

1st District head relieved of command

By John Hoellwarth
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The commander of 1st Marine Corps District was relieved March 9 because of "a loss of trust and confidence in his ability to command," according to a district spokesman.

Col. Raymond T. Bright is the subject of a command investigation into allegations of personal misconduct involving "inappropriate relationships," said Eastern Recruiting Region spokesman Maj. Billy Canedo.

Canedo declined to elaborate on the allegations, except to say the relationships were "not with any males." He said Bright is the only Marine involved.

District spokesman Capt. Don Caetano said Bright is married.

The allegations stem from Bright's last assignment as the chief of staff for the base at Quantico, Va., and the National Capitol Region.

However, Canedo said the scope of the investigation "is not limited to Bright's time at Quantico," meaning investigators will determine whether these alleged relationships followed him to his command assignment in Garden City, N.Y.

Maj. Wes Hayes, Marine Corps Recruiting Command spokesman, said Bright's relief and the allegations against him have nothing to do with his performance as commander of the district.

Canedo added that Bright had been assigned to the district ahead of schedule with the hope that he would turn around the command's performance, which was failing at the time.

The numbers back this up. The district has met its contracting goals twice in the past five months, missing the mark in February and last November and October by a total of 69 contracts. When Bright took command June 4, his predecessor had missed the contracting mission by 270 in the previous month and by 194 the month before that.

Reassigned to Parris Island

Canedo said Brig. Gen. Richard Tryon, commanding general of Recruiting Command's eastern region, had dispatched his assistant chief of staff for recruiting, Col. Craig Marshall, to the district as interim commander.

Bright has been temporarily reassigned to administrative duties at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., pending the outcome of the command investigation, which is expected to take 30 days, Canedo said.

Bright is the Corps' third colonel in six months to be relieved because of allegations of inappropriate relationships with women.

On Oct. 10, Col. Craig Tucker was removed from his position as head of the Tactical Exercise Evaluation

Control Group at Twentynine Palms, Calif., because of allegations of a relationship with a female captain there.

Two months later, Col. Michael Bonem was relieved of his position as the comptroller for Marine

Air Ground Task Force Training Command, also at Twentynine Palms, for allegedly having an inappropriate relationship with the same woman.

Bonem received nonjudicial punishment from Maj. Gen. Keith Stal-

der, head of TECom, on Oct. 13, said Lt. Col. Richard Long, a Marine spokesman at Quantico.

Tucker's case was referred to a board of inquiry tasked with recommending whether he should be allowed to retire, and at what rank.

Tucker's case was scheduled to go before the board March 16. The status of that board was unavailable by press time. □



Bright