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AN UNCERTAIN MISSION: THE ROLE OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS IN NATIONAL DEFENSE, 1880-1947

City University of New York PH.D. 1985

An Uncertain Mission:
The Role of the U. S. Marine Corps in National Defense
1880-1947

by

NATHAN N. PREFER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The City University of New York.

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PREFACE

The framework of the United States military contains within it a supposedly minor organization which in the past century has developed from a small police type structure to a force containing infantry, armor, artillery and aviation which far exceeds the total military force of most countries throughout the world. The question of why and how this force developed as it did has always interested me and this paper attempts to trace that development from the time the United States Marine Corps was a seagoing police force until the time its land, sea and air structure was formally recognized by the Congress of the United States. No other organization developed as did the Marine Corps. A similar force, the United States Coast Guard, has remained with its role and resources basically the same as when it was first established. Only the Marine Corps attained the phenomenal change of its stature which is the subject of this study.

I am indebted to a number of people who have helped and encouraged me throughout the research and writing of this paper. Certainly the paper would not have been completed without the advice and direction of Professors William Shanahan, Bela K. Kiraly and Trumbull Higgins of the City University Graduate Center. In addition, I must acknowledge the tremendous cooperation given me by Mr. Henry I. Shaw and Mr. Bemis Frank of the History and Museums Division of the Marine Corps. Mr. Frank in particular went to extra lengths to obtain access to restricted records.

CHAPTER I

Lack of a Mission

The United States Marine Corps was established in the framework of the American military system on July 11, 1798. It was designated to be an integral part of the U. S. Navy and made equally subject to Naval Regulations.[1] Its sole duties at that time were policing naval ships and installations and leading landing parties in time of war.[2] In a little more than one hundred years the Corps, still an integral part of the Navy, would evolve into a complex organization, larger and with a mission well beyond that in 1798. It would include land, air and artillery units as well as large infantry organizations. The Corps would also be threatened with extinction and yet it would survive better than anyone could have expected, strengthening its role in the U. S. Military establishment.

For many decades the Corps found itself fulfilling its role as envisaged by the initial congressional legislation.

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[1]Brigadier General Edward H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), The United States Marines: The First Two Hundred Years, 1775-1975, The Viking Press, New York, 1974, p. 14. Naval Regulations are the rules by which the Navy is governed. An inheritance from the British Royal Navy, these Regulations form the Constitution of the U. S. Navy. Periodically revised and updated, they date from colonial days when most colonies maintained modest naval forces.

[2]E. N. McClellan, "From 1783 to 1798," Marine Corps Gazette, Vol. 7, pp. 273-286, September 1922.

The Corps expanded and contracted as the experience of war demanded. Marines continued to serve aboard ship and on land as the infantry and police of the fleet. It remained throughout a part of the U. S. Navy. Yet with the end of the Civil War and the onset of slow but continuing improvements in the quality of the Navy, a major crisis for the Marine Corps took shape.

With the approach of the end of the nineteenth century the American government and people were gradually becoming more aware of the world beyond their continental borders. Some sections, such as New England, long had an interest abroad, while others were now developing new interests. During this post-Civil War era the Corps functioned as it had in the past. But new popular and congressional interest in the international scene also created new interest in the U. S. Navy's capabilities.

The European and Latin American nations had not settled down to the quiet and regular terms of their relationships that had been presumed by the liberal character of their governments. Instead, the last years of the nineteenth century witnessed the quickening of international rivalries, accompanied by a substantial increase in armaments. Ever larger and more powerful warships began to be included in these precautionary measures, even among nations that had no previous history of naval power. On the European continent

most of the Great Powers found it expedient to copy the methods of command and recruitment that had made for Prussia's military success. In the long run the United States could not remain aloof from these developments in military and naval technology and organization. The U. S. Navy was the first branch of service to be caught up in a national requirement for expansion and modernization. How it affected the U. S. Marine Corps provides the subject of this dissertation.

* * *

In 1876 Colonel Charles G. McCawley was named Commandant of the Marine Corps upon the voluntary retirement of his predecessor. Commandant McCawley had served in both the Mexican and Civil Wars. In his tenure as Commandant, however, he faced more difficult wars than these. The problems facing the Corps threatened it more seriously than war. Commandant McCawley inherited a Corps which had a serious morale problem. At the junior officer level there was much discontent with both career prospects and professional standing.[3] Slow promotions plagued the officer corps, especially with the entire force averaging two thousand men and eighty-five officers. In 1873, when the Navy Department sent Marine

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[3]First Lieutenant Henry Clay Cochrane, "The Status of the Marine Corps," Cochrane Papers, Marine Corps Personal Papers Collection, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, October 1, 1875.

Captain James Forney to Europe to observe foreign Marine Corps,[4] the reformers within the Corps led by Marine First Lieutenant Henry Clay Cochrane, drew from the British Royal Marines specific goals. These included improved officer selection, better training for enlisted personnel and officers, promotion examinations, compulsory retirement and pensions.[5]

Commandant McCawley shared to some degree the felt need for improvement and he did what he could within the limits of his authority. He revised the examinations for commissions in the Corps and he attempted other reforms, some unsuccessful. Commandant McCawley did succeed in recruiting from the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis a large number of new officers who had recently graduated, a tradition which continues today. This change alone made a significant improvement in the quality of Marine officers.[6] Previously the Marine Corps had obtained its officers thru political

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[4]Capt. J. Forney, Report to G.M. Robeson, Subject File VR (Marine Corps), Record Group 45, National Archives, September 15, 1873.

[5]Minutes, Meeting of Marine Officers, North Atlantic Squadron and Norfolk Station, February 12, 1876. Included in Henry Clay Cochrane Papers, Marine Corps Personal Papers Collection.

[6]Colonel Commandant C.G. McCawley to Lt. F.D. Webster, March 26, 1877. Also Col. Commandant C.G. McCawley to Maj. A.S. Nicholson, Adjutant and Inspector, May 1, 1877, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "Letters Sent, 1798-1884," Record Group 127, National Archives.

patronage, usually of relatives of elected officials or military men. Often these appointees were dropouts or rejects from military or civilian colleges. One of the first groups of Academy graduates to become Marine officers included John A. Lejeune, who undoubtedly became the most significant Commandant of the Marine Corps in the twentieth century.

The discontent among the younger officers of the Corps was not unique to that organization. In the U. S. Army the call for professional revival was led by Colonel (Brevet Major General) Emery Upton, who studied, admired, and recommended the Prussian General Staff system to his superior. In the U. S. Navy the catalyst for professional renewal was Commodore Stephen B. Luce. Commodore Luce had been part of a Civil War force which had been tied up in a protacted and eventually futile effort to reduce the Confederate defenses of Charleston's harbor. Commodore Luce's annoyance at this repeated and costly naval failure stayed with him after the war. He came to the conclusion that the Navy was neglecting, to its great cost, the professional development of its officers, particularly in the field of strategic studies. His establishment of the Naval War College was the first of its kind worldwide.[7]

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[7]Albert Gleaves, Life and Letters of Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, Putnam, New York, 1925. Also Commodore Stephen B. Luce, "War Schools," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Annapolis, Vol. IX, p. 656, 1883.

Commodore Luce's goal was not only the creation of a naval school for strategic thinking, but he also hoped to identify and produce a salient spokesman for the modernization of the Navy. In this hope he was more successful than he could have expected. His protege was Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose studies and prolific writings would sustain the successful adaptation of the U. S. Navy to twentieth century warfare. Captain Mahan would convince generations of Americans and Europeans that a navy must be able to control the sea, not only for success in war but international trade as well. Combined with the early renewal of interest by Congress in strengthening the navy, Captain Mahan's work and Commodore Luce's support helped to begin the revival of the American Navy.

It also began a period in which the Marine Corps' existence would be seriously questioned. The new American Navy did not guarantee the continued role of the Corps as a naval auxiliary.

Congress had begun to sponsor the new Navy before Commodore Luce and Captain Mahan had come into the public eye. Concerned over the development of modern and larger navies of small Latin American countries such as Argentina, Brazil and Chile the Congress needed little urging to continue the renewal of the navy. Investigating the cost of meeting the needs of the navy to reduce this concern over the Latin

American threat Congress was appalled at the cost of retaining its old wooden ships, which often cost more to repair than to build. Beginning in 1882, Congress authorized a steady progression of steel steam-powered warships. By 1889, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy could announce that he would seek a fleet of twenty first-class battleships with the necessary accompanying cruisers, destroyers and gunboats. Yet even with this request there was still not a full appreciation of the Luce-Mahan theory of sea power. Secretary Tracy and others of the administration as well as many Congressmen were determined that these constructions were to be used for coast defense only. The United States tradition of coast defense in military preparedness, inherited from Thomas Jefferson, died hard. When the first three battleships were built their range was carefully limited to indicate their defense role.[8] The new Navy now had to address some distinctive organizational problems.

The origin of the addressing of these problems proved to be especially serious for the Marine Corps because both the movement and the impulse for modernizing the Navy had

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[8]Peter Padfield, The Battleship Era, David McKay Company, Inc., New York, 1972, Chapters 11-17. Also Fletcher Pratt, The Navy: The Story of a Service in Action, Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., Garden City, New York, 1941, Chapters 8-9. "Report of the Policy Board," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Annapolis, Vol. 16 (1890), pp. 201-271, January 20, 1890. Also 51st Congress, 1st Session, House Executive Documents, VIII, (Serial 2721), 4.

come from within its own ranks. Neither politicians nor elected officials in Congress had been responsible for it. The Navy itself had responded to the naval issues posed by a turbulent world and the growing role of the United States within that world. In sharp contrast, the later effort to modernize the U. S. Army's command structure and its war readiness was to be initiated from within President Theodore Roosevelt's cabinet. Secretary Root and the main protagonists of military reform were civilian political appointees. Coming from "outside" the military reform effort could be blunted whenever it threatened established military practice. Not so in the case of the naval reform movement. When it took aim at outmoded procedures or organizations it bore the prestige and professionalism of high ranking and respected naval officers.

The organizational problems created by the creation of the new "steel navy" had not been anticipated. Technological innovations crammed the new steel and steam warships from breech-loading 13-inch guns to electrical systems to steam boilers. Courage, strength and determination were no longer enough to sail and fight in a warship. Engineering and mechanical aptitude had now become prime requisites. Encouraged by the endoresements of Congress, the Navy modernizers determined to completely overhaul the tables of organization. Inevitably the question arose about the purpose and usefulness

of the Marine Corps. Was the continued presence of Marines aboard ship necessary? The debate rose within the service to the highest command levels and was finally officially addressed in 1889 when Secretary Tracy ordered an inquiry. His initiative brought the formation of a Board of Organization, Tactics and Drill to address many points pertinent to the new Navy and its ancillary elements. Known by the name of its president, Commodore James A. Greer, the Board quickly prepared to begin its studies. The newly appointed Commandant of the Marine Corps, Colonel Charles Heywood, immediately applied to Secretary Tracy that the duties of the Marine Corps as envisaged within the new organizational structure be included in the scope of the Greer Board's agenda. Approval was granted and a Marine officer, Captain Daniel A. Mannix, was appointed to the Board.[9]

The Marines presented their ideas through Captain Mannix and other Marine and naval officers called to testify before the Board. The Corps insisted that Marines be retained as security forces both at sea and shore. It also wanted

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[9]Col. Cmdt. C.G. McCawley to B.F. Tracy, October 1, 1889, Subject File NF (Distributions and Transfers) Record Group 45, National Archives. Cmdre. J. A. Greer, USN, to B.F. Tracy, October 12, 1889, Subject File NF, Record Group 45. Col. Cmdt. C.G. McCawley to the Board of Organization, Tactics and Drill, October 18, 1889, Subject File NF, Record Group 45, National Archives. These McCawley memoranda were certainly written by his assistant, Charles Heywood, as McCawley's ill health at the time kept him relatively inactive and forced his retirement the following year.

official sanction for the Marines to man the secondary batteries aboard ship. These smaller caliber weapons served to protect the ships against close attack by small torpedo craft while the main batteries were directed at larger enemies.[10] In fleet engagements the secondary batteries would also fire on major adversaries within range. However, usually these batteries enabled the main batteries to fire at prime targets. For the Marines this would be a new mission in addition to the traditional security roles.

Maintaining the Corps' position for manning the secondary ships' batteries soon encountered heavy opposition. Unfortunately for the Corps point of view the Greer Board included an imposing junior officer within its ranks. Lieutenant William F. Fullam, USN, was rapidily rising to the leadership of the reformers. Lieutenant Fullam argued adamantly that the Marines aboard ship were not only unproductive but could be considered counterproductive. He believed that assigning Marines to ships' complements served to diminish motivation and dull the zeal of sailors in the crew. He further argued that the sailors could carry out any shipboard task currently assigned to the Marines, including landing party roles. And he also held that the removal of the Marines from all Navy ships would improve performance and raise the morale

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[10]Ibid.

of the ships' companies. Removing the Marines would require the sailors to take all their duties, including gunnery, more seriously and would therefore make ships' batteries more effective.

The Marines' response was the argument that history proved their value and that there was no proof to support Lieutenant Fullam's theories. They occasionally put forth a somewhat dubious claim to superior marksmanship which they would bring to their handling of secondary batteries.[11] The Greer Board's recommendations followed many of Lieutenant Fullam's points, and the Marines were not assigned to the secondary batteries. Concerned more with true navy concerns the Board apparently elected to maintain the status quo, for thanks to Secretary Tracy the Marines were not removed from the Navy's ships. But the opposing sides had merely presented their opening arguments. The case was far from being decided.

Commandant McCawley immediately registered his objections to the findings of the Greer Board. Significantly, he avoided the chain of command and sent his objections not to Commodore Greer but to Commodore Stephen Luce.[12] The reform party

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[11]Lieutenant William F. Fullam, USN, "The System of Naval Training and Discipline Required to Promote Efficiency and Attract Americans," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Annapolis, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 473-495, 1890. See also H.W. Russell, "The Genesis of FMF Doctrine" 1879-1899," Marine Corps Gazette, Vol. 35, pp. 51-59, April 1951, pp. 49-53, May 1951, pp. 50-56, June 1951, and pp. 52-59, July 1951.

[12]Col. Cmdt. C.G. McCawley to RAdm. S.B. Luce, December 18, 1889. Stephen B. Luce Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

reacted unfortunately to the Marines' position. They were alarmed by the Marines' effort to expand their role aboard ship and they acted to gather support from the Greer Board's and Lieutenant Fullam's reports. Lieutenant Fullam quickly assumed a leading role in the ensuing controversy. The Marine responses were kept strictly within the chain of command, Commandant McCawley's protest not withstanding. All comments regarding these issues were channeled through the office of the Commandant. Lieutenant Fullam, on the other hand, preferred to write for professional journals and magazines, a breach of military etiquette which may have cost him some of his supporters.

Lieutenant Fullam and his supporters failed, however, to impress enough of their colleagues in time to affect the 1893 revision of Naval Regulations. Neither were the Marines successful in expanding their role within the Navy. Clearly, neither side had yet gathered enough strength to carry the opposition.

The problems addressed by Navy reformers were not limited to the role of the Marines within the Navy or the Corps' future organizational and tactical structure. There was considerable effort by Navy officers to incorporate the United States Merchant Marine into a naval militia not unlike

the Army's militia system.[13] This would place Merchant Marine seamen under Navy command in time of war or emergency. Merchant Marine officers would become naval reserve officers, so as to establish a strong reserve for wartime mobilization. Some fifty (50) merchant ships were to be built for the Merchant Marine to Navy specifications so that they could be quickly converted into auxiliary naval vessels. Armour plating and armaments were to be stored at Navy yards for quick conversions. Most of these auxiliaries would be assigned coast defense roles when converted.[14] The reformers wanted to have a Department of Commerce created to ease interaction between the Navy and Merchant Marine. This was, in effect, the first serious attempt at unification of related organizations by the Navy.[15]

Spurred on by reduced active duty positions for officers, fewer openings for Naval Academy graduates, and several boards looking for ways to improve and modernize the Navy,[16] the reformers continued to criticize whatever they felt was

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[13]The New York Times, March 1, 1881, p. 1.

[14]John Roach, "A Militia for the Sea," The North American Review, Vol. 133, 1881, pp. 176-195. Also 47th Congress 2nd Session, "The Report of the Joint Committee on American Shipbuilding," House Report, 1872.

[15]Lawrence Carroll Allin, "The First Unification Crises: Chandler, Dingley, Folger, and the Bureau of Navigation, 1879-1884," Military Affairs, Vol. 47, No. 3, October 1983, pp. 133-137.

detrimental to the organizational effectiveness of their service.

Eliminating or seriously reducing the Marine Corps' functions would advance their objectives. Removing Marines from Navy ships would require their replacement by sailors who in turn would require more naval officers for on-board supervision. This would open additional assignments for Naval Academy graduates. Finally, this issue gave to the various Navy boards a clear issue on which to focus their attentions, perhaps causing them to overlook some other issue less conspicious and protected by naval perogative.

Navy Lieutenant Fullam was by now a leading spokesman for those in the Navy who would remove or eliminate the Marine Corps from the Navy. Lieutenant Fullam carefully argued that what the Navy needed was "general usefulness" of both officers and enlisted men. He felt that the Marines did not contribute enough to a warship to redeem the cost and inconvenience of carrying them. He argued that only "vested rights" kept Marines aboard ship. He further stated that "It is a fact that infantry drill and the guard duties in the Navy require less ability and less study than a hundred other duties that fall to a naval officer. A simple drill-book and a simple guard manual are needed - that is all."[17]

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[17]Fullam, op. cit., p. 91.

After stressing the importance of landing forces, Lieutenant Fullam pressed his point on the need for a general purpose naval officer when he stated "It has been demonstrated repeatedly that naval officers are fully competent to command companies and battalions ashore, and to direct operations with signal ability."[18] Lieutenant Fullam went on to argue emphatically that there was nothing in a Marine's duties which a sailor could not quickly be taught to do at least as well. The manual of arms, various drills and bayonet useage could be taught to sailors in two weeks, according to this argument, resulting in at least as good a performance as currently produced by Marines.[19] From such an optomistic statement Lieutenant Fullam also gave voice to realistic thoughts, such as that "There will be no difference between the discipline of the bluejacket and the Marine when the former is trusted as much as the latter."[20] Another telling point in his case was that too often the Marines had little or nothing to do while the rest of the ships' company was hard at work. This led to jealousy between groups and problems for officers. This particular complaint was often voiced by naval officers, and rarely successfully refuted by

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[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 109.

[20]Ibid., p. 112.

Marines.[21]

Lieutenant Fullam also opposed Marines as gunners on the ships' batteries because "the result will be to reduce the working force still more and thus aggravate the evils from which the service is now suffering."[22] He went on to argue that the Marines should be formed into battalions stationed at bases along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts for use as needed by the Navy. These units "would be available to co-operate with the Navy without preventing the all-around development of the bluejacket."[23] Lieutenant Fullam in his summation felt that no apology for his views were necessary, designed as they were the good of the Navy.[24]

Lieutenant Fullam's views attracted many adherents including many serving officers within the Navy. Battleship Captain R.D. Evans, for example, was if anything even more emphatic in wanting Marines off the Navy's ships. "I do not want them because I think sailors are better men for ship work. If we may rate developed intelligence in the enlisted force by dollars and cents-and I think we may fairly do so-then the more Marines we have the lower the intelligence of

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[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 113.

[23]Ibid., p. 114.

[24]Ibid., p. 116.

the crew."[25] Captain Evans did agree on "An expeditionary brigade of say five thousand men, with a brigadier-General to command it, and officered by the valuable corps of officers now in service, and used to garrison the posts near the different navy yards."[26] Such an arrangement would establish "the finest body of soldiers in this country, ready at all times to suppress riots and guard government property."[27] Captain Evans apparently did not view the United States Army as capable for overseas duty or to suppress riots. Nor did he discuss what differences there would be between the Army and the Marines if his plan were to be implemented.

Another officer in agreement with Lieutenant Fullam was Commander J.B. Coghlan who felt very strongly that "The man-of-war's man of to-day is of very different material from the one of a few years ago; is vastly superior in every way."[28] Commander Coghlan agreed that because of this vast improvement in human material "the constant surveillance of a distinct corps of police, antagonistic to the mass of the crew, is no longer necessary, in fact, is detrimental to the general efficiency of the vessels."[29] Regarding marksmanship this

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[25]Ibid., Captain R.D. Evans, USN, "Discussion," p. 118.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., Commander J.B. Coghlan, USN, "Discussion," p. 119.

[29]Ibid., p. 120.

officer pointed out that "As the original material the recruits were equal; it follows that were both classes equally drilled and instructed with each class of arms the difference would be nil."[30]

Many others agreed. Officers indicated that in their experience they "never found them as valuable as the space required for them."[31] Another pointed out that his service, on a ship which had no Marines and where sailors performed the usual Marine Guard tasks, "were nearer the ideal" than any other ship in his considerable experience.[32] This officer also pointed out that, particularly in the Asiatic fleet, Marine Guards had been on shore duty for several months without any discipline problems on their ships, indicating their usefulness in this respect was greatly exaggerated.[33] Many others joined this chorus of criticism.[34] Another rising young naval officer, Lieutenant Bradley A. Fiske, heavily supported Lieutenant Fullam's views stating

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[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., Lieut.-Comdr. W.J. Barnette, USN, "Discussion," p. 124.

[32]Ibid., Lieutenant W.H. Halsey, USN., "Discussion," p. 133.

[33]Ibid., p. 134.

[34]Ibid., see Lieutenant J.M. Bowyer, USN, "Discussion," p. 136, Lieutenant A.L. Key, USN, "Discussion," p. 137 and Lieutenant Albert Gleaves, USN, "Discussion," p. 160.

"I am strongly in favor of the withdrawal of Marine Guards from our modern warships. My reasons are exactly those stated by Lieutenant Fullam."[35] Other officers resented the Marines' attempt to get additional duties aboard ship. They felt that as Marines were "no longer necessary on board ship as policemen or as small-arms men; so they wish to undertake to fight the guns and to coal the ship."[36]

Some naval officers were ambivalent, either not convinced by either side or uncertain on which side to hinge their careers. Such men believed "Our Marine Corps is in a very unfortunate position. It has not enough men to properly carry on guard duty on shore, and to increase the Corps is to agree to a perpetuation of existing conditions."[37] These officers, however, also felt that "if the authorities decide otherwise; then in the name of reason let them go to the batteries, man the guns, clean the ship, and become a part of the ship's working force."[38]

The Marines had representatives involved in this controversy as well. Their main argument opposing Lieutenant Fullam's

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[35]Ibid., Lieutenant Bradley A. Fiske, USN, "Discussion," p. 156. Lieutenant Fiske would become a major spokesman for naval reform and retire as a Rear Admiral.

[36]Ibid., Lieutenant Commander Richard Wainwright, USN, "Discussion," p. 156.

[37]Ibid., Lieutenant A. P. Niblack, USN, "Discussion," p. 158.

[38]Ibid.

position explained that they were "Living in an age of specialists; and all around workmen cannot compete with specialists in their own particular branch."[39] They argued that naval officers did not have enough military training themselves to train their crews. They also felt that there had been no evidence presented which indicated that sailors could perform the Marines' duties better than the Marines were currently doing. Their argument denied that the ships' guards were idlers. Instead, as First Lieutenant Charles A. Doyen stressed, why were not stewards, cooks, officers' servants and others included as non-workers.[40]

Yet the opposition to the Marines remaining aboard ship was dealt its most severe blow by one of its own leaders, Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce. Admiral Luce clearly stated his views on the Marine Corps by stating in public "I believe in keeping the Marine Guard aboard ship."[41] He completely supported Lieutenant Fullam in all other aspects of his reforms, which made the disagreement over the Marine Corps a glaring exception. This undoubtedly worked to the Marines'

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[39]Ibid., First Lieutenant Charles A. Doyen, USMC, "Discussion," p. 160. This officer would have a distinguished career which would culminate in the rank of Brigadier General commanding the Fourth Marine Brigade in France during the First World War.

[40]See also Ibid., Lieutenant C. H. Laucheimer, USMC, "Discussion," p. 184.

[41]Ibid., Rear Admiral S. B. Luce, USN, "Discussion," p. 180.

advantage. Admiral Luce supported his beliefs by explaining that "The idea that Marines are placed on board ship in these days to keep sailors in order I dismiss as utterly unworthy of a moments consideration."[42] The Admiral made some telling points in support of the Marines when he pointed out that "Marine officers are just as much line officers as sea officers are, and have the same adaptability."[43] He also believed that it was the Marines' "distinctive military character that gives them their value in the economy of a ship of war."[44] Admiral Luce felt that "To take the Marine Guard from the ship is to deprive it in a great measure of its military aspect."[45]

The Admiral concluded his arguments in favor of the Marines by remarking "Had I ten thousand votes they should all be case in favor of preserving their present status and increasing their numbers."[46] He also clearly disagreed with Lieutenant Fullam when he argued that sailors and Marines aboard the same ship were compatable. Admiral Luce was careful to indicate that his support of the Marine Corps was in no way to be interpreted as criticism of the American sailor.

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[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid.

He announced publicly "I yield to no one in my high opinion of our seamen. It is my pride that I was brought up among them. I gladly concede all that is claimed for them. As infantrymen on shore, as serving with a field battery, on camp duty, as sentries serving on shore in any capacity, in peace and in war. I can testify of my own personal knowledge that our sailors have always done well. It is no compliment to say that in many respects they are far superior to Marines."[47] Clearly Admiral Luce believed that both sailors and Marines had definite areas within the Navy in which each held superior expertise. He saw no need for a change in this arrangement. On this sole issue he withheld his support from Lieutenant Fullam and his followers.

Commandants McCawley and Heywood took cognizance of the reform trend and in respect to deficiencies such as officer recruitment and marksmanship in the Corps they agreed with the critics. Commandant McCawley, as we have seen, managed to attract a number of Annapolis graduates into the Corps. He was friendly with Colonel Emory Upton, chief Army reformer, and adopted Colonel Upton's own manual entitled Infantry Tactics for the Corps.[48] Promotions of enlisted men were

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[47]Ibid.

