



**DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY**  
**HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**  
**3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON**  
**WASHINGTON, DC 20350-3000**

CMC  
12 Mar 20

WHITE LETTER 1-20

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps  
To: All Commanding Generals  
All Commanding Officers  
All Officers in Charge  
All Senior Enlisted Leaders

Subj: PRESERVE THE FORCE; CONTINUE THE MISSION

Ref: (a) MARADMIN 82/20  
(b) MARADMIN 150/20  
(c) MARADMIN 162/20

1. As the Nation's naval expeditionary force-in-readiness, the Marine Corps has a special responsibility to adapt and overcome, no matter the circumstances. Marines operate in uncertain conditions, and Marine leaders make intent-based decisions. This is what we do.

2. The response to the COVID-19 outbreak is in its early stages. Information is coming from myriad sources; guidance continues to develop; and directives cannot account for every potential circumstance. If this were a tactical situation, it would be a movement to contact - as such, we'll want to make contact with limited forces, preserve decision space and combat power, and retain our ability to react to rapidly changing circumstances.

3. Commanders must closely scrutinize what travel is mission essential, what large gatherings such as school graduations should be curtailed or modified, and take all measures to protect our Marines, Sailors and families to the greatest extent possible - commensurate with current guidance and the situation on the ground. I expect commanders and leaders at all levels to act with the preservation of their force at the forefront of their decision-making, while applying the fullest risk mitigation in continuing the mission. In this dynamic environment, it is imperative that you keep your chain of command informed and communicate regularly with your Marines, Sailors and families.

4. Expect additional guidance over the next days and weeks; this situation will take some time to resolve. Until it does, take decisive action to protect the force while continuing the mission of the Corps. We must remain always ready to respond when the Nation calls on her Corps of Marines.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. H. Berger", is positioned below the fourth paragraph of the letter.

David H. Berger