



SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS MEMORANDUM



22 September 2010

SMMC MEMO 02-10

1. **Afghanistan:** The Commandant and I recently returned from visiting Warriors in combat, and I have to tell you that Marines and Sailors are doing great things in Afghanistan. The Commandant and I can't stress enough how proud we are of Marines and Sailors. Warriors are living in true expeditionary fashion - austere environments with minimal amenities available to them, and they're taking the fight to the enemy.

2. **Manpower Rumors:** Below is an e-mail I sent out recently concerning Manpower rumors that have been circulating:

We know the best way to get information out is to push it out through the leadership all the way down to the most junior Marine. We need your assistance in getting the word out that the Marine Corps is not cutting numbers while we are engaged in combat operations. I spoke at the 1stSgt/MSgt Seminar at Camp Lejeune Friday and the topic came up about the Marine Corps drawing down to 147,000. This is not true!

The same question has come up recently as the Commandant and I travel around the Marine Corps. The Commandant has made it very clear that we are at war and we did not build a very capable 202,000 Marine Corps to cut the forces. A 202,000 Marine Corps allows us to get the Corps to the 1 to 2 dwell ratio we desire and will allow us to get back to our Core Competencies.

The Commandant is standing up a Force Structure Review Group (FSRG) to look at force numbers down the road after combat operations to see if we need a 202,000 Marine Corps in peacetime. The Commandant has made it very clear that if we do reduce our force down the road, quality Marines will be allowed to stay in our Corps. Marines that would like to reenlist in our Corps will be allowed, and it will not be a repeat from the drawdown in 1991/1992 by forcing good Marines out.

I also recently read an e-mail from a senior SNCO about the numbers for the upcoming MSgt-SgtMaj promotion board. The senior SNCO's question was why the allocations for MSgt-SgtMaj are less this year, and is this the way that our Corps is asking Marines to leave? My answer to him is we have more SgtsMaj/MGySgts staying around our Corps for 30 years and we are not asking quality Marines to leave. I see this as a positive thing with the combat experience of senior SNCOs staying around longer and 1stSgt/MSgts gaining more experience in their present rank before being promoted.

As a 1stSgt, I served in a Company, Group, and Artillery Battery. Serving in all three commands as a 1stSgt prepared me for the duties as a Battalion Sergeant Major. I ask that we clear the rumors up all the way down to the most junior Marine concerning downsizing.

3. Family Readiness Officers: We have received several e-mails and phone calls from senior SNCOs asking about the rumors that the Marine Corps is looking at cutting some of the FRO billets. The straight-scoop is no FRO billets will be cut at this time. Our Commandant, and the senior leadership in our Corps realize how important the FROs are for Marines/Sailors and our families, especially in a time of war. This program is too important to make cuts on, while we must and will continue to support our Warriors and their families.

4. 2010 SgtsMaj Symposium and Agenda Items: This year's Symposium was held at the end of July, and 75 Sergeants Major, Master Gunnery Sergeants, Command Master Chiefs, and their spouses, gathered to be briefed on the latest developments in our Corps, and discuss the way forward. I'd like to thank all the attendees for their professionalism and candid discussions on how we can better our Corps. And that includes the spouses who gathered to be briefed on family readiness issues and discuss how to improve the quality of life for Marines and Sailors, and their families.

Before each Symposium, we ask Marines throughout the Corps to submit agenda items up their chain of command. These items are ideas on how to improve our Corps - whether it's a change to policy or procedures, warfighting capabilities, a quality of life issue, or a change to a uniform item. This year the Symposium attendees brought forward 37 agenda items to discuss. After careful consideration and discussion, two agenda items went forward and were briefed to the Commandant for consideration. The good news story is that out of those 37 items, all but two were already being worked, or have been addressed.

The first item proposed is possibly modifying or changing the flexed arm hang for female Marines during the Physical Fitness Test. It was discussed that the flexed arm hang is an ineffective strength test, it causes female Marines to train for a position/movement that is not functional to military tasks, and the physical demands and expectations of female Marines are higher - attendees said they have heard female Marines throughout the Corps say they want more of a challenge. The Commanding General of Training and Education Command will be conducting a study to look at either modifying or changing the flexed arm hang. No determination will be made until the study is complete, and the requirement will continue as prescribed.

The second item proposed to the Commandant was about Bachelor Enlisted Quarters. Currently, there is not enough BEQ space in the Marine Corps to house all permanently assigned units. This creates problems when renovations are needed, or when surges in personnel occur, and also makes our single Marines and Sailors make multiple barracks moves at one duty station. The recommendation is to rewrite the BEQ Campaign Plan to ensure we have BEQ facilities to house 100 percent of all permanently assigned units, and 100 percent of their single NCOs and below.

5. Corporals Course: ALMAR 026/10, Command-Sponsored Corporals Course (CSCC), details the latest information and soon-to-be requirements on this vital PME we owe our NCOs. In June 2009, the Enlisted Professional Military Education Branch created the CSCC, which is a 3-week local program that provides Corporals the basic knowledge and skills to be successful small unit leaders. As you know, mission accomplishment always comes first, and it's been hard to get our young hard-chargers to this course.

Corporal is the only rank that does not have a PME requirement for promotion to the next grade, yet it is one of the most important ranks when

it comes to leadership development. To ensure we are giving our Corporals all the tools to succeed, EPME is developing a distance education (non-resident) version of the Corporals Course. The non-resident curriculum will not be ready until the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2012, but once it is available and implemented, completion of either the non-resident or Command Sponsored Corporals Course is going to be mandatory for promotion to Sergeant. The CSCC is the preferred method to train our Corporals, but the non-resident version is giving commanders another tool to ensure we do the right thing by educating our Marines.

The Director of EPME recently sent out some numbers that are showing positive trends - in FY09 only 1,350 Corporals graduated the Corporals Course, but so far this Fiscal Year, 4,361 have completed the CSCC. While the training won't be mandatory until 2012, plan ahead and get as many Corporals to the course as possible now. There is no excuse for a Marine not being eligible for Sergeant because he or she is not PME complete.

6. Social Networking: MARADMIN 365/10 outlines the Corps' policy on acceptable and responsible use of social networking sites. The most important part of this message is using sound judgment when posting comments. Marines/Sailors need to realize that they can, and will be held accountable for items they post on social media sites that are not in line with good order and discipline.

Some may think items they post or things they say on these sites are done in private, but they could be posting them on public pages, or they could make their way on to publicly accessible pages. Either way, if the items or comments are against good order and discipline, or break articles of the UCMJ, the Marine or Sailor can, and will be held accountable.

We need to ensure our small unit leadership is getting the word out to Marines/Sailors on what is and isn't acceptable. Our small unit leaders are essential to good order and discipline, and their guidance when it comes to appropriate behavior on these sites is no exception. The bottom line is Marines must remember they are Marines 24-hours a day and they should act accordingly. We take care of one another 24 hours a day, and ensuring the wrong things are not being put on the social media sites is another form of taking care of Marines.

If Marines or Sailors post anything negative on these sites in a public forum, they need to realize it's as if they are standing in the middle of the parade deck shouting it, and they will be held accountable.

Semper Fidelis,



CARLTON W. KENT

16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps