**UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

11TH MARINE REGIMENT

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18 Apr 18

From: Commanding Officer

To: Primary and Special Staff

Subj: PRIMARY AND SPECIAL STAFF INITIAL GUIDANCE

1. As principal and special staff officers you are my personal representatives; your actions must always reflect my personality and be guided by my intent. These ideas define my intent as it relates to your duties and more importantly your relationship with your subordinate unit leaders. The purpose of this letter is to provide you my view of your role and responsibility as staff member, as well as my initial guidance and expectations.

a. Role and Responsibility

(1) Most importantly, as the staff of 11th Marines, help me maintain focus on our warfighting priority. The purpose of this regiment is to provide close, continuous fire support to 1st Marine Division....any mission, anytime, anywhere. We "must be ready, singular." This implies a relentless sense of urgency and an unyielding bias for action.

(2) As a staff member, you are first and foremost a leader. You are accountable for leading your staff section in the accomplishment of its assigned tasks and for leading the personal and professional development of the Marines and Sailors assigned to your section. You also “lead up,” which means you provide timely advice and recommendations to me.

(3) Attitude is a weapon - How you do your job will affect our combat efficiency. Your job is to gain the results that our subordinates seek; to do so you will need to win their affection. You can't do more than your duty, and you should never do less.

(4) As a Staff Officer, you can never tell a Commander no on any issue, only I can do that, but you can provide them sound advice and guidance that will help make them all successful. While supporting our Battalion Commanders you must always move heaven and earth to support their requirements; their concerns must be your concerns.

(5) I will always judge your actions in relation to the results that our subordinate units achieve - their success is our success.

b. Initial Guidance and Expectations

(1) Tell me what I need to hear, not what you think I want to hear. You share in the responsibility to help me make good decisions. Do not take this responsibility lightly. If the "baby is ugly," I expect you to tell me.

(2) There will inevitably be times that my guidance and/or direction will be unclear to you or to our subordinate units. In these instances, ask for clarification. Do not try to plan or execute based on unclear guidance and do not try to pass unclear guidance to our subordinate units.

(3) Ensure you work hard at meeting our subordinates' timelines, as well as those of our higher headquarters'. Our units need to be able to count on our actions as a staff. On this note, staff visits are critical; visit our battalions on their turf and visit them often - clarify and confirm, "How are we doing?" Ask for suggestions on how we can serve them better. Your visits allow me to better supervise this large complex organization; don't micro manage them, but do not neglect them either. If you have to send me a note on a subordinate unit and it is unpleasant, be sure to have first shared it with that commander...no one likes to be blind-sided by the boss.

(4) "Action passed is action taken!" Staff Officers must continually follow-up and confirm that the desired results are accomplished and accomplished to standard. Excuses like: "I sent him or her an email," or "I hung that document on the shared drive" are symptomatic of a lack of concern on the part of staff officers. To invoke J.C. Hardee rule #3, we all need to continually ask ourselves "What do I know? Who needs to know it? And have I told them yet? This sounds easy, but in reality it requires active, passionate professionals to ensure that "everyone has the word!"

(5) All staff officers must aggressively seek information from multiple sources. Pirated information is often very timely and useful. The staff of 11th Marines must have the same "bias for action" that I expect of our young Marines at the point of contact. You must develop a keen sense of the possible, become proactive and anticipatory in everything you do. Mental agility is the mark of all great staff officers; you ladies and gentlemen will prevent the Regiment from ever getting caught flat-footed and unprepared!

(6) When going about your daily duties, remember to be cheerful! When discussing a particularly contentious issue with a subordinate command, try and understand their perspective. If they are screwed up - remain positive. No one follows a pessimist. No one. Ever. If they are really screwed up - be even more positive! Before you secure every day, ask yourself this question: Who have I visited today and have I made them smile? How you answer this will determine if you are meeting my intent. This may seem corny, but in the long run it serves to uplift our entire command climate. As General Mattis once noted, "There is no substitute for positive leadership!"

(7) Identify and emphasize during planning the critical planning considerations relative to your functional area. If you as the subject matter expert do not identify these considerations, no one will. Conduct thorough, detailed and complete staff work.

(8) Anticipate requirements and have a plan to support them. Identify the leading indicators of an issue and provide options to address an issue well in advance of crisis. If we fail to do this, we will consistently find ourselves reacting to avoidable crises.

(9) Develop and maintain positive, effective relationships with higher, adjacent, supporting and supported unit staffs. Know your staff counterpart at Division, Base, or peer Regiment. Establish and maintain positive rapport. Welcome them to the team and treat them accordingly. Strive to understand their perspective and help them accomplish their mission. Do not contribute to their problems. When appropriate, help them help us.

(10) Most importantly, help me maintain focus on our warfighting priority. The purpose of this regiment is to provide close, continuous, all weather fire support to 1st Marine Division....any mission, anytime, anywhere. We "must be ready, singular". This implies a relentless sense of urgency and an unyielding bias for action.

W. M. FIELD

Colonel, USMC