



W. G. FORD

Lin Ezell brings 21 years of experience as a professional museum manager to the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Her deputy director, retired Col Joseph C. Long, will provide the all-important Marine Corps experience and professional knowledge to ensure that the museum is not only something the Corps is proud of but also that it is a place of continuing interest to the American public who will visit the Quantico-based institution when it opens next year.

National Museum of the Marine Corps: Award-Winning Smithsonian Program Manager Appointed First Director

By R. R. Keene

The Corps has always looked to its past to determine its future. Its sanguinary battles, its colorful heroes and innovative leaders nurture its warrior ethos. Indeed, the Marines' history as guardians of the nation is the root of its lore, traditions and legends and the gift of heritage it passes to future generations.

There's little wonder that several years ago when the Marine Corps Heritage

Foundation started work on a National Museum of the Marine Corps at Quantico, Va., Marine historians and students of Marine Corps history greeted it with enthusiasm.

It also sparked heated debate for which Marines also are noted. Who was going to be the National Museum's director? "It has to be a Marine" was the overwhelming reaction. "It's got to be a retired general" was another. There were others, but

mostly they were along the same lines. Who better to guard the repository of the Corps' history than someone who's been a Marine?

Yet, every Marine is custodian of the Corps' heritage and responsible for passing it untarnished to those who follow. If that's the case, why not hire what the project would really need, a professional museum manager? That's what they did.

Enter Lin (short for Linda) Ezell, who for 21 years worked with the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. She's as much at home digging into history as deep-sea fishing, which she does in her off time. She is not, however, a Marine.

Despite that fact, she was professional enough to catch the attention of her Smithsonian boss, General John R. Dailey, USMC (Ret), a former Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps who, among others, recommended her for the Quantico job.

And she has done plenty of what can be considered in the museum field as "grunt work."

She worked as a historian for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for 10 years, from 1974 to 1984. It was there that she co-authored histories for the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project and the Viking Mars landing program. She also found time to write two reference volumes in the Historical Data Book series.

After joining the Smithsonian staff in 1984, she worked her way into positions that required not only historical knowledge but also administrative and business sense. While she put her English and history degrees from the University of Illinois at Springfield, Ill., to good use in research and writing, she also employed the knowledge that came with her master's degree in public administration from the University of Maryland, where she attended as a James Webb fellow.

Consequently, she worked herself into several senior National Air and Space Museum positions, including executive officer for Development; program manager for the planning, design and construction of the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, which displays thousands of the Smithsonian's air and space exhibits; and assistant director for Collections Management. Each assignment provided important experience for becoming director of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, which is projected to open in November 2006.

Her efforts, organizational skills and work at the Udvar-Hazy Center were recognized in March when Ezell was awarded the Director's Award for Excellence at the Air and Space Museum by the director, Gen Dailey, and the deputy director, Donald S. Lopez.

Because she believes this project "needs a museum professional who can

bring it in on time," Ezell wasted no time checking in to Quantico and taking up work residence in the basement of Lejeune Hall in July.

Her official title is Director of the Museums Division, Marine Corps University.

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sity and Director, National Museum of the Marine Corps. Her immediate objective is "to oversee building completion [located just outside the Marine Corps base main gate, between U.S. Highway 1 and Interstate 95] and opening on time with exhibitions that are important to both the Marines and visitors."

Ezell has an "appreciation for the dedication and sacrifices made by Marines, which are sometimes taken for granted." And she is working to ensure that

those efforts made by Marines are conveyed to visitors, 70 percent of whom will be civilians.

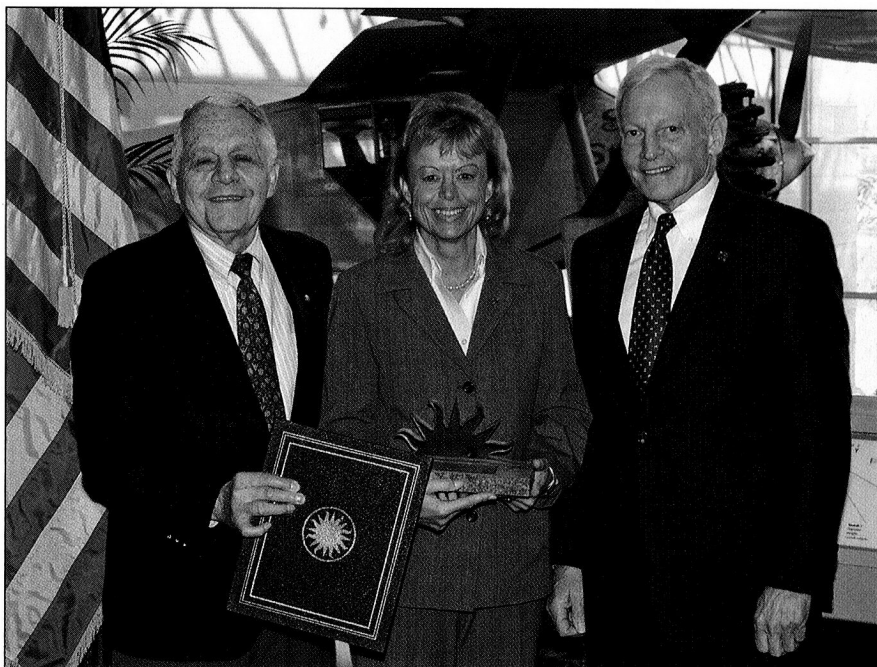
No doubt she will be under pressure to perform, as the Corps' heritage is something its members jealously guard. Her credentials point to her succeeding, as does her positive attitude, a trait Marines expect of their own.

In her new position, Ezell will receive guidance and support from Major General Donald R. Gardner, USMC (Ret), president of the Marine Corps University. MajGen Gardner is a dedicated historian and Marine of more than 45 years of service. Ezell's deputy is Colonel Joseph C. Long, USMCR (Ret). Col Long was the Corps' program manager for the National Museum of the Marine Corps and has been deeply involved with the museum conceptualization and construction for more than six years.

"A new building, welcoming visitors—it is all very exciting!" Ezell said.

It is in the Marines' best interest to wish her success, and they do.

Editor's note: To read the most recent update on the construction progress for the National Museum of the Marine Corps and to see how you may assist, visit www.usmcmuseum.org.



Prior to being named Director of the National Museum of the Marine Corps, Ezell was awarded the Director's Award for Excellence at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum by Donald S. Lopez (left), Deputy Director, and Gen John R. Dailey, USMC (Ret), Director.

COURTESY OF LIN EZELL