

Secretary of the Navy Birthday Message to the Marine Corps, November 2008

On 10 November 1775, the second continental congress gave birth to a unique corps of warfighters that would carry the name marines. When Samuel Nicholas went to Tun Tavern, down by the dockyards of Philadelphia, to find the bravest men in town, little did he know what he had set in motion - the greatest fighting force in history.

Today, two hundred thirty-three years later, the United States marine corps stands as a military service that embodies the ideals of courage, esprit de corps, and sacrifice. The sterling reputation of marines was built over many years - across the Libyan desert, on the fields of Belleau Wood, on the bloody battlefields of Iwo Jima and Okinawa, and on the streets of Falluja. Time and again, United States marines have demonstrated that they will prevail, whatever the odds.

You carry the honor and the burden of living up to your distinguished reputation as the first to the fight, and as the most disciplined, professional, and courageous of combat fighters. Walk proudly in knowing that you follow in the footsteps of great heroes, with a long tradition of absolute dedication to duty. On behalf of a grateful nation, thank you for your service. You are engaged in a noble and worthy endeavor, and your sacrifices keep our country safe. You do us proud, and I am honored to serve as your secretary.

The Honorable Donald C. Winter, Secretary of the Navy.