

Enclosure 4

ENCLOSURE C

Character Reference Letters



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLLEGE
100 STIMSON AVENUE
FORT LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS 66027-2301

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

ATZL-LSK

June 11, 2015

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

SUBJECT: Character Letter for Michael J. Forbes, SFC.

1. During the period from January 2012 through June 2014 I served as the S2 NCOIC for 3rd Special Forces Group, 3rd Battalion. In that position, I was responsible for the health and welfare of Michael J. Forbes, Staff Sergeant at the time. I also served as the Group Support Company Commander/1SG on Assumption of Command orders for over 18 months, still having Michael Forbes under the same chain of command. It is with great pleasure for me to write this character letter for SFC Forbes, Michael J. To date, I have known SFC Forbes for the past eleven years through military positions held and through continued mentorship. I can personally attest to his intelligence, fortitude, and professionalism. Others and I can confirm his exceptional qualities and potential as a leader, trainer, and motivator. I have witnessed firsthand his growth in both military knowledge and experience, and as a person.

2. I wanted to make sure that on this day, at this time, this letter would serve its purpose, by briefly highlighting a great Soldier and a great person. There is no document that could ever be produced to summarize or cover all the things that Michael J. Forbes has done to help, lead, guide and protect others throughout his Army career. Regardless of what this letter is used for, whether soon or 50 years from now, reading this document will never sum it up. You would have to get to know Michael J. Forbes for yourself to understand and appreciate his attributes. Forbes joined the Army at an older age than most, however that has never been an excuse to why he couldn't accomplish the task at hand nor go the extra mile. I have always known Michael Forbes to perform in an exceptional manner and he continues to possess the breadth and depth of knowledge seldom seen in Non-Commissioned Officers. He has the natural ability to express complicated and technical information clearly and concisely. His patience and compassion will serve him well and guarantee his continued success as a Senior Leader.

3. I joined the Army in 1994, currently still serving with almost 30 years of service. I have seen and worked with many enlisted personnel of all ranks, however I have never met or worked with anyone like SFC Forbes. I noticed great desire to be a professional, a leader, a mentor, even a great follower when needed in Forbes and that fire has never died. He is a by the book type of person, which is great and much needed in the profession of Military Intelligence. During the many years, months, days, hours spent alongside Michael Forbes, I never had a problem with him being by the book, this was a requirement from me to him. His work ethic spoke for itself. We never had an investigation, we never mishandled classifieds, we always got commendable during personnel security and physical security inspections, we trained others in the proper techniques of personnel and physical security and they too, benefited from the mentorship provided and I owe this to SFC Forbes.

ATZL-LSK

SUBJECT: Character Letter for Michael J. Forbes, SFC

4. SFC Forbes made my job and life easy as his NCOIC, but he also taught me a lot. Depending on the situation, I had to learn different communication techniques, I had to develop a higher level of compassion and empathy. These qualities would serve me best later in my career as a Command Sergeant Major. This is why I mention this, Michael Forbes did not show signs of weakness, he stood steadfast, excepted responsibility, and showed many Soldiers in the unit what it meant to be resilient. Not once did I have to worry about his physical, spiritual, or mental fitness, because he was a total Soldier that took pride in his unit and himself. Forbes was going through some emotional times, having to endure a separation and divorce, but he never faltered, never failed me, never lied; never missed work unless it was prior planned, never looked for or considered handouts, never looked for an excuse, and never compromised his integrity as a Soldier. I stand here today as a testament to his perseverance. I will tell you this, if given the chance as a CSM in the United States Army, I would hand pick SFC Michael Forbes to work for me right now.

5. SFC Michael J. Forbes is loyal, honest, dedicated, and continuously wants to be a great leader to Soldiers and his community. Allow this Soldier the opportunity to continue to provide structured leadership and leader development to all that encounter him. I am convinced that SFC Forbes will be successful in any endeavor he attempts. To be honest he has shown more potential in becoming a great leader than other promoted Sergeant First Classes and other senior enlisted personnel that I have met throughout the 29 plus years I have been in the Army. Anyone not wanting this person, this man, this Soldier, this Senior Non-Commissioned Officer on his or her team frankly is foolish and know nothing about what denotes or classifies a great Soldier, a leader, nor an Intelligence Professional. It is hard to find someone that will always tell you the truth, whether good or bad, but you will always get that from SFC Michael J. Forbes. I will always be grateful for his help in making me a better leader and I'm proud that we have one another as mentors.

