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HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
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WASHINGTON DC 20350-3000

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MARINE CORPS ORDER 5216.20B

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: MARINE CORPS SUPPLEMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
CORRESPONDENCE MANUAL

Ref: (a) SECNAV M-5216.5
(b) SECNAV M-5210.1
(c) 5 U.S.C. 552a
(d) SECNAV M-5211.5E
(e) MCO 5210.11F
(f) MCO 5215.1K
(g) JP 1-02
(h) MCO P1070.12K W/CH 1
(i) U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) Style Manual
(j) SECNAV M-5510.36
(k) MCO 3040.4
(l) MCO P5000.21A

Encl: (1) Chapter 13, Marine Corps Supplement to the DON
Correspondence Manual

1. Situation. To publish a local supplement to reference (a).

2. Cancellation. MCO 5216.20A.

3. Mission

a. This revision contains a substantial number of changes and should be reviewed in its entirety.

b. Although enclosure (1) is published as chapter 13 of reference (a), the format is consistent with Marine Corps publications for easier reading. Some portions of this supplement pertain only to Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC).

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release;
distribution is unlimited.

4. Execution

a. All Marine Corps personnel responsible for preparing and approving correspondence will familiarize themselves with the references and this Order.

b. This Order will be filed immediately after chapter 12 of reference (a).

5. Administration and Logistics

a. The Director, Administration and Resource Management Division (Dir AR) is responsible for supervising correspondence practices at HQMC and throughout the Marine Corps. Recommendations concerning the contents of this Order are invited and should be addressed to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Administration and Resource Management Division (CMC AR).

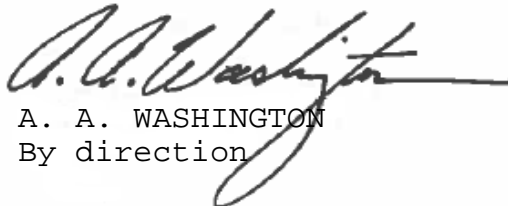
b. Records created as a result of this Order shall be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration approved dispositions per reference (b) to ensure proper maintenance, use, accessibility and preservation, regardless of format or medium. All efforts should be made to use Electronic Records Management to support record collection, storage of electronic records, metadata, and location of physical records, retrieval, use, and disposition.

c. The generation, collection or distribution of personally identifiable information (PII) and management of privacy sensitive information shall be in accordance with the Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, per references (c) and (d). Any unauthorized review, use, disclosure or distribution is prohibited.

6. Command and Signal

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.

b. Signal. This Order is effective the date signed.


A. A. WASHINGTON
By direction

DISTRIBUTION: PCN 10207631100

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SECTION 1: WRITING GUIDE

1. References. When guidance cannot be found in the Department of the Navy (DON) Correspondence Manual, the following references will be used for preparation of correspondence at HQMC, fleet organizations, major commands, and activities.

a. Any standard dictionary.

b. Reference (g), the preeminent authority for the definition and usage of military terms. Reference (g) is available on-line, at:

http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jpl_02.pdf.

c. Reference (h), the principal reference for abbreviated military terms.

d. References (b) and (e) for policy and guidance on the lifecycle management of Marine Corps correspondence.

2. Capitalization. Chapters 3 and 4 of reference (i) will be used as the basic guide for capitalization, subject to the exceptions and amplifications listed below.

a. The word "Marine" is always capitalized when used in reference to individuals or things associated with the U.S. Marine Corps.

b. Code names given to operations, exercises, geographic areas, or activities will have the first letter of all proper names capitalized but will not be written entirely in capitals; (e.g., Exercise Bold Eagle, Ocean Venture, Team Spirit, etc.).

c. The titles of military units are capitalized only when the complete title of a specific unit is given. General terms designating units of a common type or size are not capitalized. (e.g., 1st Marine Regiment).
(e.g., Report to all the regiments).

d. When the specific, formal billet title is used without qualifying adjectives, the title is not capitalized.

(1) Example 1

a. Commanding General, 1st Marine Division.

b. He was the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division.

(2) Example 2

a. Commanding Officer, Company A, 1st Battalion, 1st Marines.

b. Captain Jenks was the commanding officer of Company A.

3. Compound Words. Chapters 6 and 7 of reference (i) apply. This source, however, differs in many aspects from the dictionary. The overriding rule of usage should be clarity and consistency.

4. Punctuation. Chapter 8 of reference (i) applies but is subject to the following exceptions and clarifications:

a. Apostrophe (8.3-8.18 of Reference (i))

(1) An apostrophe does not have to be used for the plural of acronyms unless it is essential for clarity (e.g. 1990s).

(2) However, apostrophes will be used with acronyms in the possessive case (e.g. USMC's).

b. Comma (8.34-8.59 of Reference (i))

(1) Names of states and foreign countries when used in conjunction with other geographic place names will be regarded as words in apposition and will be set off by commas before and after.

Examples:

He moved from Austin, Texas, to New York.

The squadron arrived in Atsugi, Japan, on 4 July 2015.

(2) In writing titles of organizations where more than one level of command must be given to specify the exact unit, commas will be used to take the place of the words "of" or "of the."

Example:

He was assigned as Commanding Officer, Company A, 1st Battalion, 2d Marines on 8 November 2014.

(3) The comma will be omitted with the shortened name of military facilities and installations.

Examples:

MCAS Beaufort MCB Camp Lejeune

NAS Key West The squadron departed MCAS Iwakuni

(4) The comma that is normally required before and after Jr., Sr., etc., (8.40 of reference (i)) will be deleted after these forms only when full identification of a Marine is made.

Example:

Corporal Thomas A. Smith, Jr. 0000000000/0311 USMC

(5) Refer to 8.47 of reference (i) regarding placement of commas inside quotation marks.

c. Hyphen (8.86-8.90 of reference (i))

(1) The numerical designation of aviation squadrons and groups will be linked to the abbreviated title of the unit by a hyphen. The hyphen is not used when the full name of the unit is written out, with ground units, with the hull designators for Navy ships, or to separate the names of an exercise from the year in which it occurs.

Examples:

VMA-223

Marine Attack Squadron 223, MAG-32

USS Ashland (LSD 48)

BLT 2/3

Bold Eagle 86

(2) Refer to the Word Division Supplement to reference (i) for hyphenating a word at the end of a line.

(3) As a general rule, only three lines of text should be hyphenated per page, and no successive lines should be hyphenated.

5. Abbreviations. Chapter 9 of reference (i) contains general guidelines, but common military practices differ significantly from GPO rules. Chapter 6 of reference (h) is the principal reference for abbreviated military terms.

a. Abbreviations are used only if they are well-established in ordinary military service usage and then only if their adoption is warranted to save space or to avoid repetition. There must be a good reason for abbreviations, and they should be as well or better known than the term for which they stand.

b. The use of all capitals for military abbreviations is largely a result of necessity and will not be followed in correspondence unless the abbreviation is made up entirely of the initial letters of major words, (i.e., unless it is an acronym).

Examples:

HQMC

USMC

MedEvac

c. In general, periods are not used with military abbreviations and acronyms (an exception to this rule is USMC Public Affairs correspondence subject to Associated Press rules). Letters are run together without separation by space or punctuation. This run-together rule does not apply where abbreviations or acronyms include numbers of any kind - Roman, Arabic, or ordinal. Except for the abbreviations of military grades and dates, which are exceptions to this rule.

Examples:

CG III MEF

24th MEU

BLT 2/3

2d MAW

7th Mar

COMMARFORPAC

CG 1st MarDiv

d. All acronyms will be introduced upon first usage by including the complete terms for which they stand, and will be used consistently thereafter in lieu of the full term. Acronyms will not be given unless they are used more than once throughout the correspondence.

e. Where abbreviations of states are used to simplify addresses or reduce their length, the two-letter style of the U.S. Postal Service will be used (9.13 of reference (i)).

Note: There are no punctuation marks and no spaces in "DC" (District of Columbia).

f. Abbreviations for months will conform with the three letter style specified in reference (h) rather than the 9.44 of reference (i).

Examples:

Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec

g. "United States" may be abbreviated as "U.S." when used as an adjective (note use of periods and no space), but is spelled out when used as a noun (9.9-9.10 of reference (i)).

Examples:

U.S. Marine Corps

The United States and other countries.

h. In correspondence, "Retired" should be abbreviated in parentheses (Ret.) at the end of the retired individual's name if the service is abbreviated. If the service is spelled out, Retired should also be spelled out.

Examples:

Master Gunnery Sergeant John P. Jones, USMC (Ret.)

Master Gunnery Sergeant John P. Jones, U.S. Marine Corps, Retired

6. Numerals. Chapter 12 of reference (i) will be used as a basic reference. Please note that military units are expressed in numbers at all times unless they begin a sentence (12.10 of reference (i)).

Example:

2d Marine Aircraft Wing

Note: Second Marine Aircraft Wing

7. Military Organizations. U.S. Marine Corps units will be designated by the use of letters for companies and batteries; Arabic numerals for divisions, regiments, battalions, platoons, and squads, and Roman numerals for forces.

Examples:

Marine Forces Pacific/Command (MARFORPAC/MARFORCOM)

III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF)

1st Marine Division (1st MarDiv)

4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (4th MEB)

2d Marine Logistics Group (2d MLG)

6th Marines (6th Mar)

22d Marine Expeditionary Unit (22d MEU) Company A

1st Platoon, 2d Squad

1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW)

Marine Aircraft Group 33 (MAG-33)

Marine Fighter Squadron 212 (VMF-212)

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 163 (VMM-163)

Note: The use of 2d, 3d, 22d vice 2nd, 3rd, 22nd.

8. Military Grades. Full military grades will be used in correspondence. (Ex: General, Sergeant). The term "rank" will not be used in the text when "grade" is intended. Rank is intended as a relative position or degree of value in a graded group.

9. Military Decorations. It is inappropriate to refer to an individual as having "won" a decoration or award, implying that

there was a contest. Alternative words or phrases are "received," "was awarded," "a recipient of," etc.

10. Sentences, Unwanted Words, and Paragraphs

a. Sentences. The following are examples of common writing difficulties, with suggestions for overcoming or avoiding them:

(1) Short sentences are preferable to long ones, but either can become monotonous with continuous use. Mixing them will produce rhythmic, balanced paragraphs that can more easily be read aloud.

(2) Transitional words, phrases, and clauses are necessary to provide coherence and smooth, flowing copy. The writer should be wary of beginning sentences with words such as "however," "moreover," and "meanwhile." Use these connectors within the sentence immediately following the word(s) to which they refer, or find other less repetitive transitions.

(3) Use the active over the passive voice; the positive over the negative statement.

(4) Except for where emphasis is necessary, the repetition of words and phrases should be avoided through the use of synonyms.

(5) Keep verbs in one voice within a sentence and avoid splitting verb forms, particularly infinitives.

(6) The relative pronoun should be placed as near as possible to the noun for which it stands. Sentences should never begin with or only contain a relative pronoun when the noun for which it stands can be used.

b. Unwanted Words. The following should be avoided:

(1) Redundant expressions.

Examples:

thorough and complete

considered opinion

true facts

my own personal

loyal devotion

(2) Little used words.

Examples:

Denouement (the solution of a complex situation)

Mnemonic (assisting the memory)

SECTION 2: STANDARD LETTER

1. Special Instructions. Prepare standard letters in the format provided in chapter 2 of reference (a), and as supplemented by the following instructions:

a. Letterhead. Ink will be blue, Pantone Matching System (PMS) 288 or equivalent for letterhead on documents to be signed by the senior officials identified in Section 3 of this Supplement. Black ink is an acceptable substitute for other signatories or organizations.

b. Correspondence leaving HQMC will be sent "From: Commandant of the Marine Corps."

c. Address correspondence to the individual in command or in charge (by functional title).

d. Use complete address, to include nine-digit ZIP code.

e. When correspondence is sent via Marine Corps organizations/activities/ units, spell out the complete title, organization, and geographical location or mailing address of the first via addressee. Abbreviations may be used to identify the organization/activity/unit of subsequent via addressees.

f. Classified Standard Letter

(1) Prepare classified standard letters in the format provided in reference (j).

(2) Over-stamp the classification in red ink. Identify the classification of the subject line and reference (succeeding the line of text) by "(U)," "(C)," "(S)," or "(TS)"; and affix downgrading instructions as appropriate.

Example:

Subj: PORTION MARKING AND OVERALL CLASSIFICATION (U)

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST S5513.3C, "Surface Warfare SCG (U)"
(b) Technical Report No. 1234, "Littoral Operations (C)"

(3) Identify the classification of the paragraph and subparagraphs (preceding the paragraph) by "(U)," "(C)," "(S)," or "(TS)".

Example:

(U) Apply portion markings to every part of a classified document (e.g., title, section, part, paragraph or subparagraph). The objective of portion marking is to eliminate doubt as to which portions of a classified document contain or reveal classified information. Titles or subjects of classified documents included in the reference line, enclosure line, or body of a letter shall be marked with the highest classification per reference (j).

SECTION 3: AUTHORITY TO SIGN CORRESPONDENCE,
ALMARS, MARADMINs, AND MESSAGES

1. General. All official correspondence, to include messages originating within HQMC, will be issued in the name of the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). In the case of a fleet/field organization it will be issued from the commanding general/officer or equivalent.

2. Authority to Sign Correspondence. Personnel assigned to or acting in the following HQMC billets are authorized to sign correspondence from the CMC (unless restricted elsewhere in this section).

a. By Title

Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (ACMC)

Director, Marine Corps Staff (DMCS)

Deputy Commandant for Aviation (DC AVN)

Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics (DC I&L)

Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs
(DC M&RA)

Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations
(DC PP&O)

Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources (DC P&R)

Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration
(DC CD&I)

Director, Command, Control, Communications, and Computers
Department (Dir C4)

Counsel for the Commandant (CL)

Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC)

Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine
Corps (OLA)

President, Permanent Marine Corps Uniform Board (PMCUB)

Director, Intelligence Department (Dir I)

Director, Judge Advocate Division (Dir JA)

Director, Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication
(Dir OUSMCC)

b. By direction*

Director, Administration and Resource Management Division
(Dir AR)

The Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps

Director, Health Services (Dir HS)

Military Secretary to the Commandant (Mil Sec)

Military Assistant to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine
Corps (Mil Asst)

Secretary of the General Staff (SGS)

Director, Expeditionary Energy Office (Dir E20)

Director, Special Projects Directorate (Dir Spl Proj)

Director, Safety Division (Dir SD)

Note: This authority **does not include** correspondence that changes existing policy, introduces new policy, or disapproves the recommendation of a general officer.

(1) Limitations. This authority is limited to matters within the area of responsibility of the billet(s) concerned, and which good judgment indicates need not be submitted to DMCS for signature.

(2) Review. The Dir AR is the office of record for redelegations of signature authority. By 15 September annually, the Dir AR will coordinate the review of redelegation authorities throughout HQMC to ensure there is a continuing need in each case. When completed, all redelegations will either be recertified or reissued in writing, with a copy provided to the Dir AR, or the authority will be revoked.

3. Redelegation of "By Title" Signature Authority. Heads of HQMC staff agencies may redelegate "by title" signature authority to general officers/senior executive service (SES) members, but

not below the division directors' level. Re-delegations must be in writing, with a copy provided to the Dir AR.

4. Redelegation of "By Direction" Signature Authority.

Personnel who are authorized to sign official correspondence "by title" or "by direction" at HQMC may redelegate authority to officers and civilians within their organizations. Redelegation will include authority to release messages, unless specifically excluded, and will be:

- a. In writing, preferably in an internal staff agency directive, listing all authorizations by table of organization billet titles.
- b. Subject to the limitations of this section.
- c. Reviewed for need and currency annually by 15 September, and recertified or reissued in writing, with a copy provided to the Dir AR.

5. Limitations

a. "By direction" authority will be used only to sign correspondence and messages covering subjects that fall within the signer's area of responsibility, and where good judgment indicates need not be forwarded to higher authority for signature. Table 13-1 below lists types of communications (correspondence/messages/directives) that must be signed by personnel in certain billets.

Table 13-1 - Signature Limitations.

Types of Communication	Signature
To higher authority regarding mission or general efficiency of the Marine Corps	CMC
Required by law or regulation to be signed by CMC	CMC
Letters of condolence to the next of kin in case of the death of a Marine or sailor serving with the Marine Corps	CMC
ALMARS	CMC

Table 13-1 (cont.) - Signature Limitations.

Types of Communication	Signature
General public correspondence addressed to The President of the United States but forwarded to this Headquarters for direct reply	CMC, ACMC, DMCS, or DCs
Marine Corps directives (i.e., Marine Corps Orders (MCO) and Marine Corps Bulletins (MCBul)) **Note: MARADMINS are no longer an authorized publication source for these directive types. All MCOs and MCBuls must be coordinated via CMC (ARDB).	As listed in chapter 1, paragraph 7 of MCO 5215.1K
Letters to Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), Joint Chiefs of Staff, Chief of Naval Operations, or comparable officials in other governmental departments requiring action in immediate office of the addressee	*Normally CMC, ACMC, or DMCS unless excepted by custom or directive from higher authority
Letters to the field that specify major shifts in Marine Corps policy	**Normally CMC, ACMC, or DMCS or As listed in chapter 1, paragraph 7 of MCO 5215.1K

*Note: If in doubt, refer the correspondence to the Secretary of the General Staff for a determination.

**Note: Changes to Marine Corps policy may only be signed by the principal official (CMC), the assistant principal (ACMC), or the executive officer (Director, Marine Corps Staff (DMCS)). HQMC principal subordinates as listed in chapter 1, paragraph 7 of reference (f) are authorized to sign HQMC directives for matters solely within their departmental area of responsibility and which good judgement indicates need not be forwarded to higher authority. Signature authority may not be redelegated.

b. Civilian personnel other than heads of staff agencies will not sign correspondence that might be construed as a reflection on the performance of duty of a commanding officer.

c. Personnel not authorized in writing may not sign "for" another individual authorized to sign "By direction."

6. Additional "By direction" Authority. Heads of staff agencies having a need to sign correspondence "By direction" not provided for within the foregoing general authorizations will submit to the DMCS a list of specific requirements and justification for additional authority.

7. Use of the Facsimile Signature of the Commandant of the Marine Corps

a. Personnel filling certain billets at HQMC are authorized by billet title to use a facsimile rubber stamp that reproduces the signature of the CMC. When the reproduced signature is initialed by the person so authorized, it becomes the official signature of the CMC (or the individual acting in that capacity). Facsimile signature authorizations are issued by letter to the Dir AR under the signature of the CMC. These letters identify who, by billet title, may use the facsimile signatures and for what purpose. The Dir AR retains the original letters and sends certified copies to the incumbents of each billet listed. To add to or retitl billets listed, submit a request to the Dir AR. The Dir AR will forward the request to the DMCS for approval and the original letter will be managed in accordance with the appropriate disposition outlined in reference (b).

b. The Dir AR must keep a current record of facsimile signature authorizations. Notify the Dir AR in writing should an authorization no longer be needed, or an incumbent changes. For a new incumbent, include the billet title, name, grade, and sample initial(s) to be used in authenticating the facsimile signature.

c. Before using a facsimile stamp, personnel authorized shall check with their administrative office to determine whether to use the CMC stamp.

d. Secure facsimile signature stamps in a locked container except when in use by the person authorized. Return worn-out stamps to the Dir AR for replacement.

e. Facsimile signature machines are located with the DMCS and DC, M&RA. Internal procedures must be in place to ensure the electronic chip to make the machine operational is secured when not in use.

8. Policy for the Approval and Release of ALMAR and MARADMIN Messages

a. ALMAR. An ALMAR is a personal communication from the CMC to all Marines. Only the CMC may authorize release of an ALMAR.

(1) All proposed ALMARS will be submitted to DMCS for review prior to forwarding to the CMC.

(2) Prior to submitting a proposed ALMAR to DMCS, the originator will ensure proper staffing to all HQMC staff agencies with equity in its content. The Director, Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication, will review all ALMARS for Strategic Communication impact. A coordination page reflecting of all staffing will be included in the final package submitted to DMCS. Inasmuch as the CMC will personally sign the ALMAR, review and concurrence by the staff agency principal(s) is required.

(3) Only designated personnel on the DMCS staff will forward the CMC approved ALMAR to the Area Control Center, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, for transmission via the Automated Message Handling System (AMHS).

b. MARADMIN. A MARADMIN is used only by HQMC staff agencies and specific authorized commands to disseminate information applicable to and suitable for use by all Marines via the AMHS routine (not just administrative). Addressees for MARADMIN messages are the same as an ALMAR.

(1) MARADMINS cannot be used as the primary source to implement, alter, or change Marine Corps policy.

(a) MARADMINS may be used as the secondary source to announce publications and changes to policy as posted on Marine Corps Publication Electronic Library (MCPEL).

(b) MARADMINS may no longer contain the terms "Marine Corps Bulletin" or "MCBul" in the subject.

(c) All Marine Corps directives (i.e., Marine Corps Order (MCO) and Marine Corps Bulletin (MCBul) must be coordinated via CMC (ARDB).

(2) Any MARADMIN that establishes or alters major programs must be coordinated with DMCS prior to release. The DMCS will determine if a pre-brief for the CMC is warranted prior to message release.

(3) Authority. Only those personnel serving in the billets listed below, or the person acting in such capacity are authorized to release MARADMIN messages.

Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps (ACMC)

Director, Marine Corps Staff (DMCS)

HQMC general officers or senior executives serving as:

Deputy Commandant (DC)

Assistant Deputy Commandant
Division Director

Legislative Assistant to the Commandant

Inspector General of the Marine Corps (IGMC)

Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development
Command (CG MCCDC)

Commanding General, Marine Corps Recruiting Command
(CG MCRC)

Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command (COMDR MCSC)

(3) Limitations. The authority to release MARADMIN messages is limited to those matters within the releaser's respective area of responsibility, and in which good judgment indicates need not be elevated to higher authority.

(4) Delegation. Except for CG MCCDC, this authority may not be delegated. CG MCCDC may delegate MARADMIN release authority, in writing, to general officers or senior executives serving in specific billets. This authority may not be further delegated. If delegated, a copy of the delegation letter must be provided to DMCS and Dir AR. Release authority may be delegated to the following:

Commanding General, Training and Education Command
(CG, TECOM)

Commanding General, Marine Corps Warfighting Lab
(CG, MCWL)

President, Marine Corps University

(5) MARADMINs will be released in the name of the CMC (i.e., the "FROM" line will read "CMC WASHINGTON DC").

(6) The Director, Health Services, Chaplain of the Marine Corps, Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks Washington, and HQMC staff agencies with no release authority will submit proposed MARADMINs to DMCS for appropriate action and release.

(7) Prior to submitting a proposed MARADMIN to an appropriate release authority, the originator will ensure proper staffing per paragraph 8.a(2) above. The originator and releaser must carefully weigh the content and intent of the MARADMIN from a communication strategy perspective and, when appropriate, ensure it is staffed to the Director, Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication, prior to release.

(8) The last paragraph of all MARADMINs will identify the name and billet title of the individual who authorized its release.

Examples:

"RELEASE AUTHORIZED BY LTGEN I. M. MARINE, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR (enter appropriate department)."

"RELEASE AUTHORIZED BY (SES) MR. I. M. EXECUTIVE, ASSISTANT DEPUTY COMMANDANT, (enter appropriate department)."

"RELEASE AUTHORIZED BY COL I. M. MARINE, DIRECTOR, (enter appropriate division) (ACTING)."

"RELEASE AUTHORIZED BY MAJGEN I. M. MARINE, COMMANDING GENERAL, (enter appropriate command)."

