



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
INFANTRY TRAINING BATTALION
SCHOOL OF INFANTRY (EAST)
TRAINING COMMAND
CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA 28542-0161

IN REPLY REFER TO:
3000
6ITB
19 Jul 10

From: Commanding Officer
To: Student Marines of ITB

SUBJ: GUIDANCE TO FUTURE INFANTRYMEN

1. Congratulations on becoming a United States Marine. You are already a success and have proven your worth in a way most of your peers in civilian life will never do. I also thank you for enlisting during a time of war. For most of you, half of your lives have been under the cloud of war. You know the cost, but you volunteered despite that cost. I am honored to be among you.
2. My task is to make you into a Marine Infantryman, and I will do that. I also feel I am tasked to make you into good citizens; to make you better than I am. Therefore, my Combat Instructors and leaders will do their very best to impart their wisdom to you. Keep in mind, that wisdom is nothing more than experience; we have either made the mistakes we think you are about to make, or know someone who has. So please listen to us, we are trying to help.
3. Everything you have done thus far has been to prepare you for life. Many people spend 30 years or more before they realize that life is what is already happening, and that the preparation phase has been over for some time. Whether you realize it or not, your life has begun. You are your own man, and the things you do now have consequences--good or bad--that cannot be reversed. You have the future in the palm of your hands, and short of the enemy, bad luck or your own wrong-doing, you can continue on a successful path. You cannot control the enemy and you cannot control luck. However, you can control your own wrong-doing. You will have to make decisions, in training or on liberty, and those decisions can derail you if you make the wrong one. All I ask is that you think before you act, weigh the possible consequences of your actions and then choose wisely. If you make the wrong choice, you cannot come back from that choice. You must live with the outcome for the rest of your life.
4. You will be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. All my leaders and Combat Instructors know this and are responsible for ensuring this happens. But we are human, and every once in awhile we miss the mark. There have been a few instances where we failed, but the student Marines said nothing. You must remember that you are also responsible for carrying out my intent. If you are being treated unfairly by anyone, to include fellow student Marines, then you must speak up. If you see someone else being treated unfairly, then you must speak up as if it was happening to you. We will take care of each other, and it takes all of us to make this happen.
5. Bring your problems to your chain of command. We will solve them and we will give you the time you need. We want you to succeed. Do not use issues

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at home as an excuse for you to fail. Too many Marines have gone UA to "solve" their parents' problems. There is nothing you can do on a UA status, with no pay, to help your parents. If they need help at home, then send your paycheck home so they can hire help--that would be the most honorable thing to do as a man, son and Marine. I am a parent myself, and the last thing I would want is for my own son or daughter to throw away their future for me--I would consider myself a failure as a parent if that were to happen.

6. ITB is tough. Being a Marine Infantryman is tough. Combat is tough. Expect it and persevere. Do not doubt your decision to be a Marine or to be a grunt. No matter how much I want ITB to be a real unit for you, it is not. You are still in the training pipeline and you are only here for two months. Wait until you get to a real squad and platoon in the Operating Forces before you judge your decision to join. The unity and bonds you will experience there are like no other. Take the camaraderie you felt on a sports team and multiple it by a thousand; that is what being in the infantry is like. It is addictive and it is why I am still in the Marine Corps today.

7. Finally, trust me and trust your chain of command. Your Combat Instructors are all combat veterans and volunteered for this tough duty to make a difference. We care. We have information to give you that will save your life in combat and make you better in life. You are on the cusp of becoming a part of the grunt brotherhood, of something bigger than yourselves. The choices you make now impact our institution, our profession. Handle the honor with care.

J. N. RULE