



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO:

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OLAC-5B

18 DEC 2003

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6143

Dear Mr. Waxman:

This responds to your letter, to the Acting Secretary of the Navy, concerning distribution of smokeless tobacco products to Marines in Iraq. I am responding on behalf of Secretary Johnson and regret the delay in responding to your correspondence. It was necessary to coordinate with several commands in order to complete our inquiry.

Your concern in this matter is appreciated. I want to assure you the issues presented are also of importance to us. The Marine Corps fully embraces the Secretary of the Navy's Tobacco Policy, which seeks to reduce tobacco use and improve the overall health and readiness of our Marines. The U.S. Smokeless Tobacco Company contacted this Headquarters earlier in the year offering to donate their products to Marines participating in Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom. We outright refused their offer based on the current Navy and Marine Corps Tobacco Policy.

On May 23, 2003, we first became aware of the distributions of the smokeless tobacco products mentioned in the article in USA Today. This involved donations requested by individual Marines and were not "free samples" distributed throughout the Operating Forces. Marine Corps leadership did not condone the actions of these Marines, as solicitation of gifts by active duty service members is against the Joint Ethics Regulations. To my knowledge, we have not had a recurrence and we continue to make every effort to enforce current regulations.

Since we did not sanction the requests, we are unsure of the total number of Marines involved, other than those who wrote the thank you letters. If smokeless tobacco products were sent to Marines who had returned to the United States from deployment, they would have been forwarded to their stateside command. Further, these products were not obtained in an official capacity, therefore, health information would not have been included in their unofficial distribution.

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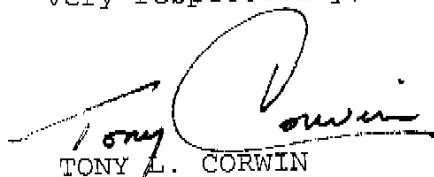
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All Commanders have an affirmative obligation to create, by personal example and command climate, a Tobacco Cessation Program that supports abstinence and discourages use of tobacco products. Commanders shall also ensure their Tobacco Cessation Programs address the use of smokeless tobacco, and ensure restrictions on smoking do not promote increase use of smokeless products.

Thank you for writing. I hope this information will help to clarify these issues and reassure you of our absolute compliance in enforcing the Navy and Marine Corps Tobacco Policy. If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony L. Corwin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "C" at the end.

TONY L. CORWIN
Major General (Select), U.S. Marine Corps
Legislative Assistant to the Commandant