

Marines in the Frigate Navy

Fourteen Full-Color Prints



by
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with text by
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UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

REPRINTED 2006

FOR MARINE CORPS ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING
THIS SERIES OF PRINTS

It is suggested that this series of prints be framed and hung in such areas as recruiting stations, unit offices, recreation rooms, mess halls, and clubs. A Marine Corps directive has been issued recommending this use and citing specifications of a standard frame available through GSA.

To frame the texts contained in this pamphlet, the staples should be removed and the pages separated by cutting carefully along the fold line. Associated prints and texts should be hung together.

Marines in the Frigate Navy

1798-1835

The first half of the 19th century saw little dramatic change in military technology or in military and naval tactics. Marines, formally organized by an act of Congress in 1798, would perform the same functions they had assumed during America's fight for independence.

In May 1798, in response to the depredations of French privateers, President John Adams instructed American frigate captains to make reprisals upon the commerce of France. Initially, Marine units were based upon the size of the ship and appointed directly, but on 11 July 1798, an act of Congress authorized "establishing and organizing a Marine Corps." American ships with Marine detachments soon set sail, landed, and captured a shore battery at Puerto Plata, Santo Domingo, and participated in the capture of more than three-score French vessels before the Treaty of Peace brought an end to the undeclared war.

The renewal of the Barbary Wars in 1801 resulted in orders to the Mediterranean Squadron for many Marines, where they fought alongside sailors at ships' great guns. In 1805, near the war's end, Marine Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon, with six privates, and a motley force of Arabs and Greeks, marched 500 miles across the desert from Egypt. Reaching Derna, the Marines led a charge through the town, captured its fort, and raised the flag for the first time over Old World territory.

From 1806 to 1811, Marines served with small detachments scattered throughout the world on board ship, guarded naval yards, harassed the Spanish in East Florida, clashed with hostile Indians, and landed on distant shores to defend American diplomatic missions and endangered citizens.

In the second war with England, first priority was given to providing Marine detachments for ships of the blue-water Navy. There were not enough Marines to do even this, let alone provide Marines for the equally critical Great Lakes squadrons. Company-sized Marine units fought heroically at Bladensburg, on the land approach to the nation's capital; at Craney Island, near Norfolk, Virginia; and at New Orleans, but apparently no thought was given to forming an amphibious force or even a permanent battalion structure. Nor, indeed, did the nature of the war offer any particularly inviting amphibious targets.

During the next 20 years, the Corps, under the able leadership of Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Archibald Henderson, established its place within the American military system by "showing the flag" in punitive actions against pirates and hostile governments from the West Indies to Sumatra, in suppressing the illicit slave trade, on the ships and shore stations of the Navy, and in handling domestic disturbances. The small Corps repeatedly demonstrated its efficiency, discipline, and usefulness.

About These Prints

The artist, Colonel Charles H. Waterhouse, United States Marine Corps Reserve, is a World War II veteran and noted illustrator. As a combat artist, he depicted scenes in Vietnam, Alaska, the Western Pacific, and the Atlantic which resulted in two published works. Returning to active duty in 1973, Colonel Waterhouse began work on a series of paintings of Marine Corps activities during the American Revolution, conquest of California, and the federal period, 1798 to 1835.

The paintings highlighting Marine activities from 1798 to 1835 form a part of a larger project now underway which will result in the publication of a definitive history covering the period. The history is to be written by Charles R. Smith, author of *Marines in the Revolution* and a forthcoming volume dealing with Marine activities in Vietnam, with the research assistance of Richard A. Long, who also assisted in the preparation of *Marines in the Revolution*.

The Prints

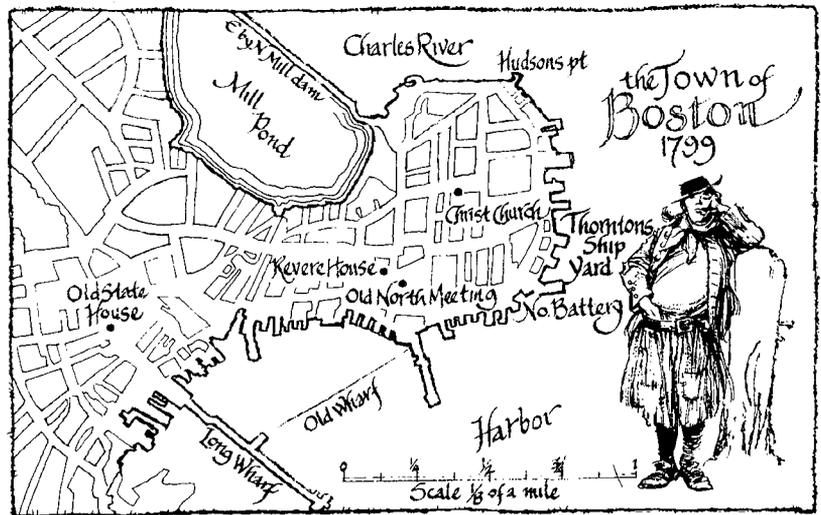
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Captain Carmick Joins the *Constitution*

Boston

9 July 1799



The 9th of July 1799 was a bright summery day in Boston as Marine Captain Daniel Carmick alighted from the coach which had carried him from Newport, Rhode Island. Despite the year-old undeclared war with France, the harbor was choked with ships and the waterfront bustling with activity, a portion of which was absorbed in illicit trade with the French West Indies. At the long wharf in Edmund Hartt's shipyard stood the *Constitution*, fitted out for a West Indian cruise. All that was wanting was a full complement of seamen and Marines.

For months, the frigate's small Marine detachment, composed of recruits, had suffered the abuse of the *Constitution's* captain, Samuel Nicholson. Despite the pleas of Marine Captain Lemuel Clark, a personal friend and appointee of President John Adams, Nicholson had refused to allow them to drill on board, thinking Marines of no use except as guards ashore. In May, Nicholson was replaced by Silas Talbot, who held a similar view of Marines. Disgraced at not being able to command his men, Captain Clark requested relief a short time later, outwardly complaining of ill health and the severe financial burden of supporting a large family. Not wanting to appoint Reuben Lilley, the "decripid" senior lieutenant, to command the Marines, Major Commandant William Ward Burrows instead ordered Captain Carmick, then at New York, to Boston.

Stepping down from the coach shortly before noon, Carmick was presented with a disturbing picture. Before him stood a sergeant and three privates, their hats slightly tipped in the customary salute; elsewhere, recruits out of uniform were scattered about, watering the ship. His sword slung by his side, the Marine sergeant wore the prescribed 1797 short, Navy-buttoned, blue coat, edged, turned-up, and belted with red; a red vest; blue, red-edged pantaloons; a black wool hat, cocked on one side with black cockade; and two yellow epaulets on his shoulders.

Except for the epaulets and hats without bindings or cockades, which Captain Carmick noted were missing, the three privates were similarly uniformed.

As the Corps was but a year old, the prescribed uniform was difficult, if not impossible, to procure. As a result, U.S. Army artillery and riflemen's coats and trousers were re-worked to fit the Marine pattern. It is little wonder that Carmick, in writing to the Commandant after inspecting the detachment, reported that he thought it "not possible to produce such another shabby set of animals in this world."

Five days later, Carmick and his 59-man detachment put to sea. During the voyage that would first take them to Norfolk, where they would receive a shipment of uniforms, and then to the West Indies, the Marines were continually drilled on deck, 15 men at a time, while the remainder were trained on the great guns. By late August, Carmick was able to report that his men were decently dressed, despite the rigors of shipboard duty, and were becoming adept in the use of firelocks.

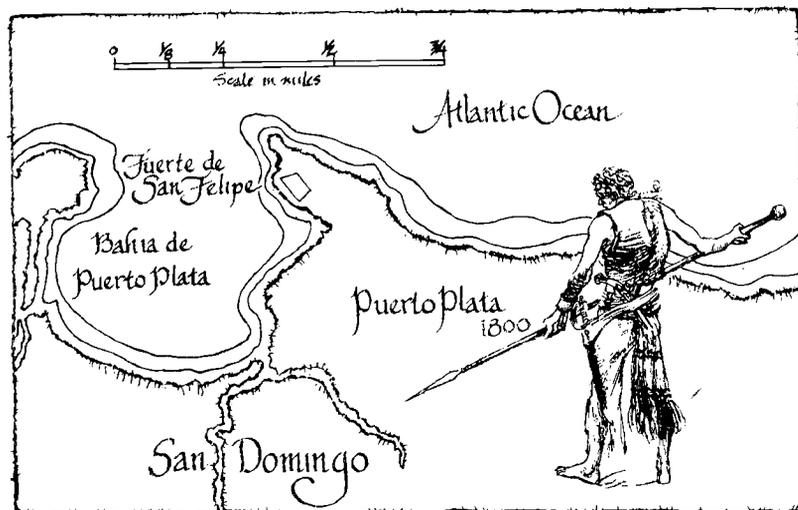
The painting and plate description are based upon the following source materials: "Uniforms for the Navy of the United States of America," dtd 24Aug1797 (Area File, Area 11, RG 45, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); Captain Daniel Carmick ltrs to Major Commandant William Ward Burrows, dtd 9Jul1799, 12Jul1799, 16Jul1799, 19Aug1799, and 24Aug1799 (Commandant's Letters Received, RG 127, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); Captain Lemuel Clark ltr to Major Commandant William Ward Burrows, dtd 9Jul1799, (Commandant's Letters Received, RG 127, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); Samuel Adams Drake, *Old Landmarks and Historic Personages of Boston* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1900).



Cutting Out of the *Sandwich*

Puerto Plata,
Santo Domingo

11 May 1800



The American frigate *Constitution*, under the command of Commodore Silas Talbot, stood off Puerto Plata, Santo Domingo, on the afternoon of 10 May 1800. She had been cruising nearby for some time in order to protect American merchantmen from privateers during the period of open hostilities with France, and Talbot had been informed that a former British packet, now the notorious French 14-gun privateer *Sandwich*, was anchored within the harbor. Having detained, a few days before, the sloop *Sally*, which was scheduled to re-enter the port before sailing for America, Talbot conceived of a plan to man the sloop with a large contingent of sailors and Marines, to enter the harbor, take the Frenchman by surprise, and put an end to her raiding activities.

Shortly after sunset, the *Sally* was brought alongside the *Constitution* and about 90 sailors and Marines climbed on board. Talbot's first lieutenant, Isaac Hull, was put in charge of the raiding party and command of the Marines was given to Captain Daniel Carmick and Lieutenant William Amory. Their mission, Talbot told Hull, was to enter the harbor, board the *Sandwich*, and carry her off; if that proved impossible, they were either to sink or burn her. Like the Greeks in the wooden horse at Troy, the men were to remain below during the entire voyage. Only Hull, the *Sally*'s captain, and six sailors, enough to work the sloop, would stay on deck.

In the morning, the sloop was still a distance from Puerto Plata, but a fresh sea breeze sprang up, and by 1000 she succeeded in entering the harbor. Not a man was on the *Sally*'s deck as she silently moved along the *Sandwich*'s starboard side. As the anchor was released, the signal was given, and the *Constitution*'s sailors and Marines sprang from the hold and boarded the privateer "like devils . . . carrying all before them and taking possession of the Corvette without the loss of a man."

Standing on a deck littered with canvas, guns, roping,

and spars, Captain Carmick, dressed in a uniform that had not changed since that prescribed in 1797, orders the last Frenchmen out of the hold to which they had retreated. Nearby, Lieutenant Hull, wearing the blue naval uniform of the period and holding a pistol, endeavors to restrain his men, eager to have their revenge for French actions against American ships and seamen. Surrounded by the *Constitution*'s crew, the corvette's captain, hat in hand, awaits his fate along with his surprised men.

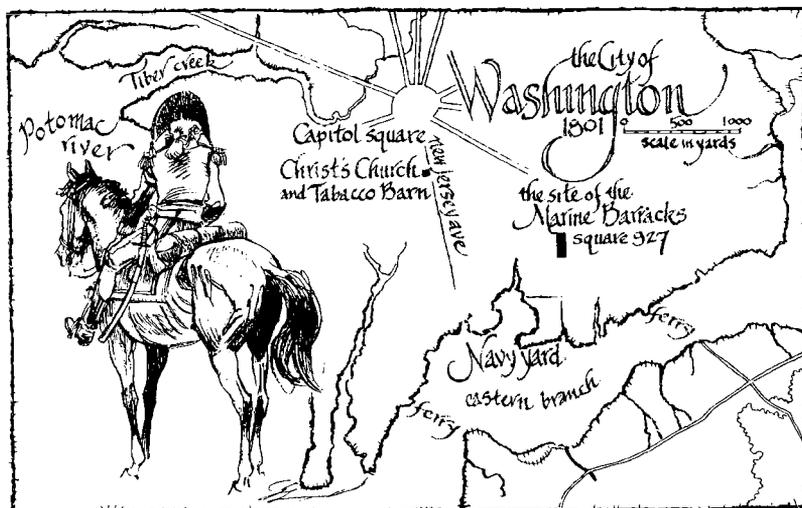
After tying up their prisoners, Captain Carmick, Lieutenant Amory, and the Marines took the *Sandwich*'s boat and headed for the Spanish fort. With muskets over their heads and water up to their necks, they landed, took possession of the fort, spiked the cannon, and returned to the ship, all "before the commanding officer had time to recollect and prepare himself for defense." During the rest of the day, the *Sandwich* was rigged, her guns scaled and reloaded, and her royal yards set aloft. By midnight, all was ready and with a strong breeze off the land, the corvette got underway and stood out of the harbor.

The painting and plate description are based upon the following source materials: "Capture of the French privateer *Sandwich* in the harbor of Puerto Plata, S.D., May 11, 1800, by a cutting-out expedition under Lieutenant Isaac Hull, U.S. Navy, from the U.S. Frigate *Constitution*, Captain Silas Talbot, U.S. Navy," oil painting by R. A. Salmon (Boston Athenaeum); on-site research of fortification and harbor by resident military attache Lieutenant Colonel Dominik G. Nargele, USMC (Ret); Captain Daniel Carmick ltr to a friend, dtd 12May1800, in *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia), 2Jun1800; Captain Silas Talbot ltr to Secretary of the Navy, 11May1800, in Captain Dudley W. Knox, ed., *Naval Documents Related to the Quasi-War Between the United States and France: Naval Operations from January 1800 to May 1800* (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1937), pp. 503-504.



Placing the Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

31 March 1801



On 16 March 1801, an unemployed Washington bricklayer, Benjamin Bryan, wrote to President Thomas Jefferson asking his assistance in obtaining work on the “Barracks to be built for the Marine Corps of the United States.” While it is unknown whether Bryan received the President’s favor, work could not proceed on the barracks for no site had been selected.

Since moving to the new capital with the government almost a year before, the Marines had been shunted from one encampment to another, finally ending up in rented War Department buildings for the winter after spending the summer months in tents on a hill overlooking the Potomac River. Always persistent in his attempts to obtain permanent accommodations for his men, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant William Ward Burrows was overjoyed in early March when he learned from the Secretary of the Navy, Benjamin Stoddert, that Congress had appropriated \$20,000 for the purchase of land and the construction of barracks. But, where to build? “Having no predilection for any particular spot of ground,” the Secretary continued, “I leave that point to be determined by yourself,” but he hoped Burrows’ decision would be made quickly so as to relieve the public of future rental expenses.

An avid horseman and a personal friend but political opponent of the President, Burrows joined Jefferson, who had always taken a keen interest in the development of the capital city, on Sunday morning, the last day of March 1801, as the latter took his daily exercise. Together they rode from the White House down treeless Pennsylvania Avenue to Capitol Hill, and then toward the Eastern Branch (Anacostia River) and the Navy Yard.

Riding among the emerging tulip poplars, magnolias, hawthorn, and azaleas, down what is now New Jersey Avenue, the two passed Christ’s Church, an old tobacco barn used by Washington Episcopalians for Sunday ser-

vices. Mounted on “Wildair,” his favorite bay, Jefferson is dressed in his customary suit of black. His carriage equally erect, the 43-year-old, South Carolina-born Commandant wears the blue officers’ breeches and coat, the latter with long red lapels embroidered with nine common naval buttons, a standing collar of red, and two gold epaulets. The gold epaulets on each shoulder signify an officer above the rank of captain, there being no other distinguishing mark of rank separating a major, lieutenant colonel, or colonel. In full-dress uniform, according to the 1797 regulation promulgated by Secretary of War James McHenry, Burrows carries a small naval sword and wears a black chapeau adorned with black cockade.

Close to midday, Lieutenant Colonel Burrows took leave of the President, who expressed a desire that the barracks be located near the Navy Yard within easy marching distance of the Capitol. The only undeveloped tract of land meeting the President’s wishes lay between Eighth and Ninth and “G” and “I” Streets in the southeast quadrant of the city. Two months after their ride, President Jefferson authorized purchase of the square. Construction began that fall on the barracks and a home for the Commandant. Burrows would not see their completion, however. In 1804, political intrigue and ill health forced his resignation and within a year he was dead.

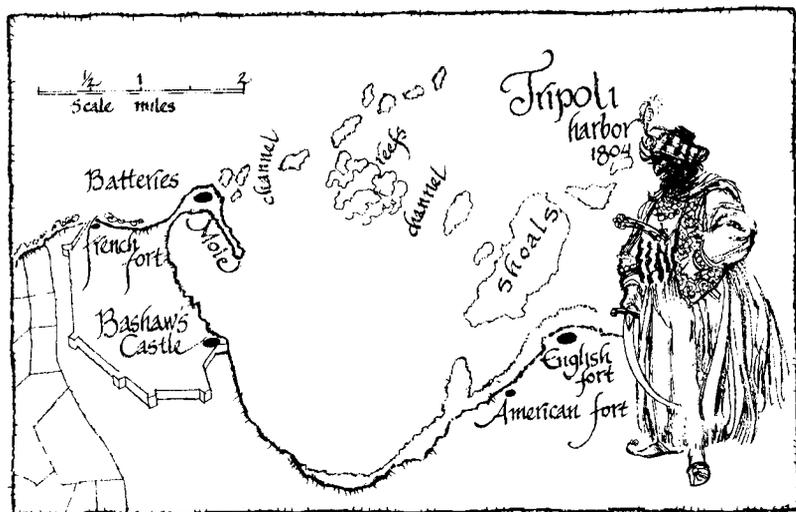
Among the sources used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: Lieutenant Colonel William Ward Burrows ltr to Captain Franklin Wharton, dtd 31Mar1801 (Commandant’s Letterbook, RG 127, National Archives, Washington, D.C.); Benjamin Bryan ltr to Thomas Jefferson, dtd 16Mar1801 (Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.); Benjamin Stoddert ltr to Lieutenant Colonel William Ward Burrows, dtd 6Mar1801 (Miscellaneous Letters Sent, RG 45, National Archives); Sarah N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson* (Cambridge: University Press, 1939); Gaillard Hunt, ed., *The First Forty Years of Washington Society in the Family Letters of Margaret Bayard Smith* (New York: Frederick Unger Publishing Co., 1965).



Marines at the Great Guns

Off Tripoli

3 August 1804



The Bashaw of Tripoli, regarding as trifling the proposed annual payment of \$10,000 for his friendship, again refused the American offer of a peace treaty to end his war on Yankee merchantmen in the Mediterranean and to ransom captives. Not content with continuing to punish Tripolitan intransigence with a passive blockade, Navy Captain Edward Preble now thought it “absolutely necessary to our National and Naval Character in the Eastern World, that we humble that Regency and bring the Bashaw to our own terms.” To accomplish this, Preble decided on “a bold stroke against Tripoli—One successful dash at them [which] will effect a peace, and make them remember the war.”

On the afternoon of 3 August 1804, a small American squadron of brigs and schooners led by the frigate *Constitution*, under the command of Captain Preble, launched the first of a series of five attacks against the port of Tripoli. Mounting only thirty 24-pounders on her gun deck and six borrowed long 24-pounders on her spar deck, the *Constitution* and her consorts faced a walled city protected by forts and shore batteries that mounted 115 heavy guns. These were supplemented by numerous gunboats, each armed with a single 24-pounder. Under cover of the frigate, the smaller American vessels advanced within point-blank range of the shore batteries and engaged the enemy’s gunboat flotilla. In an action that lasted two hours, the smaller craft engaged the Tripolitan flotilla in heavy fighting, which at times involved hand-to-hand encounters with heavily armed enemy seamen.

On board the flagship, while seamen on the gun deck fired broadside after broadside into the city, Marines under Captain John Hall and Lieutenant Robert Greenleaf left their normal battle stations in the fighting tops to man the long 24-pounders on the spar deck. In the painting, striped coats and muskets, Marines ready the long guns for another shot as the frigate tacks into position. Their ac-

curate fire, which—Preble noted—helped drive the “Tripolines out of the castle and brought down the steeple of a mosque,” merited the “highest encomiums.”

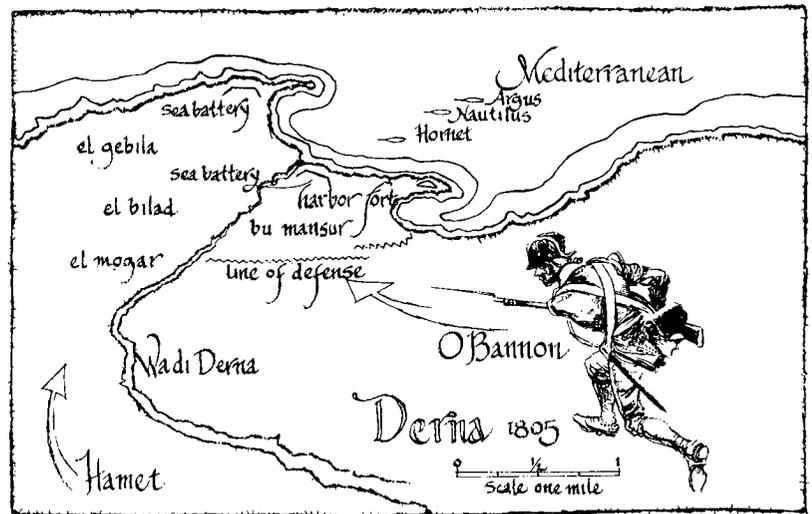
With every cannon ball hurled against the crumbling walls of Tripoli during the remainder of August, the Bashaw’s demands seemed to tumble. But Preble, who was not disposed to make any payment whatever, was soon replaced by newly arrived Captain Samuel Barron who, with the aid of Tobias Lear, chief American diplomatic representative in the area, negotiated a treaty with the Bashaw that called for the payment of \$60,000 in exchange for friendship and the release of American prisoners.

The sources for the painting and plate description were: detailed research by the artist into ship construction to ensure the accurate portrayal of the *Constitution*’s spar deck; Captain Edward Preble ltr to Tobias Lear, dtd 3May1804 and Captain Edward Preble ltr to Secretary of the Navy, dtd 18Sep1804 in Office of Naval Records and Library, *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers: Naval Operations From April to September 6, 1804* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), pp. 82, 293-310.



The Assault on Derna Tripoli

27 April 1805



A mile from the Mediterranean Sea, the Tripolitan city of Derna looked quiet in the morning light of 27 April 1805. From atop the hills which ringed the city, Navy Agent William Eaton could look down on Governor Mustifa's defenses: a shore battery of eight 9-pounders, temporary breastworks to the northeast, and a 10-inch howitzer mounted on the palace terrace. On the horizon Eaton could see the 10-gun American sloop *Hornet*, the 12-gun sloop *Nautilus*, and the 16-gun brig *Argus*, under the command of Captain Isaac Hull. Around him was his motley 400-man army, which had marched more than 500 miles across the desert from Alexandria. The main element, apart from Eaton, consisted of seven Marines and one midshipman from the *Argus*, under Marine Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon. Together with a number of Greek mercenaries and a band of restive Arabs and Bedouins led by the half-reluctant Bashaw Hamet, they stood before the city, awaiting the governor's reply to their demand of free passage through the town.

As the day progressed, a fieldpiece was landed from the *Argus* and a letter arrived from the governor: His answer, "My head or yours, Mustifa." After the flag of truce returned, Eaton signaled the squadron to move closer and open fire on the shore battery. Eaton's army, divided into two columns, the first led by O'Bannon and his Marines and the second by Hamet's Bedouin horsemen, then moved against the town. By three in the afternoon, the shore battery was silenced, then abandoned by its gun crews, who joined the defenders facing Eaton. Already outnumbered, and with the enemy's fire becoming increasingly effective, Eaton's line, except for the Marines, was thrown into confusion. With failure staring him in the face, the American Navy Agent daringly ordered a charge.

It is assumed that the Marines at Derna had not yet received the new uniforms authorized in 1804, therefore,

they are wearing the 1797 uniform: a blue cloth coat, lapelled and faced in red, with two rows of Navy buttons; a red vest; shirt; white summer linen overalls; and a "common hat" trimmed in yellow, and turned up on the left side with a leather cockade.

Lieutenant O'Bannon, leading the charge, wears the pre-1804 officer's undress uniform: plain blue cloth coat, laped and faced with red, with eagle, shield, and foul anchor buttons; a white vest; shirt; white linen overalls; and the common hat. As a first lieutenant, he wears one gold epaulet on the right shoulder. Instead of a musket, Lieutenant O'Bannon wields a naval sword.

To the Marines' rear are Navy Agent Eaton, Midshipman George Washington Mann, and a collection of Arab and Greek mercenaries. Eaton, who fancied himself a general, is dressed accordingly, and carries an American long rifle. Midshipman Mann waves a dirk. In the background lay the *Hornet*, *Nautilus*, and *Argus*.

Taken by surprise, Mustifa's line broke, most men running while others kept up a sporadic fire. Passing through a shower of musketry, the Marines, Greeks, and Arab footmen pressed the attack toward the waterfront battery. Within an hour and a half of beginning the attack, the Tripolitan colors were hauled down, and Lieutenant O'Bannon, with Midshipman Mann at his side, raised the American flag over the city of Derna.

The source materials used in the preparation of the painting and plate description were: contemporary portraits of William Eaton; details of the painting "The Bombardment of Tripoli," dtd 1805, by Michaele F. Corne (Naval Academy Museum); "Uniform for the Navy of the United States of America," *Columbian Centinel* (Boston) 13Sep1797; Charles Prentiss, *The Life of the Late Gen. William Eaton* (Brookfield: E. Merriam & Co., 1813); and Glenn Tucker, *Dawn Like Thunder: The Barbary Wars and the Birth of the U.S. Navy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963).