“It Means Something These Days to be a Marine”:

Image, Identity, and Mission in the Marine Corps, 1861-1918

by

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Department of History
Duke University

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Jocelyn Olcott

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Susan Thorne

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the Department
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, the Marine Corps plodded along, a small military institution little known to the public. Moreover, the institution faced a host of problems ranging from recruiting difficulties and desertion to resisting absorption by the Army, or even elimination altogether. It also had to deal with a negative public image as promulgated by some naval officers and the press since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Marine officers were depicted as lazy and superfluous aboard ship, while enlisted Marines were portrayed as gullible fools who did not participate fully in running and maintaining the ship. By the end of World War I, however, the institution had transformed itself into a well-respected entity. Many Marines even viewed themselves as superior to sailors. Whatever problems the Corps would face throughout the twentieth century, public ignorance would not be one of them. The institution successfully had articulated an image of itself as an elite military institution of fighters.

Existing historiography on the Marine Corps tends to emphasize the institution’s existential and finally successful quest for a mission. In contrast, Marines represented themselves as multidextrous, capable of all missions and responsibilities. They could not lay claim convincingly to a single mission because of their odd position between the land-based missions of the Army and the sea-based missions of the Navy. In response,
the Corps promoted the notion of Marines as elite troops, suggesting it could fill any role and do it more effectively than other military branches. The institution created a flexible image that could be deployed in various forms to the public while simultaneously strengthening the institution’s group identity.

This self-image required years of construction. Some aspects of this new representation grew out of the Corps’ past experiences, but others had to be invented out of whole cloth. Individual officers composed a canonical history for the Corps and stressed traditions as the foundation of the Corps’ corporate identity. By 1910 these foundation myths coalesced into coherent narrative. The Corps stressed it was an elite institution composed of picked men who prided themselves, albeit incorrectly, on being the nation’s oldest military service and the best fighters. The Corps’ Recruiting Publicity Bureau, established in 1911, adeptly fostered and even exaggerated this image. The Marine was a larger than life he-man, capable of anything and daunted by nothing.

This image was integral to the Corps’ preparation for World War I. By the time the United States declared war against Germany in 1917, the Corps had positioned itself to obtain the types of recruits it wanted, train them, and assure their presence overseas in a land war that was atypical of the Corps’ previous experience. The Bureau simultaneously sought to ensure the recruits it had attracted with an image would embrace the institution’s identity. To this end the Bureau worked to instill the Corps’ group identity into recruits during training and to reinforce this identity to fully-fledged
Marines. The Corps’ attention to wartime publicity reaped post-war dividends. By 1918, the word “Marine” was virtually a household name. Rather than being associated with any particular duty, it conjured up visions of indomitable, elite fighters. By the 1920s, fiction and myth became more important than history in maintaining and perpetuating this image. Between 1861 and 1918, then, the Corps successfully made it mean something significant to be a Marine.
In memory of Lieutenant Peter Ober, USN


And for a different type of warrior, Kelly Whitted.

Keep on fighting.
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## Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AEF</td>
<td>American Expeditionary Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASP/NA</td>
<td>American State Papers: Naval Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANJ</td>
<td>The Army and Navy Journal</td>
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<td>HD</td>
<td>Marine Corps Historical Detachment Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCRPB</td>
<td>Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCASC</td>
<td>Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections Gray Research Center, Quantico, Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>NARA</td>
<td>National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>NYT</td>
<td>New York Times</td>
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<tr>
<td>RG</td>
<td>Record Group (NARA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>RN</td>
<td>Royal Navy</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAMHI</td>
<td>United States Army Military History Institute, Army Heritage and Education Center, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States Army</td>
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<td>USMC</td>
<td>United States Marine Corps</td>
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<td>USN</td>
<td>United States Navy</td>
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Acknowledgements

When I first began researching this topic almost ten years ago, I was intrigued by my father’s descriptions of his service as an enlisted Marine during the Vietnam War. He told me about enlisting in the Marine Corps to avoid being drafted into the Army and trading packets of Kool-Aid for ice in the local village. These and other stories intrigued me, and they became even more of a part of my world when I married a Marine. My father and husband displayed a similar pride in the Corps and a sense of its differences from other military services, even though my husband graduated from boot camp more than twenty-five years after my father.

During my first foray into archival research, then, I was naively surprised to discover that nineteenth-century Marines did not demonstrate the pride for which most twentieth-century Marines are almost infamous. This disparity formed the bookends of my question: what had changed in the Corps between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? What explained the increasing extent to which Marines accepted their institution’s corporate identity? Where had that corporate identity come from in the first place?

I could not have begun to address these questions without a great deal of support. From my first time doing archival research as a master’s student to more recent trips as a Ph.D. student, I have received generous financial support from the Marine
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Since high school, I have been fortunate to have wonderful teachers. I am indebted to two of my high school history teachers, Dr. Richard Zimmerman and Dr. Orson Cook, for showing me how fascinating the interpretation of history can be. As an undergraduate at Texas A&M University, I took my first military history class from Dr. Brian Linn as well as diplomatic history classes with Dr. Betty Unterberger and Dr. Andrew Kirkendall. These courses would help to narrow my interests and set me on my future path. At the University of Hawai’i at Manoa I benefited from a wonderful master’s committee. Dr. Margot Henriksen, Dr. Jerry Bentley, and Dr. Naoko Shibusawa adroitly steered me through that program and greatly enriched my time there.

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1. Introduction

“It means something these days to be a Marine.”¹ That is what one sergeant purportedly thought after visiting with scores of wounded Marines in 1918. Impressed by the bravery and pride of the wounded men he encountered, the sergeant suggested that their recent combat experiences in France had not dimmed their identification with the Marine Corps or their belief in the cause for which they were fighting. The sergeant described how one Marine had even waved to him with the stump of his arm, eager to demonstrate what he had gladly sacrificed.²

What exactly did it mean to be a United States Marine in 1918? To the anonymous sergeant, the image of a Marine was that of an unmatched fighter, eager to charge into battle with his bayonet against the Germans.³ The German was an unworthy

² Kemper Frey Cowing and Courtney Ryley Cooper, eds., “Dear Folks at Home”: The Glorious Story of the United States Marines in France as Told by their Letters from the Battlefield (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 172. The letter was also printed in a different form in Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Naval Affairs, Hearings before the Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 65th Cong., 3rd sess., 19 Dec. 1918, 810-811.
³ The letter quoted one Marine amputee who had purportedly claimed, “The Boches might not have left me a leg to stand on, but I know I got three before they put me out of business. I plugged one, and got the other two with the bayonet.” This letter insisted that the Corps was especially adept in the use of the bayonet, although many Marines often stressed the Corps’ tradition of marksmanship over that of the bayonet. One story cited in the letter even mentioned a Marine who preferred the bayonet so much he had almost “forgotten he had ammunition.” Cowing and Cooper, Dear Folks at Home, 171, 76, and 177.
opponent, both cowardly and treacherous at the same time.\textsuperscript{4} Perhaps it was easier for one stationed away from the front, as the letter writer had been, to arrive at this meaning.\textsuperscript{5} Tasked with touring the field hospitals and ensuring that wounded Marines received their pay, this particular sergeant saw the human cost of war but seems not to have experienced battle himself.\textsuperscript{6} His views accorded with the institution’s leadership and Recruiting Publicity Bureau, but perhaps not with the enlisted Marines who bore the brunt of the fighting.

If the sergeant’s letter appears to be sheer propaganda, it is because it largely was.\textsuperscript{7} As published in \textit{Dear Folks at Home: The Glorious Story of the United States Marines in

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 172-173.
\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., 170-171. The sergeant would have been somewhat of an anomaly. At least as expressed in their memoirs, enlisted Marines were more likely to respect the Germans’ martial capabilities than some of the officers who experienced combat. For an officer’s perspective see With the Help of God and a Few Marines (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1919). For representative enlisted works see Warren R. Jackson, \textit{His Time in Hell—A Texas Marine in France: The World War I Memoir of Warren R. Jackson} (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2001) and Carl Andrew Brannen, \textit{Over There: A Marine in the Great War} (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996). On the other hand, see Thomas Boyd’s novel based on his experience for the belief that sergeants typically mirrored the attitudes of officers. Thomas Boyd, \textit{Through the Wheat: A Novel of the World War I Marines} (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 40, 63, and 75.
France as Told by their Letters from the Battlefield (1919), the letter demonstrates one way in which the Marine Corps manufactured meaning for its own purposes. Those connected with the Publicity Bureau altered the letter in a number of ways. Initially submitted by the Corps in a report to Congress, the letters had been published separately. The report also indicated those letters that were only extracts. The editors combined three letters from this one sergeant into the single document presented in Dear Folks at Home. None of the original letters mentioned German cowardice. The book’s editors even added the statement, “It means something these days to be a Marine.” By contrast, then, it appears that the editors of Dear Folks at Home manipulated the letter to project the exact image that they wanted to convey. World War I battles provided the Bureau with the ideal opportunity to solidify its image, but how did the Marine Corps come to pursue its image so doggedly in the first place? Had it always cultivated the same image?

The Corps’ self-image and the public’s image of the Corps changed dramatically between the Civil War and World War I. As the New York Times explained in 1889, no

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8 This work will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four. At the very least the book bore an unofficial affiliation to the Marine Corps.

9 For two extracts see Hearings before Committee (1918), 808-809. For the letters of the sergeant assigned to the Paymaster, see 810-811.
institution had “come in for a greater share of contumely and received less praise than have the marines of the United States Navy.”¹⁰ Nineteenth-century officers would have agreed with such a conclusion, which explains why some of them wanted so badly to rectify this problem. As one officer bemoaned in 1875, the prevalent image of Marines was that they were neither “respected nor respectable.”¹¹ This institutional anxiety was a far cry from the seemingly self-assured claims of 1918. The Corps’ first step in transforming itself from a marginalized institution into a well-respected and acclaimed one by World War I was the creation of a written historical record in the late nineteenth century. In part the Corps’ service in the Spanish-American-Cuban War and subsequent imperial wars strengthened the institution’s image. More critically, though, the Recruiting Publicity Bureau’s foundation in 1911 created a vehicle for transforming the Corps’ image both qualitatively and quantitatively.¹² The Corps acquired the means of literally flooding newspapers across the country with news of Marines and their accomplishments. The Bureau aggressively worked to put an end to the combination of ignorance and confusion it believed the public had for the institution. One Publicity

¹⁰ “Marines on Shipboard: An Important Factor in a Navy,” New York Times, 7 April 1889, 16. The journalist’s hazy assignation of the Marines to the Navy demonstrated the problem the Corps had of clearly demarcating its institutional independence to observers.
Bureau pamphlet cover emblazoned with the words, “Who am I”, epitomized the Corps’ central dilemma in educating the public about what purpose it served (Figure 1).

As the accompanying written material in the pamphlet explained, “I am a soldier. I am a sailor. Yet I am neither.” After listing some of the key highlights in the Corps’ history and explaining some of its duties, the Bureau concluded, “I am a two-fisted fighting rover. I am the United States Marine.”13 No matter the task in which the Marine was engaged, he was first and foremost a warrior. The Corps sought to resolve its problem of finding a compelling mission by focusing on a powerful, all-purpose image. The image it chose to represent itself with before World War I was of a Marine resolutely signaling for naval gunfire support while under fire from the Spanish during the Spanish-Cuban-American War.

Rather than seek to resolve the Corps’ traditional insecurity regarding what mission it should fill, the Bureau created an image of an elite fighter capable of any and all missions. In some ways, even the Bureau’s existence is testimony to the Corps’ determination to create an image. Despite being far and away the smallest branch in the U.S. military, the Corps was the first to devote serious attention to publicity. The

13 “Who Am I,” Paul Woyshner Papers, MCASC.
Bureau quickly expanded its original office space after its establishment. From occupying one floor of a building in 1912, it filled two and a half floors of the same building by 1917. Likewise, the four recruiters tasked with writing press releases in 1911 had grown to twenty seven enlisted Marines by 1917. In just a few years, the Bureau

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14 By comparison, the overall enlisted strength of the Corps increased from 9921 men in 1912 to 13,000 in 1917.
created and honed an image that has been remarkably consistent over the course of the twentieth century. Specific recruiting posters might come and go, but the message the Corps conveys today is largely the same one created by the Bureau prior to World War I.\textsuperscript{15}

This dissertation argues that the Corps could and would not settle on a mission and therefore it turned to an image to ensure its institutional survival. The process by which a maligned group of naval policemen in the years following the Civil War began to consider themselves to be elite warriors benefited from the active engagement of Marine officers with history. Rather than look forward and actively seek out a mission that could secure their existence, late nineteenth-century Marines looked backward and embraced the past. They began to justify their existence by invoking their institutional traditions, their many martial engagements, and their claim to be the nation’s oldest and proudest military institution. They received an additional boost from the prospect of exotic imperial service after the Spanish-American-Cuban War. Over time the Corps would seek out and receive new missions and responsibilities, but it stubbornly tried to avoid relinquishing traditional ones when possible.\textsuperscript{16} In the process, it argued that it was capable of fulfilling almost any mission because of its status as an elite institution. The

\textsuperscript{15} This point will be addressed in the conclusion.

\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps the best example of this tendency occurred in reaction to President Theodore Roosevelt ordering all Marines off naval vessels in 1908. The Corps’ reaction to this order is discussed at length in Chapter Three.
Publicity Bureau actively promoted this image, and the critical World War I battle of Belleau Wood (1918) seemed to suggest to some Americans that the Marines had lived up to this image. Whatever criticism the Corps might receive in the ensuing years about the Marines’ participation in the battle, their contributions at Belleau Wood in the Americans’ first major engagement with the Germans received widespread acclaim.

The Marine Corps traced its existence to the Revolutionary War when the Continental Congress established the Continental Marines in November 1775.17 The Congress believed such a military force would be useful in attacking British war material and strongholds in Nova Scotia. As the initial resolution written on November 10, 1775 read:

Resolved, That two Battalions of marines be raised, consisting of one Colonel, two Lieutenant Colonels, two Majors, and other officers as usual in other regiments; and that they consist of an equal number of privates with other battalions; that particular care be taken, that no person appointed to office, or inlisted [sic] into said Battalions, but such as are good seamen, or so acquainted with maritime affairs as to be able to serve to advantage by sea when required: that they be inlisted [sic] and commissioned to serve for and during the present war between Great Britain and the colonies, unless dismissed by order of Congress; that they be distinguished by the names of the first and second battalions of American Marines, and that they be considered as part of the number which the continental Army before Boston is ordered to consist of.18

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17 By contrast, the Army was established on 14 June 1775 and the Navy on 13 October 1775.
The Congress believed Marines would be valuable because they hypothetically would not only be able to fight at sea but also on land when required. The resolution contained the seeds of the perennial confusion regarding the institution. Although Marines were expected to have experience at sea, they would be counted as part of the Army.

Moreover, Congress did not spell out exactly what duties it intended Marines to fill. Although Congress eventually decided against using the Marines in this particular operation, it went ahead with forming two Marine battalions as planned after it acquired its first four naval vessels in November. As a result Congress commissioned the first Marine officer on November 28 and ten subsequent ones in December. On November 30, moreover, Congress ordered that Marines be raised outside of the Continental Army rather than from within it as was already occurring.19

During the American Revolution, the primary duty of Marines was literally to serve as soldiers at sea.20 Allan Millett argues that Congress simply assumed Marines would fill the same role as their British counterparts, the Royal Marines.21 As such they

19 Ibid., 393.
21 Allan Millett argues that the influence of the British Royal Marines can be seen in the fact that each of the individual state navies had marines as well. Allan Millett, Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps (New York: Free Press, 1991), 7-23. The well-known naval officer Stephen Luce had a different interpretation of the Continental Congress, arguing that its emphasis on recruiting Marines who were “good seamen” showed that it had “little conception of the nature of a properly-organized Marine Corps.” Luce did not explain fully the reasons behind his opinion. Stephen Luce, “Introduction” in History of the United
served as marksmen in close ship-to-ship combat and even as snipers from the ship’s rigging. They could also be used during amphibious landings in conjunction with sailors to capture forts or other military targets. Additionally, they functioned as naval policemen, a duty that required them to protect ships and their officers from mutinies, desertion, and theft. In their first action on land in April 1776, Captain Samuel Nichols and two hundred Marines captured a fort on New Providence, Bahamas without encountering much opposition. Capturing a significant amount of British war material, the Marines’ use in this case reflected what the Continental Congress had contemplated in the proposed military expedition to Nova Scotia.

The Corps’ mission expanded when, one year after its establishment, it was used for the first time in support of the Army when General George Washington and his troops could not hold back British attacks in New York. In 1779 Marines gained prestige from serving under Captain John Paul Jones when he successfully attacked British vessels at the Battle of Flamborough Head, or so historians of the Marine Corps have

*States Marine Corps* (Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly, 1890), 21. The extent to which the Continental Congress looked to the Royal Marines perhaps deserves more consideration, since the Royal Marines had only been organized on a permanent basis since 1755.

2 Millett states that Marines were a “bit more expert” in these landings than sailors although he does not explain how he arrived at this conclusion. Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 15.
claimed. By serving so closely with the Navy, the Corps received few opportunities to be singled out for its contributions. This reality became immaterial, however, as the fortunes of the Navy and the Corps plummeted after two major naval disasters in Maine and Charleston. By 1783, the Continental Marines had faded out of existence after Congress moved to eliminate what was left of the Navy, believing the young nation would no longer require a standing military force.

Soon, however, the U.S. government found pirates plaguing ships in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. The subsequent passage of the Frigate Act of 1794 allowed for one Marine officer and about fifty enlisted Marines to be placed on each frigate. Ships with 44 guns would have one lieutenant, one sergeant, one corporal and about fifty enlisted Marines. Ships of 36 guns would have ten fewer enlisted Marines. This number aligned with the Royal Marine practice of assigning one Marine to each gun of a Royal Navy vessel. The government did not budge on the act until 1798, when

23 Millett describes Marines’ contributions to this battle as “indispensable.” He refers to pages in a naval officer’s diary as evidence, but these pages simply state that Marines were present. The diary makes only a few other incidental references to Marines. Millett, 18; John S. Barnes, ed., Fanning’s Narrative: The Memories of Nathaniel Fanning, an Officer of the Revolutionary Navy (New York: Naval History Society, 1912), 37-38.
24 For this period of the Corps’ history see A.B.C. Whipple, To the Shores of Tripoli: The Birth of the U.S. Navy and Marines (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001).
25 U.S. Congress, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, Ch. 12, Section 1 (Approved 27 March 1794), 3d Cong., 1st session. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850).
26 By comparison, the act called for five naval officers (one captain and four lieutenants) as well as a chaplain, a surgeon, and about 250 sailors of varying ranks.
27 Paul H. Nicolas, Historical Record of the Royal Marine Forces, vol. 1 (London: Thomas and William Boone, 1845), x. This practice was not always followed. An 1813 act authorized only sixty Marines for a 74-gun
it created a fleet of 36 naval vessels that would fall under the auspices of the new Department of the Navy. Congress passed specific legislation pertaining to the Corps on July 11, 1798, with an act for “establishing and organizing” a Marine Corps.28 The act allowed for the Corps to be ordered to serve on shore at the President’s request, including at forts and garrisons, in which case they would be governed by the Army’s regulations.29 Providing for the Corps to fall under naval regulations when at sea and under army regulations when on land reaffirmed the Marine’s position as neither fully sailor nor fully soldier. The act provided details such as how many Marines would serve at each rank, but it did not set forth their duties. Not only would Marines be tasked with preventing mutinies, but they would also ensure that the vessel was not endangered by prohibited actions, such as the lighting of fires or the entry of sailors into officers’ quarters without permission.30 Because the U.S. Navy did not impress sailors and provided better overall terms of service that the Royal Navy, its risk of mutiny was considerably lower.31 Still, some American naval officers did not want to take any vessel. Benjamin Homans, Laws of the United States, in Relation to the Navy and the Marine Corps (Washington, D.C.: J. and G.S. Gideon, 1841), 91.

28 U.S. Congress, Statutes at Large, Vol. 1, Ch. 72, Section 1 (Approved 11 July 1798), 5th Cong., 2nd session. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1845).
29 Ibid., 595.
30 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 33 and 41.
chances. More martial duties undertaken by Marines included their continued support of the Navy during combat operations on land and at sea, including manning the naval guns when enough sailors were not available. When not at sea, Marines would provide guards at naval bases, improve fortifications, and perform similar tasks.

Neither Congress nor the Department of the Navy set forth precise regulations regarding the Corps’ relationship to the Navy or how exactly Marines would be used. As a result, ship captains had significant latitude in choosing how to use their Marine detachments. This leeway caused considerable consternation among Marine officers. Some felt naval officers were tasking them with extraneous duties that impeded them from carrying out their own duties. Being ordered to participate in the cleaning of the naval vessels, for example, made it almost impossible for Marines to maintain the appearance of their uniforms, as required to stand sentry duty when in foreign ports.

One naval officer wrote to express his preference for the “military and warlike

32 For the belief of some naval officers that Marines were not necessary to prevent mutiny as they would be in the Royal Navy, see L. Warrington, USN to the Secretary of the Navy, 6 March 1830, and Capt. Charles G. Ridgeley, USN to the Secretary of the Navy, 5 March 1830, appendices to Secretary of the Navy John Branch to the U.S. Senate, 23 March 1830, “On the Expediency of Dispensing with the Marine Corps as Part of the Armed Equipment of a Vessel-of-War,” American State Papers: Naval Affairs 4 vols. (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834-1861), III: 560-569: 561 and 562-563, respectively (hereafter cited as ASP/NA). For naval officers that did worry about mutiny, see Charles Stewart to the Secretary of the Navy, 8 March 1830, 566 and Edmund P. Kennedy, 6 March 1830, 567. For mutiny in the U.S. Navy see James E. Valle, Rocks and Shoals: Naval Discipline in the Age of Fighting Sail (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1980), 102-142.
33 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 32-33.
34 Ibid., 42. For the Corps’ ceremonial duties in port see The Life of the Late General William Eaton (Brookfield, Mass.: E Merriam & Co., 1815), 384 and Congress, House of Representatives, “Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Naval Academy and Marine Corps, Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives, on the Status of the Marine Corps,” 61st Cong., 2nd sess., 7 Jan 1909, 204.
appearance” of Marines over sailors. Still, tensions flourished between Marine and naval officers for a host of other reasons. Marine officers, for example, resented being subsidiary to naval officers even if they technically held superior rank. The Department of the Navy tried unsuccessfully to resolve these tensions, sending a letter to naval captains intended to limit the duties they could impose on Marine officers while clarifying the limited authority of Marine officers aboard naval vessels.

The Corps faced the first real threats to its existence in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Some government officials began considering the possibility of merging the Corps with the Army or eliminating it altogether as a way to economize. These discussions took place at high levels on several occasions. In 1829 President Andrew Jackson suggested incorporating the Corps into the Army as a means of “curing the many defects in its organization.” Not only was its small size a drawback, Jackson noted, but it had too many high-ranking officers for its size which caused unnecessary expense. When Secretary of the Navy John Branch solicited the opinion of naval officers in 1830 on the Corps’ usefulness, he received a range of answers. That naval officers could not

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35 John Rodgers to Secretary of the Navy John Branch, 8 March 1830, in appendix to Secretary of the Navy John Branch to the U.S. Senate, 23 March 1830, “On the Expediency of Dispensing with the Marine Corps as Part of the Armed Equipment of a Vessel-of-War,” ASP/NA, III: 560-569, 564.
36 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 36 and 40.
37 Ibid., 36-37.
39 “On the Expediency of Dispensing with the Marine Corps,” 560-569.
agree that the Corps provided no benefit ultimately convinced Congress to allow the institution’s continuation.\footnote{Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 61 and 66; Robert D. Heinl, \textit{Soldiers of the Sea: The U.S. Marine Corps, 1775-1962} (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1962), 39.} For what would not be the last time, Congress kept the Corps alive to the chagrin of some naval officers.

As a result, Congress sought once again to clarify the Corps’ relationship to the Navy and the Army with the Marine Corps Act of 1834. Although the Corps was part of the Navy Department, it was organizationally independent of the Navy even if its officers often fell under the command of naval officers. The act further elaborated on the subservient role of Marine officers in relationship to naval officers except in rare cases. A Marine officer could be the senior officer in landing parties, for example. The act also decreed that the Corps would adhere to Navy regulations unless the President detached it in support of the Army, in which case it would follow Army regulations.\footnote{In the decades following this act, Marines would be detached to help the Army in campaigns against Native Americans waged in the southeastern United States from 1836 to 1837 as well as during the Mexican-American War of 1845-1848. Millett argues that the fact that Marines were to follow Army regulations when on land led some Army officers to believe incorrectly that this meant they controlled Marines while they were on land. Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 30.} Once again, legislation would not satisfy naval or Marine officers. Major William Freeman expressed his dissatisfaction with aspects of the act in 1836. After two months had passed since putting Marine officers more directly under the commanding naval officer of Navy Yards where Marines acted as sentries and guards, Freeman believed the act had
“humiliate[d] and degrade[d]” the Corps. Freeman contrasted the subsidiary position of Marines under naval officers while at sea, which he was willing to accept, with the encroachment of their independence while on land.

During the Civil War Marines continued to play similar roles. Attached to the Navy, they spent much of the war on blockade duty. Marines did little during the war for the institution to be singled out favorably. As one editorial argued, while “other branches [had] their zealous champions . . . how seldom we see an elaborate eulogy of the Corps.” They also assisted the Navy in attacking Confederate coastal fortifications, sometimes with disastrous results. Some naval officers used Marines as scapegoats in explaining their failed amphibious operations. The institution faced some difficulties during the war as well. It could not recruit enough men to match proportionately the Navy’s substantial increase in the number of sailors and vessels during the war. In part, this failure resulted because the Corps was not authorized to offer the same incentives to recruits that the Army did, primarily in the form of bounties. The Corps did not reach its authorized strength of 87 officers and 3,773 enlistees until the close of the war, which meant some vessels lacked Marine detachments. As a result, the government turned

42 Maj. William Freeman to U.S. Senate, “Statement of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Freeman, of the Marine Corps, complaining of the operation of the regulations for the Navy, under the law of 1834, which subjects the Marines to the officers of the Navy, instead of their own officers, and with a general statement of the laws and regulations relating to the Marine Corps,” ASP/NA, 4: 835-847.
44 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 93.
elsewhere to find troops capable of accomplishing tasks normally performed by Marines. When the Navy’s request for Marines to man boats on the Mississippi River could not be met, the Army established the Mississippi River Marine Brigade in 1862 and recruited soldiers to fill it. The brigade duplicated the military role Marines typically filled on naval vessels, such as conducting short landing operations ashore. Not only did the government create forces that appeared to replicate the Marines, those naval vessels that lacked Marines did not experience mutinies. As a result some questioned continuing the role of Marines as naval policemen. Still, many naval officers supported the Corps because they recognized that they would not have the same control over soldiers as they did over Marines during landing operations.

Debates about the Corps’ usefulness would continue after the war as Congress sought ways to economize. Some journalists heaped vitriol on an institution it viewed as a repository for politically connected officers unable to find employment elsewhere. A Washington Post editorial entitled “Absolute Inutility” characterized the Marine Corps

45 Chester G. Hearn, Ellet’s Brigade: The Strangest of Them All (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 2000); Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 77. The Mississippi Marine Brigade consisted of infantry, artillery, and cavalry. It served the purpose of conducting short landing operations to subdue transportable Confederate artillery and other Confederate forces seeking to attack naval vessels. For a further description of their tasks see, “Ellet’s Marine Brigade,” Philadelphia Inquirer, published 29 Nov. 1862, 2. Ironically its commander, Albert D. Ellet, received the rank of brigadier general that ranked above the Corps’ commandant, Colonel John Harris. 46 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 100. 47 No title, The Idaho Daily Avalanche, 19 Jan. 1876, 2. 48 Also see Jack Shulimson, The Marine Corps’ Search for a Mission, 1880-1898 (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993), 21 for politicians’ ability to influence where officers were stationed.
as an “amphibious hermaphrodite” that served only to provide “useless idlers” with income. The use of the word “hermaphrodite” pointed to the journalist’s belief that the Corps fulfilled some of the Army’s roles as well as some of the Navy’s. Having first-hand experience of the extent to which Marine officers participated in the social circuit, Washington D.C. journalists were especially critical of the Corps. This dismissive attitude made its way far beyond Washington D.C, however. In 1876 when the Corps offered to help the Army subdue the Sioux, a Michigan paper described how the “gorgeous” Corps was eager to head west and go into the “[h]air [b]usiness.”

Another article published in an Ohio paper described Marine officers as “gingermen gentlemen” who were far more concerned with their appearance than their martial duties. The article also looked forward to the Corps’ abolition as it only numbered a few officers who could be considered competent. These articles suggest a departure from the more supportive journalistic atmosphere of the Civil War.

Technological change also began to threaten the Corps after the Civil War. The naval revolution in which vessels came to be powered by steam rather than by sail

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50 “Sitting Bull Brevities,” Kalamazoo Gazette, 26 August 1876, 1. While the article explained how many Marine officers hoped for the opportunity to aid the Army in subduing Native Americans, the headline suggested the Corps was an organization interested largely in appearance.
51 The article was almost as critical of the Navy, describing it as a “fraud” and the Corps as a “shameful fraud upon the Navy.” [Untitled], Cincinnati Daily Enquirer, 29 Dec. 1875, 4. Some Marine officers shared journalists’ critical views of their officer corps. See Shulimson, Search for a Mission, 1.
52 For complimentary articles in the wake of the war, for example, see “Promotion in the U. S. Marine Corps, North American, 2 Jan. 1867, 2 and “The Marine Corps,” The Sun, 2 Jan. 1867, 1.
called into question the Corps’ traditional roles at sea.\textsuperscript{53} Although this process began earlier in the nineteenth century, the transition did not make significant headway until the rise of the so-called “New Navy” in the 1880s. Naval officers argued that they could not retain the highly-trained sailors able to maintain steam vessels because the presence of Marines as guards made sailors feel like children.\textsuperscript{54} Given that the sailors of vessels powered by sails had also required extensive training and skill, albeit of a different kind, it is worth considering whether some naval officers simply used technological change as an excuse to achieve their goal of ridding naval vessels of Marines altogether. Some naval officers believed, for example, that relying too much on Marines for protection inhibited the development of leadership among officers and of discipline within the ranks. These clashes spoke to the long history of tension between the Navy and the Marine Corps. The presence of Marines represented just another hindrance to the Navy’s efforts to create the kind of homogenous enlisted force it sought. Naval officers envisioned a fleet manned by native-born, English-speaking sailors.\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Kenneth Hagan, \textit{This People’s Navy: The Making of American Seapower} (New York: Free Press, 1991), 109. While the transition away from sail enabled ships to avoid a dependence on wind, they required a ready access to coal which necessitated the development of refueling bases overseas.


\textsuperscript{55} Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 122.
The Corps was not the Navy’s only target. Since the 1840s the Navy had struggled to amalgamate officer and enlisted engineers into its institutional fabric.56 Similarly, junior officers especially began attacking the Corps in the late 1880s and early 1890s.57 In part these attacks were made possible by new publications such as *Proceedings of the United States Naval Institute*. Established in 1874, the Naval Institute’s publication provided a forum for naval officers to discuss key issues of the day, including the presence of Marines aboard ship.

Since its inception the Corps had occupied a peculiar position. It was not a land-based organization like the Army nor was it entirely a sea-based one like the Navy. As a result, the matter of missions was never exactly clear. A mission can be understood as the tasks and roles—the function, the *raison d’etre*—assigned to a particular institution that often constitute its justification for existence. Usually an institution’s mission or missions reveal its functional purpose. Whereas armies and navies have traditional roles

56 For the difficulties of incorporating engineers into the Navy’s culture see Hagan, *This People’s Navy*, 108 and 118 and Lt. Commander Harry P. Huse, USN, “The Question of Naval Engineers,” *Proceedings* 28 (1903), 911-916. For the hindering presence of Marines, see Lieutenant William Fullam who wrote that the Marines’ “presence” hindered the “development of a military spirit.” One example is his “The System of Naval Training and Discipline Required to Promote Efficiency and Attract Americans,” *Proceedings* 55 (1890), 473-495: 475. See Peter Karsten, *The Naval Aristocracy: The Golden Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern Navalism* (New York: Free Press, 1972) for the Navy’s efforts to instill a homogenous military culture among its officers.

and missions and realms of operation, the missions of marine forces are more varied and ad hoc. This was especially true in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The British Royal Marines, for example, transitioned from a light infantry and landing force into more of a specialized commando force in the twentieth century.58

Jack Shulimson has argued that the U.S. Marines struggled to find a particular mission during the late nineteenth century. Shulimson depicted Marine officers as highly demoralized by factors ranging from slow promotions to frustration with the quality of their brother officers. While some sought to reform the Corps in line with the trend toward professionalism in other branches, they did not seek out a new mission. Rather, they were almost pushed into one by junior naval officers who envisioned using Marines as an advance-base force. This suggestion was consistent with the increased imperial obligations of the United States after the Spanish-American-Cuban War.

In many ways this shift represented a natural development for the Corps. In the years between the Civil War and the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Navy and the Marine Corps participated in increasing numbers of landing operations around the world. Generally transient, these operations aimed to protect American lives and

property in response to unstable situations in other nations.59 With the cessation of hostilities after the Spanish-American-Cuban War, it became more evident to Marines that they would be acquiring expeditionary duties in the future because of the need to control newly-acquired lands, especially the Philippines.60 At the heart of the expeditionary mission was the idea that the Corps would be a flexible force in readiness to be used whenever needed around the world. The Navy welcomed this change as it gained more control over infantry forces than if it had been forced to rely on the Army.61 It could use the Corps to acquire advanced bases that would provide it with a more secure means of ensuring it could coal its vessels and launch operations when necessary. Marines would establish these bases by establishing defensive positions using artillery, mines, and other techniques.

During the Spanish-American-Cuban War, however, the majority of Marines served aboard naval vessels.62 Still, the most powerful image of Marines to emerge from the war celebrated the Corps’ only real ground combat. The first troops to set foot in

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60 Shulimson, Search for a Mission, 196-7.
62 Shulimson, Search for a Mission, 193.
Cuba, Marines quelled the resistance they encountered within a few days despite being outnumbered substantially. One enthusiastic writer informed readers that Marines were the most eager of all American troops to defeat their opposition and hoped to use the war as an opportunity to “capture and occupy a page of history” for their institution.\textsuperscript{63}

In one story, journalist Stephen Crane depicted Sergeant John Quick as calmly signaling for naval gunfire while under attack from Cuban troops.\textsuperscript{64} Dennis Showalter has pointed to this image as an example of how war correspondents had a pivotal role in creating the image of the “hard-bitten warrior.”\textsuperscript{65} Heather Streets’ work on the relationship between war correspondents and the military in nineteenth-century Great Britain, however, suggests that officers played a critical role in determining what message the media would convey.\textsuperscript{66} Savvy officers manipulated the media to serve their own purposes, working to evoke many of the glamorous images of empire that appealed to many Britons.\textsuperscript{67}

The war marked an important point in the Corps’ transition from a participant in transitory landing parties to more intensive expeditionary service. As a way to periodize

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\textsuperscript{63} “The Kind of Men the Marines Are,” \textit{Kansas City Star}, 12 June 1898, 1.
\textsuperscript{65} Dennis F. Showalter, “Evolution of the U.S. Marine Corps as a military elite” in \textit{The Marine Corps Gazette} (November 1979), 45 and 50.
\textsuperscript{67} Streets, 122-3.
\end{footnotesize}
the Corps’ history, historians such as Allan Millett and Robert Heinl have stressed the shift to this expeditionary mission and the subsequent transition toward an amphibious mission in the period between the world wars. This approach sometimes leads historians to fault Marines for not envisioning particular missions earlier.\(^6\) Allan Millett, for example, wondered why the Corps did not develop a doctrine for amphibious warfare during the nineteenth century considering the number of assaults on forts it participated in during the Civil War.

A search for one primary mission, however, camouflages the extent to which Marines resisted restriction to any particular mission. The development of an expeditionary role, which came to fruition after the Spanish-American-Cuban War, could not fully resolve the Corps’ insecurities about what purpose it served. After all, the continued threats the Corps faced regarding some of its traditional duties, such as guarding naval officers and naval vessels from enlisted personnel, suggested that if it focused on a sole mission it would run the risk of possibly losing any claim to usefulness. For this reason, for example, the Corps strongly resisted President Theodore Roosevelt’s efforts to remove all Marines from naval vessels in 1908.

It was by no means a natural development that the Marines would lose one of its traditional primary duties—that of guarding naval officers and naval vessels from

\(^6\) Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 91.
mutinous enlisted sailors—due to the new technology of steam-powered vessels. This role came under threat in part because some junior naval officers wanted to transform naval culture and believed the presence of Marines aboard naval vessels hindered this goal. Even in the age of sail some naval officers had argued that the presence of Marines harmed morale.\textsuperscript{69}

Instead of trying to explain how their functions differed from those of soldiers and sailors, Marines increasingly claimed that they were better than sailors and soldiers, especially after the turn of the century. Claims to elitism and a sense of affiliation with a distinctive organization are central to group identity.\textsuperscript{70} One of the most effective means of distinguishing one’s organization is by showing how it differs from “what is closest, against that which represents the greatest threat.”\textsuperscript{71} Central to the Corps’ self-definition, then, were comparisons to its sister institutions, the Army and the Navy. How the Corps defined itself against the Army and the Navy was in constant flux depending on the institution’s needs. Given the incorporation of both the Army and the Marine Corps into the American Expeditionary Force in World War I, for example, the Corps had to refine its image to avoid seeming redundant.

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 61.


Understanding the process by which individuals chose to affiliate themselves with an organization is more difficult. Scholars of organizational identity have suggested that individual identity has two components. The first component is a sense of one’s own traits and distinguishing characteristics, or a “personal” identity. The other component is the group or “social” identity, or the extent to which individuals finds meaning in identifying themselves with groups of society. Individuals may find meaning in any number of categories. This identity will be a matter of “degree” in terms of how important it is to the individual. For example, some individuals might gain a sense of belonging and even empowerment by affiliating themselves to any number of categories, whether they are based on gender, ethnicity, or an institution in this case. Of course this identity can ebb and flow. In the case of World War I Marines, for example, an initial enthusiastic pride in the Corps during training probably diminished for many after experiencing the harsh realities of combat. Moreover, individuals could serve in the Corps without feeling any sense of attachment to the institution whatsoever.

The likelihood of this identification increased in the early twentieth century. The Corps received positive press for its involvement in actions such as the Spanish-American-Cuban War and the Boxer Rebellion. During the Boxer Rebellion Marines

72 For a work that sets out important developments in the field of organizational theory, see Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz, Organizational Identity: A Reader (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
helped to relieve westerners under siege in Peking’s Legation Quarter by anti-imperialist members of the Righteous Harmony Society Movement. Either because of the praise they received or because of their enthusiasm for their involvement in these missions, both enlisted Marines and officers began exhibiting their institutional pride more openly, as seen in personal correspondence. Identity and image began to reinforce each other, especially with the establishment of the Publicity Bureau in 1911. The increased identification of some Marines with their institution vested them in the burnishing of the Corps’ image. Individual Marines internalized the image of the Corps and conveyed it to their fellow Marines and to other societal groups. Image, it seemed, had the power to help resolve the Corps’ existential crisis.

A number of sources illuminate the Corps’ turn to image. Especially valuable are the letters, histories, and articles produced by nineteenth-century Marine officers, including those of the officers most involved in the production of the Corps’ nineteenth-century histories. These sources are supplemented by official correspondence, the personal papers of other officers, and newspaper and magazine articles relating to the Corps. The variety of available sources increases greatly in the twentieth century,

74 While the correspondence of individual Marines does show an increasing pride in the institution, especially in contrast to the Army and the Navy, personal correspondence is problematic in that the letters that have been preserved in archives could be somewhat self-selecting. Those Marines who prided themselves on their time in the Corps probably were most likely to preserve their letters and perhaps ensure their relatives also preserved them and donated them to archives.
providing a wider sample of voices, especially those of enlisted Marines. One of the greatest resources for understanding how the Publicity Bureau expanded and strengthened an image while increasing the institution’s group identity is its magazine, *The Recruiters’ Bulletin*. Published on a monthly basis beginning in November of 1914, the *Bulletin* reveals how the Corps sought to attract recruits as well as strengthen the identity of current and former Marines. While Marines attached to the Bureau contributed many articles and editorials, numerous articles relied on the disparate perspectives of recruiters stationed throughout the country. The *Bulletin* provides insights into how enlisted Marines actively shaped the Corps’ image on their own initiative. Many of the topics discussed in the *Bulletin* were practical, such as what kind of signage would be most effective to draw pedestrians to recruiting offices. Other articles dealt more with the image the Corps wanted to present.

Still, official sources like the *Bulletin* pose a particular challenge for the historian. On the one hand, it is difficult to view them as anything more than propaganda, designed to shape the institution’s image. Summarizing the Corps’ approach to telling stories about itself, one retired Marine general recalled that the institution “repeat[ed] the more fantastic tales, improve[ed] on them, and invent[ed] whoppers of their own,

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75 Millett summarizes it as “full of adventure stories designed to lure prospective recruits and entertain enlisted Marines.” Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 176
[until] they came to believe what they said. Thus, they learned the art of propaganda.”76 Indeed, as will be seen, the Bureau worked diligently to create symbols that would reinforce its image and invented myths.

On the other hand, it is problematic simply to dismiss out-of-hand the Bulletin’s often flowery rhetoric as nothing more than self-promotion. The way people use words is historically contingent. A prime example of this is the disparity in writing style before and after World War I. Words like “sacrifice” and “valor” acquired a different connotation as the war came to symbolize senselessness and waste.77 The initial enthusiasm of Europeans quickly wasted away when they witnessed the enormous human cost of modern warfare. Combatants paid an enormous price for limited territorial gains, repeatedly launching offensives into defenses made powerful by the machine gun, barbed wire, and other technological developments. Janet Watson has argued that the idea of the “lost generation” and the view of World War I as a waste did not become widely held until after the war with the publication of memoirs and other personal accounts of the war.78 Even when understandings of war do not shift over time, however, the language that soldiers use in recording their feelings about war as felt

while experiencing battle can be foreign to modern readers. In order to comprehend what compelled Civil War soldiers to fight, James McPherson suggested readers accept the “genuineness” of the “sentiments” they expressed. McPherson found Civil War soldiers’ letters to be quite maudlin, albeit consistent with the romanticism of the period, and thus off-putting to some modern readers. In interpreting the Bulletin, then, there is a fine line that is difficult to establish between critically assessing its articles designed to promote the Corps and dismissing the sometimes-sentimental thoughts of recruiters’ contributions as nothing more than propaganda.

One way to remain engaged critically with such sources is to differentiate between letters and diaries written during the war from those works published after the war, as suggested by Janet Watson. The latter, whether deliberately or not, were written with the reader in mind. Even works compiled from letters purportedly written during the war can be altered, as has already been seen with the letter published in Dear Folks at Home. Contrasting the published letters with more private letters Marines wrote home makes visible the differences between the myths and images the Corps wanted to project and what individual Marines thought about their experiences within the institution.

79 McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 100.
80 Ibid., 11. McPherson includes those diaries written during war that soldiers “improved” upon after the war. Ibid., 10. For similar thoughts see Peter S. Kindsvatter, American Soldiers: Ground Combat in the World Wars, Korea, and Vietnam (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), xv. Kindsvatter also points out the tendency of some memoirs to lose sight of some of “war’s unpleasantries.”
One key to understanding the Corps’ image is its increasingly frequent articulation of itself as an elite military institution. Allan Millett sees the Corps’ determination to establish itself as an elite institution as one of the central themes in the institution’s history. Millett traces the origin of this tendency back to the leadership of Archibald Henderson, the Corps’ longest-serving commandant, who held this position from 1820 to 1859. According to Millett, Henderson believed that the best way to ensure the Corps’ existence was to prove that Marines “could fight.” As Congress debated the Corps’ purpose in the 1830s, for example, Henderson sought to demonstrate his institution’s aptitude for combat by serving alongside the Army in seeking to end Seminole resistance to resettlement. One editorial described how Henderson had “volunteered his services on land—in a situation strange to him.” While the Corps had occasionally been rushed to aid ground troops out of necessity in previous conflicts such as the War of 1812, Henderson pushed the Corps toward more ground combat. In the wake of the Mexican-American War of 1845-48, in which Marines took on some combat roles, Henderson contacted returning officers, eager to hear how their accounts might

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81 The Commandant is the head of the Marine Corps. For much of the nineteenth century, including during Henderson’s time, the Commandant held the rank of colonel. For background on Henderson, see Joseph H. Alexander, “Archibald Henderson” in Commandants of the Marine Corps, eds. Allan R. Millett and Jack Shulimson (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 54-73.

82 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 70.


work to affirm the Corps’ claim to be an elite institution.85 Marines such as Henderson might want others to view the Corps as elite, but finding an effective means of accomplishing this goal would continue to challenge Marine officers throughout the nineteenth century. The Corps did not yet have the resources to flood American newspapers with propaganda that it would acquire with the Publicity Bureau’s establishment.

The Bureau seized upon those elements of elitism it found most useful. Elitism can provide important psychological benefits to individuals by empowering them and enhancing their sense of self-worth.86 The Publicity Bureau learned to draw on the idea of elitism to strengthen the individual and group identity of Marines. The mystique of elite military institutions serves the functional purpose of attracting recruits and securing public and government approbation.87 Regardless of the reality of how institutions perform in combat situations, Roger Beaumont argues, they can become “de facto elite[s]” because of the aura they project.88

86 The Corps was beginning to place increasing stress on psychology. In a letter written in 1912, for example, one officer discussed the merits of psychological tests in weeding out mentally-deficient recruits, believing a careful selection process could improve esprit de corps and retention. Officer in Charge of Recruiting, St. Paul, Minn. to Major General Commandant, 30 April 1913, Robert Denig Papers, MCASC.
Most analogous to the Corps’ experience in transforming its image and gaining public acclaim is that of the French Foreign Legion. In the nineteenth century, the Foreign Legion did not have a glamorous image. The image of the warrior who had severed all ties with home and nation to fight against overwhelming odds, however, began to resonate with the public. Douglas Porch has compared the Legion to Hollywood in that both created a powerful illusion that was not always based on reality. As he notes, it is “not important that the ideal does not always live up to the reality.”89 It is the motive for service and the Legion’s status as “outcasts” rather than the service itself that the public finds compelling because it is tied to their image as “heroic desperados.” While many histories suggest the Legion has always fought heroically, closer scrutiny reveals it was often at the verge of “utter collapse,” but this was to be expected given its recruitment of desperate men.90

British officers similarly helped to construct the image of Scottish Highland troops. Prior to the English subjugation of Scotland in the eighteenth century, the English commonly depicted Highlanders as savage heathens. Heather Streets has demonstrated how once the English had crushed military opposition and the Highlanders no longer posed a threat, their “othering” as uncivilized brutes was no

90 Ibid., 118.
longer required to justify the harsh measures that the British had employed against them. Now, poets such as Sir Walter Scott transformed the Highlands from a mountainous wasteland into a mystical region unique by virtue of its exotic customs and traditions.91 Similarly, the Highlanders came to be viewed as powerful warriors. British Army officers, either accepting or seeking to benefit from this transformed and romanticized image, used it as an effective recruiting tool.92 Just as importantly, the Highlanders’ legendary “savagery” could become a virtue when turned against Britain’s nineteenth-century imperial enemies.93 Streets asserts that the Highlander’s image changed in part because of “military successes” but also because of the “mystique” that the Highlands had acquired in larger society.94

Like the Highlanders, the public and recruits responded to the Corps’ powerful appeals, not to the reality of what it did or did not do during combat. A number of factors contributed to how the Corps came to be perceived. Some grew out of the institution’s use, others more fortuitously. Like the French Foreign Legion, for example,

92 Streets, 59 and 157. For a similar argument, see Clyde, 157-159.
93 Streets, 1.
94 Ibid., 59.
journalists depicted battles in which the Corps faced great odds such as at Guantanamo in 1898.

The Corps also took steps to shape how others would perceive it. During World War I, for example, the institution did not want to be seen as another mass army. Elite forces increasingly appeared as “colorful remnants of a different world” to the public.\textsuperscript{95} Similarly, the idea of “shock troops” that could be used to break the stalemate of trench warfare, for example, appealed to the imagination.\textsuperscript{96} As opposed to mass armies, shock troops were designed to be used for their “speed” and “mobility.”\textsuperscript{97} In his study of World War II Marines, Craig Cameron argues that the Corps’ traditional insecurities about its existence and its need to differentiate itself from the Army led it to favor “quick, decisive assaults” over the Army’s more methodical campaigns.\textsuperscript{98} The Corps paid a heavy price for this tactical doctrine, Cameron asserts, with greater casualties and combat trauma. Cameron traces the origins of this approach back to the Battle of Belleau Wood, where he believes the Corps learned to view “battle as a test of cultural mettle

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\textsuperscript{96} \textit{Ibid.}, 16. For an historical overview of shock troops see David C. Knight, \textit{Shock Troops: The History of Elite Corps and Special Forces} (New York: Crescent, 1983). For more specific studies of World War I shock troops, see Tim Cook, \textit{At the Sharp End: Canadians Fighting the Great War} (Toronto: Viking, 2007).
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\textsuperscript{97} Wolfgang Schivelbusch, \textit{The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery} (New York: Henry Holt, 2001), 255.
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and institutional reputation." Cameron makes a convincing argument regarding the Battle of Peleliu that Marines sacrificed their troops needlessly. No doubt the idea that the Corps uses Marines as cannon fodder, however, stems in part from inter-service rivalry. A former Marine very critical of the institution, Cameron’s reference to the Battle of Belleau Wood as the foundation for this tendency is problematic given that an Army general commanded Marines. *Ibid.*, 23.

By comparison, the Army began opening up opportunities for enlisted soldiers in 1892. Any single soldier with two years’ service who was under the age of 30 could apply. He would then compete against other applicants before an examination board. Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941*
not limited to the Corps. Both the Army and the Navy increasingly promoted the ability of enlisted soldiers and sailors to rise from the ranks. In the first year of the war, however, the Marine Corps procured 27 percent of its officers from the ranks of noncommissioned and warrant officers.\textsuperscript{101} By contrast the Navy offered similar commissions to less than seven percent of its similar-ranking sailors.\textsuperscript{102}

Enlisted contributions to the Bureau, moreover, were vital. The historiography on how enlisted servicemen have shaped image and identity or even institutional culture is thin. In her account of the Corps’ occupation of Haiti, Mary Renda departed from previous works by focusing on the experiences of enlisted Marines. Her purpose was not to engage comprehensively with the Corps’ identity. Rather, she wanted to understand how the experience of U.S. Marines in Haiti shaped culture in the United

\textsuperscript{101} It commissioned 89 warrant officers and paymaster’s clerks and 122 meritorious non-commissioned officers out of 761 new officers. U.S. Navy Department, \textit{Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1917} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 836.

\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid.}, 16-17. The Navy appointed 100 sailors to attend the Naval Academy each year. It commissioned more than 1000 warrant officers during the first year of the war.
States. The inclusion of a variety of enlisted sources and perspectives provides fascinating insights into the individual identities of Marines. Yet, because Renda believes that enlisted Marines were co-opted into serving the state in its imperial project, she does not ascribe much agency to enlisted Marines.103

In contrast, Peter Stanley’s work on nineteenth-century British soldiers demonstrates the importance of taking enlisted sub-cultures seriously in examining identity formation.104 Stanley explored the so-called “White Mutiny” that occurred when government officials and politicians in London incorporated the East Indian Company Army into the British Army shortly after the Indian Rebellion of 1857. While this mutiny has been treated as political history, it has not been fully studied from the perspective of ordinary soldiers. Government officials’ decision to merge the two armies gave little thought to how these very different military cultures might clash. While the British Army represented the old order in Great Britain, the East Indian Company Army offered more opportunity for officers and enlisted men alike, attracting those who sought to improve their standing in society.105 In responding to the merger, members of the East

105 Ibid., 8 and 12. The East Indian Company Army was the private army of the East Indian Company and had a larger presence in India than did the British Army. It played a significant role in expanding British power in the region. The two armies had very different cultures. As Stanley distinguished them, the British Army “rewarded fidelity to the regiment” while the East Indian Company Army “allowed and encouraged the pursuit of individual aspiration beyond its confines.” Ibid., 17.
Indian Company Army drew on their understanding of working-class culture to articulate and shape their resistance to the merger. Individual regiments reacted differently, responding to any number of factors, including whether soldiers respected their officers’ leadership. Stanley’s work suggests the limits of more homogenous interpretations of military culture. Culture is not always imposed from above, even in extremely hierarchical institutions. In the case of the Publicity Bureau, enlisted Marines had significant opportunities to contribute to the image the Bureau created and projected. The work also indicates the potential benefit of exploring sub-cultures and tracing continuities between military institutions and larger society, such as the strength of working-class culture. Stanley, for example, views the soldiers’ responses as a “civil protest in a military setting,” epitomizing the extent to which “civilian” influences shape the actions of service members.106

These enlisted Marines built on the Corps’ historical record, which had been forged by a small group of dedicated Marines officers during the nineteenth century. Struggling to convince naval officers, government officials, and the general public that their institution served an important purpose, Marine officers turned to history to reshape its image. Marines also began representing themselves as members of an elite

106 Ibid., 141 and 162. For another work that integrates labor and military history, see Paul Foos, A Short, Offhand, Killing Affair: Soldiers and Social Conflict during the Mexican-American War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).
institution, a pose that simultaneously enhanced their own group identity. As a result, society as a whole slowly began to accept this view. Many scholars for whom the study of the U.S. Marine Corps is only a small part of their work consider the institution to be elite. They rarely explain why it is elite, though, or when it came to be considered elite, nor do they consider the role that the Corps itself played in convincing others it was elite.

This trend became increasingly evident after the Spanish-American-Cuban War. The two themes of openness to mission and claims to elitism merged in the years leading up to World War I. The Corps argued that it was willing and able to perform any mission. Some Marine officers even pointedly suggested the institution would undertake tasks other services either did not want to or were not capable of carrying out. This trend gained significant momentum with the Bureau’s establishment. Marines of varying ranks drew on their previous experiences in the Corps and the increasing pride they had taken from their perceived successes in imperial conflicts. The Bureau experimented with numerous methods of informing the public of not only what

107 See Beaumont, Military Elites, 5 and 26, and Ion and Neilson, Elite Military Formations, 2. John Mosier, for example, in explaining how Marines came to be positioned at the very center of action during the Battle of Belleau Wood of June 1918, assumes that the reader will understand what he means when describing how, after the declaration of war, Marines “had lobbied for a place at the head of the line and, Marines being Marines, a detachment was added.” See The Myth of the Great War: A New Military History of World War I (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), 321. Mosier insinuated that Marines could be expected to act a certain way and that the reader would be familiar with this notion.

a Marine was but the quality of service to the nation he provided. The Bureau combined aspects of the image perpetuated by nineteenth-century Marines along with the image of the powerful warrior made possible by the imperial missions of the early twentieth century. Drawing on the increased importance of marketing at the time, the Bureau sought to make the Corps a household name and familiarize the public with the institution’s symbols. The Bureau wanted not only to convince the public of the Corps’ merits but also, of course, to lure recruits to the institution. As the Bureau matured, it also began seeking to bond its recruits to the institution during training. In concert with boot camp, the Bureau worked to inculcate the Corps’ “spirit,” or what might constitute its identity, into its recruits during initial training. In this way the Bureau strengthened the Corps’ image externally while encouraging recruits, some of whom had been attracted by the Corps’ image in the first place, to accept its group identity.

Chapter One explores the Corps’ experience during and after the Civil War, especially its relationship with the Navy. The Corps saw only limited service on land during the war, spending most of its time aboard naval vessels. It faced several calls for its abolition or assimilation into the Army. When the United States experienced economic difficulties in the 1870s, the Corps found itself vulnerable. Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century a small group of Marines worked to shape the Corps’ public image in a positive manner by creating a history for the institution. Some historians have
viewed the Corps’ earliest histories published after the Civil War simply as short-term responses to particular threats rather than as part of a larger response that individual Marines would continue for decades. As their naval counterparts looked forward to adapt their mission to new technology and to professionalize accordingly, Marines largely looked backward to the past in seeking to resolve their ongoing existential crisis. Likewise, as Army officers began using history as an educational tool, Marines used it for self-promotion. Indeed, the Corps’ interest in justifying its existence with reference to the past might have even hindered the “search for a mission” that historians argue describes the institution during this period. Marines asserted an unbroken historical continuum that could be traced as far back as the ancient Greeks. Having also stressed, albeit incorrectly, that it was the oldest military institution in the United States, the Corps began to find virtue in maintaining that it was the most traditional one as well. In an era of rapid change and dislocation, Marines hoped the Corps’ deep roots in the past would provide an image of consistent service. The repeated insistence on the

109 Shulimson characterized these writings as nothing more than a “strenuous public relations campaign.” Search for a Mission, 16.
110 Carol Reardon describes how the U.S. Army began stressing the importance of history around this period. However, Army officers used history as a tool to assist in the institution’s professionalization. See Soldiers and Scholars: The U.S. Army and the Uses of Military History, 1865-1920 (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990).
111 Royal Marines began stressing these connections even earlier. See Marine Officer, “Economy of a Man of War,” Army and Navy Chronicle, 19 Oct. 1837, 1.
Corps being the oldest U.S. military institution also foreshadowed the myths and legends the Publicity Bureau and other Marines would foster in the twentieth century.

Chapter Two examines how the Spanish-American-Cuban War resolved many of the Corps’ nineteenth-century tensions. During the war Marines at sea served as gunners on the secondary batteries, where they did not receive much acclaim because the primary batteries proved more effective against the Spanish. 112 A battalion of about 650 Marines saw the first ground combat of the war when they went ashore in Cuba to set up an advanced base in a harbor the Navy wanted to use to recoal its vessels. Following the war, Marines stepped into the ready-made job of securing and policing imperial outposts, in part pushed to do so because the Navy wanted infantry it could control. The Corps’ increased confidence in itself, in part a result of the institution’s success in its imperial missions, encouraged Marines to distinguish themselves from both soldiers and sailors as military elites. As one young Marine officer remarked during the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the “Marines are acknowledged to be [the] best drilled and disciplined Corps in any Branch of our Services. On board ship they out sailor the sailors, and on shore they beat the Army in their own tactics.” 113 Enthusiasm more than logic seems to have underpinned this Marine’s comments. Drill and discipline had long been considered qualities of soldiers, and thereby obvious ones to

112 Millett, *Semper Fidelis*, 130.
113 James Breckenridge to Mother, 8 May 1899, Breckenridge Papers, MCASC.
use in distinguishing Marines from sailors.114 As such, suggesting that Marines
outperformed sailors at their traditional duties with reference to drill and discipline was
illogical. Still, this sort of hyperbole would influence much of the Publicity Bureau’s
approach before and during World War I. Whether or not they could back up such
assertions, Marines boasted they were qualitatively superior to the Army and the Navy.

The establishment of the Publicity Bureau in 1911 provided an official
mechanism for drawing on and perpetuating some aspects of the Corps’ image that
individuals had been propounding since the nineteenth century. Chapter Three looks at
the aggressive methods the Bureau used to obtain recruits. In the process, the Bureau
stressed the goal of insuring that every household recognized what a Marine was.
Given that a mission-based definition was problematic for the Corps, the Bureau
preferred to stress that the Marine was simply a superior, elite soldier capable of any
task.115 Looking outward to business advertising, Marines began seeking to establish
trademarks and slogans that every American would recognize. By the outbreak of the
war, the Bureau had attached meaning and significance to these symbols, reinforcing the
Marine’s identification with his institution as well as the general public’s ability to

\[114\] For examples of the importance of drill and discipline, see “Message from the President of the United
States to the Two Houses of Congress at the Commencement of the Second Session of the Thirty-second
Congress,” Part II (Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, Printer, 1852), 583, 585, 588, 601; Richard S.
\[115\] For the benefits of “mystique” in recruiting in other military institutions, see Dennis E. Showalter,
“German Army Elites in World Wars I and II” in Elite Military Formations, 135-166: 154.
recognize its image. Over time the Corps’ relationship to the Navy changed. Whereas sailors and Marines had fought side-by-side in nineteenth-century landing parties, twentieth-century Marines assumed greater responsibility for more complex landing operations requiring increased training and coordination. By the time of the Veracruz Incident of 1914, the Bureau became more vocal in claiming that it formed the “backbone” of landing parties rather than serving more equally in conjunction with sailors.116 The acquisition of more soldierly duties necessitated by its imperial duties also forced the Marine Corps into closer competition with the Army, reinforcing the importance of distinguishing Marines from soldiers. The Corps transferred the notion of Marines as naval policemen to the idea of world policemen, tasked with restoring order and bringing peace wherever they were ordered.

Chapter Four explores how the Corps altered and strengthened this sense of belonging to an elite brotherhood during World War I. This emphasis on brotherhood is one manifestation of the Bureau’s attempts to strengthen group identity by encouraging the sense of belonging to something special.117 The Corps benefited by being the smallest military branch, which enhanced the institution’s sense of brotherhood. As Sergeant B.J.

116 “Who Am I,” Paul Woyshner Papers, MCASC.
Rutzen stressed, Marines were the “aristocrats” of all the U.S. military branches.\(^{118}\) These forces worked to strengthen the institution’s esprit de corps.\(^{119}\) Literally translated as an institution’s spirit, the term speaks to the military purposes that group identity serves. Esprit de corps can be defined as the sense of attachment to and pride in one’s institution that serves the practical purpose of boosting morale and increasing unit cohesion and loyalty. In his work on esprit de corps among Civil War soldiers, Mark Dunkelman describes the term as a sense of shared community that inspires fervor and fidelity to the unit or institution. He argues that esprit de corps initially arose from the Army’s recruiting practices of creating regiments from the same geographical areas. These local ties strengthened on the battlefield because of the regiment’s shared experiences that fostered “camaraderie.”\(^{120}\) The Corps could not replicate this structure, but it could expand the reach of the Bureau not only to attract recruits but to initiate them into the Corps’ group identity during training.

The attention the Corps received during World War I in conjunction with the information promulgated by the Publicity Bureau reinforced the increasingly favorable

\(^{119}\) For examples of this term’s use by Marines, see Sgt. Henry F. Hayes, Sgt. A.K. Carrick, and Sgt. Monkton Dene, “How Necessary is Love of the Corps to Successful Recruiting,” Supplement, *Bulletin*, Feb. 1918, 4-6. The Corps also frequently just used the word “spirit” to reference the phenomenon. For one example, see “Chafing at the Bit,” *Bulletin*, Feb. 1918, 16.
image the public could have of Marines. Just as had occurred during the Spanish-
American-Cuban War, the Corps benefited from fortuitous reporting of the AEF’s early
contributions to the war, especially at the Battle of Belleau Wood. At one point the
Bureau became convinced enough of how the public perceived it that it began reining in
its more aggressive publicity. The solidification of the Marine Corps’ official song
represents this change. It no longer trumpeted the fact that it believed itself to be
superior to the Army and the Navy, as it had before the war. Confident that the public
grasped its importance, it removed a line claiming to be the nation’s finest military
institution and replaced it with a reference to the Marine’s traditional role as policeman.
Moreover, the institution more and more frequently began referring to the song as a
hymn, suggesting the extent to which it fostered an identity of a spiritual and almost
sacred body.121

How the Corps reversed its traditional place in American society from ignored at
best and maligned at worst into an institution revered to countless Americans
constitutes a remarkable transformation. In the years following the Civil War, the
Marine Corps began taking steps to promote itself. As the first institutional history

121 Just as the Corps claimed to be the oldest military institution in the United States, it claims to have the
Hymn” but not a song specifically donated to the Navy. Frederick Weld, ed. and compiler, Songs of the Sea
written by a serving military officer, Captain Richard Collum’s *History of the United States Marine Corps* established a strong foundation upon which twentieth-century Marines could begin building an image. The small institution forged ahead in the early twentieth century, using public relations to shape its image and gain broader name recognition. Where historians have stressed the extent to which the Corps needed to identify a mission to survive, they have downplayed the extent to which the Corps created an image of the Marine as capable of fulfilling any mission. Oddly situated between the Navy and the Army, it could not convincingly lay claim to any particular mission. Its solution to the problem was to seek to create an image that singled out the Marine as something special so that the word alone would be enough to have instantaneous “meaning.”
2. The Long Nineteenth Century: Identity Wars and Imagery

Almost from its establishment, the Corps faced public ignorance, Congressional scrutiny, and attacks from naval officers. The public had little understanding of what Marines did or what they had contributed, in large part because the Corps served so closely with the Navy and therefore seldom received individual recognition. Congressmen might be more aware of the Corps’ importance. Still, they wondered if the Corps’ elimination or integration into the Army might save money and be more practical.1 Finally, some naval officers believed that Marines had little to contribute aboard ship. They held the opinion that sailors could be trained to fulfill the Marines’ duties aboard naval vessels and that this would improve sailors’ behavior.

Marine officers would try to articulate a response to these images that in large part arose because of the clashing identities between the two services. Justifying sea soldiers, however, was a difficult proposition. Since Marines did not participate in all tasks at sea, naval officers suggested they were a hindrance. At the same time, Marines had to demonstrate they contributed something distinctive so as to be necessary. Marines would define themselves as soldiers, seeking to delineate clearly between the duties of sailors and their duties. This posture was problematic, however. If Marines

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were simply soldiers, could the Army not replace the Corps? Some Congressmen held this view, repeatedly calling for the Corps to be integrated into the Army throughout the nineteenth century.

In articulating a response, Marines sought to reach a broader audience. Often acting individually, they would not always develop a coherent or unified approach to ensuring support. They had yet to create a map for creating a compelling image. Still, Marines would establish a historical foundation for their institution. Over the course of a century they would remake themselves from an object of mockery and disdain to an elite institution capable of any task.

As conveyed by journalists, the public image of a Marine was someone with an impressive uniform performing unknown duties. Descriptions of the Corps ranged from vituperative to defensive. In describing their role guarding Navy yards ashore, one of the more sympathetic accounts described Marines as “gaily-dressed fellows” with “ugly-looking bayonet[s].” While many observers saw Marines as nothing more than living mannequins for fancy uniforms, this journalist made clear that they served a purpose. They had “[e]very reliance . . . placed upon them, and at night the yard is wholly in their keeping.”2 Their role as guards ashore correlated with one of their duties at sea: to keep the ship safe and orderly, whether protecting the officers from mutiny or

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2 “The Mare Island Navy-Yard,” *Scribner’s Monthly*, April 1872, 644-645. The term “Navy Yard” was the precursor to today’s naval base.
ensuring sailors adhered to regulations. The role of Marines at Navy Yards was more straightforward than their role at sea. Still, the journalist still felt it necessary to explain that Marines were “sea-soldiers.” While not providing any further detail as to what exactly this term meant and suggesting some confusion about what Marines did, he did note that this was a facetious nickname. Overall, this journalist provided a relatively benign description of Marines within a larger article describing life at a Navy Yard.

On the other extreme, a commentary on the Secretary of the Navy’s Annual Report published in the prominent *North American Review* denounced the Corps in no uncertain terms. The most substandard part of the Navy was the Corps, which interfered with the “efficiency and harmony” of naval vessels. As the journalist explained, Marines were “of no use for the ordinary duties of the ship, or else, in becoming useful, they lose entirely their distinctive character, and cease to be more of soldiers than the seamen among whom they become mingled.”3 The Corps might continue to guard naval yards or be integrated into the Army, but it had no place aboard naval vessels. In urging the Corps’ “abolition,” the journalist set out the very heart of the institution’s difficulties. It would have to subsume its identity into the Navy’s in order to be valuable at which point Marines would no longer be soldiers.

3 “Art. V. Report of the Secretary of the Navy to the President of the United States, December 1, 1829,” *North American Review* 21 (April 1830), 386.
This public image largely correlated with the opinion of many naval officers. One frustrated Marine officer explained how naval officers sought to denigrate his institution to members of Congress. These naval officers suggested that the only contribution of Marines aboard ships was as dressed-up waiters. Naval officers probably borrowed this depiction from British naval officers, who were sometimes served by Marines while at sea.

The Marine Guard typically consisted of one captain and about fifty enlisted Marines on larger vessels. It provided orderlies and sentries while afloat, guarding various areas of the ship such as the officers’ quarters. As early as the 1820s some naval officers had sought to remove Marines from their ships. In 1829, for example, the Erie went to sea without its typical Marine guard to prove the Navy did not require Marines for policing and military duties. These officers also argued that sailors could be trained to fulfill Marines’ other tasks, such as preventing mutiny, participating in landing parties, and provided firepower in combat. Instead of Marines, the Erie relied on landsmen. As the lowest-ranking sailors, landsmen possessed little knowledge of the sea

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5 Captain Basil Hall, RN, *Fragments of Voyages and Travels*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1832), 285-286.

6 See, for example, “Marine Corps,” *National Gazette*, 13 March 1828, 3.

7 Lt. J.M. Keever, USN, to the Secretary of the Navy, 6 March 1830, appendix to Secretary of the Navy John Branch to the U.S. Senate, 23 March 1830, “On the Expediency of Dispensing with the Marine Corps as Part of the Armed Equipment of a Vessel-of-War,” *ASP/NA III*: 560-569: 564.
and were not well instructed in marksmanship like Marines. Despite the general inexperience of landsmen, naval officers somehow found this experiment to be a successful one. “[D]isorderly conduct” actually decreased. Naval officers suggested that the conduct of sailors improved because a divisive force had been removed. The absence of Marines, Lieutenant J.M. Keever noted, “always seemed to impart increased ardor and good conduct.” A more homogenous corporate culture at sea facilitated better behavior because sailors resented being policed by members of another military branch.

Not all naval officers held these views. How naval officers viewed sailors influenced their opinion of whether Marines were necessary. Some naval officers believed sailors to be incapable of undertaking the military, or soldierly, duties of Marines. Naval officer Charles Stewart wrote that the “ideas and general habits of sailors” made them “unfit” to be soldiers. A sailor’s identity was too disparate from that of a Marine. As one observer differentiated between the two, sailors had a “swagger

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8 For a derogatory description of landsmen or “green hands” published the same year in which the Erie sailed without Marines, see “A Civilian,” Sketches of Naval Life with Notices of Men, Manners and Scenery, on the Shores of the Mediterranean, vol. 1 (New Haven: Hezekiah Howe, 1829), 48.
11 Charles Stewart to Secretary of the Navy John Branch, 8 March 1830, appendix to Secretary of the Navy John Branch to the U.S. Senate, 23 March 1830, “On the Expediency of Dispensing with the Marine Corps as Part of the Armed Equipment of a Vessel-of-War,” APS/NA, III: 565.
incompatible with the noble stiffness of a true marine.”12 These images suggested that sailors valued their independence too much to accept the strong discipline required of soldiers. While anti-Marine naval officers suggested the presence of Marines hurt morale, one pro-Marine officer suggested that ridding Marines from vessels would actually undermine the corporate identity of sailors. Captain Thomas Jones believed it was an “absurdity” to seek to replace the Marine Guard with sailors because it would dilute their identity. They would “have no fixed or certain character” and “thus metamorphosed, would feel themselves disgraced in their borrowed character” (emphasis in original).13 Jones did not consider whether or not sailors could acquire military knowledge. Rather, he emphasized that these tasks would undermine the sailor’s distinctive identity.

Fewer written records reveal how enlisted sailors viewed Marines, but words describing Marines suggest their views overlapped with those naval officers who disliked Marines. Many of these terms suggested the naïveté and ignorance of Marines

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12 George Alfred Townsend, Washington, Outside and Inside (Hartford, Conn.: James Betts & Co., 1874), 384. For similar comments see Harry Bluff, “Our Navy,” Southern Literary Messenger 7 (May/June 1841), 379. For the importance of this publication and others like the North American Review to these kinds of debates see Donald Chisholm, Waiting for Dead Men’s Shoes: Origins and Developments of the U.S. Navy’s Officer Personnel System, 1793-1941 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 44.

regarding nautical matters, such as navigation.\textsuperscript{14} The term “horse marine,” for example, signaled the sailor’s “contempt” for Marines.\textsuperscript{15} It suggested an “awkward, lubberly person” who was “out of place” at sea.\textsuperscript{16} Various explanations exist for the term’s origins.\textsuperscript{17} Regardless, sailors used it to mock Marines and emphasize their belief that they served no real purpose aboard naval vessels. Sailors also used the term “dead Marine” to describe an empty bottle, reflecting their belief that Marine officers were useless.\textsuperscript{18} As one nineteenth-century dictionary explained, the term “doubtless [arose] from the jealousy, dashed with a slight flavour of contempt” with which sailors viewed Marines.\textsuperscript{19} Popular fiction reflected similar distinctions between sailors and Marines, or

\textsuperscript{14} Richard Henry Dana, Jr.,\textit{ Two Years before the Mast: A Personal Narrative} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1911), 261 and 270.

\textsuperscript{15} Herman Melville,\textit{ White-Jacket or the World in a Man-of-War} (New York: United States Book Company, 1892), 116.

\textsuperscript{16} Rt. Rev. Samuel T. Fallows,\textit{ The Progressive Dictionary of the English Language} (Chicago: The Progressive Publishing Company, 1885), 252. In his account Dana described how the term “Marine” was viewed as even worse than a mere “soldier.” Dana,\textit{ Two Years before the Mast}, 253.

\textsuperscript{17} Sources varied in suggesting the term’s origin. Some said it developed from the nautical term hawse while others linked it to sea horses. William S. Walsh,\textit{ A Handy Book of Curious Information} (Philadelphia: J.P. Lippincott Company, 1913), 399. Others simply suggested it implied the impracticality of having cavalry at sea. Glascock, 33.


\textsuperscript{19} Charles G. Leland, ed.,\textit{ A Dictionary of Slang, Jargon, and Cant} (New York: George Bell & Sons, 1897), 285.
soldiers as they were often called. It required extreme circumstances to bridge their differences.20

Not only did the identity of sailors and Marines differ markedly in that the sailor was viewed as a more fun-loving individual in contrast to the highly disciplined Marine, but the enlisted Marine was viewed as a traitor to his class. In being responsible for suppressing mutiny on board, the Marine stood in support of the officer against the common sailor.21 This was more so the case for the Royal Marine than the U.S. Marine because, as has been stated, mutiny was very rare in the U.S. Navy because sailors enlisted voluntarily. Still, the extent to which the U.S. Marines inherited the image of Royal Marines provided another powerful force that divided sailors from Marines.

This is not to say, however, that sailors and Marines could not align at times. While in Key West, for example, a rumor began circulating that an African American had shot and killed a Marine. As a result, sailors and Marines organized themselves into two battalions and set off in pursuit of the alleged perpetrator.22 In another incident

enlisted Marines and sailors aligned along class lines against their officers on the Wisconsin after a Marine officer ordered the band to play a popular jingo, “Always in the Way” at a sailor’s funeral. As a Marine rhymed in response to the incident, “Yes ----- ye, we’ll salute ye, and we’ll all say “yes, sir,” too, / But we salute the shoulder straps—we wouldn’t speak to you. / Ye’re farther down beneath us than a dog a beggar owns.”

Sailors and Marines viewed the playing of the song as an example of the contempt officers held for enlisted men.23

The Marines’ self image during much of the nineteenth century is more difficult to ascertain. First and foremost Marines defined themselves as soldiers. The terms were virtually synonymous in their writing.24 This tendency might have been strengthened because of how closely they served with the Navy. At sea, naval and Marine officers frequently collided over their spheres of influence. Marine officers, for example, had to address accusations that they did not contribute enough. This suggestion was common enough to make the term “dead Marine” a well-used nautical phrase, as already

discussed. These tensions occurred in part because Marines sought to limit their duties whenever possible to soldierly duties. In one instance, First Lieutenant Edward Reynolds took offense when a naval officer asked a sailor scrubbing the deck, “‘Do you want any assistance? [I]f so, there’s a marine loafing in the gangway,’ pointing to a Corp[oral] in belts on guard’” (emphasis in original). Reynolds resented the use of the term “loafer,” which suggested that guard duty was not real work. In taking issue with the naval officer’s words, Reynolds hoped to establish once and for all the limits of how Marines could be tasked. 

Captain John Broome complained of a similar situation after the Hartford’s executive officer ordered Marines to “scrape the gun carriages.” Broome vehemently objected to doing what was “not part of the duty of a Soldier of the Marine Corps.” Defining a Marine as a soldier, Broome clearly delineated between the duties of Marines as soldiers and the duties of sailors as linked to the maintenance of naval vessels and naval gunnery. Some enlisted Marines also embraced the sense of

25 Describing Marines as “lazy” was not a new development. In his social history of the early nineteenth-century Navy, Christopher McKee recreated the midshipman’s first response on setting foot aboard a naval vessel: “Almost certainly the first person he met when he came on board was the marine sentinel in full uniform marching back and forth at the gangway with his musket.” He noted that the especially observant midshipmen would even see the “well-drilled sergeant’s guard, resplendent in their dress uniforms, now lounging more or less in idleness, but ready to turn out” instantly. Christopher McKee, A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession: The Creation of the U.S. Naval Officer Corps, 1794-1815 (Annapolis: United State Naval Institute Press, 1991), 122.


27 The executive officer was the second in command of a naval vessel. A gun carriage was the mechanism required to use naval guns. See A Naval Encyclopedia (Philadelphia: L.R. Hamersly & Co., 1880), 331.

delineation between sailors and Marines. During the traditional “Neptune Celebration,” when sailors and, sometimes, Marines were dunked in water and shaven upon crossing the equator for the first time, Marines sought to avoid participating. Corporal Miles Oviatt, serving aboard the U.S.S, Brooklyn during the Civil War, noted the Marines’ refusal to participate in the proceedings, describing how:

The lances[‘] men wer[e] all shaved, the[n] the Darks afterwards. They thought to Shave the Marines, but as they had not taken any part in the proceedings, they strongly objected. . . . Some few knocks wer[e] rec’d by the bluejackets. About this time, Mr. Daniels and Mr. Parker made their appearance and quieted the row. Mr. D then went to the captain to know if he could, by main force, take us up and put us through the process, which he did not think advisable to undertake. So they left us alone.30

In this case Corporal Oviatt and his fellow Marines rejected this naval tradition. Despite being outnumbered by sailors, they felt secure in their power aboard ship.

Being part of the Navy and yet distinct complicated the question of identity for Marines. Even Marines who jealously guarded their prerogatives aboard ship could

30 For a similar occurrence, see Congress, House of Representatives, “Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Naval Academy and Marine Corps, Committee on Naval Affairs, House of Representatives, on the Status of the Marine Corps,” 61st Cong., 2nd sess., 7 Jan 1909, 191. Both Marines and sailors still participate in this ceremony today although some of its characteristics have changed. Modern-day accounts still indicate the reluctance of Marines to participate. As one retired Marine writes, “One of the time-honored Navy traditions to be endured aboard ship is the rite of passage from ‘pollywog’ to ‘shellback.’ For some reason crossing the equator is a big deal for sailors . . . I can only guess it doesn’t take much to keep our Navy brethren entertained when they are at sea for extended periods.” Master Sergeant Andrew A. Buffalo, 


make reference to their “service in the Navy,” as Captain Broome did. Family ties also bound the two services together. In 1880, for example, Lieutenant George Elliott married Annie Badger, the daughter of naval officer Oscar Badger and sister of naval officer Charles Badger. His groomsmen included four men in the Navy, including Annie’s brother, as well as two Army artillery officers. Only one of his groomsmen was a Marine. Moreover, even the largest naval vessels only sailed with one Marine officer on tours that lasted multiple years. Whatever the bickering between the two services, Marine officers often had only naval officers as their companions for long periods at sea.

