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7 Jun 13

From: Commanding Officer
To: All Hands

Subj: COMMAND PHILOSOPHY

Encl: (1) "Sellers-isms"

1. My philosophy of command is fairly simple and straightforward and I don't think you will find anything in that you haven't seen throughout your association with the United States Marine Corps.

- a. Mission always comes first; but it only with well led, well trained Marines, Sailors and Civilians that we accomplish our assigned mission.
- b. Always show respect for the institution, the unit, our ethos and each other.
- c. Focus on professionalism, tactical/technical competency and leadership.
- d. Know, and be brilliant in, the basics but be flexible and versatile.

2. Because I believe leadership, and command, is an intensely personal endeavor I believe it is important for me to get to know you and for you to know and understand me. That of course takes time, but enclosure (1) "Sellers-isms" provides some insight into what is important to me as a leader and how I see the world. None of these are original thoughts, in almost all cases they are observations I've made over my career and are the product of having served with some outstanding Marines.


H. J. SELLERS

"Sellers-isms"

1. Never fail at your primary mission. Above all else our nation expects Marines to get the job done.
2. Mission comes first, but it is only with well trained, well led Marines, Sailors and Civilians that we can accomplish our mission.
3. Focus on the basics; if we're good at those, we can build from there.
4. If you want a new idea read an old book.
5. The trick is not in holding people accountable; it's deciding how to hold them accountable.
6. Be able to make hard decisions with less information than you would like to have.
7. Understanding number 6, also understand that many decisions are not "what now Lt decisions"; In other words they don't have to be made "right now".
8. The title Marine is earned, never given, it can not be taken away, but it can be given up.
9. Training is continuous.
10. The 80 percent solution well executed is acceptable. Or, don't let the pursuit of the "perfect" get in the way of the achievement of the "good".
11. When it comes to accountability 80% is not acceptable.
12. Effort is important, but its results that matter.
13. Running lots of NJPs is not a sign of a well disciplined unit; in fact it's the opposite. (this doesn't mean we avoid running NJP).
14. Nobody is above supervision.
15. Technology can be a great tool when used properly, but plan for what happens when it fails.
16. Example is one of the most powerful leadership tools, but in order to effectively command, at any level, you have to be able to communicate.
17. Leaders must communicate what is expected and what is unacceptable.
18. Safety is not a peacetime distraction, it is a command responsibility. If something doesn't look or feel right, it probably isn't, say something about it!
19. Bad news isn't like wine; it doesn't get better with age.

20. No is sometimes an acceptable answer, but it needs to be said earlier rather than later.
21. When you brief problems, offer solutions. (note: there are some exceptions to this one)
22. Every member of the organization contributes to the success of the team, and at the same time every one of us is expendable.
23. As a leader empathy is a good quality to have, sympathy, on the other hand, is counterproductive.
24. Keep it simple, but remember "simple" doesn't mean "simplistic".
25. Continually ask yourself what do I know, who needs to know it and have I told them. Also, occasionally ask yourself..."what do I need to know?".
26. As a general rule, praise in public, criticize in private.
27. Take your job seriously, but never take yourself too seriously.
28. Remember this isn't about me or you, it's about the mission the organization and our people.
29. Integrity and trust are critical!
30. Tell me what I need to hear, not what I want to hear.
31. Treat each other with respect and dignity.
32. Know the rules, follow the rules and enforce the rules.
33. Always apply common sense!
34. I tend to trust people until they prove me wrong.
35. You have to continually fight complacency.
36. While there is no magic formula, in general "Common Sense+Communication-Ego=Success".
37. Be your own harshest critic.
38. I believe that one measure of a person's character is how they treat people that they aren't required to be polite and courteous to.
38. Have a sense of humor!