



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:
CMC-CL

AUG 25 2009

WHITE LETTER NO 02-09

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: All Commanding Generals
All Commanding Officers
All Officers in Charge

Subj: COMMANDERS' RESPONSIBILITIES IN ADDRESSING SEXUAL ASSAULT

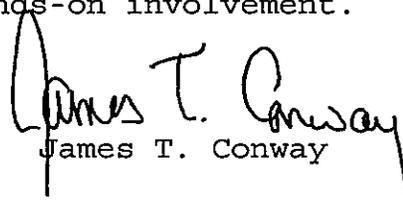
Ref: (a) MCO 1752.5A

1. Sexual assault is a crime and such acts will not be tolerated. It is prejudicial to good order and discipline and directly counter to our Core Values. Marines must be fully committed to the highest standards of personal conduct, morality, and respect for others. As commanders we must ensure our commands promote both sexual assault prevention and response.

2. We must do our utmost to prevent sexual assault. Prevention of sexual assault is crucial to defeating this issue. I am concerned that many of our Marines may not realize the gravity of this crime and may have misconceptions about the many circumstances in which it may arise; circumstances that, too often, involve large groups of young Marines and alcohol abuse. I charge you with educating yourselves on sexual assault, identifying the misconceptions your Marines may have about it, and creating a command climate that dispels these myths and establishes clear standards for personal behavior.

3. We must also improve upon the gains the Marine Corps has made in responding to sexual assault. Victims of sexual assault will be treated with sensitivity, decency, and respect; receive appropriate support; and be kept safe. ALL MARINES will comply with the requirements of the reference, including the training requirements. Commanders will hold accountable those found to have committed sexual assault.

4. Sexual assault prevention and response requires your personal continuous attention and action. There is no substitute for your direct, hands-on involvement.


James T. Conway