

# How Not to Meet the Old Man

By Capt. Graham Hamill

First of all, the names have been changed to protect the guilty. And, of course, the writer of this article has no firsthand knowledge of, nor has he ever been personally involved in such an instance as the one described below. Yeah, right. Our story involves a recent graduate of The Basic School (TBS)--one of the best and brightest young lieutenants our great Marine Corps recruiting and training system can produce, ready to meet the challenges of the fleet.

En route to his first duty station somewhere in the western United States, the lieutenant hooked up with three other young, bright lieutenants heading to the same unit. The group was due to check in early on a Monday morning. Naturally, the weekend before check-in literally blossomed with possibilities of good liberty in a nearby, major, American city of seaside entertainment. The young lieutenants took full advantage of the opportunity, staying well past the prudent time of departure. At some point during the last evening of excess, the young Marine leaders decided to delay departure from the city for their first big day in the fleet until 0300 the morning of check-in. Do you smell trouble?

Suffice it to say the group safely arrived at the gate of their new unit's base around 0600 that morning, expecting a swift wave-through so they could quickly change into their Alphas for check-in. Not so fast, cowboy. The observant gate guard noticed that the two young lieutenants in the back seat weren't wearing their safety belts, a flagrant violation of MCO P5100.19E, enclosure 2, sections 14(c) and 14(d), or so the citation read. (Remember the author is only relaying this story).

We now have two very bewildered young lieutenants holding their very own shiny, new, citation notices--less than an hour before their interview with the lieutenant colonel, their new boss. What to do now? They remembered from somewhere that bad news doesn't get better with age and resolved to bite the proverbial big bullet.

Imagine the commanding officer's chagrin as he looked up to see the young future warriors, now resplendent in

their Alpha uniforms (complete with matching National Defense medals), reporting to him with tickets in hand. The CO's chagrin of having his new officers check in with PMO-sponsored paper in hand was only partly alleviated by realizing he now had a golden opportunity for a caffeine-fueled venting of righteous rage from above on the now-wavering lieutenants. (It's definitely an art, and one's skills must be kept sharp.) The contents of the CO's lecture shall be kept private, but let's just say that the first hour in the new unit was not the most pleasant. It ranked right up there with almost drowning in the Quigley at OCS and losing a compass during night land nav at TBS.

However, it was a butt chewing they were alive to receive, and they now can relate it to their peers and subordinates for their edification and amusement. An early morning trip through the desert without wearing a seat belt (oops, am I giving the location away?) after a weekend (and night) of partying could have been the setting for a much grimmer tale. Fortunately, it wasn't. A little ORM and common sense would have eliminated the need for the early drive. Last, in case you've completely missed the point of this article, seat belts are required to be worn both on and off base, in both the front and back seats. This rule applies to all Marines, including bullet-proof lieutenants. 🚫