

Title: Passing the Baton of Honor, Courage, and
Commitment: The Voices of Women
Marine Corps Officers

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The primary purpose of this study was to examine the roles of women officers in the United States Marine Corps who are exemplary leaders and to ascertain why these women, in particular, are successful leaders. The participants' perceptions about how their education and training affect their ability to lead leaders in the military, and about what characterizes a successful and exemplary female officer and leader in the USMC were explored.

An interpretive, qualitative research design was utilized to analyze participants' perceptions and reactions. After analyzing the transcripts of each participant, the researcher constructed narrative portraits for each female USMC officer. Next, a cross-profile or cross-case analysis of the data was conducted to search for common patterns or themes,

Based on the results of the cross-profile and cross-case analysis, the successful female United States Marine Corps officers in this study are leaders who are highly educated proponents of life-long learning; have solid support systems, including understanding spouses who were also Marine Corps officers; comprehend the politics of the organization; possess adaptability in a military context; believe in the concept of mentoring; and maintain the highest ethics integrity on both their personal and professional lives. Above all, these female USMC officers deeply resonate with the organization's value system because they genuinely believe in it; they have experienced and observed first-hand how this value system has transformed the lives of the Marines with whom they have served as well as their own.

Recommendations for future research and practice include: continue both internal and external training and educational opportunities for female officers; provide female officers with the same training, especially offensive combat training, as their male counterparts; train female officers in the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war fighting; continue training female officers to be transformational leaders who comprehend leadership concepts, theories, styles, and principles; and emphasize that all female Marine Corps officers must possess and maintain integrity.