DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
2 NAVY ANNEX
WASHINGTON, DC 20380-1775

IN REPLY REFER TO:
MCO 1650.32E
PP&O/POG
JAN 16 2006

MARINE CORPS ORDER 1650.32E

From: Commandant of the Marine Corps
To: Distribution List

Subj: LEFTWICH TROPHY FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP

Encl: (1) Biographical Sketch

1. Situation. This Order provides information and instruction regarding the subject award. The Leftwich Trophy for Outstanding Leadership is an award presented annually in memory of Lieutenant Colonel William Groom Leftwich, U.S. Marine Corps, killed in action in the Republic of Vietnam in November 1970. The trophy is provided to the Marine Corps by Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich's fellow Marines and other friends. The enclosure is a biographical sketch of Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich.

2. Cancellation. MCO 1650.32D.

3. Mission. To recognize the Marine Captain who best exemplifies outstanding leadership within the Ground Combat Arms community.

4. Execution.

a. Deputy Commandant, Plans, Policies, and Operations (DC, PP&O) will establish a board of senior officers to review nominees' records and make appropriate recommendations to the Commandant of the Marine Corps (CMC). Additionally, DC, PP&O, Ground Combat Element Branch (POG) will provide liaison as sponsor of the subject award.

b. Commanding General, Marine Forces Atlantic and Commanding General, Marine Forces Pacific, are requested to nominate two officers from each Marine Expeditionary Force using the eligibility and award criteria stated below.

c. Commanding General, Marine Forces Reserve, may nominate two officers who during the eligibility period met the eligibility and award criteria stated below.

d. Written nominations must include an official photograph of the nominee taken within six months of the convening date of the board, biographical information of the nominee, and a summary of performance supporting the nominee's qualifications for the award. Include nominating unit address, point of contact, and phone number.

e. Nominations shall be submitted annually to DC, PP&O (POG), to arrive no later than 28 February. One copy of each nomination shall be forwarded directly to Deputy Commandant, Manpower & Reserve Affairs (DC, M&RA) (MMRB) for file in the official records of the officers nominated.

f. The recipient will be selected by CMC.

5. Administration and Logistics.

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a. Eligibility.

(1) A Marine Captain in the Ground Combat Arms community serving on active duty as a company/battery commander with the ground forces of the Operating Forces during the period of eligibility.

(2) Successive awards will not be made as the recipient becomes ineligible to be re-nominated after receiving the award.

(3) Posthumous awards may be made provided the officer nominated would meet all eligibility and award criteria stated in paragraph (5).

b. Award Criteria.

(1) The officer recommended for the Leftwich Trophy should be recognized by his seniors, contemporaries, and subordinates, as the officer who most exemplifies outstanding leadership.

(2) The officer must clearly and dramatically demonstrate the ideals of courage, resourcefulness, perseverance, and concern for the well being of our Corps and his enlisted Marines.

(3) The officer must exhibit officer-like qualities that have made an outstanding contribution to the development of esprit de corps and loyalty within the unit in which he serves.

(4) The officer, through personal example, must set the standards that all other officers seek to emulate.

(5) The award covers the calendar year immediately preceding the nomination due date.

c. Presentation. Presentation of the Leftwich Trophy will be made by the CMC, or his designated representative, at an appropriate ceremony such as the Marine Corps Association (MCA) Ground Dinner, jointly hosted by MCA and DC, PP&O.

(1) DC, PP&O will provide funding for the award winner and his spouse to attend the MCA Ground Dinner to receive the award.

(2) DC, PP&O will provide funding to package and ship the trophy to the award winner's unit or current home of record, should the award winner be unable to transport the trophy home after the ceremony.

6. Command and Signal.

a. Command. This Order is applicable to the Marine Corps Total Force.

b. Signal. This Order is effective on the date signed.

JAN HULY
Deputy Commandant
Plans, Policies, and Operations

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7000093, 144/8145001 (1)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILLIAM GROOM LEFTWICH, JR., USMC (Deceased)

Lieutenant Colonel William G. Leftwich, Jr., was commissioned a Marine Second Lieutenant on June 5, 1953, upon graduation from the United States Naval Academy. As Brigade Captain during his senior year at the Naval Academy, he was commended at graduation for exemplary officer-like qualities, which contributed… "to the development of naval spirit and loyalty within the Brigade."

Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich completed The Basic School in January 1954, and later served as a rifle platoon commander with the 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. During 1955-56 he served with the 3d Marine Division in Okinawa. On his return to the United States, he was stationed at Camp Pendleton, California, where he was promoted to Captain in July 1957. He began a 3-year assignment at the Naval Academy, serving as a company officer. An excellent athlete, he performed collateral duties as assistant varsity tennis coach and battalion football coach.

In 1960, he rejoined the 2d Marine Division, serving as a company commander until 1962, when he was named aide-de-camp to the Commanding General. In June 1963, he was assigned as aide to the Commandant, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia. He reported for duty in Vietnam in January 1965, as Assistant Senior Advisor to the Vietnamese Marine Brigade.

Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich participated in 27 major operations against the Viet Cong in the central highlands of Vietnam, and spent more than 300 days in the field. He was wounded in the battle of Hoai An, March 9, 1965, and in addition to receiving the Purple Heart, was awarded the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism. According to his citation, he "…played a major part in all phases of the successful relief of the village of Hoai An which was under heavy enemy attack by two Viet Cong battalions…. By his own personal example…, he led the attack…. Despite injuries by enemy machine gun bullets in the back, cheek, and nose, he went to the aid of a mortally wounded comrade… and delayed his own evacuation until he could call for additional air strikes and brief the task force commander of the situation."

Upon his return to the United States in January 1966, he served as an instructor at The Basic School. He completed the Command and Staff College in June 1967, and was named to the school's honor list. Assigned to Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in November 1967, while serving as a systems analyst with the Manpower Management Information Branch, G-1 Division.

In 1968, Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich was selected by the Under Secretary of the Navy to be his special assistant and Marine Corps aide. He served in this capacity under the Honorable Charles F. Baird, and Mr. Baird's successor as Under Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John W. Warner.

In April 1970, he began his second tour of duty in Vietnam, serving initially as an infantry battalion commander with the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines. On June 30, he assumed duty as the Commanding Officer of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced).

On November 18, 1970, Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich was, per his practice of accompanying every emergency extraction called for by his reconnaissance teams, serving as senior "extract officer" for such a mission on the day of his death. The team had incurred casualties and requested an emergency extraction from enemy-infested territory, in an area being enveloped by dense fog. The team was extracted under Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich's personal supervision. As the helicopter began it's ascent, it crashed into a mountainside in enemy territory, killing all aboard.

Lieutenant Colonel Leftwich's medals and awards include: the Navy Cross, the Silver Star (posthumous), the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and two gold stars, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal with one gold star, the Purple Heart with two gold stars, and various personal awards from the Republic of Vietnam.