

# SEMPER FIDELIS

## NEWSLETTER FOR RETIRED MARINES



10 November 2021

### A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

On 10 November 1970, Commandant Chapman challenged all Marines, active and inactive, young and old, deployed or recently returned from combat, “not to look back, but instead, to look to the future.” He insisted that we celebrate our anniversary, “not as an end of almost two centuries of dedicated service, but as preparation for new service, new dedication, and new achievement.” Those sage words resonate across time and are as applicable today as they were 51 years ago.

Our Corps holds to traditions that link us to the elite warriors who wore the uniform before us, but the traditions we hand down through the generations go far beyond tangible displays, symbols, or customs. The most important traditions that link us to our past and must be carried into the future are the intangible ones – traditions of courage, trust, discipline, loyalty, respect, perseverance, adaptability, and leadership. Today, 246 years since our warfighting legacy began, we celebrate those traits that have been forged in all Marines – past and present.

The character of Marines, our unwavering commitment and relentless pursuit of excellence, remains unchanged from that of past generations, even as the character of warfare is ever-changing. These changes will require us to do what Marines do best – adapt and innovate to win any battle or respond to any crisis. Just as Marines who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan over these past 20 years adapted to the demands of protracted counterinsurgency operations – which would have been all too familiar to the Marines of 1970 – we will adapt to the demands of the present and future, while learning the hard lessons from our recent past. We can’t know for certain where future battlefields will be, or how our methods of warfighting will be redefined as threats to our Nation evolve, but we can ensure that the Marines who fight those battles will be forged of the same courage, spirit, and warfighting excellence as all Marines before them.

We who serve today represent an unbroken chain that stretches back 246 years. As we mark our anniversary, we remember those who went before us, and as we look over the horizon to “new service, new dedication, and new achievement,” solemnly swear to uphold their example of honor, courage, and commitment.

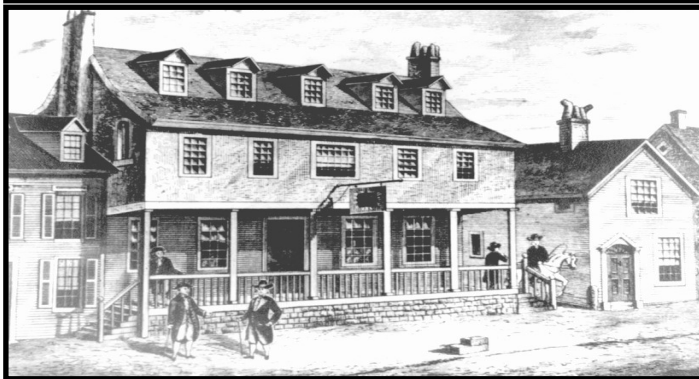
Happy 246th Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

David H. Berger

General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

## The Tun Tavern



The U.S. Marine Corps begins preparation for its “birthday party” every summer. Activities become more feverish as the fall hues arrive. By early November, every Marine is either rehearsing his role in the “party” or pressing, polishing, and spit-shining in order to appear at his or her best for the Birthday Ball. This has not always been the case, however. In fact, Marines have not always celebrated their founding on November the 10th. Formal commemoration of the birthday of the Marine Corps began on 10 November 1921. That particular day was chosen because on that day the Second Continental Congress resolved in 1775 to raise two battalions of Continental Marines.

Until 1921 the birthday of the Corps had been celebrated on another date. An unidentified newspaper clipping from 1918 refers to the celebration of the 120th birthday of the Marine Corps on 11 July “as usual with no fuss.” It is doubtful that there was any real celebration at all. Further inspection of documents and publications prior to 1921 shows no evidence of ceremonies, pageants, or parties. The July date was commemorated between 1798 and 1921 as the birthday of the Corps. During the Revolution, Marines had fought on land and sea, but at the close of the Revolution the Marine Corps and the Navy were all but disbanded. On 11 July 1798, President John Adams approved a bill that recreated the Corps, thereby providing the rationale for this day being commemorated as the birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps.

On 21 October 1921, Maj Edwin McClellan, Officer-in-Charge, Historical Section, Headquarters

Marine Corps, sent a memorandum to Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune, suggesting that the original birthday on 10 November 1775 be declared a Marine Corps holiday to be celebrated throughout the Corps. Maj McClellan further suggested that a dinner be held in Washington, D.C., to commemorate the event. Guests would include prominent individuals from the Marine Corps, Army, and Navy, and descendants of the Revolution. Accordingly, on 1 November 1921, MajGen Lejeune issued Marine Corps Order No. 47, Series 1921. The order summarized the history, mission, and tradition of the Corps, and directed that it be read to every command on 10 November each subsequent year in honor of the birthday of the Marine Corps. This order has been duly carried out.

