

## THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

BY MAJOR GENERAL JOHN A. LEJEUNE, COMMANDANT U.S.M.C.  
DELIVERED AT THE NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND,

DECEMBER 14, 1923.

SOME months ago the President of the Naval War College was good enough to ask me to deliver a lecture to the officers on duty at the College. I, of course, accepted, but did so in a state of trepidation because somehow the word "lecture" has always had a terrifying effect on my mind. When I was a youth it was connected in my thoughts with conversations with those in higher authority, concerning certain lapses or derelictions of duty on my part in which the higher authority did the talking and I did the listening; or else it is connected in my mind with certain dreary occasions when I sat in the pit, as it were, with a number of other victims while some long-winded instructor, having the platform to himself, discoursed at great length on some subject in which I was not in the least interested.

For these reasons, and also because it would be a misnomer to so label this effort, I now disclaim most emphatically any desire or intention on my part to deliver a lecture, but ask you instead to regard what I am going to say as a talk. Admiral Williams, in his invitation, did not limit me as to my choice of a subject. However, inasmuch as I believe in the truth of the old adage that a cobbler should stick to his last, I will endeavor to confine my talk to the general subject of the U. S. Marine Corps, and more specifically to its origin, its development, its organization, its peacetime duties and its wartime mission. This subject covers a very wide field and it would be easy to be prolix, but I will be as brief as is consistent with the occasion, always bearing in mind, however, that I have come a long distance and that the fitness of things requires that I should talk long enough to avoid the criticism that I am engaged in a junket at Government expense.

### ORIGIN OF THE U. S. MARINE CORPS

The U. S. Marine Corps easily traces its descent from the organization now known as the Royal Marines of Great Britain. The Royal Marines came into existence as the result of natural evolu-

tion. Very recently, Lieutenant Colonel Fields of the Royal Marines published an exceedingly interesting history of that famous Corps, entitled "Britain's Sea Soldiers," and I cannot do better than to allow him to tell his own story in his own words by utilizing extracts from his book.

In the first chapter he discusses at considerable length the ancient custom of ships of war carrying detachments of soldiers, sometimes as a small part of their regular complements, and at other times, as the major portion of the number of men embarked. This custom, coming down from the Greeks and Romans, was continued in the British Fleet, but not until the reign of Charles II was there any military organization definitely placed under the authority of the British Admiralty. This was accomplished by an Order in Council, which directed the recruitment and organization of "The Admiral's Regiment." Colonel Fields states that it was the regiment of the "Duke of York and Albany, the Lord High Admiral of England," and in a foot-note we read "The regiment of the Duke of York is called the 'Regiment of Marines,' and in case of war is the first to embark on board the fleet, over which the Lord High Admiral presides. This is considered the first office in the Kingdom, and is therefore held by the Duke of York."—From "Travels of Count Cosmo of Tuscany."

Colonel Fields further states, "It had at this time (1684) been just twenty years in existence, having been raised in 1664 in compliance with an Order in Council which directed 'That twelve hundred land Souldjers be forthwith raysed, to be in readinesse, to be distributed into his Majesty's Fleets prepared for Sea Service which said twelve hundred Men are to be putt into One Regiment Under One Colonell, One Lieutenant Colonell and One Serjeant Major and to be divided into six Companies, each Company to consist of Two Hundred Souldjers; And to have one Captain, one Lieutenant, One Ensigne, One Drume, Fowre Serjeants, and Fowre Corporalls, and all the Souldjers aforesaid to be armed with good firelocks, all which Armes, Drumes and Colours are forthwith to be prepared and furnished out of his Majesty's stoares; the care of all of which is recommended to the Duke of Albemarle his Grace, Lord Generall of his Majesty's Forces.' The Colours borne by this regiment were: For the Colonel, plain yellow; the Lieutenant-Colonel, a red St. George's Cross with white edging upon a yellow ground, and the 'Major's' and the Company's Colour, 'which bore a cross similar to that upon the Lieutenant

Colonel's, but with the yellow sun-rays issuing from the angles upon a white ground.' ”

“ Although termed ‘ Land Souldjers ’ in the Order in Council, it is evident that they were specially raised for service afloat, for in the preamble to the Order it is stated that it was issued ‘ upon a Report from the Lords the Committee for the Affayres of his Majesty's Navy Royall and Admiralty.’ ”

“ Service afloat was evidently not popular, as in 1673 we find the Duke of Buckingham, as Lord Lieutenant of the West Riding of Yorkshire, attributing the slowness with which he is able to enlist men for the King's service to ‘ the maliciously disseminated Rumors of the ill-usage of Soldiers afloat.’ ”

“ The Admiral's regiment bore its part in all the fierce naval engagements with the Dutch that took place between 1664 and 1680, battles in which we more nearly met our match at sea than has ever been the case before or since.”

