

## RP 0105 - USMC History and Traditions

### TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Given the references, identify significant historical facts in USMC history, per the student handout. (RP00.01.11)

### ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Without the aid of references, given a list, identify significant events in USMC history, per the student handout. (RP00.01.11a)
2. Without the aid of references, given a list, identify significant people in USMC history, per the student handout. (RP00.01.11b)

### **1. State significant events in Marine Corps history**



a. **1775** - The Marine Corps was created on 10 November 1775 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at Tun Tavern by a resolution of the Continental Congress, which "raised two battalions of Marines". Captain Samuel Nicholas became the commander of the two battalions and is traditionally considered the first commandant of the Marine Corps.

b. **1776** - The first Marine landing took place during the Revolutionary War. Marine invaded New Providence Island in the Bahamas and seized guns and supplies. The uniform of the day had a stiff leather stock that was worn around the neck, thus the nickname "Leatherneck".

c. **1798** - Congress recreated the Marine Corps as a separate military service.

d. **1805** - Marines stormed the Barbary pirates' stronghold at Derna on the "Shores of Tripoli." Marines raised the "Stars and Stripes" for the first time in the Eastern Hemisphere.

e. **1834** - The Marines came under the department of the Navy.

f. **1847** - During the Mexican War, Marines occupied the "Halls of Montezuma" during the Battle of Chapultepec in the Mexico City. The

royal palace fell to invading Marines, who were among the first United States troops to enter the capital. Marines also helped take California.

g. **1859** - Under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, U. S. Army, Marines stormed the United States arsenal at Harper's Ferry to put down an attempted slave revolt lead by abolitionist John Brown.

h. **1861** - Marines saw limited action during the Civil War. Due to resignations, an aging officer corps, and inadequate personnel, effectiveness was hindered. Marines served primarily with Naval detachments at sea manning ships gun, rarely conducting operations.



i. **1868** - The Marine Corps adopted an emblem that consisted of an eagle, a globe, and an anchor. Brigadier General Jacob Zelin, 7th Commandant, Modified the British (Royal) Marine emblem to depict the Marines as both American and Maritime. The globe and anchor signify worldwide service and sea traditions. The spread eagle is a symbol of the Nation itself.

j. **1883** - The official motto of the Marine Corps, "Semper Fidelis," (Latin for "Always Faithful") was adopted. The phrase is more commonly heard as its abbreviation, "Semper Fi".

k. **1898** - In response to a declaration of war against Spain, Marines conducted offensive operation in the Pacific and Cuba. Marine actions led to the establishment of several naval installations overseas.

l. **1900** - In support of foreign policy, Marines from ships on the Asiatic station defended the American Legation in Peking, China during the Boxer Rebellion. The Marines were part of a multinational defense force that protected the Legation Quarter against attack. This small defense force held out against the Boxers until

a relief force was able to reach Peking and end the rebellion.

m. **1901**- During the years 1901-1934, the Marine Corps was increasingly used to quell disturbances throughout the world. From the Far East to the Caribbean, Marines landed and put down insurrections, guarded and protected American lives and property, and restored order. Due to extensive use of Marines in various countries and locations in the Caribbean, these actions come to be known as the "Banana Wars".

n. **1913** - The Marine Corps established its aviation unit. Marine Major Alfred A. Cunningham was the first pilot.



o. **1917** - Marines landed as part of the American force in France. Marines, participating in eight distinct operations, distinguished themselves and were awarded a number of decorations, among them the French Fourragere still worn by members of the 5th and 6th Marines.

p. **1933**- The Marine Corps was reorganized into the Fleet Marine Force, formally establishing the "command and administrative relations" between the Fleet and the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps Equipment Board was established at Quantico, Virginia, and Marines began to devote long hours to testing and developing materials for landing operations and expeditionary service.

q. **1941** - The United States was thrust into war following the devastating surprise attack on Pearl Harbor by Japanese forces. Marines defended against this attack and similar attacks throughout the Pacific during the opening states of the war. The Marine Corps was the principal force utilized by the allies in execution of a strategy of "island hopping" campaigns. The earlier development of amphibious doctrine proved to be invaluable in

carrying out this strategy. The strength of the Marine Corps reached nearly 500,000 during World War II.

r. **1950** - Conflict in Korea tested the Marine Corps combat readiness. The Marines responded to the attack by North Korean forces by quickly assembling the First Marine Provisional Brigade from the under strength 1 Marine Division. These Marines shipped out and were later used to rescue the crumbling Pusan Perimeter. Marine forces further displayed the combat readiness and versatility by making an amphibious landing over the seawalls at Inchon. Marine aviators flew helicopters for the first time in battle.