Some commands expanded the celebration during the next few years. In 1923 at Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, the celebration of the Marine Corps’ 148th birthday took the form of a dance in the barracks that evening. Marines at the Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia, staged a sham battle on the parade ground in commemoration of the birthday. The battle lasted about twenty minutes, and was witnessed by Portsmouth and Norfolk citizens. At Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the birthday was celebrated on the 12th, since a special liberty to Santiago had been arranged on the 10th. The morning activities included field and water sports, and a shooting match. In the afternoon the Marines won a baseball game, 9-8, over a Cuban team. In the evening, members of the command put on a variety show followed by four boxing bouts.

The first so-called “Birthday Ball,” such as suggested by Maj McClellan, was probably held in 1925 in Philadelphia. No records have been located of one prior to 1925. Guests included the secretaries of War and Navy, Major General Commandant Lejeune, famous statesmen, soldiers, and sailors.

The principle event was the unveiling of a tablet on the site of Tun Tavern. The tablet was a gift from the Thomas Roberts Reath Post, American Legion, whose membership was composed exclusively of Marines.

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The celebration was held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Marine Corps League. A parade included Marines, Regular Army, and Navy detachments, National Guard, and other military organizations. The evening banquet was held at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel and a ball followed at the Bellevue-Stratford.

It is not possible to determine precisely when the first cake ceremony was held, but there is evidence of a ceremony being held at Quantico, Virginia, in 1935. Also on record was one held at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., in 1937 where Major General Commandant Thomas Holcomb presided at an open house for Marine Corps officers. Ceremonies included the cutting of a huge cake designed after the famous Tun Tavern in Philadelphia.

From 1937, observances of the Marine Corps Birthday appeared to develop spontaneously throughout the Corps as if they had a life of their own. The celebrations were publicized through every media. Newsreels, motion pictures, and displays were prepared to summarize the history of the Corps. In 1943, standard blank Marine Corps scrap books were forwarded to all districts to be filled with 168th anniversary clippings, scripts, pictures, programs, and other memorabilia, and returned to Headquarters. Unfortunately none of these scrapbooks remain in official files.

In 1951, a formal Birthday Ball Pageant was held at Headquarters Marine Corps. Similar to the pageant today, the script described the Marines' period uniforms and the cake ceremony. Although this is the first substantive record of a pageant, Leatherneck magazine of 10 November 1925 pictures Marines at a pageant in Salt Lake City, Utah, which had taken place "several years ago."

On 28 October 1952, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., directed that the celebration of the Marine Corps Birthday be formalized throughout the Corps, and provided an outline for the cake ceremony, as well as other formal observances. This outline was included in the Marine Corps Drill Manual, approved 26 January 1956.

Traditionally, the first piece of Birthday Cake is

presented to the oldest Marine present and the second piece to the youngest Marine present. When and where this tradition began remains unknown. Some records indicate this practice, and others vary it depending on the dignitaries present at the ball. First pieces of cake have been presented to newlyweds, the Secretary of the Navy, governors, and others, but generally speaking, the first pieces of cake go to the oldest and youngest Marines at the Ball. At present, celebrations of the Marine Corps Birthday on 10 November differ at posts and stations throughout the Corps. All commemorations include the reading of the Marine Corps Order No. 47, and the Commandant's message to those assembled. Most commands sponsor a Birthday Ball of some sort, complete with pageant and cake ceremony as prescribed in the Marine Corps Manual. Like the Corps itself, the Birthday Ball developed from simple origins to become the polished, professional function that all Marines commemorate on 10 November around the world.

Source: Marine Corps Historical Branch

### Marine Corps Birthday Celebration Guadalcanal, circa 1942



LtCol W. W. Stickney, the commanding officer, cuts a Thanksgiving cake with a Japanese officer's sword at Guadalcanal, as hungry Leathernecks look on."  
(Official USMC Photograph)

# 1921 Marine Corps Birthday Message

## 100th Anniversary

*The following will be read to the command on the 10th of November, 1921, and hereafter on the 10th of November of every year. Should the order not be received by the 10th of November, 1921, it will be read upon receipt.*

### Marine Corps Order No. 47 (Series 1921)

#### Headquarters

#### U.S. Marine Corps Washington

Date: 1 November 1921

On November 10, 1775, a Corps of Marines was created by a resolution of Continental Congress. Since that date many thousand men have borne the name "Marine". In memory of them it is fitting that we who are Marines should commemorate the birthday of our Corps by calling to mind the glories of its long and illustrious history.

The record of our Corps is one which will bear comparison with that of the most famous military organizations in the world's history. During 90 of the 146 years of its existence the Marine Corps has been in action against the Nation's foes. From the Battle of Trenton to the Argonne, Marines have won foremost honors in war, and in the long eras of tranquility at home, generation after generation of Marines have grown gray in war in both hemispheres and in every corner of the seven seas, that our country and its citizens might enjoy peace and security.

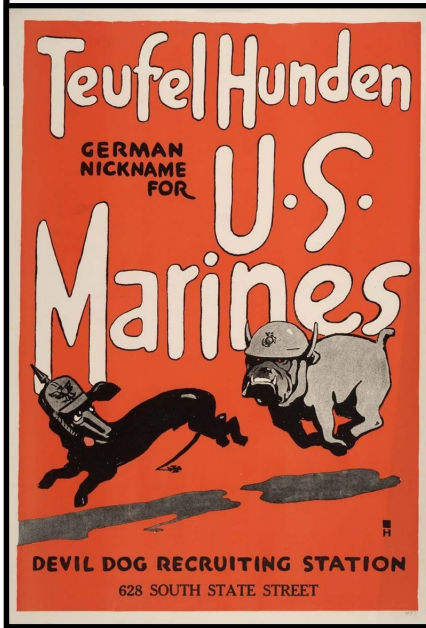
In every battle and skirmish since the birth of our Corps, Marines have acquitted themselves with the greatest distinction, winning new honors on each occasion until the term "Marine" has come to signify all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue.

This high name of distinction and soldierly repute we who are Marines today have received from those who preceded us in the Corps. With it we have also received from them the eternal spirit which has animated our Corps from generation to generation and has been the distinguishing mark of the Marines in every age. So long as that spirit continues to flourish Marines will be found equal to every emergency in the future as they have been in the past, and the men of our Nation will regard us as worthy successors to the long line of illustrious men who have served as "Soldiers of the Sea" since the founding of the Corps.

John A. Lejeune,  
Major General Commandant



# DEVIL DOGS



We got our nickname Devil Dogs from official German reports which called the Marines at Belleau Wood Teufel Hunden. It has been said that this nickname came about from Marines being ordered to take a hill occupied by German forces while wearing gas masks as a precaution against German mustard gas. While the Marines fought their way up the hill, the heat caused them to sweat profusely, foam at the mouth and turned their eyes bloodshot, and at some points the hill was so steep it caused the Marines to climb up it on all fours. From the Germans' vantage point, they witnessed a pack of tenacious, growling figures wearing gas masks, with bloodshot eyes and mouth foam seeping from the sides, advancing up the hill, sometimes on all fours, killing everything in their way. As the legend goes, the German soldiers, upon seeing this spectacle, began to yell that they were being attacked by "dogs from hell."

(Courtesy 6th Marine Regiment History (marines.mil) )

1944 - Off the shores of Guam. Coast Guardsmen and Marines handle a "Devil Dog" with care as they transfer the war dog from a Coast Guard landing barge to an LVT. He is boxed because he is trained for battle and apt to go after any and all but his own handler.

(USCG Photograph)



## Up, Up and Away with SgtMaj Jiggs

1922- Sergeant Major Jiggs was the first bulldog to serve as the Marine Corps mascot. The bulldog became an important Marine Corps symbol exemplifying the fighting spirit of the Marine Corps.

(Official USMC Photograph)

## Triangle, VA (January 2021)

The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and National Museum of the Marine Corps announced a new traveling combat art exhibition titled *Honor, Courage, Commitment: Marine Corps Art, 1975-2018*. The exhibit features 36 works of art by 15 combat artists, focusing on Marine Corps service immediately following the Vietnam War through recent years. The exhibit will travel across the country from early 2021 until mid-2023.

### About the Exhibition

The selected pieces include 34 works on canvas and two sculptures. The art speaks to the experiences of the artists, most of whom were deployed in combat. The Marine Corps' direction to these artists was simply, "Go to war, do art." The result is a rich commentary on the men and women of the Marine Corps who are "no better friend, no worse enemy" in their engagements around the world.

The works are divided into three themes:

- "Every Clime and Place," which illustrates the Corps' ability to respond rapidly to any location;
- "No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy," which portrays Marines capable of fighting the enemy but also delivering aid to those in need; and
- "The Price," which provides a glimpse into the sacrifices made by our men and women in uniform and their families.

### Tour Schedule and Locations

Oct-Dec 2021: National Museum of the Pacific War  
Fredericksburg, TX

2022 locations to be announced

Jan-May 2023: The George H. W. Bush Presidential Library & Museum

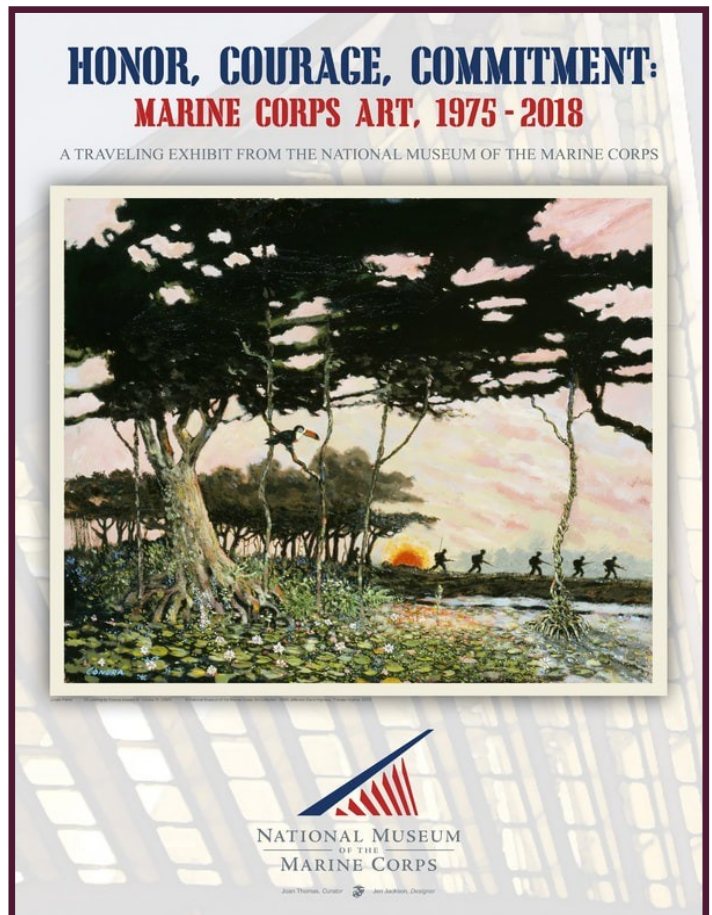
Since the centennial of the WWI Armistice in 2018, Bells of Peace have been tolled in remembrance of all those who served in WWI at 11 am on Veterans Day. Bells of Peace also commemorates the WWI Armistice of November 11, 1918, when the guns fell silent, and bells tolled on the Western Front after four years of brutal combat.

For more information on joining the celebration visit the Doughboy Foundation's home page: [Doughboy Foundation - Home Page](#).



**BELLS  
OF PEACE**

A World War I Remembrance



The painting, *Jungle Patrol* by Colonel Edward M. Condra, III, USMC (Ret.), featured in the poster, is part of the exhibition and shows a combined action patrol of U.S. and Peruvian Marines moving silently through the Amazon rain forest of Peru.

Contact the museum for more information:

National Museum of the Marine Corps  
18900 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Triangle, VA 22172  
Toll Free: 1.877.653.1775

Toll "Bells of Peace" on 11/11 at 11am local time, and honor all those who served and sacrificed in WWI.

## 2021 TRICARE Open Season November 8 - December 13



TRICARE Open Season is the annual period when you can enroll in or change your health care coverage for the next year. In 2021, TRICARE Open Season begins November 8 and ends December 13. Any enrollment changes you make will go into effect on January 1, 2022. Open season applies to anyone enrolled in, or eligible for a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select.

### If you're eligible to participate in TRICARE Open Season, you have three options:

- **Stay in your plan.** If you want to stay in your current TRICARE health plan, you don't have to re-enroll. You'll continue in your current health plan through 2022 or as long as you're eligible.
- **Enroll in a plan.** If you're eligible for a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select but not enrolled, you can enroll in a plan now.
- **Change plans.** If you're already enrolled in a TRICARE Prime option or TRICARE Select, you can switch plans and switch between individual and family enrollment.

### What Happens if I Don't Take Any Action?

If you aren't already in a plan and don't enroll in a plan during open season, you'll only be eligible for care at a military hospital or clinic if space is available.

### Making Enrollment Changes Outside of Open Season

Outside of TRICARE Open Season, you can enroll in or change enrollment to TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select following a Qualifying Life Event (QLE).

A QLE is a certain change in your life, such as marriage, birth of a child, or retirement from active duty, which may mean different TRICARE health plans are available to you and your family members. A TRICARE QLE opens a 90-day period for you to make eligible enrollment changes. A QLE for one family member creates a chance for all eligible family members to make enrollment changes.

To learn more, visit [www.tricare.mil/lifeevents](http://www.tricare.mil/lifeevents).

Outside of the Federal Benefits Open Season, you can only enroll in the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) or make changes to your existing FEDVIP plan if you experience a FEDVIP QLE. Remember, FEDVIP QLEs may be different from the TRICARE QLEs. To learn more, visit [BENEFEDS.com](http://BENEFEDS.com).

### TRICARE East

East: 1-800-444-5445

### TRICARE West

West: 1-844-866-9378

### TRICARE Overseas

International SOS (Overseas Contractor) Contact TRICARE Overseas Program ([tricare-overseas.com](http://tricare-overseas.com))

“Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference in the world. But, the Marines don't have that problem.”

— Ronald Reagan

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