

# The U.S. Marines in World War I

## PART III: THE U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE COMES TO THE FORE

by Colonel Walter G. Ford, USMC (Ret)\*

### The Marine Corps Reserve (Female)

As with the advent of the Marine Corps Reserve, the U.S. Navy led the way for women in the Marine Corps Reserve. The Navy's significant expansion, resulting from the Naval Appropriations Act of 1916, demanded more manpower quickly. While volunteers and the draft brought about growth in personnel, the Navy needed more men in the fleet, and while the act did not specifically mention women in the Reserve, it did not preclude their service. So, with a secretary of the Navy interpretation and decision, that same act opened the doors for women to volunteer and serve. The Navy began recruiting female yeomen in March 1917.<sup>1</sup>

Seeing the Navy's success, the Marine Corps quickly realized the benefit of opening its rolls to women in clerical positions at its stateside headquarters, recruiting stations and supply depots, freeing men for the frontlines in Europe and other expeditionary efforts in support of national defense commitments. The demand for trained clerical staff was particularly great, and civilian women with those skills were seen as a capable source. Just four months after the Navy acted to bring in women on 2 August 1918, Major General Commandant George Barnett wrote the secretary of the Navy seeking authority to enlist women in the Marine Corps Reserve, specifically for clerical duty. The secretary, in concurring wrote:



*National Archives, Record Group 127G, photo 515829*  
Pvt Opha May Johnson, the Marine Corps' first enlisted woman and first female noncommissioned officer, enrolled on 13 August 1918, the day after Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels authorized the enlistment of women in the Marine Corps Reserve.

\* This article, one in a series devoted to U.S. Marines in the First World War, is published for the education and training of Marines by the History Division, Marine Corps University, Quantico, VA, as part of the Marine Corps' observance of the centennial anniversary of that war. Editorial costs have been defrayed in part by contributions from members of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation.

<sup>1</sup> Nathaniel Patch, "The Story of Female Yeomen during the First World War," *Prologue Magazine* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2006).

## NAVY DEPARTMENT

Washington

August 12, 1918

To: The Major General Commandant  
 Subject: Enrollment of women in the Marine Corps Reserve for clerical duty.  
 Reference: Letter of Major General Commandant, August 2, 1918.

1. Referring to letter of the Major General Commandant as per above reference and in particular to the statement contained in the second paragraph thereof, that it is thought that about 40 per cent of the work at the Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, can be performed as well by women as men: authority is granted to enroll women in the Marine Corps Reserve for clerical duty at Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D. C., and at other Marine Corps offices in the United States where their services may be utilized to replace men who may be qualified for active field service with the understanding that such enrollment shall be gradual.

JOSEPHUS DANIELS,  
 Secretary of the Navy<sup>2</sup>

Anticipating the secretary's approval, the Marines enlisted the first female, Opha May Johnson, who was working as a civil service employee at Headquarters Marine Corps, into the Marine Corps Reserve on 13 August 1918. Johnson was assigned as a clerk in the office of the Quartermaster.<sup>3</sup> Later in August 1918, Marine recruiting offices received the following guidance on enrolling females in the Reserve:

1. Women to be enrolled as privates in the Marine Corps Reserve, Class 4, for a period of four (4) years, and the requirements to be the same as for men, except as modified by the "Circular Relating to the Physical Examination of Women" prepared by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Department.

2. To be between the ages of 18 and 40, but an applicant slightly under 18 years of age, who

is in every respect very desirable, to be enrolled with the consent of her parents, after authority from the Major General Commandant.

3. Women to be enrolled to be competent stenographers, expert bookkeepers, accountants, or typists.

4. No enrollments to be made without specific authority of the Major General Commandant.

5. All applicants to be informed that they will be subject to the rules and regulations that apply to enlisted men and that if their services or behavior are unsatisfactory they will be summarily disenrolled.