The image many naval officers maintained of Marines as worthless supernumeraries had ramifications in the nation’s capital. Congressmen considered matters of economy, sought to resolve the organizational weaknesses of the Corps’ ties to the Navy, and listened to ardent naval officers who wanted Marines off their vessels. In 1829, for example, the House of Representative’s Committee on Military Affairs urged the consolidation of the Corps with the Army to resolve the Corps’ “anomalous”

32 “A Wedding in High Life,” Washington Post, 7 Jan. 1880. Elliott would serve as the Corps’ commandant from 1903 to 1910. Elliott spent about two years at West Point, which perhaps explains the presence of Army officers at his wedding. He had been a Marine officer for about ten years before his marriage. His daughter would also marry a Marine. For other examples of intermarriage between the services, see “Married,” New York Times, 18 Jun. 1859, 5 and “Lieut. Neville’s Wife Happy,” NYT, 14 June 1898, 1. For suggestions of friendship and other family between the two branches, see “The Cowie-Gedney Wedding,” Washington Post, 16 Feb. 1881, 4 and “Linked for Life,” Washington Post, 19 Oct. 1882, 1. One naval officer had as his ushers one line officer, one engineer, and two Marine officers. See “Shepard-Watt,” The Sun, 16 Oct. 1893, 6.
position. Blaming the original Continental Congress for organizing the Corps almost accidentally, one commentator believed the best solution would be to make the Corps a part of the Army in the belief that soldiers would eagerly serve aboard naval vessels for variety. Another congressman brought up a different point. He thought that Marines simply caused tension by their mere presence aboard naval vessels. In arguing against the role of Marines aboard ship, Senator Isaac Barnard stated that the presence of Marines hurt the morale of sailors. Marines simply could not be integrated aboard ship “either in feeling or habit.”

Although Congress decided against incorporating the Corps into the Army, it did clarify its relationship with the Navy in June of 1834. Members of Congress hoped to ease some of the tensions between officers of the two services that arose because their “rights and duties” had not been set out with exactness. In “an act for the better

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33 At other points in its history some would suggest that a soldier be appointed as the Corps’ highest-ranking officer, the Commandant. See The Army and Navy Journal (hereafter ANJ), 28 Aug. 1869, 21.
34 “The Navy,” The Military and Naval Magazine of the United States, Sept. 1834, 15. For other examples see Alexander Slidell Mackenzie, The Life of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, vol. 2 (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1843), 135. Royal Marine officers reacted similarly, especially when they felt their institution was not being treated as well as the Royal Navy. See A Subaltern, “Promotion in the Corps of Marines,” The United Service Journal and Naval and Military Magazine, 1832, 538-539. The situation of both U.S. and Royal Marines was strikingly similar at times. Neither, for example, could serve in Navy court martials at sea. See The Parliamentary Debates, vol. 79 (London: Wyman and Sons, 1900), 1480-1481 and McKee, 33.
35 Barnard had served in the Army, including during the War of 1812. Debates in Congress, vol. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Gales and Seaton, 1830), 221-222.
reorganization of the United States’ ‘Marine Corps,’" Congress stated that the Corps would be under naval laws and regulations unless ordered by the President to serve with the Army.\textsuperscript{37} It further clarified that Marine officers could not command navy yards or vessels. Additionally, the rank and pay of Marine officers would align with Army officers.

If Congress had hoped this bill would put an end to organizational problems it was mistaken. In December of 1835 the Navy Department issued regulations that would put Marine detachments at naval yards more closely under the command of naval officers. The change infuriated Marine officers. One letter writer described how these regulations “brand[ed] them with degradation as a Corps” because they “destroy[ed] their identity as a body under military organization, and impeach[ed] their fidelity and trustworthiness as a guard, by imperatively requiring them to submit to the naval commandant of the yard, all orders.”\textsuperscript{38} From the Corps’ perspective, the regulations broke the relationship between Headquarters and the Marine Guard at the Navy Yard,

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article was an extended commentary on the Secretary of the Navy’s annual report. Donald Chishol appraises the article’s importance, which was part of a series, in \textit{Waiting for Dead Men’s Shoes: Origins and Development of the U.S. Navy’s Officer Personnel System, 1793-1941} (Stanford, Ca.: Stanford University Press, 2001), 141-144. Also see Millett, 61.
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\textsuperscript{37} U.S. Congress, \textit{Statutes at Large}, Vol. 4, Ch. 132, Section 2 (Approved 30 June 1834), 23d Cong., 1st. session (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1846).
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\textsuperscript{38} Philo Classiarius Miles, “The New Regulations of the Marine Corps,” \textit{Army and Navy Chronicle}, 11 Feb. 11, 1836, 93. For similar comments see “Statement of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Freeman, of the Marine Corps, complaining of the operation of the regulations of the Navy, under the law of 1834,” \textit{APS/NA}, 4: 83.
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putting the Guard under the Yard’s ranking naval officer. This change threatened the soldierly character of the institution’s corporate identity. Marines resented being forced to ask naval officers for approval every time they wanted to make an administrative decision ashore, such as temporarily removing a Marine from duty for misbehavior. President Andrew Jackson quickly moved to settle the matter, stating that Marines would remain under the control of the Corps’ commandant, its highest-ranking officer, as set forth in an 1818 regulation. In seeking to provide the Corps with some physical distance from the Navy, some even suggested building Marine barracks outside the Navy Yards to provide the Corps with more independence. In one report Secretary of the Navy Mahlon Dickerson had recommended in his annual report that “discipline and harmony” between the Marine Corps and Navy could be “promoted” by separating the barracks from the Navy Yard.

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40 “Annual Report of the Secretary of the Navy,” APS/NA, 4: 591. Also see U.S Statutes, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 107, 30 June 1834, 725 which provided for money to be used to build a barracks outside the Navy Yard if needed. U.S. Congress, Statutes at Large, Vol., Ch. 12, Section 1 (Approved 27 March 1794), 3d Cong., 1st. session. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850).
However much the Corps would have preferred being more distinct from the Navy, it remained closely bound to it. Some Marines found this reality troubling during the Civil War because of the Navy’s focus on blockade duty.41 During one of the greatest upheavals in U.S. history, the collective experience of Marines could largely be summed up with one adjective: tedium.42 As one Marine wrote in his journal, “[e]ven in these stirring times, the life of a marine is very monotonous, and judging from this, it must be next to unbearable in time of peace.”43 Primarily stationed aboard naval vessels

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41 Historiography on the Corps’ contributions during the Civil War is divided. Marine historians have taken a mixed view of the Corps’ participation in the Civil War. Robert Heinl suggests the Corps played a very marginal role. Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 71. Alan Millett points to the successes of Marine gun crews and, to a lesser extent, Marine landing parties. Millett, Semper Fidelis, 100. Millett also hinted teleologically that the Corps should have been more proactive about developing doctrine for use in the future. Instead, the Corps either failed to “recognize the amphibious assault mission or else rejected it for being to much like the Army’s tasks.” Ibid., 91. David Sullivan’s more recent four-volume series seeks to illuminate the Corps’ contributions during the war. Much of his proof, however, derives on the formulaic after-action reports of naval officers, which do not explain how Marines contributed anything distinctive that sailors could not have done. David M. Sullivan, The United States Marine Corps in the Civil War, 4 vols. (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Pub. Co., 1997).


responsible for blockading Confederate ports along the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf Coast, many Marines spent the war chasing the proverbial pot of gold at the end of a rainbow, hoping for their share of prize money from captured vessels. The experience of Marines aboard the Vanderbilt was representative of many Civil War enlistments. That vessel spent its time fruitlessly chasing well-known Confederate blockade-runner Raphael Semmes back and forth across the Atlantic. Marines also served on naval vessels patrolling the Mississippi River and supported the Navy in landing operations, particularly the assault of Confederate strongholds protecting port cities. While volunteers and regular soldiers faced the horrors of the battlefield in what has been described as the “bloodiest event in our history,” Marines spent a significant portion of their time wondering if and when they would receive liberty and mail call.

Many Marines found the lack of military opportunities during the war disheartening. This frustration was also bound up with the desire to join a different

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44 Oviatt, Civil War Marine, 89.
45 This is both in terms of the “total” number of military deaths as well as the “ratio of deaths to the total population.” Maris A. Vinovskis, “Have Social Historians Lost the Civil War,” Toward a Social History, 5. At its peak in 1875 the Navy had about 51,000 sailors compared to the Corps’ peak numbers of less than 4000. During the war 148 Marines were killed in action while 131 were wounded. By comparison, 2,112 sailors were killed in action while 1,170 were wounded. This put the likelihood of being killed in action at almost four percent for both sailors and Marines. For the experience of soldiers, see Bell Irvin Wiley, The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952); Gerald Linderman, Embattled Courage: The Experiences of Combat in the American Civil War (New York: Free Press, 1987); Reid Mitchell, Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Experiences (New York: Viking, 1988); Earl J. Hess, The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); The View from the Ground: Civil War Experiences of Soldiers (University Press of Kansas, 2006); and Thomas E. Rodgers, “Billy Yank and G.I. Joe: An Exploratory Essay on the Sociopolitical Dimensions of Soldier Motivation,” Journal of Military History 69 (April, 2005), 93-121.
service for the opportunity to reach a higher military rank. At the beginning of the war some Marines asked to be discharged, hoping to enter the Volunteers or the U.S. Army. Lawrence Carpenter wanted to take advantage of “great opportunities” for advancement in rank offered by the Volunteers and to serve alongside two of his brothers. Henry Meredith sought a discharge to escape the “position to which [he] [had] fallen.” His words suggest he had been forced to enlist in the Corps because of a fall in social status. He hoped his relatives, who held commissions in the U.S. Army, could help him with his “ambitions to succeed in life.” Pragmatic reasons aside, he also worried that the Corps’ current “state” was such that it was “most probable that the glories and terrors of an engagement with the enemy” would be limited because Marines would participate in the blockade. The types of missions Meredith anticipated the Corps filling during the war would neither fulfill his dreams of martial glory nor provide a path to restore him to his previous place in society. Some officers also wanted to leave the Corps. First Lieutenant James Forney was “chafing for want of active service.” Forney wanted to make a contribution in the Civil War, and he did not believe the Corps was the most effective place to do this. As late as 1865, Captain Robert

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47 Ibid.. Also see Ward Marston to Col. Cmdt. John Harris, 18 June 1862, Ibid.
48 L.W. Forney to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, 4 Jan 1864, copy in “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127.
Huntington hoped he might transfer to the Army. Bored at sea, he “despair[ed] of finding someone foolish enough to exchange” military services with him.⁴⁹ Other enlisted Marines did not seek official discharge and simply deserted.⁵⁰ Marines resented being tasked with the dull duties of the blockade. Marines might be considered to be soldiers, but their service during the war was atypical of their counterparts in the Army.⁵¹ In their eyes, the regular Army and the Volunteers offered opportunities for promotion in rank, financial benefits, and the opportunity for glory while the Corps, by contrast, offered tedium.

By World War I, however, the Corps had reshaped its image significantly. The Corps would have the institutional resources and the public image to attract recruits with the promise that Marines would be among the first to fight in Europe. By contrast, the Corps’ image was closely tied to naval service during the Civil War. In his work on Civil War sailors, Michael Bennett concludes that many men enlisted in the Navy to

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⁴⁹ Robert Huntington to Father, 30 Mar. 1865, Robert Huntington Papers, MCASC.
⁵⁰ About 2200 Marines deserted and of those about 550 returned on their own to the Corps. David Stephen Heidler, Jeanne T. Heidler, and David J. Coles, Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 2000), 1251. About 200,000 soldiers are thought to have deserted during the war, 40% of whom were returned to their units. Also see Thomas R. Kemp, “Community and War: the Civil War Experience of Two New Hampshire Towns” in Vinovskis, Toward a Social History, 31-77: 41; McPherson, Ordeal by Fire, 468. For discussions of desertion see Major John G. Reynolds to CMC, 28 April 1861, “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127; Major John G. Reynolds to Governor Andrew, 27 April 1861, copy in “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127. Many enlisted Marines seem to have deserted because of ethnic ties while others sought to join other services to be promoted.
⁵¹ Of course soldiers could find their service just as dull, and more than 10,000 transferred to the Navy by the end of the war. Michael J. Bennett, Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 15.
avoid the blood and gore of the battlefield. While the public gloried in the achievements and heroics of its volunteer soldiers, it viewed those serving in the Navy as cowards, if it thought of them at all.\textsuperscript{52} For most of the war the Navy and the Corps escaped significant public attention.\textsuperscript{53} The Civil War worsened the already negative image of sailors that had gained ground during the anti-flogging campaigns of the 1850s. The suggestion that sailors endured conditions that deprived them of their freedom in a way similar to slaves or that they behaved similarly kept many from pursuing service in the Navy.\textsuperscript{54} While it is difficult to determine the extent to which the Corps shared in the Navy’s image, at least one advertisement perpetuated this image. In 1864, for example, the Department of the Navy published ads seeking men for the “Naval Service and Marine Corps.”\textsuperscript{55}

The Corps faced two major problems in attracting recruits during the Civil War beyond that of image. First, Congress did not authorize the Corps to begin offering bounties until 1864.\textsuperscript{56} Second, it required a longer enlistment term than the Volunteers

\textsuperscript{52} Bennett, 14.
\textsuperscript{54} Bennett, Union Jacks, 156-7.
\textsuperscript{55} Untitled, New Hampshire Sentinel, 14 Apr. 1864, 3; “Local Matters,” Boston Daily Advertiser, 30 March 1864, 1. Also see New York Tribune, 21 May 1864, 11.
\textsuperscript{56} For the confusion regarding bounties for Marine recruits during the Civil War, see John W. Butterfield, A Digest of Decisions in the Office of the second Comptroller of the Treasury, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed. (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1869), 37-38. Also see James W. Geary, We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991).
did. Even though the Union received enough volunteers at the start of the war, it soon moved to offer monetary inducement for those deciding to enlist. These bounties, also offered at the state level, were enough that the government did not have to institute a draft until 1863. The Corps, however, could not lure recruits with a bounty. Marine Sergeant B.W. Hopper’s recruiting experience gives an idea of the competition the Corps faced. Having opened a recruiting office in the mining community of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, he noted that the office was “located in the midst of some twelve others now recruiting” for the regular Army and the volunteers. Hooper did not know how he could get recruits when the Corps did not offer “superior inducement.”

Some of these problems were resolved for the Corps, however, by the end of the war. As Gerald Linderman has argued, romanticized ideas about war quickly faded for many who encountered battle. Where those seeking battle might have wanted to avoid

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59 Linderman, Embattled Courage, 376.
the Corps in 1861, those tired or seeking to avoid battle in 1864 would have sought out the Corps.60

Despite not playing a significant role in any of the major land battles of the war, Marines did see combat. In one significant engagement for the Navy and the Corps, Marines and sailors acted as diversionary forces for the Army’s main assault on well-fortified Fort Fisher, which protected the important port of Wilmington, North Carolina.

A landing party comprised of 1600 sailors and 400 Marines met with disaster after it received what some historians have found to be confusing and unrealistic orders from Admiral David Porter.61 This view is not limited to historians of the Marine Corps. Admiral George Dewey retrospectively characterized the operation in his autobiography as “sheer, murderous madness.” He explained how sailors were armed with “only cutlasses and revolvers, which evidently were chosen with the idea that storming the face of the strongest work in the Civil War was the same sort of operation as boarding a frigate in 1812.”62

60 Captain James Lewis to Col. Cmdt John Harris, 5 Oct. 1863, “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127. For naval recruiting that played up this reality, see Bennett, Union Jacks, 17-18.
Admiral Porter, however, blamed the failure of the attack on the Marines’ inability to maintain a “steady fire” which he believed would have led to success.63 High-ranking naval officers such as Porter, Admiral Samuel Du Pont and Admiral S.P. Lee appreciated Marines because they, unlike soldiers, came directly under their command.64 Porter’s scapegoating of the Marines, then, represented a departure from his general approval of the Corps. In 1863, for example, he had requested Marines because he considered the militia troops on whom he was forced to rely to be “broken reeds.”65 They lacked discipline and drank too much alcohol.

Marines differed on the validity of Porter’s critiques. In an anonymous letter purportedly written in 1866 by Marines regarding the Corps’ future, one writer urged the Corps’ integration into the Army. He admitted that his institution had “lost [its] prestige” at Fort Fisher but blamed the failure on cowardly Marine officers.66 Becoming part of the Army, he reflected, would improve the officers’ acquaintance with tactics. Hinting at the legacy of enlisted soldiers’ contributions, he also desired to serve with the

64 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 95.
66 One Thousand and One Marines to Editor of the Herald, New York Herald, 21 June 1866, 1. In his memoir, Dahlgren recalled how three Marine officers stated how they did not want to put their men in danger by “attacking works.” Dahlgren commented that he found this “[r]ather hurtful. What are marines for?” Madeleine Vinton Dahlgren, Memoir of John A. Dahlgren, Rear-Admiral United States Navy (Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1882), 407.
“footmen” of the great Army generals. Taken together, this officer wanted to praise enlisted Marines while drawing on the prevalent image of Marine officers as worthless. Captain L.L. Dawson, however, decried these attacks as a “manifest injustice.” Dawson found it “strange that the admiral attribute[d] the want of success alone to the 350 marines not clearing the parapet of a garrison 2,200 strong, which [Porter] admits was ‘much stronger than he had considered.’”

The solution to these tensions, as many officers believed, was to make the Corps more soldierly. Marine Captain P.C. Pope, who believed that sailors could not keep up with Marines in landing parties, hoped to polish the martial skills of Marines. Because he had limited knowledge of “bayonet drill,” he requested a knowledgeable sergeant who could instruct his men. In a slightly different vein, Major John G. Reynolds hoped to make the Marine Corps more independent of the Navy aboard ships for practical reasons, such as matters of pay.

From Commandant John Harris’s perspective, however, many Marine officers seemed too desirous of shedding their connections to the Navy. He chided Major Augustus Garland for seeking to become more independent. Garland replied that he was not “unwilling to be associated with the Navy” except, like Reynolds, for “materiel”

needs. Rather, he argued the Corps should be more self-reliant. He described his institution as a “separate and distinct Corps, both from the Army and Navy, and is older than the Navy itself. The object of having such a Corps, was to have a body of Troops, under a military organization and discipline.” However much Garland tried to clarify his position, the Commandant suggested that these opinions had serious ramifications. Harris believed the extent to which Marine officers sought to become more independent had led some members of Congress to suggest the Corps become part of the Army. He explained that the Corps was “of the Navy” and had “nothing in common with the Army.”70 In some ways, the Commandant’s concerns were well founded. In 1862, for example, Congress had again considered making the Corps an Army regiment, thereby severing its ties with the Navy.71

Whereas the Marine Corps returned after the Mexican-American War to glory and accolades in Washington D.C., it received little praise for its Civil War service. In his naval history of the Civil War, Rear Admiral Henry Walke devoted two pages of his more-than-four-hundred-page account to Marines. He expressed his “regret” at being unable to provide a “full estimate of the merits due to our marine corps.” Rather, after giving a short summary of the Marines’ contributions in one battle he quoted a large

70 Quoted in Millett, 92. Harris had made similar comments in response to Garland’s request that Marines receive Army instead of Navy rations. See Col. Cmd. John Harris to Major Augustus Garland, 18 June 1863, copy in “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127.
71 Senate Journal, 37th Congress, 34d Session, 22 December 1862, 67.
paragraph about the extent to which Royal Marines had been unappreciated. Walke believed the same could be said of the U.S. Marines. Falling under the “ostensible protection of the admiralty, their interests are so subordinated to those of the fleet, that they have no status worthy of the name.” The Corps had difficulty changing its public image because it rarely received individual recognition for its actions. Its close ties to the Navy during the war also insured that it would not gain much attention except from those men who sought to join for far more pragmatic reasons than those that joined the Army.

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After the Civil War, the Corps slumbered along through the 1870s and 1880s. As during the Civil War, Congress continued to consider incorporating the Corps into the Army and introducing budgetary reductions. Of course other services faced the possibility of spending cutbacks, but they did not have to deal with the speculation that their institution either would be abolished or absorbed into another military service. If

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72 Like observers of the U.S. Marines, British observers felt that the Marines had not received enough recognition. See William Nugent Glascock, Naval Sketch-Book: The Service Afloat and Ashore, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: E.L. Carey & A. Hart, 1835), 266 and “The Royal Marines,” Colburn’s United Service Magazine 153 (1880), 221-224: 221. For a similar “contempt” between Royal Marines and British sailors see Glascock, 267. For the argument over whether it was easier to turn sailors into soldiers or vice versa, see Glascock, 270.


74 See, for example, “The Marine Corps,” Army and Navy Journal, 6 March 1875, 472. Army officers, equally worried about budgetary cuts, formed the Military Service Institution of the United States in 1878 to lobby
the Commandant’s correspondence is taken as an indication, the Corps’ primary purpose in some of its slowest decades of the late nineteenth century was to provide residents of Washington D.C. with martial music through the auspices of its celebrated Marine Band. Even the band, though, was not considered sacrosanct by at least one Congressman.75

The image perpetuated by many naval officers since the 1820s of the Corps as a well dressed but purposeless institution only strengthened after the Civil War. Considering the Corps to be an ossified institution, observers jokingly altered the Corps’ acronym (USMC) to describe its officers as “useless sons made comfortable.”76 In a series of articles suggesting how the nation could achieve a more efficient military, The Washington Post singled out the Marine Corps for the most scathing remarks.77 Written in the context of the economic crisis of 1877, the Post article unsurprisingly called for a

75 For a Congressman’s humorous defense of the Band that ensured the amendment to abolish the Band was shot down, see Harper’s New Monthly Magazine, July 1876, 318.
reduction in spending. It believed the best way to economize would be to reduce the number of Marine officers.78

Six months later, The Post attacked the Corps for its undemocratic practices.79 At a time when enlisted personnel were likely to be viewed as the dregs of society, this journalist suggested that the Corps’ enlisted personnel actually merited respect, unlike its politically and socially well-connected yet incompetent officers.80 The article recounted an interview between the anonymous journalist and what he described as an impressive-looking enlisted Marine, who represented the most “intelligent” type of service member.81 The journalist suggested the Corps should promote officers from the ranks rather than continuing to rely on patronage and influence in appointing

78 Marines, however, argued they had fewer officers per enlisted men than other branches. The Army had one officer for every thirteen and 1/3 men, the Navy one for every five and 1/3 men, and the Corps an officer for every 27 men. “The Marine Corps,” ANJ, 31 Jan. 1874, 391.
79 For similar suggestions see a letter to the editor written by Subscriber, “Abuses in the Marine Corps,” Washington Post, 8 Feb. 1882, 2. For the newspaper’s desire for more commissions from the ranks for all branches see “Give Merit a Chance,” Washington Post, 21 Jan. 1881, 2.
80 “A Mellifluous Marine,” Washington Post, 27 Aug. 1878, 1. The journalist might have sought to overturn ideas of class in the Marine Corps but he sought to maintain ideas about race. The enlisted Marine stated that if rumors were true he would not be enlisting again. Upon hearing that a “colored man” might be commissioned, the journalist responded in “utter amazement,” saying, “What! A nigger marine officer?” For society’s generally negative view of the military, especially officers, see Charles A. Byler, Civil-Military Relations on the Frontier and Beyond, 1865-1917 (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006), 1-20. Some have argued that this view did not change until the end of World War II. See Mark R. Grandstaff, “Manning the Military American: Advertising, Reform, and the Demise of an Antistanding Military Tradition, 1945-1855, Journal of Military History 60 (April, 1996), 299-323.
81 The ANJ, while supportive of the Corps’ continued existence, generally agreed with the journalist and the purported conclusion of the Marine, writing that the “trouble with the marines is simply this, that while they have always and the best non-commissioned officers and privates to be found anywhere in the service” their way of choosing officers was “radically wrong.” Untitled, ANJ, 9 Jan. 1875, 344. For a similar perspective, see Clipping, 1 Aug. 1869, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
commissions. The article’s tone suggests the continuity of journalistic accounts from as early as the 1820s in its emphasis on the uselessness of Marine officer and the need to describe Marines as soldiers. The shift toward encouraging promotion from within the ranks, however, perhaps suggested the move toward a more positive acceptance of enlisted service members.

The most vocal proponents of reform within the Corps embraced these negative representations as support for the organizational changes they wanted to see implemented for their institution. First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, perhaps seeing these attacks as the only way to inspire the Corps’ leadership to reform, asked one newspaper editor why he was not harsher when describing the Corps’ flaws. Cochrane believed that the medium of print provided the most effective means of “stir[ring] the ancient Marine foundations.” He believed the Corps’ leaders were “more

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82 The Army lagged other European countries such as Europe in promoting from within the ranks during the nineteenth century. Ernest F. Fisher, Guardians of the Republic: A History of the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps of the U.S. Army (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2001), 83. Noncommissioned officers began seeking legislation promoting their commissioning as early as the 1820s but this legislation did not make much headway until 1847 during the Mexican-American War when Congress allowed for noncommissioned officers who had served bravely on the battlefield the opportunity to become officers. Fisher, 86. 34 of the Army’s 2,863 officers serving during the war were promoted this way. In 1851 Congress established an examination system for qualified noncommissioned officers seeking promotions. Fisher, 91.

83 First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, USMC to Editor, 10 March 1875, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
afraid of newspapers than . . . of the devil.”\textsuperscript{84} Given the images conveyed in print over the previous fifty years, it would be difficult to blame them.

Marines had responded to these critiques before with various methods. They published pamphlets that explained the purpose the institution served or asked naval officers to write letters supporting Marines.\textsuperscript{85} Beginning in the 1870s, Cochrane and other Marines would begin changing the way that Marines responded to these critiques. Rather than simply relying on the testimonies of naval officers, Marines would become more vocal themselves. They would seek to reshape the incorrect image some believed the public held because of a few bad Marine officers. As a Marine explained to readers of the Army and Navy Journal, “[I]nterviews with enemies of the Marine Corps have shown in nearly every known instance that their opposition was based on misconception, or ignorance, of its history, and its multifarious functions ashore and afloat.”\textsuperscript{86} The public

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 20 Nov. 1875. His use of the word “ancient” represented a departure from the more common use of the word by officers to suggest a more sentimental attachment to their institution. The word “old” was often used as well. See First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane to Richard Collum, 15 June 1874 and First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane to Richard Collum, 14 Oct. 1877, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC. These adjectives would become even more important as the Corps began to look more consciously to the past as a means of distinguishing itself from other branches.

\textsuperscript{85} The letters were originally compiled in 1864. Shulimson, Search for a Mission, 16; George Collier to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 7 Jan. 73, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC. The ANJ seemed to think the possibility of the Corps being incorporated to be a remote one, suggesting Marine officers might be overreacting and paying attention to “unfounded” reports. Untitled, ANJ, 9 Jan. 1875, 344 and Untitled, ANJ, 12 Dec. 1874, 281. The Army was also subjected to the whims of Congress, at one point being reduced from 50,000 to 25,000 troops for the purpose of saving money. Grandstaff, 534.

\textsuperscript{86} [Untitled], ANJ, 26 February 1876, 468.
needed to learn the Corps’ history and the variety of contributions it had made to the United States. Works published in the 1870s would set out to do just that.

In a pamphlet entitled “A Resuscitation or a Funeral,” Captain Henry Cochrane suggested that officers move away from the traditional method of publicizing the Corps: “gathering certificates of character from naval officers.”\(^8\)\(^7\) Cochrane’s pamphlet set out a number of ways to reorganize the Corps and rescue it from public mockery, from improving the quality of officers to ensuring faster promotions. None of these ideas was terribly original from an officer ardent enough about reform to promise to donate up to five hundred dollars if necessary to make these ideas a reality.

Cochrane wondered if the Corps’ image was so wrecked that it might be better to “sink forever the despised name” of the Marine Corps and “rebaptize” it the “United States Naval Artillery.” As naval gunnery made marksmanship aboard ship less useful during naval warfare, Cochrane sought to find a mission the Corps might embrace for itself. Still, he struggled to articulate a reason for the Corps’ continued existence, noting that the institution:

> has a wide field for usefulness, and while I express myself dolefully as to what it is, I yield to no one in conception and conviction as to what it might be. A few short years of vigorous and wise administration would make us the American standard of military perfection and efficiency, and place us where our value would never be questioned.\(^8\)\(^8\)

\(^8\)\(^7\) Quoted in Shulimson, *Search for a Mission*, 17.
\(^8\)\(^8\) First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, “A Resuscitation or a Funeral,” 5-6, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
For all of the thought Cochrane put into reorganizing the Corps, he was hard pressed to define any particular mission that would justify the Corps’ existence.\textsuperscript{89} He instead optimistically hoped that a general quality of service would be enough to silence the institution’s critics.

Perhaps as a result, many Marines sought to focus on improving outward appearances and symbols. Debates about uniforms, the Corps’ motto, whether the Corps should commission graduates from West Point or the Naval Academy, and a host of other concerns all help to reveal the different ways in which Marines envisioned their organization and sought to reshape how the organization was perceived from the outside.\textsuperscript{90}

Beginning in 1872, Cochrane launched a two-year campaign to change the Corps’ uniform.\textsuperscript{91} After soliciting his fellow officers for suggestions, Cochrane received more than sixty responses to his written inquiries, of which only four opposed change.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{89} The Army also struggled with drawing up a “concise plan for reform” in the 1870s and thinking ahead to new missions. Grandstaff, 536.
\textsuperscript{90} Commandant Jacob Zeilin, for example, invented the Corps’ symbol, the eagle, globe, and anchor, which became part of the uniform in 1875. He also borrowed the Royal Marines’ motto. For this and other changes, see Millett, 112. Collum stated the symbol which he described as a “metal hemisphere on an anchor and surmounted by an eagle” was adopted in 1869. Collum, \textit{History} (1890), 304. Aldrich’s history made no mention of this symbol.
\textsuperscript{91} First Lieutenant A.S. Taylor, USMC to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, USMC, 10 May 1874, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
\textsuperscript{92} First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, USMC to Major John C. Cash, USMC, 20 March 1874; First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane to General [Zeilin?], 24 May 1873, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
Given that there were only 95 officers in the Corps, this represented a significant response.

The weekly military newspaper *The Army and Navy Journal*, however, wondered why officers were so focused on changing the uniform given the more substantial problems facing the Corps.93 As Scott Hughes Myerly has argued, however, frequent uniform changes help to renew a military institution’s image. The Corps had made few changes to its uniform for fifteen years while the Army and Navy both had changed them recently.94

Cochrane sought a uniform emblematic of the unique and wide-ranging missions of the Corps.95 Cochrane made an appeal for change based on the unique role of the Corps, an approach that Marines would continue to fall back on during the nineteenth century. He hoped that the Corps would appear to be the most “solid, soldierly, warlike looking body of infantry.”96

The responses he received reflect the diverging opinions as to what should influence the Corps’ uniform. Marines made a number of recommendations, many of

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95 Although this letter was written anonymously, given Cochrane’s statement discussed later in this chapter about his anonymous contributions to the ANJ it seems unlikely that anyone else could have written it. “A New Uniform for the Marine Corps,” ANJ, clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC. Also see First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane to William Church, 15 Oct. 1873, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
96 [Untitled], ANJ, 15 March 1873, 490.
which were inspired by the uniforms of others. One officer suggested the hats of the New York 7th Regiment’s and the 5th Maryland’s without providing any rationale.⁹⁷

Another wanted to maintain some aspects of the uniform in light of European practices. He also hoped to return the enlisted chevrons, the symbol of rank, to red instead of yellow as he considered it to be the only “proper facing of the Corps.”⁹⁸ While seeking a uniform that did not resemble that of the U.S. Army or U.S. Navy, officers did not hesitate to look to other foreign services. Ultimately, the Corps adopted and revised its uniforms to be more in line with British and German uniforms.⁹⁹ Cochrane described the revised uniform ultimately adopted in 1876 as “varied and elaborate.” While the Corps’ most elaborate dress uniform was “rather gaudy,” he viewed the rest as “neat and in good taste.”¹⁰⁰ The range of responses and the varied changes suggest Marine officers looked to a variety of different sources in seeking to craft their public representation. In

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⁹⁷ First Lieutenant Charles F. Williams, USMC to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, USMC, 26 Aug 1872 and 5 Jan 1872, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC. For background on the New York 7th Regiment’s uniform see Fred Porter Todd, “The Centennial of a Uniform,” The Journal of the American Military History Foundation 1 (Winter, 1937-1938): 195-198. The 7th Regiment seems to have paid excessive attention to its uniform. A discussion over changing its hat in 1842 caused so much controversy that the regiment decided that all changes to the uniform must be approved by two thirds of its members. As one historian wrote in his history of the 7th regiment, no discussion had “ever provoked so fierce and bitter a controversy.” Col. Emmons Clark, History of the Seventh Regiment of New York, 1806-1889, vol. 1 (New York: Seventh Regiment, 1890), 264.

⁹⁸ First Lieutenant C.L. Sherman to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 3 Dec. 1872, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.


doing so, they revealed that they did not yet have a compass to guide them in shaping their institution’s image.\textsuperscript{101}

Similarly, officers were divided regarding rather to readopt the Corps’ traditional “Mameluke” sword. The Corps had officially adopted the sword in 1825. The origin of this sword went back to the war with Tripoli (1801-1805), when the Navy and the Corps had sought to limit pirate attacks on U.S. commercial vessels. In the most memorable event of the war for the Corps, First Lieutenant Presley O’Bannon crossed the northern parts of the Sahara Desert from Egypt to Tripoli with seven enlisted Marines and an assortment of native mercenaries to restore a deposed Tripolitan to his throne. As a result, a grateful Hamet Karamanli gave him his own Mameluke sword, striking because of its white hilt. In 1825 the Corps would make this sword the institution’s official sword for officers. In 1859, however, it adopted the Army’s sword because it was more “efficient.”\textsuperscript{102} The Corps had yet to embrace the importance of tradition in providing the institution with distinguishing symbols.

\textsuperscript{101} By contrast, the Marine Corps’ current dress uniform has remained very similar over the course of the twentieth century. The Corps takes pride in this consistency. For example, it notes that the uniform’s buttons have been used since 1804 on its website. The uniform, the Corps claims, is the “most distinctive uniform in the military.” It is one of the most powerful symbols to Marines of the Corps’ corporate identity. \url{http://www.marines.com/main/index/making_marines/culture/symbols/dress_blues}. Accessed 25 April 2010.

Despite the sword’s history and the distinct impression it provided, Marine officers did not agree whether the Mameluke sword should be readopted. One officer found the Mameluke sword to be “ugly.”\textsuperscript{103} Captain George Collier, on the other hand, hoped to restore the traditional sword in order to appear distinct from the Army.\textsuperscript{104} Captain Richard Collum also seemed to want to return to the previous sword. He hoped that this and other changes would provide a more “soldierly appearance . . . in accordance with the progressive spirit of the age.”\textsuperscript{105} The reversion to the Mameluke sword in 1875, which many Marine officers embraced, reflected a return to tradition over military efficiency. Still, officers did not agree unanimously on this change, demonstrating the institution’s weak corporate identity.

Under Commandant Jacob Zeilin (1864-1876), the Corps also revisited its service hymn and other identifying symbols.\textsuperscript{106} Nations and institutions in crisis have looked to symbols, history and traditions as a means of portraying stability and constancy. In many cases they have “invented” these features.\textsuperscript{107} The production of history is a key

\textsuperscript{103} First Lieutenant Charles F. Williams to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 5 Jan 1872, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.

\textsuperscript{104} Captain George Collier to Captain Henry Cochrane, 7 January 1873, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC. He did, however, suggest a slight change, recommending a “silver scabbard.”

\textsuperscript{105} He stated his preference for the sword under the “old regulation,” suggesting he did not agree with the adoption of the Army’s sword. Captain Richard Collum to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 12 Aug. 1872, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.

\textsuperscript{106} Shulimson, \textit{Search for a Mission}, 18.

element of this process. Authors and institutions impose an artificial “continuity” to link an “ancient” past to the present.\footnote{108 Hobsbawm, “Introduction,” \textit{Invention of Tradition}, 7.} Because they have difficulty identifying current glories, marginalized and threatened groups favor this approach, leading them to focus on the past precisely when they feel the most vulnerable.\footnote{109 Prys Morgan, “From Death to a View: The Hunt for the Welsh Past in the Romantic Period,” \textit{Invention of Tradition}, 43.}

Perhaps most importantly in terms of symbolic meaning, the Corps decided to change its motto. It had borrowed a new motto from the British Royal Marines in 1858, but it chose to invent one of its own. Sometime in the 1880s the Corps changed its motto from \textit{“Par Mare, Par Terrum”} to \textit{“Semper Fidelis.”} This step marked an important departure as the Corps began to stress and create its own traditions independent of its British counterparts.\footnote{110 Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 112. The first motto meant “By Land, By Sea,” the other “Always Faithful.”} The new motto emphasized one’s attachment to the institution over a simple description of the institution’s ability to fight on land and at sea. It also stressed an aspect of the institution’s corporate identity: the belief that it could be relied upon in all situations because of its discipline. Finally, it reinforced its role as policemen, reminding those who heard the motto that the Marines had never participated in a mutiny.\footnote{111 For this interpretation of the motto, see “Marines’ Motto Fruit of Bravery from Tripoli to the Halls of the Montezumas Was Earned,” \textit{Duluth News-Tribune}, 9 June 1907, 11.}
The belief that Marines could be relied upon in all circumstances did not materialize out of thin air. It reflected how they believed they differed from sailors, in part from their role as guards aboard ships. There was “more to be expected from the trained fidelity of the Marine,” as Private Phillip O’Neill wrote. The institution’s headquarters might promulgate symbols and history; however, it had yet to develop a cohesive and coherent way to inculcate these developments into individual Marines. In 1889, for example, Major James Forney, erroneously noted that the Corps’ motto was “by sea and by land” rather than its new motto, “Semper Fidelis.”

At the same time as these visual and symbolic changes were occurring, Cochrane promoted the Corps on paper. For example, he began reshaping the language used to attract recruits in advertisements. Classified ads seeking recruits for the Army and the Corps were often published in close proximity. In 1861 ads written by Army and Marine recruiting officers were largely interchangeable. The Army sought “able-bodied unmarried MEN, of good character . . . .” By contrast, the Corps sought “able-bodied MEN, for Sea and Land Service” (emphasis in original). Other than mentioning more variety in its service, the Marine recruiting officer did not hold out any other inducement in regard to pay or benefits. The Army officer did provide more details, but only because his ad was lengthier. For the most part, Marine recruiters’ classified ads

112 Private Philip O’Neill to Colonel John Reynolds, copy in “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127.
113 Public Ledger, 12 Sept. 1861, 4.
verged on the mundane and unimaginative. Recruiters mentioned various duties of Marines in an almost haphazard manner. One ad sought recruits for “service at our Navy Yards and on board our national vessels of war,” while another just mentioned service at sea.114 Some recruiting officers did change the tone of their ads over the course of the Civil War. Captain James Lewis sought to lure recruits with promises of “varied and exciting” service as well as a “comfortable home” at sea.115 For the most part, though recruiters published ads well into the 1870s which ranged from providing the tersest description of the Corps’ duties to holding out just a few inducements to recruits, such as the prospect of travel.116 Two recruiting posters published during and immediately after the Civil War represent the Corps’ typical appeals for much of the nineteenth century (Figures 2 and 3). The first poster immediately sought to attract recruits with bounty money, under which it featured a more patriotic inducement with the prospect of serving one’s country. Both posters included a large chart that outlined the pay a recruit could expect. With the end of the war, the second poster moved to emphasize the prospect of foreign travel. This Marine Corps poster, however, made no mention of

114 Philadelphia Inquirer, 2 March 1863; Public Ledger, 17 Sept. 1862, 4.
115 Philadelphia Inquirer, 11 March 1864, 7 and 22 April 1864, 6. By contrast, an Army ad published on the same page offered the inducement of a commissioning. For a similar Marine ad emphasizing the benefits of service, especially for “soldiers,” see Public Ledger, 11 June 1866, 3. This ad suggests the Corps sought recruits from those who had served in the Army. The Corps would continue to seek former soldiers as well as Marines to re-enlist. New York Herald, 24 April 1875, 11.
116 Public Ledger, 14 March 1867, 3; [untitled], New York Herald, 20 July 1873, 12. For other examples, see [untitled], New York Herald, 18 July 1880, 1, which lacked any specific details or New York Herald, 17 Dec. 1876, 14 or Public Ledger, 13 March 1871, 3 which sought the more traditional “able-bodied men.”
Figure 2: “Prize Money! Prize Money!”
American Memory: Historical Collections for the National Digital Library (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress), [?].
Figure 3: “Wanted for the United States Marine Corps!”
Marines, only of seeking soldiers. This was consistent with the Corps’ nineteenth-century practice of referring to themselves as soldiers rather than Marines. Finally, the poster appealed to those recruits who might obtain the rank of sergeant and thus receive “independent command” of Marine Guards on smaller naval vessels.

By the early 1870s, however, Captain Henry Cochrane began interjecting very different themes into classified ads. One ad enjoined recruits to join the “favorite” branch of the service.117 Starting in 1872, Cochrane began pushing the Corps’ classifieds in a new direction. He stressed that the Corps was the “oldest” military service and that it was highly selective, only accepting the “best.”118 Cochrane’s ads set a precedent that would come to dominate the Corps’ twentieth-century recruiting appeals.

While Cochrane pursued multiple avenues to promote reform, Captain Richard Collum focused on a single, large project. In 1873 Collum began working on the Corps’ first institutional history. By comparison, the Army did not receive similar attention until 1924, when William Ganoe published The History of the United States Army. Organizational structure explains some of these differences. Cavalry officers, for

118 “Marine Recruiting Rendezvous,” 8 July 1872, Clipping and “Recruiting Rendezvous,” 19 July 1872, Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
example, preferred to write regimental histories emphasizing their contributions rather than those of the Army as a whole.¹¹⁹

Scholarship about the relationship between history and image helps elucidate the appeal of history to some Marine officers. History, one scholar explains, constitutes that “view of the past which looks to tradition to confer a permanent structure on experience.”¹²⁰ Between 1875 and 1903, Richard Collum published three versions of History of the United States Marine Corps. Collum began researching his study sometime around 1873.¹²¹ His knowledge of history presumably more complete than his skill at writing, his publisher gave journalist M. Almy Aldrich the task of editing the history, even publishing the work under his name.¹²² Aldrich appears to have been tasked with condensing the work, which frustrated Collum so much that he revised the work in 1890.¹²³ Despite Collum’s avowed frustration, he did not make many significant changes to the 1890 edition published in his name.

¹²¹ Captain Richard Collum to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 2 Jan. 1874 and 25 Feb. 1875, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
The common thread that linked the Corps’ histories together—an emphasis on the length of the institution’s existence, purportedly even antedating the Navy—typifies the approach often taken by peripheral or marginalized groups.124 As an organization, the Corps operated as a semi-autonomous institution that collided with and obstructed the Navy’s corporate identity, or so many naval officers believed. The naval officer corps also had its divisions, especially between line officers and engineers.125 Their tensions, though, centered more on who would take precedence in combat rather than advocating serious changes to their organization or outright destruction.

Historian Eric Hobsbawn has emphasized how nations or groups invent traditions when threatened. Often these traditions depend on recurring allusions to the past that ultimately act as validating forces.126 The production of history is a key element of this process, because it enables authors to impose an artificial “continuity” that links an “ancient” past to the present.127 This can help to create some sense of stability in periods of crisis. For the Corps, more practically, it drew on the idea that long-

124 For one example, see Morgan in Invention of Tradition, 43-100.
125 For similar tensions between line, or officers who were responsible for combat, and staff officers, particularly engineers, see Theodore Roosevelt, “II. The Genesis of the Personnel Bill,” The North American Review (Dec. 1898), 650 and William M. McBride, Technological Change and the United States, Navy, 1865-1945 (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 9. In 1867 the Navy had been separated into the groups of line and staff. Staff officers included engineers, medical officers, and other non-combat officers. McBride, 17. The transition from sail to steam caused difficulties between engineers and line officers because it gave engineers, who were often seen as less socially respectable, increased power.
126 Hobsbawm, “Introduction” Invention of Tradition, 4.
127 Ibid., 7.
established institutions had validity because of their age, just as businesses announce to their clients how long they have been in existence to demonstrate the worth of their product. Taken together, Marine officers responded to their institution’s continued state of crisis by looking backwards.128

An emphasis on the length of the institution’s existence, purportedly even antedating the Navy—typifies this approach. In an era when the transition from sail to steam seemed to obviate the need for Marines, an emphasis on Greek marines lent a timeless aura to any justification for the Corps’ existence. It was much easier to create a sense of a “yearning for a lost golden age” than articulate a new mission or set out compelling reasons for their existence in the face of a long tradition of attacks by naval officers.129 The 1875 version of Collum’s History, for example, established a standard argument that would influence later Marines. It emphasized the “antiquity” of Marines, the links to European—particularly British—Marines, and the Corps’ claim to be the oldest branch of the U.S. military.130

129 Keith M. Brown, “Imagining Scotland” in The Journal of British Studies 31 (Oct., 1992), 417. This “yearning” for the past was also a theme in naval literature, with naval officers romanticizing the days of sail. See, for example, E.Z. Bowline, “Whiffs from an Old Sailor’s Pipe,” United Service (April 1880), 486-491.
130 Shulimson notes Collum’s literary and historical interests, as well as his ties to a small cadre of officers dedicated to reform the Corps in Search for a Mission, 16.
In emphasizing the Corps as the oldest institution, Collum drew on images of the Corps already circulating. One former Marine wanted to rejoin his “ancient Corps”, in which he had served for thirteen years before defecting to the Confederacy. The reference to the Corps as “old” or “ancient” played an important part in Marine identity. Long-serving Commandant Archibald Henderson, for example, issued an order in 1838 thanking his Marines for their service during a campaign in Florida, praising them for their role in “elevat[ing] their Ancient Corps in the estimation of the Country.” Even some naval officers used similar wording. In the 1850s Commodore Joshua Sands, for example, commented on the “esprit that has so long characterized the Old Corps” (emphasis in original).

In addition to stressing the Corps’ claim to be the oldest military service, Collum’s work similarly emphasized the institution’s claims to historical “firsts.” In an article published in 1882, Collum described how the Corps supported the British in their efforts to quell an Egyptian uprising. Before describing this operation, however, Collum spent half of the article celebrating the Marines’ role in raising the first American flag in

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131 See Thomas Faulkner to Commanding Officer, Charleston Barracks, 24 Feb. 1863, “Letters Received, 1818-1915,” RG 127. Faulkner had been confined for “an unwarranted attack upon a fellow soldier by knocking out two front teeth.”
132 It seems to have become more precisely defined with the publication of Richard Collum’s History of the United States Marine Corps. Also see Captain George Collier to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 7 Jan. 73, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
133 Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 43.
the “old world” during the Tripolitan War of 1801-1805. This emphasis on various “firsts” became even more important to Marines in the twentieth century. In particular, the Publicity Bureau produced enthusiastic recruiting material celebrating the Corps’ various firsts. While in some ways the emphasis on being the first to make historical achievements reflected the European imperial mindset of the late nineteenth century, it also spoke to the emphasis the Corps put on readiness. This would become an important distinction between its service and the Army’s. Both services might be able to serve as soldiers, but the Corps could arrive faster and with less advance notice.

Through its commendatory description of European Marines, Collum also provided an overarching justification for the Marines in service to the U.S. Navy, regardless of the fact that France and Great Britain had reduced their marine forces. British naval heroes such as Admiral Horatio Nelson, described by Aldrich as the “immortal Nelson,” fully appreciated the Marines and advocated their continued use aboard naval vessels. Fittingly, then, Collum described how three enlisted Royal Marines removed Nelson’s body from the scene of battle following his fatal wounding at Trafalgar. This historical incident was only appropriate given Nelson’s belief that “every

135 Collum chose not to mention the readoption of the Mameluke sword in 1875, which would not have been out of place in an article pointing to the same war in which a Marine received the Mameluke sword as thanks.
137 Aldrich, *History*, 16.
fleet should have a perfect battalion of Marines,” as a naval encyclopedia published in 1880 explained. This explanation, contributed by Captain Cochrane, seems to have borrowed a great deal from Collum’s published work, even referring to Nelson as “immortal.” Accounts not written by Marines, however, disagreed as to who had removed Nelson’s body. Historical accuracy was less important than myth and the opportunity for Marines to claim their assistance to a famous naval officer who supposedly had favored Marines. As Charles Withers has shown in regard to how Britain shaped the image of Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the “creation of the Highlands as a set of myths is now . . . part of the very ‘facts’ of history itself.” Instead of having a history largely imposed on it by outsiders, however, the Corps would begin to shape its own historical memory on paper.

The second chapter of both Aldrich’s and Collum’s work—contributed by well-known naval officer, reformer, and proponent of history, Admiral Stephen B. Luce—tied the history of the first Greek marines to the Royal Marines, concluding with a “tribute to

139 Naval Encyclopedia, 9.
141 Charles Withers, “The Historical Creation of the Scottish Highlands” in Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley, eds., The Manufacture of Scottish History (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), 143.
the value” of the U.S. Marines.\textsuperscript{142} As a naval officer, Luce echoed Nelson’s advocacy for the Marine Corps. Luce also invoked the purportedly unbroken chain that linked U.S. Marines to the Greek marines of classical history. As a result, he concluded that Marines had “well sustained the high reputation for steadfast courage and loyalty which has been handed down to it from the days of Themistocles.”\textsuperscript{143} As a student of history, however, Luce did not find any merit in looking backwards without thinking about the future.\textsuperscript{144}

The inclusion of Luce’s essay in a history of the Marine Corps epitomized the techniques Marines frequently used to establish the Corps’ validity. Collum, however, modified and magnified this practice, filling his history with official documents

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{142} Aldrich, History, 21. Shulimson interprets the Luce essay, which he considers to be the “most remarkable feature of the Aldrich history”, as a possible ramification of the Forney report. Captain James Forney was sent to Europe to investigate the role of various Marine forces. At least one copy of this version autographed by Luce survives. See “Notices,” Marine Corps Gazette, November 1996, 10. For a similar article focused solely on the Navy, see Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce, “The Dawn of Naval History,” Proceedings 24 (1898), 441-450.\textsuperscript{143} Aldrich, History, 30.\textsuperscript{144} Rear-Admiral Stephen B. Luce, USN, “Our Future Navy,” Proceedings 15 (1889), 541-552: 541. Younger naval officers were even more strident about not holding onto tradition simply for the sake of tradition. For examples of the tension between older officers reluctant to part with sailing vessels and younger officers committed to steam vessels written by an anonymous lieutenant, including the questioning of traditions, see A Lieutenant, USN, “Style in the Navy,” United Service 4 (April 1881), 490-498. The article mentioned the “new style” of “turn[ing] sailors into soldiers” which, of course, threatened to undercut the traditional role of Marines aboard naval vessels. “Style,” 497. Also see Captain W.T. Truxtun, USN, “Reform in the Navy,” United Service (April 1880), 450-451. Commander C.D. Sigsbee enjoined officers to “value tradition as tradition, nothing more—that is, as a matter bearing on esprit du corps, not as necessarily governing practical applications of the present day.” He recommended being “merciless towards mere sentiment.” Commander C.D. Sigsbee, “Progressive Naval Seamanship,” Proceedings 48 (1889), 95-130: 96.}
expressing the gratitude of naval officers for the Corp’s gallant deeds. He supplemented these documents with terse, straightforward commentary.

Collum turned even more closely to the history of the Royal Marines when he revised and updated *History* in 1890. Mark Shulman has demonstrated how a politicized agenda of navalists shaped the production of naval history, particularly between 1882 and 1893.\(^{145}\) Collum’s work, however, does not fit this historiographical trend of U.S. naval history. Rather, Collum looked to the Royal Marines’ history for inspiration in revising his work. Collum fixed the errors he believed Aldrich had made in portraying the Marine Corps. In the 1890 edition of his book, Collum paid still more attention to the history of the Royal Marines. Collum borrowed heavily from Lieutenant Paul Nicolas’s *Historical Record of the Royal Marine Forces* (1846) to correct what he saw as flaws in Aldrich’s history.\(^{146}\) He not only plagiarized segments of Nicolas’s work but also copied the artwork in the frontispiece, simply exchanging the U.S. Marine Corps’

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\(^{146}\) In the version edited by Aldrich, Nicolas had been mentioned by name. Nicolas’ preface begins: “From an early period a practice has prevailed in many of the continental armies, for each regiment to keep regular records of its services and achievements; but it is only of recent date that this emulative principle has been encouraged in the British service, and hence arises the difficulty of obtaining any authentic account of their origin, or of their subsequent proceedings.” Paul Nicolas, *Historical Record of the Royal Marine Forces* (London: Thomas and William Boone, 1845), vii. Richard Collum writes: “A custom has prevailed throughout the armies of Europe to keep regular record of the services and achievements of their regiments and corps. This principle has not obtained in our own country, hence a great difficulty arises in presenting an authentic account of the services of any branch of our establishment either military or naval.” Collum, *History* (1890), 7.
symbols for those of the Royal Marines (Figures Four and Five). Collum’s motives for doing so are unclear. Perhaps he sought to borrow the Royal Marines’ symbols to reinforce the legitimacy of his own institution.\textsuperscript{147} Or, as has been discussed, Collum did not always emphasize the Corps’ symbols to the extent that some of his fellow officers did. That he borrowed the frontispiece in conjunction with plagiarizing some of his work suggests the extent to which Collum found it somewhat difficult to represent the Corps symbolically. He found it easier to borrow symbols from an institution in a similar situation than forge a more individual path for the Corps.

Collum did not simply update his history to incorporate events since the appearance of the first edition. He also extended the origins of the American Marines further back into history, describing the actions of Marines in the American colonies between 1740 and the Revolutionary War.\textsuperscript{148} Collum explained that the British government wanted to raise three regiments of Marines from colonists in hopes of them being better suited for the “climate.”\textsuperscript{149} Collum did not go into much greater detail.

\textsuperscript{147} The Commandant looked to the Royal Marines as a model for increasing his institution’s efficiency. See Commandant to Secretary of the Navy, 9 Oct. 1896, Press Copies of Letters Sent to the Secretary of the Navy, 1895-1899, RG 127.

\textsuperscript{148} The 1875 work had begun with the Revolutionary War. See Aldrich, History, 9. For mention of these Marines, see John Russell Bartlett, Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England: 1741 to 1756, vol. 5 (Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co., State Printers, 1860), 30 and 119.

\textsuperscript{149} Collum, History (1890), 23.
Figure 4: Frontispiece, Paul Nicolas, *Historical Record of the Royal Marine Forces* (1846).

Figure 5: Frontispiece, Richard Collum, *History of the United States Marine Corps* (1890).
Perhaps, in light of his new frontispiece, he wanted to link the origins of the U.S. Marines more closely to Great Britain. Regardless, it was more important to push the Corps’ claims to longevity back than to explain how they were used by Britain in the Caribbean and elsewhere against Spain during the War of Jenkins’ Ear or explain that the troops were mostly impressed, undesirable Virginia residents.150 The Corps had always played a key role in securing American freedom and security and, by implication, would continue to do so.151

Collum’s History also contained many favorable references to sailors. Many Marines recognized the critical importance of naval support, and they were not about to alienate potential supporters by celebrating Marines at the expense of sailors. Ultimately, though, the emphasis on the Corps as the oldest branch did cause some disturbance. One naval officer admitted that the histories of the Navy and the Marine Corps were almost “inseparable;” still, he disagreed with Collum’s conclusion that the Corps antedated the Navy.152 Less critical reviewers, however, took Collum’s point. The

150 Millet, Semper Fidelis, 4.
151 Recent historians have demonstrated how a variety of groups have taken similar steps. For two groups that similarly emphasized links to their role in the American Revolution, see Michele Gillespie, “Memory and the Making of a Southern Citizenry: Georgia Artisans in the Early Republic” and Anne Sarah Rubin, “Seventy-six and Sixty-One: Confederates Remember the American Revolution,” in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 35-77 and 85-105, respectively.
152 ANJ, 13 March 1875, 490.
ANJ called the Marines a “historical body of troops, whatever may be the final determination as to the role they are to play on sea or land.”153 Regardless of their purpose, the Marines’ length of history—rather than its mission—was invoked to validate its existence.

Collum’s vision of the Corps appears rather muted in his History, perhaps because he believed an impartial description of the Corps’ contributions would be more convincing than the more fervent enthusiasm evident in his personal correspondence. In cutting short his comments to Cochrane in one letter praising the Corps, he stated that he would not “annoy [him] further with my remarks on the Corps, because I might be guilty of egotism which, you know, should always be avoided; but I will say that the Corps should be the organization ‘par excellence’ of the service.”154 Collum sought to translate this vision into reality in a number of ways. In regard to the issue as to whether Marine officers should be graduates of West Point or the Naval Academy, Collum advocated West Point. He believed that the future Marine officer’s education “must be military” rather than “half sailor and half soldier” (emphasis in original).155

While early twentieth-century Marines would stress the Corps’ duties on sea and land,

154 Captain Richard Collum to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 21 Feb. 1873, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
155 Ibid., 14 Oct. 1877.
Collum emphasized the importance of forming soldiers first and foremost. This education would serve to protect the Corps’ “distinctive character” so as to better “ensure its efficiency.” Until Marine officers could be educated at West Point, he hoped that the Corps would take steps to expand the education of new officers beyond “infantry tactics” into other areas such as artillery. As already discussed, however, such a view was problematic because it cast Marines as very similar to soldiers.

Later generations of Marines did deviate from some of the themes stressed by Collum, Cochrane, and other Marines. Major James Forney, for example, wrote an article in 1899 about the daily lives of Marines in response to the articles written by Navy and Army officers describing their services. Like many officers, he bemoaned the fact that many remained ignorant of the Corps. He devoted less than one third of his article, however, to his avowed purpose of describing life at the Marine installation where he was stationed. Instead, he immediately began discussing the Corps’ origins. He repeated the tradition emphasized by Collum and others of pointing to the institution’s status as the “oldest” military service even as he regretted that it was the least well known.

156 Luce supported the idea of sending Marine officers to West Point in the introduction to Collum’s work and, according to Collum, in personal conversations the two had together. Captain Richard Collum to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 14 Oct. 1877, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC; Aldrich, History, 30; Collum, History (1890), 21. Luce was not the only naval officer to hold this opinion. Aldrich, History, 85.
Similarly, another Marine either had not read Collum’s revised work or he did not appreciate his new emphasis on the pre-Revolutionary Marines. Rather than beginning with 1740, Robert Meade emphasized the Corps’ legislative origins in 1775. This date reminded readers of the critical role the Corps played in securing American independence. As scholars have noted, individuals shape group memory through a process of negotiation. Historians and other writers chose various years depending on the aspect of the Corps’ origin that they wanted to emphasize as they attempted to mold the Corps’ identity.\textsuperscript{158} Collum might emphasize the first Marines in North America, but Forney and Meade preferred to stress the Corps’ official beginning. These differences would become more standardized as the Corps acquired the bureaucratic means of promulgating its image officially.

In the short term, however, these efforts would not be able to head off the tenor of anti-Marine attacks that increased significantly in the 1880s and 1890s. Naval officers had similarly amiable feelings for the Marines. \textit{Proceeding’s} prize-winning essay for 1879, for example, called for the continuation of the Marine Corps’ duties as well as an increase in the number of higher-ranking officers. The Navy, this officer suggested, should follow British practice because Marines would “enhance” the Navy’s

\textsuperscript{158} Edwin McClellan lists four possibilities for the Corps’ origins in \textit{The Birthday of the United States Marine Corps} (privately published, 1932), 6.
Within the next ten years, however, naval officers would increasingly make the same argument that Cochrane had mocked, forcing Marines to rethink their traditional approach in defining the Corps’ relationship to the Navy.160 Historians have argued that the period between the Civil War and the Spanish-American-Cuban War posed a crisis of confidence for the Corps.161 The birth of the so-called “New Navy” in 1882 when Congress finally agreed to fund four new battleships marked the beginning of significant changes in the Navy. Ardent proponents of navalism such as Alfred Thayer Mahan began arguing for a more aggressive overseas policy. Rather than rely on a largely defensive position, the Navy would build a first-rate battleship fleet.162 In remaking the Navy, naval officers also considered a host of other issues, including personnel. The shift from sail- to steam-powered vessels was not only a technological one but a cultural one. In seeking to improve the quality of sailors, naval officers argued that Marines hindered the creation of a homogenous culture at sea. These attacks, justified in terms of technology, were not a new development. They were

159 Lieutenant Commander Allan D. Brown, “Prize Essay, Naval Education,” Proceedings 5 (1879), 321. See the similar comments of Lieutenant Commander Goodrich in the ensuing “Discussion,” 379.
161 Jack Shulimson’s work exemplifies this approach. See Shulimson, Search for a Mission.
just another chapter in the identity wars between naval and Marine officers that occurred over the nineteenth century.

