



HEADQUARTERS U.S. MARINE CORPS

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Today marks the 181st birthday of the United States Marine Corps. For Marines throughout the world it is at once a day of celebration and reflection.

In the nearly two hundred years since that intrepid group of fighting men was recruited at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia there have been almost unbelievable changes in our Corps. In numbers, we have grown from a few score to more than 200,000 with every Marine now, as then, a volunteer. Our arsenal of new and fantastically complex weapons is a far cry from the muskets and cannon of Revolutionary days. The tactics we have devised to meet the challenge of the nuclear age, the outstanding development of Marine aviation, the introduction of the Marine concept of vertical envelopment, the countless and complicated items of equipment required for our forces today—these are indeed changes which could not have been envisaged by the founders of our Corps. But the basic ingredient which has always made the Marine Corps unique and unsurpassed remains unchanged—the superbly trained, highly motivated, self confident, and intensely loyal Marine. Whether it be with muskets or M-1's, the United States Marine for 181 years has been ready on a moment's notice to fight our country's battles against any form of tyranny.

Let us never forget that weapons alone do not make a formidable fighting force; even our most modern and deadly weapon is only as effective as the Marine who mans it. And the effectiveness of every Marine is now—as it has been throughout our long and illustrious history—the result of rigorous and relentless training, selfless and undeviating loyalty, unquestioned and uncommon valor.

Ours is indeed a heritage in which we may justly take pride. It is a heritage which should inspire each of us to even greater efforts today and in the years ahead. On this and every birthday of the United States Marines we must rededicate ourselves to Country and Corps. We must strive constantly to add luster to the glorious record of those Marines who have gone before us. Only by so doing can we prove ourselves worthy of our heritage. Only thus can we proudly bear the title of United States Marines.

With special trust and confidence that each of us will so discharge his responsibilities that the ensuing year will be one of solid and heartening achievement, I extend my personal congratulations and best wishes to all Marines—men and women, regulars and reserves—and to their families on this, the 181st birthday of our beloved Corps.

R. McC. PATE

General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps