



SPMAGTF-CR-CC

Commanding Officer's Statement on Sexual Assault



In combat when our fellow Marines need our help, we willingly accept extraordinary personal risk to come to their aid. Marines and Sailors carry out extraordinary feats of heroism in doing so. In fact these acts are the hallmark of who we are. We must work to ensure that this commitment extends to combatting sexual assault, and the environment and behaviors that contribute to it.

Sexual assault – one Marine taking physical advantage of someone when that person does not or cannot consent – has become a stain on the proud history and tradition of our Corps. **We will do everything in our power** within SPMAGTF to prevent sexual assault, support victims, and hold offenders and facilitators accountable. We will act in conjunction with the Commandant's goals to reduce sexual assault within our unit. Ultimately, our goal is to eliminate sexual assaults completely.

We must also recognize that in the Marine Corps sexual assault with male victims does occur. Any Marine in this SPMAGTF who is the victim of sexual assault should immediately and directly contact one of our Uniformed Victim Advocates (UVAs) to receive confidential advice on reporting and support options. All Marines must know that **restricted reporting** procedures ensure the privacy of the victim and still affords the victim access to medical and counseling services. Marines must also know that **unrestricted reporting** procedures allow the command to take action to hold the alleged offender accountable while still respecting the confidentiality of the victim and affording them access to care. **We will respect victim confidentiality.**

Focusing on the prevention of sexual assaults, leaders in SPMAGTF-CR-CC will:

- Create a command climate free from messages and behavior that undermine the seriousness in which sexual assault is viewed by our Marines. We will instead emphasize that **sexual assault is a crime** that is inconsistent with our core values and directly undermines readiness, unit cohesion, and morale.
- Emphasize the importance of **expressed consent** as the critical dividing line between consensual sexual activity and criminal sexual assault.
- Foster a sense of responsibility to **actively identify and intervene in situations** in which one Marine perceives that another Marine or a civilian may be victimized.
- Ensure a clear understanding that **those who facilitate sexual assault as inactive bystanders will be held accountable** for their actions.
- Consistently **address the role alcohol often plays in sexual assault** and the responsibility all Marines have for their actions, regardless of whether they are intoxicated.

For circumstances in which a sexual assault is alleged, commanders will respond in accordance with Marine Corps Order 1752.5B and MARCENTO 1752.5A. We will ensure that victims of sexual assault are protected and the rights of alleged offenders are respected.

Eliminating sexual assault in the Marine Corps is a priority at all levels of the chain of command. We will accept nothing less than aggressive, proactive leadership to address this issue and achieve results.

C. D. Gideons
Colonel, USMC
Commanding Officer