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Semper Fi

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS FACTS

BIRTH OF THE UNITED STATES MARINES:

The legacy of the United States Marine Corps was born on November 10, 1775, when Congress commissioned Robert Mullan, the proprietor of Tun Tavern, located on Philadelphia's historic waterfront to raise the first two battalions of Marines, under the leadership of Samuel Nicholas, the first appointed Commandant of the Continental Marines. The U.S. Marines have been the first branch of the armed forces to serve in every war since that day, and have mounted over 300 assaults on foreign shores, from the arctic to the tropics.



ROOTS OF THE U.S. MARINES:

The United States Marine Corps can trace its heritage to the British Royal Marines. Although the current ranks of the Royal Marines number quite small compared to today's US Marines (7,000 vs. 175,000), both Corps of Marines have stood side by side in conflicts around the globe and maintain their close ties. Both Corps of Marines frequently have liaison officers on exchange with each other. The USMC emblem was loosely modeled from the Royal Marines. Neither Corps' emblem incorporates a shield

signifying defense, since Marines prefer to be on the offensive and attack the enemy.

During the war of 1812 with England, the British burned nearly every public building in Washington, D.C. (including the White House and the Capital). The Marine Barracks were spared the burning out of respect.

ANCIENT MARINES:

The first documented use of marines as a class of soldier in a standing army belongs to the Greeks and Romans. Themistocles, leader of the Athenians, issued a decree that his navy "enlist Marines, twenty to a ship" to turn back a Persian attack. Rome had special legions of "Milites Classiarii" or "soldiers of the fleet". Roman Marines served through out the remainder of the empire's life, not only at sea but also on land.

CONFEDERATE MARINES:

On 16 March 1861, The Congress of the Confederate States of America established the Confederate States Marine Corps. On 23 May 1861, Col. Lloyd J. Beall, a West Point graduate who resigned his U.S. Army commission to "go south," was appointed as the Colonel-Commandant. Col. Beall served as Colonel-Commandant of the Confederate States Marine Corps until the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

SEMPER FIDELIS:

The Marine Corps adopted Semper Fidelis as its official motto in 1883 (Semper Fidelis is also the title of the official musical March of the Marine Corps). Translated from Latin, Semper Fidelis means "Always Faithful." U.S. Marines use an abbreviated verbal version, "Semper Fi," to voice loyalty and commitment to their Marine comrades-in-arms. Previous mottos of the Marine Corps were:

(1) "To the Shores of Tripoli," adopted in 1805.

- (2) "Fortitude," adopted in 1812.
- (3) "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli," adopted in 1848.
- (4) "By Sea and by Land," adopted in the 1850's.

ONCE A MARINE, ALWAYS A MARINE:

Once a Marine, Always a Marine: This truism was adopted as the official motto of the Marine Corps League. The origin of the statement is credited to a gung-ho Marine Corps Master Sergeant, Paul Woyshner. During a barroom argument he shouted, "Once a Marine, always a Marine!" MSgt. Woyshner was right. Once the title "U.S. Marine" has been earned, it is retained. There are no ex-Marines or former-Marines. There are (1) active duty Marines, (2) retired Marines, (3) reserve Marines, and (4) Marine veterans. Nonetheless, once one has earned the title, he remains a Marine for life.

OFFICIAL BIRTHDAY OF THE USMC:

All U.S. Marines are gung-ho. But, few can match the vision and total commitment of the famous 13th Commandant, General John A. LeJeune. In 1921 he issued Marine Corps Order No. 47, Series 1921.

General LeJeune's order summarized the history, mission, and tradition of the Marine Corps. It further directed that the order be read to all Marines on 10 November of each year to honor the founding of the Marine Corps. Thereafter, 10 November became a unique day for U.S. Marines throughout the world.

Soon, some Marine commands began to not only honor the birthday, but celebrate it. In 1923 the Marine Barracks at Ft. Mifflin, Pennsylvania, staged a formal dance. The Marines at the Washington Navy Yard arranged a mock battle on the parade ground. At Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Marine baseball team played a Cuban team and won, 9 to 8.

