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H. S. Clardy III
Commanding General
Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Center
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
Box 788100
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8100

Dear General Clardy:

I am writing this letter in support of Major Pietro P. Scarselli who is scheduled to appear before you in an upcoming NJP proceeding.

By way of introduction, let me say that I am a retired NYPD captain and Marine Corps Veteran. I currently serve on the Executive Board of the NYPD Marine Corps Association and am a member of the New York City Marine Corps Council. I maintain close ties to our beloved Corps by functioning as a volunteer consultant to many of the Marine units in the greater New York Metropolitan Area including the 1st Marine Corps District and the HQMC, NYC - Public Affairs Office. I have known Major Scarselli for a dozen years. I have worked with him as part of an advisory committee he created while the Commanding Officer, Recruiting Station, New York. I have observed him interact with his Marines both in New York and at 29 Palms. I believe Major Scarselli to be a highly motivated Marine Officer, a man of great personal integrity and sound judgment. He is a good leader of Marines. I am listed as a potential character witness by the defense in this matter.

I have been aware of the allegations and charges preferred against Major Scarselli since shortly after he was relieved as the PMO. As a retired police commander with 24 years of investigative experience, I paid closed attention to, and was disappointed by the techniques employed by the base inspector general and prosecution team in their preparation for a court martial. I also read the articles published in the Marine Corps Times, where the events were portrayed as a major scandal and said Major Scarselli was facing 30 years in prison. It was all very troubling to me especially since I consider Major Scarselli, not only a brother Marine, but also a friend.

I am now somewhat relieved that the entire matter has been brought back to a more appropriate venue, an NJP proceeding. Candidly I feel it might have been better handled at the battalion level over a year ago.

At first look, the accusations against Major Scarselli appear to be very serious. He is accused of disobeying a direct order, dereliction of duty, fraternization and failure to lead his Marines. However, when you examine each specification I believe the thrust of the charges lose velocity and have a diminished impact. For example, asking a gunnery sergeant "How'd it go?" and "Are you ok?" when you can clearly hear in his voice that he is stressed, is much different than asking, "What did you tell them? What did you say?" It is the difference between caring for the emotional wellbeing of one of your Marines on the one hand and digging for information on the other. Does that rise to the level of disobeying a direct order?

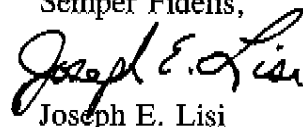
The same is true of the other allegations as well. A thorough review of the facts presents a number of mitigating and extenuating circumstances. Even for example, as to why the major would agree to reside for a short time with the master gunnery sergeant during a period of great personal upheaval in the senior enlisted Marine's life. I also appreciate that though some of these events took place without the major's knowledge, he is ultimately responsible and he must accept responsibility. That being said, I believe his staff NCOs let the major down.

May I observe that Major Scarselli has already paid a heavy price in connection with this matter. Since being relieved a year ago, he has been in limbo. He was unceremoniously removed from his assignment as the PMO without being given an opportunity to respond to any of the allegations or to defend himself to his commanding officer. He was then reassigned to an administrative position. In that position he stayed motivated and performed with energy and tenacity as is reflected in his latest evaluation. A Marine officer of lesser caliber might have done just what was required to get by in such circumstances. During this same period Major Scarselli was also selected for lieutenant colonel.

Finally, I believe derailing Major Scarselli's career over this unfortunate incident would be a travesty of justice and would do a disservice not only to the major personally, but also to the Marine Corps itself. I am confident you will reach a fair, appropriate and prudent decision in the resolution of this matter.

Respectfully submitted.

Semper Fidelis,



Joseph E. Lisi