

NATION

Marine facing ouster, prison for gay e-mail solicitations

By Rowan Scarborough
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A Marine lieutenant colonel pleaded guilty yesterday before a military judge to charges of sending graphic homosexual messages through a government computer at Fort Belvoir.

Lt. Col. Russell W. Colman Jr., the 44-year-old married father of three children, faces a maximum sentence of 4½ years in prison, forfeiture of pay and dismissal from the Corps, plus an unlimited fine.

Dismissal would also disqualify the 21-year veteran from an estimated \$1 million in long-term retirement payments, said his attorney, David Sheldon. Mr. Sheldon plans to call more than a half-dozen witnesses at a Feb. 27 sentencing hearing. He declined to discuss their expected testimony.

"By pleading guilty to the two offenses, Lieutenant Colonel Colman has accepted responsibility

Col. Colman was turned in by a fellow Marine who mistakenly received one of the obscene e-mail messages.

for his actions," Mr. Sheldon said. "Because the case is not final and this continues to be a very difficult time for Lieutenant Colonel Colman and his family, no further comment is warranted, except to say that Lieutenant Colonel Colman and his family have every hope that justice will prevail."

Col. Colman pleaded guilty to one charge of communicating indecent language to five persons on the Internet and to conduct unbecoming an officer. He also admit-

ted guilt to a charge of improper use of government property.

Col. Colman was turned in last April by a fellow Marine who mistakenly received one of the obscenity-filled e-mail messages.

Sent from his office at the Defense Logistics Headquarters, Col. Colman's messages were replete with references to a "gruntslave" engaging in oral and anal sex. He addressed his e-mail recipients as "sir."

"After he works on spankin [sic] the other guy for a while he comes back and starts to work on my nipples," one message read in part.

Another segment read, "If your buddy isn't a pig or a walking food blister, and your [sic] both clean, I can get into a night with you two in your hotel room down here. . . . If you two are two horny gay jarheads lookin [sic] for some action — great!"

Col. Colman originally faced more than 30 felony charges.