



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
2 NAVY ANNEX  
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IN REPLY REFER TO:  
CMC-MP

16 DEC 2003

WHITE LETTER NO 06-03

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

Subj: CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE MARINE CORPS

1. The results of the Armed Forces 2002 Sexual Harassment Survey have recently been received. Overall, the survey is a "good news" story for the Marine Corps and shows significant improvements have been made. Sexual harassment incident rates are down, decreasing from 57% in 1995 to 27% in 2002. Sexist behavior and sexual assault rates have also decreased by 13% and 4%, respectively. The improvements can be attributed to your leadership, but there is still room for more improvement. This is an area that requires the continuous attention of all leaders and commanders.
2. Upon my assumption of duties as the 33<sup>rd</sup> Commandant, I issued guidance that quoted the 13<sup>th</sup> Commandant, General John A. Lejeune, as stating that leadership is "the eternal spirit which has animated our Corps from generation to generation." As the leaders of our Corps, it is imperative that you are keenly aware of, and sensitive to, the organizational climate of your unit. We must ensure that our Marines are not subject to verbal or physical harassment. Marines never leave a fellow Marine wounded on the battlefield. Any Marine who is the subject of insults, slander, threats, or physical abuse is wounded just as surely as if shot. As leaders we must not allow this to occur in our Corps, and if Marines are "wounded" we must promptly and properly correct the situation.
3. I task each of you to address gender-related issues with your Marines, and critically review your command climate. Ensure your actions, and those of your Marines are consistent with your intentions and the Core Values to which we are all committed. At every level, Boot Camp, School Of Infantry, Staff Non-Commissioned Officer Academy, Officer Candidates School, The Basic School, Expeditionary Warfare School, Command and Staff College, we must drive home the fact that this type of discrimination will not be tolerated in our Corps.
4. The Corps' strength is the spirit of which General Lejeune spoke. When any Marine is spoken to derisively, excluded from unit activities, ridiculed, or assaulted either verbally or physically, the spirit is broken and the strength eroded. Where words, actions, and behavior threaten our Marines and our spirit, corrective action must be taken immediately. Those responsible for such negative actions must be held accountable.
5. This is an issue that requires your personal continuous attention and action. This is leadership in its purest sense and I expect you to continue to lead your Marines, ensuring all Marines live in accordance with our Core Values.

  
M. W. Hagee