6. Point of Contact for this memorandum is CSM Aubrey L. Crenshaw at aubrey.l.crenshaw.mil@army.mil or by cell phone at 336-337-7232.



AUBREY L. CRENSHAW
CSM, USA
CGSC Instructor

Dane A. Bergeron

909 Charleston Place, DeRidder, La 70634 • 337-401-8283 • daneb@scpd.org

June 10, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

I have known SFC Michael Forbes in various capacities for 15 years. I was the Targeting Officer and Personnel Recovery Director for CJSOTF-A, 2007-2008. SFC Forbes was my lead Intelligence Analyst for both of my positions. SFC Forbes' dedication to duty, integrity, and outstanding attention to detail directly eliminated numerous High-Value Targets (HVTs).

SFC Forbes possesses excellent communication skills (both written and verbal), allowing him to effectively interact with all levels of personnel in the Chain of Command.

SFC Forbes is one of the finest soldiers I served with throughout my 30-year career. He has been a tremendous asset to The United States Army and The United States of America.

POC for this letter is Dane A. Bergeron, 337-401-8283.

Respectfully,



Dane A. Bergeron
CW4(R), SF
Chairman Republican Executive Committee
Beauregard Parish, La.

CC: Senator John Kennedy, La
Senator Bill Cassidy, La
Senator Tom Cotton, Ar
Congressman Steve Scalise, La
Congressman Mike Johnson, La
Congressman Clay Higgins, La

June 8, 2023

BG Ferguson, Lawrence G.
Deputy Commanding General
2929 Desert Storm Dr.
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

SFC(R) Bleyl, Donald
102 Carnoustie Circle
Anderson, SC 29621

Sir:

My name is SFC(R) Bleyl, Donald, and I am writing to you on behalf of SFC Forbes, Michael J. He recently informed me that he received a GOMOR and explained his situation. After hearing that news, I felt I needed to write to you and present to you a different picture, the real picture, of who SFC Forbes really is, and what he stands for. I was honestly surprised to hear this news, as everything I know of SFC Forbes was, and is, only of the utmost professionalism.

I first met SFC Forbes in 2010 when we were both in 3rd BN, 3rd SFG (A). I was an 18C assigned to ODA 3322, and he was assigned to the BN S2 Section. I remember him being the only person that worked in the S2 Section at that time. He was always there, usually staying late, and working on off days, and was always willing to help, no matter how much work he had to get done. Everyone knew that "Forbes" was organized, professional, and unit first! He was always there for anyone or anything that needed to be done.

In 2012, I had some legal issues that affected my TS clearance, and it ended up being flagged. After all that was cleared, I needed assistance with getting my clearance straightened out. I was so confused and unsure of what to do, so I went to his office for help. SFC Forbes stopped what he was doing, and without judgement said, "I got you," and quickly retrieved a single sheet of paper that had the words "wish list" on it. He began circling and crossing things off this paper while he quickly asked questions of me. Within two minutes I left his office and could hear him feverishly typing away again. He could have simply just told me the basic steps of what to do, but instead, over the course of a couple of days, he walked me through step by step, making sure I understood all that needed to be done. He told me what to do, what kind of letter I needed to write, all the way down to the detail of checking my structure and content of my letters. He gave me the legal reasons for doing so, and how to do them in order to succeed the right way. He took extra time to ensure that I would have the best chance to successfully retain my clearance. He was and still is extremely competent in his job. He was a Wall Street Advisor for 14 years prior to his enlistment, and that should say a lot about his character. He voluntarily gave up a successful career to give his time and life for his country, and his fellow Soldiers. He has been nothing but a great influence and friend to me over the years. I have also seen him at countless charity events supporting the Special Forces Association, participating in charity motorcycle rides, being Santa Claus on several occasions, and just giving his own personal time. The first time he met my little girls, he even sent them home with some special souvenirs that he had collected from his personal travels. SFC Forbes has such a giving heart, and

he is always willing and excited to support whatever the greater cause is, whether it's Gold Star Families or Toys for Tots.