SECTION 4: CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS
WITH MARINE CORPS FIELD COMMANDS

1. General

a. HQMC must be responsive to inquiries from the field. When a commander communicates with HQMC, the commander should have confidence that their inquiry has been received in a timely manner and has received the appropriate level of attention.

b. All incoming communications should be answered completely and expeditiously. Unfortunately, not all issues lend themselves to easy answers. In-depth study and staffing may cause delays in HQMC responses. When necessary, HQMC will provide an interim reply acknowledging receipt of the communication, action taken to date, and an estimated date of final reply within one week. Periodic updates will be provided as required.

c. Correspondence to Marine Corps field commands will be sent from HQMC via the chain of command, unless:

(1) Direct correspondence is authorized. (Table 13-2.)

(2) It is in response to routine administrative correspondence on a subject about which major commands have authorized their subordinate elements to correspond directly with HQMC.

2. Applicability. Authority for direct correspondence does not apply if it:

a. Requires action, comment, or review by seniors in the chain of command.

b. Affects the planning capability of higher echelons in the chain of command.

c. Deals with policy.

d. Pertains to disciplinary or investigative matters, unless time is an overriding factor.

e. Pertains to casualties, unless authorized by reference (k).

3. Doubtful Cases. When in doubt, send correspondence / communications via the chain of command. In the case of

messages, officials through whom a letter would normally be forwarded shall be made information addressees.

4. Telephonic Response. In normal operations, the criteria for correspondence also apply to telephone calls. Individuals communicating by telephone will ensure that other interested parties are notified of the substance of the conversation, if such notification would have been otherwise required. Under emergency military operations, provide situational awareness to interested parties.

Table 13-2 - Areas in Which Direct Correspondence is Authorized.

#	Description
1.	Routine correspondence pertaining to reenlistments and career advisory matters.
2.	Replies to requests for personnel information, (e.g., dates of prior service, prior overseas duty, and grade.)
3.	Replies to requests for documents such as DD 214, "Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty," certificates in lieu of discharge; and statements of service.
4.	Personal effects claims.
5.	Letters regarding elections under the Survivor Benefit Plan or the Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan.
6.	Welfare reports to geographically separated subordinate commands with copies to major commands.
7.	Routine communications on items of supply shipped directly to receiving organizations instead of via logistics support bases or parent units.
8.	Correspondence regarding repair criteria, planned replacement, assignment of serial numbers, record cards, delivery dates, and disposition of commercial motor vehicles.
9.	Correspondence concerning transportation and traffic matters such as checkages covering shipment of excess household goods, routings, rate quotations, travel information, space available transportation, etc.

Table 13-2 (cont.)- Areas in Which Direct Correspondence is Authorized.

#	Description
10.	News releases to Marine Corps posts and stations.
11.	Notifications of inspections by the IGMC, with copies provided to Marine Force Commanders.
12.	Matters of public information when timeliness is critical.
13.	<u>Congressional Correspondence</u> . The authority for direct correspondence in this case is not intended to indicate that congressional correspondence is routine, but to expedite investigation and submission of information. The intermediate command is provided a copy.
14.	Data processing technical and operational information that does not affect policy matters or influence the operational capability of the major command concerned.
15.	Letters replying to publications and printing requests, requests for copies of the Marine Corps seal and emblem, and letters dealing with printing matters and the operation of printing plant equipment.
16.	Letters concerning allotment accounting procedures and allotment status reports.
17.	Correspondence addressed to The President of the United States and referred to HQMC for direct reply to the originator.
17.a.	Interim and/or final reply sent directly to originator if the originator is a Marine with no copies required for the command.
17.b.	When the correspondence requires information from the immediate command of either the originator of the command within the subject of the correspondence prior to direct reply, direct liaison is authorized to the immediate command of the Marine. The intermediate command is furnished a copy.

Table 13-2 (cont.)- Areas in Which Direct Correspondence
is Authorized.

#	Description
17.c.	The direct correspondence authorized above is intended to both protect the private nature of the correspondence and to expedite the investigation if one is required.
18.	Correspondence between the Director of NAF Business and Support Services (MR) Division, Director of Marine and Family Programs (MF) Division, and personnel in charge of installation Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) programs.
19.	Correspondence requesting additional information required to permit proper evaluation of unsatisfactory equipment reports.
NOTE:	All records created as a result of this Table shall be managed according to National Archives and Records Administration approved dispositions per references (b) and (e) to ensure proper maintenance, use, accessibility and preservation, regardless of format or medium.

SECTION 5: CONTROLLED CORRESPONDENCE

1. General

a. Controlled correspondence includes the following:

- (1) Congressional correspondence.
- (2) SECNAV Administrative Office coordinated controlled correspondence.
- (3) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.
- (4) White House inquiries and requests.

b. Controlled correspondence is received at HQMC by the following means:

- (1) Mail/telephonic inquiries addressed to a HQMC official or HQMC staff agency.
- (2) Mail addressed to the CMC, ACMC, DMCS, or Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC) by title or name.
- (3) From the Secretary of the Navy Administrative Office (SECNAVADMIN).
- (4) From the SECNAV Office of Legislative Affairs.
- (5) From the Legislative Assistant to the Commandant.
- (6) From the White House Liaison Office.

2. Procedures

a. Control

(1) The SECNAVADMIN has responsibility for maintaining an automated record of receipt, routing, and action taken on controlled correspondence acted on within the DON components/agencies.

(2) The office of the DMCS has responsibility of maintaining a record of receipt, routing, and action taken on controlled correspondence received by or referred to HQMC.

b. Because the DMCS forwards all mail addressed by name to the addressee or designated representative unopened, controlled

correspondence that is addressed to a HQMC official by name (except the CMC, ACMC, or SMMC) should be forwarded to the DMCS for processing. Controlled correspondence or telephonic requests addressed directly to a staff agency should also be forwarded to the respective DC for processing.

c. Controlled correspondence addressed by name to the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS is controlled by the SGS. Staff agencies will respond according to instructions provided on individual CMC, ACMC, and DMCS taskings. If a letter that was intended to be read by the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS is received directly by a staff agency, such correspondence should be forwarded to the office of DMCS for instructions/disposition.

3. Routing and Rerouting

a. The DMCS routes controlled correspondence to staff agencies via the Marine Corps Action Tracking System (MCATS) and/or Department of Navy Tasking, Records and Consolidated Knowledge Repository (DON TRACKER). Action or acknowledgement is assigned to a particular staff agency based upon the major theme or subject matter.

Note: DON TRACKER will replace MCATS in its entirety.

b. Before a change of action or primary assignment will be authorized via MCATS and/or DON TRACKER, another staff agency must agree to accept the change. Changes must be accomplished by the original staff agency within two working days of receipt. At that time, another staff agency may be tasked to provide information on which to base a reply, but they are not required to accept action reassignment.

4. Deadlines. Almost all controlled correspondence requiring an action or coordination will have a deadline. CMC policy is that the assigned deadline will be met or appropriate action will be taken to get it extended. If an item of controlled correspondence has a due date, that date will be reflected in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER. If that date cannot be met, an interim response must be provided or due date extension from the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) or SECNAV action office, as applicable, must be granted.

5. Interim Replies. On controlled correspondence for which an interim response is authorized, the interim reply must address the circumstances that preclude meeting the due date and project a reasonable date of expected completion.

6. Closures. After completing action on an item of controlled correspondence, take the following action to close the case:

a. If the action required is to forward a reply to the SecDef or SECNAV action office, attach the proposed reply to the task in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER. DMCS will forward to SECNAVADMIN.

b. If the action required is to reply to the originator of the controlled correspondence, attach a copy of the reply to the task in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER. DMCS will forward to SECNAVADMIN.

c. Telephonic closures are usually acceptable for controlled correspondence that authorized a direct reply to the originator (does not apply to tasks originated by the SGS). If a response is provided by telephone, in addition to completion in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER, insert an annotation in the comments section reflecting the date and name of the person to whom the response was made.

SECTION 6: WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE

1. General. The White House Liaison Office (WHLO) is located in the office of the SECNAV to coordinate and prepare responses to correspondence addressed to the President of the United States that have been referred to the DoD or DON for reply. The primary function of the WHLO is to minimize administrative delays in order to meet the White House-imposed 72-hour deadline.

2. Coordination. In most cases, WHLO will request pertinent information by telephone for expediency. The Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (OLAC) furnishes WHLO a subject matter listing and staff agency phone numbers so that the WHLO can coordinate directly with staff agencies.

3. Procedures. White House inquiries have priority over all other controlled correspondence. Written inquiries and responses will be hand-delivered to ensure the addressee is aware of the precedence of the correspondence.

a. Telephone Inquiries and Responses. When a member of the WHLO phones and authorizes a telephone reply, staff agencies will prepare a memorandum for the record which discusses the circumstances of the inquiry and the response provided. The original memorandum will be retained on file by the staff agency, and a copy provided to the OLAC.

b. Written Inquiries and Telephone Responses. Telephone responses may be authorized for some written inquiries for the WHLO. When a telephone response is made, staff agencies will prepare a memorandum for the record as discussed above, providing a copy to OLAC attached to a copy of the WHLO route sheet.

c. Written Responses. Written responses to White House correspondence will be composed, assembled, and processed in the same manner as responses to correspondence from the SecDef or the SECNAV.

d. All records created or collected regarding White House correspondence must be managed in accordance with reference (b), SSIC 3000, paragraph 3.

SECTION 7: CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE

1. General. Personnel responsible for preparing responses to congressional inquiries must be familiar with reference (a).

NOTE: All records collected and created regarding congressional correspondence must be managed in accordance with the appropriate dispositions outlined in reference (b).

2. Procedures. Congressional inquiries are referred to HQMC in a variety of ways (e.g., mail, e-mail, and telephone). Because most inquiries are by written correspondence, this section focuses on written responses. Regardless of how they are submitted, congressional inquiries shall receive responsive and timely replies. Congressional inquiries will not be referred to a field command to reply directly to the Member of Congress.

3. Deadlines

a. Reference (a) directs a five working-day suspense from receipt to reply. Congressional inquiries received under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), however, are authorized a 10 working-day response deadline unless an extension is approved.

b. Deadlines for the HQMC-controlled congressional correspondence are adjusted by interim responses only.

c. Deadlines for congressional correspondence referred to the CMC from the SECNAV are controlled by the Chief of Legislative Affairs, Navy Department, Washington, DC 20350-1000.

4. Interim Replies

a. Interim replies are expected when a response deadline cannot be met. They shall give the status of the inquiry, the reason a final reply cannot be made, and the date when the Member of Congress can expect a final reply.

b. Send the interim reply via MCATS and/or DON TRACKER with the Automated HQMC Route Sheet to OLAC. OLAC will then add 10 working days to the response deadline, and will mail the interim reply to the Member of Congress.

c. Prepare copies of interim responses per reference (a).

5. Composition and Copies

a. Refer to reference (a) for guidance on composing and addressing congressional responses.

b. Review inquiries to determine where the Member of Congress wants the response to be sent (field office or Washington, DC, office). See reference (a) for proper format.

c. In addition to the copies specified in reference (a), provide a courtesy copy of the final reply to the field command(s) that contributed information to the final response.

6. Signing Replies to Congressional Correspondence

a. The CMC, ACMC, or DMCS will normally sign replies to congressional correspondence that has the personal signature of Members of Congress, and are addressed to the CMC by name. This does not include those inquiries received from Members of Congress in the form of brief referral slips or those of an extremely routine nature. Any congressional letter addressed to CMC by name which has not been seen by CMC should be delivered to the SGS immediately upon receipt by a staff agency.

b. Authority to sign replies to congressional correspondence may not be redelegated below the staff agency head level. Authority to sign replies to congressional correspondence subject to the limitations and provisions of this section has been redelegated to the individuals assigned to the following billets (or person acting in that capacity):

(1) OLAC may sign replies to routine congressional correspondence pertaining to HQMC matters, and may readdress congressional mail erroneously addressed to HQMC.

(2) Personnel filling the following billets within the Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department may sign replies to routine congressional correspondence:

(a) Director, Manpower Management Division (MM).

(b) Director, Reserve Affairs Division (RA).

(c) Director, Manpower Plans and Policy Division (MP).

