



## COMMANDER'S STATEMENT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

Trust is a key component in the military. As Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers, we must trust our fellow service members with our lives everyday. Our trust in each other is what brings forth our success in battles and keeps America the strong fighting force that we are today. Unfortunately, there are times where this trust is violated. Whether by another service member or a civilian, there are military servicemen and women in our military today who have been sexually assaulted. As Commander of Marine Forces Reserve and Marine Forces North, **I am fully dedicated in preventing and properly handling sexual assault cases for all military personnel assigned to MFR and MFN. Sexual assault is a crime and will not be tolerated!**

Sexual assault is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, physical threat of force or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. "Consent" shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance. Consent is not given when a person uses force, threat of force, coercion or when the victim is asleep, incapacitated, or unconscious. Sexual assault includes rape, nonconsensual sodomy, indecent assault, or attempts to commit these acts. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender or spousal relationship or age of victim.

If you are a victim of sexual assault **you are not to blame!** As a victim, you have the right to be treated with fairness and with respect for your dignity and privacy. **You have the power to take action, and your leaders have the authority to support you – I expect nothing less!** If assaulted, report it immediately to your command Uniformed Victim Advocate (UVA), healthcare provider, chaplain, and/or a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARCs). All have confidentiality and can help you with a restricted or unrestricted report. For more information on the rights of sexual assault victims and what you can do, go to [www.usmc-mccs.org/sapro](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/sapro) and click on resources. Remember! Education is the best tool for prevention! As a victim of a crime, you have the right to seek help—and your commander is committed to ensure you receive it.

If a member of our team is sexually assaulted, we must help the victim receive the assistance they need through concerned leadership and education of options open to them for help. As a team, I expect the focus of all leaders will be on prevention—educate your people and do not tolerate inappropriate behavior in your work areas. Have the courage to take a stand and do the right thing. Together, we can make a difference for our fellow Marines, Sailors and civilians and defeat this enemy from within.

Semper Fidelis

Steven A. Hummer

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