6. Pay and allowances while detailed as clerks to be the same as privates in the Marine Corps Reserve (\$110.00), in addition to which articles of uniform clothing are issued gratuitously.

7. Women enrolled to be entitled to the same privileges as enlisted men in the regular service regarding family allotments and insurance.

8. Opportunity for promotion to noncommissioned rank, with corresponding increase in pay, open to those who prove capable and industrious.<sup>4</sup>

The uniforms for Reserve female Marines were designed by the Marine Corps Quartermaster's Office and tailored for each woman from material similar to the men's uniforms. The issued items, described in the May 1936 article by former Corporal Lillian C. O'Malley, included "a specially designed skirt and coat, overcoat, chambray shirt, regulation tie, overseas cap, and campaign hat. The overseas cap, both in winter field and khaki, was the preferred head gear and the one usually worn by all women in uniform."<sup>5</sup>

Initially, each female reservist was issued one green wool jacket and skirt for the coming winter. The standard issue later became two winter and three summer khaki uniforms. The uniform issue consisted of jackets and skirts, six shirts, one overcoat, two neckties, and a pair of brown high-topped shoes for winter wear and low-cut oxfords for the summer khaki uniform. There was no dress uniform, and raincoats, gloves, and purses were not issued. The Marine Corps

<sup>2</sup> Lillian C. O'Malley, "Marine Corps Reserve (F)," *Marine Corps Gazette* 20, no. 2 (May 1936): 30.

<sup>3</sup> Capt Linda L. Hewitt, *USMCR, Women Marines in World War I* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, 1974), 4.

<sup>4</sup> O'Malley, "Marine Corps Reserve (F)," 30, 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.



National Archives, Record Group 127G, photo 528855  
Marine Corps artist Morgan Dennis depicts a female Marine replacing a Marine clerk for duty in the operating forces.

emblem and appropriate chevrons were also issued. The female Marines were noted to be “very impressive with their ‘trim and snappy appearance.’”<sup>6</sup>

There was no boot camp or recruit training for these new female Marines, who were called “Mari-nettes” in both civilian and War Department news releases and in photograph captions. However, officials at Headquarters Marine Corps disapproved of the nickname, as did many of the female reservists who preferred to be called simply “Marine.”<sup>7</sup> Training for the female reservists consisted of clerical work and close order drill. The drill, conducted by experienced male Marine noncommissioned officers (NCOs), took place in Potomac Park on the White

House Ellipse. The new Marines, under the tutelage of the demanding male NCOs, became sufficiently proficient to be included in numerous parades and ceremonies in Washington, DC.<sup>8</sup> The Major General Commandant reviewed them on parade at the Ellipse on 3 February 1919, and the “entire unit was included in the guard of honor, facing the Presidential Reviewing Stand at the White House, for a parade of troops just returned from the front,” in early summer 1919.<sup>9</sup>

## Women Reservists by the Numbers

Thousands of women stepped forward to be screened for enlistment in the Marine Corps Reserve in those first weeks after its authorization. In New York City, 2,000 women lined up at the recruiting office to be screened. After dictation and typing tests winnowed the line somewhat, interviews were conducted and only five were chosen.<sup>10</sup>

Faced with the challenge of all the enlisted women entering at the rank of private, some more mature women received early appointment to a higher rank. The September muster roll for Headquarters Marine Corps indicates that, on 11 September 1918, with just less than one month on active duty, Opha M. Johnson was appointed to sergeant, making her not only the first female reservist but the Corps’ first female NCO.<sup>11</sup>

Florence Gertler, one of the five applicants from New York City, was enrolled as a private on 3 September 1918 and assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps. She rose in rank quickly: promoted to private first class in November, corporal in February 1919, and sergeant in April 1919.<sup>12</sup> Also promoted to sergeant in April 1919 were Violet Van Wagner and Florence M. Weidinger (enlisted 17 August 1918), Helen M. Mull (enlisted 29 August 1918), and Margaret L. Powers (enlisted 19 September 1918).<sup>13</sup>

Another female enrollee, Sophia J. Lammers, en-

<sup>6</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 29.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> O’Malley, “Marine Corps Reserve (F),” 31.

