



MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

Eagle, Globe, and Anchor

From its birth through the Civil War, the Marine Corps went through various uniform insignia, often featuring an eagle, occasionally an anchor, and sometimes an embellished “U.S.M.” In November 1868, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Brigadier General Jacob Zeilin, determined the Corps needed an insignia unique to Marines and emblematic of the Service’s roles. Zeilin approved the recommendation of a board of Marine officers studying the issue, which was disseminated on 30 November 1868, of an insignia of a plate displaying a globe featuring North and South America, with an eagle standing atop, while an anchor intersected the hemisphere. The Marine Corps had borrowed freely from the British Royal Marines’ own “Globe and Laurel” emblem, which featured a globe and anchor as well. Nevertheless, each component of the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor highlighted a unique aspect of the Marine Corps: the eagle incorporated a traditional United States symbol, the anchor emphasized the Corps’ naval heritage, and the globe represented Marines’ expeditionary nature.

The design has been modified over the years, with differing versions for officers and enlisted, for different uniforms, and for inclusion with the Marine Corps’ official emblem. The basic symbols nonetheless have remained. The last major changes were made in 1955, which confirmed the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor as the Corps’ official emblem and included a ribbon with “Semper Fidelis” held in the eagle’s beak. For the official seal, the emblem sits on a scarlet background encircled by a navy-blue band with a gold rope rim, inscribed with “Department of the Navy” on one side and “United States Marine Corps” in gold on the other.



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