

Throughout the storied history of our Corps, certain unimpeachable images stand forth as unparalleled in capturing the tradition and ethos of what it means to be a United States Marine. Now, poised on the brink of a new millennium, we prepare to celebrate the 224th birthday of our Corps and recall in the series of articles that follows, the thoughts, reflections, and esprit that epitomize all Marines. The *Gazette* offers these memoirs and heartfelt tributes as a salute to all Marines—past, present, those still living, and those that have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our great Nation.

SEMPER FIDELIS

1916-1924 WORLD WAR I 1915

IN HONOR AND MEN
OF THE MEN OF THE
UNITED STATES MARINE
WHO HAVE GIVEN
THEIR LIVES TO THEIR COUNTRY
SINCE 10 NOVEMBER



10 November 1999

A Message from the Commandant of the Marine Corps

As we gather to celebrate the Marine Corps' 224th Birthday, we find ourselves at a crossroads between the past and the future, at a time where we serve as both guardians of our heritage and torchbearers committed to writing the next chapter of our Corps' history. The 20th century was a period of national definition and immense global change. It is both fitting and appropriate that we recognize and celebrate the role Marines played during these dramatic times.

As the United States evolved into the role of superpower during the often-turbulent events of the last 100 years, Marines were ever present; exerting influence far beyond that expected of a Corps so few in number. Marines protected America's interests, struggled against foes who attempted to do our country harm, and they remained at the forefront of the Nation's efforts to maintain global peace and stability. From the defense of the Peking Legation to operations in Kosovo, the 20th century witnessed Marines "In ev'ry clime and place," helping the United States grow from a fledgling world power to become the only remaining superpower. In two World Wars, the Corps marched to victory against powerful enemies. In Korea, Vietnam, and Kuwait, Marines assisted in providing freedom for people who sought to live in peace. In hundreds of distant lands, from Nicaragua to Lebanon to Somalia, Marines restored and maintained order, aided people in distress, provided protection for the weak, and upheld the values that have come to define our country on the world stage.

The Americans who accomplished these noble deeds came from our society as ordinary men and women. They became extraordinary by earning the title "United States Marine." Many made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of their country, and we honor their memory. Others returned to our society where they continue to serve by living exemplary lives as men and women of character and dedication. Finally, many Marines remain in uniform, always on watch, that Americans may live in peace. On this day—the final Marine Corps Birthday of the 20th century—I offer warmest regards to all who have worn the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor, and to the families who also serve by supporting them. You represent all that is wonderful about our Nation, and I am proud to serve with you.

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. L. Jones".

J. L. JONES
General, U.S. Marine Corps