<sup>9</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 33; and O’Malley, “Marine Corps Reserve (F),” 31.

<sup>10</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, Muster Roll (MRoll), September 1918, Roll 0149, Ancestry.com.

<sup>12</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRolls, September and November 1918, and February and April 1919, Rolls 0149, 0154, 0161, and 0167, Ancestry.com.

<sup>13</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRolls, August 1918, September 1918, and April 1919, Rolls 0147, 0149, and 0167, Ancestry.com.





National Archives, War Department photo 165-WW-598A-12

Women applicants surged into the New York recruiting office when the announcement was made that the Marine Corps was enrolling qualified women for clerical work as members of the Marine Corps Reserve.

listed on 4 November 1918 and reported for active duty at Headquarters on 9 November 1918.<sup>14</sup> She had the distinction of being immediately appointed to sergeant due to her qualifications: a 1911 University of Nebraska graduate, former reference librarian for the university, and a reference librarian at the Library of Congress when in the Marine Corps Reserve (F), listing source materials for a history of the Marine Corps. As such, this previous education, training, and work experience made her highly qualified to research and assist in writing Marine Corps history.<sup>15</sup>

Another female accepted for enlistment was Martha L. Wilchinski. In August 1918, the Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau in New York City

enrolled Wilchinski as a private.<sup>16</sup> With a degree in journalism from New York University, she was well prepared for service in the Publicity Bureau. During her active duty, several of her articles about service in the Corps were published in various newspapers and magazines, and she frequently appeared in publicity photographs. Wilchinski went on to become the editor of *Variety* magazine.<sup>17</sup>

Wilchinski rose to the rank of sergeant by July 1919 and was transferred to the Assistant Adjutant and Inspector Office, San Francisco, California, that month.<sup>18</sup> There, Wilchinski was discharged from active duty, but remained as an Inactive Reserve until her enlistment obligation was completed in August 1922.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, December 1918, Roll 0156, Ancestry.com.

<sup>15</sup> Marine Recruiting Station Washington, DC, MRoll, October–December 1918, Roll 0157, Ancestry.com; and Nebraska Alumni Association, "Alumni Directory: Classes 1873–1914," *University Journal*, January 1919, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau, MRoll, August 1918, Roll 0147, Ancestry.com.

<sup>17</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Office of the Assistant Adjutant and Inspector, San Francisco, MRoll, July 1919, Roll 0174, Ancestry.com.

<sup>19</sup> Marine Corps Reserve Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, July 1922–September 1922, Roll 0216, Ancestry.com.



Defense Department (Marine Corps) 518891

Cpl Martha L. Wilchinski, assigned to the Recruiting Publicity Bureau in New York City, marches alongside USS *Arizona* (BB 39) seagoing Marines when the ship was anchored in the North River (south end of the Hudson River) in late 1918.

Another impressive female enlistee who attained the rank of sergeant outside of Headquarters was Lela E. Leibrand. She enlisted on 31 October 1918 at the recruiting station in New York City and began her service as a clerk in the Adjutant and Inspector Office on 8 November.<sup>20</sup> Muster rolls show her on “Special Temporary Duty” with the Publicity Bureau in New York City, during 11–17 March 1919 and again in 17–21 May 1919.<sup>21</sup> She then transferred to the Central Recruiting District, Kansas City, Missouri, on 25 May 1919.<sup>22</sup> Leibrand continued on the inactive Reserve list until discharged at the rank of sergeant in December 1922.<sup>23</sup>

While assigned to the Marine Corps Publicity Bureau, Leibrand did routine office work but also produced articles published in the *Recruiters' Bulletin*, *Leatherneck* newspaper (it later became *Leatherneck* magazine) and *The Marines Magazine*. She had been a Hollywood scriptwriter in 1916 prior to entering the Marine Corps. Her talents, honed in the burgeoning

movie business prior to active duty, proved very useful for the Marines. Among her credits as a Marine is one of the first training films, “All in a Day’s Work.”<sup>24</sup>

While with the Publicity Bureau, Leibrand’s articles provided insight into life as a female reservist at Headquarters. Her article, “The Girl Marines,” tells of the Navy Department taking over the Vendome Hotel in downtown Washington to house the women away from the men. She describes drill, beginning early in the morning on the Ellipse behind the White House, with each female company having a Marine NCO in charge. She recorded the names of these early drill instructors for the female leathernecks: Sergeant Arthur G. Hamilton, Corporal Edward E. Lockout, Corporal Guy C. Williams, and Private Herbert S. Fitzgerald.<sup>25</sup>

Leibrand returned to the film industry after the war, first working at Fox Studios in New York City, but eventually making a name for herself and promoting her daughter’s career. Although married more than once, she was well known by the last name: Rogers. Her daughter, Ginger Rogers, gained fame in the movie and entertainment industry.<sup>26</sup>

With assignments restricted to clerical-type duties, even with the expanding need for manpower, the numbers of Marine female reservists were small. By 1 September 1918, there were 31 women enlisted; as of 1 October there were 145; and by 1 November, there were 240 female reservists. In July 1919, when disenrollment from active duty began, there were 226 reservists.<sup>27</sup> At its greatest strength, the Marine Corps Reserve (F) numbered only 305.<sup>28</sup>

While the numbers were few, the impact was significant. As early as mid-September 1918, the Major General Commandant was able to authorize the transfer of men “at Marine Corps Headquarters in staff offices, and in recruiting offices, employed on clerical or other routine duty and who were classified under selective service regulations, provided, of course, their service could be spared without det-

<sup>20</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, November 1918.

<sup>21</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRolls, March and May 1919, Rolls 0165 and 0171, Ancestry.com.

<sup>22</sup> Central Recruiting District, MRolls, May and July 1919, Rolls 0170 and 0174, Ancestry.com.

<sup>23</sup> Marine Corps Reserve Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, December 1922, Ancestry.com.

<sup>24</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>26</sup> Sabrina Messenger, “Lela Leibrand Rogers,” Women Marines Association, 26 July 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Maj Edwin N. McClellan, *The United States Marine Corps in the World War* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1920), 77.

<sup>28</sup> O’Malley, “Marine Corps Reserve (F),” 18.





Courtesy of former Capt Linda L. Hewitt Seagraves, USMCR

Marines participate in a 1919 parade in Philadelphia commemorating Marine Corps expeditionary service.

riment to the government service and the women clerks available were competent to fill their places.”<sup>29</sup>

With the majority of the female Reserve billets at Headquarters by January 1919, there were 88 female reservists assigned to the Adjutant and Inspector’s Office, 53 in the Quartermaster’s Office, and another 28 in the Paymaster’s Office.<sup>30</sup>

## Release From Active Duty

On 11 November 1918, when the Armistice began, there were 277 women in the Marine Corps Reserve (F).<sup>31</sup> With the war over, Sergeant Opha M. Johnson, the first female to enlist in the Marine Corps Reserve (F) and the Corps’ first female NCO, was discharged on 28 February 1919.<sup>32</sup> She had etched her name sol-

idly into Marine Corps history. However, the need for additional administrative support was not over. The clerical demands of bringing the Marines home, ensuring the accuracy of pay records, and accounting for the supplies while drawing down the force required the skills of the women reservists for several additional months. The Naval Appropriations Act for the fiscal year beginning 1 July 1919 called for “placing on inactive duty within 30 days of all female members of the Marine Corps Reserve, but also provided for the retention of such that were necessary and whose service was satisfactory, in the capacity of temporary civil service appointments, and about 75 percent were retained under this arrangement.”<sup>33</sup>

By July 1919, the urgent need for experienced

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 27.