[48]Col. Cmdt. C. G. McCawley to Col. J. H. Jones, USA, June 12, 1879, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "Letters Sent, 1798-1884," Record Group 127, National Archives.

centralized at Headquarters.[49] Retirement benefits were adapted along Army lines, which was a considerable improvement.[50] The Navy would not institute a retirement system until 1899. Commandant McCawley's tenure would be marked by such attempts to improve the Corps. Changes in uniforms and equipment, improvements in barracks accommodations and attempts to increase sobriety and reduce desertions were among the issues addressed by the Commandant.

Under Commandant McCawley the Marine Band began its role as a major public relations tool of the Corps.[51] Under Commandant Heywood, the band and the new Marine uniforms became the basic symbols bringing the Corps into the public eye. Between 1874 and 1890 when the first two histories appeared, the laudatory text helped give the Corps an improved public image.[52]

Commandants McCawley and Heywood both believed the Corps to be too weak numerically for its tasks and they argued regularly for an increase in the enlisted strength of the Marine

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[49]Col. Cmdt. C.G. McCawley to R.W. Thompson, July 2, 1877, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "Letters Sent, 1798-1884," Record Group 127, National Archives.

[50]Army and Navy Journal, August 29, 1885 and November 21, 1885.

[51]Ibid., February 26, 1881, March 12, 1881, March 21, 1885 and June 8, 1889.

[52]M. Almy Aldrich, History of the U. S. Marine Corps, H. L. Shepard, Boston, 1875. Captain Richard S. Collum, History of the United States Marine Corps, L. R. Hamersly, Philadelphia, 1890.

Corps. This plea had a real basis throughout the 1880's and 1890's for as Congress authorized more ships, the Corps became hard pressed to man them with Marine guards. A small increase of one hundred enlisted men in 1890 did little to help and Commandant Heywood made a sustained effort to promote more efficient use of men without relinquishing his effort to get additional manpower allocations from Congress. Commandant Heywood's persistence was rewarded by Congress in 1896 with an authorization of an additional five hundred enlisted men, the minimum number Commandant Heywood had lobbied for.[53]

Commandant Heywood followed Colonel McCawley's lead in selecting new pieces of legislation and applying them to the Marine Corps. These new laws, meant for the Army or the Navy, were applied to the Marine Corps if the Commandant believed it would improve the general organizational health of the Marine Corps. The retirement law, meant for Army not Navy personnel, was a prime example of the Commandant's applying an improvement meant for another service to his own. In another attempt, Commandant Heywood wanted to apply a law

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[53]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to H.A. Herbert, September 28, 1893, October 11, 1895, and October 9, 1896, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. The authorized strength of the Corps was over 3000 enlisted men, a number not reached in fact until the Spanish-American War. For strength figures see "Authorized Strengths of the United States Marine Corps, 1798-1916," Memorandum, Subject File VR (USMC), Record Group 45 or "Strength of the Marine Corps," Memorandum, December 11, 1969, Reference Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

aimed at reducing Army desertions to the Corps but was disappointed by the U. S. Attorney General who ruled against him. In 1892 Congress did pass an amendment which placed the Corps under the desertion law and which Commandant Heywood felt did contribute to reducing desertions.[54] Secretary Tracy also helped by ordering Marines be given Navy rations, which were always better than the Army's. Measures such as these did much to improve morale and professional attitudes in the Corps' ranks.

Commandant Heywood continued to draw selectively from Army and Navy legislation to improve the Corps. Although an integral part of the Navy the Corps thus benefited from Army sponsored legislation which affected promotion examinations for officers, awarding of medals for combat between wars, and the desertion legislation. From the Navy he drew the creation of a life savings plan. He also refused to adopt the Army's legislation which refused re-enlistment to privates over thirty-five years of age. Commandant Heywood felt that a Marine could spend his entire career as a private if he performed well.[55]

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[54]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to B.F. Tracy, May 13, 1892 and October 15, 1892, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, Army and Navy Journal, September 20, 1890, September 27, 1890, November 14, 1891.

[55]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to B.F. Tracy, October 15, 1892, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives, Army and Navy Journal, May 14, 1892, May 28, 1892, November 14, 1896, and November 13, 1897.

Commandant Heywood understood, however, that while his reforms and attempts at better professional standards could make the Corps more attractive to the public and to fellow Marines it would not respond to its Naval critics. Some of these clearly believed that the Corps was outdated. Commandant Heywood responded to the criticism of his organization by seeking to enlarge the duties within the new Navy. He had tried during the Greer Board hearings to get official sanction for Marines to serve as gunners at the secondary batteries of the new warships. In this he had been unsuccessful. Although testimony had been given by both Marines in favor and sailors against Marines manning secondary batteries the issue was not directly addressed by the Board in its findings.[56]

Commandant Heywood continued to press this point to the Navy Department.[57] He also organized a School of Application at Headquarters which was designed to instruct new officers and selected enlisted men in naval gunnery. Courses there included instruction in mine warfare, electricity, high explosives, infantry tactics and drill, as well as general field service matters. It was this on which Commandant Heywood hoped that the Navy would be forced to rely in times or emergency.

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[56]H.W. Russell, "The Genesis of FMF Doctrine: 1879-1899," op. cit.

[57]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to B.F. Tracy, October 18, 1891, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives.

Commandant Heywood could offer trained officers and enlisted men of a professional military force prepared to man the Navy's guns. He included in his arguments that with this role in mind he would increase the Corps' need for officers, as well as an improved officer rank structure. The Corps would have more billets available for Academy graduates, thus responding directly to some of the catalysts motivating the Navy's more outspoken critics.[58]

When Secretary of the Navy Tracy was replaced by Hillary A. Herbert, Commandant Heywood immediately approached the new Secretary with his ideas and requested assistance with his training program. Commandant Heywood succeeded in convincing the new Secretary and he soon received the material support he had requested. The Commandant's School of Application now began training on the same weapons that he hoped its graduates would be called upon to serve at sea.

Despite the progress Commandant Heywood appeared to be making, the naval reformers remained unsatisfied. As a group they remained critical of the Corps and they were gaining support from within the Navy. Lieutenant Fullam's attacks on the necessity for ships' guards convinced the Chief of the

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[58]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to B.F. Tracy, October 15, 1892 and Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to H.A. Herbert, October 9, 1896. Both Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives, Army and Navy Journal, April 4, 1891, April 25, 1891, May 20, 1893 and July 22, 1893.

Bureau of Navigation, Commodore Frank M. Ramsay, to order gun crews of secondary batteries to be made up of sailors as well as Marines. Some ships' captains ordered Marines off all gun crews, a move strongly opposed by the Commandant.[59] In 1892 Commodore Ramsay also tried unsuccessfully to keep Marines off the new coast defense ship USS Monterey. Commandant Heywood now understood that despite all his and Colonel McCawley's efforts he still had not convinced the Bureau of Navigation nor the junior officers of the Navy of the real value of the Corps.[60]

Commandant Heywood again appealed to the Secretary of Navy. But Lieutenant Fullam and his fellows had become dissatisfied with both Secretaries Tracy and Herbert. They now decided to petition Congress directly using petitions gathered from sailors under their commands, a somewhat unmilitary procedure and a not entirely ethical practice. The Commandant learned of these actions too late to offset the petitions arriving in Congress. As a result, a bill was introduced which proposed to merge the Army's coast artillery units and the Marine Corps into a new Corps of Marine Artillery, modeled

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[59]Lieutenant Colonel John G. Miller, "William Freeland Fullam's War With the Corps," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 101, pp. 37-45, November 1975. Also Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to B.F. Tracy, January 21, 1892, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives.

[60]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to Cmdre. F.M. Ramsay, USN, January 22, 1894, Subject File VR (USMC), Record Group 45, National Archives.

after similar European units. Commandant Heywood immediately mobilized his allies on the Naval Affairs Committees in both houses, and with Secretary Herbert's aid, stopped the bill's progress. The bill was tabled and Secretary Herbert issued orders to all ships' captains to stop the petition campaign.[61] Another standoff between Marine and naval reformer rivals had come about. Commandant Heywood resumed his campaign for official recognition of Marines as ships' gunners[62] while Lieutenant Fullam sought new allies to support his advocacy of all naval gun crews.[63]

The year 1896 brought the next round of the conflict between the reformers and the Marines. During the winter 1895-1896 the question of the role of Marines aboard ship was raised to new intensity when the captain of one of the Navy's new battleships, Robley D. Evans of the USS Indiana, officially requested that no Marines be assigned to his ship. He

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[61]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to H.A. Herbert, July 20, 1894, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives, New York Herald, July 20, 1894, Washington Post, July 2, 1894 in Headquarters, Marine Corps Scrapbooks, Record Group 127, National Archives. Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to H.A. Herbert, October 1, 1894 and December 6, 1894, Headquarters, Marine Corps; "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives, Army and Navy Journal, August 4 and August 5, 1894.

[62]Major H.B. Lowry, USMC, "The United States Marine Corps Considered as a Distinct Military Organization," Journal of the Military Service Institution, Vol. 16, pp. 532-539, May 1895.

[63]Lieutenant W.F. Fullam, USN, "The Organization, Training and Discipline of the Navy Personnel as Viewed From the Ship," United States Naval Institute Proceedings, Vol. 22, pp. 83-116, 1896.

claimed that there was neither space nor need for their presence. His request was refused by Secretary Herbert.[64] The Secretary, again prompted by the Commandant, opposed, Captain Evan's request. He did make some concessions, however, which would only serve to prolong this discussion. He stated that the Marines were full members of the ships' crews and as such could be assigned any duties so ordered by the captain of the ship. In later years this was to give additional leverage to followers of Lieutenant Fullam.

Lieutenant Fullam himself had not been idle during this period and he continued to press for removing all Marines from aboard ship. Using his partial success with the petition campaign and the USS Indiana episode he attacked what he hoped would be a weak spot in the Marines' defense. He made his by now standard argument that the Marine guard aboard ship no longer, if ever, was needed to maintain order with the current quality of human material. Lieutenant Fullam also reaffirmed that sailors could just as effectively perform the duties of landing parties as Marines. Now he offered his alternative, which was to suggest that several battalions of Marines be formed and permanently based at naval installations ashore to await the call for large and long-term landing party

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[64]H.A. Herbert to Capt. R.D. Evans, USN, November 1, 1895, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "Letters Received 1818-1915," Record Group 127, National Archives.

assignments.[65] Lieutenant Fullam hoped to appease Commandant Heywood while at the same time achieve his goal of removing Marines from the Navy's ships.

Lieutenant Fullam hoped, with some success, that his plan to provide an alternative to ships' guards would soften the Marines' defense by providing an attractive alternative. In this he was partially successful. The possibility interested Marine officers for a number of reasons. Standing battalions would require more officers than ships' guards presently did. Such units would also increase promotion opportunities because new and higher ranks would be created with these units. Another attraction was relief from sea duty, generally disliked by younger officers with families because of its long family separations. Although Lieutenant Fullam's latest criticisms stirred up much discussion and angered Commandant Heywood to the point of his requesting the Lieutenant's cenure for insubordination, no change was made in the Marines' status.[66] Article 999, Navy Regulations of 1806 clearly delineated the Marines as ships' guards. How

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[65]Fullam, "The Organization, Training and Discipline of the Navy Personnel as Viewed From the Ship," op. cit., pp. 83-116. Lieutenant Fullam knew that some Marine officers supported his position. He was in effect predicting the "Banana Wars" of the period 1900-1930.

[66]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to H.A. Herbert, April 14, 1896, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives.

they would be assigned to duties aboard ship remained the ship captain's perogative. They could also be commanded by either Navy or Marine officers, depending upon their duty assignment.

With the new administration taking office a new Secretary of the Navy was appointed in 1897. John D. Long had not long assumed office when faced with the problem of the status of the Marine Corps. Again a ship's captain, this time Captain J. J. Read of the cruiser USS Olympia, raised the usual question of the role of Marines aboard ship. Secretary Long replied that the ship captain's only clearly defined responsibility was to train the Marines, their duty assignment remained a matter of a captain's discretion.[67] This exchange was important because it brought the issue to the attention of a newly appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt.

Secretary Roosevelt was interested in the arguments because his duties included responsibility for the Marine Corps, the responsibility for merging certain segments of the Navy into one, and because of his personal background as an author on naval affairs. His friendship with several naval

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[67]Secretary of the Navy J.D. Long to Capt. J.J. Read, USN, May 24, 1897, History Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "Letters Received, 1818-1915," Record Group 127, National Archives.

officers, including some reformers, also heightened his interest. Secretary Roosevelt had a considerable interest in the Navy, but like many civilians of his day, did not look upon military life with favor. He would later advise his son against the military as a career, claiming it could be "a great misfortune"[68] to spend a life in uniform. Commandant Heywood would now have to contend with Secretary Roosevelt's leaning towards the Navy's views and his reduced respect for career military officers.

Secretary Roosevelt's board which was looking into consolidating various Navy segments into one also began looking into the question of the future of the Marine Corps within the Navy. Commandant Heywood immediately began to prepare a response to Secretary Roosevelt's inquiries, a response based on his own inquiries to his officer corps. The Commandant still supported the continued presence of Marine guard units on capitol ships, the role of Marines as ships' gun crews,

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[68]Theodore Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., Jan. 21, 1904, in Joseph Bucklin Bishop (ed.), Theodore Roosevelt's Letters to His Children, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1919, pp. 83-89. An interesting sidelight to this incident is that Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. during World War Two was a top-rated Infantry Division Commander and a winner of the Medal of Honor for actions on Utah Beach June 6, 1944. He died of natural causes shortly after the invasion.

and the historical landing party role.[69] Commandant Heywood continued to stress that the Marines had not been fairly tested in the role of ships' gunners and so they should not be denied this role until such a fair test had been made.

The test Commandant Heywood sought was coming. Its results were to surprise everyone concerned with the controversy over the role of the Marine Corps. But the controversy would not be settled by this test. Indeed, it would serve only to prolong and add fuel to an already strong fire. For the Marines, who had been defending their position for nearly a decade, the test would both help and hiner them, for it did not prove Commandant Heywood's theories as he could have wished. The danger of the Corps being dissolved or absorbed by another part of the Navy or Army did not go away with the Spanish-American War. The Corps' greatest organizational struggle would be resumed after hostilities had ceased.

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[69]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to Assistant Secretary of the Navy T. Roosevelt, November 22, 1897, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. Commandant Heywood had circulated a questionnaire amongst his officers in preparing this reply. (See Commandant Marine Corps circular letter November 11, 1897, History Division, Headquarters Marine Corps, "Letters Received, 1818-1915," Record Group 127, National Archives). Among those replying was Henry Clay Cochrane, now a Captain. In these replies there is less support for ships' guards and more interest in the Fullam idea of standing infantry units. Secretary Roosevelt was "responsible for direct contact with Heywood's headquarters and for a personnel board formed in 1897 to merge the line with the Navy engineers. During its deliberations Roosevelt's board also considered the amalgamation of the line with the Marine Corps and the removal of the ships guards." Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, The History of the United States Marine Corps, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., New York 1980, p. 127.

CHAPTER II

A Question of Survival

Fortune smiled on the Marine Corps throughout the Spanish-American War. Thanks to a series of fortuitous incidents the Corps gained renown and quickened the pulse of the American public. That popular wave of acclaim and pride in the Marines' heroic accomplishments presently reached Congress itself.

Even before the outbreak of war the Corps produced a hero. He was Marine Orderly William Anthony, who, as a member of the battleship Maine's guard, had safely escorted the Maine's captain to safety when it was destroyed by an explosion in the harbor at Havana, Cuba. The war also brought the Corps relief from official inquiries, because the deliberations of the Roosevelt board ground to a halt in the rush to war. Assistant Secretary Roosevelt himself lost all interest, hiw own efforts to get into the new war having replaced any other consideration. The Commandant's attention also quickly turned to the war effort and the part his Marines would play in it. For the moment, at least, the war became the main concern of all parties.

Commandant Heywood was in a difficult position. For years he and his predecessors had been assuring presidents and Congress that a war would prove how indispensable the Marine Corps would be. Now that the war had come, Commandant

Heywood had to make good on his forecast. Fortunately for the Marines, both the Congress and the Navy cooperated, albeit unknowingly.

As in all previous American wars, Congress released the purse strings to the military at the war's outbreak. The Corps could and did recruit to its full strength and was further permitted to add to its ranks, if only on a temporary basis, forty-three Second Lieutenants. These new officers could enlist for the war's duration only, but Commandant Heywood welcomed any additions to his force, for every Marine would quickly find an assignment. As a final gesture of good will, the Congress gave the office of Commandant of the Marine Corps the rank of Brigadier General and Colonel Heywood was promoted accordingly.[1]

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The United States had long been concerned with events in Spanish Cuba, where an insurrection boiling beneath the surface seemed to be a herald of democracy and freedom.

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[1]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to J.D. Long, March 12, 1898, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to J.D. Long, April 25, 1898, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to J.D. Long, September 24, 1898, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. The position of the Marine Corps at the outbreak of this war was remarkably similar to conditions fifty years later, at the outbreak of the Korean war, occurring at the end of the Defense Department unification crisis. See Paolo Coletta, The United States Navy and Defense Unification, 1947-1953, University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1981.

Several incidents had come close in the previous years to causing hostilities[2] but not until the battleship Maine was destroyed by an explosion of unknown origin did the national government find sufficient cause to make demands which Spain could not reasonably accept. Supported by American public opinion which had been aroused by the journalistic accounts of the alleged atrocities committed by the command of the Spanish General Weyler and continuing journalistic demands for military action, the conflict, opposed in principle if not in fact by President William McKinley, became inevitable.[3]

Immediately the nation responded to the President's call to arms. "All walks of life, humble and distinguished, felt its pull. A complete regiment was formed of Wall Street stockbrokers and clerks. John Jacob Astor offered to the Army a battery of artillery, purchased and supplied with ammunition from abroad; Assistant Secretary Theodore Roosevelt announced his intention to quit the Navy Department and take the field at the head of his own picked unit of cowboys and college men."[4] Volunteers from all walks of life rushed to

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[2]In March 1896 the American steamship Alliancia reported itself fired upon by Spanish gunboats off Cuba.

[3]Jack Cameron Dierks, A Leap to Arms: The Cuban Campaign of 1898, J.B. Lippincott Co., Philadelphia and New York, 1970, Chapter I. See also Allan Kellar, The Spanish-American War: A Compact History, Hawthorn Books, New York, 1969.

[4]Ibid., p. 25.

the colors to vanquish the haughty but oppressive Spanish.

All this patriotic ardor which flowed into voluntary units of one sort of another did not have much bearing on the actual conflict either on land or at sea. Unlike many wars in previous centuries the hostilities got underway almost immediately. Congress declared war on April 24-25, 1898, and in less than a week Admiral Dewey had defeated the Spanish fleet guarding Manila Bay (May 1). Rear Admiral William T. Sampson had quickly moved the warships under his command from the North Atlantic Squadron into a blockade of Cuba and Puerto Rico. He proposed to emulate the classic British assault on Havana and bring the war to a speedy end. If Secretary of the Navy Long had approved that plan the Marine Corps might have enhanced its growing prestige, but the threat posed by the Spanish fleet under Admiral Cervera which had left Cape Verde on April 29 made it too risky. And as it turned out the war proved to be or short duration. All hostilities on land and sea were over before the end of July.

The war's brevity meant that it had to be fought by the regular units of the Army and Marine Corps and the ready strength of the Navy. That meant in turn that each service would be obligated to display both its strength and its weaknesses.

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The focus of American attention was on Cuba and so it

was inevitable that the first American offensive move to be made was against that island. While the Army was massing in Florida for the assault, the Navy prepared the way for the attack by sending its major fleet units to blockade Cuba and Puerto Rico in anticipation of the Spanish Fleet's arrival. Here arose a problem for which the Navy strategists had not planned. The duration of the stay off Cuba had to be extended indefinitely. The Navy had to wait until the Army was ready to make an assault. The Navy also had to prevent the Spanish fleet from interfering in that operation. The time necessary to complete these missions could be prolonged beyond the sea-keeping endurance of many of the blockading vessels. The short range of coast defense ships did not enable them to remain long at sea wihout coaling. A temporary coaling station had to be established on or near Cuba before the amphibious assault could begin.

The Marine Corps had placed much of its hopes for showing its value on the Marines stationed aboard the Navy's ships. There were, however, other Marines who had been assigned to shore duty. These men, the detachments guarding Naval posts ashore in the United States, had as an afterthought been formed into a battalion so as to serve as a landing party. This battalion had been ordered to assemble at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, New York under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Huntington, a Civil War veteran.

Commandant Heywood had personally seen to the equipping of this unit and loading it aboard ship, although still without an assigned mission. When the need for a secure coaling base arose, Commandant Heywood offered his battalion as the attack force. Ironically, it would be these Marines who would make the best impression on the public by war's end.

It was Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's battalion, formed by the Secretary of the Navy and the Commandant as an afterthought, that did the most for the Marines' public reputation. This despite all the attention that had previously been paid to the ships' guards and those Marines manning the secondary batteries aboard ship. The glare of public attention did not come to those Marines stationed aboard ship, however excellent their gunnery might have been. Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's battalion, quite by accident, stumbled into the pre-eminent land engagement of the war, excepting only the battle at San Juan Hill.

The Marine Battalion, consisting of twenty-four officers and six hundred and thirty-three enlisted men had been formed into six companies, five of infantry and one of heavy weapons. This last was armed with four three-inch landing guns.[5] Still

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[5]Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret.), The United States Marines, The First Two Hundred Years, 1775-1975, Viking Press, New York, 1974, pp. 58-59. See also Allan R. Millet, Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1980, pp. 130-131. The term "landing guns" denotes guns used as mobile, rather than fixed, artillery. These weapons were mounted on wheeled chassis instead of emplaced.

without a mission, they had been left to fend for themselves at Key West, Florida. The Navy had meanwhile selected Guantanamo Bay in Cuba as the best site for a coaling station. It now called upon the Marines to secure that area. Landing parties of sailors and Marines from the ships' companies found a suitable area but because of the presence of large well-armed Spanish military forces they could not hold the position. A larger force which would seize and defend the area was required. On June 7, 1898, Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's battalion was reloaded on a Navy transport assigned to take and hold Guantanamo Bay for the Navy.

Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's men landed on June 11 and proceeded to give a good account of themselves. All missions were accomplished. Although not a major engagement by European standards, it was the first ground action of the war and as such it received full press coverage. The circumstances and press attention gave the battalion and the Marine Corps a reputation for valor out of all proportion to the extent of the engagement.[6] Covered extensively by war correspondents who had little else to report at that time, the Marines became a national sensation. By providing not only the first battle story but also the first land victory, the

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[6]See New York World, New York Herald, New York Tribune, Chicago Tribune and Harper's Weekly for the months June-July 1898.

Marines were widely hailed as an example of American military prowess. Headquarters, Marine Corps, had made Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's battalion available for another planned landing at Manzanill, Cuba, but before it could be carried out the war had ended.[7]

For the Marines aboard ship, those upon whom Commandant Heywood had placed such hope, very little that was unusual happened during the war. No opportunity presented itself for them to distinguish themselves as a select element among Navy crewmen. Marines did serve at the battles of Manila Bay and Santiago, in some cases manning naval ships' batteries. But the overwhelming number of sailors taking the same risks and performing the same duties did not lend itself to the Marines' claim of a special status.

With the cessation of hostilities the survivors of Lieutenant Colonel Huntington's battalion sailed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to be posted to their original assignments. However, Commandant Heywood found himself the recipient of numerous requests to show off his most successful unit. Before being disbanded the battalion paraded before President McKinley as well as the admiring populations of New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Omaha. The Marines' reputation with the public which buoyed up to Congress had never

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[7]Millet, op. cit., p. 134.

been higher.[8] Those naval officers who still believed the Corps to be superfluous would have to argue their case from a new standpoint, starting from an even more difficult position than before.

Brigadier General Commandant Heywood realized quickly that every advantage should be gained for his Corps while riding this crest of popularity. Using the military requirements of the newly acquired overseas bases as a pretext, he requested an expansion of the Marine Corps which would raise it to six thousand men. Not surprisingly, this request was granted in March of 1899, when, in a general reorganization of the Navy and Marine Corps, the authorized strength of the Corps was raised to two hundred and eleven officers and six thousand and sixty-two enlisted men.[9] This trend continued throughout the next decade, with Congress taking little or no time out of their prolonged discussions of rural postal service, Presidential protection, and improving the U. S. Merchant Marine, to contest Marine Corps

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[8]Col. Cmdt. C. Heywood to J.D. Long, September 24, 1898, History Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127. See Army and Navy Journal, August 13, 1898, September 23, 1898, October 22, 1898 and November 12, 1898.

[9]U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1975, pp. 1140-1143. See also U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1979, pp. 370, 373-375.

Legislative requests.[10] Commandant Heywood and his successor, George F. Elliott made every effort to obtain advantage for the Corps during this period. By the year 1908 the authorized strength of the Corps had risen to three hundred and thirty-two officers and nine thousand five hundred and twenty-one enlisted men.[11]

There were other important benefits derived from the Corps' performance in the Spanish-American War. Officer procurement ceased to be a problem. Although the expanding Corps required many more officers the applicants for these commissions were of much better moral and educational quality than in the past. Again the popularity of the Marines caused these volunteers, some with recent combat experience and some with above average education, to apply to the military organization which embodied for them the most glamour. Naval Academy graduates and political patronage still played a role, but for the most part duing this period direct entry from civilian life was the main source of officer enlistments.[12] The same effect was felt in the enlisted ranks, with the Corps

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[10]See The Congressional Record, Fifty-Seventh Congress, First Session, Vol. XXXV, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1902.

[11]U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, op. cit.

[12]Maj. Gen. Cmdt. C. Heywood to W.H. Moody, September 22, 1903, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127, National Archives. See also Army and Navy Journal, March 11, 1899, May 13, 1899, June 3, 1899, June 24, 1899, October 14, 1899, January 20, 1900 and January 7, 1905.

turning away many applicants on a selective basis with higher standards than the man-hungry Army and Navy. The Corps also took this opportunity to expand its recruiting base from the east and west coasts to the interior of the continent.[13] Recruitment also became a little easier because Congress recognized the military's service to the nation by a twenty percent pay raise. New non-commissioned ranks were created for the Corps, including that of Gunnery Gergeant, a result no doubt of Commandant Heywood's emphasis on the Marines' service at secondary batteries.[14]

In 1903 Congress expressed its gratitude to Commandant Heywood by making the Commandant a Major General and promoting him to be the first to hold that rank. The staff at headquarters also benefited from Congress' benevolent mood, the three staff posts of Quartermaster, Paymaster, and Adjutant being raised from Lieutenant Colonel to full Colonel. The decade following the Spanish-American War can certainly be called the first "golden age" of the Marine Corps.

While the Marine Corps leadership was dealing with

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[13]See Army and Navy Journal, January 11, 1902 and March 21, 1908. Previously recruiting had been concentrated on each coast, with little or no attention given to inland population centers. Full expansion to national recruitment came with World War One, see Chapter III.

[14]See Army and Navy Journal, July 15, 1899 and August 26, 1899. See also Bernard C. Nalty et al., United States Marine Corps Ranks and Grades, revised edition, Historical Reference Pamphlet, Historical Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1970, pp. 20-25.

Congress and the administration, the Marine in the ranks was undergoing many changes. "Khaki had come into use for tropical field service during the Spanish-American War."[15] Later, "A mustard-colored flannel shirt replaced the blue shirt of the Philippine Insurrection and Boxer Relief. In 1901 the Marine Corps emblem moved from the side to the front of the field hat. In 1903, a standing collar khaki blouse was added. Next year the spiked helmet disappeared without lament and a bell-crowned visored cap came in. In 1912 a new model field hat was introduced, stiffer, with a narrower brim, and a four-dent "Montana peak" to replace the fore-and-aft crease. In the same year it was decided to adopt a forest-green winter service uniform, with dull bronze ornaments and buttons."[16] The Corps during this decade also adopted the Springfield M1903 .30-06 bolt-action rifle as its standard infantry weapon, one that would continue in service for the next four decades. Commandant Heywood's desire to improve the Marines' marksmanship, aided by the Congressional bonus money for specialists, aided significantly to help establish the reputation of the Marines for accurate marksmanship.

With the increased publicity following the Spanish-American War giving added impetus, the Marine recruiters provided the only public relations activity existing within the

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[15]Simmons, op. cit., pp. 73-75.

[16]Ibid.

Corps before the First World War. But at that stage the other services also lacked a press section to create favorable public relations. The Marine uniform and the usual encouraging speeches to local clubs which were primarily designed to inspire patriotic youth also gave the public its only picture of the Marine Corps other than the sensational newspaper headlines that had appeared during the war. Some historians have made much of the effectiveness of the Marines' effort at public relations beginning with the period around the turn of the century. However, the stress laid on this aspect of Marine Corps organization at this stage of its history is certainly exaggerated. The example of Sergeant George Kase, USMC, can be considered typical.

* * *

George William Kase was an average American youth at the turn of the century. When his life on the east coast had become dull and uninteresting for him at age seventeen, he and a friend decided to travel westward to see what life had to offer. They progressed as far as Pittsburgh, where without money or employment, they decided to see the national capital. Here George Kase tried for the first time to enlist in the United States Marines. He was attracted by the look of the uniform and by a vague knowledge that travel was included with the job. At this time he was only eighteen and rejected as a minor. He did not forget the Marines however,

and at age twenty-one, still not satisfied with civilian life, he again tried to enlist. Now old enough, George Kase was accepted at a Pennsylvania recruiting station. He would spend the next thirty years as a Marine.[17]

Since there were no recruit training facilities at that time, Private Kase and all other recruits were trained at their first duty station. Close-order drill, marksmanship and smart appearance were stressed. From his initial duty at Annapolis, Private Kase would eventually serve aboard the USS Missouri in Cuba, the South Pacific, China and at Veracruz. In thirty years of service Marine Kase certainly lived up to his expectations of extensive traveling. His only combat experience was gained at Veracruz, Mexico in 1914 but his assigned duty as a company cook kept him away from most of the fighting.[18]

Early in his career it became evident that Private Kase was an exceptional rifle marksman. He served on the Marines' National Rifle teams of 1913 and 1915. This traveling shooting team was yet another effective way of advertising the Marines, since they were required to wear their uniforms for all occasions. Other means of early advertising for the Corps was the use of talented professionals such as the famed actress Lillian Russell who helped in recruiting campaigns.

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[17]George W. Kase, unpublished manuscript in the Personal Papers Collection, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. M. C., n.d., Washington, D.C. (Hereinafter cited as Kase, P. C. 85).

[18]Ibid., p. 85.

Ms. Russell developed a publicity campaign in which she sang with an all-Marine act on the "Eastern Vaudeville Circuit."[19] Although short-lived, it was a sample of early Marine public relations combined with recruiting efforts. Another more enduring method was the Marine Band, which became a fixture at the celebration of national holidays.[20]

By 1914 the great powers of Europe were engaged in a bloody war and Sergeant Kase, recently married, had in any event lost his former interest in travel. Sergeant Kase now sought a tour of duty as a recruiter and so applied for that type of duty. As in any large organization it was more who you knew than your skills which were important. Sergeant Kase's tale of obtaining recruiting duty also sheds light on how recruiters were selected, a contrast to later years. "To get on recruiting duty was not an easy matter in general. In my case, however, I was well acquainted with the Officer in Charge of the Eastern Recruiting Division whose headquarters was in Phila. and who I knew was most friendly towards me."[21]

Sergeant Kase's application for recruiting duty was speedily accepted and he was assigned to the Philadelphia headquarters, which, including Sergeant Kase, consisted of three sergeants. Their duties consisted of presenting the

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[19]Ibid., p. 99.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

Marine Corps in a very favorable light at various meetings of civic organizations and wherever else they were invited. Part of the sales technique was the full dress uniform which, in the case of experienced Marines like Sergeant Kase, also included various medals and decorations won over the years. Sergeant Kase, for example, deliberately wore his shooting medals whenever he was on a recruiting assignment. He considered this a valuable aid to stimulate recruiting.[22] This type of recruiting combining public relations was the first step in educating the public. Too many Americans still felt as Sergeant Kase did when he first enlisted when he said "I understood very little about the difference between the various branches of the service, at least not where the Marines came in, but I was willing to learn what they really did."[23]

It is clear that before the establishment of a true public relations section within the Marine Corps the only way the Corps could educate the public about their organization short of wartime headlines was thru the adroit use of recruiters like Sergeant Kase. And usually educating the public about the Corps brought their support for that organization. Such support could quickly be translated into Congressional and administrative support when properly handled.

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid., p. 88.

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With the recruiting and public relations effort in the capable hands of men like Sergeant Kase, the hierarchy of the Marine Corps concentrated its efforts at developing the Corps into an organization which would not again be threatened with merger or any other type of dismemberment. The basic tension in the efforts to preserve the Corps continued to be between the Headquarters, Marine Corps and the Secretary of the Navy. However, since most Secretaries of the Navy stayed in office an average of only two years, the true arbitrator of problems relating to the future of the Marine Corps came to be the General Board. Established in November 1900 as a response to the Navy's lack of a strategical planning command in the Spanish-American War, the General Board had at first only advisory functions. Yet, with the rapid turnover of the political leadership of the Navy, it soon became the duty of the General Board to supply each new Secretary of the Navy with estimates of the current needs of his service and to continually brief him on its anticipated needs. This gave the Board a tremendous influence which went far beyond the influence that might have been expected from an advisory board.[24]

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[24]Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900-1970, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1973, p. 7.

Fortunately, the Marine Corps had immediate representation on the Board when the Adjutant and Inspector of the Marine Corps was named to the position of Secretary of the Board. In addition to its chairman, the Board consisted of the President of the Naval War College, the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, the Chief of the Office of Naval Intelligence and additional members who could be appointed temporarily as their assistance or expertise was required. Admiral George Dewey, the hero of Manila Bay, was appointed first President of the General Board, a position he held until his death in 1914. Following the general trend of national opinion following the Spanish-American War, the early Board favored the Marine Corps and did its best, within reason, to protect the interests of the Corps and to assist in fulfilling its future ambitions.[25]

The General Board immediately considered the Marine Corps' strength and its role in the national defense. Aside from the commonplace strengths and assignment problems the Board, in its very first meeting in April 1900, directed Colonel George C. Reid, USMC, Secretary to the Board, to determine what the Corps required to garrison specific overseas bases. It further required that additional equipment, including overseas transports, be provided in sufficient numbers to carry Marines to possible Asiatic areas of conflict.

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[25]Ibid.

The Board ordered the Corps to organize and to maintain at full strength a battalion of four companies of one hundred and four men each. This battalion was to be stationed at Philadelphia with full equipment for an expedition anywhere directed. As it turned out, the battalion was divided into two training units, one stationed at Annapolis and the other at Newport, Rhode Island. Local logistical difficulties forced this somewhat awkward posting of what was to be a "ready force." The unit, reinforced to nineteen officers and five hundred and twenty-two enlisted men took part in the first amphibious exercises at the island of Calebra in 1902. The following year the Subic Bay, Philippines, island of Grande was successfully defended in maneuvers carried out by the Marines.[26] This was a purely defensive role for the Marine units involved and this was also the first time such a large force of Marines, had trained together with naval support. The prodding of the General Board had much to do with this new Marine program.

The following years showed increasing Marine interest in the Marines concept of an advanced base force. Developed from the events at Guantanamo Bay during the Spanish-American War, the idea had grown into a defense against naval officers' criticism of the Marine Corps. Articles appeared in professional journals advising on how many men and what

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[26]Ibid., pp. 5-11.

equipment were required to defend an advanced naval base. Eventually the General Board would settle on the idea of Marine Corps Major Dion Williams who recommended a regiment of thirteen hundred Marines divided into three battalions. By 1914 the delineation of this regiment included coast defense artillery, infantry, searchlight, engineer, signal and field artillery units with the preponderance of strength in the artillery and infantry units.

The General Board went further in recommending that both east and west coasts of the United States have an advanced base force regiment assigned to it. It also recommended two "mobile defense regiments" of the same size and organization for each coast. The mobile unit was to be organized primarily as infantry and its mission was to protect the advanced base force from ground attack by forces landed beyond the range of its artillery.[27] Philadelphia and Mare Island, California were selected as the locations for the respective advanced base forces. In addition the Marines in the Philippines constructed base defenses equipped with 6-inch, 4.7-inch, 4-inch, and 6-pounder guns mounted in temporary fixtures. This last was to cause Army-Marine conflict over roles of defense of the Philippines until 1909 when Congress strengthened the Marine Corps "so that there was a sufficient force of Marines to meet the probable demands of the Navy in this

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[27]Ibid., p. 16.

respect, and the cooperation of the Army received no further consideration."[28]

In 1913 the First Regiment (Fixed Defense), U. S. M. C., was established at Philadelphia. "The regiment consisted of one battery of five-inch rapid fire forty caliber guns; one battery of three-inch rapid fire guns; one battery of three-inch landing guns; two U. S. Army experimental 4.7-inch heavy field guns; one mine battery with sixty mines; one signal company; one engineer company with the necessary equipment, together with eight automatic rifles and four 1-pounders."[29]

All this preparation and planning for specific missions changed the daily life of the average Marine, especially the officers. Lieutenant Fullam's criticism of them as lazy with little or nothing to do was now challenged by the memory of one officer who recorded "A new scheme of things was under way in the Marine Corps. A regiment had been designated as an Advanced Base Force. It was being trained to occupy a base in advance of the arrival of the fleet. I found that the easy days in Philadelphia were over. With drills and 4 hours a day schooling, we didn't get out of the Yard until 4:30 in the afternoon. Then we had to study at night. We had six companies. One was field artillery, one had four

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[28]General Board Letter to Secretary of the Navy, 30 December 1909, Record Group 408, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C.

[29]Clifford, op. cit., p. 16.

5-inch guns, one had four 3-inch naval guns, one was engineers and machine guns, one was mines and one was signals."[30]

All of these new measures did greatly reduce the amount of criticism which had been made of the Marine Corps by the Navy officers led by Lieutenant Fullam. The Marines' drill, discipline, marksmanship and sobriety all improved markedly during the early years of the twentieth century. The performance of Marine units in the China Relief Expedition and Legation defense and in the Philippine Insurrection increased the popularity of the Corps both with the public and with their elected representatives. The revision of the United States Naval Regulations in 1900 and again in 1905 maintained the status quo of the Marine Corps with but one apparently minor addition in 1900 which mentioned in passing that the President could assign Marines as he felt them needed, including duties at coast defense fortresses.[31]

Yet despite this considerable improvement in their status over the troubles the Corps had endured before the Spanish-American War, the Marine Corps had not gained a

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[30]Colonel Frederick May Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, New York, J.H. Sears and Company, Inc., 1929, p. 119.

[31]U.S. Navy Department, Regulations for the Government of the Navy of the United States, 1900, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1900, pp. 203-221, and U.S. Navy Department, Regulations for the Government of the Navy of the United States, 1905, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1905, pp. 211-230.

permanent service footing and it was still under attack by those naval officers who insisted that the removal of the Marines from service aboard naval ships would be a considerable improvement. These critics used the example of Guantanamo Bay to support the thesis that the Marine Corps should be formed into permanent battalions stationed at strategic seacoast bases for use in expeditionary force roles. This argument, used as early as 1894, was revived and given added impetus by events in the first years of the century.

Commandant Elliott, who became Major General Commandant in 1903, did not address himself directly to the demand for shore-based Marine units. Instead he concentrated on the old problems of maintaining ships' guards. The new Commandant experienced internal problems as well, being more difficult to work with than his predecessor. He got less support from both his own staff and the usually enthusiastic supporters in Congress.[32]

There was considerable evidence produced in the first decade of the twentieth century that the usefulness of ships' guards was being underrated by professional naval officers. The shipboard Marines were available for quick thrusts ashore

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[32]Acting Secretary of the Navy Beekman Winthrop to Maj. Gen. Cmdt. G.F. Elliott, July 15, 1910. William F. Fullam Papers, Naval Historical Foundation Collection, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

or more permanent missions in any locale of interest to the United States and its Navy. Besides the well known events in China, Marines from ships' guards were ashore at Nicaragua (1899), the Dominican Republic (1903 and 1904), Honduras (1903 and 1907), Korea (1904 and 1905), Morocco (1904) and Beirut, Lebanon (1903). Congressional Medals of Honor were won by Marines in several instances, notably in China and Samoa (1899). Thus Major General Elliott had considerable evidence available to indicate that the usefulness of ships' guards had, if anything, remained as important in the new navy as it had been in the old one.[33] Nevertheless the argument against Marines aboard ship continued to occupy a major role in the organizational debates of that period.

The Marine Corps defense against its naval critics had not been helped by the passage of time. Many of them had risen in rank and had gained influential positions. Former Lieutenant Fullam was now Commander Fullam and an influential member of the Navy's policy making circles. President Roosevelt's naval aide was Commander William S. Sims, a close friend and supporter of Commander Fullam, and an outspoken critic of old naval usage as well as a determined advocate of a fully professionalized modern navy. Captain

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[33]Captain Harry Allanson Ellsworth, USMC, One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines 1800-1934, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1974.

Robley D. Evans, a longtime critic of the Marines, was commanding officer of the "Great White Fleet" which had sailed around the world on the orders of President Roosevelt. Others who shared Commander Fullam's views were now in influential positions in Navy or political circles. With the lapse in leadership around Commandant Elliott, a new crisis for the Marine Corps was in the making. It surfaced in 1908.

The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation of the Navy, Rear Admiral J.E. Pillsbury, wrote to the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Victor Metcalf, requesting that the Marines be withdrawn as ships' guards from all Navy ships. He gave as his reasons the customary argument advanced by naval reformers about better discipline among ships' crews, the weakening of the ships' labor forces such as "work parties," coaling parties and the need for Marines ashore as ready expeditionary forces.[34] Secretary Metcalf supported Admiral Pillsbury and forwarded his proposal to President Roosevelt. The President had, prior to receipt of this suggestion, been discussing the status of the Marines with his unofficial military advisor, Major General Leonard Wood. General Wood had been a distinuished soldier throughout the preceeding fifty years on the Indian frontier and more recently the Spanish-American War. He and President Roosevelt were in

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[34]Chief, Bureau of Navigation, to Secretary of the Navy, October 16, 1908, House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings, "Status of the Marine Corps," p. 402.

complete agreement that the Marine Corps should be absorbed into the Army. They were annoyed at the influence the Corps had displayed politically and they resented the remaining political patronage appointments in the Corps. So it was that Admiral Pillsbury's recommendation received favorable consideration at both the Secretary and Presidential level.[35]

Commandant Elliott argued for his Corps and his own feelings that ships' guards were essential to the continued unaltered existence of the Marines, but to no avail. President Roosevelt was his usual adamant self. Commandant Elliott lost the argument but managed to substitute an agreement that he should be authorized to draw up a draft of the new Executive Order which would redefine the Marines position and duties.

Executive Order 969 was signed and published on November 12, 1908. It stated that the Marines were to guard navy yards at home and abroad, to be the first line of defense of naval bases overseas, to man naval defenses of navy bases beyond continental borders, to garrison the Panama Canal Zone and to furnish both garrisons and expeditionary forces for duty overseas in peacetime. By textual omission, the Marines could be removed from the ships of the Navy. Secretary Metcalf issued

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[35]Maj. Gen. L. Wood to Capt. F.R. McCoy, U.S.A., December 13, 1907 and Maj. Gen. L. Wood to T. Roosevelt, November 26, 1908, Leonard Wood Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

orders to the fleet commanders that all shipboard Marines were to be sent ashore at the nearest naval base. Within a month most seagoing Marines had been posted ashore. Surprisingly, initial reaction within the Corps was favorable since the Marines had many duties to perform within Executive Order 969's guidelines and these Marines could be assigned these tasks. Public or congressional support to return the Marines to their ships was nowhere to be found in late 1908.[36] Ironically, it was the President who created that support by his subsequent actions.

Even while the Marines were leaving their ships rumours began to circulate in Washington that more restrictions were to come. President Roosevelt himself, perhaps deliberately, fueled these rumours.[37] Supported by these rumours and the President's loose talk, a reaction to Executive Order 969 began to set in.

The initial reaction came within the Corps itself, among those officers who saw their organization and careers threatened with extinction. Word of the War Department and House of

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[36]See for example, the Army Navy Journal, November 21, 1908; New York Herald, November 14, 1908; New York Evening Post, November 12, 1908; and Washington Post, November 15, 1908.

[37]Capt. A.W. Butt, USA, to Mrs. L.F. Butt, November 19, 1908, in Lawrence F. Abbot, ed., The Letters of Archie Butt, Doubleday, Page, Garden City, N.Y., 1924, pp. 184-185. Roosevelt is reported to have told Captain Butt, his military aide, that the Corps was too influential and that he wanted the Marines merged with the Army.

Representatives Committee on Military Affairs studying the possibilities of merging the Army and the Marine Corps was circulating in Washington.[38] In increasing numbers Marine officers began to speak out publicly against Executive Order 969. Commandant Elliott, pressured by his staff at Headquarters, also spoke publicly against Executive Order 969, claiming the President did not understand the importance of ships' guards and thus had mistakenly issued Executive Order 969 without knowing the relevant facts.[39]

Finally, even Secretary Metcalf became concerned at the talk of removing the Marine Corps from the Navy. Publicly, using Admiral Pillsbury, he had the Navy go on record as opposed to any further reduction or removal of the Marines from Navy facilities.[40] Neither Secretary Metcalf nor Admiral Pillsbury recanted their views about eliminating ships' guards, but strong statements were made opposing any consolidation with the Army.[41] As a final incentive to reconsidering the issue the Navy Department found itself requiring two thousand additional sailors to replace the Marines ordered off ships by

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[38]See the Washington Post, November 15, 1908, December 4, 1908. Also the Army and Navy Journal, November 23 and December 26, 1908.

[39]Army and Navy Register, November 21, 1908, Army and Navy Journal, December 19, 1908, Washington Post, November 22, 1908.

[40]Army and Navy Register, December 19, 1908. Pillsbury stated clearly referring to the Marines, "We want them in the Navy."

[41]Ibid.

Executive Order 969.[42]

All this discussion and argument soon came to the notice of Congress. Many of its members who were not happy with President Roosevelt's policies gave enough credence to the talk of abolishing the Corps to respond both individually and as a body. Many Congressmen went on record opposing the President on his Marine Corps policy.[43] The Senate as a body opened the question of the Marine Corps status in its own investigation by the Naval Affairs Committee.[44] Clearly there was no support in Congress for further dismemberment or abolition of the Marine Corps. In fact, as the Congressional investigation began, it became apparent that it was in fact a serious attempt at repealing Executive Order 969. As if the Marine Corps needed further assistance in repealing Executive Order 969 the House of Representatives set up a special investigating sub-committee of the House Naval Affairs Committee and appointed as Chairman Congressman Thomas Butler, who happened to have a son who was a Captain of Marines, Smedley Darlington Butler.[45]

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[42]Army and Navy Register, November 21, 1908, December 4, 1908, Army and Navy Journal, December 19, 1908, Washington Post, November 22, 1908.

[43]Representative John W. Weeks to Commander W.F. Fullam, USN, January 11, 1909, in Fullam Papers. See also Army and Navy Journal, January 2, 1909.

[44]Congressional Record, 43, (60th Congress, 2nd Session), p. 361.

[45]House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings, "Status of the Marine Corps," pp. 400-578.

The special committee spent one week taking testimony. The Marines were represented by Commandant Elliott, Adjutant and Inspector Charles Lauchheimer, Quartermaster Frank L. Denny, Assistant Paymaster George Richards, Lieutenant Colonel Charles McCawley, Colonel L.W.T. Waller and Major Wendell C. Neville.[46] The Navy was well represented by Secretary of the Navy Truman Newberry, Admiral Pillsbury, Admiral Evans, Commander Sims, and Commander Fullam. Various retired naval officers were also called upon to testify.

The Navy's arguments for keeping the Marines shore based at naval installations prepared for expeditionary duty was again made by Commander Fullam, supported strongly by Commander Sims and others. The president of the General Board, Admiral Dewey, was also brought in to testify that the Marine Corps had not done enough, in his opinion, with the expeditionary or advanced base force concept. He believed that with the additional Marines available from former ships' guards this could be improved upon.[47]

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[46]Charles Lauchheimer was a longtime defender of his Corps, see Chapter I, footnote 42. Charles McCawley was the son of former Commandant McCawley. L.W.T. Waller would later be considered for Commandant of the Marine Corps but not be appointed due to a question over his conduct in the Phillippine Insurrection. Wendell C. Neville would command the famous 4th Marine Brigade in World War One and be appointed Major General Commandant in 1929.

[47]House Naval Affairs Committee, Hearings, op. cit.

As expected, the Marine witnesses testified that the removal of the ships' guards was only the first step towards abolition of the Corps. These witnesses also argued, without basis, that there was no need for training an advanced base force as the ships' guards could do that task as they had in the past. There was additional testimony by Marines that drew upon the Corps' heritage and tradition. The Assistant Paymaster, Colonel George Richards made a detailed financial presentation showing that it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars for the Navy to replace each ships' guard.[48] Not surprisingly, the Butler Committee found in favor of the Marine Corps. When the Senate Naval Affairs Committee also voted to return ships' guards, the Marine Corps had won a very significant organization victory.[49] But the struggle between the Marine and the Navy "brass" went on.

The resolution of the issue of maintaining ships' guards in the Marine Corps' favor clearly indicated that the Corps had over the past century, but particularly in the past two decades, forged a bond with the public and Congress strong enough to support it in any serious crisis. The performance

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[48]Ibid.

[49]The Committee findings were put into House Resolution 26394 which refused all money for the Corps unless there were ships' guards. This resolution was made a rider on the yearly Naval Appropriations Act which soon passed both Houses of Congress. President Roosevelt did not object since he was leaving office anyway.

of Marine units in the Spanish-American War, the Boxer Rebellion, the Philippine Insurrection, and the numerous "banana war" incidents had created a strong affection for the Corps which had not grown correspondingly for the Army or Navy.[50] It was only through this support that the Corps had been able to overcome its most serious challenge to its concept of mission. The setback accorded to a strong President as well as the rebuke of its parent organization, the U. S. Navy, had proven to the military world in the United States that the Marine Corps had become a sacred "American Trust."

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[50]The Corps had always managed to perform to public expectations in all these conflicts. We have seen how Colonel Huntington's battalion did in the Cuban Campaign. During the Boxer Rebellion in China during 1900 fifty Marines, ships' guards from the USS Oregon and the USS Newark formed a part of the Legation Defense force which was to total some 337 British, German, Japanese, Italian, Russian, Austrian and American troops. In addition several hundred Marines drawn from ships' guards and the Philippines formed a part of the relief force which rescued the Legations. A total of thirty-four Marines were awarded Medals of Honor for action during the legation defense or the relief expedition. (See Committee on Veterans Affairs, United States Senate, Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1978, U. S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1979, pp. 385-397). The defense was commanded by Captain John T. Myers and the Marines in the relief force by Major L.W.T. Waller. In the Philippines Marine ships' guards had first landed in May 1898 under Admiral Dewey's command. Still assisting the Army in 1901 the Marines under Major L.W.T. Waller avenged the massacre of an Army infantry unit on the island of Samar. This made favorable newspaper reading in America, while the subsequent execution of alleged Philippine traitors within his command made few newspapers but did keep Major Waller from being appointed Commandant later in his career. For details see Stuart Creighton Millar, Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1982.

Seeking to increase the scope of its successful defense, the Corps asked that the restored ships' guards be officially assigned to man the main gun battery of their ships. This attempt was defeated in the Naval Regulations of 1909. But the Corps was officially assigned all the duties of Executive Order 969 in addition to those mentioned in the Butler amendment, mainly the restoration of ships' guards.[51] President William Howard Taft, also discomfited by the Marines' astute political manuevers, ordered a study to ascertain if the Butler rider was constitutional, but nothing came of this attempt to reopen the controversy.[52]

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The very successful defense of the Marine Corps prevented further efforts to curtail their organization and duties. But in actually accomplishing a repeal of what they considered attempts to reduce their effectiveness was only one aspect of this period in Marine Corps history. The beginning of the twentieth century also saw the start of the Corps' search for a unique mission for which the Marines

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[51]U. S. Navy Department, Regulations for the Government of the Navy of the United States, 1909, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1909. Major General Commandant G.F. Elliott to the Secretary of the Navy, April 21, 1909, Headquarters, Marine Corps, "LSSN," Record Group 127. RAdm. J.E. Pillsbury to Maj. Gen. Cmdt. G.F. Elliott, March 20, 1909, File 51295, Headquarters, Marine Corps Case Files, Record Group 127. See also the Army and Navy Journal for the months of March, April and June, 1909.

[52]Ibid.

would be especially qualified through which they could justify their continued existence. This search quickly developed into the creation of the Advanced Base Force.

Since the onset of the dispute about the Marines' future they had been consistently criticized for lacking a specific mission and a unique organization appropriate to it. Their function, the critics claimed, could be carried out by either Army or Navy personnel. We have seen that Lieutenant Fullam claimed, with some justification, that given enough time any group of military or naval personnel could be trained to carry out the duties of a Marine detachment assigned as a ship's guard. In effect, he said that each service should be responsible for providing its own MP's. He also pointed out that sailors had often successfully formed military detachments that became effective landing parties with or without Marine participation.

The Marine Corps had always reacted sensitively to these criticisms which pointed up its lack of a mission uniquely its own. The Corps itself had not been able to identify one. Ironically, the General Board took the initiative by offering the Marine Corps a solution to its basic dilemma: the advanced base force concept. This proposal stemmed from the Navy's experience in sending Marines to secure the base at Guantanamo Bay during the Spanish-American War. In view of the Navy's postwar assumption of extended responsibilities in the Pacific

and Asiatic theaters it had become imperative to have a strong, well-trained landing force ready to seize and defend potential bases. The Marines, under Navy command, seemed well-suited to this requirement.

Nonetheless, the Corps' leadership reacted initially by insisting that such an assignment was inappropriate for Marines. The long tradition of service aboard naval vessels was not easily overcome. So it was that at first Commandant Heywood dragged his feet about implementing the General Board's orders for creating and training a regiment of Marines for seizing and defending advanced naval bases. And at first the Corps was not eager to provide Marine manpower to defend the permanent naval base being established at Guantanamo Bay.[53] Only after repeated urging from the General Board and pressure from the Secretary of the Navy did the Commandant finally establish the provisional battalion that would make up an advanced base defense force.[54]

The Marine Corps leaders then realized that the responsibility for an advanced base force could be usefully employed to sustain the Corps' permanent organization. If handled

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[53]Kenneth J. Clifford, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900-1970, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1973, pp. 1-21. See also Lieutenant Commander J.H. Sears, "The Coast in Warfare," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, September 1901, pp. 449-527 and December 1901, pp. 649-712.

[54]Ibid.

properly that responsibility could provide a valid reason for the Corps' continued existence that would supplant the deteriorating argument for assigning Marines as ships' guards. In its new role as a guardian of overseas naval bases the Corps now enjoyed the support and backing of the Navy's brass. Supporting the Marines was an easy price to pay for keeping the Army out of what the brass considered exclusive spheres of naval activity. With this support, whatever the Navy's motives might have been, the Marine Corps fastened on an opportunity to develop its own unique training and mission.

The development of the advanced base force was repeatedly used in subsequent years to defend the continued existence of the Marine Corps and equally forcefully to justify its expansion. The creation of the advanced base force, beginning with Major Dion Williams' concept and the battalion at the Philadelphia Naval Yard, proved to be a major strategic innovation in the Marine Corps' definition of its mission. It defined the Corps' principal role up to World War II.

By the time the advanced base force had been expanded into two regiments the old issues about the ships' guards and Executive Order 969 appeared to have been laid to rest. The Marine Corps now concentrated its attention on developing units that would be true forces in readiness. Some part of the Corps' mystique about being ready to go into instant

action stemmed from the zeal applied to the training of advance base regiments. Training exercises in the field were held nearly every year beginning in 1903 with progressively larger numbers of officers and men being involved. But as promising as this new mission seemed to be, it did not lack its critics. During the early stages of this new program the Secretary of the Navy had assigned the Naval Division of Inspections as the command responsible for evaluating the Marines' progress in their preparation for carrying out their new mission.

Unfortunately for the Corps the Aide-for-Inspections in 1913 was the Corps' old adversary, Captain William F. Fullam. He duly inspected the Marine Corps' preparedness at Philadelphia in 1913 and not surprisingly found it inadequate. His report dound the Marine training efforts wholly unsatisfactory and he contrasted them with a successful Italian landing exercise conducted in Sicily in 1911.[55] In no uncertain terms the report went on to castigate the Marine Corps' efforts as "failures"[56] and also claimed that "nothing has been accomplished during the past 13 years."[57]

Captain Fullam persisted in his bitter criticism of the Corps. Some four years after Executive Order 969 the Captain

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[55]Aide-for-Inspections to Secretary of the Navy, 1 May 1913, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, Dept. of the Navy.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

again raised the subject of shipboard Marines. He again complained that "the work assigned to Marines on board battleships and cruising vessels of the Navy gives them no training or experience whatever with mines, torpedoes, and other practical work."[58] This was quite beyond the scope of his inspection report on the advanced base force, as was his remark that "homogeneity in our man-of-war crews"[59] would improve both Navy and Marine performance. The Captain was still lobbying energetically for removal of the Marines from Navy ships.

Major General Commandant William P. Biddle was now the spokesman for the Marine Corps, having replaced the retired General Elliott in 1911. Commandant Biddle's response to Captain Fullam's latest attacks on the Marine Corps was to state that in fact the Marines had made some serious improvements in their organization of the Advanced Base Force and "the present system of semipermanent companies, battalions and regiments is much better suited to the requirements of the Marine Corps"[60] than the proposals made by Captain Fullam.

The Commandant was joined in his defense by a distinguished American naval hero, Admiral George Dewey, still President of the General Board, who refuted all of Captain

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[58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid.

[60]Major General Commandant to Secretary of the Navy, 7 July 1913, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, Dept. of the Navy.

Fullam's arguments. Admiral Dewey was particularly angered by Captain Fullam's resurrection of the ships' guards question. Admiral Dewey wrote to the Secretary of the Navy in the name of the General Board saying that there was still no reason to suppose the replacement of Marines aboard ship and their replacement by sailors would produce any economic advantages or professional improvement. He further remarked that "The General Board regrets the renewed agitation of the question of removal of Marines from ships of the Navy in which the strength of the Marine detachment is sufficient to demand the presence of a Marine officer."[61]

Spurred on by Captain Fullam's continued criticism, the Marine Corps in 1914 fielded for the first time its First Advanced Base Brigade, which consisted of the two advanced base force regiments. This unit conducted advanced base force exercises on the Island of Culebra in the Caribbean early in 1914 under the command of Colonel George Barnett. The exercise assumed a strategic need for a presumptive action to defend a threatened naval installation. The Marine Brigade landing was unopposed and it established itself without difficulty. Once established, other units of the fleet then began simulated attempts to dislodge the defenders. The Marine regiments met this test so that the military umpires

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[61]General Board to Secretary of the Navy, 21 July 1913, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, Dept. of the Navy.

ruled that they had successfully defended the advanced base from a mock attack by naval forces. Captain Fullam had again failed to make his point. The General Board recommended to the Secretary of the Navy, Josephus Daniels, that yearly exercises be held so that the advanced base force concept could be continuously developed.[62]

Events in Mexico and France presently interrupted these plans, but the Marines had found what they had been seeking: a new mission. The first years of the new century had been a time of trial for the Corps with its fate still unresolved.

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[62]Major General Commandant, 3rd endorsement of "Supplemental Report, Brigade Commander, Advanced Base Expedition, Culebra, Jan-Feb 1914," Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, Dept. of the Navy. Not everyone was as satisfied with the exercises as the Commandant. One Marine officer wrote "the umpires solemnly announced that the Island of Culebra was impregnable, which I always thought was a damned lie." Wise, (then Captain) op. cit., pp. 120-121.

CHAPTER III

A Dedicated Leader

During the first decade of the new century the U. S. Marine Corps secured a firmer anchorage in the U. S. defense establishment. For the first time since the onset of its troubles with the naval leadership in the 1880's the Corps seemed to be assured of its future existence. That result could be said to be the outcome of the Marines' skillful deployment of both their military record and their political skill. As an organization the Corps had honed its adroit use of administrative politics and public relations. These alone would not have been enough: the Marines' sound combat record provided an impressive support.

At the same time, it must be said, that the Marines' political style developed in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War and became a fixture of its public life. Themes that appeared in this period were to recur with alarming frequency during the next half century. These included persistent disagreement with the President about the size and mission of the Corps; and the resort to congressional support whenever the Corps faced adversity originating with the president or from the naval command. Another persistent effort developed from the skillful use of public information

media.[1]

The Marine Corps continued to profit from decisions taken by the Navy's General Board during the next years. It was the General Board which insisted on the early development of the advanced base force concept. Steadfast support by the Board forced the Marine Corps Headquarters' staff to accomplish that development despite its own reluctance to do so. Many officers continued to believe that the existing duties of the Marine Corps would suffice to ensure its continued existence. Still some junior officers welcomed the new duties, and with the retirement of Commandant George F. Elliott in 1910, and his replacement by Commandant William P. Biddle, a new interest arose among officers for complying with the General Board's desires.

Commandant Biddle was of the distinguished Biddle family of Philadelphia, a product of the patronage officer appointment system. He had an ordinary but undistinguished career in the Marines until his appointment to the post of Commandant. It appears that the new Commandant was one who obeys his orders to the best of his ability without being

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[1]It is interesting to note that several important leaders in the later difficulties of the Marines entered their respective services in this period, including future Marine Commandant Alexander A. Vandergrift (Jan. 21, 1909), future Chief of Naval Operations Ernest J. King (August 15, 1897) and Chester W. Nimitz (September 7, 1901).

creative or questioning those orders. While in most cases this is a detriment for an organization in this rather unique case such an attitude on the part of the Commandant was of considerable help to the Marine Corps. The General Board was still anxious to develop the advanced base force concept. The early results of the first decade had been slow in coming but acceptable when finally produced. The appointment of Commandant Biddle, who took his orders from the Secretary of the Navy who in turn received advice from the General Board, was a key factor in making further progress.

Prodded by the new Secretary of the Navy appointed in 1909, Commandant Biddle ordered that a post of assistant to the Commandant be created. This assignment would make an immediate subordinate to the Commandant responsible for preparedness and training, thus giving considerable weight to his directives. Commandant Biddle ordered the creation of permanent expeditionary companies at all naval installations where Marines were stationed. The new Commandant also instituted a required three month recruit training program, the forerunner of today's "boot camp."[2] Following additional directives from Secretary of the Navy George von L. Meyer, Commandant Biddle created a formal school for both the study and training on the advanced base force, originally at New

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[2]Previously Marines had been trained, as we have seen with Sergeant Kase, at their first duty station with no centralized plan or schedule.

London, Connecticut and later at Philadelphia.[3]

The General Board also required that the Marine Corps train and give examples of the needs of an advanced base force. Among those items designated by the General Board as required subjects were loading transports, landing equipment and supplies from transports, establishing battery sites, laying and defending minefields, gun and searchlight exercises, all for the effective defense of an advanced base site.[4]

In accordance with these instructions the landing exercises were continued in the Caribbean. It was these exercises which renewed Captain Fullam's interest in the Corps.

The 1913 exercises were to consist of two "regiments" of Marines combined into the First Advanced Base Brigade. The commanders of the two regiments involved were Colonel Charles G. Long and Lieutenant Colonel John A. Lejeune, the

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[3]Assistant Secretary of the Navy B. Winthrop to Maj. Gen. Cmdt., March 24, 1910. Also General Board to Secretary of the Navy, January 31, 1910. Both are in Subject File 432, Records of the General Board, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Division, Washington. See also Maj. Gen. Cmdt. to Secretary of the Navy, April 19, 1913, File 1975-10, Headquarters, Marine Corps, General Correspondence 1913-1938, Record Group 127, National Archives.

[4]General Board to Secretary of the Navy, 19 August 1913, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

brigade being commanded by Colonel Barnett.[5] The whole exercise, as we have seen, was reported to be a great success and the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet "strongly recommended that frequent opportunity be given for extended advance base work of this kind."[6] The General Board was equally satisfied with the Marines in their new assignment, Admiral Dewey writing that the "General Board therefore considers that two Marine Regiments, one fixed defense and one mobile, of about 1,520 enlisted men each, regularly drilled in advanced base operations, is an adequate peace time provision" to hold any advanced base site then under construction.[7]

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As the advanced base force concept developed within the Corps increasingly the officers reasoned that the future for the Marines lay in developing that concept into their own special field of expertise. Dissatisfied with both Commandants

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[5]Of these three, two would become Commandant, Barnett (1914-1920) and Lejeune (1920-1929).

[6]U. S. Atlantic Fleet, USS Arkansas, Flagship, "Report on Operations of Advance Base Expedition, Culebra, W. I., Jan-Feb 1914," 15 April 1914, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

[7]3rd Endorsement, "Supplemental Report, Brigade Commander, Advanced Base Expedition, Culebra, Jan-Feb 1914," 23 April 1914, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

Elliott and Biddle,[8] several Marine officers organized in 1911 the Marine Corps Association. This organization, privately funded, was originally designed to oppose any attempt to reduce the Marine Corps or limit its assigned tasks. It also strove to educate the Marine officers on the national value of the Marine Corps and its military role, specifically the advanced base force.[9] Organized by Colonels George Barnett, Ben H. Fuller and John A. Lejuene, the Association quickly flourished and began to produce its own periodical, the Marine Corps Gazette.[10] Another important development occurred at this time, 1911: the request of Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham to receive flying instructions. Believing that the airplane had an important role within the advanced base force, Lieutenant Cunningham became the fifth Naval Aviator and the first Marine to learn to fly. Significantly, Lieutenant Cunningham and Navy Lieutenant Bernard L. Smith[11] were

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[8]General Elliott, as we have seen, was disliked for his personal abrasiveness. Commandant Biddle apparently was opposed because of his pliability and lack of creativity. These officers wanted a strong leader who would push for an exclusive Marine role in the advanced base force development.

[9]Colonel Robert D. Heinl, Jr., "An Association is Formed," Marine Corps Gazette, 47, p. 14-17, April 1963.

[10]In addition to future Commandants Lejeune and Barnett, Colonel Fuller would also serve as Commandant, 1930-1934.

[11]Lieutenant Smith trained with Lieutenant Cunningham and was Naval Aviator Six.

assigned upon completion of flight training to the advanced base force, as pilots of seaplanes.[12]

The election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 followed by the appointment of Colonel George Barnett who replaced the retired Commandant Biddle were both favorable occurances for the Marine Corps. At first glance it might seem that the new President would not be especially favorable to military expansion, but as events were to show, the foreign policies of the Wilson administration often required a display of American military might. This was usually provided by the Navy and Marine Corps. Another valuable asset for the Corps was the appointment of Franklin Delano Roosevelt as Assistant Secretary of the Navy. The Wilson administration was also responsible for the appointment of Colonel Barnett to the post of Commandant. Commandnat Barnett, as we have seen, was among the group favoring development of the advanced base force so as to make it into the Marine Corps' new primary mission. The new Commandant appointed as his assistant Colonel John A. Lejeune, another active supporter of the advanced base force role. Commandant Barnett's and Colonel Lejeune's Naval Academy background also helped in

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[12]Lieutenant Colonel E.C. Johnson and Graham A. Cosmas, A Short History of Marine Aviation, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, 1976, Chapter I. See also Graham A. Cosmas, Marine Flyer in France: The Diary of Captain Alfred A. Cunningham, November 1917, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, 1974.

their dealings with the Navy administration which was generally pleased with their rise to command. The coincidental grouping of Commandant Barnett, Colonel Lejeune, Assistant Secretary Roosevelt and coming world events would prove of great benefit to the Corps.

President Woodrow Wilson's contributions to the Marine Corps' steady progress stemmed from his foreign policy. President Wilson has been described as a personal diplomat. "In the areas that he considered vitally important - Mexico, relations with the European belligerents, wartime relations with the Allied Powers, and the writing of a peace settlement - Wilson took absolute personal control."[13] It was in the first three of these areas that the Marine Corps became involved.

President Wilson immediately opposed the new Mexican President, Victoriano Huerta. Appalled at the way President Huerta had seized power, by revolution and assassination, President Wilson's administration looked with disfavor on every aspect of the Mexican administration. By March 1914 the administration of President Huerta was under strong attack by three major armies under the overall leadership of Venustiano Carranza. Vessels of the United States Navy

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[13]Arthur S. Link, Wilson the Diplomatist, A Look at His Major Foreign Policies, Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1957, p. 23.

had been dispatched to patrol off Mexican ports to protect American life and property, a standard procedure in that era. Other nations had vessels off the Mexican coast as well.[14]

During the course of operations off the Mexican port of Tampico on April 8, 1914 an American Marine acting as a courier for the Admiral in command of the squadron off Tampico was detained by Mexican authorities. Later returned to his ship, the American Admiral thought little of the matter. The following day, however, a naval shore party under an officer's command was arrested. They, too, were returned with apologies. Rear Admiral Henry T. Mayo did not accept these as he had those concerning the Marine courier. The sailors had been taken at gunpoint from a whaleboat flying American flags. To Admiral Mayo this was an insult to the American flag and a formal apology was demanded. Subsequently backed by President Wilson, these incidents were escalated into a major event. Demanding satisfaction, President Wilson eventually ordered that the Mexican port of Veracruz be seized, both to avenge the insults and to prevent arms shipments to President Huerta's forces.[15]

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[14]Robert E. Quirk, An Affair of Honor: Woodrow Wilson and the Occupation of Veracruz, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1962, pp. 1-12. German and British warships were also present.

[15]Ibid., pp. 12-79.

Against less than one thousand garrison troops in the Mexican port, American Marines and sailors landed and seized the port of Veracruz midday on April 21, 1914. The landing parties consisted of 502 Marines and 285 sailors commanded by a Navy Captain. The Marines were under the command of Colonel Wendell C. Neville.[16] Although the initial landing in the port was unopposed less than an hour passed before the Mexican defenders started their resistance. Thus began a six month U. S. commitment to hold and defend the port of Veracruz.[17]

The military action that had seized Veracruz turned out to be the major combat in which the Marines were committed between the Philippine Insurrection and the First World War. It was unsatisfactory in terms of organizational development for two reasons. The initial commitment, albeit a hurried affair, had been by ships' guards. Yet the prolonged defense of the port was made by both Marine units from the advanced base force program as well as Army and Navy forces. In effect, nothing beyond the fact that ships' guards could still be useful had been proven, and except for Captain

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[16]Commandant of the Marine Corps, 1929-1930. This contingent consisted of the Marine detachments of the battleships USS Utah and USS Florida, and the gunboat USS Prairie. The sailors were all from the Florida, whose Captain, William R. Rush, was in overall command. Quirk, p. 86.

[17]Quirk, pp. 78-120.

Fullam, that item was not open for dispute at this stage. Although men like Sergeant Kase received their initial combat experience at Veracruz, it failed to resolve the questions still being asked about the future of the Marine Corps.

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Since the Boxer Rebellion and including the landings at Veracruz, the Marines had landed at some twenty-six spots around the world, several times being obliged to make a swift return to places they only recently left.[18] Despite all this action, the role of the Corps remained ill-defined and uncertain. Aside from Executive Order 969 and its Congressional amendments, the Corps was still without its own well-defined mission. Perhaps for this reason in the second decade of the century the basic interest of the Corps' leadership centered on the concept of the advanced base force. Clearly the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune as the Commandant's assistant reinforced General Barnett's known support for this role. Combined with the success of the

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[18]These landings were; Colombia (1901, 1902), Abyssinia, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Panama, Syria (all 1903), Africa, Korea, Dominican Republic, Panama (all 1904), China Korea, France and Russia (all 1905), Cuba (1906), Honduras (1907), Nicaragua (1910), China (1911), China, Cuba, Nicaragua (all 1912) and China and Mexico (1913). In addition to Veracruz, Marines landed in Haiti in 1914. See Captain Harry Allanson Ellsworth, USMC, One Hundred Eighty Landings of United States Marines, 1800-1934. History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1974.

recent exercises in the Caribbean, the advanced base force concept developed rapidly in 1914. Units, including those at Veracruz, were designated as parts of the advanced base force while bases were similarly designated. Funding and the requisite equipment both remained inadequate but one which headquarters seemed much more determined to correct than in the past.[19]

Making changes in the headquarters' staff were also on the Commandant's agenda. Testifying before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, Commandant Biddle had presented the Corps' position that the staff and line officers should be merged. Commandant Biddle stressed that the officers of the Adjutant and Inspector's Department were "required to inspect troops both in garrison and in the field, and these duties require technical knowledge that can only be gained by actual experience, and as with time conditions and methods change, it is almost impossible for a permanent staff officer to keep himself informed of changing conditions."[20]

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[19]"Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps," Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1914, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1915, pp. 468-469. The Congressional amendments were those restricting funds unless Marines were restored to shipboard duties.

[20]Senate Committee on Naval Affairs, U. S. Congress, Hearings on the Personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps, Govt. Printing Office, Washington, 1914, pp. 740-741.

The entire staff of Headquarters, Marine Corps was at this time not large and this request for legislation was an effort to make better use of what officers were available. Seeking to rotate officers, Commandants Biddle and Barnett sought to enlarge the base of experienced staff officers which in the event of a large war, would be needed quickly. At this time the entire war planning staff of the Marine Corps consisted of the Assistant to the Commandant and three Captains whose primary assignment was as aide to the Commandant.[21] There was no formal Navy-Marine liaison. Congress did not at this time act upon the Commandant's request.

The Mexican Intervention hindered more advanced base exercises since by 1915 some two regiments of Marines were on duty there. Nevertheless, Commandant Barnett insisted upon continued efforts to develop advance base force tactics. Both the Advanced Base School and the 1st Regiment (Fixed Defense) were organized at Philadelphia in 1915. This unit was organized along the previous lines, but larger. It totaled eight companies plus headquarters. Four companies were armed with 5-inch fixed naval guns, designed in such a way as to be capable of being emplaced upon landing. The others were engineer, searchlight, minelaying and air defense companies, the latter armed with machine guns. Although

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[21]Major General John A. Lejeune, The Reminiscences of a Marine, Dorrance and Company, Philadelphia, 1930, p. 220.

manpower commitments to the Mexican and various Caribbean involvements seriously hindered an effective development of tactics and techniques for the advanced base force, the idea that it had come to the Marine Corps to stay was firmly imbedded.[22] These local interventions, which would continue until the eve of the Second World War, obliged the Commandant to request more men. It was an opportune time to make such a request.

Another highpoint of the Marine Corps occurred in 1916. Events far from the jungles of Haiti or the heat of Veracruz combined to create a climate of cooperation between the military, Congress and the Wilson administration. The Great War was now in its second year and American public opinion, fostered by President Wilson, sought to remain neutral while strengthening America's preparedness. This strength was to be the deterrant confronting provacative or aggressive acts which might bring about American involvement in a European War. The first line of defense against such possible agression was, of course, the United States Navy. In this buildup of America's first defense line the Marine Corps received substantial benefits.

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[22]"Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps," Annual Report of the Navy Department, 1915, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1916, pp. 755, 764-765.

Events moved with unusual speed in 1916. The Commandant's request for added strength was answered by Congress when it approved an additional 255 officers and 5,034 enlisted men. While less than the Commandant had asked for, it did include for the first time personnel slots for five brigadier generals. In what was to prove equally important to future growth of the Marine Corps, Congress also granted the Corps permission to develop its own federally sponsored reserve force. This reserve was to be in all respects equal to the Naval Reserve. Five classes of the Marine Reserve were authorized by Navy Department General Order 231, issued August 31, 1916. These were the Fleet Marine Corps reserve, the Marine Corps Reserve A, the Marine Corps Reserve B, the Volunteer Marine Reserve, and the Marine Corps Flying Corps.[23]

Another milestone passed by the Marines in 1916 was the agreement of Congress that the Marine Corps would be maintained at one-fifth the crew strength of the Navy. This agreement assured a Marine enlisted strength based on what would certainly be a permanently enlarged navy. In addition the Corps saw the first naval transport built expressly for carrying Marines: the USS Archibald Henderson was built in 1916 to help transport the Marines to various Latin American conflicts.

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[23]Reserve Officers of Public Affairs Unit 4-1, The Marine Corps Reserve: A History, Division of Reserve, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1966, p. 4.

Additional transports were planned.[24] Funds were designated by Congress for the formation of an aviation unit within the Marine Corps. New bases were also authorized by Congress, including what proved to be two permanent bases located in Quantico, Virginia and San Diego, California. The Commandant's 1913 proposal about the advantages of merging staff and line officers was finally carried out on August 29, 1916, permitting vacancies in staff appointments below the rank of Colonel to be rotated at four year intervals.[25]

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The Marine Corps was, in effect, getting itself ready for the First World War, and unknowingly, preparing itself for an even greater war that would follow. The First World War, however, would not enable the Marines to prove the value of their units as naval base defense forces. "When the United States entered the World War, the Allied Fleets had already obtained control of the sea except for the submarine menace."[26]

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[24]"Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps," Annual Reports of the Navy Department, 1916, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1917, pp. 759-769, Marine Corps Personnel Board to the Secretary of the Navy, "Report of Board," February 3, 1916, File 1850-40, General Correspondence, Headquarters, Marine Corps, 1911-1938, Record Group 127. The transports were built at the insistence of the General Board, although with considerable Marine Corps' support.

[25]Kenneth W. Condit, Major John H. Johnstone, USMC, and Ella W. Nargele, A Brief History of Headquarters Marine Corps Staff Organization, Historical Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1971, pp. 6-11.

[26]Lejeune, op. cit., p. 236.

As a result there was "no available naval mission, therefore, for an advanced base or expeditionary force."[27] In effect the Marine Corps had as serious a problem as it had had before the Spanish-American War, that of being ready for a war that did not fit their specifications. Having concentrated its total effort on the development of the advanced base force the Corps found itself off balance militarily for the events of World War One. Having capitalized on the Wilson administration's willingness to prepare for war, the Marine Corps, like the other services, was now in a position to attempt to prove its military value.[28]

With the coming of 1917 the Wilson administration had become all but convinced that American involvement in the European war was inevitable. In an Executive Order dated March 26, 1917 the President authorized increases in the Navy and Marine Corps which would bring them up to full complement. This meant for the Marine Corps an additional 7,000 men. The advanced base force regiments currently deployed in the Caribbean were replaced with these new recruits and security detachments and ships' guards were also strengthened. Following the Navy's lead, the Marine Corps

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[27]Ibid.

[28]For a detailed history of this period, see Major E. N. McClellan, The United States Marine Corps in the World War, Historical Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, 1920.

claimed to be ready for action. Men like Sergeant Kase were put to work recruiting and advertising the Marine Corps nationwide.[29]

The Marine Corps had remained abreast of the latest methods of publicity. Still the responsibility of the recruiting bureau, the need to publicize the Corps to the public and Congress fell to a considerable extent on the recruiters. Established under Commandant Biddle in the New York offices of the Marine Corps recruiting station and commanded by a Captain with an average of four recruiters, the publicity bureau was and remains one of the most successful of the Corps' adaptions to modern life. Denied Congressional approval for funds to advertise itself for recruiting purposes the Marine Corps publicity bureau established itself as a publisher, filmmaker and information distributor on Marine Corps' affairs.[30] As was soon evident the bureau's initial efforts were remarkably successful.

The efforts of the recruiters and the publicity bureau soon flooded the Marines with applications for enlistment.

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[29]Robert Lindsay, This High Name: Public Relations and the U. S. Marine Corps, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1956, pp. 23-35. "Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps," Annual Reports of the Navy Department 1917, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1918, pp. 835-848.

[30]Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 10-16. Included in this early publicity work were some of the first actual films of combat, from Latin America.

Since a major portion of the recruiting campaign had been that the Marines were always "first to fight" and that the Marines would accept enlistments for the duration of the war only, a technicality not available to the Army or National Guard, additional pressure was put on the Commandant's office to produce a Marine Corps role in the Great War. Some 239,274 men had applied for enlistment to the Marine Corps by war's end with the Corps accepting some 60,189.[31] By May 1917 Congress had been induced by this patriotic display to raise the Corps' enlistment ceiling to 30,000 men. Several twentieth century Marine Corps "walking legends" enlisted in this period, including future General Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller and former Congressman Edwin Denby who established the later famous recruit training program at Parris Island, South Carolina.

Commandant Barnett agreed with Colonel Lejeune that the war showed no promise for the Marines in the role of an advanced base force. Indeed, there seemed little need for them in any naval related role beyond the ever necessary ships' guard role. General Barnett's problem was solved, however, when British and French delegations arrived in Washington to implore immediate American aid. This aid was specified in terms of men and weapons. While Congress was

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[31]McClellan, op. cit., pp. 14-24.

still coping with conscription the Army was ordered to send one combat ready division to France, as at least a token of U. S. military aid. General Barnett offered to help the Army form this division by supplying two regiments of Marines, about half the combat strength of that unit. Surprisingly, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and Army Chief of Staff Tasker H. Bliss accepted the Marines' offer, largely because they themselves were short of trained troops to fill such a division. With the Navy providing transports for the Marine units, the Marines were now truly going to be among the "first to fight."[32]

Although General Barnett had been quick to offer two regiments of Marines to the Army, in reality the Corps was little better prepared for a European War than the U. S. Army. In order to rectify this, the Corps drew upon every resource it could identify and exploit. Veterans of China and the Caribbean interventions were grouped together with fresh-from-college officers and enlisted men. First Sergeant Daniel Daly, winner of the Medal of Honor in Haiti and Peking, would lead new recruits into combat led by officers such as Colonel

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[32]Secretary of War N.D. Baker to Secretary of the Navy J. Daniels, May 16, 1917, Folder 2231, G-3 GHQ AEF Correspondence, Records of the American Expeditionary Force, Record Group 120, National Archives. Brigadier General C.L. McCawley, Quartermaster General, USMC, to Col. D.D. McCarthy, USA, May 23, 1917, File 29, Adjutant General AEF Correspondence File, 1917-1919, Record Group 120, National Archives.

Frederic Wise and Lieutenant Colonel "Hikin'" Hiram Bearss, both of whom had served worldwide, Colonel Bearss also held the Medal of Honor for action in the Philippines. Naval base security forces and ships' guards were combined with boys direct from the farm or factory. Recruit training under men like Major Denby quickly merged these groups into an effective enough force to be called combat ready.

How the Corps would be organized, whether in the U. S. Army or on its own, continued to be a problem during the war. The agreement between General Barnett and the Army had been that the Marines would be under Army control during the duration of their service in France. This included an agreement that the units sent to France be structured like similar sized Army units. Thus, for the first time the Marine Corps fielded large companies of six officers and 250 enlisted men, and regiments of three battalions each. In a perverse way the Marines retained some identity, numbering instead of lettering their company sized units. The Marines also wore Marine Corps insignia on their clothes and helmets, even after their original equipment had worn out and been replaced with Army issue items.[33]

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[33]Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC, (ret.), The United States Marines: The First Two Hundred Years, 1775-1975, The Viking Press, New York, 1976, pp. 85-93. J. Robert Moskin, The Story of the United States Marine Corps, Paddington Press Ltd., New York, 1979, pp. 99-138. Colonel John A. Driscoll, USMCR, The Eagle, Globe and Anchor 1868-1968, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1971, pp. 37-40.

With the entry into large U. S. Army formations the Marine Corps for the first time was required to maintain and structure large units corresponding the U. S. Army combat units on the Western Front. In addition to the large company sized unit the overall unit was the regiment. For the Marines, this and the brigade proved to be the largest units fielded in World War One.[34]

After several different plans were discarded the Marine Regiments sent to France were ordered to consist of a full Colonel as commanding officer with a Lieutenant Colonel as regimental executive officer. Seven Majors, including three designated as battalion commanders, were also required. Sixteen Captains were to be included to command the twelve infantry companies, the machine gun company, the supply company, and to act as personnel officer, headquarters company commander and one extra captain assigned to headquarters. Forty-six First Lieutenants were provided at a ratio of three per rifle company, two at regimental headquarters, two with the machine gun company and two at the supply company. The thirty-eight Second Lieutenants were assigned two per rifle company and two assigned to each battalion headquarters as battalion

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[34]The Marine Corps had fielded "brigades" in Latin America before, but they were administrative units only. The Fourth Marine Brigade in France was the first tactical unit of that size fielded by the Marines.

intelligence officer and battalion gas officer.[35]

The Marine rifle companies in action in France were therefore supposed to carry six officers and two hundred and fifty-two enlisted men into battle. Usually this number was reduced by wounds, disease and temporary reassignments but for the first time the Marines had a table or organization and equipment for a combat unit other than the advanced naval base defense force.

In addition to organization, equipment had to conform to Army issue. This equipment was never standardized or even uniform since it came from both domestic manufacturers and the Allies' weapon stocks. This mixed bag of arms had to do because the American war effort never did catch up with demand. Much borrowed equipment was used by American forces, including French automatic weapons and artillery pieces, British helmets and gas masks, and tactics copied from all allied armies. To equip the Marine Regiment of 116 officers and 3,774 enlisted men a considerable amount and variety or equipment was needed. Most numerous among these items was the model 1903 Springfield Rifle of which some 3,058 were required. In each company 223 men were armed with these. An additional ten men were armed with rifles which were equipped with telescopes for sniping

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[35]Table No. 1, Infantry Regiment, U. S. Marine Corps, August 1, 1918 (date corrected to September 1, 1918), Untitled File, Table of Organization and Equipment, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

purposes. Sixteen automatic rifles[36] were allocated per rifle company. These were the small arms used by the front-line Marine. From regimental support units the line companies could call upon sixteen heavy machine guns, six 3-inch Stokes Mortars and three 1-pounder guns. Army artillery battalions from divisional support were usually available.[37]

In addition to organization and equipment, supply and maintainence services were obviously required. All supply and general maintainence was the Army's responsibility except for the medical services, which as is tradition in the Marine Corps was provided by the Navy. Each regiment had fifty-five Navy hospital corpsman attached "including 4 especially trained in the care of the foot."[38] The Marines were truly in the infantry now.

Setting forth the necessary tables of organization and equipment did not resolve the difficulties involved in defining a role in the First World War for the Marines. At first able to send only one regiment, the Fifth Marines,[39]

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[36]These were either French Chauchat or later Browning Automatic Rifles. The machine guns were Hotchkiss.

[37]Table No. 1, Infantry Regiment, op. cit. By this date the British and German machine gun support was much greater and by 1918 the BEF's squads were also allocated Lewis guns.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Marine Regiments are known as "Marines," while Marine Divisions are always referred to as Division. Hence 5th Marines refers to a regiment, never a division, which would be cited as Fifth Marine Division.

Commandant Barnett ordered the formation of another regiment and a machine gun battalion at Quantico to complete the Marine Corps' contribution to the U. S. Army's 1st Infantry Division, the token American aid sent to France early in 1917. These units, the Sixth Marines and the Sixth Machine Gun Battalion, were in France by February 1918. General John J. Pershing, Commander of the American Expeditionary Force of which the Marines were a part, ordered the Marines into a brigade to be attached to the 2nd U. S. Infantry Division. The brigade was designated the 4th brigade, the 1st and 2nd being in the 1st Infantry Division and the 3rd being the sister brigade of the Marines in the 2nd Infantry Division. By coincidence this was also the 4th Brigade of Marines currently in existence. Commandant Barnett requested and General Pershing approved of the idea of calling the Marine unit the 4th Brigade, U. S. Marines. This was to be of major consequence later in the war.[40] As did all U. S. Infantry Divisions, the 2nd went into training with experienced French and British troops.

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While the Marine Brigade in France was getting itself into readiness for combat, events at home and at Headquarters,

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[40]Maj. Gen. Cmdt. G. Barnett to CO, Marines, AEF, November 6, 1917. Also Col. F. Conner, AC/S G-3 AEF to C/S AEF, January 14, 1918, File 10171, Adj. Gen. AEF Correspondence, 1917-1920, Record Group 120, National Archives.

American Expeditionary Force, were affecting the future role of Marines in the First World War. In Washington, Commandant Barnett was testifying before Congress. The premise of his argument was that the Corps was now, in January 1918, at full authorized strength but that the duties of the Marines in the current war required many more men in the ranks. Commandant Barnett argued for doubling of the size of the Marine Corps, from 1,230 officers and 36,334 enlisted men to 74,594 officers and men. These men were to be used to fill the ranks depleted by men sent to France, to replace two regiments in Cuba and to refill the vacancies in the advanced base force regiments created by transferring men to the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments.[41]

The Commandant's prime reason for making the manpower request was, however, to try to send another brigade of marines to France. Commandant Barnett and many senior Marine officers felt that the Marine Corps should have a full Marine Division on the combat front. This would require not only another brigade of infantry but machine gun, engineer, support units and replacements for casualties. This was an enormous amount of manpower for the Marine Corps. "A U. S.

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[41]"Excerpts from the Statement of the Major General Commandant, U. S. Marine Corps, before the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives on the Estimates of the Marine Corps, January 23, 1918," Marine Corps Gazette, March 1918, pp. 67-75.

division was immense in 1917. Where a French division was now reduced to five thousand rifles, and a British one soon shrunk to little more, a Yank outfit possessed about three times that many."[42]

The size of the 5th Marines had exceeded the entire on-duty strength of the Marine Corps as it was in 1898. To field a full division would be a major effort and reorganization of the Marine Corps. This is what General Barnett was asking of Congress. Nor was it a problem for the Marine Corps only, for with a division commander who "had at his disposal 17,666 rifles, 72 guns, 260 machine guns, 979 officers - for a total of 27,082 human beings"[43] there were problems for Army officers as well. "No two-star officer had ever commanded more than a brigade, and this in peacetime maneuvers, usually an imaginary brigade in the wheatfields of Kansas around the staff school at Leavenworth."[44] To many Army leaders it appeared that the Marines suddenly felt themselves equal to the United States Army.

Although Congress had some sympathy with General Barnett's request, there was as expected opposition from the United States Army. While Congress itself felt that "There are today on the firing lines of France no better trained, no

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[42]Laurence Stallings, The Doughboys, The Story of the AEF, 1917-1918, Harper and Row, New York, 1963, pp. 32-33.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

braver, no more effective force than our own Marines now serving there"[45] it also felt that the need for more Marines in France should be supported by the commander of the American Expeditionary Force, General John J. Pershing.

General Pershing became the central military figure in the American participation in World War One. As such, he had an important bearing on the role of the Marine Corps in that war. He has been described numerous times. Considered an "obstinate man"[46] who remained dedicated to his goal that "He was going to build up an American army and lead it to victory,"[47] General Pershing was also known as "reasonable and open-minded."[48] All of these qualities were present in the development of the problem presented by Marines within his command. General Pershing kept the agreement that the Marine brigade would be treated exactly like any Army brigade, and that Marine officers would be used interchangeably. General Pershing completely refused, however, to agree to Commandant Barnett's

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[45]"Report of the Sub-Committee for Investigation of Conduct and Administration of Naval Affairs," Marine Corps Gazette, March 1918, pp. 76-78.

[46]Cyril Falls, The Great War, 1914-1918, Capricorn Books, New York, 1959, p. 262.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

proposal regarding a Marine Division in France.[49] Without General Pershing's agreement the War Department, which by this time no longer needed Marine manpower to fill its divisions, would not request more Marine units from Congress.[50] The question of a Marine Division with the American Expeditionary Force stalled under General Pershing's opposition and the lack of need for manpower by the War Department.

While the question of sending more marines to France continued to be argued in Washington, the German Army made its own power known. Launching massive offensives in March and April of 1918 again created panic among the European Allies and within Washington circles, although this panic did not transmit itself to American field forces. The War Department agreed late in March 1918 to accept another brigade of infantry from the Marine Corps for the Western Front. The 5th Marine Brigade was formed and sent to France. It

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[49]By contrast, Britain's Royal Marines formed a brigade of the Royal Navy Division which served on the Western Front. Additional artillery and anti-aircraft units were also made up of Royal Marines. The Royal Naval Division was throughout commanded by a Royal Marine Officer. In World War II a Royal Marine "light" Division was formed but broken up into several commando, artillery and anti-aircraft units. Much of the Royal Navy's small boat crews were Royal Marines, as well as the Mobile Naval Base Defense Organizations, which were similar to the U. S. Marine defense battalions of later years. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, The Marines Were There, The Story of the Royal Marines in the Second World War, Putnam, London, 1950.

[50]Adm. W.S. Benson, USN, to Maj. Gen. J. Biddle, USA, January 12, 1918, and Maj. Gen. J. Biddle, USA, to Adm. W.S. Benson, January 12, 1918, in File 14503, Correspondence of the Chief of Staff, Record Group 165, National Archives.

consisted of the 11th and 13th Marine Infantry Regiments and the 5th Machine Gun Battalion, with the Brigade commanded by Marine Brigadier General Eli K. Cole.[51] This unit was destined to spend the war in rear areas providing replacements for casualties in the 4th Marine Brigade and doing guard duty in the rear, for General Pershing had no intention of forming a Marine Division regardless of the number of Marines he was sent.[52] No Marine artillery units or specialists other than machine gunners were ever sent to France. Although Brigadier General Lejeune was sent to France by the Commandant, both to change General Pershing's mind and to command the hoped-for Marine Division, no other Marine Corps units went to France.

These high level negotiations went on far above the Marines in the 4th Brigade. Now assigned to the 2nd U. S. Infantry Division, they had been training under French and British instructors for months. The major item of interest to these Marines was the relief by General Pershing of their commander, Brigadier General Doyen, for illness. To replace the relieved Marine, General Pershing sent his own Chief of Staff, Army Brigadier General James G. Harbord. There was some resentment by the Marines that this relief had been engineered to place an army officer in command of the only

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[51]J. Robert Moskin, The Story of the U. S. Marine Corps, Paddington Press Ltd., New York, 1979, p. 138.

[52]Ibid., pp. 138-139.

Marine combat unit in France. Headquarters Marine Corps was alarmed by this action.

However, a closer look at General Pershing's handling of the entire American Expeditionary Force showed that he was ruthless with any officer who did not meet his exacting standards, whether it be for physical or emotional reasons. Marine Brigadier Doyen was relieved just as General Pershing relieved many army officers for similar reasons, including one he considered too fat.[53] As shortly proved to be the case, by placing General Harbord in command the Marines would presently take on more significant duties.

"At 4:30 a.m. on March 21, 1918, the sudden crash of some four thousand German guns heralded the breaking of a storm which, in grandeur of scale, of awe, and of destruction, surpasses any other in the World War. By nightfall a German flood had inundated forty miles of the British front; a week later it had reached a depth of nearly forty miles, and was almost lapping the outskirts of Amiens; and in the ensuing weeks the Allied cause itself was almost submerged."[54]

In this crisis atmosphere the 4th Marine Brigade was thrust into action. General Pershing, grudgingly conceding

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[53]This army officer, in an example of General Pershing's "open-mindedness" was later restored to command and served with distinction.

[54]Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, The Real War, 1914-1918, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1930, p. 387.

the need of the Allies, offered his entire combat-ready force to assist in repelling the German attacks. Included amongst this force was the 2nd Infantry Division. This unit was rushed to the French sector at Chateau-Thierry and placed behind exhausted French units. Retreating French units passed through the Division, adding a new legend to the Marine Corps rhetoric when Marine Captain Lloyd Williams replied to a French officer's advice to withdraw with the now immortal phrase "Retreat Hell! We just got here."[55] It was no idle boast. When the Germans followed the French across the open wheatfields in front of the Marine and Army positions, they were thrown back. The German attacks, intended in this area as a diversion only, presently ceased.

After waiting a few days to be sure the Germans had finished their attacks, the French command ordered the 2nd Division to take the offensive. They were to seize the ground to their immediate front, which included a woods known to the French as the Bois de Belleau. The month-long battle of Belleau Wood would be the prime action for which the Marines of World War One would be remembered.[56] Casualties were high

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[55]Brigadier General Logan Feland, "Retreat Hell!," Marine Corps Gazette, September 1921, pp. 289-291. Like the phrase "Lafayette, We are here," this has been attributed to several authors, but General Feland settles the matter. Captain Williams was killed at Belleau Wood.

[56]In addition to Belleau Wood, the Marine Brigade also fought at Soissons, Saint Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne and Mont Blanc. Simmons, op. cit., pp. 86-93.

and progress slow. The general inexperience of American units in trench warfare clearly showed, as did the gallantry and brash courage of the Marines. In one particularly difficult day's battle in Belleau Wood the Marines suffered over one thousand casualties, more than the entire Corps had accumulated in its entire previous history.[57]

There now occurred another of the incidents in Marine Corps history which, though arising by coincidence, changed the course of that history. General Pershing had agreed back in 1917 that the Marine Brigade could be cited in newspapers as Marines. He refused permission for correspondents to name any other units for security reasons. With the first American offensive action taking place in Belleau Wood and with the Marine Brigade a major part[58] of that action, newspaper accounts began appearing citing the Marines as the victorious American force.

There also appeared a graphic account of the battle written by newspaper correspondent Floyd Gibbons. This account, which praised the Marines to the exclusion of Army

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[57]See Robert B. Asprey, At Belleau Wood, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1965. Also James G. Harbord, The American Army in France, Little, Brown, Boston, 1916, pp. 275-300, and "Diary of the Fourth Brigade, Marine Corps, AEF, May 30, 1918 to June 30, 1918" in Fourth Brigade File, Reference Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps.

[58]The Third Infantry Brigade also fought in Belleau Wood, and the entire 3rd Infantry Division was involved at Chateau Thierry.

units involved, probably should not have passed General Pershing's censors except for the fact that Correspondent Gibbons had been severely wounded in the attack and was reported to be dying. A sympathetic censor passed the story and the Marine Corps had the greatest publicity break of the century.[59] After a brief flurry of inquiries which determined no Marine Corps culpability, General Pershing's headquarters let the matter drop, but not without some lingering distaste for the combination of the press and the Marine Corps.[60]

The battle of Belleau Wood exhausted the 4th Brigade and General Harbord insisted upon their withdrawal and replenishment. By the end of the battle General Harbord had become an "honorary Marine" and was as fondly respected as any Marine officer.[61] General Harbord's reward from the

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[59]Lindsay, op. cit., pp. 31-33, Asprey, op. cit., pp. 201-211 and 227-273. See also Floyd Gibbons, And They Thought We Wouldn't Fight, George H. Doran, New York, 1918. See Associated Press bulletins of June 6 and 7, 1918 reprinted in Marine Corps Gazette, June 1918, pp. 158-167.

[60]The only similar episode to receive wide publicity was the famous "lost battalion" episode involving units of the 77th Infantry Division. This unit, a reinforced battalion of the New York National Army Division, spent several days surrounded and under attack by superior German forces. The unit's stand and eventual relief made newspapers nationwide, but in accordance with General Pershing's dictum, no units or individuals were publicly identified until war's end.

[61]Stallings, op. cit., pp. 101-113.

Army was command of the 2nd Infantry Division and promotion to Major General. Marine Colonel Wendel C. Neville moved up from regimental command to brigade headquarters.

While the 4th Brigade in France was making headlines there were other Marine units performing worldwide. All naval stations, domestic as well as foreign, were manned by Marines and the Marine Legation Guards were maintained as always. Marines continued to serve as occupation forces in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba. All ships' guards maintained and expanded in accordance with the increase in the navy.[62]

There were innovations in all the services during the war. The Marine Corps was no exception. Marine aviator Cunningham, now a Major, had expanded his force from 5 officers and 30 enlisted men[63] to 34 officers and 330 enlisted men by war's end. Arriving late October 1918, to the war, the primary purpose of the force, that of bombing enemy naval vessels, had long since been accomplished by the British and French. Even the submarine menace had been largely suppressed. The Marines did, however, get to show their skills in

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[62]McClellan, op. cit., pp. 17-20.

[63]Some of these enlisted men were pilots, the Marine Corps maintaining enlisted pilots from inception until 1973. See Midshipman Michael F. Belcher, USMC, "The Flying Sergeants," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, February 1982, pp. 73-76.

bombing military targets in support of ground operations. By the Armistice they had flown fourteen missions, dropped 27,000 pounds of bombs and had shot down perhaps a dozen enemy planes.[64]

The most obvious and drastic innovation in the Marine Corps during the war years was the introduction of Women Marines. Using the reserve status recently conferred by Congress, the Marine Corps recruited women into its ranks beginning in August 1918. These Women Marines, following the Navy's lead, were enlisted for clerical duties, although they were also required to learn military parade, drill and courtesy. Although many male Marines scoffed at this addition to their Corps, the general population accepted with good grace the new members. A total of 305 Women Marines, designated Marine Reserves (Female) served during the war years.[65]

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[64]Major General Cmdt. to CNO, "Organization of Land and Aero Squadron," July 27, 1917, Capt. A.A. Cunningham to Maj. Gen. Cmdt., October 10, 1917, 1st Aviation Force File, Reference Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps. See also Lieutenant Colonel E.C. Johnson and Graham Cosmas, A Short History of Marine Aviation, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, 1976, and Robert Sherrod, History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II, Combat Forces Press, Washington, 1952, pp. 5-19. The Marines in aviation flew in support of British and French troops, never their American comrades. There is a disagreement about the number of enemy aircraft shot down by Marines.

[65]Reserve Officers of Public Affairs Unit 4-1, The Marine Corps Reserve: A History, Division of Reserve, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1966.

"Recruiting officers were instructed to enroll only women of excellent character, neat appearance, and with business and office experience."[66] The Marine Corps' greatest need was for stenographers, typists and bookkeepers but any female with a background of business or correspondence work was acceptable.[67] The Women Marines, or "Marinettes," were permitted to advance to the grade of sergeant with satisfactory service, and several reached this level. There were no Women Marine officers during the First World War. Most Women Marines served at Headquarters, Marine Corps in Washington but a few were assigned to recruiting stations at major American cities.[68]

The part of the Marine Corps under which the Women Marines came, the Marine Corps Reserve, was the other great innovation of the war years. "On 6 April 1917, when Congress declared a state of war between the United States and the Imperial German Government, the entire Marine Corps Reserve was just 3 commissioned officers and 32 enlisted men. In addition, the Marine Corps Branch of the National Naval Volunteers had 24 officers and 928 enlisted men."[69]

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[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid. See also Captain Linda L. Hewitt, USMCR, Women Marines in World War I, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1966.

[69]Ibid., p. 9.

The reserve aspect of the Corps grew enormously during the war, so much so that the question of exact numbers is still in dispute, since many reservists were not so identified. At the very least the end of the war saw over six thousand reserve Marines on duty. In addition to the ground forces at home and abroad, reserve Marines served in the aviation effort as pilots and mechanics. They served not only with Major Cunningham's 1st Aviation Section, but with Army units as well. Marine Reserve Second Lieutenant Kenneth P. Culbert was in action as early as 15 May 1918 when he was cited for gallantry in action with Army aero units in France.[70] The entire Marine Corps reserve profited greatly from its contribution to the parent organization's effort in World War I.

The Marine Corps had at the end of the war displayed many important qualities for which it had been previously criticized. It had fielded and maintained, with Army assistance, a substantial combat infantry force. This force, after displaying inexperience common to all American units, became one of the most successful combat forces in the American Expeditionary Force. The Marine Corps had added a strong reserve component to its organization and had experimented with the use of women to replace men at clerical duties, following the Navy's lead. It had also added the

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[70]Ibid., p. 14-15.

important element of aviation to its structure.

Its performance in France had unquestionably enhanced the Marine Corps' position with the American public and Congress. The Marines had not been permitted their own Division, but in nearly all other respects they had proven themselves a viable military force for all contingencies. And, as usual, they had made some more emenies, notably some Army leaders resentful over Marine Corps publicity coups.[71]

It should not be assumed that the results of the First World War were entirely beneficial to the Marine Corps. It did nothing, for example, to provide a unique mission for the Marines or to prove the concept of the Advanced Base Force. Many Army leaders were now displeased with the Corps for its infringement on Army roles in France. Clearly the Marine Corps still faced several organizational difficulties ahead.

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[71]Certain traditions established in the First World War remained while others disappeared. The "Marinettes" were quickly phased out, not to return until World War Two. They have since been known only as Women Marines or "WM's." The Star and Indian Head shoulder patch of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division still appear on the unit placques of the 6th Marine Regiment, see "The Star and Indian Head Insignia," Fortitudine, Newsletter of the Marine Corps Historical Program, Spring 1980, p. 11. Marines in motion pictures also started in World War One, to both commercial and professional audiences. See "Marines in the Movies," Fortitudine, Newsletter of the Marine Corps Historical Program, Winter 1977-78, pp. 10-11. The Marine Corps Reserve continued in existence to the present day, now consisting of the entire 4th Marine Division and 4th Marine Air Wing, plus supporting units.

CHAPTER IV

Emergence of a Mission

The second decade of the twentieth century, and particularly the First World War, had firmly established the United States Marine Corps in the American military framework. Following the precedents set in prior decades, the Corps had made itself known internationally. Using its now established skill in organizational politics, public relations, and combat skills the Marine Corps established itself firmly as a member, albeit junior, of the defense team.

Severe problems remained. The Marine Corps had still not proven itself unique to any mission beyond the now dated Executive Order 969. The United States Army grew increasingly resentful over the role of the Marines in the First World War. The size and organization of the Corps remained undetermined and a matter of controversy. While the danger from the Navy appeared past, new problems had arisen which required immediate attention. Fortunately the Marine Corps, and particularly its leadership, was especially competent to handle these problems as the third decade began.

With the end of the war on November 11, 1918 the role of the 4th Brigade, U. S. Marines changed to occupation troops. The brigade, with the 2nd Infantry Division, occupied German territory until July 1919 when the Marines were shipped home and the brigade was disbanded at the new Marine Corps base

near Washington, D.C. at Quantico, Virginia. "During the war the strength of the Corps had gone to about 76,000. Some 32,000 had served in France. There had been 11,366 casualties of whom 2,459 were killed or missing in action. Only 25 Marines were taken prisoner."[1] Those who survived, especially the career officers, had gained experience and knowledge about modern warfare not otherwise available to an organization designed for the guarding of ships and bases.

Another result of the First World War was the rise of Japan in the Pacific. The United States Navy, concerned about this new threat, began to plan to counter this new possible danger by strengthening the fleet in the Pacific.[2] The Marine Corps, defender of advanced naval bases, immediately became concerned in this planning. The development of the advanced base force was to be continued and intensified insofar as the resources of the Marine Corps would permit. The usual postwar Congressional budget cuts did not help matters, but planning proceeded. Commandant Barnett was instructed by the Chief of Naval Operations to establish an expeditionary organization on each coast, prepared to seize

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[1]Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC, (ret.), The United States Marines: The First Two Hundred Years, 1775-1975, The Viking Press, New York, 1976, pp. 85-93.

[2]See William R. Braisted, The United States Navy in the Pacific, 1909-1922, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1971, pp. 409-453.

or defend naval bases, with priority on the Pacific area of operation.[3]

Having come through the First World War and already preparing for the next, the Marine Corps now was to have a new leader. Commandant George Barnett had been in office since 1914 and had led the Marine Corps thru its greatest test. His wife, the former Lelia Mantague, had established a reputation as the "Mother of Marines" for her concern over the welfare of the enlisted Marines in her husband's command. Married to the future Commandant in 1908 after the death of her first husband, Mrs. Barnett had always been eager to advance her husband's career. Accepted members of New York, Philadelphia and Washington society, the Barnetts had many important social and political attachments. There was in 1920 every reason to believe that an extension of General Barnett's term as Commandant of the Marine Corps was only a matter of form.[4] Nevertheless on 30 June 1920, General John A. Lejeune relieved General Barnett of the commandancy of the Marine Corps.

The background of the relief sheds light on the status

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[3]Chief of Naval Operations R. E. Coontz to Maj. Gen. Cmdt., "Function of Marine Corps in War Plans," January 28, 1920, File 221-2 (1920) Secretary of the Navy/Chief of Naval Operations Confidential Correspondence, Record Group 80, National Archives.

[4]"Mrs. George Barnett-Mother of Marines," Fortitudine, Newsletter of the Marine Corps Historical Program, Winter 1979-80, pp. 8-10.

of the Corps at the end of the First World War. Both men were Naval Academy graduates. Both had political connections in Congress. Each had contributed in large measure to the betterment of their organization. Yet Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels determined that the Marine Corps was to have a new Commandant and that Commandant would be General Lejeune.

Commandant Barnett had served during the most crucial period in Marine Corps history, excepting only the first decade of the twentieth century. He had expanded the Corps from 10,000 men to over 75,000 by war's end. He had instituted organizational changes such as the Marine Corps Reserve, Marine aviation, and Women Marines. Under his commandancy the advanced base force doctrine had progressed at an accelerated pace. He was largely responsible for the role of the Marine Corps in the First World War. His wife was an asset to the Corps and career of the Commandant. Certainly no Commandant since the Civil War had been of such importance to the development of the Marine Corps as an organization.[5]

General John A. Lejeune was another popular and respected officer of Marines. He had graduated from Annapolis, like General Barnett, and had attended the right service schools,

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[5]Lieutenant Colonel Merrill L. Bartlett, USMC, "Ouster of a Commandant," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November 1980, pp. 60-65.

served in the right places, and had emerged from the First World War as the leading General Officer. He had contributed in large measure to the development of the advanced base force doctrine. He was the only Marine officer to command an Army infantry division in the war.[6] Described as a "short, dark French Creole, his great-grandfather having migrated with Evangeline's people from Nova Scotia to the Bayou Teche country of Louisiana,"[7] he had been considered too young for the position of Marine Corps Commandant when General Barnett was appointed in 1913. The experience of the First World War had certainly aged him and elevated him in rank to be again considered in 1920.[8]

There was no requirement that the Commandant of the Marine Corps be replaced. Extensions had been granted in the past and would be again in the future. The true problem lay in the clash of personalities between General Barnett and Secretary of the Navy Daniels. For all his efforts in behalf of his Corps, General Barnett had offended the Secretary in his eagerness to expand and improve his domain. Secretary Daniels was particularly offended by General Barnett's

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[6]General Lejeune commanded the 2nd Infantry Division, including the 4th Brigade, U. S. Marines, during the last three months of the war.

[7]Laurence Stallings, The Doughboys: The Story of the AEF, 1917-1918, Harper and Row, New York, 1963, p. 247.

[8]LtCol. Merrill L. Bartlett, op. cit.

efforts to get Marine combat units to France. He did not like the idea that U. S. Navy warships had to carry them there after the U. S. Army refused them space. Nor did the lobbying for a Marine division in France agree with Secretary Daniels. An additional point of dispute was Mrs. Barnett, who was not above using her social connections, including one with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, to intervene on behalf of the Marine Corps and her own husband's personal advancement. Indeed, the last straw was apparently Commandant Barnett's request that the rank of the Commandant be raised to that of Lieutenant General.[9] The Secretary of the Navy, who had considered relieving General Barnett during the war, now felt that he had no longer need of Commandant Barnett. An additional factor governing the timing of the replacement was the new status of Secretary Daniels' favorite candidate to replace Commandant Barnett, General Lejeune.[10]

General Barnett also had critics within his own Corps. A powerful leader of a faction of Marine Corps officers opposed to General Barnett's continued commandancy was Lieutenant Colonel Smedley Butler. He had also been considered

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[9]Ibid. The Senate version of the 1918 Naval Appropriations Bill contained a provision to make the Marine Corps Commandant a Lieutenant General and other staff rank increases.

[10]Ibid.

for the commandancy in 1913 but was passed over because of a court-martial resulting from his actions against guerilla forces in the Philippine pacification.[11] He strongly opposed General Barnett not only for his missing the commandancy but also because the Commandant had never seen real combat action. Lieutenant Colonel Butler opposed staff officers in general. To him Commandant Barnett was a "rocking chair warrior" and "swivel chair hero"[12] who never deserved the position of Commandant, despite any other qualities he may have exhibited. And unfortunately for Commandant Barnett, Lieutenant Colonel Butler's father was a member of the House of Representatives.

The first time that General Lejeune learned of the possibility of his relieving Commandant Barnett came when he brought the 2nd U. S. Infantry Division home from Europe. "Lejeune was summoned to Daniels' office. After an exchange of pleasantries, Daniels told him in strictest confidence that he planned to oust Barnett; Lejeune would be the new Commandant."[13] Events planned by Secretary Daniels were delayed, however, by the illness of President Woodrow Wilson. Since the Commandant of the Marine Corps serves at the pleasure of the President of the United States, the President's consent was required before any relief could be affected.

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[11]Butler had executed alleged "spies" without trial.

[12]Quoted in Bartlett, op. cit., p. 62.

[13]Ibid., p. 63.

Apparently the Secretary of the Navy did not want to burden the ailing President with an internal problem whose roots were so murky.

Although the Secretary's plans were supposed to be classified, the Secretary himself had advised both Congressman Butler and his Brigadier General son that he was indeed planning to accommodate them. Apparently there were at least two arguments between General Butler and General Lejeune as to the propriety of what was being planned.[14] In the end General Lejeune was convinced that he could not prevent Commandant Barnett's relief and that it was in the best interests of the Marine Corps that he be the next Commandant. But the drama was not yet over.

Having permitted Commandant Barnett to inspect installations on the West Coast, Secretary Daniels in June of 1920 proceeded with the relief. He sent a note to the home of the Commandant on 18 June 1920 announcing the relief and requesting what new duty the former Commandant wished. To the surprise of everyone concerned, General Barnett requested to remain on active duty. At the same time, he and his wife began to marshall their political allies to forestall the relief. Secretary Daniels, annoyed that General Barnett did not gracefully fade away, denied his request for a new assignment at

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[14]Ibid. General Butler finally threatened General Lejeune with the fact that he was not the only General available.

the nearest Marine base to Washington, at Quantico, and instead exiled him to the post of Commander of the Department of the Pacific in San Francisco. This was as far from Washington as the Secretary could send a man of General Barnett's rank.[15]

Secretary Daniels would have additional problems in effecting the appointment of General Lejeune to the post of Marine Corps Commandant. Chief amongst these was the change of administration from Democratic to Republican and the accompanying freeze of all appointments. General Barnett's political supporters elected not to actively intervene in the matter to avoid being accused of interfering in the military's internal matters. Mrs. Barnett's connections also failed her despite several uncomfortable moments for Secretary Daniels. As a parting gesture the Barnetts gave a farewell party for their friends in Washington. "Not a stick of furniture remained, and the walls were bare except for a framed photograph of Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels inscribed affectionately to Barnett. None of the guests missed the point."[16]

Eventually confirmed by the new administration, Commandant Lejeune still felt uneasy about the nature of his rise to Commandant. He proposed to the new Secretary of the Navy, Edwin H. Denby, that now Brigadier General Barnett be promoted

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p. 64.

to one of the few Major General slots available to Marine officers. Secretary Denby agreed. Shortly after his promotion, General Barnett retired from the Marine Corps at the mandatory retirement age in 1923.[17] By that time Commandant Lejeune had already begun to leave his mark upon the Marine Corps.

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Commandant Lejeune was a major figure in the development of the United States Marine Corps in this century. Born 10 January 1867 he had first encountered Marines when the USS Alliance visited Natchez, Mississippi, where he was attending boarding school at age 13. Young Lejeune was particularly impressed with the uniform of the Marine officer in charge of the ship's guard. First Lieutenant George F. Elliott.[18] Later, while a sophmore at Louisiana State University he applied for the Naval Academy and was accepted for the class of 1888. As with all Annapolis graduates, Cadet Lejeune was given a nickname based on the poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow entitled "Evangeline." Known to his associates as "Gabe" Lejeune, he graduated with his class on 8 June 1888.[19]

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Commandant of the Marine Corps 1903-1910. See previous chapter.

[19]Colonel James W. Hammond, Jr., "Lejeune of the Naval Service," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, November 1981, pp. 42-46.

At that time passed midshipmen served for two years aboard ship, then were classified as to their assignments for their future career. Midshipman Lejeune served first aboard the USS Mohican off California, then transferred to the USS Vandalia operating in the Pacific. During this cruise Midshipman Lejeune first commanded Marines at a gun crew protecting American rights in Samoa. Later he served aboard the USS Adams, also in the Pacific. Midshipman Lejeune returned with his class to Annapolis in March 1890 for final examinations and determination on a specific career. He had decided upon the Marine Corps. Midshipman Lejeune "arrived at my choice chiefly by a process of elimination. First of all, I promptly eliminated the Engineer Corps, because I had no bent for mechanical engineering. The choice between the Line of the Navy and the Marine Corps was much more difficult . . . I liked going to sea occasionally but not for the greater part of my life; I preferred the military to the naval side of my profession; . . . and most important of all, I realized that whatever ability I had lay in the direction of handling and controlling men rather than . . . handling and controlling machinery. From my own standpoint, therefore, the Marine Corps seemed to possess more advantages and less disadvantages than did the other branches of the naval service; and I made my decision accordingly."[20]

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[20]Ibid., p. 43.

It would not be quite that simple for the future Commandant. Because he was thirteenth in his class of thirty-five graduates his superiors considered him too outstanding for the Marines, who usually received the very bottom of the class. Ordered to the Engineer Corps, Ensign Lejeune protested. His personal protests did no good and Ensign Lejeune appealed to Senators Randall Gibson and William Eaton Chandler. It so happened that one of Ensign Lejeune's classmates was seeking a commission in the Engineer Corps which had been refused because of poor eyesight. Senator Chandler had been approached by this officer as well. A tentative agreement was made whereby places would be exchanged, Ensign Lejeune to the Marines and his associate taking his place in the Engineer Corps of the Navy. The agreement was presented to Secretary of the Navy Benjamin F. Tracy, who ordered it put through. Ensign Lejeune became a Lieutenant of Marines.

Lieutenant Lejeune was ordered to duty aboard the USS Cincinnati. Before reporting for duty, the young Lieutenant married Miss Ellie Murdaugh in October of 1895. This was the period when the role of Marines aboard ship was still in hot dispute and when Lieutenant Lejeune reported aboard the Cincinnati he was advised by the ship's executive officer that the duties of the Marines aboard this ship were to be reduced. "Lejeune appealed to the commanding officer for increased duties. His request was granted. This action was the first

manifestation of Lejeune's life-long belief that the Navy needed marines - troops familiar with shipboard life and naval ways, able to conduct land operations in support of naval campaigns. Conversely, marines could not exist without a Navy. He was to build a new Marine Corps on that simple fact."[21]

The Cincinnati was in South America at the time of the Spanish-American War and took no active part in hostilities. Nevertheless, Lieutenant Lejeune benefited by the results of the expansion of the Marine Corps after the war in an accelerated promotion. Routine duties followed. He served on boards in Washington, recruiting duty in New England, command of marine barracks in Pensacola and as Major Lejeune was appointed in 1903 to staff duties in Washington at Headquarters, Marine Corps. His duties were as an aide to the Adjutant and Inspector. Assignment as commanding officer of the Marine Corps' mobile battalion followed. This unit was stationed aboard a navy transport ready for expeditionary duty.

It was Major Lejeune's first large command and he worked hard to develop the unit into an effective force. In this he was hampered by the commanding officer of the transport who, in this time of adversity for the Marines, saw no need to inconvience himself or his ship for the Marines.

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[21]Ibid., p. 43.

After transferring to the USS Dixie where a more cooperative skipper cleared away any objections to Major Lejeune's requests, the battalion practiced amphibious techniques which their commander already believed was their primary mission.[22] Later his unit served in Panama under Brigadier General Commandant George F. Elliott.

By 1909 after twenty years as a Marine officer and with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Lejeune was called to the office of Commandant George Elliott to discuss his future assignment. Obviously Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune was by this time highly thought of by his superior. Commandant Elliott offered to send Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune to the Army War College, a distinct honor for any Marine officer. Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune attended the 1909 class at the Army War College. This was to prove a most fortuitous assignment for the future commander of the Army's 2nd Division.[23]

As always, Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune worked hard to learn and assimilate all he could at the War College. He made sharp impressions on his fellows at the college, among them future Army Chief of Staff Marlin Craig who assured him "If you make good at the college, as I am sure you will, your future will be assured."[24] Indeed, Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune

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[22]Ibid. At this time a battalion command was one of the largest available for Marine officers.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Stallings, op. cit., p. 249.

did so well that his diploma read: "In case of a National Emergency, this officer should be given a division."[25] Upon graduation he was given command of the marine barracks at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Upon the voluntary retirement of Commandant William P. Biddle, Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune was unexpectedly invited to interview for the position of Commandant. He was one of four candidates considered by Secretary of the Navy Daniels. As we have seen, Colonel George Barnett was appointed the 12th Commandant of the Marine Corps. One candidate was eliminated because of a divorce, and Lieutenant Colonel Smedley Butler passed due to a record of a court-martial. Only Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune was passed for something that could be corrected, his age. While he was increasing his age to acceptable levels, Lieutenant Colonel Lejeune continued to excel in his profession.[26]

As previously shown, Colonel Lejeune was a major figure in the early development of the amphibious force. In addition to commanding the mobile battalion he served as regimental commander of one of the Advanced Base Force Regiments and was a senior officer during the amphibious exercises in 1913 and 1914. Here he first worked with General Barnett whom he was

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[25]Ibid., p. 250.

[26]Hammond, op. cit. See also Bartlett, "Ouster of a Commandant," op. cit.

later to succeed as Commandant. The newly appointed Commandant Barnett was impressed enough with Colonel Lejeune that he offered him the post of Assistant to the Commandant, a position it will be recalled which was established to facilitate the development of the advanced base force concept. Colonel Lejeune declined the offer however, feeling that events in Mexico were more in his interest. When Marine units, including an advanced base force regiment commanded by Colonel Lejeune, arrived in Mexico he briefly commanded the brigade of Marines until relieved by a senior Marine officer.[27]

"On 2 January 1915, Lejeune became Assistant Commandant. In his first six months, with the Commandant away, Lejeune was called upon by the Navy to provide an expeditionary force for immediate service in Haiti. A fine point in amphibious command relationships was solved for future reference. Colonel Waller was ready to command all troops of the brigade ashore. Rear Admiral William B. Caperton desired that control of each unit ashore be vested in the commanding officer of the ship at anchor off that town. Lejeune appealed to Caperton's fleet superior, Admiral William Benson, that the principle of unity of command ashore be maintained. Benson overruled Caperton."[28] During his tenure as Assistant Commandant,

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[27]Ibid. Colonel Lejeune was relieved by Colonel Littleton W. T. (Tony) Waller. Colonel Lejeune reverted to command of the 2nd Marine Regiment.

[28]Ibid., p. 44. The precedent set here, though disputed over the succeeding years (especially the early years of World War II), remains in force.

Colonel Lejeune also did much in the way of personnel increases, working with Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt, to implement additional staffing as ordered by Commandant Barnett. This expansion just prior to the First World War also brought a promotion for Colonel Lejeune, to the rank of Brigadier General, also requested by the Commandant. General Lejeune was also instrumental in acquiring and developing new all-Marine bases at San Diego, California and Quantico, Virginia.[29]

Clearly General Lejeune was an outstanding Marine officer even before the First World War. Having already been considered for Commandant, and still in a highly visible and important post within the Marine Corps, there was every reason to expect continued excellence in the new General's career. If there was any doubt, however faint, in anyone's mind about his abilities, the performance of General Lejeune during the First World War dispelled them completely.

When General Barnett was lobbying for a Marine Division in France over Army objections he ordered a second Marine Brigade to France both to put pressure on General Pershing and to have them immediately available if a Marine Division was approved. Although this was one of the incidents which Secretary Daniels would later hold against Commandant Barnett, it worked out well for General Lejeune. It was he who was

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[29]Ibid. Previously Marines had shared Navy installations.

ordered to command the second brigade sent to France. Although the new brigade never saw action as a unit and no Marine Division was formed, General Lejeune impressed General Pershing enough so that he was ordered to command the Army's 64th Brigade of the 32nd Division.[30] Shortly after the battle at Soissons, when General Harbord moved up to Division command, Brigadier General Lejeune was ordered to the command of the 4th Brigade, U. S. Marines. When ordered later from command of the 2nd Division, General Harbord recommended to General Pershing that Brigadier General Lejeune replace him in command of that unit. This necessitated a promotion to Major General, a task swiftly accomplished since both Army and Marines were in agreement.

Major General Lejeune led the Army's 2nd Division for the remaining months of the war and the occupation. Shortly after his return to the United States began the events which led to his appointment as Commandant. Although not sure of confirmation Commandant Lejeune began immediately to make his ideas felt throughout the Marine Corps.[31]

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Any new accession to the command of a large military

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[30]Ibid., pp. 44-45. The 32nd Infantry Division was a National Guard unit from the states of Michigan and Wisconsin. As previously noted, other Marine officers were assigned to Army units, but General Lejeune was the only one to reach divisional command. Very few reached even brigade command.

[31]Ibid.

organization requires that at first the lesser housekeeping chores be settled. Repairs were being made at the residence of the Marine Corps Commandant in Washington so Commandant and Mrs. Lejeune continued "to reside at Quantico until the necessary repairs to the Commandant's house at Marine Barracks, Washington, were made."[32] The Marine Corps was still in the process of recovering from the First World War and Commandant Lejeune took stock of his needs to restore the Corps to stability. When he became Commandant "demobilization had been completed and the entire Corps was suffering from the consequent let-down which invariably follows the return of a military organization to peace-time conditions. Nearly all of the splendid men who had enlisted for the period of the emergency had resumed their civil occupations; many wartime officers had separated themselves from the service; wholesale demotions in rank had taken place; recruiting was slow; the number of enlisted men being only about 15,000, which was altogether insufficient to perform the important duties assigned to the Corps; there was much unrest among the officers owing to their uncertain status; and the lavish expenditures incident to war were to a great extent still prevalent."[33]

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[32]Major General John A. Lejeune, The Reminiscences of a Marine, Dorrance and Company, Philadelphia, 1930, p. 460.

[33]Ibid., p. 461.

As a first step the recruiting service was given priority and given additional personnel. This effort, with the events of the recent war still fresh in everyone's mind, was so successful that within six months the recruiting service was reduced to normal proportions. Next on Commandant Lejeune's agenda was reduction in spending. Civilian employees and positions were reduced as was the amount of Marines assigned clerical duties. Tables of organization were issued fixing the personnel strengths of all Marine detachments and units. Construction and repair at Quantico was assigned to enlisted men and some outlying Marine bases were centralized. The 5th and 6th Marine Regiments were stationed at Quantico as an expeditionary force in readiness. Each regiment was brought up to strength.

Commandant Lejeune also sought to solidify the Corps internally. Using his campaign for economy and efficiency as the basis he set out to "obtain the enthusiastic and loyal cooperation of the officers and men. This was obtained, not only by means of official communications and orders and by personal correspondence and personal interviews, but also by frequent conferences which were attended by the officers on duty at Headquarters who occupied key positions there, and by commanding officers. At these conferences, policies and plans were discussed and suggestions were invited; and detailed reports of the conferences were distributed to all

posts and detachments and written suggestions from the officers were requested. By these and by other methods, harmony of action was obtained and the Corps stood together as a unit."[34]

Having brought the Corps together again Commandant Lejeune began applying his principles in earnest. The graduate of Annapolis and the Army War College was a great believer in educating the military officer. He ordered the establishment of Officer Schools at Quantico and Philadelphia, the first for advanced training and the latter for Second Lieutenants new to the Marine Corps. General Lejeune also sent Marine officers to both the Army and Naval War Colleges, to the "Army School of the Line at Fort Leavenworth, and to the Army technical schools."[35]

Schooling was not the end of the Commandant's interest, however. Application of knowledge in the form of intense and continuous training was another basic principle of the Commandant's plan. The relatively new base at Quantico became headquarters for the training and planning on the new advanced base force. Training was conducted year after year both inland and at the familiar island of Culebra in conjuction with naval forces. All of these concepts were closely watched by

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[34]Ibid., p. 462.

[35]Ibid., p. 463.

the Commandant and monitored by his staff.[36] Military bearing and appearance were also important and stressed accordingly. Commandant Lejeune felt that "It is proverbial that well dressed soldiers are usually well behaved soldiers. This thought led to the restoration to the Marine Corps of the blue uniform, to the successful endeavor to induce American manufacturers to produce a khaki cloth of high grade both as to texture and dye, and to improvements in the design and the cut of all articles of uniform."[37]

Nor did the Commandant neglect the enlisted man's education. A correspondence school was created for them under the Commandant's auspices.[38] Athletics were included to build bodies as well as minds. Marines of all ranks were reminded constantly that the Marine when stationed abroad was to be on his best behavior. Stress was also laid on the fact that the Marine Corps existed by the will of the American people and that behavior at home must be exemplary. Nor did the new Commandant forget his early experience at sea. He made every effort "to convince officers and men of the soundness of the doctrine that the future of the Corps would be

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[36]Commandant Lejeune personally sent memoranda congratulating officers upon the completion of courses. See The Major General Commandant to Captain Benjamin A. Moeller, USMC, 7 June 1924, in the personal papers collection of Major Benjamin A. Moeller, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

[37]Lejeune, op. cit., p. 464.

determined by their ability to serve efficiently with the Fleet in the conduct of the shore operations which are essential to the successful prosecution of naval campaigns in war, and which are essential to the successful conduct of the foreign policy of our country in peace."[39]

While the Commandant was busily reorganizing and reshaping the Corps the President and Senate agreed on his confirmation as Commandant. Instrumental in this process was the new Secretary of the Navy, Edwin Denby, a former Marine who had served under Lejeune's command in France. Confirmation was announced 6 March 1921.[40]

General Lejeune knew that the Marine Corps had never been able to live for long on past glories. Planning for the future was another of his highest priorities. This centered in his own belief in the value to the nation and the Corps of the advanced base force.

Brigadier General Wendell Neville, late of the 4th Brigade, had been assigned a planning section to study the future role of the Marine Corps. Chief among his planners was a young troubled Marine officer, Lieutenant Colonel

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[39]Ibid., p. 465.

[40]In addition to General Lejeune, four other World War I Marines became Commandant; Wendell C. Neville (1929-30), Thomas Holcomb (1936-43), Clifton B. Cates (1948-51), and Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. (1952-55). Edward M. Coffman, The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I, Oxford University Press, New York, 1968, p. 221fn.

Earl H. "Pete" Ellis. Largely through the efforts and ideas of Colonel Ellis, the planning section submitted for the Commandant's review "Operation Plan 712, Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia" in mid-1921. Commandant Lejeune endorsed the plan on 23 July 1921[41] and it remained the basic strategic doctrine of the Marine Corps thru the Second World War. Colonel Ellis' ideas coincided nicely with the national emergency plans, especially the War Plan Orange 5, which envisaged war with Japan as did Operation Plan 712. The Marine Corps could not be later criticized of a "colossal blunder in high strategy"[42] by ignoring Japan's stated aggressive intentions.[43]

In February 1922, having settled into his new position and with all proceeding satisfactorily, Commandant Lejeune summarized the primary missions of the Marine Corps. These, he wrote, included "Marine detachments on board the vessels of the Fleet in full commission," and as "guards for navy yards, naval stations, ammunition depots, naval prisons, etc., at home and abroad." Also important were providing

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[41]Hammond, op. cit., p. 46.

[42]Samuel Eliot Morison, Strategy and Compromise: A Reappraisal of the Crucial Decisions Confronting the Allies in the Hazardous Years, 1940-1945, Atlantic, Little, Brown, Toronto, 1958, p. 66.

[43]Colonel Ellis became a Marine Corps legend, both for his farsightedness in Operation Plan 712 and his mysterious death in Japanese territory. He has been variously described as a genius and an alcoholic.

"garrisons for Haiti, Santo Domingo, Virgin Islands, Guam, Peking, Managua, etc." plus the necessary "detachments necessary for the recruiting service, for training recruits, and for administrative purposes."[44] But the chief duty that General Lejeune saw for the Marine Corps was that duty to "supply a mobile force to accompany the Fleet for operations on shore in support of the Fleet: This force should be of such size, organization, armament and equipment as may be required by the plan of naval operations. Also it should be further utilized in conjuction with Army operations on shore, when the active naval operations reach such a stage as to permit its temporary detachment from the Navy."[45] Clearly the new Commandant's main interest for the future of the Corps was with advanced base operations.

The recruiting, training and planning for the future was directed towards one goal. That was to preserve and improve the Marine Corps. General Lejeune, whose public statements announced that the Marine Corps was his hobby as well as his profession[46] was as concerned as any of his predecessors over the future. "Because of the pressure

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[44]Commandant Marine Corps to General Board, 11 February 1922, Subject: Future Policy for the Marine Corps as Influenced by the Conference on Limitation of Armament, Record Group 432, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Lejeune, op. cit., p. 473.

that was brought to bear on all departments, especially the War and Navy Departments, to reduce expenditures and personnel and to consolidate activities, there was grave danger that the Marine Corps, being the smaller and weaker vessel, would be crushed between the larger and stronger - the Army and the Navy."[47] Commandant Lejeune's "hobby" would keep him fully occupied during his nearly nine years as Commandant.

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General Lejeune's commandancy brought many changes at Headquarters, Marine Corps. The staff was modernized along the lines set by staffs of military organizations at home and abroad.[48] On 1 December 1920, Commandant Lejeune issued his first revision of the Marine Corps staff. Modeled after changes in the General Staff of the Army and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, among the major innovations in the change was the moving of the Aviation Section from the Director of Naval Aviation to Headquarters, Marine Corps. The Planning Section was expanded into a Division of Operations and Training, which was to have responsibility for trainings, operations, military education, military intelligence and aviation. The previously established Paymaster,

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[47]Ibid.

[48]See James E. Hewes, Jr., From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963, Center of Military History, Washington, D.C., 1975.

Quartermaster and Adjutant and Inspector Departments remained as before.

Later, on 14 November 1924, Commandant Lejeune instituted a War Plans Committee to report directly to the Commandant as a response to all the war planning being conducted by Army and Navy staffs. This same 1924 reorganization instituted the Personnel, Recruiting and Educational Sections at Headquarters, Marine Corps to handle "what had become an unmanageable burden of routine administration."[49]

Public relations also became one of General Lejeune's central concerns. He established on 3 September 1924, the position of Officer in Charge of Publicity at Headquarters. Later, in 1933 under Commandant Ben H. Fuller this would be expanded into a Publicity Section within the Headquarters staff and finally under Commandant Thomas Holcomb it would become the Division of Public Relations within the Office of the Commandant on 9 July 1941.[50] Originally designed under Commandant Lejeune to handle publicity for recruiting, by 1941 its duties included responsibility for "all public relations and publicity, included publicity for recruiting."[51]

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[49]Kenneth W. Condit, Major John J. Johnstone, USMC and Ella W. Nagle, A Brief History of Headquarters Marine Corps Staff Organization, Historical Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1971, p. 12.

[50]Ibid., p. 15.

[51]Ibid.

Under General Lejeune the Marine Corps Reserve also found a place in the staff structure. He was seriously concerned about the status of the Marine Corps Reserve from the beginning of his commandancy. Not only was the regular Marine Corps kept understrength by Congress but no effort was being made to maintain the Marine Corps Reserve at all. Numbers dwindled drastically. In fiscal 1922 there were no Marine Reserves on active status, even for training. Commandant Lejeune approached Congress and administration officials whenever possible to rectify this situation, for he remembered the value of the Marine Reserves of the 4th Brigade. When, on 28 February 1925,[52] Congress passed a bill authorizing all provisions for both a Naval and Marine Reserve, General Lejeune quickly established a Division of Reserve within Headquarters, Marine Corps, whose director had direct access to the Commandant on all matters pertaining to the Reserve. Although initially recruitment remained a problem, the Marine Corps Reserve, originally authorized by Congress in 1916, was finally in 1925, firmly established as a component of the U. S. Marine Corps.[53]

Although authorized a strength of over 27,000 men,

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[52]The Act became effective 1 July 1925. For details see Reserve Officers of Public Affairs Unit 4-1, The Marine Corps Reserve: A History, Division of Reserve, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1966, pp. 22-26.

[53]Ibid. See also Kenneth W. Condit, et al., op. cit., pp. 15-16.

Congress permitted the Corps to maintain only about 20,000 during the early twenties. This caused real concern at Headquarters about fulfilling all the missions assigned to the Corps, particularly the development of amphibious warfare.[54] Commandant Lejeune did not feel that the Corps could afford to neglect the progress in development of amphibious warfare and so the base at Quantico, in addition to many other duties, became the center for developing the Marine Corps concept of assault from the sea. All priorities on men and material were given here. The men of the 10th Marine Regiment (Artillery) were added to the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments for training and availability for expeditionary roles.[55] Despite occasional grumblings from within, the Marine Corps was to be the Navy's amphibious assault arm if Commandant Lejeune was in command.[56]

Under the Commandant's desire to establish an effective and essential expeditionary force, the Marine Corps did what it could to gain experience in all matters relating to possible future roles with the Navy. Marine officers who showed special aptitudes were sent to specialized Navy schools for

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[54]Commandant Lejeune ordered in 1923 that the term Expeditionary Force replace the former advanced base force. Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps, 1900-1970, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1973, p. 50.

[55]Ibid.

[56]There were still some Marine officers who did not want to have too much connection with the U. S. Navy.

special aptitudes were sent to specialized Navy schools for training. Two of the first were Major Holland M. Smith posted to the Navy War Plans Division and Colonel Ben H. Fuller posted to the Navy War College.[57] From the reports these and other officers made upon their return to Headquarters, the new Planning and Operations Division could and did make its own plans to coincide with those of the Navy's for future operations.

Training for all ranks also intensified, rising from only two hours devoted to landing operations in 1924 to over one hundred hours by 1927. Lessons learned from landing operations conducted with the Navy were incorporated into each new year's curriculum, both enlarging and correcting the previous year's studies.[58] The need for specialized equipment also became apparent, and development of those new machines began. Private contractors were approached to design what the Marines felt they would need to bring ashore against a

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[57]Col. A.T. Mason, Special Monograph on Amphibious Warfare, Command File, World War II, Operational Archives Branch, Naval History Division, pp. 4-15. See also Col. Ben H. Fuller to Maj. Gen. Cmdt., "Advanced Base Plans," August 1, 1921, File 2515, Headquarters, Marine Corps, General Correspondence, 1913-1938, Record Group 127, National Archives.

[58]See Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Amphibious Warfare Development in Britain and America From 1920-1940, Edgewood, Inc., Laurens, New York, 1983, pp. 85-126. See also this author's Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the U. S. Marine Corps, 1900-1970, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1973, pp. 43-48.

defended beach. Equipment of all kinds was tried and either accepted or rejected.[59] The various interruptions of other duties hindered but never halted the development of the Marine Corps' amphibious tactics.[60]

Under Commandant Lejeune's constant prodding, the years 1922-1925 were productive for the Marine Corps towards developing their specialization in advance base and in landing operations. In each of these years major fleet maneuvers which included amphibious landings took place. Many lessons were proved or disproved and much in the way of equipment was tested.[61] It was just as well that this occurred, for budgetary and other restrictions prevented any more major maneuvers until 1934. Yet so much had been accomplished under the demanding new Commandant that the three years of exercises was more than enough to keep Marine Corps planners

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[59]The British Royal Marines were facing the same problems at the same time on independent research. Their solutions to equipment problems were more far-reaching than the Americans. See Clifford, Amphibious Warfare Development in Britain and America From 1920-1940, pp. 30-85.

[60]During this period U. S. Marines were twice detailed to guard the U. S. mail and large numbers were sent to fight various guerilla movements in the jungles of Latin America. A Marine garrison at regimental strength was also maintained in China throughout this era.

[61]Clifford, Progress and Purpose, op. cit. and Amphibious Warfare Development, op. cit.

busy for the intervening years.[62]

In fact, so successful were these exercises that the Joint Board of the Army and Navy for the first time officially granted the Marine Corps a specific role in expeditionary forces. In 1927 the Board ordered the Marine Corps to "Provide and maintain forces for land operations in support of the fleet for the initial seizure of advanced bases and for such limited auxiliary land operations as are essential to the prosecution of the naval campaign."[63]

While the development of amphibious warfare was proceeding well within the Corps Commandant Lejeune was still working to preserve the Corps itself. Although no major crisis occurred it was a time of budget cuts and economy moves. Commandant Lejeune "fought constantly to maintain (the Marine Corps) organization, its functions and its semi-independent status; to prevent an undue reduction of its personnel; to secure sufficient appropriations to keep it in an efficient condition and to provide for housing, clothing and feeding its personnel properly; to retain its status as the Navy's expeditionary force in peace and war; to build up Marine Corps aviation as a vitally important element of the

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[62]Ibid. See also Alan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps, Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1980, pp. 319-344.

[63]Joint Board, Joint Action of the Army and Navy, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1927, p. 3.

expeditionary force; to erect at Quantico permanent buildings to replace the temporary war time structures; to recreate the Reserve as a constituent part of the war time strength of the Marine Corps; and to secure the enactment of a law providing for a modified form of promotion by selection, combined with an annual, automatic elimination of a certain percentage of non-selected officers."[64]

Commandant Lejeune quickly developed skills in the bureaucratic type of fighting in which he was now involved. He quickly made friends in both the administration and Congress saw to it that the Marine Corps' view on crucial issues was heard favorably. At the end of his tenure as Commandant all of his objectives had been accomplished except for officer selection and elimination.[65]

One example of the dexterity with which Commandant Lejeune handled his problems as Commandant was with one of the almost constant attempts to reduce the number of personnel within the Armed Forces during these decades. "In 1922, a much more serious situation confronted the Marine Corps. That was the year signalized by drastic reductions of personnel. The Army was reduced to 125,000 enlisted men, and the House Appropriations Committee had decided to make

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[64]Lejeune, op. cit., pp. 473-474.

[65]Ibid., p. 474.

allowance for only 65,000 enlisted men for the Navy."[66] As we have seen, this meant the Marine Corps would be reduced to eight percent of the Navy figure.

Commandant Lejeune had long been cultivating a professional relationship with Representative Paul H. Kelly, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Naval Appropriations. Due to testify before Congress, Commandant Lejeune "in response to Mr. Kelly's request, I called on him several hours before the hour fixed for our official appearance. He took me aside and told me that the Chairman, Mr. Madden, and the members of the Committee had decided to make material reductions in the enlisted personnel of all the services, but had such confidence in the Marine Corps that they would accept a proposal submitted by me for its reduction. He asked that I be prepared to submit the new estimates at the hearings."[67] As a result, the Marine Corps retained over 19,000 enlisted men instead of the 13,000 they would otherwise have been entitled.

Commandant Lejeune revitalized the Marine Corps and brought it fully into the scope of twentieth century warfare. Under his leadership it developed all the organizational skills needed to survive in the new world of what later came

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[66]Lejeune, op. cit., p. 475.

[67]Ibid., p. 476.

to be called a "military-industrial complex." In the past the Marine Corps had always had some influence with Congress and the administration in power. General Lejeune refined this relationship into a finely honed tool to be used only when necessity dictated, but then to be used with force. Similarly, he mended all fences with the United States Navy, even over some objections from some of his own officers, long enough in service to be unforgiving of the Navy for the days of now Rear Admiral William F. Fullam or Executive Order 969.

Equally important, General Lejeune saw to it that the Marine Corps had a reason to exist. The development of the expeditionary force concept, though not originating with him, provided his means of giving the Marine Corps of the Twentieth century a secure role for itself, effectively replacing older, obsolete roles, now maintained as much for traditions sake as anything else. The improvements in the staff, the organization and development of what is now the Marine Corps Schools, the study of advanced base warfare, and the development of close ties with the Navy and Congress were all to the credit of General Lejeune, and remain today as basic supports of continued Marine Corps success. Under his commandancy the Marine Corps Reserve and Marine aviation flourished from weak beginnings. Leadership, a major interest of General Lejeune, was also given assistance. Although he could not get his

appointment and elimination bill passed, he did open the Marine Corps officer program to civilian colleges under the Reserve Officers Training Program.[68] Clearly, the Marine Corps owes much to its thirteenth Commandant.

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By 1929 General Lejeune was tired. In service over fifty years, counting Annapolis, he "had determined, when I was reappointed Commandant by President Coolidge, that I would not accept another reappointment"[69] and announced that decision shortly before his latest term expired. The Major General Commandant requested that Brigadier General Wendell C. Neville be named his successor. Such was the popularity of General Lejeune that his request was immediately granted and General Neville succeeded to the leadership of the Marine Corps.[70]

Major General Commandant Neville had little time to make any impression on the development of the Marine Corps, dying in office on 8 July 1930.[71] His successor, Major General Ben H. Fuller was content to continue in a status

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[68]Several future Commandants entered the Corps this way, including Randolph McCall Pate (1956-1959), Virginia Military Institute, David M. Shoup (1960-1963), DePauw University, and Leonard F. Chapman (1968-1971), University of Florida.

[69]Lejeune, op. cit., p. 483.

[70]Ibid.

[71]General Neville did make important contributions prior to being Commandant.

quo situation until reaching retirement age in 1934.

His successor, Commandant John H. Russell, was a believer in General Lejeune's theories and stressed the development of the expeditionary force formula for the Marine Corps. Under Commandant Russell, active training with the Navy was resumed for the first time since 1925. Commandant Russell was also successful in instituting selection boards for officer promotions, something that Commandant Lejeune had desired strongly.[72] Retired at the mandatory age limit after only two years as Commandant, General Russell had revived flagging interest in General Lejeune's ideas. He left the Corps with many benefits, including a close relationship with the political administration in office, that of Franklin D. Roosevelt. President and Commandant had known each other personally since 1915 when then Assistant Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt had been given responsibility for Marine Corps affairs and Commandant Russell aided him. Commandant Russell continued to aid the now President by having his son, James, appointed a Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel from civilian life and made spokesman for the Marine Corps. Among the returns on this favor was the establishment of the Fleet

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[72]Maj. Gen. Cmdt. J.H. Russell to M.H. McIntyre, November 5, 1936, File OF 18-E, Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Marine Force.[73]

The Fleet Marine Force was the epitome of what the Corps had been struggling for since World War One. It was the especially designated part of the Marine Corps for participation in the seizure by naval forces of advanced bases. It was the new primary function of the Marine Corps. All other parts of the Marine Corps were supportive to it. In the years since Commandant Lejeune had directed all Corps efforts towards amphibious warfare, a manual had been developed by his staff and their successors entitled Tentative Landing Operations Manual. Developed over years of study and military exercises, and later of war experience, the Manual "is perhaps the most important contribution to military science the Marine Corps made to date in the 20th century; certainly it is one of the landmarks in its history."[74] With the Fleet Marine Force in existence, albeit understrength and lacking essential training, and the Manual published and available, the major goals of the amphibious warfare prophets were within reach.

Training with the Navy continued regularly after 1934, each new exercise adding to the Manual, to the improvement

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[73]Headquarters, Marine Corps, Memorandum for Lieutenant Colonel J. F. Roosevelt, USMCR, November 12, 1937, File OF 18-E, Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. See also Millet, op. cit., p. 335.

[74]Clifford, Progress and Purpose, op. cit., p. 48.

of equipment, and increasing the confidence of the planners. Units were always understrength, averaging in 1934 only two platoons to an infantry company instead of three and only two squads to a platoon rather than three. Unit designations changed that year as well, the Marine Corps finally adapting the Army's alphabetical unit designations to replace the numerical designations always used before.[75]

Certainly one of the crucial factors in the development of the Marine Corps during the thirties and early forties was the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the Presidency. Long a friend of the Corps, and with a taste for the soldiering side of life, President Roosevelt always had an ear available to hear Marine Corps problems and requests. President Roosevelt picked the next Commandant from among the junior Brigadier Generals of the Marine Corps, selecting General Thomas Holcomb. Probably inherent in this choice was the technique the new President had of making selections which would make the selectee feel obligated to the President. General Holcomb, a member of the Marine Corps rifle team and with a distinguished record in France, was to be equal to the challenge.

President Roosevelt was interested in all things military and naval. "Roosevelt not only assumed the role of

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[75]Brigadier General Robert Hugh Williams, U. S. Marine Corps (ret.), The Old Corps: A Portrait of the U. S. Marine Corps Between the Wars, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 1982, pp. 37-57.

Commander in Chief, but he embraced it and lived it."[76] Nor was this just a political move to bring him closer to the voters. For President Roosevelt "the feeling of involvement in the military role probably went much deeper; partly because that role was so crucial for a nation at war and partly because he felt deep deprivation at not having seen active service in World War I. He wanted to be a soldier, a professional."[77] Because of this President's attitude, General Holcomb's Marine Corps would often benefit.

President Roosevelt liked the Navy and the Marine Corps. Familiar with both organizations since the early days of World War I, he expressed his fondness in concrete ways. Ground forces equipment became more readily available. Marine and Naval aviation benefited as well, since the President was interested in this aspect of military tactics as well. Large numbers of aircraft were made available to both Navy and Marines, creating a strain on officer procurement for the Marine Corps.[78] Secretary of the Navy Forrestal recommended to the President that a Marine Corps reserve program, modeled exactly as a recently approved Navy

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[76]James MacGregor Burns, Roosevelt: The Soldier of Freedom, Harcourt Brace Javanovich, Inc., New York, 1970, p. 491.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid.

plan, be instituted. This request was given immediate approval.[79] President Roosevelt was also quick to approve an expansion of the Marine Corps several times as he felt the need arise.[80]

President Roosevelt also used the Corps for his own interests. He employed Captain Evans F. Carlson as an undercover personal observer of the Communist efforts in China. We have seen how the President arranged the commissioning of his son James into the Marine Corps.[81] All factors together made the Marine Corps important to the President with resulting benefits to the Corps. The President and the Commandant communicated frequently, often on mundane matters with the President calling General Holcomb "Dear Tommy."[82] Thus as the nation's and the Marine Corps' greatest test of arms began the close relationship between President and Corps worked to everyone's advantage.

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[79]Millett, Semper Fidelis, op. cit., p. 345.

[80]James Forrestal, Memorandum for the President, September 5, 1940, File OF 18-E, Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York. The President replied "O.K., but not to be paid out of the President's Fund. F. D. R."

[81]Michael Blankfort, The Big Yankee: The Life of Carlson of the Raiders, Little, Brown and Co., Boston, 1947. As Colonel Carlson he later commanded a Marine Raider Battalion with James Roosevelt as his battalion executive officer.

[82]See for example, Hon. Summer Welles, Under Secretary of State, 2-9-40, Meeting Notes, and Memo for the President, Nov. 28, 1940, both File OF 18-E, Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

The decision to wage war in Europe first and leave the Pacific Theatre in a holding action is as well known along with the rise of the Navy as the chief instrument of defense in the Pacific Theatre. This left the Army's main force destined for Europe. The Navy gradually took the offensive from the Japanese and, using the Marine Corps, began to fight its way back across the Pacific as envisaged years before in War Plan Orange 5 and Marine Colonel Ellis' Operation Plan 712. By war's end in August 1945 the United States Marine Corps numbered some 458,000 officers, men and women. Blacks were now Marines, originally formed in segregated units, later integrated with white Marines. The Marine Corps made up five percent of the total American armed forces, suffering ten percent of the total casualties.[83] Six Marine divisions existed. Each division had an attached air wing and additional Marine Corps squadrons flew off Navy carriers and Army airfields. Individual Marine Corps pilots filled in Navy squadrons. The Marine Corps was in its most triumphant moment.[84]

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[83]Social Science Research Council, Bureau of the Census, The Statistical History of the United States From Colonial Times to the Present, Fairfield Publishers, Stamford, Conn., 1965. See also "USMC Casualties and Strengths," Historical Reference Memo, Reserve Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, March 15, 1976.

[84]The Royal Marines, in contrast, expanded from 12,000 to 80,000 officers and men during the Second World War. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, The Marines Were There: The Story of the Royal Marines in the Second World War, Putnam, London, 1950, p. 206.

From the most glorious moment for the Marine Corps there would quickly come the usual demobilization and the return to peacetime activities. For the Marine Corps this time, however, there would arise the most dangerous threat to their continued existence since the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. There was a movement now for economy and consolidation, favored strongly by the new President, Harry S. Truman. As this newest drama unfolded, it appeared that economy and consolidation required the dissolution of the United States Marine Corps. Fresh from the battlefields of the Pacific, the Marines went back to the old familiar battlefields of Washington, D. C.

CHAPTER V

Mission Accomplished

The legacy of the Marine Corps' effort between the wars was the establishment of the Fleet Marine Force and the publication of the Tentative Landing Operations Manual, which "is perhaps the most important contribution to military science the Marine Corps had made to date in the 20th century; certainly it is one of the landmarks in its history."[1] The Corps had taken an indefinite mission fostered upon it by the Navy's General Board and progressed with it into a clear role for itself. Under Commandant Lejeune the term "advanced base force" was changed to Marine Corps Expeditionary Force and under Major General Commandant John H. Russell to the present name, Fleet Marine Force.

Commandant Russell was also successful in instituting selection boards for officer promotions, something Commandant Lejeune had desired strongly.[2] Most important, General Russell was instrumental in obtaining the issuance of General

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[1]Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the United States Marine Corps 1900-1970, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1973, p. 48.

[2]Maj. Gen. Cmdt. J. H. Russell to M. H. McIntyre, November 5, 1936, File OF 18-E, Roosevelt Papers, Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York.

Order number 241. This Navy-wide instruction from Secretary of the Navy Claude A. Swanson, issued 7 December 1933, created the Fleet Marine Force. The Fleet Marine Force was what, for the past several decades, the Marine Corps had been looking for. It was specifically designated to be an expeditionary force in readiness for use by the Fleet as needed. The Commandant, Marine Corps was specifically designated by this order to have this force available and free from all other duties which might interfere with its readiness for fleet actions. The Marine Corps finally had an official Naval mission by order of the Navy itself.

The roles of the General Board and the Marine Corps had by now become reversed from the original positions of two decades ago. After the Spanish-American War the General Board had insisted that the Marine Corps study advanced base operations and the Marines had been less than enthusiastic. Twenty years later it was Marine Corps interest in amphibious warfare which initiated continued study while the General Board, interested but no longer the prime motivater, observed. The Marines' need for a mission had supplanted the General Board as the motivating factor.

Throughout the interwar years the interest and resources expended in the development of this amphibious warfare role continued to grow within the Corps. Commandant Lejeune had formally agreed with the General Board that as often as possible Marine exercises with the Fleet should include practice in making amphibious assaults by Marine units. These landings refined over the years the techniques of assaulting strong enemy positions from the sea. Beaches at Culebra, Guantanamo and Catalina Island were the major areas used for these exercises. Equipment such as heavy artillery and bulldozers were landed to see what means were necessary to get them ashore to support Marines in making the assault.

As more time and effort were committed to the study of the means and methods for making a successful assault against a hostile shore, more difficulties arose as well. Commandant Ben H. Fuller would later write that "while the exercises of 1922 were defensive in nature, they brought out the difficulties of attack against hostile opposition"[3] and that in turn led to the view that in addition "the

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[3]Commandant Marine Corps to Secretary of the Navy, 8 September 1931, USMC, Record Group 432, Naval History Division, Washington, D.C.

Marine Corps should be preparing for offensive landing operations."[4]

In addition to enlisting the cooperation of the General Board and the operating units of the Navy, Commandant Lejeune had been unsparing of his own organization in allocating resources to the development of the amphibious techniques. During 1923-1924, for example, over 3,300 Marines were assigned to active participation in practice assaults in the Panama Canal Zone. Many mistakes were made, here and elsewhere. Units were landed in the wrong areas, transports were improperly loaded, naval pre-assault bombardment was improperly targeted or lacked sufficient strength. Many other lesser deficiencies were brought to light during this period.