When I was nearing retirement, I went to see him to check on my situation after everything regarding my legal issue was dropped. He sat down at his computer and notified me that my clearance was good. He began talking me through a series of questions (I have seen him do this repeatedly with others). All of them had to do with my career or service. Upon mentioning the TAP Program, he abruptly asked me, "How many months do you have until you get out?" I replied it was about 18. He sat down and looked me up again and looked for my renewal window. He told me to put a date 30 days prior to the earliest renewal request date on my calendar and he would ensure we put in for my PPR. He wanted to do this so that I could have some coverage in the civilian world to have a better chance for professional employment. Even after I had been out for years, I called him, and he helped me by getting me phone numbers to get in touch with DoD CAF to restart another review process for a potential employer. I retired in May 2015. Now I have a new home here in SC with my wife and children, a great job, and still an active DOD clearance, thanks to SFC Forbes' dedication to his profession.

Sir, SFC Forbes has never wavered in his commitment to doing the right thing. He stands for justice and would sacrifice himself (figuratively or literally) for any one of us. He is one of the most competent Soldiers and people I know. I would gladly and proudly serve with him again. He is an asset to his unit, and to the United States Army. Please reconsider your decision on this GOMOR. From what he has told me, and I completely trust him, there may be some bigger issues in his unit that are falling on him without reason, and that is unfair. He has, and will always do the right thing, even under pressure. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



Donald Bleyl SFC(R)
Robert Bosch LLC
Mechanical Engineer
912-675-5155
bleyld@gmail.com



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS BATTALION
82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION
FORT LIBERTY, NORTH CAROLINA 28310

AFVC-HBN-CO

11 June 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander BG Ferguson,

SUBJECT: Letter of Character for SFC Michael J. Forbes

1. The purpose of this memorandum is to speak to the character of SFC Michael Forbes. Thank you for the opportunity to address my personal experience as one of his former Soldiers. I would like to address how much this leader has positively contributed to my career, my personal success as a leader, and how he remains a mentor of mine in our United States Army.
2. SFC Forbes and I worked together for approximately two years while I was assigned to HHC, 3/3 SFG (SO) (A). He was my S2 NCOIC and provided oversight to my assigned duties. SFC Forbes personally mentored and coached me on my duties and assisted me on many personal and professional issues, which prepared me to later assist my Soldiers and colleagues during my time as a leader of Soldiers. SFC Forbes' in-depth understanding of Army Policy, Regulations and procedures has helped me become a knowledgeable leader while deployed and/or serving in subsequent assignments. I still remain in contact with him as he continues to coach and mentor me as a peer, serving as the 82nd Division, Counterintelligence Coordinating Authority, which is at the G2/G2X Division Intelligence Architecture. Though SFC Forbes does not consult me in operational matters in relation to Counterintelligence, he is a superb resource in leading/training soldiers, mentoring/coaching peers, and guiding Senior Leaders at any echelon. He is excellent at providing and/or researching Policy and Regulation references that many times change Commanders and OICs decision-making process. He is the epitome of a professional guide; he does not tell people what they want to hear or participate in group-think.
3. SFC Forbes is everything a leader, junior leader or Soldier should aspire to be. He LIVES the Army Values. Some could say, he fully represents these values. His coaching and mentorship, has guided me through the following processes: he was instrumental to my retention in my MOS back in 2015 (see below); he has coached and mentored me from a SGT to SFC (pinning me during a recent promotion ceremony last year); he has mentored me to pursue my BA in Criminal Justice, MS in Criminal Justice and MBA in Project Management; and he has continued to be my point of contact for regulatory guidance and personal development now and in the future.
4. Back when I was an Buck Sergeant, then SSG, Forbes became the sole reason I continue to serve in the MOS, of my choosing, today. It was due to his intervention and tough words, behind the HHC, 3/3 SFG building, that I realized what kind of man SFC Forbes was. I was in a situation where counterproductive mid-level leaders had convinced our BN Commander that I should go back to the Infantry. A group of SSGs and SFCs created MFRs they presented, embellished, and falsified to the BN Commander without notifying me. Subsequently, I was given a first reading for a reassignment. I immediately contacted my Congressman and discussed my situation with SSG Forbes periodically.

5. On the morning of the day, of my third reading of my pending reassignment to an 11B, I decided to reach out to SSG Forbes again. Carrying my binder of extremely organized evidence, I went to the S2 Office and asked him to speak with me out back. He and I, both, knew I was being pushed out of my MOS by a corrupted process. I said to him, "I don't know what to do. Congress is taking their time. Its all right here!" I will never forget this; he sternly said, "I have told you two times now, Congress takes forever. IG can stop this! They can put it on hold until you get due process. Now either you take that book to them (pointing to their office through the trees) or go be an Infantryman, again. You must decide and, it seems, you need to do it right now." He was right. He gave me their number on a post-it and I was at IG in an hour. Everything stopped. The meeting with the BN Commander was cancelled and two weeks later I was reassigned to 525th MI BDE.
6. Thanks to SSG Forbes' blunt encouragement in getting me to contact IG, someone stopped the process. It hadn't occurred to me they could even help; SSG Forbes' insight in how the Army works helped me preserve my chosen career and is the reason I remain in the Army today.
7. When SFC Forbes shared with me what is going on with him right now, I felt compelled to write this letter on his behalf. I believe he should not receive a GOMOR or a Relief for Cause NCOER and that something or someone else is out of place. Please consider my character assessment of this great leader. The US Army would be greatly impacted without leaders such as SFC Forbes.
8. Point of contact for this memorandum is the undersigned at eric.l.salinis.mil@army.mil or 910-551-9347.



ERIC L SALINIS
SFC, USA
Senior Counterintelligence Sergeant



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE
MILITARY COMMITTEE
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
PSC 81, BOX 300
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USDELMC-SLD

10 June 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL REVIEWING AUTHORITIES

SUBJECT: Character Statement for SFC Michael J. Forbes

1. My name is SSG Valerie M. Hughes. I have served as a Security Representative with the United States Military Delegation to NATO since July 2022. I worked with SFC Michael J. Forbes from September 2016 to June 2017 when he was a SSG and I was a SPC in Delta Company, 54th Brigade Engineer Battalion (Airborne), 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne). During this time, he was assigned as my squad leader.
2. As a junior enlisted service member, SFC Forbes was critical in the development of myself and my peers, as a Soldier and future leaders in the military. He exhibited humility, knowledge, decisiveness and courage; characteristics that he reinforced in his leadership style. The following events displayed his characteristics.
3. After arriving to the unit and observing our behaviors for about a month, SSG Forbes held a squad meeting under the BDE flagpole. During this meeting, he explained that we were a team and that he would not tolerate us talking bad about each other. If he found out about it, then he would bring everyone together to resolve the issue. From that moment on, I no longer saw my teammates as annoying and I put my negative feelings aside so that our team could accomplish its mission. During this meeting he also explained his Soldier development method, a three-strike progression. SSG Forbes placed an importance on Soldier development by establishing a working environment where mistakes were encouraged as long as Soldiers were able to learn from their mistakes and no one was injured. When a mistake was made, he would walk Soldiers through critical thinking to determine a different resolution for the future. He followed through on his method and consequently the squad had excellent meetings where individual's mistakes were discussed openly and we worked together to become a team. In one example, I recall one of our Soldiers lacked the discipline to show up on time. SSG Forbes addressed her individually the first time, then addressed her, with her team leader, the second time that she was late. The third time she was late, SSG Forbes addressed the squad and how we needed to work together to help our peer be on time. The team leader took responsibility for her lateness and SSG Forbes allowed the individual one more chance. In the end, the Soldier was no longer late so SSG Forbes counseled her to let her know that she would have her strikes reset to zero. His process allowed for mistakes, remediation and, more importantly, recovery.
4. SSG Forbes discovered that our PSG had abused his authority and violated the civil rights of many Soldiers by coercing Soldiers to allow him to search their phones prior to SSG Forbes' arrival to the unit. Later, SSG Forbes noticed that the same PSG was counterproductively targeting two of SSG Forbes' assigned Soldiers. SSG Forbes immediately intervened, but soon after, the attention of the PSG turned to SSG Forbes. I believe SSG Forbes' intent was to deflect

