

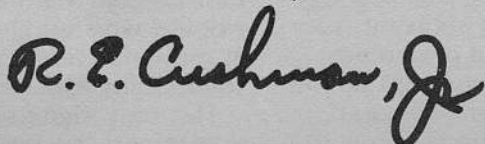
As it should be, our Marine Corps Birthday is cause for celebration: celebration in honor of another year of proud, dedicated and successful service to our Country.

This occasion not only recalls a birth and the passing of another year of success and honor—but celebrates a re-birth of the spirit which binds all Marines.

That spirit is embodied in the thousands of young Marines around the world who will celebrate their first Marine Corps Birthday this year. They will provide the bridge between the proud traditions of our past and the exciting possibilities of the future. Ultimately, the character of the name "Marine" will be entrusted to their charge.

At the end of the year ahead, when we transmit to those that follow the well-lighted torch of special trust of the American people, let us ensure the glow is brighter—through act and deed—in the knowledge that all Marines truly take care of their own. This is my charge. This is my message.

Happy Birthday and best wishes to all members of our Marine Corps family on this 197th Anniversary.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "R. E. Cushman, Jr." with a stylized, flowing script.

R. E. CUSHMAN, JR.  
General, U.S. Marine Corps