(d) Director, Marine and Family Programs Division (MF).

(e) Director, NAF Business and Support Services
Division (MR).

(f) Director, Manpower Information Systems Division
(MI).

(g) The Head, Manpower Management Division, Manpower Management Records and Performance Branch (MMRP) is authorized to sign replies to the following types of requests:

1. Last-known addresses.
2. Soldiers' and sailors' certificates.
3. Authentication of signature certificates.
4. Certificates in lieu of lost or destroyed discharge certificates.
5. Certified copies of reports of separation.
6. Corrections to reports of separation.
7. Statements of service.
8. Any letter that transmits a document signed by the Head, Records Correspondence Section, or Head, Manpower Management Records and Performance Branch, Manpower Management Division, Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department.
9. Notifications of referral of correspondence to the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) on requests for medical records.

(h) Dir JA may sign replies to routine congressional correspondence.

c. Replies to congressional correspondence forwarded to the SGS for signature by the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS should be assembled per reference (a).

SECTION 8: MISCELLANEOUS CORRESPONDENCE

1. General. Miscellaneous correspondence refers to inquiries received from or sent to Marines, the general public, or any other correspondence not addressed in this supplement. The term "general public" refers to individuals other than active duty Marines, reservists on active duty, or members of the Marine Corps Reserve establishment. General public inquiries may be from family members of Marines, retired or discharged Marines, or from any number of civilian sources. Such inquiries are normally uncontrolled, but may be sent from other military departments or governmental agencies for action. Inquiries from the general public addressed to HQMC will be answered, either wholly or in part, at HQMC, or, after appropriate acknowledgements, may be referred to a field command with a request for the correspondent to be provided additional information or a complete reply. Replies/acknowledgements will be brief and courteous.

a. All records collected and created regarding correspondence outlined in this section must be managed in accordance with their appropriate dispositions defined in reference (b).

b. If obscene, threatening, or otherwise inappropriate correspondence is received electronically, contact the DMCS.

2. Anonymous Correspondence. Correspondence that does not contain an identifiable name or signature is considered anonymous and is generally uncontrolled, but may be from other military departments or governmental agencies. Anonymous correspondence can occasionally be identified with a command even though it does not bear a name or signature, and, depending on its contents, can be referred to the identified command for information and action. If identification cannot be determined, the correspondence will be destroyed.

3. Obscene or Threatening Correspondence. Forward all obscene or threatening correspondence (with original envelope and packaging) to the Dir AR (ARS). Dir AR (ARS) will coordinate with Dir JA to determine further action, to include referring the matter to appropriate law enforcement agency.

4. Incoherent Correspondence. Correspondence that contains no identifiable purpose or request shall either be destroyed or returned to the sender with an appropriate response.

5. Unsolicited Inquiries from Active Duty Marines. General inquiries from active duty Marines will be processed using the format in reference (a), Chapter 7.
6. Correspondence from the General Public. Inquiries from the general public will be processed as soon as possible. Screen the subject matter to ensure that information provided eliminates the need for further correspondence.
7. Acknowledge Correspondence. Give prompt attention to correspondence requiring action or reply. Legitimate inquiries addressed to this headquarters which are not answered within a reasonable time reflect negatively on the Marine Corps.
8. Identification of Marines in Business Letters. In business letters that pertain to a Marine, include the complete identification in the first paragraph, (i.e., grade, full name, and branch of service). Once complete identification is made, further references shall be made by grade and last name. If the letter is to a relative of a Marine and the incoming correspondence used first name, refer to the Marine by first name.
9. Correspondence to Marines on Active Duty. In preparing letters to Marines on active duty, identify the organization to which the Marine belongs as a "via" addressee. Depending on the nature of the communication, you may omit the remaining organizations in the chain of command and provide an information copy to meet the needs of intermediate channels. For letters to Marines assigned to HQMC, see reference (1), for appropriate chain of command. Correspondence through higher echelon/official channels should appear as (see Figure 13-1):


	DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY NAME OF ACTIVITY ADDRESS CITY STATE ZIP+4	SSIC Code/Ser Date
From: Commandant of the Marine Corps		
To: Grade First M. Last Name EDIPI/MOS USMC		
Via: (1) Functional title of senior commander whose endorsement is required		
(2) Functional title of the subordinate commander		
(3) Functional title of the commander of the activity/unit to which the Marine is assigned.		

Figure 13-1.--Correspondence through Higher Echelon/Official Channels.

NOTE: Use guard mail versus U.S. mail between HQMC; H&S Bn, HQMC; MarBks, Washington; MCCDC; TECOM; MCB Quantico; MCSC; NAF Andrews.

10. Correspondence to Reserve Marines not on Active Duty. Before preparing correspondence to a reservist, verify the Marine's grade, EDIPI, MOS, and current organization. Prepare and forward letters through official channels.

11. Correspondence to Retired Marines. Before preparing correspondence to a retired Marine, verify the individual's grade and home address with records maintained by M&RA (MMRP). Prepare as follows (see Figure 13-2):

The figure shows a form template for correspondence to retired Marines. It features the Department of Defense seal on the left. The main header is "DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY" with sub-headers for "NAME OF ACTIVITY", "ADDRESS", and "CITY STATE ZIP+4". To the right, there are fields for "SSIC", "Code/Ser", and "Date". Below these are fields for "Grade First M. Last Name EDIPI/MOS USMC", "Home address", and "City, State, and Zip Code". At the bottom, there is a salutation line: "Dear Mr. or Mrs. _____".

Figure 13-2.--Correspondence to Retired Marines.

SECTION 9: THE HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS ROUTING SHEET

1. Use of the Headquarters Marine Corps Routing Sheet

a. The HQMC Routing Sheet is used only for routing incoming and outgoing correspondence within HQMC. The HQMC Routing Sheet is printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch prescribed color bond paper as follows:

- (1) Unclassified. Canary-colored bond paper.
- (2) Confidential. Light blue-colored bond paper.
- (3) Secret. Pink-colored bond paper.

(4) Top Secret. Red-hatched border and red printing on white bond paper.

b. Staff agencies are encouraged to use the electronic HQMC Route Sheet for enhanced productivity and material savings. This "electronic copy" of the HQMC Routing Sheet, provided by the DMCS, is a PDF fillable form, when used, will allow a preparer to fill out the form on the computer and print out a hard copy on the appropriate color paper.

c. All correspondence forwarded to the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS will be submitted via the SGS under the Route Sheet with no letter codes in block 5 (also do not use highlighters to highlight SGS, ACMC, or CMC).

d. The routing sheet will be:

(1) Used to route all correspondence and other staff products throughout HQMC.

(2) Prepared and placed on outgoing correspondence by the originating office.

(3) Securely fastened, but not stapled, to incoming correspondence when forwarding it to the SGS.

(4) Filed with correspondence to which it pertains.

(5) Retained with correspondence of permanent value that is being retired ONLY if it contains pertinent record information.

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2. Management of Marine Corps Routing Sheets. Manage in accordance with their appropriate dispositions as outlined in reference (b).

SECTION 10: DOCUMENT FORMATS AT HQMC

1. Standardization of Document Formats

a. Staff agencies must respond promptly with accurate and authoritative information in preparing staff response papers. These papers, though often prepared quickly, need to contain sufficient detail to satisfy important requirements. This paragraph discusses several formats to provide options for the level of staff response required.

b. The following formats are prescribed for use in this headquarters. Figures 13-3 through 13-9 are samples. Formats for documents external to HQMC may vary by command.

(1) Position/Decision Paper. The position/decision paper is prepared by an action officer to develop, recommend, and obtain an official position on a particular proposition. It includes a clear statement of why an official position/decision is required, essential background on the problem or subject, and a rationale for the recommended position. A position/decision paper usually requires rapid research to identify key sources of information pertaining to the topic. The author must make a sound analysis of the information and write the paper in a clear and accurate format. Figure 13-3 provides the doctrinal format for the position/decision paper. The heading contains the classification of the paper, the office code of the originator, the date, and the caption "POSITION/DECISION PAPER." The subject is indicated in simple terms. If references are used, they should be standard and self-explanatory. The problem statement identifies the problem for which the position is being developed. The author should also state why a position/decision is required. The background states what has taken place before. The positions of other agencies are addressed when appropriate; otherwise, "Not Applicable" is stated. The recommended position is stated in clear, concise terms. The rationale includes statements which support the position taken. The recommendation is the action you recommend to be taken, (e.g., "approve attached statement" or "study,") as well as a decision block for the decision to be recorded.

(2) Information Paper. An information paper is normally used to provide factual information in concise terms to prepare the recipient for discussions and/or meetings. Only essential facts concerning the subject should be included and developed in an orderly and logical manner. Information papers are self-explanatory and will not refer to enclosures except for additional tabs containing data, charts, etc. Information papers

are normally attached to other documents, hand-carried, or transmitted by informal note. They do not require an address or signature block. See Figure 13-7 for recommended information paper format. Place the appropriate originating office symbol/code and date in the upper right hand corner of the page, the date is the day of dispatch from the originating agency. The format may be altered to meet specific needs.

(3) CMC Green Letter. A CMC Green Letter is a personal communication between the CMC and all Marine General Officers and Senior Executives. It is of a personal and confidential matter and not usually intended for further dissemination.

(a) Signature Authority. CMC only.

(b) Originated By. Appropriate HQMC staff agency (sponsor) based on subject matter or specific tasking by CMC. Sponsor is responsible for proper staffing to all HQMC agencies and/or MARFORs with equity.

(c) Routing. From Action Officer (AO) to CMC via agency senior leadership (principal), DMCS (Actual, Admin & HQMC Editor), and ACMC.

(d) Distribution. DMCS distributes via e-mail to HQMC FLAGALL. Original maintained by DMCS; copy and all back-up returned to originator.

(e) Access. All current Green Letters are posted on the Senior Leader Services Portal (SLSP). Green Letters are kept only in personal files. Copies of all current and cancelled Green Letters are maintained by DMCS Support.

(f) Periodic Review. Periodic review will usually occur every two years; first shortly after new CMC, then in mid-term. DMCS initiates/tasks; response(s) require principal review.

(g) Reference. Green Letter 1-56 and last periodic review.

(4) CMC White Letters. A CMC White Letter is a personal communication between the CMC and all Marine commanders (GOs, COs and OICs) on subjects of current interest. It is not intended to supplant or duplicate current Marine Corps directives. If a topic requires long-term attention, it will become the subject of, or be incorporated into, an appropriate directive. CMC White Letters are intended for wide dissemination.

(a) Signature Authority. CMC only.

(b) Originated By. Appropriate HQMC staff agency (sponsor) based on subject matter or specific tasking by CMC. Sponsor is responsible for proper staffing to all HQMC agencies and/or MARFORs with equity.

(c) Routing. From AO to CMC via agency senior leadership (principal), DMCS (Actual, Admin and HQMC Editor), and ACMC.

(d) Distribution. DMCS distributes via e-mail to HQMC FLAGALL. Original maintained by DMCS; copy and all back-up returned to originator.

(e) Access. All current White Letters are posted in the SC tab on SLSP. White Letters are kept in unit files. Copies of all current and cancelled White Letters are maintained by DMCS Support.

(f) Periodic Review. A periodic review will usually occur every two years; first shortly after new CMC, then in mid-term. DMCS initiates/tasks; response(s) require principal review.

2. Management of Standardized Documentation. Marine Corps standardized documents identified in this section must be managed in accordance with their appropriate dispositions as outlined in reference (b).

CLASSIFICATION

(CODE)
(DATE)

POSITION/DECISION PAPER

Subj: FORMAT FOR A POSITION/DECISION PAPER

1. Purpose. Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF): briefly state who the paper is for and why. For example: 'Obtain CMC decision/establish Marine Corps position on subject.'
2. Major Points. Briefly summarize main points to be made.
 - a. State each point in one brief sentence.
 - b. Major points should stand alone and not require amplification by subordinate points.
3. Discussion
 - a. This format is used to examine issues/unresolved matters, courses of action for implementation/resolution; provide rationale to support a recommended position/decision the reader should take/make.
 - b. Tailor discussion to needs and knowledge of the reader.
 - c. Write in short, clear, direct conversational style so the reader understands the key points and arrives at a logical conclusion. Use the active voice and avoid jargon; brevity is expected; identify all acronyms.
 - d. General format is not as important as content. Tailor paper to fit the need. Subparagraphs such as "Participants," "Facts," "Opposing Views," "Other Staff/Service Positions," "Fallback Position," "Conclusion" or others may be used.
 - e. Limit to 1 page, unless issue is complex; do not exceed 2 pages. If greater detail needed, attach tabs with supporting documents and address in content.
 - f. Include preparer and approving official information at the bottom of page per below. Minimum Colonel/GS-15 level approving officials required when going to CMC/ACMC.
4. Recommendation. The recommendation(s) must flow logically from the major points and discussion. State in direct and positive language; provide a decision grid to route through the chain to the decision-making authority. Note: Recommendations affecting enlisted matters require SMMC review and comment; add SMMC in the grid immediately before DMCS. See the examples provided on the following pages; use only the one appropriate to your situation.

Prepared by: Grade and Name, Office Code, phone number

Approved by: Grade and Name, Office Code, phone number

CLASSIFICATION

Figure 13-3.--Format for Position/Decision Paper.

4. Recommendation. Approve the establishment of Marine Experimental Riverine Unit 1 in the Mojave Desert.

Dir Ops recommends: Approval _____

Disapproval _____

ADC PP&O recommends: Approval _____

Disapproval _____

DC PP&O recommends: Approval _____

Disapproval _____

DMCS recommends: Approval _____

Disapproval _____

ACMC recommends: Approval _____

Disapproval _____

CMC decision: Approved _____

Disapproved _____

CLASSIFICATION

Figure 13-4.--Single Recommendation Format and Decision Grid.

In this example, three courses of action (COA) examined and presented.

4. Approve 1 of 3 COAs for the establishment of Marine Experimental Riverine Unit 1 in the Mojave Desert.

Dir Ops recommends: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

ADC PP&O recommends: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

DC PP&O recommends: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

DMCS recommends: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

ACMC recommends: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

CMC decision: COA 1 _____
COA 2 _____
COA 3 _____

CLASSIFICATION

Figure 13-5.--Multiple Choice Recommendation and Decision Grid.

In this example, the Permanent Marine Corps Uniform Board presented multiple recommendations to change the Marine Corps Uniform Regulations.

4. Recommendations

a. Approve adoption and wear of the male bow tie with the Service "A" and "B" uniform effective 1 October 2015.

SMMC recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

DMCS recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

ACMC recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

CMC decision Approved _____
Disapproved _____

b. Adopt the "left over night" method for lacing all Marine Corps uniform footwear.

SMMC recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

DMCS recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

ACMC recommends: Approval _____
Disapproval _____

CMC decision: Approved _____
Disapproved _____

CLASSIFICATION

Figure 13-6.--Multiple Recommendations and Decision Grid.

CLASSIFICATION

(CODE)
(DATE)

INFORMATION PAPER

Subject: **FORMAT FOR AN INFORMATION PAPER (WRITTEN IN ALL CAPS)**

1. Purpose. Why is the information being provided?
2. Key Points
 - . Use these papers to convey information for the reader's use in preparing for a meeting or briefing.
 - . Present facts and use clear, concise wording.
 - Tick and bullet format is preferred. Use key words and phrases.
 - . General format is not as important as content.
 - Tailor the paper to fit the need.
 - . Convey information the audience (usually a principal) would need to know if being introduced to the subject issue or meeting for the first time.
 - . Address objectives the reader or the participants may have for the meeting.
 - . Alert the reader to potential trouble areas.
 - Identify hidden agendas.
 - . A length of one page is preferred. Two pages is the maximum.
 - . If the meeting is one-on-one with someone the reader does not know, attach a biographical sketch.

Prepared by: I. M. MOTIVATOR, Capt, USMC
Agency, Section, Phone Number

CLASSIFICATION

Figure 13-7.--Format for Information Paper.

COORDINATION PAGE

Subj: ENTER SUBJECT HERE

STAFF/EXTERNAL AGENCY (Note 1)	NAME (Note 2)	DATE & POSITION (Note 3)
DC PP&O	LtGen John	16 Sep 16; concur
DC M&RA	LtGen Smith	6 Sep 16; concur w/comment See attached memo
DC I&L	LtGen Williams	9 Sep 16; concur w/comment
MARFORCOM	SES Jim Davis CoS	4 Sep 16; concur
MARFORPAC	Col J. Cunningham CoS	9 Sep 16; concur w/comment
MCI-West	BGen Moore	6 Sep 16; concur
MCI-East	BGen Robinson	5 Sep 16; Non-concur
HqSvcBn HH	None obtained	Delivered 19 Jul 16; No response as of 2 Sep 16

Staffing Comments:

DC I&L: Concur contingent upon inclusion of MC Business Enterprise Office in review.

MARFORPAC: Concur; may need to revisit in near term as Pacific laydown continues to develop and evolve.

MCI-East: Paper fails to address the need for improvements on east coast ranges.

NOTES:

1. List all internal and external agencies/commands using the appropriate abbreviated agency/command title.
2. Enter grade and name of the individual who approved/provided response, or "None Obtained" when an agency/command does not respond.
3. Enter date provided comments and position taken.

Figure 13-8.--Format for Coordination Page.

SECTION 11: PREPARATION OF CORRESPONDENCE SUBMITTED
TO THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS (CMC),
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS (ACMC),
OR DIRECTOR, MARINE CORPS STAFF (DMCS)

1. Correspondence Control. All correspondence routed for signature by CMC, ACMC, or DMCS must be managed by the DMCS Support Office and tracked through MCATS and/or DON TRACKER.

a. DMCS Tasks. The DMCS office will create a task in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER which will generate a task number, and assign a due date to correspondence coming from the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS. The "Task Reconciliation Document" listing all unanswered tasks will be published weekly, Thursdays before noon, and distributed to all HQMC staff agencies with a due date of Monday the following week. Extensions may be granted to the original due date based on the subject and if the below are met:

(1) Calls are made to the DMCS office prior to the due date.

(2) An interim reply has been sent (if appropriate).

(3) The CMC, ACMC, or DMCS did not personally impose the deadline, or the task does not indicate that no extension will be granted.

b. Personal Mail

(1) If correspondence addressed personally to the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS is received directly by a staff agency, deliver it immediately to the DMCS Support Office, no matter how the envelope is addressed. For instance, if the envelope says CMC (MMA) and the letter says, Dear General (last name) or the content of the letter appears to be meant for the general himself, bring the letter to the DMCS Support Office for determination.

(2) If personal mail to the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS is tasked as a "staff reply," the introductory sentence should read: "The Commandant asked that I reply on his behalf."

2. Correspondence Submission/Routing Instructions

a. Once correspondence is in FINAL form (staffing complete and ready for signature) route the original package through the DMCS Support Office for processing to the DMCS, ACMC, or CMC. Ensuring an electronic copy (Word Document) is uploaded in MCATS

and/or DON TRACKER prior to routing package for signature for all associated files.

b. Use the HQMC Route Sheet to submit all correspondence. Ensure the route sheet has proper classification marking and no classified material has been inserted into an unclassified package as it "was routed through the chain" or during staffing. A classified cover sheet attached to an unclassified route sheet will not suffice; redo the route sheet if classified material has been added. Use only one route sheet per package, and use the following guidelines to prepare it:

(1) Be specific when describing the subject so the DMCS Support Office can track your correspondence. For example, "CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION" is too vague, but "CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION FOR CPL JAMES T. MARINE, USMC," is specific.

(2) Provide a summary of your package with MCATS I.D. and/or DON TRACKER ID in this section or on a separate memorandum. Ensure to give the purpose, background, discussion, coordination and recommendation.

(a) The route sheet and/or remarks must be reviewed/signed by the head (or acting head) of the staff agency if you desire a signature or decision by the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS.

(b) Packages coordinated with another staff agency will include the "principal's" approval on the route sheet or the coordination page being forwarded to the SGS. (When in doubt, coordinate.) Prepare staff agency comments on plain bond paper. Include the organization code in the upper right-hand corner, general reference title of the staff agency as a heading in capital letters and underlined (e.g., ADMINISTRATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DIVISION COMMENTS on ...), a subject line, and reference/enclosure lines as appropriate. Refer to Appendix A of this Supplement for general reference titles.

c. On decision packages, always provide a decision ladder (See Figure 13-4).

d. Attach all enclosures. Neatly organize all enclosures using tabs, and assemble the package as follows:

(1) Route sheet.

(2) Action Document (i.e., proposed reply with enclosure(s), if applicable or other document for action or

info). All packages require a coordination page-updated route sheet provided.

(3) Task/Incoming correspondence; CMC, ACMC, or DMCS memo, etc.

(4) Background information, brief sheet, references (if applicable).

(5) Interim reply (if applicable).

(6) Coordination Page (Figure 13-8)

Note: Use tab dividers, marked appropriately, to separate the different parts of the package. Start tabs at top right and work down.

e. If a package has been reworked, always return the paperwork that indicates the previous error(s). Proofread and use spell check on reworked correspondence.

f. If a package is truly urgent, attach an "Expedite" tag to it and briefly explain the urgency. Otherwise, it may be processed as routine. Do not "front-door" packages or attempt to circumvent the administrative chain; this only delays processing and leads to un-trackable packages.

g. Deliver all correspondence for the CMC, ACMC, or DMCS to the DMCS Support Office, Pentagon, Room 4B688; hand all deliveries to one of the staff noncommissioned officers or noncommissioned officers; never simply place on someone's desk.

(1) If correspondence is unclassified and routine, place it in the "incoming" box.

(2) If correspondence is urgent, hand-deliver it to a clerk in the DMCS Support Office.

(3) If correspondence is classified, never leave it in the incoming box. Hand-deliver the correspondence to a clerk in the DMCS Support Office.

h. Ensure outgoing correspondence is picked up from the DMCS Support Office at least twice each day (preferably early morning and mid-afternoon).

MCO 5216.20B
10 MAR 2016

i. If in doubt about how to process any correspondence, or if you have recommendations for improving "the system," call the DMCS Support Office at (703) 697-1043/1668.

SECTION 12: GUIDANCE FOR PREPARING CORRESPONDENCE
ON BEHALF OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS (CMC),
ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS (ACMC),
OR DIRECTOR, MARINE CORPS STAFF (DMCS)

1. Stationery Guidance

a. Usage. Use letterhead stationery on all correspondence prepared for CMC, ACMC, or DMCS signature. Use general officer personal star stationery sparingly. The nature of the incoming correspondence should determine the type of stationery/format used for a reply; (i.e., if CMC receives a letter on star (or personal, engraved) stationery), then reply using star stationery. Likewise, if CMC is responding to a "MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS," his reply should be a "MEMORANDUM FOR..." on letterhead.

b. Requisitioning

(a) CMC and ACMC personal star stationery will be obtained from HQMC ARD. Large and small stationery is available. One page of large stationery should be used vice two pages of small stationery.

(b) Requisition 1-star, 2-star, 3-star, and SES stationery from the Dir AR (ARD).

c. Color of Ink. Ink for letterhead stationery will be blue, Pantone Matching System (PMS) 288 or equivalent for correspondence to be signed by the senior officials identified in Section 3 of this Supplement. Refer to Chapter 2 and Appendix C of reference (a) for more guidance regarding letterhead stationery requirements.

2. Writing Style and Format

a. Length of Correspondence. Avoid sending correspondence exceeding one page in length. If necessary, include detailed information in an enclosure.

b. Words/Phrases to Avoid

(1) Complicated expressions and bureaucratic jargon; let facts stand on own merit without personal qualifier.

Examples:

"As you know,"

"I can assure you/please be assured/rest assured"

"I believe/think/feel".

(2) Beginning sentence with "However,".

(3) Acronyms - spell them out.