“ In March, 1672, sometime prior to the Sole Bay Fight, the Duke of Monmouth had gone over to France in command of a regiment formed from detachments for the Guards and other battalions to serve against the Dutch with the French Army. In November, another composite regiment under Sir Bevil Skelton, a Captain in the 1st Foot Guards—now the Grenadiers—was formed and crossed over to Calais at the end of December. One of the companies of this battalion was drawn from the Admiral's Regiment and its Captain was John Churchill—afterwards the famous Duke of Marlborough—who, as we have seen, had just been promoted from Ensign in the King's Company of the 1st Guards, to command a company in this Regiment.”

“ Early in the year (1678) it had been decided to send over an expedition to Holland to assist the Dutch against the French. In fact, the review at Hounslow was a direct consequence of this decision, since the Army had been raised from a very low figure to something like 20,000 men, half of whom were encamped at that place. The Maritime Regiment was raised to two battalions, in addition, presumably, to the detachments serving afloat. One of these was known as ‘ The Duke of York's ’ and the other as ‘ Sir Charles Lyttleton's. ’ By the end of February, nine companies of these marines had arrived at Ostend, and seven more were under orders to follow them \* \* \* .

“ Both Marine battalions went to Flanders, where they had been augmented by the arrival of a Grenadier Company apiece. The Duke

of York's was at Louvain, Sir Charles Lyttleton's very possibly with him at Bruges \* \* \* ."

"But the Marines had proved themselves too valuable not to be replaced, and in 1690 orders were issued for the formation of two large regiments of fifteen companies each—200 men to a company." The Marine Regiments took part in all the campaigns of England, both on land and on sea, during the last quarter of the 17th century.

"In September, 1692, detachments were drawn out of the two Marine regiments to go with Colonel Faringdon's regiment to Jamaica, and in November, Colonels Lillington and Norcutts were also sent to that island with 100 Marines. At the same time 500 were sent to Admiral Russell, presumably for duty afloat.

"On February 14, 1694, the following order was issued to the officers commanding the Marine Regiments: 'You are also Req'd. to cause your men to be frequently exercised at the Great Guns for the better Instructing them in that matter.'

"After a service of eight years the two Marine Regiments, then commanded by the Marquis of Caermarthen and Sir Clowdisely Shovell, underwent a considerable transformation. By an order of July 18, 1698, the two, which must have been considerably reduced in numbers, were combined into one and placed under the command of Colonel Thomas Brudenall, and at the same time the three infantry regiments commanded by Colonels Edward Dutton Colt, William Seymour, and Henry Mordaunt, were turned into Marine regiments and placed upon the naval establishment. These four regiments had each of them a strength of 754 officers, N.C.O.'s and men, so that the the whole four of them together were barely stronger than one of the original regiments whose place they took."

I will not attempt within the space of this talk further to follow the development of the Royal Marines, but will turn to our own Marine Corps.

It was but natural that the American Colonies, in organizing their armed forces for the Revolutionary War, should follow the example of the mother country. On November 10, 1775, Continental Congress provided by resolution for the organization of two battalions of Marines, to consist of men with a knowledge of the sea. These Marines took part in many engagements, both ashore and afloat, during the War of the Revolution, notably in the Battle of Princeton, and also on board the American naval vessels which operated off the British coast under the command of Commodore John Paul Jones.

Upon the making of peace with Great Britain, the Continental Marines, like the Continental Army and Navy, ceased to exist until after the adoption of the Constitution and the installation of the Federal Government; but it was not until July 11, 1798, that the Marine Corps, by Act of Congress, was brought into being in substantially the same form that it exists today. Since that date its administration, its organization and its duties have developed along logical lines.

The first and subsequent organic acts provided for a Commandant and a staff, and the Act of April 22, 1800, authorized the appointment of a "Lieutenant Colonel Commandant to command the Corps of Marines."

A curious situation arose in the early days of the history of the Corps due to the fact that the Act of July 11, 1798 provided that the Marines were to be a part of the Army or Navy "according to the nature of the service in which they shall be employed." The immediate result of this phraseology was the decision that Marines afloat were subject to the Articles for the Government of the Navy, and when on shore to the Articles of War. In consequence of this anomalous situation, general courts-martial convened on shore for the trial of Marines were Army courts and were composed of officers of the Army and of the Marine Corps.

The Act of April 10, 1806, Article 68, provided that:

"When ever it may be found convenient and necessary to the public service, the officers of the Marines shall be associated with the officers of the land forces, for the purpose of holding courts-martial and trying offenders belonging to either; and in such cases the orders of the senior officer of either corps, who may be present and duly authorized, shall be received and obeyed."

Much friction, too was caused between the Army, Navy and Marine Corps by the dual nature of the disciplinary jurisdiction. Finally, the whole question of the status of the Marine Corps was clarified by the Act of June 30, 1834, which provided that the Marine Corps was at all times subject to Navy laws and regulations except when all or part of it were detached for service with the Army, when that part would be governed by the Articles of War. Since 1834, there has been a gradual tightening of the ties which bind the Navy and Marine Corps together, until now it has definitely become a part of the Naval Service.

As the Corps has grown in size and its duties have become more numerous and more varied, its organization in the field and at Head-

quarters has expanded. Until recent years there was no provision of law or regulations governing the field of service of Marines, the sole mention in the Articles for the Government of the Navy of the service of Marines on shore being the inclusion of the Commandant of a Marine Barracks in the list of the officers authorized to order summary-courts-martial. Similarly, the Navy Regulations made no provision for the service of Marines under any conditions except on board ship or at a Marine Barracks, although the statute law prescribed that Marines were eligible for duty in the forts and garrisons of the United States, or for such other duty on shore as the President may direct.

Little by little this condition has been corrected, until now the laws recognize the varied nature of the duty Marines may be called on to perform, and have placed regimental and separate battalion commanders on the same footing as to disciplinary authority as are the commanding officers of naval vessels and brigade and higher commanders in the same status as are flag officers of the Navy in command afloat or ashore. During this period of development, the Navy Regulations pertaining to the Marine Corps have been expanded, and the Marine Corps manuals approved by the Secretary of the Navy and therefore having the same effect as the Navy Regulations, have been drawn up and issued to all officers.

The Marine Corps functions administratively under the command of the Commandant of the Corps. He is solely responsible to the Secretary of the Navy for the discipline and efficiency of the Corps. He has under his immediate jurisdiction and control the heads of the three staff departments, who correspond closely to the bureau chiefs of the Army and Navy. There is also a general officer who is the assistant to the Commandant, who aids him in coördinating all the business transacted at Headquarters, including the staff departments, the Division of Operations and Training, and the sections of Personnel, Recruiting and Education.

I believe that one of the principal reasons for the efficiency of the Marine Corps is the fact that it has, in the Commandant, a single head, and that he is charged with the duty not only of building up its efficiency and of conducting its affairs economically, but also is regarded by all the officers and men as their natural protector and friend. As students of history, all of us must be convinced that unity of administrative control is as essential to success as is unity of command, that both are in accord with the principle of simplicity; and that, con-

versely, division of authority spells confusion, demoralization and disaster:

Before going to another branch of the subject, I deem it pertinent to add that there is the closest kind of liaison and coöperation between Marine Corps Headquarters and the Bureaus and Offices of the Navy Department. There is no friction and the machine functions in high gear without any serious jolts or jars. We are working, so far as our abilities permit, for the welfare and upbuilding of the entire naval establishment and not in the interest of any clique or faction.

#### PEACE TIME DUTIES AND WAR TIME MISSION

I have coupled these two together because in peace we must so construct our machine that it will function economically and efficiently when it is required to carry out the purpose for which it was created.

The Marine Corps mission may be succinctly stated as follows, *viz.*: To support the United States Fleet and to aid the Navy in carrying out that part of the policy of the government which has been or may be assigned to it. In carrying out this mission, the Marine Corps is called on for the performance of many and varied duties. These may be classified as follows:

(a) Detachments to guard and protect navy yards, naval bases, and other naval utilities, at home and abroad.

