



# SILENT DRILL PLATOON

THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS SILENT DRILL PLATOON IS A HIGHLY DISCIPLINED PLATOON THAT EXEMPLIFIES THE PRIDE AND PROFESSIONALISM ASSOCIATED WITH ALL MARINES. THE SDP IS A 24-MAN RIFLE UNIT THAT PERFORMS MILITARY DRILL MOVEMENTS WITHOUT ANY VERBAL CADENCE OR COMMANDS. THE DRILL EXHIBITION CONCLUDES WITH A SERIES OF RIFLE INSPECTIONS DEMONSTRATING ELABORATE RIFLE SPINS AND TOSSES. THE PLATOON PERFORMS DURING PARADES AND CEREMONIES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, ACROSS THE UNITED STATES, AND AROUND THE WORLD.

MARINES OF THE SDP ARE INFANTRYMEN HAND SELECTED FROM THE MARCHING COMPANIES TO PERFORM BASED ON PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND CEREMONIAL DRILL ACUMEN. EXPERIENCED MARINES HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SELECTION AS ONE OF THE TWO RIFLE INSPECTORS. THESE INSPECTORS, ALONG WITH THE PLATOON DRILL MASTER, ARE ENTRUSTED WITH KEEPING AND PASSING ON THE UNIQUE KNOWLEDGE, HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SILENT DRILL PLATOON.

THE PLATOON COMMANDER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMPLOYMENT, ADMINISTRATION, AND WELFARE OF THE PLATOON. HE IS THE PRIMARY UNIT COMMANDER FOR ALL CEREMONIES RELATED TO THE PLATOON. THE CURRENT COMMANDER WEARS THE COLLAR DEVICES OF GEN. HOLLAND "HOWLIN MAD" SMITH, PASSED DOWN FROM EVERY COMMANDER SINCE 1989, THESE COLLAR DEVICES SIGNIFY THE TURNOVER OF THE BILLET.

THE RIFLE INSPECTION TEAM IS A GROUP OF MARINES THAT PERFORM THE MOST INTRICATE PORTION OF RIFLE SPINS AND TOSSES. A MARINE IN HIS SECOND YEAR WITH THE SDP MAY TRY OUT FOR THE TEAM AND IS GRADED ON PROFICIENCY, LEADERSHIP, AND BEARING. A COMPLEX SPIN SEQUENCE PRECEDES THE MARINES TOSsing THE RIFLE TO THE INSPECTOR, WHO ALSO PERFORMS A SPIN SEQUENCE WHILE INSPECTING THE RIFLE.

THE M1 GARAND RIFLE, USED IN BOTH WORLD WAR II AND THE KOREAN WAR, IS THE PRIMARY RIFLE IN USE BY ALL MARCHERS AT MBW. THE RIFLE, WITH FIXED BAYONET, WEIGHS IN EXCESS OF 10.5 LBS.

THE #1 RIFLE INSPECTOR, IS A BILLET HELD IN THE PLATOON BY A MARINE IN HIS THIRD YEAR WITH THE SDP. THIS MARINE HAS THE TIME HONORED-TRADITION OF WEARING THE SILVER BRASS. THE #1 RIFLE INSPECTORS OF THE PAST HAVE PASSED DOWN THE BUTTONS FROM THEIR DRESS BLUES BLOUSE. OVER TIME, THESE BUTTONS HAVE LOST THEIR BRASS FINISH, GIVING THE BILLET A UNIQUE HERITAGE.

