



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO

CMC-MM
JUN 9 1997

WHITE LETTER NO. 05-97

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

Subj: PROMOTION RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Promotions are essential building blocks of our Corps. They provide, from within, the critical expertise and leadership so vital to our combat readiness. I believe that we have a fair, responsive promotion system, but we must use it more effectively.

2. As commanders and leaders, we must do a better job of ensuring our Marines are fully prepared for promotion selection boards. Promotion within our Corps has always been a highly competitive, precious opportunity for increased responsibility. This opportunity cannot be lost simply because our Marines' records are not complete. I receive mail daily from Marines who believe that the system has failed them and has impeded their opportunity for well-earned advancement. Their reasons run the gamut, but one too-often seen is an incomplete record.

3. ALMARs 410/95, 38/96 and 339/96 clearly state my intent in these important areas, however, promotion boards continue to brief me of their concerns regarding incomplete records. It is incumbent upon all leaders to assume a "shared responsibility" with their Marines to properly prepare for promotion. Below are critical areas that must be improved:

a. Photographs. ALMAR 38/96 (Submission of Required Photos to Promotion Boards) directed that official photographs are a command responsibility. Yet to date, officer and enlisted promotion boards rarely exceed a 70 percent submission rate. Remember, height and weight certification, to include approved alternate weights, is mandatory. We must do better.

b. Professional Military Education. The Commandant's Planning Guidance links PME with qualification for promotion. ALMAR 339/96 (Enlisted Professional Military Education (PME)

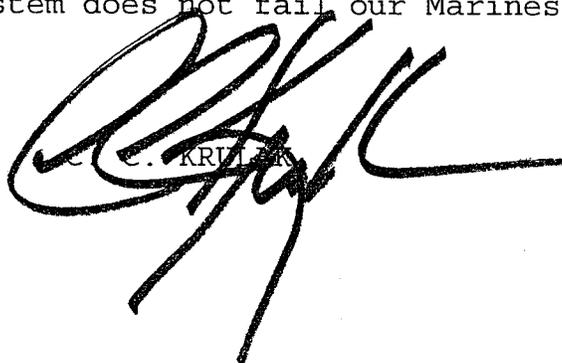
Subj: PROMOTION RESPONSIBILITIES

Requirements for Sergeants Through Gunnery Sergeants Eligible for Promotion) recounts the necessary PME requirements for SNCOs to be considered fully qualified for promotion. Additionally, officers are strongly encouraged to complete appropriate level PME to be highly competitive for promotion. To enable our promotion boards to make the "tough calls," our Marines' PME attendance and completion must be promptly and properly documented in their Official Military Personnel Files. Documentation is your responsibility and must be improved.

c. Physical Fitness Test and Weapons Regualification. Competition for promotion is very keen and these annual scores can be the critical difference between selection and nonselection. Don't handicap your Marines by failing to promptly record and report these scores.

d. Fitness Reports. Performance, good or bad, can only be recognized and evaluated by a promotion board if it is documented. The responsibilities of the Marine Reported On, Reporting Seniors, and Reviewing Officers are effectively enumerated in MCO P1610.7D, Performance Evaluation System (PES). Commanders have the responsibility to ensure that all PES policies are implemented and upheld--to include timeliness! Do your job.

4. As commanders and leaders, we must become more active in ensuring our Marines' records are ready for promotion. I challenge each of you to review your responsibilities and ensure that all Marines are provided the support necessary to compete fairly for promotion in our Corps. I am convinced that concerned leadership can ensure our system does not fail our Marines.



A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to a Marine Corps officer, is written over the bottom right portion of the page. The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.