



# MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

## *Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune*

Lieutenant General John A. Lejeune drove fundamental changes that created the modern Marine Corps while serving as the 13th Commandant. He was born near Lacour, Louisiana, on 10 January 1867. He attended Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, for three years before securing an appointment at the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated second in his class in 1888. At the expiration of a two-year cruise as a cadet midshipman, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps on 1 July 1890 and reported to Marine Barracks New York the next month.

For the next 20 years, Lejeune held a variety of roles that were representative for the era, spending the bulk of his time aboard warships as part of Marine detachments or commanding units in Cuba, Panama, the

Philippines, and Mexico. He was a brigadier general by the time the United States entered World War I. In France, he commanded the 4th Marine Brigade and then the U.S. Army's 2d Division. When he returned to the United States in October 1919, Lejeune became the commanding general of Marine Barracks Quantico for a second time.

On 1 July 1920, Lejeune was appointed the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps. Throughout the next nine years of his commandancy, Lejeune presided over significant changes. He sought to expand the Marine Corps' relevancy to the U.S. Navy and the nation, doing so by



*Archives Branch, Marine Corps History Division*

Collect

Preserve

Promote

Support

For History Division publications, click [here](#)  
To learn more about History Division, click [here](#)





prioritizing the doctrinal development, training, and implementation of amphibious assault and defense and advanced base operations. Lejeune also prioritized high standards, efficiency, and the expansion of Marine Corps professional military education, establishing Marine Corps Schools at Quantico in 1921. Here, the Marine Corps would not only educate Marines in warfighting competency but also emphasize the importance of leadership at all ranks. Moreover, Lejeune stressed leadership themes that remain today, such as special trust and confidence and paternal leaders as teachers. Finally, Lejeune understood the importance of history and heritage and diligently worked to formalize important Marine Corps traditions.

Major General John A. Lejeune stepped down as Commandant and retired in 1929. He was promoted to lieutenant general on the retired list in 1942, just before his death on 20 November. Lejeune's life, career, and vision established the bedrock on which the modern Marine Corps rests today.