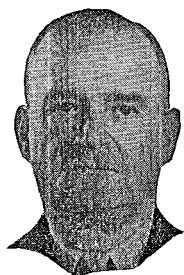


Anniversary Greetings

... from the Commandant

ON THIS 171st anniversary of the U. S. Marine Corps I have a special greeting and challenge to the officers and non-commissioned officers who have chosen a career in the postwar military establishment. One of the reasons you have chosen that career is that you are proud of the record of our Corps, and of being a part of it, just as I am.



In 171 years our Corps has an amazing record which will bear the closest scrutiny. Its traditions have been upheld in every generation by marines who did more than their duty at all times. On this anniversary we have virtually a new organization. Never in peacetime has the Marine Corps approached its present size, while even during the first World War it was only slightly more than half as large as it is today. In the last two months approximately as many men joined the Marine Corps as composed its entire force during the early 1930's, when the nation mistakenly abandoned its defenses for treaties that were to become scraps of paper.

These new men will hear, just as you have heard in years past, of the spectacular feats of arms performed by a few marines at Tripoli and the Halls of Montezuma. They will hear, at first hand, of the gallantry of marines at Belleau Wood, Guadalcanal, and Iwo Jima. In the long years in which the Marine Corps has served the nation these battles rightly have special significance.

At the same time, other contributions which were equally vital were made during the years when the world was technically at peace. The task which the Corps now faces is to equal or surpass these accomplishments in the coming years, which we can help to make years of peace.

It is a part of our history which we can well consider today that between 1812 and 1917 marines made 108 separate landings in every part of the globe. Moreover, each of these landings was so efficiently accomplished as to win the commendation of the naval officer in command. Never was a Marine landing force ambushed or driven back, and never did the Marines fail to accomplish their mission.

The phrase "First to Fight" is no empty one, although a study of Marine operations shows that quick, decisive action has many times averted the necessity for actual hostilities. It is axiomatic that the Marine Corps is always ready for action with the Fleet in any part of the world. How that reputation was won is well worth the serious study of any professional military man. In 1836 the Commandant of the Corps mobilized even the clerks in Head-

quarters and led more than half the strength of the Corps in action against an Indian uprising. The rapid movement of marines to capture Guantanamo Bay in the Spanish-American War and their bold and skillful performance of duty led Admiral Dewey to remark that if he had had a thousand marines at Manila he could have averted the bloody Philippine Insurrection. Again in 1902 a battalion of marines was embarked for Panama within 24 hours of receipt of orders, and its presence halted a rebellion which was under way.

That state of readiness which is and must continue to be standard for the Marine Corps made possible the speedy garrisoning of Iceland in 1941 and it allowed the United States to take the offensive at Guadalcanal. The Marines were not ready by accident, but rather by plan, in accord with the doctrines of employment of amphibious forces which the Navy and Marine Corps have worked out in their 171 years of close association. The Fleet Marine Force was the test of these amphibious doctrines which were adopted by all the major nations.

The Presidential Unit Citations won by Marine units in the Pacific testify to more than individual courage and "esprit de corps." They demonstrate knowledge, skill, attention to details, and above all, devotion to duty, all of which go to make up an efficient fighting team. These are the qualities which every leader must have and which he must impart to the men around him.

A military career is an honorable one and I take pleasure in welcoming into our ranks the thousands of officers and non-commissioned officers who have lately chosen it. It is not an easy life, because it is a position of trust, and as such calls for continuous effort. There is more which you must learn today than ever before in military history. The developments of the future which are now casting their shadows among us merit the closest attention and study. Equally important is familiarity with the past achievements of our Corps. Tactics and techniques change, although their basic principles remain the same. Devotion to duty never changes. In the year ahead we can well take inspiration and guidance from the marines who have freely hazarded and offered their lives in the cause of the United States. We can draw equal inspiration from the generations of marines who have quietly stood guard over our liberties for 171 years. Years of hard work in keeping the peace are as much a part of our tradition as battles and beachheads.

It is our job to be ready for anything which may be required of us, and it is our tradition that we will be ready at any time. That is one of the many cherished traditions which it is our privilege and our challenge to maintain during the coming year. I know that each of you will meet the challenge squarely, just as marines have done ever since November 10, 1775, in peace as well as war.

