

10 November 1983

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

When I assumed office as your 28th Commandant, our Commander-in-Chief gave me my first order. He said, “. . . on behalf of all Americans, I want a message sent to every member of the Corps—to every place where the words ‘Semper Fidelis’ are a way of life. General, tell it to the Marines. Tell them that their countrymen are grateful . . . that we stand behind them . . . that we are proud of our proudest.”


Today, on the 208th anniversary of the founding of our Corps, I republish that message. If there is one word which more accurately describes pride than any other, that word is Marine.

Pride is an 18-year-old recruit when he is called Marine for the first time. Pride is our predecessors at Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, Inchon, Hue City—or any other battle where uncommon valor was a common virtue. Pride is standing in harm’s way in Lebanon so that others less fortunate can find peace. And, finally, pride is what draws together those of us who have earned the title “Marine” to celebrate our 208th birthday.

During our 209th year, I ask that all Marines rededicate themselves as “Soldiers of the Sea” by remembering that our pride is based upon a tradition of “Semper Fidelis”—to God, to Country, to family, to fellow Marines, and to our beloved Corps.

Here’s health to you, and to our Corps, which we are proud to serve.

Happy birthday!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.X. Kelley', with a large, sweeping loop at the top and a horizontal line extending to the right.

P.X. Kelley
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps