

The Commandant's Birthday Message



Once again all Marines, regular, reserve, and retired, and their families, join together on this special day to celebrate the anniversary of our Corps. It's an old tradition, a fine tradition, one that pays high honor to our proud history. And on this day we especially remember and pray for the welfare of Marines who are prisoners of war and their families.

But this year I would ask all Marines; active and inactive, young and old, in the combat of Vietnam and on more tranquil stations; not to look back, but instead, to look to the future. We are in a new time, and we must celebrate our 195th anniversary not as an end of almost two centuries of dedicated service, but as preparation for new service, new dedication, and new achievement.

We must seek a new level of professionalism. We must complete the link of communications between our traditional duties, the demands of this new time, and the dedication of a new breed of Marine. How well we do this is the true measure of our worth to claim the rich heritage of our Corps. If there is to be a repeat of the old question -- "When did the Old Corps end, and the New Corps begin?" -- let all of us who are now Marines answer proudly, "It happened on my watch."

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "L. F. Chapman, Jr." The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "L" and a cursive "Chapman".

L. F. CHAPMAN, JR.
General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps