



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20380

IN REPLY REFER TO
DA-5A/tdls

19 SEP 1969

Honorable Ralph Yarborough
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510

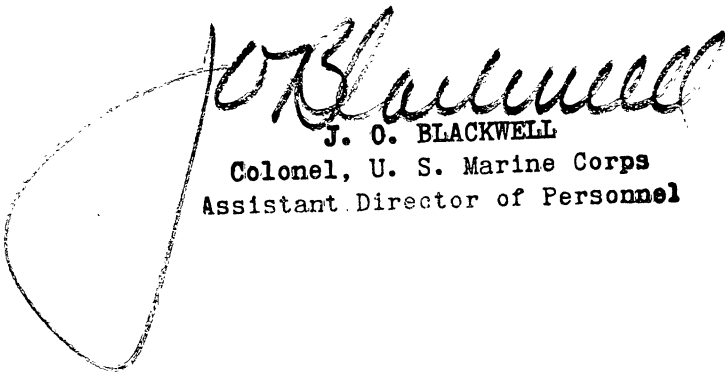
Dear Senator Yarborough:

This is in reply to your inquiry of 9 September 1969, regarding Private First Class Juan LEAL, Jr., 246 91 50, U. S. Marine Corps.

There is no provision for exempting a Marine from overseas or combat duties because he is an only son. Private First Class Leal's enlistment in the Marine Corps was for general service. Marines so enlisted are assigned in accordance with the needs of the Marine Corps and each must contribute his share to our overseas and combat mission. The normal tour of duty in the Far East is 13 months. Since Private First Class Leal departed the United States in February 1969, he will be eligible for return during March 1970. It would be most unfair to the thousands of Marines serving in Vietnam, and to their parents who are equally worried for their sons' safety, to give Private First Class Leal preferential treatment by restricting him from combat prior to his completion of his overseas tour of duty.

I regret that I cannot provide a favorable reply, but I trust that the foregoing information will be satisfactory for your purposes.

Sincerely,


J. O. BLACKWELL
Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps
Assistant Director of Personnel