

22 Sept 2020

From: Mark David Mahaffey, Colonel, United States Marine Corps (Retired)
To: Citizens of Ridgetop, Tennessee

SUBJ: LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION (Herbert Clayton Bollinger)

1. While I have never visited your fine city, I can certainly envision the setting as Major Bollinger has described it to me, for you see, I too hail from a rather small rural town that sits just outside Columbus, Ohio. Americana at its finest. Neighbor supporting neighbor, morning coffee with life-long friends at the local diner, church socials and tall tales and boasts about fishing, hunting and the towns football team. Yes, I can see it all.
2. I do, however, know Clayton Bollinger. As a young Captain of Marines, "Sparky" as we called him, served as a valuable member of the Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron that I had the honor of Commanding during my 28 years of service in the Marine Corps. Honest and trustworthy to a fault, Sparky was respected by all who served with him, senior, peer and subordinate. An exceptional pilot, he was an even better Marine. A true leader, Clayton well understood the precept of the Marine Corps: People First, Mission Always.
3. Later in our careers, our paths crossed several times. As a Marine Aircraft Group Commander, I would frequently see, now a more seasoned Captain Bollinger, and seek his council. Our Aircraft Group was supporting global combat operations and a key challenge that confronted us at the time was how to rapidly, and best train, our new aircrew, fresh out of flight school, for the demanding task of flying in combat. Sparky's contributions to our efforts to address this challenge were numerous and well founded.
4. Following my retirement from active service, I was invited to attend the activation ceremony of the Marine Corps' newest Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA-467), a unit that now Major Bollinger, was instrumental in helping to "stand-up". A herculean task, all associated with the unit's activation raved about Major Bollinger's contributions. Leadership? You bet; Sparky has the leadership trait down solid. Organized? Yes. Competent? Without a doubt. Task focused? Clearly/Absolutely.
5. In closing, it is with great pride, and without hesitation, that I recommend Clayton Bollinger to the citizens of Ridgetop, Tennessee for election to the position of City Mayor. Without any reservation whatsoever, should I be a citizen of Ridgetop, I would cast my vote on 3 November for Mr. Bollinger. He has earned, and has, my every confidence.


Mark D. Mahaffey