



MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

General Alfred M. Gray Jr.

General Alfred M. Gray Jr., 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps (1987–91), left an indelible mark on the Corps through his visionary leadership and transformative initiatives. Gray was a key leader in theorizing, testing, and codifying the maneuver warfare philosophy, culminating in the publication of *Warfighting*, FMFM-1 (today's MCDP-1) in 1989. Since then, maneuver warfare has been the cornerstone of the Marine Corps' warfighting doctrine.

Gray inculcated a "warrior ethos" throughout the Corps that promoted professionalism, intellectual rigor, and a deep commitment to initiative and mission success. Gray built his

understanding of a warrior ethos from years of experience as a Marine Corps combat leader. In Korea, Gray served as an artillery officer and an infantry officer. In Vietnam, he served as a signals intelligence electronic warfare officer and an artillery officer. In 1967, Gray commanded a composite artillery battalion at an isolated outpost called Gio Linh near the demilitarized zone, where he led by example on 14 May 1967 by risking his life to help rescue wounded Marines trapped in a minefield, an action for which he received the Silver Star.

As Commandant of the Marine Corps, Gray founded Marine Corps University out of a deep belief in the value of professional military education. Today, the university continues to



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educate and hone the minds and warfighting skills of the next generation of Marine Corps leaders through its many officer and enlisted programs designed to educate Marines to prevail in combat.

General Gray retired from the Marine Corps on 30 June 1991. His impact on the post-Vietnam transformation of the Corps cannot be overstated. Gray was an inspirational combat leader who always led by example. His vision of maneuver warfare, a warrior ethos, and a premier institution for professional military education continues to thrive and define the current Marine Corps. On 20 March 2024, General Alfred M. Gray Jr. passed away and was laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.