(b) Guards for American legations in foreign countries, such guards being under the jurisdiction of the flag officer in command of the naval forces on the station.

(c) Landing forces to protect American lives, rights and interests.

(d) Forces of occupation to restore order and to maintain peace and tranquility in disturbed countries, as, for instance, Haiti and Santo Domingo.

(e) Detachments for Marine Corps administrative purposes, such as the recruiting service, training stations, supply depots, etc.

(f) Aviation.

(g) Marine Detachments for service on board the vessels of the Fleet.

(h) Expeditionary forces for service with the Fleet in war.

It is not necessary to discuss all of these duties, and I will confine myself chiefly to the major war mission of the Marine Corps, which is to support the Fleet by supplying it with a highly trained, fully equipped expeditionary force for the minor shore operations which

are necessary for the effective prosecution by the fleet of its major mission, which is to gain control of the sea and thereby open the sea lanes for the movement of the army overseas. These minor shore operations are numerous and varied in their nature. Probably the most important are the seizure and defense of temporary or advanced naval bases in the theatre of operations.

#### NAVAL BASES

It is incontrovertible that to safeguard its interests in waters remote to its shores a nation either must have securely held bases from which operations can be directed or must be able to seize and hold certain points which can be used as such bases. A nation must also be able to strengthen the weak points in its line of communications in order to prevent an aggressive enemy from utilizing such points.

The geographical isolation of the United States with respect to the other powerful nations will, in any great war in which we may become involved except a purely defensive war, necessitate our Navy operating in regions quite remote from our shores and from our few inadequate bases. If we then contemplate a naval advance or progression over great sea distances, the possession and occupation of naval bases becomes an essential part of the plan. If the United States was so fortunate as already to possess such bases, the problem would be simplified to that extent. Unfortunately, the United States does not possess such bases, and the alternative proposition is, therefore, that we must be ready and able to seize promptly the bases that will be needed by our naval forces. On the other hand, it is equally important that we capture enemy overseas possessions close to our own territory in order to deprive him of his bases and put him at a disadvantage.

It has been recognized by the Joint Board and by the War Plans Division of Naval Operations, and is so recorded, that a large force of Marines for expeditionary work is essential to the furtherance of the naval plans, and that this force should be an integral part of the Fleet. The Joint Board has laid down that "The most important function of the Marine Corps (in relation to War Plans) is to seize and hold temporary advance bases in coöperation with the Fleet and to defend such bases until relieved by the Army."

The problem involved in the maintenance of expeditionary forces concern the strength, equipment, training, the peace time location of



such forces, and the relationship of these forces with the Navy and Army in probable operations. An expeditionary force should be sufficiently strong to be self-supporting and contain within itself all the elements for its own defense. The use of battleships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines for defending bases (held or seized by expeditionary forces) prevents their better employment in their legitimate rôle of finding and destroying the enemy. Mobility, flexibility and a state of constant preparedness require that the organization should be no larger or more complex than the service may require.

Equipment must necessarily play an important part in any campaign. The character of the equipment depends upon the character of each operation. A line of demarcation must therefore be closely drawn. For instance, the equipment for seizure and temporary occupation protected by the Fleet would be much less than that which would be needed for seizure and permanent defense. In this day of modern invention the element of surprise has been largely reduced and the advantage which has been lost through surprise must be made up by celerity of movement. It therefore follows that to be burdened with unnecessary and cumbersome equipment is to jeopardize the success of the adventure.

In general, equipment should consist of mobile artillery, searchlights, wireless, communications, air service, transportation, landing gear, special types of boats for landing heavy material, light tanks, etc. The equipment should differ from that of ships since all possible operations against sea forces, land forces, air forces, or any combination of these may occur. The equipment and personnel must be able to undertake any of these.

The training of an expeditionary force must be carried out so as to prepare the force to exercise a dual function—that of seizing a base and that of defending the base after seizure until relieved by the Army when the lines of communication have been made secure. The basic training embraces practical experience with the arms and equipment of the force and a study of the manner of its best employment. This should be followed and supplemented by actual experience with the Fleet and actual embarkation and disembarkation under conditions as near actual war conditions as possible. This enables us to learn by experience how to handle our equipment and at the same time gives

the Navy an opportunity to become familiar with the needs of the expeditionary force.

