

STATEMENT  
OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL DAVID OTTIGNON  
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE MARINE CORPS  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL  
ON  
SENIOR LEADER MISCONDUCT: PREVENTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY  
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**BGen David A. Ottignon**  
**Office of the Inspector General of the Marine Corps**

Brigadier General David A. Ottignon is currently serving as the Inspector General of the Marine Corps.

A native of Mount Laurel, New Jersey, Brigadier General Ottignon attended Ithaca College, was commissioned through the NROTC program in August 1987 and assigned as a Combat Engineer. He received a Master's of Business Administration from the University of Rochester's Simon School of Business in June 1997 and a Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval

War College in June 1998.

Brigadier General Ottignon has served in 3d Combat Engineer Battalion, 3d Marine Division; in 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group; as the Commanding Officer, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion, 2d Marine Division; Commanding Officer, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, and as the Commanding General, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

His staff assignments include serving in the 1st Recruit Training Battalion, MCRD San Diego; as the Marine Officer Instructor, University of Rochester; as Executive Assistant to the Deputy Commandant for Installations and Logistics, Headquarters Marine Corps; and as the Military Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy.

Brigadier General Ottignon joint assignments include Engineer Plans Officer (J4) and Deputy Executive Assistant to the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command; and Deputy Operations Director (J3), U.S. European Command.

He has participated in peace keeping operations in Somalia (Operation Restore Hope), counter insurgency operations in the Southern Philippines (Operation Enduring Freedom – Philippines) and combat operations in Iraq (Operation Iraqi Freedom).

Brigadier General Ottignon is a graduate of the Army Advanced Engineer Officer's Course, Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Naval Command and Staff College, Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island and former CMC National Security Affairs Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

Chairman Coffman, Ranking Member Speier, and distinguished members of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel, I thank you for the opportunity to testify today on such an important topic. The Marine Corps Inspector General's Office provides the Secretary of the Navy and Commandant of the Marine Corps an impartial and credible means to investigate or inquire into allegations of senior official misconduct, impropriety or violations of law. I oversee a group of 25 dedicated professionals committed to upholding the laws and orders that govern the service.

While no organization is flawless, the success of the Marine Corps past and present rests upon the moral and ethical fiber of our leaders at all levels. The seriousness with which the Marine Corps approaches character, leadership and ethics is apparent in the demanding standards we expect all our leaders to uphold.

Education in ethics occurs repeatedly each year and at every rank. Our senior officials get this education in multiple forms many times throughout the year. From selection as a general officer, continuous touch points in ethics training occur at orientation, through annual symposiums at Quantico, as well as specialized training provided by the offices of our Counsel, Staff Judge Advocate and Inspector General. In the last year, this office has traveled around the globe conducting training with Commanding Generals across the Corps, ensuring and the application of our standards are consistent with our foundational core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

In the past ten years, fifteen Marine Corps General Officers were substantiated by a thorough investigative process led by an Inspector General. In other words, roughly 1.5% of the General Officer population were substantiated per year. Most of these substations were violations of administrative processes and standards of conduct regulations. For example, in 2013, two Generals were substantiated for using a government vehicle to travel to work from quarters and a third General was substantiated for accepting a gift of time and services from subordinates.

The average time to complete an investigation of a General Officer, regardless of whether it is substantiated, is more than 180 days (beyond the 120 day Department target).

Every General Officer investigation is reviewed for legal sufficiency and requires Department of Defense Inspector General oversight. Across the force, we have seen a significant increase in reprisal complaints over the past three years, but not a commensurate increase in substantiations.

Over the recent years, changes in the Military Whistleblower Reprisal statute (10 U.S.C §1034) have often strained resources and affected the timeliness of all investigations, to include General Officer Investigations. For example, the elongated statute of limitations to one year, and subsequent Department application of the analytical framework, challenge the services with a larger volume of complaints and unintended administrative requirements, potentially impacting operational effectiveness in a deployed environment. Coupled with the fiscally constrained environment that has decreased the size of my office, keeping pace with the growing number of complaints, which require either an inquiry or investigation will continue to challenge this office.

We believe the statutory timelines and Department guidance, along with a rigorous oversight process, result in fair and objective investigations. It is well understood that the investigatory process is deliberate, and efforts to accelerate the pace of an investigation must be balanced with due process. It is important that these investigations present facts and prevent the misuse of the system for purposes other than intended. We must continue to balance service regulations that maintain the good order and discipline of our war fighting service with the law to best ensure protections of all service members and reinforce the high standards the American public expects of its Marines.

On behalf of the Secretary of the Navy and the Commandant of the Marine Corps, thank you for your continued support of your United States Marine Corps and its families; I look forward to the opportunity to answer your questions.