



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380-0001

IN REPLY REFER TO:
CMC-MHF
10 Jun 94

WHITE LETTER NO. 11-94

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

Subj: TRANSITION ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

1. The end of the Cold War and deficit reduction efforts have combined to make the 90's a decade of unprecedented change for our Corps. The number of active duty Marines has dropped to the lowest level since Korea. While our end strength has stabilized at 174,000, our Country's economic climate has created a challenging environment for those Marines who are separating or retiring.

2. Along with the President and Congress, I am committed to ensuring that Marines leaving active duty know that the skills they learned while in service to their Country will serve them well in civilian life. And, at no time in our Nation's history, has there been a greater need for the skills, knowledge, and self-discipline our Marines possess.

3. Since 1991, transition assistance programs have been available at our Family Service Centers (FSC) at all major Marine Corps installations. These programs, which begin with a required pre-separation briefing, also include detailed counseling on a variety of topics such as affiliation with the Reserves, relocation assistance, educational benefits, and employment assistance. In addition, the Departments of Labor, Veterans Affairs, and Defense jointly offer 2 to 3 day seminars to sharpen employment search skills and to explain veterans' benefits.

4. Despite the availability of transition assistance, recent studies by the Department of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) and the Government Accounting Office (GAO) have concluded that command support for transition assistance is lacking. Public Law 102-484, "The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1993" requires that pre-separation counseling be provided at least 90 days prior to the servicemember's date of separation. The DoDIG and GAO found that most Marines receive this counseling within weeks of their transition, not months. As a result, many Marines leave active service with neither a full knowledge of the benefits and entitlements they have earned nor sufficient time to prepare for civilian life.

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5. As commanders, I am asking your help in solving this Corps-wide problem. First, I am asking each of you to visit the FSC nearest you and find out what transition assistance services and programs are offered. Second, I am asking each of you to ensure your separating and retiring Marines receive transition assistance briefings at least 6 months prior to their date of separation or retirement so they can take full advantage of the benefits and services to which they are entitled.

6. Just as we ensure our Marines are prepared for the battlefield, let us also ensure they are ready for their transition to civilian life. In keeping with the philosophy of taking care of our own, our Marines deserve our full support.


C. E. MUNDY, JR.