<sup>31</sup> McClellan, *United States Marine Corps in the World War*, 76.

<sup>32</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, February 1919, Roll 0160, Ancestry.com.

<sup>33</sup> *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1919* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1920), 126.

clerical staff had diminished, in spite of the fact that most of the Marine ground forces would not return until August 1919.<sup>34</sup> So, in July, to comply with the congressional direction, the Major General Commandant ordered "all reservists on clerical duty at Headquarters . . . to inactive status prior to 11 August 1919."<sup>35</sup>

As is traditional in the Marine Corps, a farewell ceremony, including speeches from the Major General Commandant and secretary of the Navy, was conducted in honor of the female reservists departing active duty. The grand event, recognizing the service of the women Marine Reserves in time of great need, was held on the White House lawn. Both the Major General Commandant and the secretary applauded their commitment and performance.<sup>36</sup>

Based on their service, the female reservists earned several lifelong benefits. In addition to the option of burial in a national cemetery, these included:

1. Eligibility for government insurance.
2. \$60 bonus on discharge and World War Adjusted Compensation at the rate of \$1.00 a day for home service performed during the period from April 5, 1917, to July 1, 1919. Some states also provided a bonus for legal residents.
3. Medical treatment and hospitalization under the regulations of the Veterans Administration for service connected disability.
4. Five per cent added to earned rating in examinations for entrance to classified service under Civil Service Regulations.<sup>37</sup>

The women who remained in the Reserves in an inactive status, serving out their enlistment, received a \$1 monthly retainer pay until discharged at the end of their four-year enlistment. In addition, they were awarded a Good Conduct Medal and World War I Victory Medal when they were discharged from the Inactive Reserves.<sup>38</sup>

## Once a Marine

The saying "Once a Marine, Always a Marine" was certainly ascribed to by female reservists. Although no longer a part of the uniformed Marine Corps, some women remained in government service working for the Marine Corps. One was Jennie F. Van Edsinga. Van Edsinga joined in September 1918 and was released from active duty to complete her enlistment as a corporal in the Inactive Reserve on 31 July 1919.<sup>39</sup> Corporal Van Edsinga changed her name to Jane F. Blakeney in 1921 after marrying Arthur Blakeney, a fellow Marine, while she was still in the Inactive Reserve.<sup>40</sup> Before retiring from civil service, Jane Blakeney rose to head the Marine Corps' Decorations and Medals Branch at Headquarters Marine Corps.<sup>41</sup>

Blakeney's reference book, *Heroes*, first published in 1957 and dedicated to her late husband Major Arthur Blakeney, remains a significant source of information on Marines earning medals for valor from the Civil War era to 1955 and includes histories and facts about the highest military medals awarded by our country.<sup>42</sup> With this book, her contributions to Marines, their families, and historians, which began in 1918, continue through today.

Another of the original female reservists who remained with the Marine Corps was Private Alma Swope. She worked in the Supply Department for more than 44 years. She was the last female reservist from World War I who worked in the civil service to retire. When she retired in 1963, General David M. Shoup, Commandant of the Marine Corps, personally congratulated Swope on her service to Corps and country.<sup>43</sup>

Two of the World War I female reservists, Lillian O'Malley Daly and Martrese Thek Ferguson, came back into the Corps for World War II.<sup>44</sup> One of these two, Martrese Thek Ferguson, ordered to the Divi-

<sup>34</sup> McClellan, *United States Marine Corps in the World War*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 40.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, 41.

<sup>37</sup> O'Malley, "Marine Corps Reserve (F)," 45, 46.

<sup>38</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 43.

<sup>39</sup> Reserve District No. 2, New York, MRoll, July–September 1918, Roll 0149, Ancestry.com; and Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, July 1919, Roll 0174, Ancestry.com.

<sup>40</sup> Headquarters, Eastern Reserve District, Philadelphia, MRoll, July–September 1921, Roll 0204, Ancestry.com.