s. **1958** - The Marine Corps completed reorganizing combat structure of its Fleet Marine Force. The Marines created units equipped to conduct landing operations in either atomic or non-atomic warfare. The Marine Corps had the ability for the Fleet to go where it was needed, to stay there, and to readily project its power as the cutting edge of sea power. This concept was put into use when Marines landed in Beirut, Lebanon at the request of the Lebanese government to support its army against internal strife. The Marines helped stabilize the situation and were withdrawn in a few months.

t. **1965** - Marines landed in South Vietnam, which committed the Marine Corps to the longest war in history. Marines conducted numerous large-scale offensive operations throughout the course of the war, as well as participating in the pacification program designed to win the support of the local populace. Also, in response to an attempted coup of the local government, Marines landed in the Dominican Republic to evacuate and protect U. S. citizens. The Marines formed the core of a multinational force that quickly restored the peace.



u. **1982** - Marines deployed to Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force in an effort to restore peace and order to this war-torn country. This action further displayed the Marine concept of a "Force in Readiness". On 23 Oct 1983, a suicide truck bomb attack on the headquarters building killed 241 Americans, 220 Marines, and wounded 70 others. The last Marine withdrew in July on 1984.

v. **1983** - Following assassination of the Prime Minister and violent overthrow of the government of Grenada, Marines participated in Urgent Fury, a joint military operation in response to a request for intervention from neighboring Caribbean nations. The Marines' rapid response led to securing of the island and the safeguarding of hundreds of American citizens living there.

w. **1989** - In response to the increasing unrest in Panama, the President of the United States ordered a joint military operation, Just Cause, to overthrow the military government of Panama headed by General Manuel Noriega. United States forces, including Marines, accomplished this mission and installed a civilian government. This same government had been denied office after free elections were illegally declared invalid by Noriega's government. General Noriega, under indictment in the United States for drug trafficking and racketeering, was arrested and sent to the United States for trial.



x. **1990** - Following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces, Operation Desert Shield was launched. This joint military operation was designed to halt the advance of Iraqi forces and to position multinational forces assembled for possible offensive operations to expel the invading force. This operation validated the Marine Corps Maritime Prepositioning force (MPF) concept and enacted the plan of



tailoring units to accomplish a mission as part of a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF).

y. **1991** - Operation Desert Storm was launched after the Iraqi government refused to comply with United Nations resolutions. Marine aviation was heavily used when the air phase commenced in January of 1991. When massive bombing failed to dislodge Iraqi forces, Marine ground forces swept into Kuwait and liberated the country, causing severe damage to the Iraqi military capability. Operation Desert Storm was the first ground engagement with Iraqi force in the Persian Gulf.

## **2. Describe significant battles in Marine Corps History**

a. **The BATTLE OF BADENSBURG:** In January of 1814, 103 Marines and 400 Sailors made a vain attempt to block a force of 4,000 disciplined British troops from advancing on Washington. The Marines stopped three headlong charges before finally being overflanked and driven back. The British then moved down Bladensburg Road to Washington where they burned a number of public buildings before retiring to their vessels in the Chesapeake Bay.

b. **The BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS:** In January of 1815, Marines under the command of General Andrew Jackson soundly defeated British Forces that were attacking the city of New Orleans. The British lost approximately 2,000 men while American losses were less than 100.

c. **The BATTLE OF BELLEAU WOOD:** Marines fought one of their greatest battles in history at Belleau Wood, France during World War I. Marines helped to crush a German Offensive at Belleau Wood that threatened Paris. In honor of the Marines who fought there, the French renamed the area "the Wood

of the Brigade of Marines." German intelligence evaluated the Marines as "storm troopers" --the highest rating on the enemy fighting scale. In reference to the Marine's ferocious fighting ability, German troops called their new enemy "Teufelhunden" or "Devildogs," a nickname in which Marines share pride.

d. **The BATTLE OF WAKE ISLAND:** In 1941, following the air attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese struck Wake Island on 8 December. Despite being heavily outnumbered, the Marines mounted a courageous defense before finally falling on 23 December. This small force of Marines caused an extraordinary number of Japanese casualties and damage to the invading force.

e. **The BATTLE OF GUADALCANAL:** On 7 August 1942, the 1st Marine Division landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and launched the first United States land offensive of World War II. This battle marked the first combat test of the new amphibious doctrine, and also provided a crucial turning point of the war in the Pacific by providing a base to launch further invasions of Japanese-held islands. Amphibious landings followed on the remaining Solomon Islands including New Georgia, Choiseul (Feint), and Bougainville.



f. **The BATTLE OF TARAUA:** The Gilbert Islands were the first in the line of advance for the offensive in the Central Pacific. The prime objective was the Tarawa Atoll and Betio Island which had been fortified to the point that the Japanese commander proclaimed that it would take a million Americans 100 years to conquer it. On 20 November 1943, Marines landed and secured the Island within 76 hours, but paid a heavy price in doing so. Because of an extended reef, landing craft could not cross it and Marines were offloaded hundreds of yards from the beaches. This led to heavy losses

from enemy fire. Additionally, many Marines drowned while attempting to wade ashore.

**g. The BATTLE OF THE MARIAN ISLANDS:**

Due to the need for airfields by the Air Force and advanced bases for the Navy, the Marianas were invaded. Landings on the islands of Saipan, Guam, and Tinian accomplished this. During June and July of 1943, Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith led a combined invasion force of Marines and Soldiers that totaled over 136,000. This was the greatest number of troops up to that time to operate in the field under Marine command.

**h. The BATTLE OF IWO JIMA:** On 19 February 1945, Marines landed on Iwo Jima in what was the largest all-Marine battle in history. It was also the bloodiest in Marine Corps history. The Marine Corps suffered over 23,300 casualties. The capture of Iwo Jima greatly increased the air support and bombing operations against the Japanese home islands. Of the savage battle Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said, "Among the Americans who served on Iwo Island, uncommon valor was a common virtue."

**i. The BATTLE OF OKINAWA:** In April of 1945, Marines and Soldiers landed and secured the island of Okinawa. This marked the last large action of World War II. Due to the death of the Army commander, Major General Roy S. Geiger assumed command of the 10th Army and became the only Marine officer ever to have commanded a field Army.

**j. The BATTLE OF THE CHOSIN**

**RESERVOIR:** After pushing far into North Korea during November of 1950, Marines were cut off after the Chinese Communist Forces entered the war. Despite facing a 10-division force sent to annihilate them, Marines smashed seven enemy divisions in their march from the Chosin Reservoir. The major significance of the retrograde movement was

that Marines brought out all operable equipment, properly evacuated their wounded and dead, and maintained tactical integrity. General Smith made a famous quote that stated: "We are not retreating, we are attacking in a different direction.

k. **The SECOND BATTLE OF KHE SANH:** In January of 1968, Marines defended the firebase at Khe Sanh from an attack force of two North Vietnamese Army (NVA) divisions. Despite heavy bombardment, the Marines held out for over two and half months before finally forcing the enemy forces to withdraw.

l. **The BATTLE OF HUE CITY:** During the Vietnamese holiday of Tet in January of 1968, Communist forces launched a surprise offensive by infiltrating large numbers of their troops into the major population centers of Hue City, South Vietnam. A near division-size unit of NVA troops occupied the city of Hue and the Citadel. Marines fought in built-up areas for the first time since the Korean War foregoing the application of heavy arms to minimize civilian casualties. Fighting was house-to-house with progress measured in yards. The city was secured on 25 February 1968.

### 3. Note worthy Marines in Marine Corps history



a. **PRESLEY NEVILLE O'BANNON.** First Lieutenant O'Bannon is remembered for heroism in the battle for the harbor fortress of Derna (Trioli) in the Mediterranean. O'Bannon's Marines were the first U. S. forces to hoist the flag over territory in the Old World. The "Mamaluke" sword, carried by Marine Officers today, was presented to O'Bannon in 1805.

b. **ARCHIBALD HENDERSON.** Brevet Brigadier General Archibald Henderson became Commandant in 1820 and held his command for 39 years until his death in 1859. General Henderson led the Corps through the

Indian Wars, the War with Mexico, the opening of China, and the disorders in Central America. The "Grand Old Man of the Marine Corps," as he was often called, introduced higher standards of personal appearance, training, discipline, and strived to have the Marine Corps known as a professional military force, capable of more than just sea and guard duties.



c. **JOHN H. QUICK.** Sergeant Major Quick is remembered for his performance at Cuzco Well (Guantanamo Bay, Cuba) where he participated in an operation to seize an advanced base for the Atlantic Fleet battalion of Marines. The Sergeant Major won the Medal of Honor for semaphoring for an emergency lift of the naval bombardment while under Spanish and American Shellfire. The landing at Guantanamo demonstrated the usefulness of Marines as assault troops. When employed with the fleet, Marines gave added strength for the capture and defense of advanced bases, becoming a primary mission of the Marine Corps (1898).



d. **DANIEL DALY.** Sergeant Major Daly is recognized for earning two Medals of Honor: (1) Chinese Boxer Rebellion and (2) First Caco war in Haiti. When his unit had been pinned down and their attack was stalled during the Battle of Belleau Wood, Then Gunnery Sergeant Daly yelled to his men, " Come on, you sons of a b----, do you want to live forever?"



e. **SMEDLEY D. BUTLER.** Major Butler is recognized for earning two Medals of Honor: (1) Veracruz and (2) First Caco War in Haiti. By the end of 1916, the Marine Corps was recognized as a national force in readiness and for leadership gained from continual combat and expeditionary experience.



f. **JOHN A. LEJEUNE.** Major General Lejeune served as 13th Commandant of the Marine

Corps, 1920-1929. Lejeune was the first Marine officer to command an army division in combat during World War I (1918).



g. **LEWIS B. ("CHESTY") PULLER.**

Lieutenant General Puller served in Nicaragua through several periods of political unrest and rebellious activity. Puller and a force of about 32 Marines became famous for their ability to engage rebel groups and bandits while scouring the jungles in a wide area of Nicaragua to the Honduran border. Puller became known as the "Tiger of the Mountains" (1930). The Marine Corps mascot, and English bulldog named "Chesty," is named for this brave and fine Marine Corps officer.

h. **JOHN L. FOSS.** Captain Foss was a Marine pilot instrumental in taking the Japanese airfield at Guadalcanal. For his participation, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. By the end of World War II, Foss was the second-ranking Marine ace, with 26 victories ("kills") to his credit.

i. **JOHN BASILONE.** For more than 60 years Marines have heard about the legendary acts of Gunnery Sgt. John "Manila" Basilone. In the steaming jungles of Guadalcanal, two sections of heavy .30-caliber machine guns at the Tenaru River were in charge of defending a narrow pass to Henderson Airfield in the Solomon Islands. Suddenly, Japanese forces attacked their position. Vastly outnumbered, the Marines held their ground and fought valiantly to check the savage and determined assault. Suddenly one of the gun crews was knocked out. Disregarding his own life, a Marine lifted his 90 pounds of weaponry and raced 200 yards to the silenced gun pit and started firing. Enemy soldiers attacked to his rear. He cut them down with his Colt .45 pistol. Short of shells, he dashed 200 yards amid a stream of bullets to an ammunition dump and returned with an armload of ammo for his gunners. This Marine battled his way through



hostile lines running back and forth between gun pits clearing jams and re-supplying the other Marines with ammo. Flares lit up more swarms of grenade-tossing attackers. The Marines' hands started blistering from the heat of his machine gun, but still he kept shooting. At dawn, reinforcements found this Marine resting his head at the edge of his pit. The line had held. Nearly 100 sprawled enemy dead were around his cut-off outpost. At least 38 enemy dead were credited to this Marine, many killed at arms length. The day was Oct. 24, 1942 and his name was Gunnery Sgt. Basilone. For his actions he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Gunnery Sgt. Basilone, the man whom [Gen. Douglas MacArthur](#) called "a one-man army," became the only man in the history of the United States awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, and the Purple Heart. Gunnery Sgt. Basilone was killed in action at Iwo Jima.



j. **GREGORY R. ("PAPPY") BOYINGTON.** Major Boyington is recognized for Marine prowess in aerial dogfights. "Pappy" commanded VMH-214, the "Black Sheep," during World War II. By the end of the War, the Major was recognized as the Marine Corps' top flying ace with 28 victories ("kills") (1945).



k. **IRA H. HAYES.** The fifth Amphibious Corps of Marines, commanded by Major General Harry Schmidt, was assigned to take Iwo Jima. Corporal Ira Hayes, a Pima Indian, was one of the Marines immortalized in the now famous photograph taken of the second flag raising incident on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima shortly after the Japanese stronghold was taken on 23 February 1945.

l. **OPHA MAE JOHNSON.** Private Johnson became the Marine Corps' first enlisted woman on 13 August 1918. Her enlistment was a reflection of the dramatic changes in the status of women brought about by the entry of the

United States into World War I. Marine Reserve (F) was the official title by which the Marine Corps' first enlisted women were known. They were better known as "skirt Marines" and "Marinettes."

m. **ANNIE L. GRIMES**. CWO Grimes was the third black woman to become a Marine and the first black woman officer to retire after her full 20 years.

n. **MARGERT A. BREWER**. Brigadier General Brewer, then a Colonel, served as the Director of Women Marines (WM) during the period 1973-1977. She was the seventh and last director of WM, the only post-World War woman to hold the position. Margaret Brewer became the Marine Corps first woman general officer on 11 May 1978.



o. **MOLLY MARINE**. "Molly," a monument in New Orleans to women, who served the Marines, was dedicated on the Marine Corps birthday in 1943. The first statue of a woman in uniform anywhere in the world was that of Joan D'Arc, in full armor, in Orleans, France; it is only fitting that the first statue of a woman in uniform in the United States resides in New Orleans.