



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
3D MARINE DIVISION (-) (REIN)  
UNIT 35801  
FPO AP 96602-5801

1500

CG

'AUG 27 2009

COMMANDING GENERAL'S POLICY LETTER 02-09

From: Commanding General  
To: Distribution List

Subj: BUDDY SYSTEM

Ref: (a) MCO 1500.58

1. Situation. The purpose of this Policy Letter is to promulgate information, guidance, and policy on the 3d Marine Division Buddy System.
2. Mission. All commands will implement the Buddy System in accordance with this Policy Letter and reference (a) in order to enhance our "Marines take care of their own" ethos.

3. Execution

a. Commander's Intent and Concept of Operations

(1) Commander's Intent. I have used the Buddy System successfully with several commands. I have three buddies, the Sergeant Major, my Aide, and my Driver. Many units use a Buddy System only for liberty in foreign ports; however, I think that the use of the Buddy System also covers us in garrison, training, and combat. In essence, our buddy is our own "Guardian Angel." Let me give some examples:

(a) Garrison Environment. I am convinced that Marines and Sailors know when their buddies have alcohol problems, drug problems, emotional distress, family problems, financial problems, etc., long before an incident comes to the Commander's attention. In such cases, buddies must take action. If confronting their buddy with the situation does not provide positive results, then the buddy must go through their chain of command and seek assistance. This is the point where we, as commanders and leaders, must be "problem solvers" vice "fault finders" and provide assistance. Alcohol or drugs and vehicles are our most likely and most dangerous enemy in a garrison environment. We must know the enemy and combat him in any way that we can. This is where the Buddy System applies. Moreover, when new Marines or Sailors join our units, they should be "Buddied-Up" as soon as possible so that they feel a real sense of belonging and can rapidly assimilate to the unit

Subj: BUDDY SYSTEM

without delay. Again, you can come up with more garrison examples in which Marines and Sailors can help each other. Though your buddy may not be accompanying you on liberty, he or she should know your liberty plans.

(b) Training Environment. Many of you remember the Rother case in Twentynine Palms. Had Rother had a buddy, even if he had been on another checkpoint, his buddy could have alerted the company gunnery sergeant that Rother was not present in the pick-up vehicle when the Marines were pulled from the desert to Camp Wilson. Instead, Rother was not discovered as missing until over 24 hours later. In the meantime, Rother tried to find his own way out of the desert and failed, ultimately resulting in his death. Buddies watch out for each other on live fire ranges, during the movement of vehicles, and in any other potentially dangerous situation. Again, you can come up with other examples from your own training experiences.

(c) Combat Environment. The unit is planning cordon and search operations. Even though the platoon commander and squad leaders, in theory, are to inspect their Marines, time constraints may limit their ability to do so. Marines and Sailors that are "Buddied-Up" can also inspect each other and ask each other questions about the mission to ensure total understanding, thus enhancing mission preparation. Mutually supporting buddies are more likely to ask questions than a single individual. As the plan is executed, the buddies move into actions on the objective. One buddy is wounded and cannot continue the mission. The other buddy is aware of the situation, continues his mission, and ensures that his buddy is taken care of during consolidation on the objective. This is one combat example.

(d) Amplification. Although I have no statistics to support my premise, I am convinced that the Buddy System works. Is a buddy culpable should his buddy do something illegal? Maybe not, however in many situations I would want to talk to the buddy after an incident to determine any details leading up to what went wrong, or how the incident could have been prevented. Finally, positive actions taken by buddies must be positively reinforced by the command. This is an essential component of running a successful Buddy System.

## (2) Concept of Operations

(a) Effective immediately, and NLT 11 September 2009, units and stations will "Buddy-Up" their Marines and Sailors in accordance with the intent of this Policy Letter. Buddies can be individuals who already spend time together off duty or buddies may be paired within sections, fire teams, etc. Ensure that individuals with known problems are not "Buddied-Up" with someone else also with noted problems. Marines awaiting discharge or in a legal hold status will also be "Buddied-Up" until discharged.

Subj: BUDDY SYSTEM

(b) New Marines and Sailors will be "Buddied-Up" within 24 hours of arrival at each unit. This applies to all grades and ranks. If possible, an effort should be made for new Marines to be assigned a buddy who has some experience in the unit.

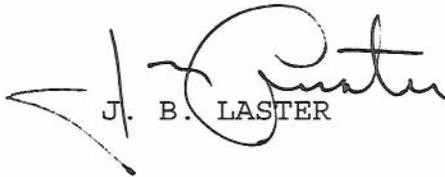
(c) Commanders will make every effort to positively reward/reinforce those appropriate actions taken by buddies.

4. Administration and Logistics. Buddy rosters will be maintained, and will be updated the first week of every month.

5. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Policy Letter is applicable to all commands and units under or attached to 3d Marine Division (-) (Rein).

b. Signal. This Policy Letter is effective the date signed.

  
J. B. LASTER

DISTRIBUTION: A