It must be understood that the Marine Expeditionary Force is as much an integral part of the Fleet as any other fighting unit and that all impedimenta, supplies, etc., must be transported by the Navy. Expeditionary forces should be considered as an integral part of the fighting line, and its equipment, material and personnel should be maintained in the same efficient condition as the component parts of the Fleet.

Coöperation between the landing force and the ships supporting must be complete. The responsibility in any campaign or adventure rests in its last analysis with the officer who commands, but his decision should be the result of mutual agreement with his subordinates rather than a compromise. History relates that the success of combined operations has often been jeopardized by the lack of unity of command. No such contingency can arise when the landing force consists of Marines, for we are part and parcel of the naval service—an integral part. A complete understanding of the respective missions of the Navy and the Marine Corps, and a familiarity with the respective functions of each organization is bound to be conducive to best results. It is reasonable, for instance, to assume that an officer whose special training has been along certain defined military lines is better fitted for command on any duty coming within this category than one whose experience along the same line is not so extensive.

The seizure and occupation or destruction of enemy bases is another important function of the expeditionary force. On both flanks of a fleet crossing the Pacific are numerous islands suitable for utilization by an enemy for radio stations, aviation, submarine, or destroyer bases, etc. All should be mopped up as progress is made. Furthermore, the presence of an expeditionary force with the fleet would add greatly to the striking power of the Commander-in-Chief of the fleet. History is replete with examples of the value of such a force. Admiral Dewey stated on more than one occasion that had he had with his fleet an expeditionary force of 5000 Marines on May 1, 1898, he would immediately have accepted the surrender of Manila and occupied it, thereby avoiding the serious international complications which arose during the long and anxious three months which elapsed before the arrival of a military force. Admiral Sampson, the official reports show, planned to utilize the Marine Battalion at

Guantanamo and the marine detachments on board the vessels of his fleet to make a surprise attack on the forts at the entrance of Santiago Harbor, thereby enabling his fleet to clear the channel of mines, enter the harbor and engage the Spanish Fleet. The disastrous sortie of Cervera's ill-fated fleet alone prevented the carrying out of this plan. One of the greatest disasters in history was the failure of the Gallipoli campaign in the World War. How different the result would probably have been if the British Mediterranean Fleet had been accompanied by an adequate expeditionary force when its first attack was made. By utilizing the principle of surprise it would have been comparatively easy to have seized the fortifications on Gallipoli Peninsula and then to have proceeded to clear the straits of mines, thereby permitting the fleet to enter the Golden Horn, to open sea communications with Russia, and to isolate all of Asiatic Turkey from contact with Bulgaria and the Central Powers.

The maintenance, equipping and training of its expeditionary force so that it will be in instant readiness to support the Fleet in the event of war, I deem to be the most important Marine Corps duty in time of peace. It is with this end in view that this force has been concentrated, that it has held field exercises annually; that it is to take part in the winter manœuvres of the Fleet in the West Indies, and that the military and naval instruction of the officers of the Marine Corps has been developed and intensified even at the expense of some of its other activities.

I will conclude with a reference to the service of the Marine Corps during the World War from the point of view of the manner in which it carried out its mission. When the United States entered the World War, the Allies had gained control of the seas, and the sea lanes, except for enemy submarines, were open for transportation of the military forces overseas. The necessity for an expeditionary force to support the Fleet did not then exist, and the Marine Corps activities in support of the Navy were confined to an expansion of the guards of navy yards, etc., etc., the garrisoning of Haiti and Santo Domingo, the supplying of detachments for duty on board naval vessels, and the organization of three regiments, two for duty in Cuba, and one to be held in readiness at Galveston for possible duty in the Mexican oil fields. Expansion for the performance of these duties did not by any means exhaust its latent possibilities for service, and I for one believed that it was the part of wisdom to utilize to the fullest extent these

latent possibilities by organizing an expeditionary force for service with the Army. This was done, and the 4th and 5th Brigades and twelve replacement battalions, a total of nearly 30,000 officers and men, were sent overseas. I feel certain that in the wars yet to come a similar procedure will be followed and that such part of the Marine Corps Expeditionary Force as may not be required for use by the Fleet after it has gained control of the seas will be detached for service with the Army by order of the President. This course would be in accord with the military principle as "Economy of Force," and what is of still more importance, it would be in accord with the patriotic principle that, in the event of war, every man, especially those trained for war, should do his utmost to aid in the winning of the war.