

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
Marine Corps University
User's Guide to Marine Corps Values

PROFESSION OF ARMS

1. Introduction. Is the Marine Corps considered to be a profession? Are all Marines professionals? What unique demands are placed on Marines by our society? These are a few of the questions which will be discussed during this seminar on professionalism.

2. Overview. Military service is a difficult profession and it makes unique demands on each individual. Unless the Corps' leaders recognize and dedicate themselves to meeting those demands in a professional manner, the Corps will not stand ready to assist with the important role of the military in keeping the nation secure.

3. References. The following provide additional information on the Profession of Arms:

FMFM 1-0, Leading Marines

FM 22-100, Military Leadership

NAVMC 2563, The Armed Forces Officer

The Soldier and the State, by Samuel P. Huntington

The Professional Soldier, by Morris Janowitz

Those Who Can Teach, by Ryan and Cooper

4. Notes to The Discussion Leader

a. In preparing to lead this seminar on professionalism, the discussion leader should familiarize himself with some of the literature and manuals available dealing with the profession of arms and the term professionalism. NAVMC 2563, The Armed Forces Officer, Chapters 1-3, and FM 22100, Military Leadership Chapter 3, will provide some additional insights into the meaning of professionalism within the military services. Additionally, Samuel P. Huntington deals with the issue in his book The Soldier and the State, as does Morris Janowitz in his book The Professional Soldier.

b. This discussion guide is just that, a guide, and is not meant to be the "end-all" of leadership instruction on the subject, but it does provide the basic points for discussion. Only you, the leader, know what your unit needs most, and therefore, you must evaluate what needs to be emphasized, modified, or expanded.

c. When leading this discussion, remember that the effectiveness of the group learning experience is primarily dependent upon your preparation and your ability to fulfill your duties as the discussion leader.

5. Discussion. As professional military leaders we have obligations and responsibilities to our Corps, to our Country, and to ourselves. Unless we understand the full extent of those responsibilities, and appreciate the unique nature of our profession, we cannot dedicate ourselves to meeting those obligations. Today we will discuss professionalism within the Marine Corps. In so doing, we hope to increase our Marines' awareness of the uniqueness of their role as military professionals, and remind them of the responsibilities associated with that role. The agenda for today's discussion is:

- a. Discuss the characteristics of a profession.
- b. Define the term military professional.
- c. Discuss the need for professionalism in the Corps.
- d. Identify some responsibilities of being a member of the profession of arms.
- e. Discuss the development of a professional attitude.
- f. Identify some professional problems facing our Corps.

6. Appendix

- Appendix A. Discussion Leader's Guide
Appendix B. An Old Soldier to the New Ones: Duty, Honor, and Country

APPENDIX A

Profession of Arms

1. Discuss the characteristics of a profession.

Note: Your goal for this portion of the discussion is to point out that the Armed Forces, and the Marine Corps in particular, is not just a job but a profession. A profession which is held in esteem by their society and considered a "calling" by many.

a. WHAT IS A PROFESSION?

(1) Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word profession as follows:

Profession. 1: the act of taking the vows of a religious community 2: an act of openly declaring or publicly claiming a belief, faith or opinion 3: an avowed religious faith 4: a calling requiring specialized knowledge and often long and intensive academic preparation b: a principal calling, vocation, or employment c: the whole body of persons engaged in a calling."

(2) These definitions are fine, but deal with the subject in a very general way. Several authors have attempted to point out specific factors that help define a profession. Ryan and Cooper in their book Those Who Can Teach, have established a specific list of such factors. We have listed them below for your information. The seminar should discuss each of the eight characteristics, and how they relate to the Marine Corps.

(a) A profession renders a unique social service. The most obvious social service rendered by the Corps is the defense of the nation. However, there are others such as providing technical skills used by our society and providing young men and women with experience in leading others.

(b) A profession relies upon intellectual skills. Intellectual skills utilized by the Armed Forces include leadership, motivation, ethics, law, mechanics, all forms of engineering, etc.

(c) Becoming a professional involves long periods of specialized training and experience. Recruit training, TBS, formal schools, career schools, civilian education programs and intense periods of OJT and experience are all utilized by the Armed Forces.

(d) A profession has considerable autonomy and decision making authority. Although Congress and our civilian

leaders provide a great deal of guidance to our Armed Forces, each service still retains a large degree of autonomy in the manner in which it trains and in establishing its own internal regulations and standards.

(e) Members of a profession are held personally responsible for their actions and decisions. This is true for all Marines but especially so for leaders in the Marine Corps. We accept responsibility for our troops and for our units, and we are held accountable for our actions. Society expects us to do what is right and correct in all situations.

(f) Service is emphasized over financial rewards. No one should associate themselves with the Marine Corps in anticipation of personal reward. People who are seeking self-aggrandizement in our profession stand out like sore thumbs, and their actions tend to splinter our goals and detract from esprit de corps. Being a Marine often requires personal and family sacrifices not expected of the average citizen or of other professionals.

(g) A profession is self-governing and responsible for policing its own ranks. In the Marine Corps we have both general and specific means of governing ourselves. The UCMJ, the Code of Conduct, and Title 10 of the U.S. Code apply to all of the Armed Forces, yet each branch of service administers unto itself and establishes its own standards and regulations to meet its peculiar needs.

(h) Professions have their own code of ethics which establishes acceptable standards of conduct for its members. In general the Armed Forces have the UCMJ, the Code of Conduct, and Title 10 of the U.S. Code as well as other governmental decrees which help to establish our code of ethics. Each service amplifies those documents in written and unwritten form to establish its own particular code of ethics. In the Marine Corps we achieve this through Marine Corps regulations and to a great extent through customs, courtesies, and traditions upon which our Corps was established and continues to grow.

b. ARE THERE OTHER CRITERIA WHICH ESTABLISH THE MARINE CORPS AS A PROFESSION?

(1) Yes. In the history of our civilization the military has held a position of respect. Along with medicine, law, and the priesthood, it has been recognized since at least the eighth century in Western civilization, and since 2500 BC. in Asia, as a special calling.

(2) Define the term military professional.

(a) WHAT IS A MILITARY PROFESSIONAL?

(b) FM 22100, Military Leadership (1973 Rev), states:

"A military professional is a person who has undergone special preparation and training. A professional possesses the knowledge on which professional actions are based and the ability to apply this knowledge in a practical way. The profession is a means of earning a living, but wages do not become the primary purpose of their work."

c. WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO/BE TO BE CALLED A PROFESSIONAL MARINE?

(Have the group identify and list characteristics of a professional Marine. The list should include those listed below.)

(1) To be a professional a Marine must be:

(a) Competent. To be competent Marines must study and work to become expert in their field while continually striving to improve their knowledge and expertise in all military related skills appropriate for their rank and assignment.

(b) Responsible. To be responsible Marines must first make sure that they know what is expected of them, and then they must work to fulfill those expectations. These expectations come from their immediate supervisor, but also are associated with holding a particular rank within the Corps.

(c) Dedicated. To be dedicated Marines must be willing to make personal sacrifice. They must put themselves and their personal needs secondary to the needs of the Corps. As pointed out in Annex A, Duty, Honor, and Country are the guideposts for a military professional and without dedication a Marine will not put these ahead of personal desires.

d. SINCE WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE MARINE CORPS AS A PROFESSION DOES THAT MEAN THAT EVERY MARINE IS A PROFESSIONAL?

(1) Some authors insist that only officers and SNCOs are professionals. This type of thinking is contrary to the Marine Corps philosophy of leadership. Every Marine can be a professional to the extent that he/she practices the previously listed characteristics of a professional. However, it must be pointed out that like all the other professions, the Marine Corps

possesses some members who are not as professional as others and their lack of professionalism adversely impacts the Corps.

(2) These individuals put their personal needs ahead of the Corps. They shirk responsibility while continually placing blame elsewhere. They usually lack ambition and are indifferent toward improving their knowledge and skill level.

e. WHAT CAN YOU, THE INDIVIDUAL MARINE, DO TO IMPROVE PROFESSIONALISM IN THE CORPS?

(1) Do your job 24 hours a day to include but not be limited to the following:

(a) Execute all orders immediately, to the best of your ability, working thoroughly and conscientiously.

(b) Maintain a positive attitude in your approach to all tasks, requirements, desires, disappointments, etc.

