

A LETTER TO GENERAL LOUIS H. WILSON

Dear General Wilson,

As you leave active duty following a most distinguished career in the Corps I would be remiss if I failed to note your unique contributions to the Marine Corps Association.

We pay tribute to General John A. Lejeune as the founder of this old and honorable Association. Just as surely, you must be ranked as the primary driving force behind its modernization.

Your individual achievements on behalf of the Association are far too numerous to relate in detail. Two major accomplishments, however, should be recorded.

While serving as Secretary-Treasurer in the early 1970's your realization of the necessity of placing a full-time executive director in charge of the day-to-day management of the growing activities of the MCA was a critical and absolutely essential step.

The result of this action was a continuity of management and the development of the requisite skills to oversee the expanding scope of Association activities, including the group term life insurance program for Marines and their families. It further resulted in the selective acquisition of new programs both to the benefit of the membership of the Association and in support of professional education within the Marine Corps.

A second noteworthy event was your recommendation, as President of the Marine Corps Association in 1976 that the Leatherneck Association and the Marine Corps Association be merged. This merger consolidated the best features of both organizations, eliminated duplication of effort and unnecessary overhead, and assured the continued publication of the two fine magazines devoted to the Corps, the Marine Corps GAZETTE and LEATHERNECK. Although this merger had previously been contemplated and rejected, the experience gained over the nearly three years since the merger has unequivocally proven the wisdom of the act.

As will the Marine Corps in many other areas, we will miss your leadership in the affairs of the Marine Corps Association. However, we are certain that we may count on your continued interest in the MCA during your retirement years. Your suggestions as to ways we might strengthen the Association and improve its service to the Corps and the Marine family will always be most welcome.


ROBERT H. BARROW
General, U. S. Marine Corps
President, Marine Corps Association

WILSON. Very much so. The easiest thing for me to have done in 1970 when the restrictions were put on concerning active duty military personnel serving on staffs of civilian associations would have been to dissolve the Association. Many people believed that the cost of running the MCA with civilians would be so high that we couldn't survive. I didn't believe it then, and I've been proven right. It took a lot of hard work, but the Association was worth saving to continue its work.

It's the only professional association the Marine Corps has, and it benefits the individual and the Corps. We've got away from the idea, and rightly so, that a Marine has an obligation

to belong. But it has evolved into an organization to which Marines should want to belong. That is the only way it can survive.

Today it offers a wide variety of services which help the individual personally and professionally. Its activities have a positive impact on the Corps. The two magazines, in particular, are the only vehicles we have to share ideas outside of the chain of command.

I must also mention the awards program, where the MCA gives prizes to the top finishers of all the Corps' formal schools. Those awards are a donation to the Marine Corps which saves the Corps a lot of money while allowing individual recognition of superior performance.