



Commanding Officer's Statement on Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment/Assault



The Marine Corps is an institution in which people from all walks of life can enlist or accept a commission with the understanding that merit, promotion, and reputation can be achieved based on performance alone. The diverse backgrounds of our Marines bring unique experiences, culture, and vitality to our Corps. Those differences, be they ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation or ability, are a foundation of strength rather than division. We are a professional organization and we will act as professionals as we build the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines team. It is my desire that over time, this team will coalesce into a close-knit family, willing to give the ultimate sacrifice for our brothers and sisters.

Equal Opportunity: I will not tolerate discrimination of any kind in this unit. Every Marine and Sailor in this unit is critical to our ability to accomplish our mission. There should be no question in the minds of each individual Marine and Sailor that he or she is cared for, valued, and trusted. There are certain offenses which, if substantiated, I will prosecute to the fullest extent. One of these offenses is discrimination by word or deed. When a Marine or Sailor no longer believes their unit will afford them dignity and respect, we have lost the trust and confidence of that individual. If anyone in this unit feels they have been discriminated against, I would ask that you immediately speak with the Equal Opportunity Officer or your chain of command. You can trust that your complaint will be given careful consideration and deliberation. And, if substantiated, we will endeavor to rid our unit of this cancer.

Sexual Harassment and Assault: For too long, we as an institution have failed to root out this egregious offense through complicity, rationalization, and inadequate punishments. I agree with our Commandant when he says we have a culture problem and it has harmed the trust of our female Marines in this great institution. We must also acknowledge that a significant number of male Marines have also been the victim of sexual harassment and assault. Let me promise you, that if you are convicted of either one of these offenses, I will fight to ensure you receive the maximum punishment allowable. There is no place for this behavior in our Corps. Similar to my sentiments on discrimination and hazing, once we earn the title Marine, there should not be additional hurdles to surmount in order to prove that we belong in this Corps. I would ask that if you feel you have been the victim of sexual harassment or assault, that you report the offense to a Unit Victim Advocate (UVA) or your chain of command, with the confidence that we will treat your report with confidentiality, respect, and professionalism.

All of us should be deeply offended when one of our own is subject to discrimination or is the victim of a sexual offense. We should all be vigilant about reporting instances of both if we witness them on or off duty. Sometimes victims are afraid to report an offense because of what it might do to their standing in the unit. We should all share the desire to root out these offenses and bring the offender to justice. We all have a duty to protect each other when others cannot or will not. For the same reasons we serve our fellow Americans, such as our willingness to stand up and fight for our country, we should do the same for our fellow Marines and Sailors!

LtCol Kenny Jones
Commanding Officer
1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment
"First in the World"