(4) Coined words not found in the dictionary.

c. Words/Phrases to Use

(1) Use simple, conversational, straight-forward language.

(2) Make an effort to personalize replies.

(3) If the incoming correspondence used the first name when referring to a Marine, refer to the Marine by first name in the response, once the Marine has been fully identified in the first paragraph.

d. Dating Correspondence. Never predate correspondence. The DMCS Support Office will stamp the date after the correspondence is signed, except for star stationery. After letters on star stationery have been signed, the originating staff agency will type (never stamp) the date, using the same type used to prepare the correspondence.

e. Salutation

(1) When using 4-star stationery, never use the first name or nickname for personal friends or for Generals of equal or lower grade (excludes former Commandants) whom the CMC knows. Refer to Appendix B of reference (a) for proper civilian models of address.

(2) Use a colon on business letters when not using the first name (Dear Mr. Jones:); use a comma if the first name is used (Dear Sam,). A comma is preferred on star stationery at all times.

f. Complimentary Close. Use the following closings on business letters and star stationery. Begin at the center of the page, but do not center.

Examples:

For:	Normal	Seniors
CMC, ACMC, DMCS	Sincerely	Very respectfully

g. Signature Blocks for Letterhead Stationery

(1) Ensure that signature blocks are typed on all CMC correspondence prior to submitting for approval and signature. The appropriate format for each style of correspondence is provided below:

(a) Standard Naval Letter. Type the signature line on the fourth line following the last line of text beginning from the center of the page, (See Figure 13-9). (No complimentary close.)

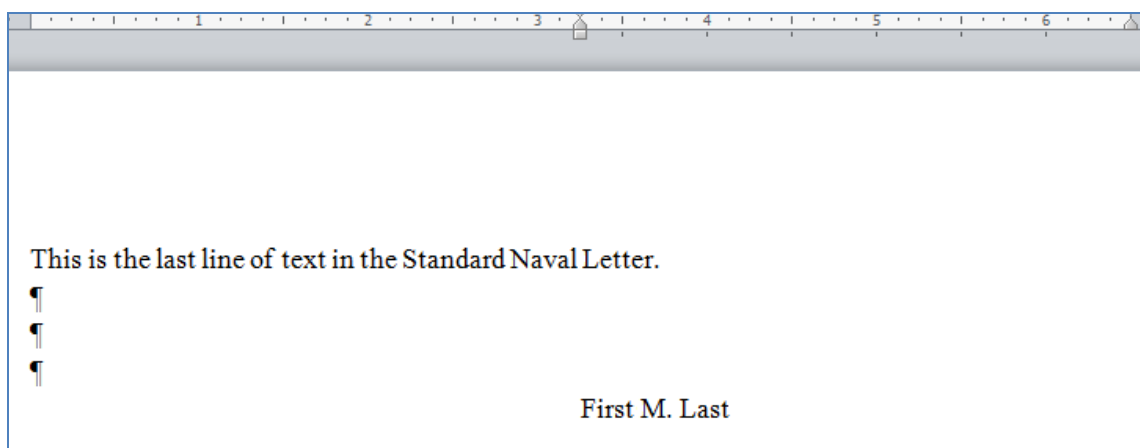


Figure 13-9.--Standard Naval Letter - Signature Block.

(b) Business Letter. Type the required standard complimentary close on the second line following the last line of text beginning from the center of the page. See Figure 13-10 and Figure 13-11.

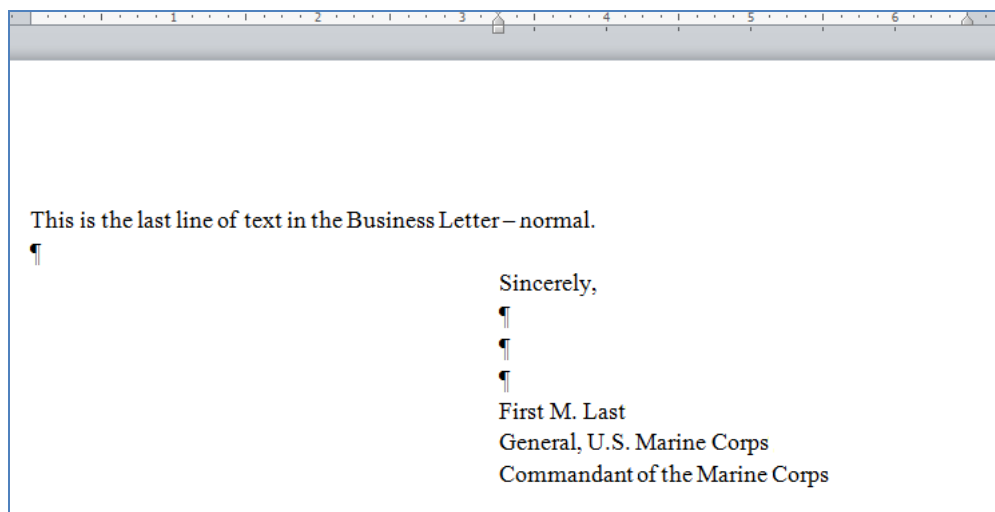


Figure 13-10.--Complimentary Close for Business Letter (Normal).

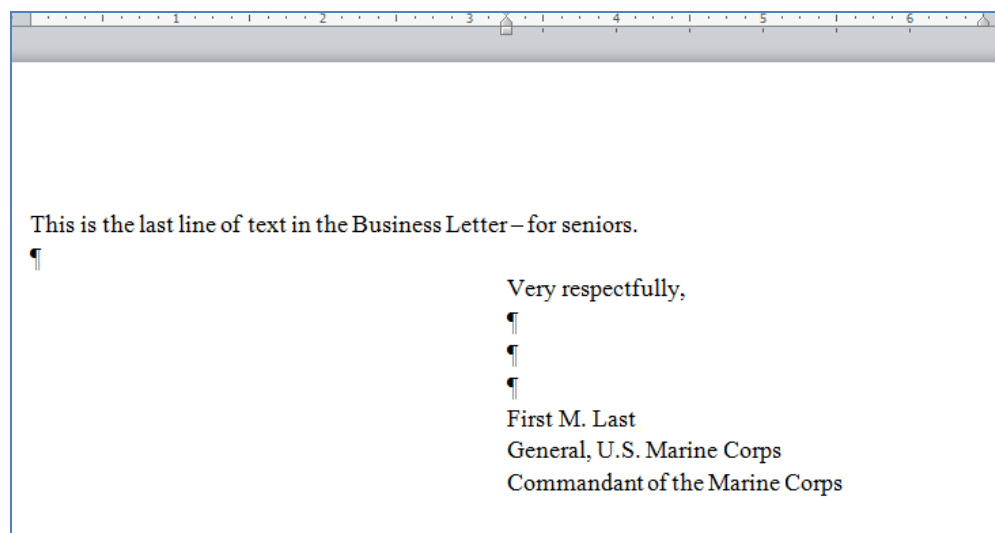


Figure 13-11.--Complimentary Close for Business Letter
(For Seniors).

(c) Memorandum For. This form of correspondence (does not have a "From" or "To" line) is the style of memorandum appropriate for signature by the Commandant. Type the signature line on the fourth line following the last line of text beginning from the center of the page (see Figure 13-12). (No complimentary close.)

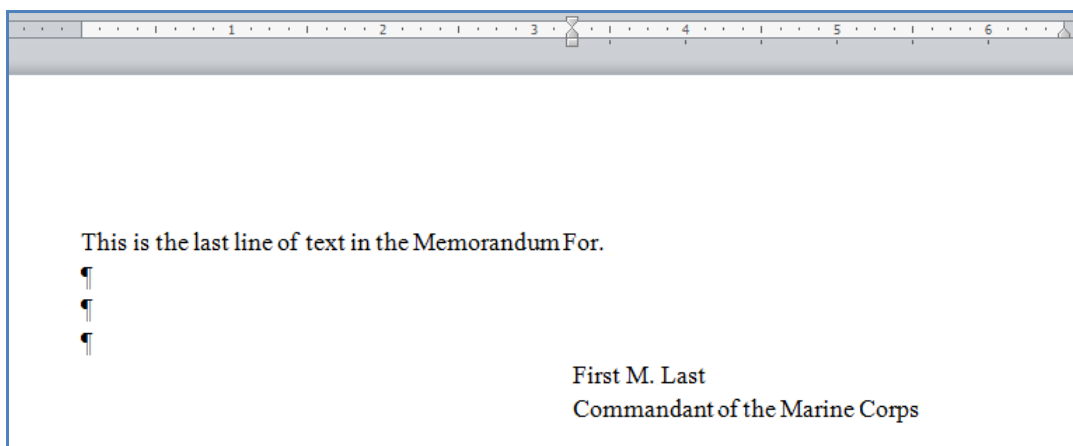


Figure 13-12.--Memorandum For - Signature Block.

(2) When preparing correspondence to be signed by the ACMC or DMCS, the originating office will type the appropriate signature blocks blank except for star stationery and letters authorized to be pen-signed. The DMCS Support Office will stamp the signature block per the following after the correspondence is signed (see Figures 13-13 through 13-20):

(a) ACMC

1. Standard Naval Letter:

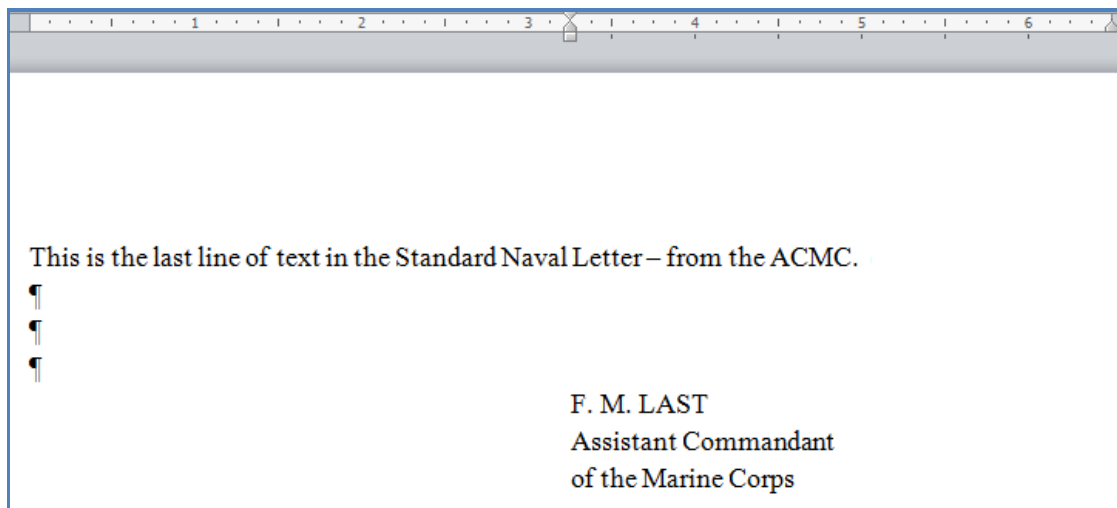


Figure 13-13.--Standard Naval Letter - From the ACMC.

2. Business Letter:

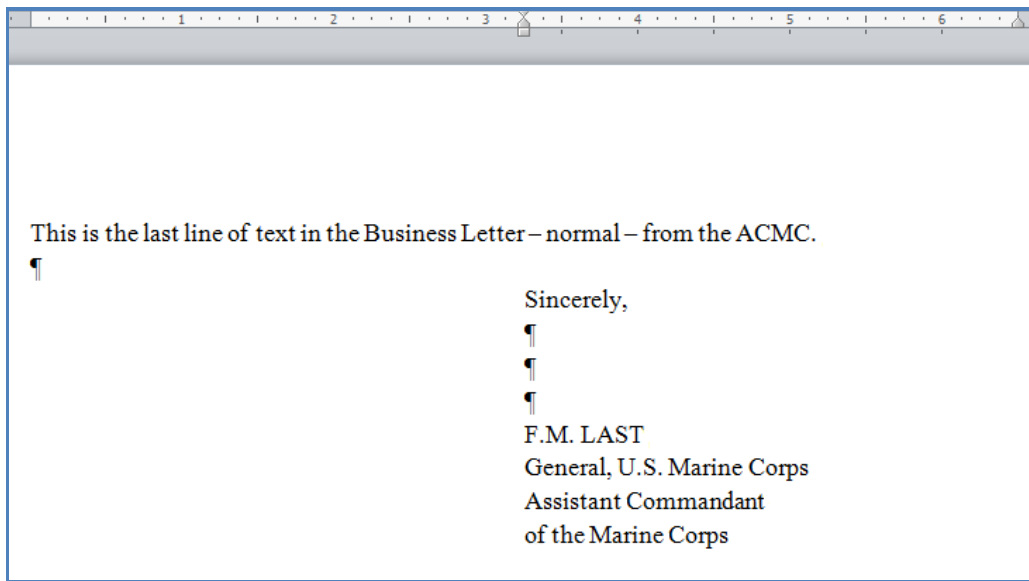


Figure 13-14.--Business Letter (Normal) - From the ACMC.

