



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

CMC-MM

21 APR 2003

WHITE LETTER NO. 02-03

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

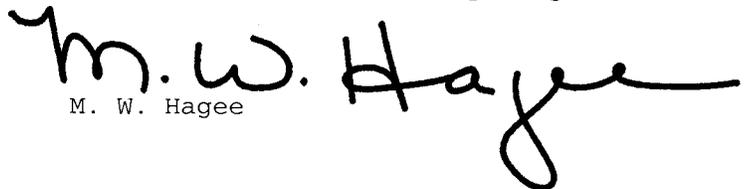
Subj: MERITORIOUS PROMOTIONS

1. The intent of our selection process in the Marine Corps is to promote those Marines who are determined to be "the best and most fully qualified." Meritorious promotions are intended to promote those "exceptionally well-qualified" Marines whose performance is "significantly superior" to their peers.

2. Meritorious promotions are not to be used as rewards, when a personal commendation/award is appropriate, or when a recommendation for accelerated promotion is warranted. Just as a recommendation for accelerated promotion is strictly reserved for the Marine who is "the one above" and who is "eminently capable" of immediately assuming the responsibilities of the next senior grade, a recommendation for meritorious promotion should be reserved for the Marines whose demonstrated leadership and performance are "clearly superior" to that of their peers.

3. Selection boards receive guidance from me in the form of a precept that states policy and procedures to follow during deliberations. My precept to you, regarding meritorious promotions, is to only recommend those eminently qualified Marines who have truly demonstrated leadership and performance far superior to their peers. This guidance should not be interpreted as implementation of zero tolerance.

4. It is understood that Marines who have erred can recover through hard work and commitment to the Corps. I charge all commanders to ensure these Marines are exceptions when it comes to meritorious promotions, not the norm. We must all remain vigilant in ensuring meritorious promotions do not become a tool to promote Marines who are otherwise noncompetitive. Adherence to the spirit and intent of the Marine Corps Promotion Manual should be your guide.


M. W. Hagee