



TUN TAVERN

The traditional birthplace of the United States Marine Corps, authorized by a resolution of the Continental Congress, November 10, 1775.

ENGRAVING BY ALBERT MOERK, 1904. (BASED ON HISTORICAL RESEARCH. THE TAVERN WAS DESTROYED BY FIRE IN 1781.)



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

Birthday Ball





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It is not something that can be inherited, nor can it be purchased. No amount of money will buy it. It is not for sale and it may not be borrowed. It isn't a birthright and it doesn't come easily. It must be earned. It requires honor, courage, and commitment. Its reward is the result of hard work and even spilled blood. It is a sacrifice. It remembers those lives that went before. Once earned, it can never be taken away. You, and the brotherhood of the Corps, maintain it forever; the title...

UNITED STATES MARINE.





Our Proud History:

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

250 YEARS OF HONOR, COURAGE, AND COMMITMENT

From a spirited gathering at Tun Tavern in 1775 to today's elite global force, the United States Marine Corps has stood at the forefront of American history. Over two and a half centuries, Marines have adapted to new battlefields, technologies, and challenges while holding fast to the values that define them.

This timeline traces the Corps' remarkable journey through its uniforms, weapons, and defining moments in combat, revealing how tradition and innovation have marched side by side. From the green coats of the Continental Marines to digital camouflage and precision warfare, the story of the Marines is one of sacrifice and enduring pride.



1775

FOUNDING OF THE CONTINENTAL MARINES

On 10 November 1775, the Continental Congress established two battalions of Marines, with Captain Samuel Nicholas appointed as the first Commandant. Tun Tavern in Philadelphia is celebrated as the birthplace of the Corps. From the start, Marines were envisioned as adaptable forces, capable of serving aboard ships and conducting operations ashore.



1900

“CHINA MARINES”

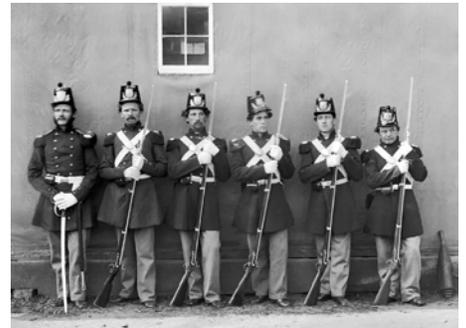
From 1900-1941, U.S. Marines were stationed in cities such as Peking (Beijing), Tientsin (Tianjin), and Shanghai, China. Their mission was to protect American citizens, businesses, and legations during a time of frequent civil unrest, foreign rivalry, and rising nationalist movements in China.



1898

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

In June 1898, Marines landed at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where they seized and held a strategic position against Spanish forces. Their success provided the U.S. Navy with a vital coaling and operations base in the Caribbean. The swift and decisive action in Cuba reinforced the Marines' reputation as America's premier amphibious force.



1861-1865

CIVIL WAR

Marines served primarily aboard Union naval vessels, manning shipboard guns and enforcing blockades along the Confederate coast. They also fought in land engagements, including the First Battle of Bull Run. While smaller in number compared to the Army, Marines provided critical naval support and flexibility during one of America's most turbulent eras.



1776

BATTLE OF NEW PROVIDENCE

The Marines' first amphibious landing took place in March 1776, when they stormed the island of New Providence in the Bahamas. They captured much-needed gunpowder and supplies from the British, demonstrating their ability to strike swiftly from the sea, a hallmark of Marine operations ever since.



1777

FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN MARINE

The very first known African American Marine was **John Martin**, a slave from Wilmington, Delaware. He enlisted in the Continental Marines during the Revolutionary War, serving aboard the brig *Reprisal*. Tragically, he was lost at sea when the *Reprisal* sank near the coast of France in 1777.



1783

REVOLUTIONARY CLOSING CAMPAIGNS

Marines contributed to major naval battles and coastal raids, helping harass and weaken British forces. Although disbanded in 1783 at the war's end, the Marines left behind a legacy of resilience and expeditionary skill that would be revived when the U.S. Marine Corps was permanently re-established in 1798.



1846-1848

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Marines played a decisive role in the Mexican-American War, most famously during the assault on Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City. Their courage in storming the fortress inspired part of the Marine Corps Hymn, "From the Halls of Montezuma." The victory cemented the Marines' reputation as a force capable of bold amphibious assaults and fierce land combat.



1820s

"LEATHERNECK" NICKNAME

In the 1820s-30s, the leather "stock" collar was added to the Marines uniform, giving rise to nickname "Leatherneck." The collar protected against sword slashes and improved posture. In this era, Marines wielded rifled muskets and implemented naval cannons. This weaponry improved accuracy and effectiveness in coastal and shipboard engagements.



1801-1815

BARBARY WARS

U.S. Marines fought in North Africa to protect American merchant ships from pirate attacks and secure freedom of navigation. Marines famously landed "to the shores of Tripoli," earning lasting distinction for their courage and discipline. Their service during these early 19th-century campaigns helped establish the Marine Corps' reputation as a ready and adaptable expeditionary force.



1912

BANANA WARS

Nicaragua (1912–1933): Marines help fight rebels and build the Nicaraguan National Guard.

Haiti (1915–1934): Marines fight Cacos rebels and reform Haitian forces.

Dominican Republic, Honduras, and others: Frequent deployments to protect U.S. economic interests, maintain political stability in nations with fragile governments, and prevent rival powers from gaining a foothold.



1914

VERACRUZ, MEXICO

In April 1914, U.S. Marines executed an amphibious landing at Veracruz, Mexico, seizing the port to prevent arms shipments from reaching the Mexican government amid revolution and political unrest. The operation showcased the Marines' growing expertise in expeditionary warfare, securing a strategic objective with minimal casualties while demonstrating discipline and professionalism.



1917

U.S. ENTERS WWI

The 5th Marine Regiment, activated in June 1917 and deployed to France that same month, joined the U.S. Army's 2nd Division as part of the American Expeditionary Force. The Marines prepared for front-line service in a modern war of machine guns and artillery. Their arrival marked a turning point: the Corps moved from expeditionary policing to large-scale combat operations.



1949

FULL INTEGRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MARINES

Following President Truman's Executive Order 9981, the Marine Corps fully integrated African American Marines into all units in 1949. This milestone ended the era of segregated service, including the separate Montford Point facility, and allowed Black Marines to train, fight, and lead alongside their fellow Marines as equals.



1948

WOMEN'S ARMED SERVICES INTEGRATION

In 1948, women were granted permanent status in the Marine Corps through the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. **Colonel Katherine A. Towle** became the first director of Women Marines, leading a new era of opportunity and recognition for women serving their country in uniform.



1945

IWO JIMA

On February, 23 1945, during the fierce Battle of Iwo Jima, Marines raised the American flag atop Mount Suribachi. Captured by photographer Joe Rosenthal, the image became one of the most iconic in American history. It symbolized the valor and sacrifice of Marines in the Pacific campaign, as well as the broader struggle for victory in World War II. The flag raising remains a lasting emblem of Marine courage and unity.



1918

FIRST WOMAN MARINE

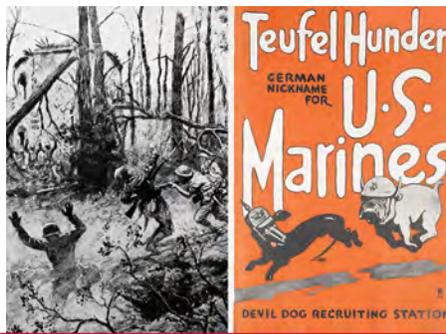
On August 13, 1918, **Opha Mae Johnson** became the first woman to enlist in the United States Marine Corps, opening the door for more than 300 other women who joined shortly after during World War I. Serving primarily in clerical roles so that more men could fight overseas, these “Marinettes,” marked a historic milestone for women in military service and paved the way for future generations.



1943

WOMEN’S RESERVE

Established in 1943, the Marine Corps Women’s Reserve allowed women to serve for the first time in the Corps’ history. More than 20,000 women enlisted, taking on clerical, technical, and aviation roles to “free a Marine to fight.” Their dedication and professionalism proved invaluable to the war effort and paved the way for women’s continued service in the Marine Corps.



BATTLE OF BELLEAU WOOD (FRANCE)

In June 1918, the Marines fought against seasoned German forces. The Marines launched repeated counterattacks through wheat fields and dense woods, often facing machine gun fire at close range. The Germans, stunned by the Marines’ tenacity, gave them the nickname “Teufel Hunden,” which translates to “Hell Hounds” or “Devil Dogs.”



MONTFORD POINT MARINES

Between August 26, 1942 and 1949, nearly 20,000 African-American men trained at the segregated facility known as Montford Point, adjacent to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Under strenuous conditions and amid institutional resistance, these Marines persevered to serve with distinction in World War II and beyond, paving the way for racial integration in the Corps.



END OF THE GREAT WAR

Marines of the 4th Brigade, U.S. 2nd Division took part in the arduous crossing of the Meuse River and continued forward toward the German lines even as the armistice approached on Nov. 11, 1918. Following the cease-fire, Marines also participated in the occupation of the Rhineland (1918-19), marching into Germany as part of the Allied advance and helping ensure the terms of peace were observed.



1942

WWII PACIFIC THEATER

Through a series of grueling island-hopping campaigns, from Guadalcanal to Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, Marines faced fierce Japanese resistance in brutal combat environments. Their ability to execute amphibious assaults, adapt to jungle warfare, and sustain relentless pressure was critical to securing Allied victory in the Pacific.



1950

KOREAN WAR

As the Korean War settled into a stalemate near the 38th parallel, Marines fought in intense defensive engagements such as the Punchbowl, Bunker Hill, and Outpost Vegas. These battles demanded endurance in trench-like conditions reminiscent of World War I. At the same time, Marine aviation units provided close-air support and reconnaissance, refining the air-ground team concept that became a hallmark of Marine operations.

INCHON LANDING

September 15, 1950: The 1st Marine Division executed a daring amphibious assault at Inchon, a port city with extreme tides and challenging terrain. The landing turned the tide of the war, cutting North Korean supply lines and enabling UN forces to retake Seoul. It stands as one of the most brilliant amphibious operations in military history.

RECAPTURE OF SEOUL

Late September 1950: After landing at Inchon, Marines spearheaded the street-to-street fighting to liberate Seoul from North Korean forces. Their disciplined urban combat ensured the swift retaking of South Korea’s capital, restoring a vital center of government and morale.



2001–PRESENT

GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

Following the September 11 attacks, Marines deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, leading major operations such as Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. They fought insurgencies, secured key cities like Fallujah, and trained local forces, demonstrating resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment in a new era of global conflict.

1990–1991

GULF WAR

Marines led a rapid ground assault that liberated Kuwait International Airport in less than three hours. This operation marked one of the fastest and most decisive advances in Marine Corps history. Nearly 1,000 women Marines were deployed to the Persian Gulf in combat support roles.

1983

PEACEKEEPING & COMBAT

During the 1980s, Marines took part in key peacekeeping and combat missions, including the 1983 Beirut deployment, where 241 U.S. service members were killed in a tragic barracks bombing. They also led the 1983 Grenada invasion (Operation Urgent Fury), showcasing rapid-response capabilities and dedication to protecting American interests abroad.



1965

1968

BATTLE OF CHOSIN RESERVOIR

November-December 1950: Surrounded by overwhelming Chinese forces in freezing conditions, the 1st Marine Division fought its way out with remarkable discipline and courage. The "Frozen Chosin" remains a legendary symbol of Marine endurance.

VIETNAM WAR

The Vietnam War tested the Marines' ability to fight in dense jungles, challenging terrain, and complex political conditions. They conducted amphibious landings, jungle patrols, and helicopter-borne assaults across South Vietnam, demonstrating adaptability and resilience in unconventional warfare.

BATTLE OF HUẾ: TET OFFENSIVE

Marines were pivotal in the Battle of Hue, engaging in fierce urban combat to retake the city from North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. The battle showcased their discipline in close-quarters fighting, clearing buildings and streets while minimizing civilian casualties under extreme conditions.



1976

1975

1968 (continued)

WOMEN AS DRILL INSTRUCTORS

In the 1970s, the Marine Corps expanded opportunities for women, allowing them to serve as drill instructors for the first time. This breakthrough marked a turning point in the integration of women into leadership and training roles, shaping future generations of Marines with the same rigor and standards expected across the Corps.

END OF THE VIETNAM WAR

As the Vietnam War ended in 1975, Marines carried out the heroic evacuation of Saigon during Operation Frequent Wind. Amid chaos and danger, they rescued thousands of Americans and South Vietnamese allies, marking both the end of U.S. involvement and a testament to Marine courage under fire.

KHE SANH & I CORPS OPERATIONS

Marines faced siege conditions, artillery barrages, and constant ambushes. These campaigns highlighted the Marines' endurance, coordination with artillery and air support, and commitment to holding strategic positions despite isolation and enemy pressure.



2012

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL - MONTFORD POINT MARINES

The Montford Point Marines, the first African Americans to serve in the Marine Corps, were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal. This honor recognized their courage, service, and trailblazing role in breaking racial barriers, paving the way for an integrated and stronger Marine Corps.



2013

GROUND COMBAT INTEGRATION FOR WOMEN

Between 2013 and 2016, the Marine Corps implemented Ground Combat Integration, allowing women to serve in combat roles for the first time. By 2016, all Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) were officially opened to women, marking a historic step toward full gender equality in Marine Corps service and leadership.



2014

IRAQ & SYRIA

From 2014 to 2021, Marines fought alongside coalition forces to defeat ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Facing intense urban combat, suicide bombers, IEDs, and drone attacks, they provided vital artillery and fire support, trained local troops, and helped reclaim key territories from terrorist control.



Semper Fidelis:

ALWAYS FAITHFUL

“Always Faithful” is more than a motto; it is a way of life. From the shores of Tripoli to the mountains of Afghanistan, the history of the United States Marine Corps is one of courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication to duty.

For 250 years, Marines have stood ready to defend our nation’s freedoms on land, at sea, and in the air, often in the most challenging and dangerous circumstances. Their legacy is written in the countless acts of bravery that have shaped the course of history and protected generations of Americans.

As we gather for this banquet, we pause to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Marine veterans among us, whose service and example continue to inspire.

We also extend our deepest thanks to the men and women currently serving in the Marine Corps around the world. Your commitment, strength, and honor uphold the proud traditions of the Corps and the security of our nation.



2017

**AFGHANISTAN:
HELMAND PROVINCE**

Marines returned to Helmand Province to support Afghan forces in counterinsurgency operations against the Taliban. Operating in one of Afghanistan’s most dangerous regions, they faced ambushes, IEDs, and constant risk while training local troops, securing key bases, and reinforcing U.S. commitments until the final withdrawal in 2021.



2020

SOMALIA

Since 2020, Marines have operated in Somalia against al-Shabaab extremists, conducting missions in remote and hostile terrain. They’ve trained and advised Somali forces, supported precision counterterrorism strikes, and strengthened security at forward bases, advancing regional stability and U.S. interests in the ongoing fight against violent extremism in East Africa.



2023

RED SEA & YEMEN

From 2023 to 2025, Marines operated in the Red Sea to defend vital shipping lanes from Houthi missile and drone attacks launched from Yemen. Embarked aboard Navy vessels, they conducted air defense, maritime security, and deterrence operations, protecting international trade routes and ensuring freedom of navigation in a volatile region.



2025

**MARINES IN THE
CARIBBEAN**

Marines are actively engaged in counter-narcotics operations in the Caribbean Sea, targeting drug cartels linked to Venezuela. This mission involves deploying warships, fighter jets, and conducting missile strikes on suspected drug vessels, aiming to disrupt illicit trafficking and enhance regional security.



**JOINT MILITARY
EXERCISES: JAPAN &
SOUTH KOREA**

In Japan, U.S. Marines participate in training programs such as Iron Fist 25 and Resolute Dragon 25, enhancing amphibious and multi-domain capabilities. In South Korea, Marines collaborate in exercises like Ulchi Freedom Shield 25 and Freedom Edge 25, focusing on regional defense and interoperability.



**MARINES IN THE
MIDDLE EAST**

Marines are currently deployed across the Middle East, including Iraq, Syria, and the Red Sea, to support counterterrorism efforts and protect maritime shipping lanes. They conduct operations against groups like ISIS and Houthi rebels, ensuring regional stability and safeguarding U.S. interests.



250th Birthday

CHALLENGE COIN

Challenge coins have a long history within the militaries of the United States and, indeed, around the world.

Starting out as a form of identification, there is a tale of a downed World War I American pilot making his way back to friendly lines and showing his challenge coin as his only form of identification to the French soldiers. The French recognized the unit crest and rather than executing the would-be prisoner, gave him a bottle of wine and escorted him back to American positions.

Today, challenge coins have been widely adopted not only throughout the military, but often by first responders such as police and fire units. Those in possession of a challenge coin are supposed to carry one on them at all times. If someone shows their coin in challenge to another, and the other person cannot produce their coin, they owe the challenger a drink. If they do have their coin, the challenger must buy.

Coins have also evolved to serve purposes of unit spirit and morale, and as an on-the-spot award or recognition.



We are pleased to recognize the contribution of our sponsors through the presentation of challenge coins commemorating the 250th USMC Birthday.

Sequence OF EVENTS

Cocktail Hour	
Narrator Of Ceremonies	G. Victoria McCoy, Commandant, Department of Pa-MCL
Video Address From Honored Marine Corps Leadership	39th Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps and the 20th Sergeant Major of The United States Marine Corps
Welcome	
Invocation	Colonel Geoffrey Bailey, Chaplain - U,S, Army War College
Entry of the Official Party	
Recognition To Fallen Comrades	
National Anthem	
Message From The 13th Commandant Of The Marine Corps	General John A. Lejeune Lisa Solarcak, Depart-PA MCL, Depart. Protocol Officer
Cake Cutting Ceremony	Colonel William Donnelly, Senior Marine Instructor, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle
Recognition of Distinguished Guest	Larry Braxton, Master Sergeant, Retired
Guest of Honor	Introduction: General James T. Conway, 34th Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps, Retired Guest of Honor: Sergeant Major Carlton W. Kent, 16th Sergeant Major of the U.S. Marine Corps, Retired
Presentation	G. Victoria McCoy, Commandant, Department of Pa-MCL
Video	"God Bless The USA"
Dinner	Shippensburg Swing Band
Dance	D.J. Mast Productions



CENTRAL-PA
MARINE
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A non-profit charitable organization 501(c)(3)

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Welcome to the Central-PA Marine Associates (CPAMA) Birthday Ball, celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

On behalf of CPAMA, I thank all of you for your attendance.

This evening, we assemble to celebrate two and a half centuries of honor, courage, and commitment in the illustrious history of our Corps. Furthermore, we pay homage to generations of Marines who have carried a Warrior's Spirit into every clime and place.

From the dawning faithfulness of forming two Battalions of Continental Marines in 1775, to the Devil Dogs serving around the globe today, the Corps has embraced every challenge uncompromised, unmatched, and unwavering.

We are especially proud and privileged this evening to have with us eight of America's Greatest Generation of veterans—eight World War II heroes. Their courage, sacrifice, and devotion to our beloved America have significantly affected the very fiber of this evening's celebration.

Their love of country is an inspiration to all who embrace America, highlighted more especially this evening as we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps. Whether currently serving in the Corps or a former Marine, we thank you for your service. We salute you for your valor!

As you glance around this evening's imposing celebration, be mindful that there is no other brotherhood like earning the title of United States Marine: an earned title that you retain for eternity!

CPAMA first celebrated the birthday of our Corps on November 14, 2015. To learn about CPAMA's mission, visit our website at: Centralpamarineassociates.org

Happy 250th Birthday Marines, and "Semper Fidelis."

L. E. Braxton

Larry E. Braxton

Master Sergeant, US Marine Corps (Ret)

President, Central Pennsylvania Marine Associates



UNCOMMON VALOR

Tonight, as we gather in celebration, we are reminded of the enduring legacy of the United States Marine Corps. From the hallowed grounds of Arlington, where the Iwo Jima Memorial stands in tribute, to every battlefield where Marines have given their lives in defense of our nation since 1775, we honor the bravery, sacrifice, and commitment of those who have come before us.



MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

DEPARTMENT OF PENNSYLVANIA

Welcome to all, and thank you for allowing us to join you in celebrating the 250th Birthday of our beloved Marine Corps. Here is a little information on who we are: A veterans organization for Active, Reserve, Retired, and Veteran US Marines and FMF Navy personnel.

We were founded to perpetuate the traditions and spirit of all Marines who proudly wear or have worn the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor of the Corps.

There are over 1,000 detachments Nationwide, with Pennsylvania being home to over 65 of them.

Membership Eligibility includes:

- Marines with honorable active or reserve service in the U.S. Marine Corps for no less than 90 days of active service.
- FMF Navy personnel who have earned the Marine Corps Device and served no less than 90 days with an active Marine FMF Unit.
- Friends and family who want to support the mission of the Marine Corps League are eligible to join as Associate members.

The League is dedicated to fostering the ideals of Americanism and patriotic volunteerism that make this nation what it is. We do this with our support of Toys for Tots, participating in Funeral Honors, and helping Marines and their families in times of need. We have also established programs for Marksmanship, scholarships, Scouting, and recognizing ROTC and JROTC cadets.

I hope that everyone enjoys great camaraderie this evening, and safe travels to all when you depart.

Semper Fi,

Victoria McCoy

Commandant

Marine Corps League

Department of Pennsylvania



1891 US Marine Band

PLEASE JOIN US IN A *Time of Song*

We invite you to enjoy a special performance of the Marine Corps Hymn, the oldest official song of the U.S. Armed Forces.

For generations, its stirring melody has inspired Marines and embodied our motto, *Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful)*. Once played to rally troops on the battlefield, it now serves to honor those who have served, are serving, and have made the ultimate sacrifice. Passed down through generations, the Hymn unites Marines of every era in shared pride and purpose.

The Marine Corps Hymn stands as a proud symbol of courage, commitment, and the enduring spirit of the United States Marine Corps and their families.



US Marine Band playing on a pier, Japan, 1945



MARINES' HYMN

U.S. MARINE CORPS

VERSE 1

From the Halls of
Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's
battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and
freedom
And to keep our honor
clean;
We are proud to claim
the title of United States
Marine.

VERSE 2

Our flag's unfurled to every
breeze From dawn to
setting sun;
We have fought in ev'ry clime
and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off
Northern lands And in
sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on
the job
The United States Marines.

VERSE 3

Here's health to you and to
our Corps Which we are
proud to serve
In many a strife we've
fought for life And never
lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's
scenes;
They will find the streets
are guarded By United
States Marines.

Message from the
**COMMANDANT OF THE
U.S. MARINE CORPS**



U.S. Marine Corps Gen. Eric M. Smith

ERIC M. SMITH

GENERAL, U.S. MARINE CORPS COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Two hundred and fifty years ago, before our Nation declared its independence, a small group of men gathered in Philadelphia and formed a Corps of Marines.

From that moment, our story has been bound to the story of America itself. A quarter of a millennium later, Marines remain at the center of our Nation's defense. Ready to fight, ready to win, and ready to uphold the trust placed in us since 1775.

Across centuries, Marines have fought on distant shores and in desperate battles, earning a reputation for discipline, toughness, and valor. From the Revolution to the World Wars, from Chapultepec to today's operations across the globe, every generation has proven worthy of the title Marine. They secured liberty, defended allies, and carried forward the promise of a free Nation, and a free world. We are the heirs of that legacy, and we are its stewards.

This anniversary reminds us that our standards are the foundation of our Corps. Honor, Courage, and Commitment are not abstractions, but the code that binds us to one another and to all who went before. Every Marine, in every clime and place, must hold true to these values. The conflicts ahead will demand nothing less.

I could not be prouder of the Marines I see serving today. At home, at sea, and across the globe, you carry forward our proud traditions with skill and ferocity. It is your discipline, initiative, and fighting spirit that anchor our Corps. The battles of the next 250 years will challenge us in new ways, but I have no doubt we will prevail. Happy Birthday Marines!

Semper Fidelis,



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

Guest of Honor
& FEATURED SPEAKER



CARLTON W. KENT

**16TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE U.S. MARINE CORPS,
U.S. MARINE CORPS, RETIRED**

Carlton Kent served 36 years in the United States Marine Corps, retiring as the 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps. In this billet, he served as the advisor to the Commandant of the Marine Corps on all Marine Corps matters. He was called upon to testify before Congress on warfighting capabilities of the Marine Corps, and quality-of-life issues affecting Marines and their families. Throughout Sergeant Major Kent's 36 years of service, he served in numerous commands within the Marine Air Ground Task Force and special duty assignments.

After retirement from the Marine Corps and before launching Kent, Campa and Kate Inc. (KCK), with the 11th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, Joe Campa, and Marine Corps Vietnam Veteran, Bob Turner; Carlton Kent served as Director, Veteran Support, and Development Office for CACI International Incorporated.

He holds a Bachelor of Science in Education from Southern Illinois University Carbondale, a Master's Degree in Education from Trident University International, and a Graduate Certificate in Strategic Leadership from Trident University International.

His awards include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit with Gold Star in lieu of second award, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, and the Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Gold Star in lieu of second award, and the Combat Action Ribbon. Sergeant Major Kent is also the recipient of the General Gerald C. Thomas Award for Inspirational Leadership.

Sergeant Major Kent is married to his childhood sweetheart, Liz Kent. They have two daughters and three grandchildren. One of their daughters is married to a United States Marine.





HONORING OUR HEROES

Saluting their Service

In this section, we pay tribute to the remarkable individuals who have served our country with honor and courage. Here, you will find profiles and photographs of our oldest and youngest Marines, as well as heartfelt remembrances from Gold Star Families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving. We also honor our World War II veterans, whose bravery laid a foundation for the freedoms we cherish today. Join us in celebrating their legacies and the enduring spirit of service that unites us all.





"The Greatest Generation"

OLDEST MARINE

ROBERT HARTLINE

**CAPTAIN, MARINE &
NAVAL AVIATOR, WWII
U.S. MARINE CORPS, RETIRED**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Reading, PA

MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY (MOS): Fighter Pilot

DEPLOYMENTS:

Pacific Theater, WWII

- Okinawa
- Le Shima

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- VRF-1 Ferry Squadron: Flew over Arlington Cemetery for President Franklin D. Roosevelt's funeral
- VMF-223 Squadron: Served as fighter pilot and transportation officer of a radar station in the Pacific

Captain Hartline flew TBM Avengers, Hellcats, Wildcats, and his favorite, the mighty Corsair. He was the second youngest fighter pilot in WWII, missing the first position by two days to George H. W. Bush.

During WWII, Hartline belonged to the VRF-1 Ferry Squadron and was tasked with flying over Arlington Cemetery to do a slow roll during the funeral of President Franklin D. Roosevelt—a memory that still brings a tear to his eye.

He continued as a fighter pilot by joining the VMF-223 Squadron in 1945 and was stationed in Okinawa and Ie Shima. During occupation, Bob flew patrols and served as a transportation officer of a radar station in the Pacific.

Following WWII, he had a prolific career with Western Electric. Bob resides in Reading PA, where he was born and raised being the son of a WWI Veteran.



A Corsair fires its rockets at a Japanese stronghold on Okinawa, 1943.



YOUNGEST MARINE

CONNER RAY DUGAN

**PRIVATE FIRST CLASS,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

Private First Class Dugan was born at Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina on April 7, 2007. He graduated from Boiling Springs High School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on June 4, 2025.

He attended Marine Corps Basic Training at Parris Island, South Carolina, where he pinned on the rank of Private First Class. In the following months, he attended Marine Combat Training at Camp Geiger, NC.

Private First Class Dugan will report to the Marine Detachment at Dam Neck Naval Annex, Virginia Beach, Virginia, in November 2025 to pursue the military occupational specialty of Marine Air Ground Task Force Intelligence Specialist.

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Carlisle, PA

MOS: Marine Air Ground Task Force Intelligence Specialist (in training)

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Marine Combat Training, Camp Geiger, North Carolina
- Reporting to Marine Detachment, Dam Neck Naval Annex, Virginia Beach, Virginia (November 2025)

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Boiling Springs High School, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (Graduated June 2025)
- Marine Corps Basic Training, Parris Island, South Carolina
- Marine Combat Training, Camp Geiger, North Carolina



GOLD STAR FAMILY

JONATHAN DEAN FAIRCLOTH

**CORPORAL,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**



SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: York, PA

MOS: Aerial Observer (CH-53D)

YEARS OF SERVICE: 2006–2011

DEPLOYMENTS:

- Iraq
- Afghanistan

AWARDS & DECORATIONS:

- Four Air Medals
- Two Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medals
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- Afghanistan Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- National Defense Service Medal

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

Mechanicsburg High School
(Graduated 2006)

Corporal Jonathan Dean Faircloth was born in York, Pennsylvania, on May 7th, 1988, the second child of Dean and Beverly Faircloth. He and his brother James were best buddies. Jonathan graduated from Mechanicsburg High School in 2006. He joined the Marine Corps in 2006.

Jonathan served as an Aerial Observer in Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 363, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing from April 2007 to March 2011. During his tour, Jonathan achieved over 4,000 flight hours while serving as a CH-53D Aerial Observer. Jonathan successfully flew 408 hours, of which 284 were in support of combat operations. He personally trained over six Collateral Duty Inspectors and 10 Plain Captains. For his exemplary service, Corporal Faircloth was awarded Four Air Medals, two Navy-Marine Corps Achievement Medals, the Iraq Campaign Medal, The Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Jonathan brought joy and laughter to his peers. All who knew him enjoyed his light-hearted attitude and encouragement he gave to others during their long deployments. He would bring laughter to them and was always for the underdog. Jon had a big heart of compassion for others.

Jonathan's helicopter came down on the evening of March 29, 2011, during training maneuvers in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.



GOLD STAR FAMILY

MARTIN WILSON KONDOR

SPECIALIST (SPC),
U.S. ARMY

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: York, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: November 5, 2001

MOS: M240 Machine Gunner

YEARS OF SERVICE: 2001–2004

DEPLOYMENTS: Ba'Qubah, Iraq
(Operation Iraqi Freedom)

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

- Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device for valor
- Purple Heart

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

Personal Security Detail (PSD),
Headquarters Company, 3rd
Brigade, 1st Infantry Division

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- Trained as a "Tanker" with the 1st Infantry Division's 1st/63rd Armor Regiment, Vilseck, Germany
- Intensive security training for convoy and personnel protection
- Machine gunner on M240 Bravo, specializing in high-risk combat situations

Martin Wilson Kondor was born on November 5, 1983, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Michael and Cherriney Kondor. He enlisted on November 5, 2001, into the United States Army.

Specialist Martin Wilson Kondor died on April 29, 2004, (age 20) from severe injuries he sustained in combat from an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Ba'Qubah, Iraq, on April 9, 2004. SPC Kondor was assigned to a Personal Security Detail (PSD) that was ambushed; he was operating his M240 machine gun while assigned to Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

SPC Kondor demonstrated personal courage and military excellence in the face of a determined enemy during this devastating ambush. SPC Kondor's exceptional Warrior Spirit saved the lives of many of his fellow warriors, in keeping with those soldierly virtues that reflected great credit upon himself, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, and the United States Army. SPC Kondor was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device and the Purple Heart for his unquestionable bravery, valor, and gallantry in combat.

The death of Specialist Martin Wilson Kondor inspired an initiative by his parents to establish a healing space for themselves and their community—a space dedicated to our Pennsylvania Fallen and those who serve in the Global War on Terror: **The Veterans Memorial Gold Star Healing and Peace Garden**, located at 1000 Vander Avenue, Memorial Park, York, PA 17403. Website: GoldStarGarden.com



GOLD STAR FAMILY

ROBERT A. SEIDEL, III

FIRST LIEUTENANT,
U.S. ARMY

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Gettysburg, PA
(formerly of Emmitsburg, MD)

ENLISTMENT DATE: West Point, 2004

MOS: Infantry Officer (Platoon Leader)

YEARS OF SERVICE: 2004–2006

DEPLOYMENTS: Baghdad, Iraq

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

- Purple Heart
- Bronze Star Medal
- Army Achievement Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Army Service Ribbon
- Combat Infantryman Badge
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- War on Terrorism Service Medal
- Army Overseas Service Ribbon
- Ranger Tab
- Parachutist Badge

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

Rifle Platoon Leader, Company
B, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry
Regiment, 10th Mountain Division,
Fort Drum, NY

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

College: U.S. Military Academy at
West Point, Class of 2004

A 2004 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Rob was Airborne and Air Assault qualified.

After graduating from Ranger School, he reported to his assignment as an Infantry Platoon Leader with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Ft. Drum, NY.

Rob died on May 18, 2006, when his Humvee hit an IED during combat operations in the Abu Ghraib sector of Iraq. He had plans to apply for Special Forces upon his return from Iraq.

Rob's dedication to his country will always be remembered by the warriors he served with, his many friends and family, and most especially by his parents, Robert II and Sandy Seidel.



U.S. ARMY

GOLD STAR FAMILY

BRYAN D. WILLARD

**CAPTAIN,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**



SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Hummelstown, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: 2000

MOS: Marine Helicopter Pilot

YEARS OF SERVICE: 2000-2006

DEPLOYMENTS:

- Anti-terrorism training, Djibouti
- Reconnaissance missions during Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS:

- Air Medal on ten occasions
- 2 Navy Achievement Awards
- Presidential Unit Citation
- Navy Unit Commendation
- National Defense Service Medal
- Iraq Campaign Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal
- Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
- 3 Sea Service Deployment Awards

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464
- Marine Air Group 29, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing II, Marine Expeditionary Force, New River, NC

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Lock Haven University
- Flight training at the Naval Aviation Training Center, Pensacola, FL

Bryan Douglas Willard graduated from East Pennsboro High School, Enola, Pennsylvania, in June 1990. He attended Lock Haven University, where he specialized in sports medicine. After graduating from Lock Haven, he furthered his education by securing accreditation in Mortuary Science and served his apprenticeship at Jesse H. Geigle Funeral Home in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Bryan was attending a military exhibition on City Island, Harrisburg, when he was so impressed that, at the age of 27, he decided he wanted to be a member of the Marine Corps and serve his country. His only request was that he wanted to fly. Captain Willard was assigned to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 464, Marine Air Group 29, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing II, Marine Expeditionary Force, New River, North Carolina. His flight training took him to the Naval Aviation Training Center near Pensacola, Florida.

During his last leave period in the U.S., Bryan volunteered to fly reconnaissance missions to rescue residents of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He was recognized for his bravery and service in a *Time* magazine article in 2005. A decorated Marine helicopter pilot, Captain Willard, at the age of 33, died on Friday, February 17, 2006, during an anti-terrorist training mission in the Godoria Range area when the CH-53 helicopter crashed in Northern Djibouti on the Horn of Africa, near the Sea of Aden. Bryan is buried in Arlington Cemetery, Section 60.

Article submitted by his mother, Bonita J. Lewis.



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

WILLIAM "BILL" BALABANOW

**LIEUTENANT,
U.S. MERCHANT MARINE**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Lancaster, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: February 1944

MOS: Radio Officer

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1944–1979 (33 years)

DEPLOYMENTS:

- Marseille, France (European Theater, WWII)
- Philippines (Pacific Theater, WWII)
- Various voyages during the Korean War, Vietnam War, and Cold War

AWARDS & DECORATIONS:

Congressional Gold Medal (awarded to Merchant Marine veterans)

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Supply missions to Europe and the Pacific during WWII
- Postwar Marshall Plan aid deliveries to Germany and Poland

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Training at Sheepshead Bay, New York
- Six months at radio officers' school

Bill Balabanow grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, during the Great Depression. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, he tried to enlist in the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps, but each branch of service rejected him because of a curvature of the spine. Undeterred, he joined the U.S. Merchant Marine in February 1944. He underwent training at Sheepshead Bay, New York, followed by six months at radio officers' school, preparing him for his role as a radio officer. Balabanow's wartime service involved critical supply missions to Europe. His first assignment took him—seasick the whole way—to Marseille, France, where he witnessed the extensive destruction wrought by the conflict. His ship transported essential military supplies to Allied forces and returned to the United States with damaged equipment for repair and reuse. He also participated in voyages through the Panama Canal to the Philippines, contributing to the Pacific theater operations.

After World War II, Balabanow chose to continue his maritime career, playing a vital role in postwar recovery efforts. He was involved in voyages related to the Marshall Plan, delivering aid to rebuild war-torn Europe, including destinations in Germany and Poland. His service extended through the Korean and Vietnam Wars, as well as during the Cold War, reflecting his unwavering commitment to supporting U.S. military operations and international aid initiatives. Retiring in 1979 after 33 years at sea, Balabanow became an advocate for the recognition of Merchant Marine veterans. He worked tirelessly to address misconceptions and prejudices that had marginalized the contributions of merchant mariners during and after the war. His efforts contributed to the eventual acknowledgment of their service, culminating in the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to Merchant Marine veterans.



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

CHARLES BROOKING

**GUNNER'S MATE
SECOND CLASS,
U.S. NAVY**

Charles Brooking was born April 21, 1927, in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, the son of Theodore and Sadie Marks Brooking. He was raised in Bloomsburg with his siblings, Margaret and William "Bill" Brooking, USMC, who served 23 years including Korea and Vietnam.

Charles was married to the late Ruth Dorothy "Dottie" (Broadt) Brooking for over 70 years. Together they raised their son, Charles "Chuck" Brooking, also a U.S. Marine veteran. Charles has three grandchildren: Amanda, Ashley, and Jayden Brooking, and resides with his daughter-in-law, Christina Grendzinski, a Gulf War veteran.

At age 17, with his father's consent, Charlie joined the U.S. Navy. He completed basic training in Sampson, NY, and PT Boat training in Melville, RI. He then began serving in the South Pacific Theater. Charlie saw combat duty near the Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal. He served two years of active duty and 8 years as a reservist. He was stationed on PT Boat 617, 619, 621, 223. PT (Patrol Torpedo) boats were small (77-80 feet), torpedo-armed, fast-attack vessels used by the Navy for short-range oceanic scouting, for daring and harassing attacks on enemy supply lines, and for search and destroy missions. Only made from plywood, with no protective shield, these heavily armed boats carried a 37 mm on the bow, 20 mm on the port-side front, two turrets of twin 50 cal. machine guns, a 40 mm anti-aircraft gun on the stern, 4 torpedoes and 16 rockets (8 on each side, midship), 2-4 depth charges, and a smoke screen generator on the stern. The boats were also armed with 45 caliber. pistols, shotguns, carbines, and hand grenades. Known by the Japanese as the new weapon, "A dragon that flaps wings and shoots torpedoes!"

After his honorable discharge, Charlie earned his pilot's license and worked 39 years as a printer at Henrie's Printing. In retirement, he enjoys woodworking, crafting, and 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzles, remaining active in veterans' groups and proud of his service.

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Bloomsburg, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: 1944

MOS: GM2 (Gunner's Mate Second Class), Twin .50 Caliber Machine Gunner on PT Boats

YEARS OF SERVICE: 2 years active duty, 8 years reserve (total 10 years)

DEPLOYMENTS:

- South Pacific Theater (near Solomon Islands and Guadalcanal)

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- Stationed on PT Boats 617, 619, 621, and 223
- Served in combat operations aboard PT Boats conducting scouting, attacks on enemy supply lines, and search-and-destroy missions

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Basic Training, Sampson, New York
- Patrol Torpedo Boat Training, Motor Torpedo Boat Squadrons Training Center, Melville, Rhode Island



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

ARLESTER BROWN

**QUARTERMASTER
ENGINEER**

U.S. ARMY

Rev. Dr. Arlester Brown was born on April 1, 1924, in Spring Lake, Louisiana, and spent his youth in several Louisiana towns including Grambling, where legendary Coach Eddie Robinson encouraged him to play football. A Grambling State University Football Hall of Fame inductee, lifelong G-Men Nation member, and Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity brother, Dr. Brown has remained deeply connected to his alma mater.

Drafted into the U.S. Army on July 6, 1942, Arlester trained at Camp Ellis, Illinois, as a laundry technician and served with the all-Black 599th Quartermaster Laundry Company in Europe. His unit supported front-line troops by cleaning and supplying uniforms across France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. He was wounded in Germany when struck by debris from an unmanned buzz bomb. Discharged in December 1945, he received multiple honors, including the ATO, EAMETO, Good Conduct, WWII, and Victory Medals.

Through the GI Bill, he completed high school, earned degrees from Grambling College, Texas Southern University, and Howard University, and later a Doctorate of Divinity. Dr. Brown served as a principal, founded the Caddo Teachers Federal Credit Union, and led the Arlester and Ozeal Brown Scholarship Foundation.

As a clergyman, he pastored several Washington, D.C.-area churches, mentored countless youth, and advocated for justice and unity. Returning to Normandy in 2023, 2024, and 2025, he sang "Amazing Grace" on the hallowed grounds where he once served. In 2024, President Emmanuel Macron awarded him the French Legion of Honor during the 80th D-Day celebration, followed by recognition in Washington, D.C., in 2025.

In September 2025, he walked the red carpet in Paris for the film *Why We Dream*, which featured his story. God Almighty was his co-pilot while in the military and during his entire life. Arlester's favorite quote is: "I am blessed to be a blessing."

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Spring Lake, LA

ENLISTMENT DATE: July 6, 1942

MOS: Quartermaster Engineer /
Laundry Technician

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1942–1945

DEPLOYMENTS: England, France,
Belgium, Holland, and Germany

AWARDS & DECORATIONS:

- ATO Medal
- EAMETO Medal
- Good Conduct Award
- World War II Medal
- Victory Medal
- French Legion of Honor Award

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- 599th Quartermaster Laundry Co.
Quartermaster Engineer
- Laundry Tech. in European Theater

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- B.S. in Education, Grambling
College
- M.Ed., Texas Southern University
- M.Div., Howard University School
of Religion
- Doctorate of Divinity, Universal
Life Church



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

IRVIN C. GERS

**YEOMAN THIRD CLASS,
U.S. NAVY**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Osceola Mills,
Clearfield County, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: 1944

**MOS (Military Occupational
Specialty):** Seabee

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1944–1946

DEPLOYMENTS: South Pacific theater
(including Okinawa, Japan)

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:
Construction battalion in the South
Pacific

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Boot camp at U.S. Naval Training Center, Sampson, New York
- Specialty training as a Seabee at Camp Davisville, Rhode Island
- Additional Seabee training at Port Hueneme, CA

Irvin C. Gers was born on August 21, 1926, in Osceola Mills, Clearfield County, PA. In 1944, he graduated from Osceola Mills High School.

Irvin answered the call to service for his country in the U.S. Navy at 18 years of age. His enlisted boot camp was spent at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Sampson, New York. His military specialty training as a Seabee took place at Camp Davisville, Rhode Island.

After additional Seabee training at Port Hueneme, CA, he was assigned to a construction battalion that deployed to islands throughout the South Pacific theater, including Okinawa, Japan, during World War II.

Irvin was honorably discharged in 1946 from the U.S. Navy and returned to his home of record in Osceola Mills, PA. He obtained employment with a coal mining company for the next two years. During the following 36 years, he excelled in a career in the insurance sector and retired in 1984. Irvin was married to Alice (Conklin) Gers for 61 years.





"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

GEORGE IVANOFF

**CORPORAL,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Harrisburg, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: 1943

MOS: Infantryman

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1943 - 1945

DEPLOYMENTS:

- Peleliu, Pacific Theater
- Okinawa, Japan

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th
Marines, 1st Marine Division

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

Initial training as an Infantryman in
the U.S. Marine Corps

George Ivanoff was born in Harrisburg, PA, on February 24, 1925, and attended Harrisburg Catholic High School before leaving early to join the U.S. Marine Corps in 1943. After his initial training, he was designated an Infantryman and assigned to Fox Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, and deployed to the Pacific theater. His first action was on the island of Peleliu. While evacuating his wounded Corpsman, a mortar shell exploded nearby, killing the Corpsman. George was also wounded and medevacked to the hospital ship AD Admiral Allen. After recovering, he rejoined his unit and was promoted to Corporal.

Corporal Ivanoff's next major battle was the attack on Okinawa, Japan, where he fought for 45 days. Advancing toward enemy positions, he jumped into a shell hole to take cover, but as he looked out to locate the enemy, he was shot through the face by a sniper. When he regained consciousness, he felt a huge hole in his face and thought he would certainly die, so he asked the Lord to forgive him of his sins. He laid back down and went unconscious again, believing he would never wake up. When Corporal Ivanoff woke up once more, he couldn't believe he was still alive. He looked around and saw a couple of Marines hiding behind some rocks, so he went over to them.

The sniper that shot George was hiding and still shooting at them. He said to the other Marines, "Give me a rifle, and I will take this sniper out because I am going to die anyway." They pushed him away and told him to get out of there. Then some Marines and a Corpsman found him, put him on a stretcher, and carried him to the hospital tent. A chaplain gave him his last rites, and once again, Corporal Ivanoff thought this was it and that he would die on the stretcher.

All the doctors and nurses thought he was dead, so they didn't attend to him. Finally, a doctor came over and said, "Hey, this guy is still alive." Miraculously, George was stabilized by the doctors and nurses who attended to his wounds.



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

WALTER LASOTA

**PRIVATE FIRST CLASS,
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Scranton &
Conshohocken, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: Drafted in 1943

MOS: Rifleman / Browning Automatic
Rifle (BAR) Sharpshooter

YEARS OF SERVICE: 1943–1946

DEPLOYMENTS:

- Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands
- Okinawa, Japan
- Guam

AWARDS & DECORATIONS:

- Two Purple Hearts
- Sharpshooter Medal (BAR)
- Honorable Discharge (March 1946)

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS:

- 6th Marine Division
- Combat operations at Sugar Loaf Hill, Okinawa
- Security details at Boston Navy Yard and Squantum Air Force Base

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

- Basic Training, Parris Island, SC
- Combat Training, Camp Lejeune, NC
- Additional Training, Camp Pendleton, CA

Walter LaSota was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, on February 23, 1926, to Polish immigrants Wladislaw and Wladyslawa LaSota. His early life was marked by hardship—his family lost their farm during the Depression, his mother passed away when he was eight, and his brother was killed in 1936. Determined to serve, Walter left school at sixteen to work at Kimble Glass until he was drafted in 1943.

Choosing the Marine Corps, he completed basic training at Parris Island, followed by security duties at Boston Navy Yard and Squantum Air Force Base. After combat training at Camp Lejeune—where he earned his BAR Sharpshooter Medal—he traveled to Camp Pendleton and shipped out to Guadalcanal to join the 6th Marine Division.

On April 1, 1945, Walter landed on Okinawa's west coast. His unit fought north, then south under Admiral Nimitz's orders. At Sugar Loaf Hill, he and a fellow Marine held their position under relentless attack. When his comrade's gun jammed, Walter fired in single-shot mode while his buddy threw back enemy grenades. Walter switched to automatic fire as four Japanese soldiers advanced—then a shell exploded. He later awoke at the bottom of the hill, severely wounded by shrapnel. Hospitalized for weeks, he earned his first Purple Heart.

Later, while signaling his unit to spread out, a sniper's bullet struck his forearm, severing a nerve and causing permanent loss of feeling in his right arm—his second Purple Heart.

When the battle ended, only eight of the original 286 men in Item Company returned to San Diego. After a 30-day leave, Walter surprised his family in Conshohocken, who had believed he'd been killed in action. He was honorably discharged from Quantico, Virginia, in March 1946.

Walter's courage at Sugar Loaf Hill and his survival through Okinawa's brutal combat remain enduring testaments to his valor and devotion to his country.



"The Greatest Generation"

WORLD WAR II VETERAN

SAMUEL W. WORLEY

**TECHNICAL SERGEANT,
U.S. AIR FORCE**

SERVICE DETAILS

HOMETOWN: Fannettsburg, Franklin County, PA

ENLISTMENT DATE: September 19, 1942

MOS: Technical Sergeant / NCOIC, Intelligence Unit

YEARS OF SERVICE: Active duty from 1942 to 1945, continued in the Air Force Reserve

SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS: Intelligence Unit, 8th Air Force's First Bomb Division, stationed in England; decoded orders for bombing missions over Germany

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: High school graduate (1939, Fannett Township High School); attended Shippensburg State College

103-year-old Samuel W. Worley was born on a farm in Fannettsburg, Franklin County, PA, on June 13, 1921. He graduated in 1939 from Fannett Township High School in Dry Run. He had a summer job helping build the Pennsylvania Turnpike, where he earned money to attend Shippensburg State College. Sam received his draft notice from "Uncle Sam" in 1942 and was drafted into the United States Army Air Corps on September 19, 1942. After stateside training, he was stationed in England in the intelligence unit for the 8th Air Force's First Bomb Division. His job was to decode incoming orders for bombers and their fighter escorts to pinpoint targets during bombing runs over Germany.

Samuel had one sister, Nora, who worked during WWII at Fairchild Aircraft as a "Rosie the Riveter." Samuel was honorably discharged on October 31, 1945, with the rank of Technical Sergeant / NCOIC and continued his service in the Air Force Reserve. Samuel is a past commander of American Legion Post 46 in Chambersburg, PA, and the Pennsylvania State American Legion Scholarship Chairman.



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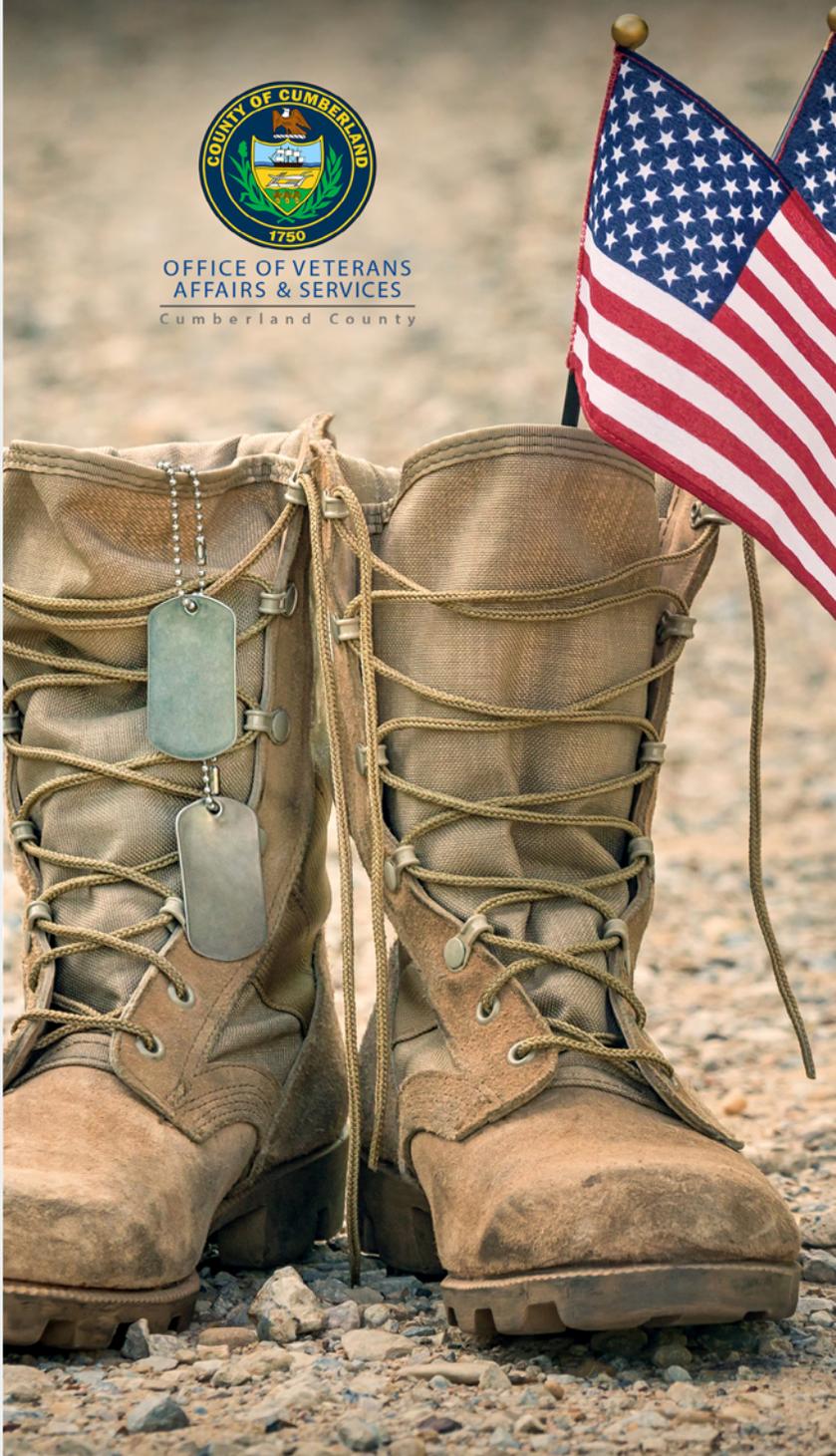


U.S. Marines of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit receive Purple Hearts at Kara Soar Base, Makhmur, Iraq, where they were wounded. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter J. Berardi)

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The owner, Joe Staudt is a retired Marine Sergeant Major and a combat veteran. He has been a firearm enthusiast and a collector of firearms for many years. He opened Staudt's Gun Shop in June of 2011. Joe is married and has four sons and four grandchildren.



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We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have served and continue to serve in the U.S. military—thank you for your dedication and sacrifice!

PATRIOT LIST

Joseph Bradley	Thank you for your donation.
Rudolph M. Janiczek	Colonel, USMC, Retired
Patrick W. Milano	Detachment #299 Marine Corps League
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SPECIAL THANKS

Narrator Of Ceremonies	G. Victoria McCoy, Commandant, Department of Pa-MCL
Adjutant & Reading from the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps	Department-PA MCL Department Protocol Officer: Lisa Solarczk
Paul Hasting, Past National Commandant, Marine Corps League	Appreciation for the donation of this year's ceremonial 250th Birthday Cake. Additionally, donated 24 seats for Marines within MCL Detachments.
Thomas "Tom" W. Hayes Sergeant Major/USMC, Inspector-Instructor Command Senior Enlisted 4th Engineer Battalion	Appreciation for your professionalism, and role as ceremonial military advisor in the wake of a government shutdown.
Shippensburg Swing Band	swing.shipband.org
Chaplain	Chaplain (Colonel) Geoffrey Bailey, PhD, DMin Asst. Professor, Director of Ethical Development, & College Chaplain U.S. Army War College
Camera Box	Camerabox.com Camp Hill, Pa 17011
Penn Harris Hotel	Penn Harris Hotel Harrisburg Camp Hill Bypass



Happy 250th Birthday

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MARINE CORPS**

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