The 1924 landings saw the prototypes of the amphibious assault craft of the Second World War. British and American commercial design boats were studied for adaptability to military needs. Military observers abroad, particularly in China, sent back descriptions and sometimes photographs of landing craft used by other nations, particularly the Japanese. The design of a suitable assault landing craft became

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[4]Ibid.

a major goal of Commandant Lejeune's commandancy, and became with General Lejeune's prodding, the same with Admiral Richard E. Coontz, Commander in Chief, U. S. Fleet and later Chief of Naval Operations.[5]

In cooperation with the Navy, the Marines soon refined the question of the needs for landing craft into three basic catagories. The first was the need to get troops ashore, therefore a troop landing craft was required. The second identified need was a landing craft for heavy equipment, trucks, artillery, and the like to be lifted ashore quickly. The final need was for heavy fire support brought ashore as soon as possible to assist the landing forces, and this was early on determined to be a need for a type of amphibian tank.[6]

Trials were made repeatedly during the 1930's by asking for bidders on the types of boats needed. All of these designs were found wanting in one respect or another. In late 1936, however, a New Orleans boat builder named Andrew

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[5]Commandant Marine Corps to Brigadier General Eli K. Cole, 14 December 1923, History and Museums Division, Research Section, Washington, D.C. An interesting note is that one of these observers of Japanese efforts in China was Lieutenant Victor H. Krulak who, as a Lieutenant General, commanded the Marine Corps' effort in Vietnam.

[6]Clifford, op. cit., p. 48.

Higgins again offered a design that had previously in 1926, been declined by the Marines. Its most attractive feature was its ability to beach itself and retract quickly without difficulty. This had been developed by Mr. Higgins for use by oil drillers and trappers along the Louisiana and Mississippi coasts.[7] The Higgins boat, formerly called the Eureka, was again not accepted by the Navy-Marine Corps examiners due to lack of funds. However the Higgins boat had made the best impression on the examining officers and, in 1937, "Commander Ralph S. McDowell, who was responsible for landing craft development in the Bureau of Construction and Repair, wrote to Higgins inviting him to visit the Navy Department for further discussion of his boat."[8]

Many additional steps were necessary before in late 1939, the Navy and Marine Corps accepted the Higgins boat as their standard landing craft, but progress then became comparatively swift and by 1940 procurement was well under way. By 1941, based on Japanese designs, Higgins was working on an improved version of his own design.[9] This would

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[7]Ibid., p. 50.

[8]Ibid., p. 50.

[9]Ibid., p. 51.

develop into the LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel) which was the mainstay of amphibious operations in both the Pacific and European theatre of operations during World War Two.

With the need for both personnel and vehicle landing craft satisfied by Andrew Higgins, the need for an amphibian tank remained. Although both Britain and Japan had experimented with this concept, neither design was acceptable to the Marines. Again it was an American commercial design which was adapted for military use which prevailed. A tracked amphibian craft designed by Mr. Donald Roebling for use in the Florida everglades was tested, modified several times, and eventually found acceptable as an amphibian armoured vehicle.[10] Operating as a separate battalion attached to assault divisions for operations, this type of craft would be credited with saving the American effort at several Second World War battles, notably Tarawa. They were not available at Normandy, although they were requested by a Corps Commander who had experience with them in the Pacific. It has been suggested that Omaha beach would have been less severe had one or more battalions of

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[10]Ibid., pp. 54-55.

LVT's (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) been available.[11]

It has already been noted that the epitome of the Marine Corps' achievements during the twenties and thirties was the publication of the various issues of the Landing Manual. The original was entitled Tentative Landing Operations Manual, 1935. In 1937 it appeared as Landing Operations Doctrine, U. S. Navy. That same year it was re-published as Fleet Training Publication Number 167. Yet another version appeared the following year under the title Landing Operations Doctrine, U. S. Navy, 1938. It was also to be published under U. S. Army auspices a few years later, during the Second World War. Regardless of the title or by whom it was published, the basic work was that of the Marine Corps officers at the Marine Corps Schools during the late twenties and early thirties.

When Commandant Lejeune established the Marine Corps Schools his main concern was to improve officer education within the Corps. His consolidation and development of the

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[11]Corps Commander Charles Cortlett, who had been at Guadalcanal, suggested the use of LVT's, but because his was not an assault Corps no action was taken. There is, of course, no way to prove whether the presence of LVT's would have speeded up progress, and reduced casualties, at Omaha beach. However, at Tarawa, only units landed by LVT's were intact, others were decimated by fire from shore.

Marine Corps Schools was as critical to the development of the amphibious warfare mission as anything else during the period. At that time there was no other school or opportunity for professional officers to study the techniques of amphibious warfare. Army and Navy schools taught every other mode of warfare, but only at the Marine Corps Schools were amphibious warfare assaults studied as a formal part of the curriculum. During the commandancy of General Lejeune the study of amphibious warfare techniques was constantly refined by using studies and reports from the various exercises and equipment boards prepared by Marines in the field. "By the end of 1939, out of a total of 1,092 hours in instruction, 455 hours, or 42 percent, pertained to some aspect of landing operations."[12]

Despite normal turnover in personnel at the Schools, the study of amphibious warfare remained constant. In addition to reviewing reports from the field studies of past operations, successes like the German assault on offshore islands near Riga, in 1917, and failures, like the classic Gallipolli assault by the British and French. From

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[12]Colonel Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Amphibious Warfare Development in Britain and America from 1920-1940, Edgewood, Inc., Laurens, New York, 1983, p. 96.

these combined sources information was gathered and studied. In 1933, under Commandant Russell, orders were issued that temporarily cancelled classes at the school and directed that all efforts be aimed at the creation of a landing force manual. Since most of the staff and students were already involved in analyzing amphibious warfare compliance was immediate.

Organizing themselves as quickly as possible, the staff and students broke down the problem into what needed to be in the manual, where to get the information, and how to prepare it. Committees and sub-committees handled individual problems. By 1935, about one year after getting the order, the first draft was in publication. The manual addressed itself to command procedures within the landing force. A Navy flag officer was to command, with the actual landing force of Marines commanded by a Marine officer. The naval support groups, including fire support, transport, air support, and covering force, were naval responsibilities. Exact command relationships were spelled out, with overall responsibility vested in the amphibious force commander. Naval gunfire was to replace artillery, as was air support. Control and types of ammunition were only some of the problems addressed in this area.

Aircraft also had a clear role, largely as a supplement to the naval gunfire support. This concept would eventually develop into the Marine close air support role, one which it was anticipated might on occasion entirely supplant naval gunfire support. The ship to shore movement was identified as the most critical phase of amphibious assault. Problems of communication, supply and reinforcement were all clearly addressed. Logistics also had an important place in the manual. The loading of transports, for example, had to be ruled by the needs of the landing force, not the requirements of space aboard ship. Items needed first by the landing force had to be loaded last, thus being easily available when called for by the troops. All aspects, even how to load and unload the troops, were included. As we have seen, continuous training exercises after the first edition of the manual led to continuous revision. The role of air support, for example, continually increased. The procurement of new equipment also required revisions. One of the least appreciated, but most important, aspects of the manual was its own adaptability to changing needs.

The establishment by the Marine Corps of the Landing Operations Manual and the development of assault landing

craft like the LVT and LCVP in conjunction with the Navy established firmly the scope of the Marines' mission to carry out amphibious warfare. It further established that the United States Marine Corps was the force in the American military which was designed specifically to accomplish amphibious assaults.

CHAPTER VI

To the Bitter End

The United States Marine Corps "emerged from World War II with an institutionalized sense of self-importance that affected its highest generals and its greenest privates."[1] It had grown to six divisions, two amphibious corps with all requisite support units, and an aviation force of four land-based aircraft wings, four carrier groups, making a total of more than one hundred thousand aviation personnel. As an organization it could reasonably expect to have ensured its continued existence in the military establishment of the United States. Yet before the war had ended, the Marines were again challenged about their continued existence.

The United States Marine Corps has many battle honours to its credit in its two hundred year history. Still, one of its fiercest and crucial battles is little known, even within the Corps itself. This battle, which was a continuation and a culmination of the battle for the Marine Corps' existence has been widely ignored except for the most sweeping generalizations or incomplete accounts of a truly intense struggle. No medals or campaign ribbons were awarded for this battle which engaged all the American armed forces.

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[1]Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps, Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc. New York, 1980, p. 439.

Many men in all the services risked everything for their service. And of all the blows and counterblows delivered in this battle the most punishing were directed at the Marine Corps.

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President Harry S. Truman was not a friend of the Marine Corps, but neither was he its enemy. President Truman was a veteran of the American contribution to the defeat of Germany in World War I. He served with the artillery of an American Infantry Division which saw considerable action on the Western Front. President Truman ended the war as a Captain in command of an artillery battery. His total military experience was limited to those months in France but like many "he had a lifelong love affair with things military and had a romantic view of soldiering."[2] His contacts with the military increased as his career progressed. As a Senator he served as Chairman of a committee which looked into the military's management of their resources and while little in the way of dishonesty was found Senator Truman came away with a low regard for the ability of the military leaders to use resources allocated to them in the best way possible. Waste and mismanagement disturbed him and he determined that the political leadership should more closely watch the management of the armed forces.

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[2]Paolo E. Coletta, The United States Navy and Defense Unification, 1947-1953, University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1981, pp. 17-18.

Although the Truman Senatorial Committee had a considerable effect on the armed forces, the Truman Presidential administration had an even greater effect. At a time when the military forces of the nation had for two hundred and fifty years been functioning as two separate and distinct organizations which cooperated when necessary and when they were just about to conclude their most successful undertaking, Vice-Presidential candidate Truman would declare himself "an ardent champion of a single authority over everything that pertains to American safety."[3] Not much initial attention was given to these remarks since the figure of President Franklin D. Roosevelt overshadowed the opinions of his potential Vice-President. Yet Senator Truman was in deadly earnest about his views on the future of the armed forces. As vice-president his opinions were still of little importance, but upon President Roosevelt's death in April 1945, they became for all the armed forces a matter of extremely serious concern.

Unexpectedly in the position where his own opinions on all facets of American life were now predominant, President Truman did not neglect the military. "From the time I became President I made it plain, in my relations with the military, that I was interested in the details of actual administration as much as in the larger objectives. I had

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[3]Ibid.

implicit faith in (General George C.) Marshall, but I took the position that the President, as the Commander in Chief, had to know everything that was going on. I had just enough experience to know that if you are not careful the military will hedge you in."[4] With this attitude President Truman set out, when his other priorities permitted, to establish a unified armed force for the national defense. "As President he sought three major military reforms: universal military training, desegregation, and a radical reorganization to achieve the unification of the armed forces. With respect to the last, he would reorganize the "antiquated" and "inadequate" military establishment so as to get the utmost in fighting capacity from each dollar. He alluded to the fact that "the Navy had its own little Army, that talks Navy, and is known as the Marine Corps," and that "it also has an air force of its own, and the Army, in turn, has its own little Navy, both freshwater and salt."[5] These were mismanagement and waste as viewed by the Presient. His solution was to cut the duplication of effort, the several organizations performing what to him looked like the same function, and thus to improve efficiency and reduce costs.

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[4]Harry S. Truman, Year of Decisions: Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, The New American Library, Inc., New York, 1955, Volume I, (Time Inc.), p. 105. It is interesting that President Truman viewed General Marshall as the central military figure to the exclusion of Navy and other leaders.

[5]Coletta, op. cit.

Several plans were being developed even as the Second World War ended. Each of the services put forth one or more plans which they felt would meet the goals of unification while at the same time protecting their own professional interests. For the new President the solution desired was "one civilian secretary, three assistant secretaries for the ground, sea and air forces, and a general staff that would avoid political and economic issues and concentrate on directing the strategic and tactical operations of troops."[6] These proposals met instant opposition from several sources, most vocal of which was the Navy. If put into effect as described, claimed the Navy, the Army could dominate the new department by sheer size alone. The Navy further was to object at the lack of consideration given to their more technical branch which required more intimate knowledge of subjects the other services neither knew nor cared about. There was general opposition to the general staff idea as being modeled on the Prussian and German General Staffs.

"Realizing that his plan would destroy military morale and contained explosive political ingredients, he had then conciliated the Navy, which opposed any merger in which it would lose control of naval air and the Marine Corps, by agreeing to three military departments, abandoning his proposal for a single chief of staff, and recommending that

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[6]Ibid.

the Navy retain its carrier-and-water based aviation and the Marine Corps."[7] While this compromise offered by the administration made it only slightly more plausible to discuss the implementation of the service unification, the problems were nowhere near solution. While all the services could agree in principle to unification along the lines set down by President Truman, the details became the heart of the problem. Each service expected the other to make the necessary adjustments while maintaining its own pet operations. Nor did criticism diminish with the compromise. "The mere words of the unification law did not evoke the desired vital transformation in the hearts of military men, for most of them although intensely patriotic, were steeped in long-cherished traditions of their services."[8]

The struggle over implementation of the unification of the services would cause problems for all the services and their subsidiaries but for the Navy and the Marine Corps the struggle would go on for years and be at times a serious threat to their status as viable military forces. The basic problem, insofar as the Marine Corps was concerned, was that although President Truman had permitted them to continue to exist within the Navy, no provisions were made as to roles, strengths, or assignments. And in this apparent oversight

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[7]Ibid., p. 18.

[8]Ibid.

were to lie some serious problems.

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"Caught in the complex political currents that characterized the unification of the United States Armed Forces, the Marine Corps found itself pitted against a strong War Department-executive branch-Congressional coalition that wanted to strip the Corps of its wartime amphibious assault mission, transfer Marine aviation to the newly independent Air Force, and so constrain Marine combat functions that the Corps could have been a 'force in readiness' only if its opponents had been Pacific Islanders."[9] The Army used its most prestigious spokesmen, including Generals Dwight D. Eisenhower and Omar Bradley. These men argued that the advent of nuclear war made obsolete the concept of amphibious assault and that the reason for the existence of the Marine Corps no longer existed. With the central mission of the Marine Corps obsolete and gone, the Marine Corps should follow suit, although they were careful never to be so blunt about it. Generally, the critics of the Marine Corps spoke of reducing the Corps in size with no aviation or armour capabilities. In clearer terms, the Corps was to be returned

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[9]Millett, op. cit., pp. 456-457. It should be noted, however, that the 80th Congress contained eleven former Marines including Senators C. Wayland Brooks and Joseph R. McCarthy. Information provided by Research Section, Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

to its role at the turn of the century as a naval police force. At the same time the Army and Air Force united to deprive the Navy of its aviation arm.

The Navy and Marine Corps were not prepared to accept these views of either naval aviation or the role of the Marines. They too brought out their most influential spokesmen, and defended their views with vigor. Secretary of the Navy James V. Forrestal and Fleet Admiral Chester A. Nimitz led the Navy's fight to preserve naval aviation while Commandant and Medal of Honor winner General Alexander A. Vandegrift led the Marine Corps defense. The initial plan for implementation, submitted by the War Department, was drawn up under the leadership of Army General J. Lawton Collins, and thus became known as the "Collins' Plan." This plan was reviewed by a select staff at Marine Corps Headquarters. Commandant Vandegrift found that "Calling for 'unification now' the plan proposed a single Secretary of Defense and a single armed forces Chief of Staff. In my mind its various tenets spelled an attempt to replace the traditional authority of Congress in military affairs with that of the President and the proposed Secretary of Defense. Other provisions would have curtailed the role and missions of the Marine Corps to make it little more than an auxiliary police force. In my mind this would represent the first step in the

total abolition of the Corps."[10] Now convinced that they were fighting for the continued existence of the Marine Corps the staff at headquarters quickly organized for their response.

The initial response was for Commandant Vandegrift, at Secretary Forrestal's request, to draw up a reply to the Collins' plan. This paper was soon to form the basis for the Commandant's testimony before the Senate Military Affairs Committee. He stressed the fact that there was no clear definition of what unification was to accomplish. Pointing out also that none of the services had had sufficient time to closely study the proposal, he stated that since "it may well be that conventional methods of warfare will occupy a secondary role altogether"[11] until such time as future needs could be more factually predicted, no drastic steps should be taken which may later be regretted. Acknowledging faults in all the services, Commandant Vandegrift concluded with opposition to centralizing such power into the hands of officers representing "only one shade of political opinion."[12] This speech to the Committee made its point and support continued to some to the Corps from the Navy and legislative sources.

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[10]A. A. Vandegrift, Once a Marine: The Memoirs of General A. A. Vandegrift, USMC, W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., New York, 1964, p. 301.

[11]Ibid., p. 305.

[12]Ibid.

But the Marines did not dare let their defense become a passive one. Supported by Brigadier General Gerald C. Thomas and Brigadier General Merritt A. Edson, both of whom served with General Vandegrift on Guadalcanal, the Commandant established the position for the Marine Corps with respect to the unification issue. "The air-ground FMF must be preserved as the amphibious element of the Navy's 'naval campaign' fleet organization; the Marine Corps must be recognized as an independent service; and defense decision-making must not be centralized under either a single, powerful civilian secretary or a single chief of all the armed forces."[13] The active defense of these issues was entrusted to two groups of Marine officers under Generals Edson and Thomas. These groups, one under each Brigadier, were the men who contributed the core of the preservation battle.

Early in 1946 it became apparent to Commandant Vandegrift and his advisors that the fight for Marine Corps survival in the unification controversy was a most serious one. His initial testimony on Capitol Hill had been but one opening battle in a continuing campaign. "Realizing that I was still facing a fight to prevent being 'run over,' I now formed a special advisory group headed by Jerry Thomas and Merrit Edson. This group included such Colonels as Bill Twining

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[13]Millett, op. cit., p. 458. General Edson was also a Medal of Honor recipient.

and Brute Krulak and such Lieutenant Colonels as Schatzek, Murray, Shaw, Heinl and Hittle. In the months ahead these officers worked long, hard hours in helping me pursue what sometimes seemed an uphill fight."[14] They were to do much more than that.

With the initial rebuff of the Collins' plan the Truman administration decided to hand the Joint Chiefs of staff the responsibility for providing a reasonable alternative acceptable to all concerned. The Joint Chiefs had conducted hearings from which the original Collins' plan had emerged and still based its conclusions on these papers, known as JCS Series 1478. General Edson had obtained an unauthorized copy of these papers and they were instrumental in preparing Commandant Vandegrift for his testimony before Congress. Sympathetic naval officers also risked their careers to aid the Marines. Admiral Arthur W. Radford was assigned as the Navy's negotiator during the hearings. Although assigned to assist the negotiations, Admiral Radford agreed to testify

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[14]Vandegrift, op. cit., p. 322. He is referring to Colonel (later Lieutenant General) Merrill B. Twining, Colonel (later Lieutenant General and commander of Marines in Vietnam) Victor H. Krulak, Lieutenant Colonels Dewolf Schatzel, Raymond L. Murray, Samuel R. Shaw, Robert D. Heinl, Jr., and James D. Hittle. Also assigned to this board were Colonel Edward G. Dyer, Lieutenant Colonel Edward H. Hurst and Major Jonas M. Platt. For details see the Oral History transcript of Lt. Col. (Brigadier General, Ret.) James D. Hittle, Marine Corps Oral History Collection, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps. Access to this transcript is restricted at General Hittle's request.

with Commandant Vandegrift against the Collins' plan. He also provided additional information concerning the negotiations to the Marine Corps staff officers preparing the Marine Corps defense against the Collins' plan. This example of the leadership risking their careers for the good of their service was not lost on the members of the study groups. They, or at least several of them would also soon be risking their professional lives to save their Corps.[15]

As before, the Marine Corps did not rest their defense on past performance alone. Convinced by their own studies that nuclear war would change drastically the character of the future amphibious assault, the Commandant had ordered a new study into the future role of the Marine Corps, much the same as was done after World War I. Colonel Merrill B. Twining and Colonel E. Colston Dyer led the research tean. The conclusion, that amphibious assault was still practical with major modifications, was made a part of the Marine Corps defense posture. The study concluded that widely dispersed assault forces concentrating at the last possible minute and using vertical assault and covert insertion could effectively seize an advanced naval base.[16] The Marine Corps

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[15]Hittle, op. cit.

[16]Special Board, Marine Corps Schools, "Summary of Findings and Recommendations Respecting Future Amphibious Operations," Dec. 16, 1946, Commandant Marine Corps to the Chief Naval Operations Correspondence File, Reference Section, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps. See also the Oral History Transcripts of Brigadier General E. C. Dyer, pp. 190-200, and Brig. General Samuel Robert Shaw, pp. 120-123, both Marine Corps Oral History Collection, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

turned to the helicopter as its primary assault vehicle.

The Marines were fortunate that both the Naval leadership and the civilian leadership of the Navy Department were willing and in some cases eager to assist the Marines in their struggle. The Navy, trying hard to preserve its own air arm, had reasons of its own for disputing the plans put forth under Army domination. This often put them in the position of defending the Marine right to have an aviation force along with their own. Once it became apparent that the Naval Air arm would be preserved, however, the support for the Marine Aviation diminished noticably.

Secretary Forrestal did not like the attitude of the War Department with regard to its plans for the Navy. Strongly in favor of retaining naval aviation and the Marine Corps, Secretary Forrestal instituted some study groups of his own. One of his assistants did some research on the attitude of the assumed next Army Chief of Staff, Dwight D. Eisenhower. General Eisenhower had recommended clearly, in JCS Series 1478, that the Marines need be no larger than what was immediately needed and in any case no Marine unit should be larger than a regiment. They were to be used only in shore operations "in which the Navy alone is interested"[17] and that all future operations could be handled by the Army.

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[17]Walter Millis, (ed.), The Forrestal Diaries, The Viking Press, New York, 1951, (The New York Herald Tribune, Inc.), p. 224.

Secretary Forrestal continued to oppose the Army's unification plan. For a time the issue was deadlocked, with neither of the three services prepared to compromise enough to satisfy any of the others.

The deadlock which delayed matters was in large measure due to the lack of coordination between the Army and new Air Force. Each wanted to assume a supreme role in its own sphere. This meant for the Army reducing or eliminating the Marine Corps, and for the Air Force the reducing or eliminating of Naval and Marine Corps aviation. Their lack of coordination and obvious techniques hampered their efforts and aided the Navy and Marines. As early as 1943, for example, Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King had warned Marine Corps Commandant Holcomb that the Marines had better strengthen their ties within the Navy to prevent the Army Air Force from acting against the Marines best interests. "King had been alerted to this threat by his senior Marine Advisor, Colonel Oman T. Pfeiffer, a member of the JCS committee studying how to avoid duplication and waste. The Army Air Force representatives were manipulating the committee to justify establishing a separate air force, which would swallow up naval air; and, as Pfeiffer later said, 'another very apparent aim was to eliminate or reduce the Marine Corps to impotence."[18]

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[18]Thomas B. Buell, Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1980, p. 340.

Yet three years later the Army and Air Force still could not work closely enough to achieve their joint goals.

The Marines took immediate advantage of their enemies' inadequacies. Using tried and true techniques, methods used by Marines and Commandants such as General Elliott, General Barnett, General Lejeune, and many others, the members of the study groups established by Commandant Vandegrift used their knowledge of the ways of institutional politics to eventually preserve the Marine Corps. The use of direct and indirect lobbying was refined to a science. "Examples of Marine 'direct lobbying' (absence of any intervening agency or instrumentality) include: General Vandegrift's close friendship and influence with Senator Byrd (which had developed years before - - both were Virginians and, at any rate, Byrd had long been pro-Marine Corps as a result of his experience on the Naval Affairs Committee); Lt. Colonel Hurst's work with Senator Robertson; Lt. Colonel Heinl's limited contacts with Senator George Smathers; and, the detailed activities of Lt. Colonels Hittle and Schatzel with Representative Clare Hoffman."[19]

While the Army and particularly the Air Force were busy making public statements, statements which sometimes amounted to hysterics, in favor of the pending legislation based on

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[19]Gordon W. Keiser, "The U. S. Marine Corps and Unification, 1944-1947," unpublished M. A. Thesis, Tufts University, 1971, p. 165.

the Collins' plan, the Navy-Marine Corps team was talking to those who counted the votes. While General Carl Spaatz of the Air Force could tirade against the Navy's existence at a dinner given by the Aviation Writers Association[20] the Naval and Marine officers involved in preserving their organizations talked, not to writers, but to Congressmen.

"Indirect lobbying, that with an agency or other third party intervening, was used to good effect by the Marines, Heinl's contact with the widely-read David Lawrence, and other press functionaries and news chains; Hurst's association with the highly-respected editor, Ralph McGill; Hittle's work with the VFW (which, in turn put its lobbying muscle behind the Marines); and, General Thomas' largely successful efforts to prevent the American Legion from taking a positive, qualified stand"[21] all were a part of the Marines' appeal to Congress.

The Marines mounted a massive effort to get their roles and missions protected within the legislation which became known as the National Security Act of 1947. The act itself was debated and amended until by 1953 the Marine Corps was a legally protected organization as to roles, missions, and strengths. The Marine Corps, continually affected by events such as Korea, Vietnam, and Lebanon, still needs to defend

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[20]Vandegrift, op. cit., p. 312.

[21]Keiser, op. cit.

itself against critics of its role and its continued existence.[22] But the period between Commandants Elliott and Vandegrift were the most serious times of crisis for the Marine Corps as an organization, and in each case the loyalty, apptitude, originality and dedication of some of its members preserved the Corps for its future. Loyalty to itself and the Navy, ability to adjust to changing demands made upon it, original thinking in terms of tactics and strategy, and dedication at the risk of career of many of its leaders have been the basic tenent of survival as practised by the United States Marine Corps.

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[22]See for exam , "Comeback of the Marines," U. S. News and World Report, January 12, 1981, pp. 57-81, or Colonel Joseph H. Alexander, USMC, "The Role of U. S. Marines in the Defense of North Norway," U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings, May 1984, pp. 180-194.

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Outside of the records in the National Archives and Marine and Navy Historical Divisions the next most valuable source is the Personal Papers and Oral History collections held by the History and Museums Division, United States Marine Corps. A very few of these collections are classified but permission can be obtained for full or partial access through the staff of the Historical center.

Two journals in particular are helpful in tracing the progress of the Navy-Marine Corps organizational conflicts. These are Proceedings and the Marine Corps Gazette. Most general histories ignore or slight organizational problems. A good lead to additional sources is the newsletter of the Marine Corps Historical Program, Fortitudine. Certainly the best general history and guide to sources is Allan R. Millett's Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps.

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