



CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20318-9999

22 August 2014

1stLt Gerald F. Merna, USMC (Ret)
1101 S. Arlington Ridge Road, Suite 1007
Arlington, VA 22202-1928

Dear Lieutenant Merna,

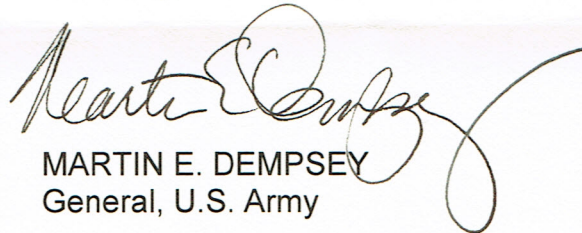
Thank you for writing. It was very nice to meet you at Sine' Irish Pub & Restaurant on 30 July. You have certainly met quite a few notable military personnel, and I am honored to be included among them.

I was sad to read about the loss of your wife, Dorothy. Please accept my sincere condolence on her passing. May the proud and loving memories of her life continue to comfort you. Your tributes to LTG Skibbie and MajGen Hochmuth were also very touching. They were terrific officers and are greatly missed.

With your background as an awards officer, you definitely have a lot to offer on the subject. Awards remain a top priority within the Department and the Military Services. I assure you, things haven't changed too much since you wore the uniform.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for your past service in the United States Marine Corps. Deanie joins me in sending best wishes for a happy, healthy, and safe year.

Sincerely,



MARTIN E. DEMPSEY
General, U.S. Army