



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000

IN REPLY REFER TO:
CMC

JUL 12 2012

WHITE LETTER NO. 3-12

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: All General Officers
All Commanding Officers
All Officers in Charge
All Sergeants Major, Master Gunnery Sergeants, and
Command Master Chiefs

Subj: LEADERSHIP

1. Commanding Generals, Commanding Officers, Senior Staff Noncommissioned Officers (SNCOs), leaders...Sergeant Major Barrett and I have, for the most part, completed presenting the Heritage Brief throughout the Corps. While we no doubt missed some officers and SNCOs, we were able to speak face-to-face with the bulk of our Corps' leadership about "Who We Are...and Who We Are Not." As Commandant, I have no greater responsibility to our institution than to ensure that our Corps adheres to the legendary high levels of discipline and professionalism expected of us by the American people. I will not stop talking about this matter, and neither should you! Additionally, just last month, I signed our Marine Corps' Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Campaign Plan. As such, I thought it timely that I reinforce a couple of key elements of our way-ahead on these matters.

2. While the Heritage Brief spoke in some detail about the matters of *accountability, discipline, sexual assault* and *hazing*, I want to be clear about our ever-present responsibilities as senior leaders to uphold the enduring tenets of the Military Justice System. While the briefings express my strong feelings about "*getting the Corps back on a heading of True North*," I am not directing or suggesting specific administrative or military justice actions be taken absent compliance with established law. My intent is not to influence the outcome or response in any particular case, but rather to positively influence the behavior of Marines across our Corps. As senior leaders, we have the inherent responsibility to ensure the sanctity of our justice system, this includes the presumption of innocence unless proven otherwise.

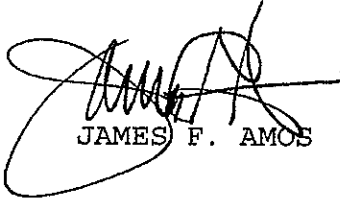
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3. More specifically, as you implement our Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Campaign Plan, there are a couple of things that I want you to keep in mind. Sexual assault is a problem. It's a reality in our society and thus it's a reality in our Corps. Statistics reflect that alcohol is a contributing factor to the majority of our sexual assaults, and something that we must address in our overall plan.

4. Next, the matter of whether or not a Marine committed a sexual assault and what should happen, will be determined based on the facts presented. I expect all Marines involved in the military justice process -- from convening authorities, to members, to witnesses -- to make their own independent assessment of the facts and circumstances of each case.

5. Let me be clear about my intent...I expect each of you to do your duty and to set a command climate such that sexual assault is known among your Marines as shameful and unacceptable. Intervene to prevent sexual assault from occurring in the first place, and when it is alleged...take your responsibilities as leaders seriously. Above all, do what you believe is right in each case.

6. I've just spent the past two days at Quantico discussing all of these issues with most of the General Officers in our Corps. I stressed to them the importance of taking sexual assault seriously while fulfilling their responsibilities as Commanders and as Convening Authorities under the UCMJ. I directed each to ensure that the content and intent behind this White Letter is discussed in detail with each of their commanders and throughout their organizations.



JAMES F. AMOS