

## ***Making Marines – Transformation***

### ***Discussion***

The Corps has strengthened the way it makes Marines, builds self-confidence and strength of character, and instills a common set of values. The Corps' goal is not only to produce high quality Marines, capable of winning the nation's future battles, but also to make better Americans. The transformation of young men and women into Marines challenges them mentally, morally, and physically and occurs in four phases: recruiting; recruit training; cohesion; and sustainment.

Recruiters begin the transformation process by recruiting the highest quality men and women. The Delayed Entry Program allows recruiters to prepare recruits for the rigors of recruit training and to expose them to Marine core values: honor; courage; and commitment.

Recruit training has been modified to expand the influence of drill instructors, as well as the amount and quality of time they spend mentoring and setting the example for their recruits. Recruit training is a twelve-week program for both males and females. The Corps has retained its proven, tough, demanding recruit training program, but has enhanced it to ensure the Marines it makes are capable of prevailing in the future.



The culmination of recruit training is the “Crucible,” an intense field training exercise designed to build unit cohesion, reinforce core values, and complete the transformation from recruit to Marine. The “Crucible” is the defining moment of the recruit training experience. As a rite of passage, the

“Crucible” is a 54-hour ordeal that tests the mettle of every recruit. The physical and mental challenges are intensified by sleep and food deprivation. The “Crucible” focuses on six major field events and is augmented by eleven challenging “Warrior Stations.” Throughout this rapid paced exercise, emphasis is placed on the importance of teamwork in overcoming adversity and adaptive problem solving. The teams of recruits, under the leadership of their drill instructor, succeed as a team. The experience pushes recruits to their limits and is a poignant culmination to the transformation process.

Following recruit training, newly forged Marines are assigned into teams under a new program called “Cohesion.” This program builds and assigns the recruits into teams from the “Crucible” through initial military occupational specialty training and then into the Fleet Marine Force (FMF). Unit Cohesion is designed to develop team integrity through the assignment of Marines who will remain together throughout their first term of enlistment, building bonds and developing confidence in one another. Achieving this objective requires synchronization of team assignments with deployment cycles so teams spend as much time as possible together in a unit. Ideally, first-termers will spend their entire enlistment with one unit. The focus of initial efforts is on ground combat units, but will ultimately be implemented throughout the Marine Corps.

The transformation is sustained through the reinforcement of core values while the individual Marine is in the FMF and by holding Marines accountable throughout their careers. This program provides stronger, smarter, and more capable Marines who have the maturity and flexibility to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century battlefield.

### ***Marine Corps Position***

The recruit training process has been strengthened to better prepare Marines for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The resulting “Transformation” produces more highly trained Marines with a stronger appreciation for the Marine ethos. More cohesive units improve the Corps’ readiness posture and combat capabilities. The daily performance and conduct of Marines reflect the values of the Corps and the ideals of the nation they serve.