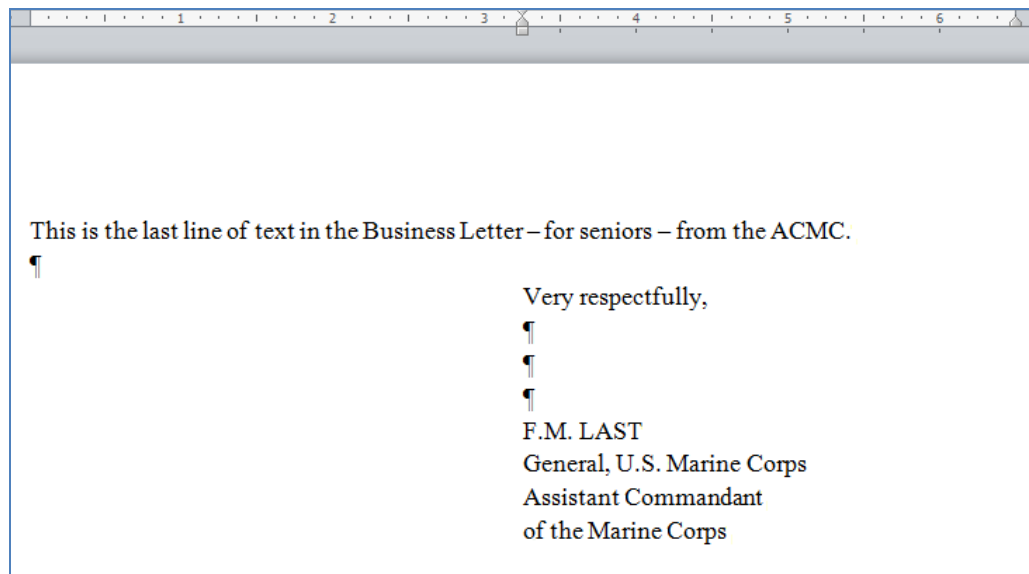


Figure 13-15.--Business Letter (For Seniors) - From the ACMC.

3. Memorandum For:

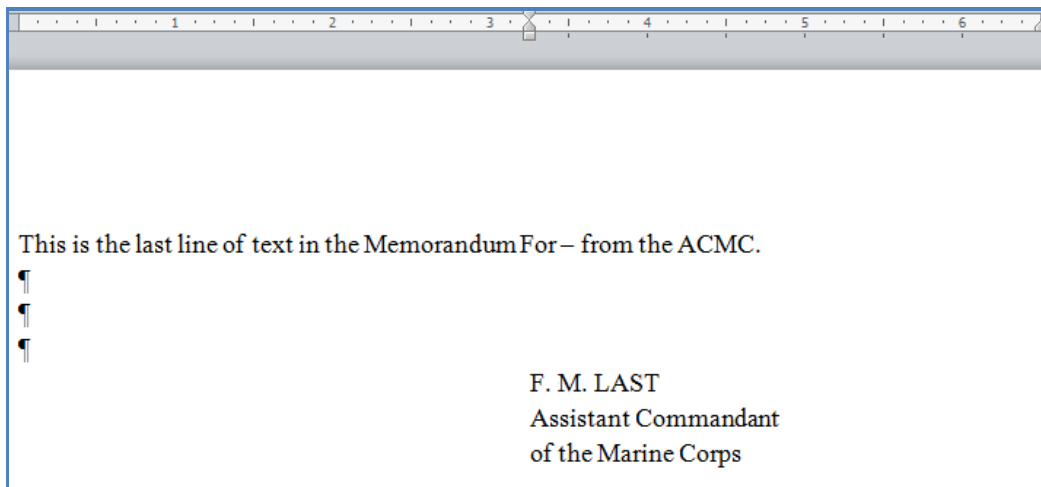


Figure 13-16.--Memorandum For - From the ACMC.

(b) DMCS

1. Standard Naval Letter:

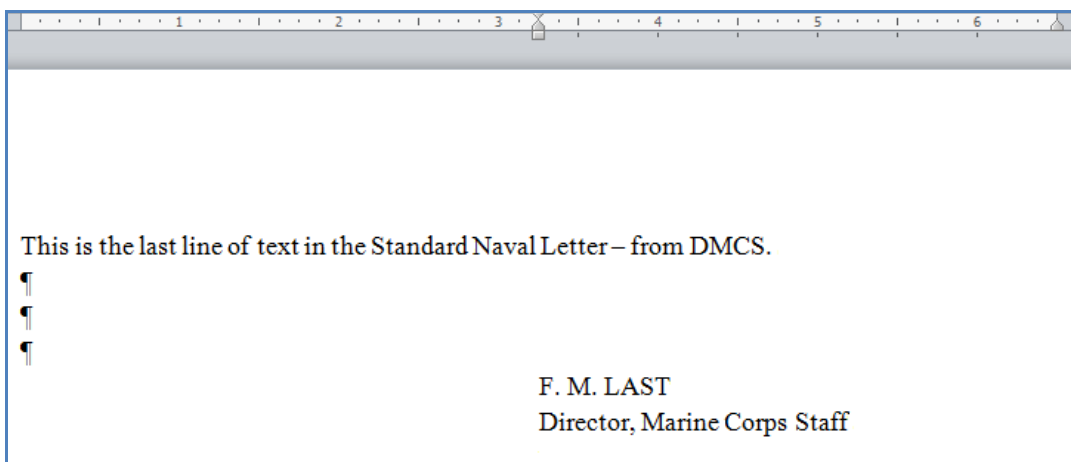


Figure 13-17.--Standard Naval Letter - From DMCS.

2. Business Letter:

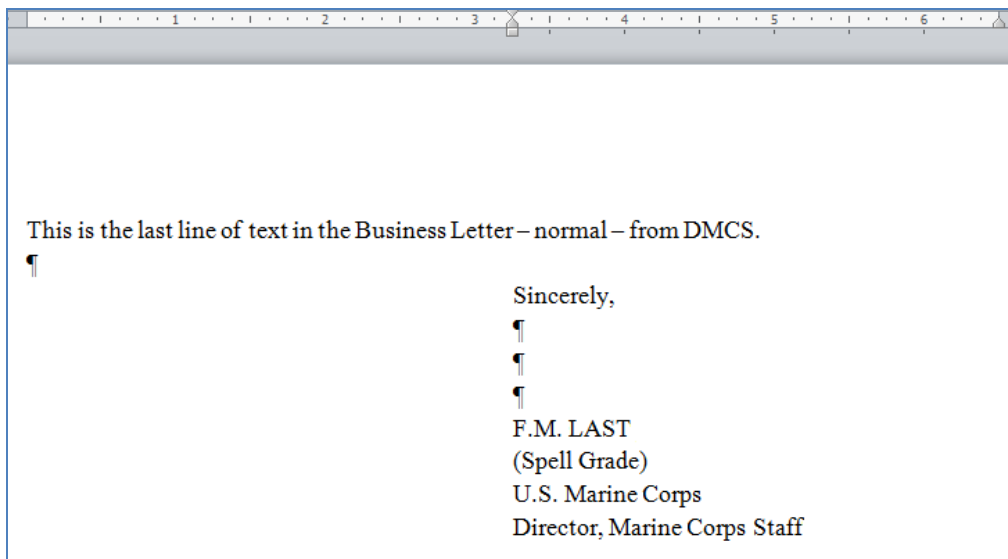


Figure 13-18.--Business Letter (Normal) – From DMCS.

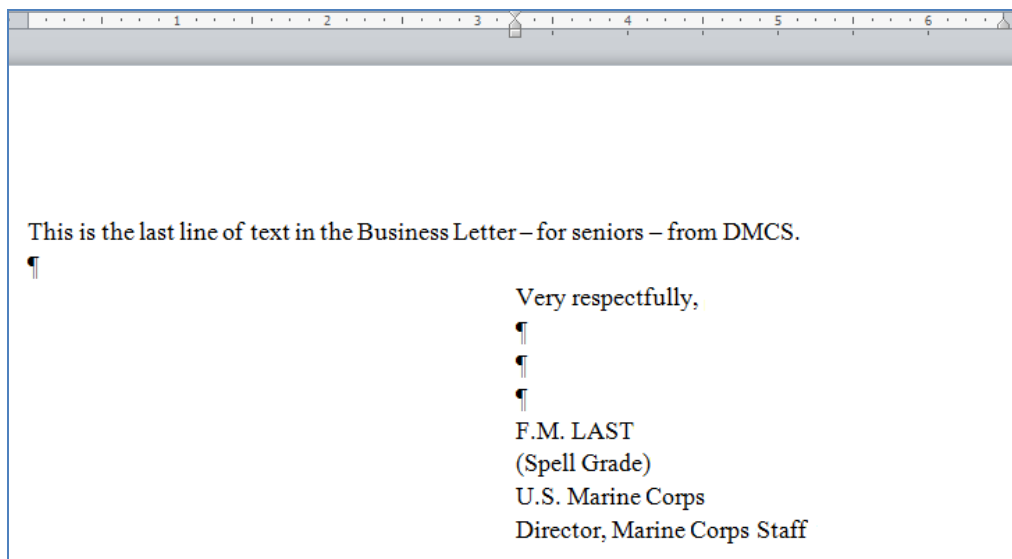


Figure 13-19.--Business Letter (For Seniors) – From DMCS.

3. Memorandum For:

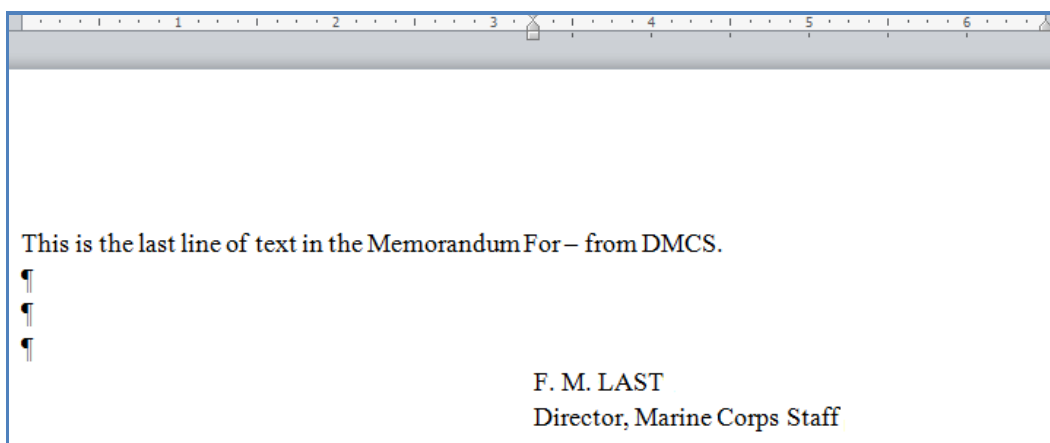


Figure 13-20.--Memorandum For - From DMCS.

3. General Officer Personal (Star) Stationery.

a. Always balance the letter so margins are even; never type agency codes on star stationery. See example in Figure 13-21.

b. The originating staff agency should always type the date, centered, one line below the flag after the correspondence is signed, using the same type used to prepare the letter.

