



SPMAGTF-CR-CC Commanding Officer's Statement on Hazing



The Marine Corps is a "people business" and our cohesion and commitment as members of SPMAGTF-CR-CC have as great an impact on our SPMAGTF's combat effectiveness as the training we receive, the tactics we use, and the equipment we employ. SPMAGTF-CR-CC cohesion will be built on positive, proactive and concerned leadership that inspires the development and consistently enhances the welfare of our Marines and Sailors. Hazing, intimidation, isolation, and negative leadership are our enemies as they do nothing but tear at our cohesion and limit our combat effectiveness. Hazing, in particular, is a critical vulnerability to the success of our unit and will not be tolerated.

Marine Corps Order 1700.28A defines hazing as "cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning or harmful" actions – either physical or emotional – against another Marine or Sailor. Nothing in that description supports our Core Values of honor, courage, and commitment. Nothing in that description supports the cohesion we must build and maintain to be successful in combat. Hazing gains SPMAGTF-CR-CC nothing.

Past and recent events indicate that hazing occurs during field days, and as Marines join the SPMAGTF throughout the deployment. The victims targeted for hazing are usually brand new Marines or Marines who have not yet deployed. The perpetrators are overwhelmingly those Marines who have conducted a deployment but have not yet understood their responsibilities as junior leaders and members of the unit. These Marines have confused the authority granted to them to accomplish unit missions with personal power – and they use this power to harm their fellow Marines and Sailors.

Every Marine and Sailor in the SPMAGTF must take proactive steps to prevent hazing – particularly during the most vulnerable times when new members are joining the unit. All leaders must regularly discuss the negative impacts of hazing with their Marines and Sailors. We must root out this practice that makes us weaker in combat by stepping forward and intervening before a situation ever escalates to the point of hazing. All Marines and Sailors must understand their obligation to report suspected incidents of hazing via their chain of command or the Request Mast process. Alternatively, victims or witnesses can contact the SPMAGTF EO to report a suspected hazing incident. There will be no reprisals. I will ensure that leaders quickly investigate suspected hazing incidents so those responsible can be held accountable. Be assured that I will take swift administrative and disciplinary action against anyone who is found to have hazed any member of this SPMAGTF.

Hazing is not part of the legacy we will build for the SPMAGTF. We will hold true to that honor through our performance in combat and our commitment to our fellow Marines and Sailors.

Christopher D. Gideons
Colonel, USMC
Commanding Officer