



10 November 1994



Fifty years ago, at the pinnacle of our Corps' heaviest involvement in combat, General Alexander Vandegrift, our distinguished 18th Commandant, issued the following Birthday greeting:

"Today we Marines begin our 170th year of life. It is destined to be one of the most momentous years in all our battle-filled history. A birthday is a fitting time to peer backward—and forward. As we look back into the twelve months just passed, we have reason to look ahead with hope and with courage.

Since the last observance of the Corps' official birth, our advance in the Pacific has been steady and unswerving. We take deserved pride in our role as the spearhead of a great amphibious drive against a formidable enemy. You have fought ably in the past year. You have met and licked the foe's forces at Cape Gloucester, at Bougainville, in the Marshalls, the Marianas, the Palaus. You have planted our flag again on Guam. You have helped secure the bases from which our Navy has sailed forth to overwhelming conquest. You, with the other services, have come as liberators to thousands of men, women and children who have been under Japanese rule for nearly three years. The price has been high. Many of your comrades are gone. Their lives, their wounds paid for those victories.

Today, as new blows are being readied, we stand prepared for further action. Our enemy is determined that we shall not reach our objective of inflicting total defeat. He is ready to fight to the death. In these many years we have met other such enemies. And we have won against them. For we, too, are determined. Whatever obstacles confront us, we shall destroy them and press on to our goals. On this 169th birthday of the Corps, therefore, I wish all who wear the Marine green the highest success in the ventures they face."

Some things never change. Today, we Marines begin our 220th year of life...and we continue to stand prepared for further action. On this 219th birthday of the Corps, therefore, I charge all who wear the Marine green to stand tall. You're United States Marines; and highest success in the ventures you face will continue to be your hallmark.

Semper Fidelis,

CARL E. MUNDY JR.
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps