



10 November 1997

A Message From The Commandant Of The Marine Corps

Today the Corps and its friends around the world gather to celebrate 222 years of making Marines and winning battles for our nation. Over the course of those years, the name "Marine" has taken on a legendary, almost mystical, warrior status. It is a status forged in the cauldron of basic training, tempered by shared hardship and sharpened in the crucible of battle. Making Marines and winning battles are inseparable, but on this, the 222nd birthday of our Corps, I would like each of us to reflect on what winning battles *means*.

Winning battles is as much a triumph of Marine spirit as it is a victory over a foe. It means reaching deep within ourselves to unleash the special inner strength...the indomitable will to win...that is the legacy of our Corps. Princeton, Tripoli, Bladensburg, Chapultepec, Belleau Wood, Iwo Jima, the Chosin Reservoir, Hue City, the oil fields of Southwest Asia...the mere mention of battles such as these floods us with deep emotion. Our hearts swell with pride, and our thoughts drift to memories of fallen friends, brave deeds and the proud legions who have gone before. Our eyes seek out, and lock with, other Marines in a silent reaffirmation that we, too, are ready—in body, mind and spirit—to win the battles looming on our nation's horizon.

No Marine is told to feel deeply about the battles of our Corps. But we do. This inner commitment, this spirit, is passed from Marine to Marine, generation to generation—not in word—nor in print—but in *resolve*. It is a resolve to be the most ready when the nation is least ready—to sortie into the unknown—to meet the unexpected—to overcome the impossible—to defeat the forces of tyranny—to guarantee victory. This same determination has sustained our Corps in times of uncertainty, in times of adversity and in times of combat—just as it will in the battles we will fight—and win—tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

The battles of our storied past are our legacy. Those battles, the ones we fight today and those we will surely face in our future form the headwaters of a mighty river that flows through all Marines—its current ripples through our souls, renewing us, sustaining us and fortifying us. Winning battles is what we should reflect upon today—and every day.

Happy Birthday, Marines. God bless you, and

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. C. Krulak".

C. C. Krulak
General, U.S. Marine Corps