Total Commitment to the Total Force

By BRYAN B. BATTAGLIA

Marines wait for dust to clear after destroying abandoned compounds that blocked views from security post

U.S. Marine Corps (Nathan McCord)

As the newly appointed Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman, I would like to use this inaugural column to introduce my position and communicate several important points.

First, allow me to express my professional appreciation and gratitude to you and all military families for what you do each and every day across the globe. I am extremely honored to serve our total force in this capacity.

In the Chairman's letter to the joint force and as reiterated throughout this issue of *Joint Force Quarterly*, you will see that General Dempsey identifies four key themes. Regardless of Servicemember status or category, each of us has a defined role, responsibility, and professional obligation within these themed areas.

Former Marine sprints in racing wheelchair during paralympic military sports camp

U.S. Navy (Lisa Rama)

Sergeant Major Bryan B. Battaglia, USMC, is the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Senior Noncommissioned Officer in the U.S. Armed Forces.

In order for us to continue to *achieve our national objectives*, we will *reshape and refine a force* that remains ready, relevant, capable, trained, and educated to handle whatever emerging requirements that our nation requires of its Armed Forces. As we reshape the force to meet the challenges of 2020, we will maneuver through some fiscal and organizational changes. I expect that as a result of these adjustments, *all* elements of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities will be touched in some way, shape, or form. We must realize, however, that fiscal and organizational changes are nothing new to our rank and file. When we last trekked a similar path, many of our experienced operational leaders were company-grade officers and midgrade noncommissioned/petty officers. As we were led then, today, it is our duty, obligation, and responsibility in leading our all-volunteer force through like modifications.

The Chairman has asked for each of us to *renew our commitment to the profession of arms*. I do not take his use of the word *renewal* to mean that something is broken or even about to expire. I interpret this word to mean that through a decade of battlefield exposure, our force has

11-year-old boy trains with Coast Guard rescue swimmers through local chapter of Make-a-Wish Foundation

U.S. Coast Guard (Stephen Lehmann)

Clockwise from top left: Coast Guard Commandant thanks Pearl Harbor survivor for his service (U.S. Coast Guard/Patrick Kelley); Sailors and villagers carry injured boy during humanitarian assistance mission Continuing Promise 2011 in Costa Rica (U.S. Navy/Jonathen E. Davis); Airmen demonstrate building assault at Eglin Air Force Base (U.S. Air Force/Samuel King, Jr.); and Sailor hugs children after returning from deployment aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (U.S. Navy/Brian Morales).

gained a great deal in tactical and operational art, combat resiliency, and lessons learned—but only if we seize these opportunities will they deliberately reflect on and improve our profession. I am reminded of something that a former commander of mine, General James Mattis, once said: "Sometimes, the best way to grab a new idea is to read an old book." And these old books that he and the Chairman refer to are stored in the repositories of our lessons learned.

I also believe that we can renew our commitment by returning to some basics, such as the creeds and oaths that guide our loyal and dedicated membership in the profession of arms. For example, I believe strongly that every enlisted Servicemember should know the enlistment oath by memory. The powerful words contained in this special oath trace back to the founding of our military and truly capture our pledge to this great profession. One does not have to wait for the occasion for which an oath was written in order to recite it. There are many other traditions within your individual Service branches, such as the code of conduct, Service creeds, and fight songs, that play significant roles in renewing our commitment to the profession.

Our ongoing and future energies toward professional development of the total force provide great opportunity for the enlisted corps. Time and again, our outstanding enlisted Servicemembers display their values and credentials both in garrison and on the battlefield. It is no secret that the talent pool throughout the noncommissioned officer/petty officer corps is deep.

To that end, the Chairman and I encourage you to express your talent, art, and experience on paper via articles submitted to this journal and other military publications. From operating in garrison to employment of full-spectrum operations, from logistical movement to site exploitation, the list is endless. By sharing your ideas beyond the lifelines of your individual commands, you will make a much larger difference—and impact.

Upon assuming this office, I saw the lifeline in the execution of my duties embedded in my office motto: Total Commitment to the Total Force. I am confident that you all understand what total commitment is, but let me touch on what I mean by total force. From the military infant, to the young teenager enrolled in junior ROTC, to the Servicemember in uniform, we are all members of the total force. From the spouse to the military retiree residing in one of our rest homes, or as a lifelong member of the American Legion chapters located across America, you, too, are members of the total force. And perhaps most of all, spouses who have lost loved ones are lifetime members of the total force. Put another way, everyone in our total force belongs to a family, so when we speak of military family, we speak of the total force. I welcome you to adopt and embrace this motto as we continue to take care of our own.

Our military families continue to make great sacrifices and have demonstrated exceptional stamina and resiliency. We recognize that it takes a special family to endure the frequency and length of separations, to move from school to school and town to town, and to shoulder the uncertainty as they wait for the return of their loved ones in uniform. We shall *keep faith with our military families*, as our support and commitment to them remain embroidered in the cloth of the nation that we wear. In the words of the Chairman, you are "the heart and soul of our force." **JFQ**

U.S. Army (D. Myles Cullen)

President Obama awards Medal of Honor to SFC Leroy Petry, USA, July 12, 2011