(1) The preferred format is day, month, year:
10 November 2015.

(2) Date stamps are not allowed on CMC, ACMC, and DMCS star stationery.

c. Salutation. The salutation will be followed by a comma vice colon. If there is no specific guidance on the tasker, check previous correspondence or call the DMCS Administrative Office to see if the CMC is on a first-name basis with the recipient. When in doubt, use the formal name and title (if applicable) per Appendix B of reference (a).

d. Paragraphs

(1) Indent all paragraphs 1/2".

(2) Use 13-pitch Times New Roman.

(3) Try not to hyphenate more than one word per page. A maximum of three hyphenated lines is allowed, but no successive lines may be hyphenated.

e. Complimentary Close. Begin at the center of the page, and follow the closing by a comma. See Figure 13-21 for additional guidance.

4. Special Correspondence Assignments

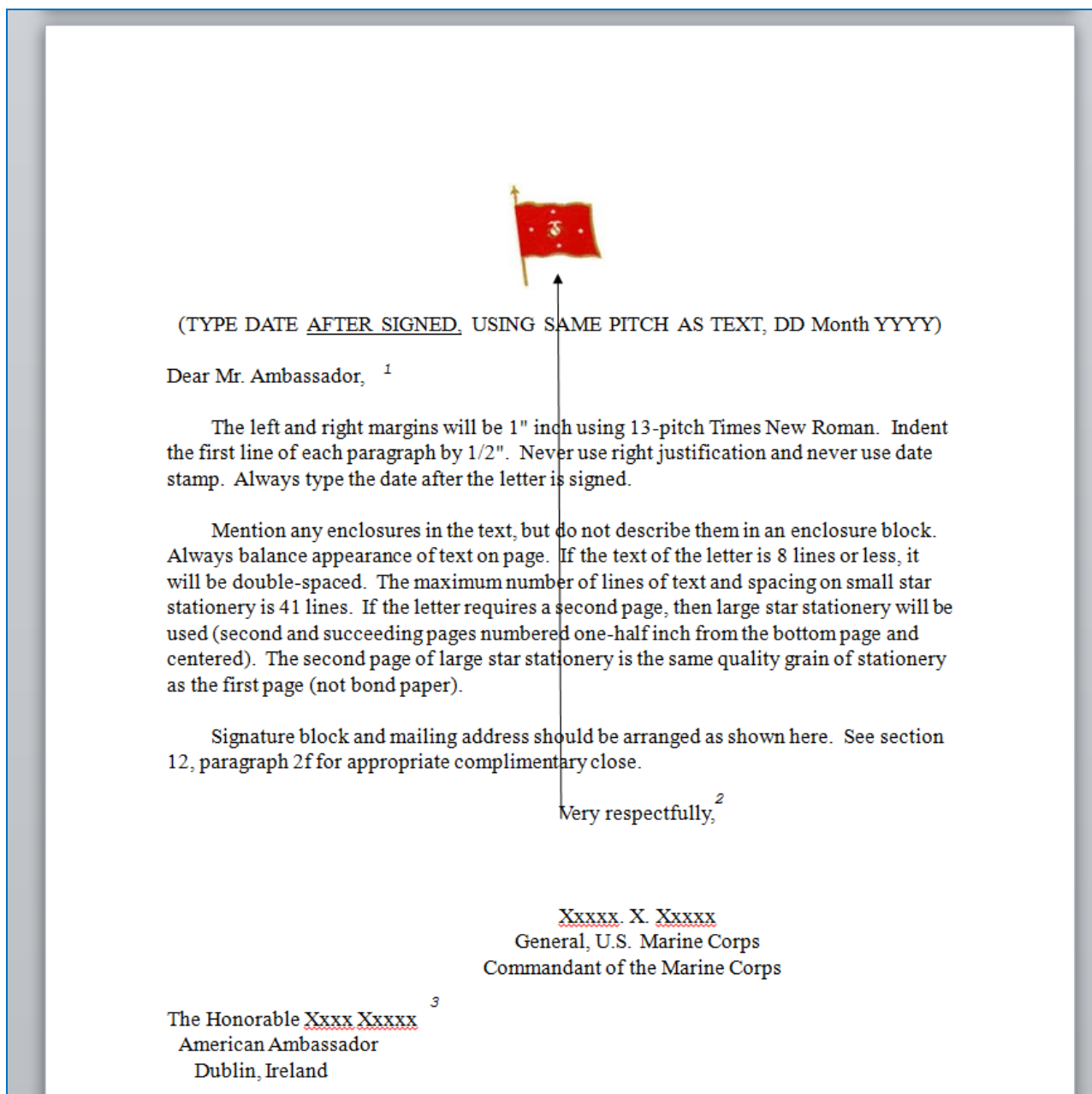
a. The CMC historically recognizes federal holidays, other Service and Foreign Service anniversaries, and other appropriate events through special correspondence (message or letter).

b. The staff agencies identified in Appendix B are responsible for producing the special correspondence indicated.

(1) Submit special correspondence at least 30 days prior to the occasion or event to DMCS Support Office via MCATS and/or DON TRACKER. Include a route sheet and attach the word document file in MCATS and/or DON TRACKER.

(2) The HQMC Editor will review the correspondence and determine if any additional staffing is necessary prior to forwarding the correspondence for the CMC's signature.

5. Management of Correspondence. All correspondence collected for CMC, ACMC, and DMCS signature must be managed in accordance with their appropriate dispositions outline in reference (b).



Note 1: When writing to Marine Corps general officers (other than former Commandants) and 4-star general/flag officers of the U.S. Armed Forces, the salutation will be: "Dear General (last name),"

Note 2: As a general rule, "Very respectfully," is used when writing to members of Congress, cabinet members, and the Secretary of a military Department. The salutation line and signature block will begin at center line as shown.

Note 3: Format for the address block staggered under the 2nd letter from the line before.

Figure 13-21.--Sample Letter on General Officer Personal Stationery.

APPENDIX A

ABBREVIATIONS FOR HQMC STAFF AGENCIES			
Functional Title	Abbreviation	General Reference	Code
Commandant of the Marine Corps	CMC	Office of the Commandant	CMC
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	SMMC	Office of the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps	SMMC
Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps	ACMC	Office of the Assistant Commandant	ACMC
Director, Marine Corps Staff	DMCS	Office of the Director Marine Corps Staff	DMCS
Secretary of the General Staff	SGS	Secretary of the General Staff	SGS
Legislative Assistant to the Commandant	Legis Asst	Office of the Legislative Assistant	OLA
Counsel for the Commandant	Counsel	Office of the Counsel for the Commandant	CL
Director, Special Projects Directorate	Dir Spl Proj	Special Projects Directorate	SPD
Inspector General of the Marine Corps	IGMC	Inspection Division	IG
Deputy Commandant for Aviation	DC AVN	Aviation Department	AVN
Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics	DC I&L	Installations and Logistics Department	I&L
Deputy Commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs	DC M&RA	Manpower and Reserve Affairs Department	M&RA
Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies and Operations	DC PP&O	Plans, Policies and Operations Department	PP&O
Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources Department	DC P&R	Programs and Resources Department	R

Functional Title	Abbreviation	General Reference	Code
Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration	DC CD&I	Combat Development and Integration Directorate	CD&I
Director, Command, Control, Communications, and Computers Department	Dir C4	Command, Control, Communications, and Computers Department	C4
Director, Intelligence Department	Dir I	Intelligence Department	I
Director, Administration and Resource Management Division	Dir AR	Administration and Resource Management Division	AR
Director, Judge Advocate Division	Dir JA	Judge Advocate Division	JA
Director, Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication	Dir OUSMCC	Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication	OUSMCC
The Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps	Chaplain	Office of the Chaplain USMC	REL
Director, Health Services	Dir HS	Office of Health Services	HS
Director, Safety Division	Dir SD	Safety Division	SD
Director, Expeditionary Energy Office	Dir E20	Expeditionary Energy Office	E20
<p>Note: Staff actions used in Headquarters correspondence and directives should be assigned by the complete functional title or the abbreviated functional title, followed by the cognizant code in parenthesis.</p>			

APPENDIX B

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENCE ASSIGNMENTS (DATE)				
Agency	Type	Founded	Date	Remarks
CMC's Office	Photos, Posters, etc.			
	Regrets to Invitations			
	Trip Letters			
Commandant's Staff Group	As directed by CMC			
	CMC Personal Correspondence			
	Condolence Letters			Other than those initiated by MFPC
	Change of Command Messages			
	CMC Articles			
	CMC Speeches			
	Comments for Publication			
	Thank You Letters			
History Division, MCU	Anniversary Messages as follows:			
	1 st Marine Division	1941	1 Feb	
	2d Marine Division	1941	1 Feb	
	Armed Forces Day			3 rd Saturday in May
	U.S. Army	1775	14 Jun	
	1 st Marine Aircraft Wing	1941	7 Jul	
	2d Marine Aircraft Wing	1941	10 Jul	
	U.S. Coast Guard	1790	4 Aug	
	4 th Marine Division	1943	16 Aug	
	4 th Marine Aircraft Wing	1942	22 Aug	
	3d Marine Division	1942	16 Sep	

Agency	Type	Founded	Date	Remarks
History Division, MCU(Cont.)	U.S. Air Force	1947	18 Sep	
	U.S. Navy	1775	13 Oct	
	3d Marine Aircraft Wing	1942	10 Nov	
	Veterans Day	1942	11 Nov	
Health Services	Anniversary Messages as follows:			
	Navy Hospital Corps	1898	17 Jun	
	Navy Medical Department	1842	31 Aug	Include all Officer Corps (Medical, Dental, Nurse & Medical Services) of the Medical Department
Installations & Logistics Department	Anniversary Messages as follows:			Anniversary acknowledged on 2 March by single message with Navy Seabees and Naval Facilities Engineering Commands
	Civil Engineer Corps	1867	2 Mar	
	Navy Seabees	1942	5 Mar	
	Naval Facilities Engineering Commands	1842	31 Aug	
Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication	All media queries directed to HQMC			
	Birthday Letters			Requests from civilian community for birthday letter from CMC (usually former/retired Marines)
	Retirement Letters			Requests from civilian community for retirement letter from CMC (usually former/retired Marines)
	ComRel Coordinates			DoD special events & programs; programs using speakers, color guards, musical & marching units, static aircraft displays, etc.

Agency	Type	Founded	Date	Remarks
Office of U.S. Marine Corps Communication (Cont.)	Special Events			Coordinate community events including participation by Marine Corps units & individual Marines
International Issues Branch (PLU), Plans, Policies & Operations Department	Foreign Service Anniversary Letters as follows:			
	Columbian Marine Corps	1939	12 Jan	
	Portuguese Naval Fusiliers	1961	24 Feb	
	Spanish Marine Corps	1537	27 Feb	
	Royal Welch Fusiliers	1689	1 Mar	
	Brazilian Marine Corps	1808	7 Mar	
	Korean Marine Corps	1949	15 Apr	
	Chilean Marine Corps	1818	16 Jun	
	Royal Thai Marine Corps	1959	28 Jun	
	Royal Marines	1664	28 Oct	
	Peruvian Marine Corps	1821	6 Nov	
	Philippine Marines	1950	7 Nov	
	Ecuadorian Marine Corps	1966	12 Nov	
	Indonesian Marine Corps	1945	15 Nov	
	Argentine Marine Corps	1879	19 Nov	
Royal Netherlands Marine Corps	1665	10 Dec		
Venezuelan Marine Corps	1945	11 Dec		
Chaplain	Religious Program Specialist	1979	15 Jan	
	Navy Chaplain Corps	1775	28 Nov	

Agency	Type	Founded	Date	Remarks
Safety Division	Holiday Message with safety reminder as follows:			
	Memorial Day			4 th Monday in May
	Independence Day		4 Jul	
	Labor Day			1 st Monday in September
	Thanksgiving			Last Thursday of November
	Holiday Season			25 December through 1 January