



## **The Marine Corps Professional Reading Program**

The recently released ALMAR 007/05 announced revisions to reinvigorate the Marine Corps Professional Reading Program. As we have witnessed firsthand over the past few years, today's strategic environment is challenging, and it will remain progressively more complex and demanding. To date, Marines have made significant contributions to the conduct of the global war on terror—in large part due to the high quality of our force. As a Corps long accustomed to expeditionary operations, the skill of all Marines in solving unique problems, across a wide range of potential combat and security missions, brings invaluable flexibility and adaptability to the joint force. To remain the Nation's premier expeditionary force-in-readiness in an age of uncertainty and in the face of intelligent and rapidly adapting foes, we cannot rest on our laurels. The Marine Corps must continue to improve its commitment to warfighting excellence in order to effectively provide security to our Nation and do our part in bringing stability to an unstable world. Professional military education is the cornerstone of our innovation and agility that, along with our warrior ethos, has earned the Marine Corps its richly deserved reputation for military effectiveness in demanding situations.

The new ALMAR builds on the enduring objective of Gen Alfred M. Gray when he initiated the Professional Reading Program in 1989—to promote the pursuit of lifelong learning. Full implementation of this goal, however, requires a new sense of ownership and creative inspiration. All Marines must develop a disciplined approach to studying, thinking, and discussing our profession, fully fostering a higher level of shared competency within our Corps. In addition, we will not achieve continuous improvement in warfighting proficiency without guided professional growth and a sense of comradeship that only leaders at all levels can instill. The revised reading list—including a number of books assigned to multiple ranks—provides a starting point for these goals. The selected books will facilitate a common understanding, stimulate intellectual curiosity, and enhance unit cohesion. The Marine Corps Combat Development Command, through the Marine Corps University, will soon provide resources—including a revised *Book on Books* and a web site with additional material—to assist leaders in creating effective discussion forums.

The global war on terror is our most important and pressing priority, but we must also keep a weather eye to the future. We cannot neglect our responsibility to ensure that the Marine Corps is prepared to meet future challenges. Our organizational flexibility and our intellectual adaptability are as vital as any weapons program we are developing. We have an immediate need to bolster our professional education within our ranks and ensure that the most important, precise, and lethal weapon we possess—our individual Marine—is prepared to make the critical decisions upon which future victories will rest.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. W. Hagee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

M. W. Hagee  
General, U.S. Marine Corps