



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
CMC-MRP  
16 Aug 04

WHITE LETTER NO. 04-04

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

Subj: NOVEMBER 2004 ELECTIONS

1. The 2004 elections are approaching fast. As with all elections, Marine Corps leadership is responsible to ensure all eligible voters are aware of the procedures to vote and are afforded the opportunity to exercise this right. The studies that followed the 2000 elections attributed the low military voter participation primarily to a lack of command emphasis and voter awareness. We must improve on this.

2. Voter awareness and command emphasis are key to a successful voting program. During the next few months, we must take every opportunity to talk about the importance of registering and voting. We must ensure voting information is widely disseminated, posted throughout our areas of responsibility, and available to Marines, family members and civilian Marines.

3. Voting Assistance Officers (VAO) are the key to ensuring eligible voters have an opportunity to exercise their right to vote. As leaders, we must ensure every assigned VAO has been trained and receives support and encouragement as they execute their voting officer duties. During Armed Forces Voters Week, 3-11 September 2004, commanders must be involved to ensure VAOs are actively engaged in voting awareness and registration activities. VAOs should achieve 100% contact with Marines. Past experience indicates particular attention must be given to educating junior Marines on how to vote and their obligations of citizenship. This is particularly true for Marines between the ages of 18-24 who may have never voted before.

4. I am confident that with your personal involvement and oversight, along with the efforts of your VAOs, every Marine, their eligible family members and our civilian Marines will have the opportunity to exercise their right to VOTE!

  
M. W. Hagee