

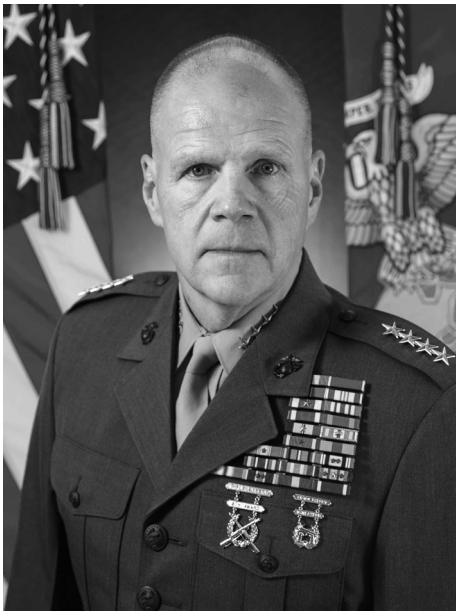
SEMPER FIDELIS

MEMORANDUM FOR RETIRED MARINES

GENERAL ROBERT B. NELLER

37th Commandant of the Marine Corps

General Robert B. Neller assumed the duties of Commandant of the Marine Corps on September 24th, 2015. A native of East Lansing, Michigan, he graduated from the University of Virginia and was commissioned in May 1975. He previously served as the Commander, Marine Forces Command from June 2014 to September 2015.



General Neller has served as an infantry officer at all levels. He commanded the Marine Security Force Company Panama during Operations Just Cause and Promote Liberty, 3d Light Armored Infantry Battalion during Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, 6th Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division and Marine Forces Central Command.

His Joint assignments include service in the Policy Division of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Casteau, Belgium, and as the Director of Operations (J3) of the Joint Staff in Washington, D.C.

He has also served as Executive Officer, 7th Marine Regiment, G-3, 2d Marine Division, G-3, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Assistant Division Commander for the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions, and Deputy Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) during Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.

General Neller is a graduate of the Advanced Armor Officer Course, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College, the NATO Defense College and the Armed Forces Staff College. He holds a M.A. in Human Resource Management from Pepperdine University.



10 November 2015

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

When the Continental Congress raised up two battalions of Marines in 1775, it launched the greatest fighting force the world has ever known – a force revered globally for its uncommon valor, unparalleled adaptability, and ferocious tenacity. Over the past 240 years, the battlefields and equipment have changed, but the spirit of the United States Marine Corps has prevailed in every clime and place.

One hundred years ago, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island opened its doors as the first base dedicated solely to making Marines. Since then, hundreds of thousands of men and women have been forged into elite warriors at Parris Island, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, and The Basic School in Quantico. Each recruit had a different reason for stepping onto the yellow footprints, but all are unified by the intangible traits that characterize United States Marines and the remarkable legacy that has carried on across generations.

Whether you served on the hallowed grounds of Belleau Wood, fought on the iconic island battlefields of World War II, navigated the harsh terrain and climate of the Chosin Reservoir or Vietnam, conducted assaults during Desert Storm, marched on Baghdad, fought in close combat in Fallujah, or conducted combat operations in Afghanistan, everyone who wears the Eagle, Globe and Anchor is a member of that storied legacy.

As we celebrate the 240th birthday of our Corps, we pay tribute to all who have served and we remember our fallen heroes. We take great pride in our legacy and in the fine men and women who carry our colors into the future. And we extend heartfelt thanks to our families for their steadfast support.

Our 26th Commandant, General Louis Wilson, once said, “In the last analysis, what the Marine Corps becomes is what we make of it during our respective watches. And that watch of each Marine is not confined to the time he spends on active duty. It lasts as long as he is ‘proud to bear the title of United States Marine.’” Thank you all for guarding the legacy of our Corps during your watch.

Happy Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. Neller".

Robert B. Neller
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr. 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Passes the Colors to General Robert B. Neller

General Robert B. Neller received the battle colors of the Marine Corps from General Joseph F. Dunford Jr. during a passage of command ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, Sept. 24, 2015, signifying his new position as the 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps. General Neller, an East Lansing, Michigan, native and 40-year Marine veteran, assumes responsibility as the senior ranking officer of the Corps.

"I am honored, proud and humbled to be here," General Neller said. "I appreciate your support. Now let's go do this."

During the ceremony, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter spoke highly of General Neller and his ability to lead the Marine Corps and spoke about his "greatest trait" — his love for the troops. "They light up when he's talking to them, and he lights up too," Carter said.

General Dunford, a Boston native, relinquished command of the Marine Corps after serving in the top post for less than a year.

"In his short but significant tenure, General Dunford guided the Marine Corps during the final drawdown in Afghanistan, and maintained the Corps as the most formidable expeditionary fighting force that has ever existed," said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus. "He kept it ready to respond to any crisis throughout the globe in spite of budget constraints, threat of sequestration and the impact of continuing resolutions." During his time as the 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Dunford moved forward to meet challenges with his planning guidance stressing innovation, adaption and winning America's battles.

"I feel fortunate because a few minutes ago General Neller became my commandant," said General Dunford. "Just like all the other Marines and sailors, I have the good fortune to have a leader who's passionate, has extraordinary operational capability, and he has extraordinary energy and vision to take us into the future. We couldn't be in better hands."

General Dunford assumed his new position as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sept. 25, 2015.

MARINES BARRACKS WASHINGTON, Washington D.C. - The 37th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert B. Neller, left, receives the Marine Corps Colors from General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., during the Passage of Command ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, Washington, D.C., Sept. 24, 2015.

Photo By: Sgt Tia Dufour



ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION: The Semper Fidelis publication is published with appropriated funds on a quarterly basis. The Writer-Editor of Semper Fidelis is Tanya L. Ramey.

Marine Corps Birthday Celebration

The U.S. Marine Corps begins preparations for its “birthday party” every summer. Activities become more feverish as the fall hues arrive. By early November, every Marine is either rehearsing his role in the “party” or pressing, polishing, and spit-shining in order to appear at his or her best for the Birthday Ball. This has not always been the case, however. In fact, Marines have not always celebrated their founding on November the 10th. Formal commemoration of the birthday of the Marine Corps began on 10 November 1921. That particular date was chosen because on that day the Second Continental Congress resolved in 1775 to raise two battalions of Continental Marines.

Until 1921 the birthday of the Corps had been celebrated on another date. An unidentified newspaper clipping from 1918 refers to the celebration of the 120th birthday of the Marine Corps on 11 July “as usual with no fuss.” It is doubtful that there was any real celebration at all. Further inspection of documents and publications prior to 1921 shows no evidence of ceremonies, pageants, or parties. The July date was commemorated between 1798 and 1921 as the birthday of the Corps. During the Revolution, Marines had fought on land and sea, but at the close of the Revolution the Marine Corps and the Navy were all but disbanded. On 11 July 1798, President John Adams approved a bill that recreated the Corps, thereby providing the rationale for this day being commemorated as the birthday of the U.S. Marine Corps.

On 21 October 1921, Maj Edwin McClellan, Officer-in-Charge, Historical Section, Headquarters Marine Corps, sent a memorandum to Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune, suggesting that the original birthday on 10 November 1775 be declared a Marine Corps holiday to be celebrated throughout the Corps. Maj McClellan further suggested that a dinner be held in Washington D.C., to commemorate the event. Guests

would include prominent men from the Marine Corps, Army, and Navy, and descendants of the Revolution. Accordingly, on 1 November 1921, MajGen Lejeune issued Marine Corps Order No. 47, Series 1921. The order summarized the history, mission, and tradition of the Corps, and directed that it be read to every command on 10 November each subsequent year in honor of the birthday of the Marine Corps. This order has been duly carried out.

Some commands expanded the celebration during the next few years. In 1923 at Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, the celebration of the Marine Corps’ 148th birthday took the form of a dance in the barracks that evening. Marines at the Navy Yard, Norfolk, Virginia, staged a sham battle on the parade ground in commemoration of the birthday. The battle lasted about twenty minutes, and was witnessed by Portsmouth and Norfolk citizens. At Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the birthday was celebrated on the 12th, since a special liberty to Santiago had been arranged on the 10th. The morning activities included field and water sports, and a shooting match. In the afternoon the Marines won a baseball game, 9-8, over a Cuban team. In the evening, members of the command put on a variety show followed by four boxing bouts.

The first so-called “Birthday Ball,” such as suggested by Maj McClellan, was probably held in 1925 in Philadelphia. No records have been located of one prior to 1925. Guests included the Secretaries of War and Navy, Major General Commandant Lejeune, famous statesmen, soldiers, and sailors. The principle event was the unveiling of a tablet on the site of Tun Tavern. The tablet was a gift from the Thomas Roberts Reath Post, American Legion, whose membership was composed exclusively of Marines. The celebration was held in conjunction with the annual convention of the Marine Corps League. A parade included Marines, Regular Army, and Navy detachments, National Guard, and other military organizations. The evening banquet was held at the Benjamin Franklin Hotel and a ball followed at the Bellevue-Stratford.

It is not possible to determine precisely when the first cake ceremony was held, but there is evidence of a ceremony being held at Quantico, Virginia, in 1935. Also on record was one held at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., in 1937 where Major General Commandant Thomas Holcomb presided at an open house for Marine Corps officers. Ceremonies included the cutting of a huge cake designed after the famous Tun Tavern in Philadelphia.

From 1937, observances of the Marine Corps Birthday appeared to develop spontaneously throughout the Corps as if they had a life of their own. The celebrations were publicized through every media. Newsreels, motion pictures, and displays were prepared to summarize the history of the Corps. In 1943, standard blank Marine Corps scrap books were forwarded to all districts to be filled with 168th anniversary clippings, scripts, pictures, programs, and other memorabilia, and returned to Headquarters. Unfortunately none of these scrapbooks remain in official files.

In 1951, a formal Birthday Ball Pageant was held at Headquarters Marine Corps. Similar to the pageant today, the script described the Marines' period uniforms and the cake ceremony. Although this is the first substantive record of a pageant, *Leatherneck* magazine of 10 November 1925 pictures Marines at a pageant in Salt Lake City, Utah, which had taken place "several years ago."

On 28 October 1952, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., directed that the celebration of the Marine Corps Birthday be formalized throughout the Corps, and provided an outline for the cake ceremony, as well as other formal observances. This outline was included in the Marine Corps Drill Manual, approved 26 January 1956.

Traditionally, the first piece of Birthday Cake is presented to the oldest Marine present and the second piece to the youngest Marine present. When and where this tradition began remains unknown. Some records indicate this practice, and others vary

it depending on the dignitaries present at the ball. First pieces of cake have been presented to newlyweds, the Secretary of the Navy, governors, and others, but generally speaking, the first pieces of cake go to the oldest and youngest Marines at the ball. At present, celebrations of the Marine Corps Birthday on 10 November differ at posts and stations throughout the Corps. All commemorations include the reading of Marine Corps Order No. 47, and the Commandant's message to those assembled. Most commands sponsor a Birthday Ball of some sort, complete with pageant and cake ceremony as prescribed in the Marine Corps Manual. Like the Corps itself, the Birthday Ball developed from simple origins to become the polished, professional function that all Marines commemorate on 10 November around the world.

Source: Marine Corps Historical Branch



BIRTHDAY CAKE - General Clifton B. Cates, Commandant of the Marine Corps, cuts the Birthday Cake commemorating the 176th anniversary of the U.S. Marine Corps at the Sail Loft of the Naval Gun Factory on 10 November 1951 at Washington, D.C.

Photo By: TSgt Nix and Sgt Matheson



A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT

“All previous guidance remains in effect”

To all Marines, Sailors, civilians and families, I am honored to serve as your Commandant. To General and Mrs. Dunford, as you transition to your next assignment, please know that you go with the respect and thanks of every Marine, Sailor and their families. It is now our responsibility to maintain the institutional momentum of the past year in our efforts to sustain and continue to improve our Corps. That said, no later than the New Year I will publish a “FragO” to the current CPG.

“Like war itself, our approach to warfighting must evolve”

As the Nation’s crisis response force and force in readiness, Marines remain forward deployed, ready to fight and win tonight. However, we cannot rest on our past successes and our current efforts because our nation’s enemies are continuously adapting and challenging us with new and different forms of warfare. We must continue to improve our readiness for today’s fight, while at the same time ensuring we remain relevant for the conflicts we know will come in the future. As Marines have always done, we will continue to seek new opportunities and develop solutions that maintain an overwhelming tactical advantage over any adversary. We must know how we will operationally apply our capabilities against our adversaries, but also **study and be aware of how they will apply their capabilities against us.**

“For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack”

Our strength is the talent, skill and discipline of our Marines and Sailors. Today, we are a ready and capable Corps of Marines because of patriotic Americans who are willing to step forward and accept the challenge of being a Marine in order to serve our Nation. Since our friendly center of gravity is our “Team of Marines,” it is appropriate to begin our tenure by communicating clear expectations for leaders and those they serve.

“The senior is obligated to provide the guidance and the example that allows subordinates to exercise proper judgment and initiative.” This includes providing a clear mission and intent...What to do, not how to do it.

What Marines should expect from leaders:

- **Firm but fair leadership.** Marines and Sailors will be treated with dignity and respect.
- **Accountability.** All Marines will be held to the highest standards of conduct and performance.
- **Leadership from the front.** Leaders will set the highest examples in their professional and personal life.
- **Realistic and challenging training.** We will train hard in every clime and place, day and night.
- **Weapons and equipment that is on the cutting edge of technology.** Marines must quickly recognize and leverage technology to make us better warfighters.
- **Opportunities for advancement.** All Marines will be recognized for a high level of performance.
- **Care and support for families and our wounded.** Both are critical members of the Marine Corps team and have earned our support.
- **Honesty, Integrity, and Loyalty.** Trust is a two-way street. Listen to and take care of Marines in your charge and they will take care of you.
- **Compassion.** All leaders will provide those in their charge sincere and concerned assistance with problems.

“The subordinate agrees to act (with discipline, respect and loyalty) and not exceed the proper limits of authority”

What leaders should expect from Marines:

- **Always give 100% to the mission.** Bring your “A” game every day.
- **Be technically and tactically proficient.** Learn, study, read.... know your profession.
- **Be physically, morally, and mentally fit.** Lead a healthy and disciplined life style. Condition your mind and body for the rigors of combat. Use of illegal drugs and abuse of legal drugs and alcohol are not conducive to this goal.
- **Be accountable for your actions.** If you make a mistake, admit it, correct it, and press on.
- **Care for and maintain your weapons and equipment.** Readiness depends on it.
- **Overcome adversity and exercise initiative.** Seek solutions and never run away from problems.
- **Tell the truth - ALWAYS!** Bad news does not get better with time. Things cannot be fixed if they are not talked about.
- **Set goals and then strive to achieve them.** Have a plan for your life whether you serve 4 or 40 years.
- **Earn trust in all things, every day.** Be loyal to your unit, your peers, your subordinates, and your leaders.

“Human will, instilled through leadership, is the driving force of all action in war.”

Being a Marine is not a job but a way of life. Give your all to be the best human being, teammate and Marine or Sailor possible. The end result will be an unbeatable force ready to take on any mission, any place, and any time. When we do execute our missions and our lives in this way, we will take our proper place alongside the long line of Marines and Sailors who have preceded us. Let's go!

Semper Fidelis,



Robert B. Neller

General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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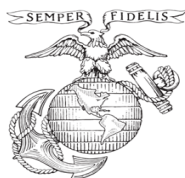
To Our Readers:

We hope you have enjoyed this special edition of Semper Fidelis. Taps, Reunions, and the Directory Assistance Pages will return in Volume 59 No 4. Look for it soon.

Happy Marine Corps Birthday!

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