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An Chronological Outline of the United States Marine Corps History 1775-1915

[Excerpted from [Marine Corps History](#) on [MarineLink](#) the Official Homepage of the United States Marine Corps]

Birth of the Corps

Nov. 10, 1775 -- Continental Congress establishes Marine Corps On 10 November 1775, the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia passed a resolution stating that "two Battalions of Marines be raised" for service as landing forces with the fleet. This resolution, sponsored by John Adams, established the Continental Marines and marked the birth date of the United States Marine Corps. Serving on land and at sea, these first Marines distinguished themselves in a number of important operations, including their first amphibious raid into the Bahamas in March 1776, under the command of Captain (later Major) Samuel Nicholas. Nicholas, the first commissioned officer in the Continental Marines, remained the senior Marine officer throughout the American Revolution and is considered to be the first Marine Commandant. The Treaty of Paris in April 1783 brought an end to the Revolutionary War and as the last of the Navy's ships were sold, the Continental Navy and Marines went out of existence.

Nov. 28, 1775 -- John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, authorizes captain's commission for Samuel Nicholas, which tradition holds, was the first Commandant of the Marine Corps.

March 3, 1776 -- First amphibious raid: New Providence, Bahamas

July 4, 1776 -- Declaration of Independence signed

April, 1783 -- Treaty of Paris; Marine Corps disbands shortly after treaty signed. Formal re-establishment of Marine Corps doesn't occur until 11 July, 1798.

April 25-27, 1805 -- Capture of fortress at Derne, Tripoli -- Lt. Presley N. O'Bannon presented "Mameluke" sword for actions at Derne

War of 1812 - Mexico

War of 1812 -- Corps' strength reads 10 officers, 483 enlisted

1820 -- Archibald Henderson becomes Commandant of the Marine Corps; "Grand old Man" Henderson held CMC billet for 39 years

Sept. 13, 1847 -- Battle of Chapultepec, Mexico

Civil War

1861-1865 -- Civil War; nearly half of Marine Corps' officers resign their commissions to join the New Confederate States Marine Corps -- Confederate Marines' roster reads 539 -- A resolution introduced to Congress was one of the first attempts to disband the Corps; idea was tabled but the thought continued

18 June, 1866 -- Another resolution to disband the Corps studied and dropped (21 Feb., 1867)

Nov. 19, 1868 -- Marine Corps Emblem adopted (usually credited to CMC Jacob Zeilin; emblem nearly unchanged since that time) -- The Marines' Hymn first begins to be heard; no author credited.

1883 -- Marine Corps' motto -- "Semper Fidelis" or "Always Faithful" adopted, replacing other well-known motto's of "Fortitudine" (early 1800's) and "By Sea and By Land" (1876).

1888 -- John Phillip Sousa's "Semper Fidelis" composed.

Spain - Haiti

1898 War with Spain -- June 14, Sgt. John H. Quick at Cuzco Well, Cuba, wigwags (signals) USS Dolphin to direct ships' fire; Quick awarded Medal of Honor for his action. -- National Press pounce on story of Marines in action at Cuzco Well; this begins recognition of the name "Marine."

1900 -- China Relief Expedition (Boxer Rebellion)

1901 - Pvt. Dan Daly awarded his first Medal of Honor for actions while in China (Battle of Peking July, 1900)

1907 -- "Horse Marines" -- China Marines guarding Legation Quarter organized this small detachment, mostly for ceremonies and crowd control, riding Mongolian Ponies. Marines who served in China were often referred to as "Horse Marines."

1912 -- Nicaraguan Campaign

1912 -- Birth of Marine Corps Aviation -- Lt. A.A. Cunningham 1st Marine Aviator; Cunningham, designated Naval Aviator #5, Sept. 17, 1915

1914 -- Maj. Smedley Butler awarded his first Medal of Honor for actions at Vera Cruz

1915-1924 -- Occupation of Haiti

1915 -- Maj. Smedley Butler and Gunnery Sgt. Dan Daly awarded their second Medals of Honor for actions while in Haiti