

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

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On November 10, 1775, our Corps was born as the Continental Congress raised the “first and second battalions of American Marines.” Each year as we celebrate our birthday, we pause to reflect on the Marines of yesteryear who fought in our touchstone battles and forged the modern Marine Corps with their courage, integrity, and undying commitment to their fellow Marines. Each of our storied battles is a link in the long chain that binds all Marines together—from the Continental Marines at Bunker Hill to the Teufelhunden crossing the wheat fields of Belleau Wood. This chain binds us to the Marines on the crest of Mount Suribachi; it passes through the ice and snow of the Chosin Reservoir and the steaming jungles of Vietnam, and it anchors firmly today in the desert sands of Iraq.

This year’s celebration again finds many from our ranks serving with distinction in harm’s way. As we have for the past 231 years, our Corps is answering the Nation’s call. I can report first hand that our Marines fighting on the frontlines of the long war on terror are performing brilliantly, acquitting themselves with honor, dedication, and dignity in difficult and dangerous environments.

All Marines are making a difference. Regardless of where you are serving, you are adding new chapters to the legacy that was earned with sweat and blood on old battlefields. Just as previous generations of Marines shaped today’s Marine Corps, your deeds are molding the Corps of tomorrow. Our Corps has never been stronger, and all Americans are extremely proud of your magnificent performance and unwavering commitment to serve our Corps and country. With high caliber Marines like you, our future has never been brighter.

Another irreplaceable element of our success as Marines is the terrific support we receive from our families. Through the long hours, the exercises, and the combat deployments, their support is unconditional and firm. They give us love and devotion, providing us with the strength to drive on when duty calls. Today we should all acknowledge our loved ones for their patient, steadfast service.

To all who have earned the title Marine, to the superb Sailors who serve with us in every clime and place, and to our precious families—I wish each one of you a heartfelt *Happy 231st Birthday*.

Semper Fidelis and Keep Attacking!

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Hagee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

M. W. Hagee
General, U.S. Marine Corps