



10 November 2000

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Today, around the world, in gatherings large and small, Marines will assemble, as they have for two hundred and twenty-five years, to honor both our history and the memory of those who have preceded us. It is fitting that we do so, for it is our profound respect for our traditions and reverence of our heritage that distinguishes us as a Corps of Marines. This year is especially meaningful. Fifty years ago, the free nations of the world united to stem aggression in Korea; twenty-five years ago, the long war in Vietnam drew to a close; and a short decade ago, America and her allies liberated Kuwait. The thread linking these disparate conflicts is the Corps itself, and our performance on these distant battlefields added new definition to our character while cementing our privileged place in the hearts of our countrymen.

Just as the valor of Marines on the battlefields of Korea, Vietnam, and Kuwait contributed uniquely to our legacy, so, too, do our actions today. We continue to write our history, whether conducting critical operations in the international spotlight or diligently attending to the equally important, but unheralded work of taking care of Marines and their families. We are, in fact, stewards of past, present, and future. We, therefore, must remain mindful that our actions today—guided by the lessons of yesterday—will determine the fate of the Corps tomorrow.

As the Corps—a family in the truest sense of the word—pauses to celebrate our two hundred and twenty-fifth birthday, it is proper that we take great pride in who we are and the work we do. We are United States Marines and for two and a quarter centuries we have defined the standards of courage, esprit, and military prowess. On this occasion, we should also remember that a grateful Nation cherishes our service and joins us in celebration.

The spirit of the Marines of Korea, Vietnam, and Kuwait still animates those who wear the eagle, globe, and anchor today. Their voices and those of all our predecessors join in a familiar chorus and exhort us to uphold our standards and honor our legacy. This we will do, for we have learned well the lessons of our past and know that there is no substitute for vigilance, strength, and resolve. Our Nation and the Marines of tomorrow can depend on that commitment.

Happy Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

J. L. JONES
General, U.S. Marine Corps