THE MARINE CORPS BALL:

The first "formal" Birthday Ball took place in Philadelphia in 1925. First class Marine Corps style, all the way. Guests included the Commandant, the Secretary of War (in 1925 it was Secretary of War, not Secretary of Defense), and a host of statesmen and elected officials. Prior to the Ball, General LeJeune unveiled a memorial plaque at Tun Tavern. Then the entourage headed for the Benjamin Franklin Hotel and an evening of festivities and frolicking.

Over the years the annual Birthday Ball grew and grew, taking on a life of its own. In 1952 the Commandant, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., formalized the cake-cutting ceremony and other traditional observances. For example, Marine Corps policy now mandates that the first piece of cake must be presented to the oldest U.S. Marine present. The second piece goes to the youngest Marine. Among the many such mandates is a solemn reading of the Commandant's birthday message to the Corps.



Like the U.S. Marine Corps itself, the annual Birthday Ball has evolved from simple origins to the polished and professional functions of today. Nonetheless, one thing remains constant, the tenth day of November. This unique holiday for Marine warriors is a day of camaraderie, a day to honor Corps and Country. Throughout the world on 10 November, U.S. Marines celebrate the birth of their Corps -- the most loyal, most feared, most revered, and most professional fighting force the world has ever known.

ABOUT THE U.S. MARINES:

The United States Marine Corps is a force in readiness; always prepared to fight, anywhere, anytime.



There is a special aura surrounding the word "Marine." It means something different from a soldier, a cut above, and more can be expected from this person. Pride and cockiness are the trademarks of Marines, the strongest brotherhood in the world. To serve in the Marine Corps is to serve in an organization that demands and delivers excellence beyond all others. Service in the Marines leaves a lasting impression upon the innermost being of everyone who is privileged enough to serve. "Once a Marine, Always a Marine." To dispute this is to invite a brawl.

Marines enjoy a reputation of prowess in battle, that was earned "in every clime and place" throughout the world in our nation's history.

U.S. MARINES THE WORLD'S GREATEST WARRIORS:

Why are U.S. Marines considered the world's premier warriors?

What puts the Marine Corps above the rest? Other military services

have rigorous training and weapons of equal or greater lethality. So, why do U.S. Marines stand head and shoulders above the crowd?

The truth lies in each person who wants to be a Marine. They did not just join the Marines. They must prove that they are Marines. Many have tried and failed. Only those who survive the crucible of Marine basic training, have been sculpted in mind and body into a Marine. They have become and proven they are Marines.

Once they have earned the title and entered the Brotherhood of Marines, then the new warrior can draw upon the legacy of his Corps. Therein lies their strength. In return, the strength of the Corps lies in the individual Marine. The character (often defined as "what you are in the dark") of these warriors is defined by the three constant Corps Values: honor, courage, and commitment.

HONOR: Honor requires each Marine to exemplify the ultimate standard in ethical and moral conduct. Honor is many things; honor requires many things. A U.S. Marine must never lie, never cheat, never steal, but that is not enough. Much more is required. Each Marine must cling to an uncompromising code of personal integrity, accountable for his actions and holding others accountable for theirs. And, above all, honor mandates that a Marine never sully the reputation of the Corps.

COURAGE: Simply stated, courage is honor in action -- and more. Courage is moral strength, the will to heed the inner voice of conscience, the will to do what is right regardless of the conduct of others. It is mental discipline, an adherence to a higher standard. Courage means willingness to take a stand for what is right in spite of adverse consequences. This courage, throughout the history of the Corps, has sustained Marines during the chaos, perils, and hardships of combat. And each day, it enables each Marine to look in the mirror -- and be proud.

COMMITMENT: Total dedication to Corps and Country. Gung-ho Marine teamwork. All for one, one for all. By whatever name or cliché, commitment is a combination of selfless determination and a relentless dedication to excellence. Marines never give up, never give in, never willingly accept second best. Excellence is always the goal. And, when their active duty days are over, Marines remain reserve Marines, retired Marines, or Marine veterans. There is no such thing as an ex-Marine or former-Marine. Once a Marine, always a Marine. Commitment never dies.

THE THREE CORPS VALUES: Honor, Courage, Commitment. They make up the bedrock of the character of each individual Marine. They are the foundation of the Corps. These three values, handed down from generation to generation, have made U.S. Marines the Warrior Elite. The U.S. Marine Corps: the most respected and revered fighting force on earth.



U.S. MARINE MASCOT:

Thanks to the German Army, the U.S. Marine Corps has an unofficial mascot. During World War I many German reports had called the attacking Marines "teufel-hunden," meaning Devil-Dogs. Teufel-hunden were the vicious, wild, and ferocious mountain dogs of German Bavarian folklore.

Soon afterward a U.S. Marine recruiting poster depicted a snarling English Bulldog wearing a Marine Corps helmet. Because of the tenacity and demeanor of the breed, the image took root with both the Marines and the public. The

Marines soon unofficially adopted the English Bulldog as their mascot.

At the Marine base at Quantico, Virginia, the Marines obtained a registered English Bulldog, King Bulwark. In a formal ceremony on 14 October 1922, Brigadier General Smedley D. Butler signed documents enlisting the bulldog, renamed Jiggs, for the "term of life." Private Jiggs then began his official duties in the U.S. Marine Corps.

A hard-charging Marine, Pvt. Jiggs did not remain a private for long. Within three months he was wearing corporal chevrons on his custom-made uniform. On New Years Day 1924, Jiggs was promoted to Sergeant. And in a meteoric rise, he got promoted again -- this time to Sergeant Major -- seven months later.

SgtMaj. Jiggs' death on 9 January 1927 was mourned throughout the Corps. His satin-lined coffin lay in state in a hangar at Quantico, surrounded by flowers from hundreds of Corps admirers. He was interred with full military honors.

A replacement was soon on the way. Former heavyweight boxing champion, James J. "Gene" Tunney, who had fought with the Marines in France, donated his English Bulldog. Renamed as Jiggs II, he stepped into the role of his predecessor.

But there was a big problem. No discipline! Jiggs chased people, he bit people. He showed a total lack of respect for authority. The new Jiggs would have likely made an outstanding combat Marine, but barracks life did not suit him. After one of his many rampages, he died of heat exhaustion on 1928. Nonetheless, other bulldogs followed. During the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s they were all named Smedley, a tribute to General Smedley Butler.

In the late 1950s the Marine Barracks in Washington, the oldest post in the Corps, became the new home for the Corps' mascot. Renamed Chesty to honor the legendary Lieutenant General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, Jr., the mascot made his first formal public appearance at the Evening Parade on 5 July 1957. In his canine Dress Blues, Chesty became an immediate media darling, a smash hit.

After the demise of the original Chesty, the replacement was named Chesty II. He became an instant renegade. You name it, he did it. He even escaped and went AWOL once. Two days later he was returned in a police paddy wagon. About the only thing he ever managed to do correctly was to sire a replacement.

In contrast to his father, Chesty III proved to be a model Marine. He even became a favorite of neighborhood children, for which he was awarded a Good Conduct Medal. Other bulldogs would follow Chesty III (bulldogs don't live long). When Chesty VI died after an Evening Parade, a Marine detachment in Tennessee called Washington. Their local bulldog mascot, Lance Corporal Bodacious Little, was standing by for orders to Washington.

Upon arrival at the Marine Barracks in Washington, Lance Corporal Little got ceremoniously renamed Chesty VII. He and the English Bulldogs who followed him epitomize the fighting spirit of the U.S. Marines. Tough, muscular, aggressive, fearless, and often arrogant, they are the ultimate canine warriors.

English Bulldogs. "Teufel-hunden." "Devil Dogs." They symbolize the ethos of the Warrior Culture of the U.S. Marines.