

FROM DEVIL DOGS TO GOOD SAMARITANS – IMAGE MAKEOVER FOR US MARINES



The US Marines are desirous of upholding their kinder side, through a string of videos and ads that show them involved in a number of humanitarian activities and missions throughout the world. The ads show that they are not only focused on "killing people and breaking things," but that they do that in the course of duty and that there is also a kind, caring and compassionate side to them. The ads are aimed at convincing the young people, who may be interested in a military career, that the US marine life is not all fight and fury and that joining it could mean playing a pivotal role in allaying human catastrophe's around the world. The ads depict, Marines not only as combatants but as humanitarians and peacekeepers. The ads to be telecast on television and movie theatres and YouTube, show Marines, bringing relief materials to the victims of the Haiti earthquakes, clearing rubble from villages ravaged by the Tsunami in Japan and talking to children. The ad campaign, aptly titled "Toward the Sounds of Chaos," illustrates that in a time of crisis and chaotic situations, people flee from the scene of the catastrophe, whilst the marines run towards it to restore order, or to save or evacuate those in danger – even at considerable risk to their own lives. In one of the videos, amidst screaming people and smoke-filled skies, a Marine is seen running towards the fire, whilst a sea of people is running in the opposite direction. A narrator says, "There are a few who move toward the sounds of chaos ... toward the sounds of tyranny, injustice and despair," and then poses a query, "which way would you run?" The new ad campaign attempts to educate the new generation that in an increasingly uncertain world Marines "need to be ready to engage in whatever activity our country needs us to engage in." It could be fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, or helping drought and famine ravaged people in Ethiopia. Recruiters believe that the ad campaign will help in promoting the Marines. There are a lot of young men and women out there who want to join specifically for "that adventure and action" that they see in combat operations, so we want to make sure that they understand that it's still going to be a very busy world in front of us, but more on responding to chaos ... than to a traditional combat role." Maj. John O. Caldwell admitted that the recruiting process was a very difficult one. He said that some applicants changed their minds at the last moment, whereas others failed to make it through basic training and infantry school. Earlier, in the Corps, the term 'Devil Dogs' was seen like a badge of honor, and referred to someone with a ferocious nature, a fighter who would not give up. Not anymore, now the term is considered derogatory and offensive. Today's Marines react to it differently and feel that it carries a connotation of disrespect and condescension – the new ad campaign, is designed to change that.