



A Message from the Commandant



THE MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY of 1953 is the first anniversary in four years which does not find men of the Corps in action. It marks the end of a long and arduous period of combat by our air and ground forces in Korea—combat which has added further to the host of battle honors won by the Corps.

Now, with the halt in active combat, we find our Corps once again in its traditional posture of striving to improve itself in peace so that it may be fully ready for war. We know that the weapons, the tactics, and the techniques of the last battle are never adequate for the next. For that reason, we must never falter in our efforts to be stronger through day to day increases in our skill, our efficiency, and our overall readiness to meet any challenge that the future may hold.

In one area, however, we must look not to the future, but to the past. That is in the great example of courage, resolution, and selfless loyalty that has been set for us by our forbears in the Corps. It is for us to revere and to emulate in our every action the inspiring Marine tradition which lives today in such words as Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, and Inchon—words which have been made a part of our nation's great history through the valor and sacrifice of Marines of other years.

It is in the memory of those brave men that we find the confidence and courage to meet the responsibilities which confront the Corps today. While those responsibilities have never been heavier, I believe that the superb accomplishments of every man and woman in the Corps during the past year are a clear measure of our ability to meet them. It is therefore with a sense of deep satisfaction with the past, and of full confidence for the future, that I extend to Marines everywhere—regular and reserve, active and inactive—my personal best wishes and sincere thanks on this, the happy occasion of the 178th anniversary of our beloved Corps.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr."

LEMUEL C. SHEPHERD, JR.
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps