



## Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion Readiness and Force Preservation Statement



"The United States Marine Corps exists for one purpose -- to fight.... The primary mission -- readiness -- combined with the Marine state of mind makes the Corps what it is today.... Marines are prepared mentally and physically for instant employment, as individuals and in trained units."  
-- The Marine Officers Guide

**1. Readiness:** The purpose of Headquarters and Support Battalion is to “increase operational and functional effectiveness and readiness,” not only of the units and agencies we support aboard Camp Pendleton but also of every individual Marine within our command. Readiness is attained primarily through effective training which MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, states is “the key to combat effectiveness” and “the main effort of a peacetime military.” However, achieved readiness must be sustained through effective force preservation. Ineffective force preservation robs us of our combat power. To echo the words of our 33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant, General M. W. Hagee, “Our enemies seek to do us harm. Do not do their job for them.”

**2. Force Preservation:** Force preservation is a critical element of force protection, one of the six warfighting functions (see MCRP 1-0, *Marine Corps Operations*). Protecting the force in order to preserve its combat power is inherent to command and to leadership. Force Preservation, often referred to as “safety”, deals with eliminating non-hostile mishaps, injuries, equipment damage, or deaths both in the continental United States (CONUS) as well as in the theater of war. Force Preservation is accomplished primarily by eliminating unnecessary risk, effectively managing acceptable risk through risk control measures, and employing personal protection tactics, techniques and procedures.

**3. The Power and Protection of Professionalism:** Professionalism inspired by strong leadership is the key to force protection, force preservation, and sustained combat readiness. Mishaps are almost always avoidable and usually occur for a few primary reasons which ultimately reveal failures in leadership and professionalism:

- **Disobeying prescribed regulations, policies, procedures, instructions, directives, and publications:** These are written in the blood of dead and permanently injured Marines, sailors, civilians, and family members. Failure to know them, follow them, and hold others accountable to them is negligence and cannot be tolerated.

- **Exceeding the capabilities of equipment:** Limitations are almost always defined in writing, but safe operations require sound systems knowledge, situational awareness, and discipline. The reckless use of equipment or assets on duty or on liberty, whether it is a piece of tactical equipment, a personally owned vehicle, or any other potentially dangerous apparatus is simply inexcusable. All personnel are responsible for using equipment in the way it was intended and within its prescribed limitations. I give every Marine within this command the charge, the authority, and the responsibility to intervene in situations where proper precautions are not being exhibited.

- **Exceeding capabilities of people:** Through sheer force of will and moral and physical courage, Marines regularly accomplish the seemingly impossible. However, when Marines push, or are pushed, beyond their capabilities, on duty or on liberty, mission accomplishment is jeopardized. Marines must know their limitations and understand the difference between courage and recklessness. Leaders must know their Marines well enough to coach them to greater levels of accomplishment without exceeding their mental, emotional, physical or spiritual (MEPS) capabilities – this is at the heart of “taking care of Marines”. Everyone is responsible for their own actions, but no one is perfectly self-aware. Teammates protect each other from their personal “blind spots” and intervene when required. Have the strength of character and moral courage to correct others and to accept correction from others.

- **Failure to identify hazards and mitigate risks associated with the situation:** The four principles and the five steps of Operational Risk Management (ORM) must become second nature to every member of this command and must be applied naturally in all that we do. IADIS must be as ingrained in our decision-making lexicon as SMEAC, BAMCIS, and METT-T.

**4. Communication:** Finally, open communication is essential to effective force preservation. Everyone within the command is responsible for immediately reporting unsafe conditions or practices both to those at risk as well as to their chain of command. “If there is doubt, there is no doubt” – report what doesn’t seem right.

Semper Fidelis,

Joseph A. Craft

Colonel, United States Marine Corps

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion