



A MESSAGE FROM  
THE COMMANDANT OF  
THE MARINE CORPS





The Marine Corps continues to play a vital role in protecting and preserving our American way of life. Though we exist to win our nation's battles when called upon to do so, each day the Corps helps promote peace and prosperity through deterrence and regional security cooperation. Our success in these endeavors requires that we draw upon the strengths of our past while moving forward in an innovative fashion to anticipate and overcome 21st-century challenges.

Our Marines have always been our greatest strength. Indeed, the Corps' enduring contribution to America is the development of Marines who embrace our service values and warrior culture, selflessly serve their country, and then return to society as outstanding private citizens. Highly trained warriors, however, are not enough to ensure victory on tomorrow's battlefields. Marines need flexible and robust weapons systems, as well as organizational structures that support operational concepts designed for future threats and mission requirements. Consequently, the Corps has earned great dividends from its institutional tradition of innovation.

Marine innovation is evidenced by continuous transformation and modernization efforts, which allow us to keep pace with changes in an increasingly complex national security environment. In fact, the Corps has consistently viewed transformation as an

evolutionary process, not a singular event. Marines are currently adapting new technologies that hold promise of a quantum leap in capability.

This 2003 version of *Concepts & Programs* provides a single source for a wealth of information about the United States Marine Corps. Throughout this issue, we will describe how our major programs fit into the ideas and concepts that are driving the transformation process and taking the Marine Corps and the Navy from a 20th-century amphibious force to an expeditionary fighting force of the 21st century. This book also includes all of the information previously found in the *Marines Almanac*. Though *Concepts & Programs* is filled with facts, figures, tables, and conceptual descriptions, we must remember that the Corps' greatest strength comes from the ethos, abilities, and character of our individual Marines. Our focus is to provide them with the tools they need to continue winning our nation's battles.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael W. Hagee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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