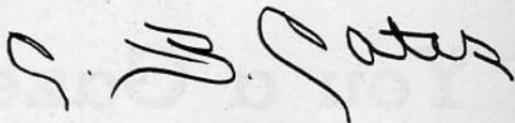


To Marines everywhere, regular and reserve, active and inactive, I extend my personal best wishes and felicitations on the happy occasion of the 174th Anniversary of our Corps.

Volumes have been written and countless words have been spoken about the history and accomplishments of the United States Marine Corps. Marines of every age since the trying days of the American Revolution have contributed a substantial share to the development and preservation of our Nation as a true champion of liberty and a staunch advocate of peace among men. This sacred heritage is ours to foster for the rest of our days. We must prove ourselves equal to the task by accepting and accomplishing the missions assigned to the Marine Corps under existing legislation with the same thoroughness and sincerity of purpose that has guided the efforts of those who have preceded us in the Corps.

But more than that, we of this generation who live in a world beset with conflicting ideologies would do well to take stock of our personal appreciation of the fundamental liberties of American life. As Marines we must be among the first to know, respect, and propagate the principles on which our American heritage is founded. To fail in this mission is to break faith with those who have given their lives that we might enjoy "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. B. Cates". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

C. B. CATES  
General, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps