

From Marine green to HPD Blue, values are fundamental

by MIKE KLUTCHKA
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No doubt, the man is a leatherneck — a Marine. This first impression does not jump out at you but rather is visceral.

Self-discipline, intelligence, perseverance, inner-strength, decisiveness and leadership — those are just a few of the qualities that have helped Capt. Gregory J. Fremin rise through the ranks of the Houston Police Department (HPD). While personally observing his take-charge ability in a recent emergency situation, he capably demonstrated why he has gained the respect of his subordinates, platoon. He served as a machine gunner in the Marine Corps Reserve from 1981 to 1987.

A 23-year veteran at HPD, Fremin was 19 when he entered the police academy. Upon graduation and completion of field training, he served as a patrol officer for eight years. After promotion to sergeant, he served as a division IAD investigator. Upon promotion to lieutenant, he moved to night shift, Northeast Division command, with additional assignments as Fondren Division command day shift and human resources.

In 2006, he was promoted to captain and given his most challenging assignment, division command/special operations. When asked why, he thoughtfully expressed the enormous responsibility this command entails: "Being able to adapt to an ever-changing world with regard to security and staffing issues. Insuring that subordinates are trained in WMD in a time when values and society have changed so much and safety and security is a global threat."

The units he commands are responsible for the safety and security of the entire Houston downtown business district. These include mounted patrol and the SRG (special response group), a rapid mobilization force of 700 officers including an elite hard-team which deals with problems such as crowd control and catastrophic events. Additionally, all security for the City Hall falls under his command, as does central bicycle & training, traffic liaison, special events, uniformed dignitary protection and four patrol shifts that operate 24/7/365.

A humble man, the captain has a reverence for those that have served in the military and law enforcement, relating it to his own personal experience. "I joined the Corps to be a part of something special. It's a brotherhood that carries into the police department."

For many years he wore the MIA bracelet of a fallen Marine, 2nd Lt. Donald J. Matocha, who was killed in action in Vietnam in 1968. His remains were later found and returned in 2004 for burial in the U.S. Fremin proudly served on the HPD honor guard at this service, introduced himself, and presented that bracelet to the fallen Marine's sister. His reflection of that moment depicts his

peers and superiors throughout the ranks of the department.

Fremin attributes much of his success in law enforcement to his military training in the Marine Corps. "The Corps instilled in me values that formed the foundation for my career in law enforcement — the discipline, duty, service to others and camaraderie of being part of something special for a noble cause." A native of Lafayette, La., and an Eagle Scout, he enlisted at 17 and was the youngest member of his



empathy and compassion for others, the true mark of a caring public servant in an effective leadership role.

Some of the finest officers at HPD have achieved a combination of both military and academic accomplishments, and Fremin is no exception. In 1992 he earned his Associate of Arts degree from North Harris College, and in 1996 he was awarded a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from the University of Houston. HPD encourages its officers to pursue higher education and supports this by offering college tuition reimbursement and yearly educational incentive pay for advanced degrees earned.

The road that led Fremin to a career at HPD began with fellow Marine and HPD veteran Sgt. Kerry Hassler, a friend of Fremin's uncle, who inspired him to join the force. It was one of the best career decisions he has ever made. Before beginning his career at HPD, he had dropped out of college, relocated to Houston, and started a job selling pots and pans. "HPD is one of the finest organizations I have ever seen. There are so many opportunities within the department, including SWAT, dive team, SRG and mounted."

When asked what advice he would give to transitioning personnel considering a career in law enforcement at HPD, the captain offered this poignant insight. "You will walk into people's lives, and that entails an enormous amount of power and responsibility. Understand that it is a paramilitary organization where you will be interacting with civilians. Bring the military training, skills and work ethic. Treat others with civility and respect. Never lose sight of where you came from. All the qualities you amassed in the military you will carry with you for life. Maintain professionalism and always stay motivated."

Interested in learning more about career opportunities with the HPD? Applicants can contact HPD Recruiting at 800-252-0473 or visit www.houstonpolice.org (Careers) for information. Perhaps the famous Marine Corps motto of "Semper Fidelis" rings true in the spirit of faithfulness to public service, community and country. Stand up for your career, your community and your future — you will never stand alone!