the abuse from the Soldiers. All I know is that this turned into an IG complaint and the two Soldiers were removed from platoon while the PSG was reassigned to a BDE manning position.

5. SSG Forbes also created an environment where he taught us to be humble and encourage suggestions from everyone, regardless of rank. Even as a SSG, with about 9 years of experience in the military, he believed it was normal for PV2s to have good ideas. SSG Forbes had no issue implementing the idea of a PV2 instead of his own. By doing this, he also taught Soldiers how to bring forth a different idea or how to bring forth problems if there were any.

6. Despite the good and bad times that our platoon experienced, SSG Forbes wanted to improve the platoon's cohesion and esprit de corps. He was able to accomplish this by inviting all platoon members to his house on a regular basis. He made an effort to have birthday parties every two months for everyone that was celebrating a birthday. For the Soldiers this was a meaningful gesture because most Soldiers were single and in a small overseas community. They did not have anyone to celebrate a birthday with.

7. I highlighted these lessons to you because these are ones that I emulate as a SSG. I have maintained contact with SFC Forbes since I left the unit in 2018 because I know that I can rely on him as a mentor for my development as a Soldier and Leader. I can rely on SFC Forbes because he always cared about me and my peers. He got to know us as individuals because he was concerned about our well-being. I still rely on him and what he taught me to this day, which is almost five years after working together. SFC Forbes is an effective leader and should be supported to continue developing Soldiers. If provided the opportunity, I would work with SFC Forbes in any capacity.

8. This character letter does not reflect the views of my unit. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at valerie.m.hughes4.mil@army.mil or DSN: 314-597-9433.

Valerie M. Hughes

VALERIE M. HUGHES
SSG, USA
US Military Delegation to NATO

June 8, 2023

BG Ferguson, Lawrence G.
Deputy Commanding General
2929 Desert Storm Dr.
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Armijo, Anthony J., MSG(R), 18Z
5120 Trophy Ct.
Fayetteville, NC 28314

Sir:

I am writing this letter you for SFC Forbes, Michael J. He called me and explained his current situation and your decision to present him with a General Officer Memorandum of Reprimand (GOMOR). You may be getting some misinformation from those who seek your fulfillment of this GOMOR. I have worked with, now SFC, Forbes from 2009 to 2012 at both the 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG-A) HHD and at 3/3SFG when he worked in the S2 Section as a Personnel Security representative. You must be aware of SFC Forbes characteristics; he is a very unique person.

I first met SFC Forbes in 2009 when we were both in HHC 3SFG (SO) (A). I was asked to take over by CSM Peters as the NCOIC of the Group S2 Section (intelligence production and personnel security) because the incumbent was abruptly removed. After a changeover and enough time to assess the section, I realized that these Soldiers were divided into factions due to the hands-off leadership style of my predecessor. Also, SPC Forbes and two female NCOs were being informally targeted with extra work, details, and disparaging comments behind closed doors. I devised a plan to destroy the wall that had been created between the Soldiers and get them to begin to trust each other and, hopefully, cohesively work together. I held rank-graduating meetings (from the highest NCO rank to all lower-enlisted) where I was open and candid about what I learned had occurred to SPC Forbes and the two female NCOs prior to my taking over. I wanted complete transparency between my Soldiers prior to our upcoming OEF XIII deployment, which was necessary if we were going to have any chance to become a team. We began doing everything as a team from our Physical and Army training, to our tasked intelligence production. I believe we began functioning as a unit prior to deployment.

