

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS

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November 10, 1775, the formation of two battalions of Marines was authorized by the Continental Congress, then sitting in Philadelphia. These Marines constituted the first armed forces established for the service of the infant American nation then in the throes of birth, and were the first men to bear the name, American Marines, a title since rendered illustrious through time by deeds of soldierly devotion and heroism on countless fields in all the quarters of the earth.

These first American Marines did not have long to wait for active service against the foe. The companies of one battalion were drafted almost immediately on board the ships of the Continental Navy, then being created, while the second was held ashore in Philadelphia for an emergency. The emergency came in the autumn of 1776, when Washington called for all possible reinforcements to enable his army to make a stand on the Delaware river, following its disastrous retreat across New Jersey.

Joining Washington on the eve of the battles of Trenton and Princeton, this powerful, well-trained battalion of Marine regulars proved a force of inestimable worth in the conflicts that followed, their heavy casualty list attesting to the severity of the fighting in which they were engaged.

After these battles this Marine battalion remained with the Army throughout the remainder of the Revolutionary War, serving brilliantly through the long land campaign to its victorious conclusion, while their comrades at sea participated in the victories of Barry, Hopkins and John Paul Jones.

So much for the service of the American Marines during the Revolution. Their record since that time has been equally distin-

guished and notable. Few Americans realize the unremitting service which the Marine Corps has rendered the Nation since its birth. The Marine as a soldier is distinct from all others of the Nation's armed forces in that he may be landed to protect American lives and rights without a declaration of war. This protection of American lives and rights is the Marines' profession and the exercise of it has brought him constantly into action even during the periods when the United States as a whole enjoyed the most profound peace.

A search of the Nation's annals show that Marines have been in action more than ninety out of a hundred and forty-seven years since the declaration of independence. Since the birth of the Nation not a generation nor a decade has passed that has not been marked by one or more Marine expeditions or campaigns. As a result the Marine Corps has always been a Corps of veterans and there have always been and are today in the Corps, a goodly sprinkling of officers and men who have grown gray in war with seldom an opportunity of enjoying more than a few short intervals of peace.

Sagas of adventure, self-sacrifice and devotion to duty might be written from the history of the Corps. In the early days Marines fought in the war with France, against the Mediterranean pirates of Tripoli and the Barbary States, in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, against West Indian pirates, against the Chinese, the Japanese, the cannibals of the South Seas, against several tribes of American Indians, and others too numerous to mention.

In recent years the Marine Corps has been equally busy and the annals of the Corps during the lifetime of the present generation form an epic of heroism and soldierly virtue of which the average American knows little or nothing. Of the twenty-four years from the Spanish-American War in 1898 to the conclusion of the war with Germany, twenty-three were marked by Marine campaigns and expeditions. One only, 1913, was a year of peace.

In 1898, Marines took part in the Spanish War. In 1899, they were in action during the Philippine insurrection and also in Samoa to protect American lives during a native uprising. In 1900, one Brigade of Marines was busy in the Philippines, while another formed a part of the Peking relief column in the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, and still a third force was landed at Panama. In 1901 and 1902, Marines saw action in a new Philippine uprising in Samar and another Marine force was again landed at Panama. In 1903, Marines were landed in Santo Domingo, Corea and Panama, and a

force was also sent to far-off Abyssinia. In 1904, more trouble in Panama necessitated the landing of Marines at Ancon. In 1905, an expedition was sent to Cuba with an eye to disturbances which happily did not materialize. In 1906, another force was landed in Cuba, remaining until 1909, as a part of the Army of Cuban pacification. In 1907, Marines landed following an uprising in Honduras, and also went to assist survivors of the Jamaica fire and earthquake. In 1908, Marines were again landed in Panama, and also took part in the relief work following the great earthquake at Messina, Italy. In 1909 and 1910, two different Marine forces were landed in Nicaragua, and in 1911 and 1912, Marines operated in China to protect American life and property following the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty. During 1912, also, a Marine force operated in Nicaragua. Nineteen hundred and thirteen was notable in Marine annals because there were no wars, but Marines were sent to Haiti and Santo Domingo in 1914, during which year they also took part in the occupation of Vera Cruz. In 1915, the occupation of Haiti was undertaken following the murder of President Sam and the violation of the French legation, and a Marine Brigade has been maintained in Haiti ever since. In 1916, the occupation of Santo Domingo became necessary, which also continues to this date. In 1917, Marines were sent to Cuba, but their presence exerted a steadying influence and disorder was avoided. In 1917, also the United States entered the war with Germany, during which the part played by the celebrated Fourth Marine Brigade, which stopped the German advance on Paris at Belleau Wood in the Chateau Thierry sector, is familiar to every American schoolboy. The heroic achievements of the Fifth and Sixth Marine regiments and the Sixth Machine-gun Battalion are too well known to require mention. Among the first to land in France, they took part in the actions in the Chateau Thierry sector, at Soissons, St. Mihiel, Blanc Mont in the Champagne, and at the Meuse-Argonne, covering their standards with glory and compiling a record seldom equalled in the annals of war.

Such in brief is the history of the Marine Corps from its founding. We believe that at present it is in a condition of efficiency and readiness for service to the Nation, worthy of its matchless record, and look to the future confident that as long as American Marines exist they will prove worthy of the priceless heritage of their Corps' heroic past and of its motto: "Always Faithful."