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Commandant of the Marine Corps

his is the month when countless Marines, former Marines, and friends and families of Marines will be taking a long look backward. In terms of personal experience, each of us rightfully owns a part of the sense of pride shared throughout the Corps. The personal experience factor can be limited—that of the most recent graduate from recruit training. Or, it can be as extensive as that of the thirty-year veteran who has fought through three hard wars. It doesn't matter. When we celebrate the Birthday of our Corps, the oldest Marine and the youngest are served side by side, and there is a piece of cake for each one of us.

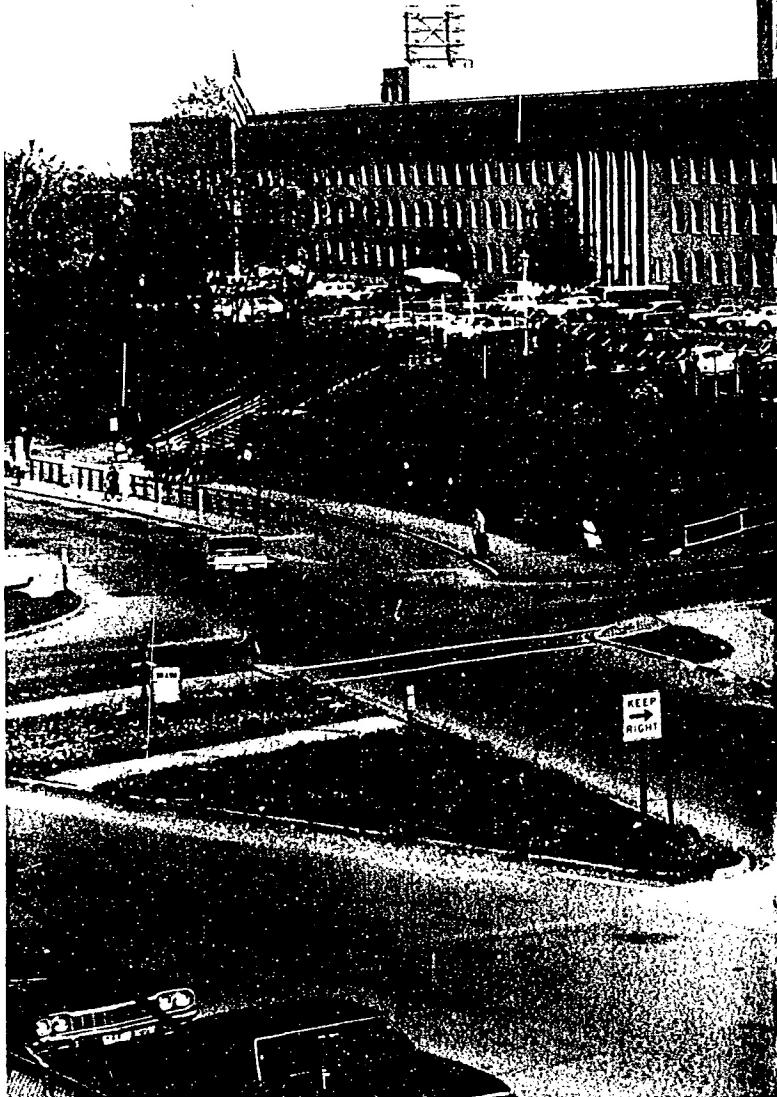
Some Marines have had the good fortune to have worked and fought alongside some of the real giants of the Corps, whose names are recognized everywhere. Such inspiring experiences are hard to match. On the other hand, each of us knows many *more* Marines whose names will never appear in the history books, but who are equally unforgettable—as steadfast friends who have shared the same labors, hardships, or dangers. Working with such people can be equally inspiring, fueling vivid memories which can last a lifetime.

Going beyond personal recollection, there is considerable value in looking back over our Corps' two proud centuries of dedicated service. It is truly difficult to understand who we, as a military organization, are today without knowing something about the Marines who went before us.

One thing that a look at our history shows us is that from the outset Marines have been called upon to handle a wide variety of unique missions. In fact, the formation of Marine battalions was first proposed two centuries ago as part of an expedition to keep Nova Scotia from the British. The Continental Congress did not approve the expedition, but they did approve the Marines, who found themselves loading out for a raiding mission in the Bahamas a few months later.

From the beginning, Marines earned their title as "Soldiers of the Sea." Afloat, they were favorites of John Paul Jones, among others; ashore, they fought as part of George Washington's army during the crucial winter of 1776-77. History provides an ironic footnote, then, in the most recent non-routine deployment of Marines. Our response to the seizure of the *Mayaguez* involved both a ship's boarding party and hot combat ashore.

Another thing our history shows us is that Marines have displayed an uncommon talent for coming up with the innovative tactics, techniques, and equipment required to carry out the varied missions that have fallen to them. Many of these innovations have been put together on the spot—from the level of rifleman on up—in response to an immediate combat need. Others have been the product of more deliberate study, such as the development of the amphibious doctrine which carried us through the Pacific island-hopping campaigns of World War II, and the development of the vertical assault concept in the late 1940s, even before we had the helicopters to carry it out. Many of these innovations have come about through a fortunate combination of individual and organizational traits: a conservative approach to matters of tradition, duty, and discipline—mindful of the hard lessons of the battlefield—and a forward-looking approach to the require-





LOOKING AROUND (cont.)

ments of the future.

This brings us to the question of looking ahead. Hindsight is easy to come by, but accurate foresight takes skill and imagination. Moreover, the rapid and accelerating rate of technological and social change which is part of our lives tends to take events beyond our wildest guesses. For example, we are in the early stages of the development of a technology which promises a dramatic breakthrough—the capability of moving Marines across the seas at speeds of 100 knots by surface-effect ship. When this mobility breakthrough finally occurs, after years more of painstaking research and development work, the roles, missions, and capabilities of the Marine Corps could be in for extensive change.

In the meantime, we have plenty of short and mid-term looking ahead to do in the 20-knot amphibious world of today. The Marines who are fortunate enough to work with the *Tarawa*, the first of the new LHA amphibious assault ships to enter the Fleet, will be pioneers in their own right. They will be testing and evaluating the full range of capabilities of this unique ship, which was designed from the keel up to meet the needs of the landing force.

Looking ahead in aviation matters can also be tricky. Even though the lead times for design, development, and procurement are less than those of the shipbuilding industry, they are still long. To keep up with the potential threats our aviators face, we will continue to upgrade our current fighter and attack aircraft through service life extension programs until the early 1980s. By then, we hope to have a follow-on aircraft for the F-4 and an improved AV-8B Harrier, with about double the capability of the present model. We will continue to work for the procurement of the CH-53E, which will raise our heavy lift helicopter capability from six to sixteen tons. The new helicopter will be able to lift over 90% of the types of combat essential items organic to a Marine division.

On the ground, we will continue to modernize to improve our tank and antitank capabilities, through the M60A1 tank and the TOW and DRAGON missile systems. In addition, we will be introducing new 105-mm. and 155-mm. artillery weapons developed jointly with the Army, together with new ammunition which includes rocket-assisted projectiles and guided ordnance. Modernization in other ground systems will continue at a modest, yet regular pace, as we monitor the research efforts of the other Services, and keep an eye on the weapons capabilities of potential adversaries.

In looking ahead to the future, then, it is also necessary to watch what is going on around you. In some ways, being able to look around in an objective manner is harder than looking either back or ahead. The opportunity for hindsight

is missing, and you are expected to have a higher batting average on your decisions than someone who is dealing farther into the future.

Yet we have to spend most of our time looking around, from purely a personal standpoint and from the standpoint of the entire Marine Corps.

Looking around today's Marine Corps, then, what do we see?

First of all, we can see tens of thousands of dedicated hard working men and women who are proud to bear the title of United States Marine—and who show it, through their drive, their spirit, and their thoroughly professional conduct. Most of today's Marines are as good as any who have ever worn the uniform.

These men and women represent a wide range of talent, and we need every bit of that talent to fill our ranks. Although the idea of "every Marine a rifleman" is valid, the fact of the matter is that we must fill a complete range of military occupational specialties—not only those of a modern ground army, but of naval aviation, as well. We have to modernize to stay on top of our responsibilities as a ready, mobile, amphibious force of combined arms—but new weapons and equipment won't do us much good unless we have the people to operate them, to fire them, and to fix them. The premium on brainpower is going up as things get more complex. This is true not only for the hard skill specialists, but for the rifleman as well, who will also have to keep up with the changes that are taking place.

For these reasons, among others, the decision to raise enlistment standards is being carried out. Only time will tell whether we can get enough potential Marines who meet the new standards. If we cannot, we will take less. It is in the interest of all Marines—active, reserve, or former—to see that we do not have to settle for less. And no one can recruit a Marine like another Marine. This is a continuing task for all of us.

Our concern with quality cannot stop at the recruit depots. It must extend through the training pipeline to the operating forces and the rest of the Corps, as well.

The starting point for Corps-wide quality of performance is the individual Marine. The process works best when it is self-starting, with the Marine seeking on his own to meet established standards and to raise his educational level—both personal and professional. The critical need for this kind of individual growth cannot be emphasized too much. The rate of change in our lives today is so swift that anyone who contents himself with standing still will soon be passed by. Relatively speaking, he will be moving backwards.

There has been a great deal of emphasis on the visible standards of quality—fitness, grooming, weight control,

military bearing and discipline, and the like. That is because the visible standards are the most obvious place to begin. No one can read a Marine's mind, but anyone can read his appearance for quick indications of how hard he is trying to get with the program. The current emphasis on visible standards will be continued. Meeting these standards is second nature for most Marines.

Meeting professional standards is a more complex problem, and helping each Marine meet his is a task for his leaders. Leadership is sometimes incorrectly regarded as a cure-all for every sort of problem. Although this is an overstatement, one thing is certain: strong, effective leadership can make a tremendous difference in solving *most* problems, if both the leader and the Marine with the problem work together on it.

For many years, the Marine Corps has had a tradition of personal leadership which stretches all the way through the ranks, from top to bottom. Under this concept, a Marine should be familiar not only with his own duties and the duties of the Marines around him, but with the duties of his own immediate leader, as well. There are sound historical reasons for this. The Marine Corps is usually subject to rapid expansion in time of war. Whether they seek them or not, practically all Marines find new responsibilities thrust upon them, including the serious responsibility for the lives of others. The rifleman suddenly finds himself acting as squad leader or even platoon sergeant. Our history records countless cases of relatively inexperienced Marines taking over their units after their leaders have been hit—and getting the job done. Such has not been the case with all the world's military units. Many have been overtaken by disaster, once deprived of their small-unit leadership.

Such a broad base of leadership does not come about automatically. The two main ingredients are the individual Marine's desire to get out in front and his leader's willingness to help him along. They both have to work at it. The payoff for this effort, both in war and in peace, is substantial.

This heavy emphasis on quality, self-starting individual responsibility, and leadership throughout the Corps is essential if we are to maintain our stock in trade: combat readiness. Again, true readiness is a state of mind, and it must begin with the individual Marine. He is truly ready when he is professionally qualified in his MOS, when he is in top physical shape, and when his personal life is in order.

Looking beyond our readiness as individuals, we find that maintaining our readiness as a Corps entails a lot of hard work and self-sacrifice, especially on the part of those taking part in, or preparing for long term deployments. These deployments are very important, both for their training value and as a means of expressing national interest in certain key areas of the world. In the upcoming

months, you will see efforts to increase the combat readiness both of the deployed units and of the backup forces at home. The strength of certain units will rise, while other units with less critical combat roles will be cut back or deactivated. Our divisions and aircraft wings will receive some individual tailoring, to prepare them for the conflicts they are most likely to fight.

There has been some talk of the Marine Corps preparing to fight in conflicts oriented on the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, rather than the Pacific. This overstates the case. Our responsibilities have always been world-wide, and continue to be so. For years, we have found our attention focused on the Pacific because that is where the action has been. Now, other parts of the world deserve a close look, as well.

Maintaining a world-wide readiness posture means more than supporting a credible pattern of deployments. It also takes rigorous training of individuals and of units. We constantly seek new training areas to broaden our experience in all types of terrain and climate. In addition to practicing our amphibious skills, Marines will become involved heavily in fire support coordination work at our new air-ground training center at Marine Corps Base 29 Palms. To meet the demands of the modern battlefield, where more and more nations will have the ability to use sophisticated weapons and equipment, we must be sure that we know how to make best use of our own new gear.

For two hundred years, our countrymen have counted on the Marines to be ready, willing, and able to tackle the tough missions and to accomplish them in outstanding fashion. Just being ready has not been enough. We have had to *come through*, once Marines reached the scene. Through the years, we have not let our countrymen down. By upholding their faith in the Corps, we have raised their expectations that we will always get the job done, no matter how difficult or dangerous the situation. That is our legacy as Marines, handed down to us by the bravest of the brave. Together, we must ensure that our legacy is passed on un tarnished.

We can draw great pride and strength from the past, as we face the future with confidence and determination. In the meantime, however, we must continue to do our best *today*—right now—to make our Corps everything it can and should be. We are the only ones who can make sure the Corps is the kind of outfit we can be proud of.

Look around you, Marines. You are part of one of the greatest teams ever assembled—two hundred years proud—with a rich heritage envied by fighting organizations the world over. Our Corps is the gift of over two and a half million Marines who have gone before us. What we do with it, as we enter our third century, will be our gift to future generations.

