes to become a great communicator (listen, listen, listen!). We will be especially watchful for the "boiling frog" syndrome of degrading and unprofessional behavior and language – often disguised as jokes – seeping into our culture and ultimately setting the conditions for bad actions

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to occur. *Make no mistake: language precedes action as lightning precedes thunder!*

Unprofessional conduct and incremental tolerance of lower standards can, and will, lead to disaster. Second, personal discipline. The personal habits we bring to recruiting duty are the same habits that have served us so well throughout our careers. Good habits are under-rated, but essential to well-led units. Personal discipline on recruiting duty is reflected by our appearance in uniform, adherence to systematic recruiting, energetic prospecting, setting the right example, and doing the hard right as a matter of routine. Third, physical fitness. Physical fitness is a cornerstone of all other forms of personal excellence and is what the American people expect of us. Keep yourself physically fit. Expect me to constantly check on the state of our culture, paying close attention to the three areas above, and please tell me if/when you think we're veering off course.

b. People. Respecting the dignity of every individual is absolutely essential to accomplishing our objectives. A person's dignity and self-respect is the "innermost armament of their soul" and at the very root of their self-worth, self-esteem, and personal resilience. We will be ever-vigilant in guarding and protecting this dignity and self-respect in our people, strengthening their resilience whenever we can. Tell people what they can and should be and they will strive to achieve it. Do not violate or degrade the dignity of another individual. In all of our actions with Marines, applicants, and the American people, we should ask ourselves this simple question: if the Commandant and Sergeant Major were looking over one shoulder and the Marine's and/or applicant's parents were looking over the other shoulder, would we still take the same action? If not, let's think again.

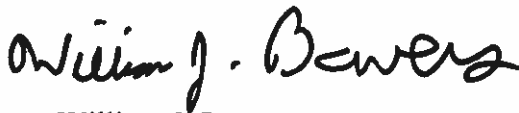
c. Processes. Systematic recruiting has proven its effectiveness across two generations; I expect us to know, practice, and enforce it across MCRC. My goal is for the MCRC staff to always "add value" in all interactions with subordinate and higher headquarters. I expect MCRC to make deadlines and produce quality work the first time. Administrative matters such as awards, fitness reports, reenlistments, investigations, and administrative action forms are important to Marines' careers and their opportunities for promotion, so they are therefore very important to all leaders within MCRC. Let's follow the Golden Rule: in all administrative matters and issues, we will treat others (to include our applicants) the way we want to be treated. My guidance on awards is simple: *swift, public, generous*. I will do my part to ensure all administrative processes dealing with Marines, civilians, and applicants are completed thoroughly, correctly, and on time, the first time.

d. Organization. While MCRC operates within a hierarchical command structure going from the Marine Recruiter to CMC, we have the talented people and tools necessary to function in a flat way. This means information is transmitted quickly, completely, and transparently. I have empowered the MCRC staff to streamline processes and eliminate bottlenecks for routine tasks (such as waivers) to make mission accomplishment easier. If there is an unexpected bottleneck somewhere, I need to know about it. Effective command groups expand the capabilities of their Marines by empowering them to act; those that do so will have MCRC support. Finally, I expect us to conduct frequent inspections to ensure proper supervision is in place and business is being conducted properly. These inspections are intended to be helpful in nature. My guidance on inspections is simple: *trust but verify!*

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5. Conclusion. Finally, we will do this while having *fun*, understanding that Marines who radiate pride in who they are and what they do are an unstoppable *magnetic force* in attracting and inspiring young men and women of character to become Marines. Look forward to working with you!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Bowers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "W".

William J. Bowers  
Major General, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding General,  
Marine Corps Recruiting Command