

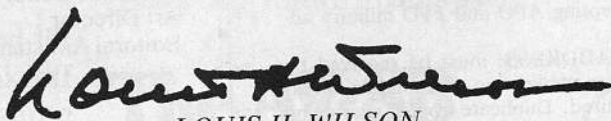
10 November 1977

Through succeeding generations since 1775, dedicated Marines have shaped the heritage of our modern Marine Corps. The story is well known. Marines at Trenton, Bladensburg, Chapultepec, Guantanamo, Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, Inchon, and Khe Sanh—all Marines who have preceded us—have written the heritage of our Corps. It is a heritage of greatness that we live by today.

While that heritage points up our indebtedness to yesterday, it underscores our present obligation.

As we join again to celebrate the birthday anniversary of our Corps, it is well to consider that obligation. In fulfilling it, we must insist upon solid quality: in every Marine, in the life we lead, and in the air-ground team we form. Our training must be disciplined, thorough, and meaningful. Our readiness must be sound and on the mark. And every Marine must give unflagging dedication to both new, well-grounded standards, as well as to those formed during 202 years of experience and tradition. Those who have gone before expect no less. Nor must we today. Only a quality, ready Corps can take the hill and entrust it to those who follow. We are unalterably committed to that end, for efforts today, like yesterday, write the heritage for tomorrow.

Happy birthday and every good wish for the 203d year that we begin today—with determination, pride, and vision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Louis H. Wilson", with a stylized, sweeping flourish at the end.

LOUIS H. WILSON
General, U. S. Marine Corps