



United States Marine Corps
Professional Reading Program
First to Fight Preface and Introduction

Lieutenant General (LtGen) Victor H. Krulak, USMC (Ret.), the author of First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps's official biography is available at:

http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/HD/Whos_Who/Krulak_VH.htm

The following biography appeared on the fly leaf of the 1984 hardcover edition of First to Fight (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press):

About the author:

Lieutenant General Victor H. Krulak served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1934 to 1968, distinguishing himself in a career that spanned three wars and involved command of Marine Combat Organization [sic] from the platoon to a fleet marine force.

During World War II, as a commander of a parachute battalion, he led a diversionary attack against the Japanese on Choiseul Island to cover the Bougainville invasion, an action that earned him the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart. He later served as operations officer of the Sixth Marine Division in the 82-day Okinawa campaign and, at the war's end, took part in arranging the surrender of Japanese forces in northern China.

When the Korean conflict began, he was assisting chief of staff of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific, later moving to Korea as chief of staff of the First Marine Division, where he remained until late 1951.

In 1964, after two years in the Pentagon as special assistant for counterinsurgency for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Krulak assumed command of the Fleet Marine Force Pacific with responsibility for all Marines in the Pacific Ocean area. Between 1964 and 1968 he traveled to Vietnam fifty-four times.

Interspersed with these combat assignments were various teaching and staff duties in the United States as well as command of the Marine Corps Educational System in Quantico, Virginia, and the Marine Corps recruit depot in San Diego.





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Upon retirement from active service, LtGen Krulak embarked upon a career in journalism, as a vice president of the Copley Newspaper Corporation and president of its news service. He currently serves as president of an editorial and feature service in San Diego and writes a weekly syndicated newspaper column.

Lt Gen Krulak is a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and received a Ph.D. from the University of San Diego in 1970. He has written numerous articles on international and military affairs, and is the author of *Organization for the National Security* and *University of the Third Age*.

1. Identify LtGen Krulak’s mission (task and purpose) in writing this section.

LtGen Krulak’s mission is to tell readers why he’s writing the book in order to engage the readers’ interest and convince them to read the book.

2. What part of the section was most effective in accomplishing LtGen Krulak’s mission? What part of the book was least effective?

The letter LtGen Krulak reproduces, in part, in the preface accomplishes his mission most effectively. This letter helps the reader understand that the impetus for the book came from LtGen Krulak’s dissatisfaction in that his letter “had not adequately analyzed the rich and complex soil in which the durability of the Marines is rooted” (xvi). The letter also peaks the interest of readers in its argument that from “cold mechanical logic, the United States does not *need* a Marine Corps” (xv). In engages the reader to find out through the rest of the book how the Marine Corps has survived and been shaped into the renowned fight force that it is today.

3. What does LtGen Krulak assume in order to accomplish his mission? Does he validate these assumptions in the book?

LtGen Krulak’s main assumption is that the Marine Corps history varies significantly from the description given by Gunnery Sergeant Holzworth in the introduction that, “[Marines] started right out telling everybody how great they were. Pretty soon they got to believing it themselves. And they have been busy ever since proving they were right” (1). Throughout the introduction he describes several historical instances that have found the Marine Corps fighting for survival and goes on to show broadly how the Corps has overcome these life-threatening situations.





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4. The part of the book that is most relevant to what I/we do:

Understanding the people and attributes of the Corps that combined have made it successful are incredibly relevant to Marine leaders today. Knowing that the Corps exists today because of the people that have gone before us and that it will only survive if the leaders of today and the future continue convince the citizens of the United States that “when trouble comes to our country there will be Marines”, “when Marines go to war they invariably turn in a performance that is dramatically and decisively successful”, and “our Corps is downright good for the manhood of our country” (xv).

5. Identify LtGen Krulak’s specific and implied conclusions.

LtGen Krulak’s conclusions are that we must have the support of the American people to survive as a Corps. He believes that we have become separated from some of the very things that have allowed the Corps to survive to this date and time and that without understanding the struggles and people who have battled for the Marine Corps the Corps may find itself endangered again.

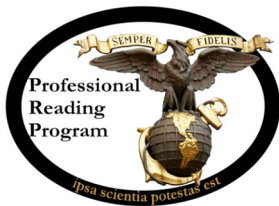
6. With respect to LtGen Krulak’s conclusions (either specified or implied), I/we accept or agree with the following:

I agree with LtGen Krulak’s assertion that we must understand that the history of the Marine Corps is volatile. Assuming that because we live in a time where many of these events are not memorable to young Marines does not mean that they are not relevant, nor does it mean that the same issues may not creep back again.

6a. With respect to LtGen Krulak’s conclusions (either specified or implied), I/we reject or do not agree with the following:

N/A





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7. This part of the book made a favorable impression on me and it will change the way I approach:

As a Marine leader, this part of the book reinforces the importance of holding myself and other Marines to the Marine Corps standards and striving to exceed them at all times. The importance of individuals in the livelihood of the Marine Corps cannot be ignored and illustrates the importance of each Marine's actions on the success and future of the Corps.

7a. This book made an unfavorable impression on me for the following reasons:

N/A

Submitted by: A-M Theriot