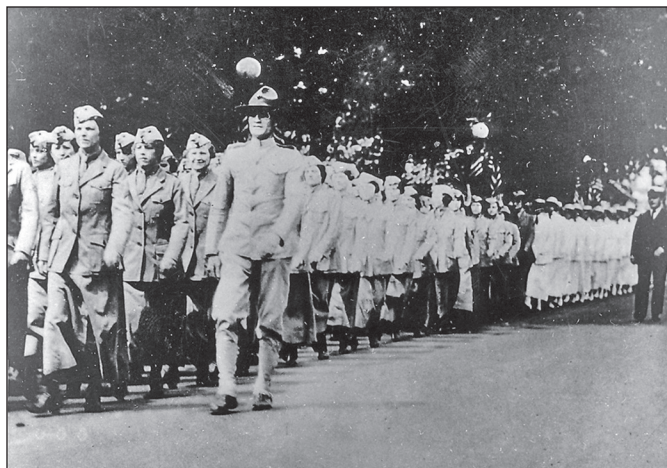
<sup>41</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 43.

<sup>42</sup> Jane Blakeney, *Heroes: U.S. Marine Corps, 1861–1955; Armed Forces Awards, Flags* (Washington, DC: Guthrie Lithograph, 1957).

<sup>43</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 43.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, 44.





Defense Department (Marine Corps) 521222  
Marine Corps Reserve (Female) and U.S. Navy Reserve (Yeomen) march in one of the numerous wartime parades in Washington, DC, in 1918-19.

sion of Reserve, Headquarters Marine Corps, in April 1952 for training, extended her active service into the Korean War era.<sup>45</sup>

Lillian O'Malley Daly, then Lillian C. O'Malley, enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve (F) in November 1918, moved to an Inactive Reserve status as a corporal on 31 July 1919, and remained in the Inactive Reserve until her four-year enlistment period was complete. She was discharged on 8 November 1922.<sup>46</sup> Later married, she came back into the Marine Corps as a reservist with a direct commission to captain, one of only eight women who entered the recently authorized Marine Corps Women's Reserve (MCWR) as an officer in early 1943, straight from life as a civilian. Daly was assigned as the West Coast liaison officer for the MCWR.<sup>47</sup>

As the West Coast liaison officer, Daly represented the Marines at various civilian functions.<sup>48</sup> By January 1944, she was the adjutant for the Women Reserve Battalion, Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, San Diego area.<sup>49</sup> She transferred to the East Coast



Official U.S. Marine Corps photo A412893

LtCol Martrese Thek Ferguson served on active duty in the Marine Corps Reserve during three wars: WWI, WWII, and on active duty for training at Headquarters Marine Corps during the Korean War.

as a major in January 1945, assigned to the Women's Reserve Battalion at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.<sup>50</sup> The end of World War II found her assigned to 3d Reserve District, Marine Barracks, Navy Yard, New York.<sup>51</sup> Daly was listed in the Officers Volunteer Reserve, 4th Marine Corps Reserve District, as a major in 1952, promoted to lieutenant colonel on the Inactive Status Personnel list in October 1952, and last noted on the October 1957 roll "Inactive Status List, Officer Volunteer Reserve, 4th Marine Corps Reserve and Recruiting District, Philadelphia," while a lieutenant colonel.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Company C, Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps, Division of Reserve, Unit Diary (UD), 7 April 1952, Roll 0251, Ancestry.com.

<sup>46</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, November 1918 and July 1919; and Marine Corps Reserve Division, HQMC, MRoll, October-December 1919, Rolls 0154, 0174, and 0219, Ancestry.com.

<sup>47</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 45.

<sup>48</sup> "Detachments: San Diego," *Leatherneck*, September 1943, 68.

<sup>49</sup> Headquarters Company, Marine Corps Women's Reserve Battalion, MRoll, January 1944, Roll 0717, Ancestry.com.