(c) Adhere to basic principles of leadership as appropriate to your rank and job assignment.

(d) Carry out the 6 troop leading steps as appropriate to your rank and job assignment with particular emphasis on the supervisory aspects; pay attention to detail.

(e) Strive for excellence in all that you endeavor or in that which is demanded of you.

(f) Set a definite goal for yourself NOW and continuously and persistently work toward that goal. Waiting until you are in the promotion zone or a civilian is too late to start. Develop a strong desire to obtain what you want from life and take the initiative (don't procrastinate) to attain it. "A quitter never wins and a winner never quits."

(g) Maintain yourself in the best physical condition and realize the importance of physical conditioning to a successful life.

(h) Don't be satisfied or complacent with that which you have but strive continuously to improve yourself in all areas (i.e., education, habits, spiritual, mental and physical well-being).

(i) Maintain an immaculate and well groomed appearance at all times and realize the importance and the psychological effects a favorable impression has on others, your job, your unit, etc.

(j) Realize the tremendous importance of the quality of loyalty, and be loyal to yourself, your unit, your Corps, and your Country, always rendering faithful and willing service under any and all circumstances.

(k) Realize that "no one is an island" and that it is extremely important to cooperate with and live and work in harmony with others. That which one does or fails to do today has a tremendous effect on others and on his/her own personal long range goals.

(l) Follow the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

(m) Resist the temptation to "keep up with the Jones' " and don't get into debt by exceeding your income. Live within your means and program for the future. Be aware of the pitfalls of buying on credit, and establish a savings program.

(n) Develop a sense of humor. Quite often this is the saving grace between complete despair and triumph. "Smile and the world smiles with you, cry and you cry alone."

(o) Develop self control. The man who cannot control himself cannot expect to control others. Self-discipline is a must.

(p) Develop self-confidence. If you are not confident that you can do a task, no one else will be. Sell yourself.

(q) Analyze yourself to the point that you know yourself, your traits, strong points and weak points, and work continually to strengthen or eliminate the weak points. Know that the physical, mental and spiritual aspects should complement each other for best performance and success in life.

2. Discuss the need for professionalism in the Marine Corps

a. WHY IS PROFESSIONALISM IMPORTANT IN THE CORPS?

(1) Answers should include:

(a) Marines are public servants and are responsible for the defense of the nation. They perform a necessary service which the civilian public needs, and when that service is required the public expects and deserves nothing less than a professionally trained and motivated force.

(b) A leader is responsible for the lives of his Marines. In combat a leader may have to take risks which endanger their lives in order to accomplish a mission. If a leader is careless, and has not conditioned himself and trained his followers to act professionally, a unit may suffer needless casualties.

4. Identify some responsibilities of being a member of the profession of arms.

Read or display the following quote.

"What you have chosen to do for your country by devoting your life to the service of your country is the greatest contribution that any man could make."

John F. Kennedy
35th President of the United States
6 June 1961

Note: This quote is indicative of the esteem which many civilians hold for members of the military. However, with that esteem come certain expectations.

a. AS MILITARY PROFESSIONALS WHAT UNIQUE DEMANDS ARE PLACED ON US BY OUR SOCIETY?

(1) Because of the type of work and its responsibilities, there is a great need for the development and maintenance of high standards of conduct among the members of our profession. A Marine just as other members of the Armed Services must follow a unique value system which sets him apart from the rest of society. This value system is based upon obedience, courage, discipline, selflessness, and honor; the principle ingredients of the military ethic.

5. Discuss the development of a professional attitude.

a. WHAT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES SHOULD MARINE LEADERS DEVELOP IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THEIR PROFESSIONALISM?

(1) Have the group list the qualities on a flip chart, chalkboard, or other aid so all can see the list. The list should include:

(a) Technical Competence. You must know your job and do it well in order to lead others.

(b) Values. To develop professional values and attitudes, you simply resolve to let nothing be more important to you than the welfare of your Marines, the accomplishment of your

mission, and your personal integrity. (Values are covered in more detail in "Instilling and Developing Values.")

(c) Ethical conduct Your values include what you want, but your ethics are more involved with the way you get what you want. In getting what you want a leader must be concerned with proper conduct and the distinction between right and wrong. Nothing must sway him/her from choosing a course of action which is right, i.e., conforming to ethical and moral standards. (Ethics are covered in "Ethical Leadership.")

b. WHAT STEPS SHOULD A LEADER TAKE TO FOSTER PROFESSIONALISM IN SUBORDINATES?

(1) Again, use an aid to display the listing. The list should include:

(a) Being a professional Marine. Setting the example.

(b) Letting subordinates know what it means to be a professional. Defining professionalism in specific terms.

(c) Stressing the uniqueness of the profession and explaining the responsibilities associated with being a Marine.

(d) Wearing the uniform with pride and insisting on the same from subordinates.

(e) Cultivating in each Marine's heart a deep, abiding love of Corps and Country by historical, educational, and patriotic address.

6. Identify some professional problems facing our Corps.

Note: The discussion leader should point out that the Corps faces two problems which are hurting the professional image the Marine Corps has developed in over 220 years of service to this country. These problems are: Careerism and a perception among Marines that they work at an ordinary job with ordinary responsibilities (occupationalism).

a. WHAT ARE SOME INDICATORS OF THESE PROBLEMS?

(1) Careerism

(a) Marines seeking advancement for its own sake and seeing it exclusively as a goal rather than an opportunity to do something of greater value for their nation and the Marine Corps. These individuals accept promotion just for the additional

recognition and compensation while trying to avoid increased responsibility.

(b) Marines more concerned with "ticket punching" and less concerned with the contributions they make for the Marine Corps. These individuals avoid certain billets because they are not "career enhancing." They attempt to get a highly responsible billet for a minimal amount of time. During this time they are looking for recognition, but do not want to make waves. They want in and out, taking all but contributing little.

(c) Marines who accept credit for successes, but are quick to blame others when things go wrong. When things are going well these individuals are at the front of the line for recognition. However, if something goes wrong, they are the first to point fingers.

(2) Occupation rather than profession.

(a) Money becomes more of a motivation than the nature of the profession and its associated responsibilities. This individual is more concerned with enhancing his take home pay and if a higher paying opportunity presents itself outside the Corps he will take it.

(b) A feeling among some officers and enlisted personnel that what they do in their off duty hours is of no concern to the Marine Corps. This is what we call the "0800-1600 syndrome" and is demonstrated by an individual's insistence on "my time" versus the Corps' time. He is less concerned with getting the job accomplished and more interested in quitting time. This individual lacks a sense of responsibility and deep commitment to the Corps.

(c) A tendency in many specialist fields to play down and in some cases ignore the responsibility to develop a wider military expertise. Also, identifying more strongly with their "specialty" than with their unit or with the Corps. This individual takes a very narrow view of his/her duties within the Corps. Outside his specialty, he/she does just the minimum required to stay out of trouble and refuses to develop his overall abilities.

b. REALIZING BOTH PROBLEMS ARE HARMFUL TO UNIT READINESS AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S ABILITY TO PERFORM IN COMBAT, WHAT CAN A LEADER DO TO ATTACK BOTH ISSUES?

(1) Leaders must render objective evaluations on subordinates and counsel them accordingly.

(2) Leaders must set the example for subordinates and live a life according to the military ethic. Keep in mind the principal ingredients of the military ethic are obedience, courage, discipline, selflessness and honor. These are not only desired traits; they are essential characteristics of a professional fighting force.

(3) Leaders must continually emphasize the important and essential function we perform as Marines keeping the nation secure.

(4) Leaders must set and enforce standards which will not tolerate the actions of careerists and those who view the Corps as something less than a profession.

8. Summary

a. Summarize the main points of the discussion.

b. Sir John Hackett in his book, The Profession of Arms, points out that military professionals are expected to "get out there and get killed if that's what it takes." Although somewhat simply stated, this quote does point out the extent of the dedication necessary to be called a military professional.

c. Professionalism must be the heart of every Marine leader. The leader must not only conduct himself/herself in a professional manner, but must also develop a spirit of professionalism in all Marines.

d. Remember, on becoming a Marine you have entered upon one of the oldest and most honorable professions. However, with this prestige comes the responsibility of conducting yourself in a manner consistent with the thousands of proud, dedicated, courageous Marines who have served our Corps well and made tremendous sacrifices for our country.