During OEF XIII as the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force-Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A) J2 SGM, I sent, then SPC, Forbes to Special Operations Task Force-East (SOTF-E) to support their Intelligence efforts. Regardless of all he had been through in Garrison with prior leadership, he remained positive. In fact, SOTF-E, which was run by 19th SFG, quickly repurposed him to be the Battle NCOIC's direct assistant. He worked on the JOC floor and supported current OPS via multiple roles; he did everything from: TIC documentation, UAV liaison, and CONOP de-confliction work with the S35, to name a few. The most significant thing I remember about SPC Forbes and OEF XIII was that within two weeks of being reassigned back (mid-deployment) to CJSOTF-A, he produced an impactful intelligence product about Aqtash Valley in Konduz Province. SPC Forbes' initial assessment of his newly assigned duty responsibility of covering RC North, resulted in an order from the CJSOTF-A Commander (CDR), COL Benton, to provide weekly updates on the topic. SPC Forbes had identified a key trend that had been


missed for over 6 weeks; a Warlord had autonomously begun standing up militias without uttering a word in the Shura and, significantly, without any US Army assistance. When asked by the CJSOTF-A CDR, "Why do you believe this so strongly?" SGT Forbes responded, "Sir, I don't believe anyone read [the Warlords] Bio, that I found. It's very clear what his motivation is and mannerism in the [three letter agency] document. It was thorough." Given we were in the 3rd or 4th rendition of renaming our partnering militia recruitment and training efforts, SPC Forbes identified within two weeks one of the most important developments in RC North. Weeks later he was asked to Brief his accurate growth predictions of the militia groups to COL Buldoc, the in-coming CJSOTF-A commander, via a VTC. He was the only lower enlisted SME in the room and enhanced CJSOTF-A intelligence reputation in theater. SPC Forbes is dynamic and well spoken.

During OEF XVII, as the SOTF-E Operations SGM, now SGT, Forbes who was the NCOIC of our night-shift operations for 3 months was selected to go forward and support AOB 3330 in RC East, Afghanistan. During this time SGT Forbes spear-headed a Comprehensive (FUSION) All-Source Intelligence Presentation for the AOB CDR. This product was designed to be 'evergreen' with independent updates from the usual intelligence sources and the more unusual sources, like Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations and Information Operations on our in-theater shared-drive. This product shaped the AOB CDR's Village Stability Operational (VSO) Plan recommendations to the SOTF-E CDR that were later approved and implemented. Due to this product's success, the AOB commander asked him for another one in a different area in his AO. SGT Forbes believed that the FUSION concept should be standardized whereas each intelligence discipline updates it regularly, because he showed it can be done via phone and email. All of this was before the online collaboration tools we have today.

Sir, SFC Forbes is not a typical out-of-high-school Soldier; he never has been, nor will ever be. He is highly intelligent, insightful, dutiful, and he brings tons of life and work experience with him in every daily engagement he has. He joined at 38 years of age and has been older than every CDR (except possibly his first one formerly COL HAAS). He has always enjoyed open-door access to every BN CDR as a long-time Personnel Security Manager. He never gave any of them bad guidance because he double checks his work. It is for these reasons that SPC/SGT/SSG Forbes was always assigned to the HHC, 3SFG S2 Section. In fact, he worked in the office and for years was only provided 1 Soldier over 8 years at 3rd BN. They got 2 Soldiers for the price of 1 with him; they exploited his work ethic and intelligence after he single handedly rebuilt what he inherited. It took him 9 months to consolidate, sort, retain relevant/destroy outdated Personnel Security Files in 3 separate BN locations. He did this while he set up trackers and SOPs that made the shop run unlike it ever had and likely ever has since. I have remained in contact with him since I left 3SFG and later retired from the Army.

Please rescind this GOMOR, Sir. I know SFC Forbes, I know he is rebutting this GOMOR and the investigation that underpins it. I can assure you, he would not argue a losing point. He would concede if he was wrong; he is a true professional! Please feel free to contact me if you need more examples, my phone number is below.

Respectfully,


Anthony J. Armijo SGM(R) 18Z
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