

Chapter 1

The Marine Corps' Philosophy and Principles of Training

Training Philosophy

The history of battle, a commander's experience, and the wisdom of military philosophers all confirm the direct correlation between training and victory in war. Successful combat units train as they intend to fight and fight as they were trained. Marines base their future success on the battlefield on this philosophy. The Marine Corps undergirds this philosophy with a training mandate and a training imperative. This philosophy is further backed by a number of training principles.

"You are either in contact, moving to contact, or training!"¹

*LtCol "Chips" Catalone,
USMC*

Training Mandate

The Marine Corps' mandate for training is simple and compelling: The nation must have units that are ready for combat! Because the Marine Corps trains for war, not for peace, the intended battle determines training directions and goals. War places rigorous physical, psychological, and moral demands on Marines, and a battle environment demands substantial dedication, perseverance, and motivation to ensure the highest possible chance of success. Success on the battlefield also demands the ability and willingness to fight. Combat-ready units are manned with motivated, disciplined, and proficient Marines; led by tactically and technically competent leaders; and conditioned through physically tough and mentally demanding training that ranges from individual Marine battle drills to joint combined-arms exercises. Pursuit of the highest possible quality of training must become a way of life in the Marine Corps.

Training Imperative

Training is a professional and moral imperative. It is the Marine Corps' responsibility to ensure that both regular and reserve components are properly trained. Training encompasses the full range of duties, responsibilities, and missions of Marines, and it must be embedded in all that Marines do. It can be as simple as practicing an individual task or as complex as conducting a joint or combined field training exercise (FTX) with an opposing force. It can vary from a squad leader informally making an on-the-spot correction, to a company commander teaching lieutenants how to apply tactical principles. Employing weapons, operating equipment, communicating information, maintaining vehicles, and rearming and resupplying units are all critical skills mastered only

through training. From training comes the ability to follow procedures, to execute techniques, to apply tactics, and to integrate the capabilities of arms and services.

Principles

Out of the Marine Corps' philosophy of training emerges fundamental principles that are applicable to all levels of Marine Corps training. All Marines must understand and apply these principles at every level of training. These principles provide sound and proven direction and are flexible enough to accommodate the demands of local conditions and the judgment of commanders and other trainers. The principles of Marine Corps training are discussed in the following subparagraphs. These principles are not inclusive, nor do they guarantee success. They are guides that commanders can use to assess unit training programs.

Train as You Fight

The battle is the ultimate test of training. To train as you will fight is the fundamental principle upon which all Marine Corps training is based. Therefore, all peacetime training must reflect battlefield requirements. All leaders are considered trainers and coaches, and they must ensure that individual Marines and units receive realistic training that simulates wartime conditions. Marines' training should prepare them to perform their tasks and meet operational standards during the complex, stressful, and lethal situations they will encounter in war. If units and elements are to function together during combat, they should train together during peacetime exercises. The Marine Corps' philosophy is to train well in peace so that it can fight well in war.

Make Commanders Responsible for Training

Commanders at all levels are responsible for the training and performance of their Marines and units. They do more than manage training. The commander's personal presence and involvement demonstrate to all that training is the number one priority. Senior commanders personally train each direct, subordinate commander; e.g., battalion commanders train company commanders, company commanders train platoon commanders, etc. This simple but practical approach allows for standardization from above and for flexibility at the trainer's level.

The ability to delegate authority to an individual who is trained to accept responsibility is vital to the Marine Corps' operational concept. Therefore, training the chain of command is an inherent part of the Marine Corps training philosophy. It is an integral part in developing subordinate commanders into effective leaders. This provides

subordinate leaders both implementing and supervisory responsibilities and also the opportunity to train other subordinate leaders. This delegation of authority fosters initiative throughout the chain of command and is vital to the teacher-trainer role.

Use Standards-Based Training

Training standards are published as individual training standards (ITSs) for each military occupational specialty (MOS) and as mission performance standards (MPSs) for each unit. All training must conform to these standards. Standards-based training is the use of common procedures and uniform operational methods to create a common perspective within the Marine Corps. This method of training is further reflected in Marine Corps doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures. This commonality allows Marines to train, operate, maintain, and fight from a common perspective. Standards-based training—

- Provides a measurement of performance.
- Provides Marines with the ability to adjust rapidly to changing tactical situations.
- Eliminates the need for retraining if units are cross-attached.
- Fosters flexibility in battle by reducing the need for complex orders.
- Teaches Marines to respond to changes in combat in a reflexive and automatic manner.

Since the Marine Corps' standards-based training is used throughout the Total Force, it provides commanders with a firm foundation upon which to request needed resources that support training throughout the Marine Corps. These resources include funding, equipment, ammunition, and ranges.

Appendix A is an example of the ITSs of individuals responsible for unit training management (UTM).

Use Performance-Oriented Training

Marines must be proficient in the basic skills required to perform their jobs under battlefield conditions. To achieve results, all training should be performance-oriented. Individual training occurs on a continual basis and is fully integrated into collective training. Marines are trained to meet published standards, not merely to occupy the time designated for training.

Use Mission-Oriented Training

To obtain maximum benefits during training, commanders develop training programs based on mission analysis. The mission analysis provides a careful assessment of possible warfighting missions, identifies specified and implied tasks, and is the foundation for the

mission essential task list (METL).

The unit's combat missions are the basis for the development of tasks and for the specific standards to which each task must be executed. A unit does not train for Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System (MCCRES) tasks that are not dictated by its combat mission. Units are taught these tasks according to prescribed collective and individual training standards set forth in MCCRES and the Individual Training Standards System (ITSS).

Train the MAGTF to Fight as a Combined-Arms Team

The cornerstone of today's Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) is the combined-arms team. Combined-arms proficiency develops only when teams train together on a regular basis. Cross-attachment of units and routine employment of the full spectrum of combat, combat support, and combat service support functions must be practiced regularly. At the company, battalion, and regimental levels, combined-arms operations focus specific training requirements for combat support, combat service support, and aviation elements to rearm, resupply, evacuate casualties, and recover equipment quickly and to integrate indirect fires, electronic warfare, aviation, engineer, and air defense. Regimental and higher level commanders and their staffs must continually train to synchronize and integrate operations.

Train to Sustain Proficiency

Once units have trained to a required level of proficiency, they must sustain it. To sustain proficiency, commanders must continuously evaluate performance and design training programs that correct weaknesses and reinforce strengths. This means training year round, not focusing training on one or two key events during the year. MCCRES allows for both multi-echelon and individual training, and it develops and sustains mission proficiency. It is key to sustaining a high level of proficiency. MCCRES is the continuous process of training, evaluating results, analyzing feedback, and training again to strengthen weak areas.

Train to Challenge

Training must be challenging. If training is a challenge, it builds competence and confidence by developing new skills. The pride and satisfaction gained by meeting training challenges instills loyalty and dedication. It inspires excellence by fostering initiative, enthusiasm, and eagerness to learn.