<sup>50</sup> 4th Marine Corps Reserve District (MCRD), Philadelphia, Roll 2040, Ancestry.com; 4th MCRD, Philadelphia, Inactive Status Personnel UD, 26 October 1952, Roll 2041, Ancestry.com; and 4th Marine Corps Reserve and Recruiting District, Philadelphia, Inactive Status Personnel UD, 31 October 1957, Roll 3725, Ancestry.com.

<sup>51</sup> General Service Unit, 3d Reserve District, Marine Barracks New York, MRoll, July 1945, Roll 1003, Ancestry.com.

<sup>52</sup> 4th MCRD, Philadelphia, Roll 2040; 4th MCRD, Philadelphia, Inactive Status Personnel UD, 26 October 1952; and 4th MCRD, Philadelphia, Inactive Status Personnel UD, 31 October 1957.





*National Archives, Record Group 127G, photo 530164A*

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, fourth from the left, with the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels standing to his left, join USMCR(F) Marines and Navy Yeomen (F) at their final review in Washington, DC on 30 July 1919.

There was no indication she served in an active-duty status during the Korean War-era, although she was carried on the Reserve rolls in an inactive status.

Martrese Thek enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve (F) on 7 September 1918 in New York City and was assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps.<sup>53</sup> When released from active duty, she returned to civilian life, married, and as Martrese Thek Ferguson, reentered the Corps as a cadet in the newly formed MCWR in April 1943.<sup>54</sup> That same month, she graduated first in the initial women officers' course conducted at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts.<sup>55</sup>

By the end of the war, she was a major and commanding 2d Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps, Henderson Hall, Virginia.<sup>56</sup> In March 1952, Lieutenant Colonel Ferguson was again on the Marine Corps' muster rolls, now called the Unit Dia-

ry (UD), as a reservist in Company C, Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps, Henderson Hall, Virginia, in the Office of the Division of Reserve.<sup>57</sup> She was transferred to the "Inactive Status List" in 1956.<sup>58</sup>

## Making Their Mark

While the active duty for those women who labored so intently to serve the Marine Corps and the nation in time of war was limited to not quite one year, it was impactful. In his annual report to the secretary of the Navy, prepared for Congress in 1919, the Major General Commandant noted, "The termination of hostilities on Nov. 11, 1918, precluded the practical working out of the principal idea in enrolling women in the Marine Corps Reserve for clerical duty, namely, that of releasing for active service in

<sup>53</sup> Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, September 1918.

<sup>54</sup> Marine Detachment Naval Reserve Midshipmen's School, MRoll, April 1943, Roll 0600, Ancestry.com.

<sup>55</sup> Hewitt, *Women Marines in World War I*, 44.

<sup>56</sup> Headquarters Company, 2d Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps, MRoll, April 1945, Roll 0955, Ancestry.com.

<sup>57</sup> Company C, Headquarters Battalion, Headquarters Marine Corps, UD, 7 April 1952.

<sup>58</sup> 1st Marine Corps Reserve and Recruiting District (MCRRD), Boston, Inactive Status List of Officers Volunteer Reserve, UD No. 11-56, 30 April 1956, Roll 3394, Ancestry.com.

the field practically all the enlisted men who had been and were being utilized in the performance of such duties. However, the majority of the women so enrolled rendered capable and efficient service, and about 75 per cent of them have elected to remain on in a temporary civil status as provided by the Act of July 11, 1919, so that the working efficiency of those

headquarters and the staff and recruiting offices outside of headquarters at which women were stationed has not been interfered with by the sudden demobilization of the female reserve.”<sup>59</sup>

It would be 24 years and another great world war before the Marine Corps once again turned to women to meet wartime manpower needs. ♦1775♦

<sup>59</sup> “Annual Report of the Major General Commandant to the Secretary of the Navy for the Fiscal Year Ended 30 June 1919,” in *Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1919*, 2637, 2638.