Still, naval officers began to justify their attacks on the Corps with reference to how technological change necessitated more stringent manpower requirements. Some naval officers believed the Marine’s role as naval policemen was obsolete. Technologically-advanced ships required better-trained and therefore more mature and disciplined, sailors.163

Historiography about the late nineteenth century Marine Corps stresses its hesitant professionalization, pointing in particular to inept leadership and the self-seeking aims of officers to secure better pay and faster promotions. Jack Shulimson has argued that the Corps simply could not match the Navy’s “intellectual ferment” of the 1880s, triggered in part by the adoption of steam and the new vision of naval officers for American seapower.164 He compared their efforts to the more limited focus of Marines on practical matters, such as reducing desertion.165 Shulimson characterized the few

165 Shulimson, Mission, 10.
successful reforms of the period—such as enabling the direct commissioning of Naval Academy graduates—as nothing more than “legislative flukes.”

Marine officers did not participate in the technical aspects of professional debates to the same extent of their Army and Navy counterparts, who debated everything from homing pigeons to electricity. To label these decades the “doldrums” as some have done, however, is to miss important changes underway, even if their effects did not become clear immediately. At least a handful of Marine officers promoted military reforms, many of which would have made Marines more soldierly. Captain Richard Collum, for example, sought out an opportunity to experiment with the Gatling gun. He expressed frustration when he encountered officers that he did not believe took their professional duties seriously enough. He also encouraged his friend First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane to apply to teach tactics at the Naval Academy, believing that a Marine should fill this role. With the help of First Lieutenant Richard Neill, Cochrane published a guidebook detailing a Marine’s duties in 1873. With less than eighty officers for most of the 1870s and 1880s, the Marine Corps did well to have even a

166 Ibid.
167 Captain Richard Collum to First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane, 1 June 1875, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
168 Ibid., 21 Feb. 1873.
169 Ibid., 1 June 1875.
handful of officers actively engaged in seeking reform. Like Marine officers, Army officers of the 1870s were concerned with similar issues, such as improving marksmanship and promotion opportunities. As one historian argues, however, their efforts were largely confined to sending anonymous letters to the *Army and Navy Journal*.172

Most works on professionalization emphasize technical debates and increased training and education for officers and enlisted service members. When definitions of professionalization include identity, however, the Corps’ efforts to professionalize become more evident. In connecting the Navy’s professionalism to the Naval War College’s establishment, for example, Ronald Spector defined professionalization as the “process by which members of an institution stressed the importance of developing technical knowledge as well as a “heightened feeling of group identity” as signified by

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171 Historians have argued about when the Army professionalized. William Skelton believes this process began prior to the Civil War. See William B. Skelton, *An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1992). Samuel P. Huntington has argued that apolitical officers largely isolated from society began professionalizing in the 1880s. See *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1981). Edward Coffman suggests that the end of frontier wars brought Army officers together to think about professionalization and that they did so within the framework of larger societal changes beginning in the 1890s. See “The Long Shadow of The Soldier and the State,” *Journal of Military History* 55 (Jan. 1991), 69-82. Mark Grandstaff suggests that antebellum reform efforts were stopped by the Civil War and not immediately picked up after the war because the demographics of the officer corps had changed significantly. By the 1880s, however, officers who had served prior to the Civil War would articulate a peacetime purpose of the Army based on education and preparing for future wars. Grandstaff, 521-45.

172 Ibid., 535.
the founding of associations and journals.”173 While Spector closely examined the pursuit of knowledge through a discussion of the Navy’s adoption of advanced education for naval officers, he largely ignored group identity. In discussing education and training not only for their peers but for enlisted sailors as well, naval officers debated the Navy’s future corporate identity.

Progressive naval officers sought to make sailors more military. One officer described the increasing belief that the “principal distinction between seamen and marines should be in discipline and uniform, not in different capabilities and a division of duties.”174 Sailors would become more like infantry, and Marines would also gain more familiarity with naval gunnery.175 As a result, Marines would contribute more to naval vessels. As Captain W.S. Schley scathingly wrote, Marines were “a privileged class who ma[d]e dirt, but [were] not cleaners, as every man on board ship ought to be.”176 That the Corps did not fully participate only lessened the vessel’s efficiency by failing to promote the “camaraderie” that resulted from sharing the same duties and tasks, or so some naval officers believed.

175 Ibid., 59.
In seeking to illuminate the daily experiences of Marines, Major James Forney spoke of the “general notion that the marines are of an amphibious nature; that they are neither fish, flesh, nor fowl.” The choice of expression was an odd one, especially as his words were published in the military magazine, *United Service: A Quarterly Review of Military and Naval Affairs*. At face value it suggested people could not pin down a particular purpose for the Corps that could be easily comprehended. Yet Forney went on to suggest that people understood that the Corps served with the Navy at times and at other times with the Army. He even stated they had the idea that the Corps was “independent” of both the Army and the Navy. Forney’s expectations about what general impressions were maintained of Marines is somewhat surprising, especially since he had begun his article by explaining that there was “very little known” about them, especially by way of comparison to the Army and the Navy. It is difficult to ascertain who Forney believed held these impressions. He never made clear if he was talking about the general public or other servicemembers, who presumably would know something about the Corps and its duties.

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Viewed in the context of larger debates, Forney’s article could be read as a response to the calls of naval officers for the removal of Marines from ships, given the particularly heated nature of the debate in the mid-1890s. Interpreted in this way, his article would implicitly call for an increased role for Marines as naval guards on shore. Instead, he provided a contradictory image of what purpose Marines served. In seeking to explain to his reader what a Marine did, Forney described the confusion that arose from the variety of tasks the Corps performed. As such, he defined a Marine as a soldier whose duties were “entirely military.” A page later, however, Forney noted that Marines were also “good sailors.” Considering that Marines generally did not participate in the actual cooperation of the ship, to claim that Marines “knew every rope in the ship” was very unusual, if not misleading.179

Forney also took a different approach regarding the Royal Marines that Collum would in his History published a year later. Forney emphasized the need to celebrate the Corps’ own history as distinct from that of the Royal Marines. He feared that the reputedly tarnished image of their British brethren might hurt the U.S. Marines.180 Forney explained that the British public somehow had developed an illogical “prejudice” against Marines, which the U.S. Marines had inherited. Despite his apparent proclivity for writing—based on his observations from a year-long trip abroad,

179 Ibid., 394.
180 Ibid., 397.
he had submitted a lengthy report in 1873 summarizing his conclusions about the conditions of European Marine forces—this was his first foray into publishing.\textsuperscript{181} This image could be corrected, however, if people only acquired a “clear understanding in regard to the history of the Corps” that would enable them to appreciate its many contributions since its establishment.\textsuperscript{182} Forney dismissed links between the U.S. and Royal Marines such as the expression, “Tell it to the Marines.” \textsuperscript{183}

Over time, this expression acquired various meanings and stories in regard to its origins. As used by sailors, the expression was more often meant to belittle the Marines by depicting them as ignorant fools. As the\textit{New York Times} explained in 1889, “[f]rom time immemorial it has been Jack’s saying in response to all doubtful stories, ‘Tell that to the marines,’ for . . . the hearty contempt in which they hold the marines is sufficient to incite the firing of a volley of epithets at the latter on the slightest provocation.”\textsuperscript{184} Sailors perennially joked that you could “tell anything” to the Marines; their gullibility knew no bounds.\textsuperscript{185} The article explained how no institution had “come in for a greater share of contumely and received less praise than have the marines of the United States Navy.” A few years after Forney’s article was published, one naval historian described

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\item \textsuperscript{181} Shulimson, \textit{Search for a Mission}, 14. Almost 75 percent of the paper focused on the Royal Marines.
\item \textsuperscript{182} Forney, “The Marines,” \textit{United Service}, 397.
\item \textsuperscript{183} \textit{Ibid.}, 400.
\item \textsuperscript{184} “Marines on Shipboard: An Important Factor in a Navy,” \textit{New York Times}, 7 April 1889, 16. “Jack” was a nickname for a sailor.
\item \textsuperscript{185} \textit{Ibid.}
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how this phrase epitomized the tensions between sailors and Marines, arguing that Marines “considered themselves two or three degrees better than the seamen, while the latter regarded the marines with supreme contempt as being no better than landlubbers, and anybody making a particularly stupid remark was told to ‘Go tell it to the marines.’”186 In 1896, however, one Royal Marine sought to reshape the phrase’s meaning. Captain William Drury, a novelist, claimed that Samuel Pepys’ diary recounted an incident in which King Charles II, doubtful of a story told to him by a naval officer, had it confirmed to him by a Royal Marine officer.187 In this story, then, the expression signified that Marines had been everywhere and seen everything. But Drury had yet to provide this meaning of the story. As such, Forney wanted the U.S. Marine Corps to have nothing to do with what he considered the “false, repellant tales” of the Royal Marines. In the early twentieth century, however, the Corps would come to embrace this saying as it learned how to manipulate meaning for its own advantage. At this point, however, Forney and other Marine officers had not been able to do much more than point to their institution’s long history.

186 Edgar S. Maclay, A History of the United States Navy, from 1775 to 189, vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1894), 21. The phrase was frequently used in headlines. One of the earliest which did not draw on the typical tension between sailors and Marines is perhaps an article recounting the Commandant’s desire to enlist more Marines. See “Tell It to the Marines,” Washington Post, 30 Oct. 1894, 9.
Part of a growing number of Marines who contributed articles, Forney differed from Collum in that he emphasized the symbols that distinguished the Corps from others. Unlike Collum’s article about Tripoli, which would have required readers to connect the Mameluke sword to the story themselves, Forney described the Corps’ defining symbols, including its flag, its motto, and its emblem. All of these symbols that the Corps focused on in the late nineteenth century represented the types of “invented traditions” that the Corps would begin placing more emphasis and maintaining rather than altering based on the whims of European military fashion or other factors.188

The historical work of Collum and other nineteenth-century Marines established a pattern and precedent that would shape the Corps’ future use of history and its tendency to look to the past in times of crisis. Amidst the loss of traditional military symbols due to the industrialization of war, one Marine lieutenant celebrated the Corps’ singular decision to maintain the drum for field music in 1897.189 Fortunately, as he explained, of “all the regular organizations in the United States service, the Marine Corps, the oldest, last retains the drum.”190 Such an approach no doubt resonated with many Marine officers, who worried that they, like the drum and the sword, were becoming obsolete. While many naval officers challenged traditions they believed had

188 Ibid., 397.
190 Ibid., 715.
become outdated, the Corps clung to them. At the time Perkins wrote his article, however, other military services had drums. The Army’s *Infantry Drill Regulations*, revised in 1904, for example, included a section on “drum signals.” Like their claim to be the oldest institution, the suggestion that the Corps was the last to hold onto this more traditional symbol of warfare was inaccurate. As has been seen, however, Marine officers made numerous errors and contradictions in seeking to establish an image for the Corps throughout the nineteenth century.

Marines did not concoct an image in isolation, though. Journalists and other writers continued to depict them in other forums. First published in 1896, Rudyard Kipling’s poem about Royal Marines titled “Soldier An’ Sailor Too” described an overworked man caught in between the Army and the Navy who was capable of any task. Told from the perspective of a soldier, it stressed how the Marine could be relied upon to support the Army when required. Kipling began the poem by explaining how the soldier caught sight of a man aboard a ship who, although dressed more in the style of a soldier, was busy scraping paint. This setting thus depicted a Marine engaged in

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duties characteristic of sailors, namely maintaining the appearance of vessels. As a soldier and a sailor, the Marine was something of a “giddy harumfordite” [sic] and a “bloomin’ cosmopolouse.” The Marine knew how to handle just about any job, but he did not really fit in with the Navy.

Kipling’s work quickly became integrated into the imagery of the American Marine. Pieces of the poem “Soldier an’ Sailor, Too” were quoted in an article describing a Marine sergeant by August of 1896. This article depicted an immigrant who had served in the German army prior to joining the U.S. Navy. His past status as a non-commissioned officer, which allowed him some “authority,” made him rebel against his new lot as a common sailor. As a result, he enlisted in the Corps where he was quickly promoted through the ranks to sergeant. The article contrasted the opportunity for leadership in the Corps in contrast to the Navy. It even pointed out, in marked contrast to articles of the 1870s and before, that there were no excess Marine officers. More positive images of the Corps, then, were in circulation by the 1890s, and they incorporated pieces of an image created by journalists, poets, and Marine officers.

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194 Kipling wrote that “there isn’t a job on the top o’ the earth the beggar don’t know, nor do” and that “'E isn’t one o’ the reg’lar Line, nor 'e isn’t one of the crew.” Ibid. The poem was told from the perspective of soldiers who, despite differences, appreciated that they were “brothers” to them. Ibid., 154.

Kipling’s image of the Marine as “soldier an’ sailor, too” would become a powerful one. Marines would use it as a way to explain who they were and what they did. During the Spanish-American-Cuban War, for example, one enlisted Marine advised his parents to read Rudyard Kipling to understand how a Marine was both a soldier and a sailor. Journalists would use references to the poem to introduce stories or simply quote a stanza of the poem as a way to introduce the reader to Marines. The Corps’ Recruiting Publicity Bureau, established in 1911, similarly would draw on this image in its material.

The Corps’ self-definition was not concocted overnight or out of thin air. Bits and pieces of what Marines would choose to embrace could be found in the 1860s. Marines had begun to hammer out a foundational image during the nineteenth century, and, after the Spanish-American-Cuban War, they acquired military responsibilities that would enable them to push the ideas of officers like Collum and Cochrane even further. For all their fits and starts and their inconsistencies and problems in formulating an image, Marines had begun reshaping how the public viewed the Corps. Taken together,

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198 This subject will be addressed in Chapter Three.
they had built a foundation, however problematic, upon which Marines would be able to expand under the right circumstances and with the right resources.
3. “A marine always fights fair”: Identity, Image, and Imperial Wars, 1898-1905

John Philips Sousa, the most famous Marine of the nineteenth century, was greatly relieved when Lieutenant Colonel Littleton Waller’s court martial ended in acquittal. Colonel Waller had been charged with ordering eleven Filipino porters to be summarily executed. Sousa was less concerned with the fate of the Filipinos than he was with the Corps’ reputation. “A marine always fights fair,” he insisted, glad that this faith in the institution had not been sullied by Colonel Waller’s actions. The Marine Band’s esteemed leader from 1880 to 1892, Sousa served at a time when the institution seemed to receive more requests for band performances than it did to conduct military operations.

The Corps’ involvement in America’s early twentieth century imperial wars would challenge Marines even as it provided new directions for the institution’s developing image. In many ways imperialism would test the culture of chivalrous manliness that had characterized the nineteenth-century Navy and Marine Corps. Waller’s court martial served as a stark reminder of the difference between the short landing parties of the nineteenth century and the complexities of fighting imperial wars.
America's imperialism sparked a rising public interest in all things military, with ramifications for the Marine Corps' image. In some ways it offered a boon. No longer did the American public consider the military something fit only for the dregs of society. The public eagerly embraced and celebrated the heroic exploits of Admiral Dewey and the sailors who so easily won the Battle of Manila during the Spanish-American-Cuban War. With the rise of yellow journalism, popular curiosity for exotic foreign cultures, and more frequent and better-publicized engagements abroad, the Marine Corps became the subject of greater interest. Popular journalists and novelists including Stephen Crane and Richard Harding Davis brought the ostensible glamour of military adventure into the homes of Americans, and Marines eagerly internalized these heroic images. Instead of needing to correct the unfavorable accounts of nineteenth-century

1 For this process in Great Britain see Graham Dawson, Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinity (New York: Routledge, 1994).
journalists, early-twentieth-century Marines could choose to incorporate more favorable images into their culture while basking in the praise of past exploits. On the other hand, though, imperial incidents such as Colonel Waller’s court martial, posed the possibility of besmirching the Corps’ image.

Joint operations with other imperial powers provided yet another impetus for identity formation. Although Marines had looked to the Royal Marines during the nineteenth century, now they expanded their vision to include elite British Army regiments with whom they served in China and elsewhere. As a result of increased imperial responsibilities, moreover, Marines served more frequently in the vicinity of the U.S. Army. Marines used these opportunities to compare themselves to their competitors.

In the decade following the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the way that Marines molded their institution’s image began to change significantly due to their participation in imperial wars. One new area of institutional behavior was dealing with the public. Perhaps most importantly, the Corps had to turn outward to ensure it had the manpower to fill its increasing overseas responsibilities. If nineteenth-century Marines had sought to curry favor with members of Congress, twentieth-century Marines had good reason to ensure they sought a wider web of public approbation.
A solution to the Corps’ image problem began to emerge after the Spanish-American War. In article after article journalists continued to explain to the public that the Marine was neither sailor nor soldier. The public still did not understand what Marines did. Marines themselves continued to stress their long historical tradition, but they had difficulty arguing that they fulfilled a unique mission. Instead, they emphasized how they could accomplish the same mission differently. They stressed their various “firsts” as evidence of their readiness, which distinguished them from the Army. In regard to the Navy they suggested they were more efficient and better qualified to assume more military duties, such as naval gunnery. Marines also began seeking out additional duties aboard naval vessels while arguing that they carried out the sailors’ duties better than they did. Unlike in the Civil War, Marines now appeared eager to volunteer for anything, even the miserable job of coaling a ship.5 In 1892, for example, the Corps had adopted a uniform to be used in assisting with this task.6

By exploring the Corps’ participation in the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the China Relief Expedition, and the Philippines War, as well as looking more closely at

individual Marines’ views of their institution, this chapter explores how imperialism left a lasting imprint on the Corps. In some ways imperial wars provided significant challenges to the Corps’ sense of self but, on the other hand, these events bound Marines of all ranks more closely together while allowing them to see themselves as elite fighters.

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Many historians view the Spanish-American-Cuban War as a decisive marker in U.S. imperial history.\(^7\) Historians depict it as an equally seminal event in the Marine Corps’ history, as one that largely secured the institution’s existence.\(^8\) The reality, however, was more complex. With the end of the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the war between Marine and naval officers regarding the role Marines would play aboard

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\(^7\) While few scholars would argue that physical expansion has not been a critical component of U.S. history, many offer different interpretations regarding its continuity. Some emphasize how expansion has characterized the nation’s history from the first conflicts with Native Americans to today’s war in Iraq. Others argue that the nature of expansion changed between Reconstruction and the Spanish-American War. Historians have also changed their interpretation of the Spanish-American War dramatically from the idea of a “splendid little war” to a major step in the U.S. becoming a modern imperial power. For contributions to this debate, see Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); Robert Beisner, *From the Old Diplomacy to the New, 1865-1900* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1986; second edition, 1975). Others find such distinctions irrelevant. If historians like Edmund Morgan and Eric Foner characterize slavery as one of the critical aspects of U.S. history, Hazel Carby places slavery at the core of imperial expansion. From this perspective, imperialism reflects the outward projection of slavery. Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). For a work that challenges the U.S.-centric approach of many English-language works, see Lou Pérez, *The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998). For naval aspects of the war, see Edward Marolda, *Theodore Roosevelt, the U.S. Navy, and the Spanish-American War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

ship, especially regarding naval gunnery, would resume. Still, the Corps would profit from an improved image because of the war. It benefited not only because of its close ties to the Navy and the extent to which the public embraced the Navy’s successes but also from its victorious land battle at Guantanamo.

As seen in the previous chapter, the public did not have a very high view of the Navy during the nineteenth century. The Corps, closely linked by association to the Navy, also suffered because of the extent to which naval officers had perpetuated negative views of Marine officers, which made their way into newspapers. Beginning in the 1890s, however, journalists had begun reporting more favorably on the Navy and the Marine Corps. The Washington Post, for example, had been highly critical of the Corps in the late 1870s and early 1880s. In the 1890s, however, it began publishing favorable articles. It began one article with the phrase “tell it to the Marines,” which in the nineteenth century had signaled the sailor’s dislike for the Corps. Now, however, the phrase had to be used in a more respectful manner to signal the respect the institution deserved. The journalist suggested that if you were going to “tell it to the Marines” you do so “politely” because the institution was a “fighting corps.” Implicit in this suggestion was the connection between the controlled violence of a military institution and the somewhat joking advice of the journalist that the Marine be treated with respect. The journalist suggested that the persistent popular image of the Corps as a ceremonial
service was misguided. Marines, he argued, were “fighters from ‘way back.’”  

This image would gain significant ground in the Spanish-American-Cuban War when the public relished in seeing its troops of all services acting as fighters, successfully defeating the Spanish in a relatively short war.

After the destruction of the Maine in February of 1898 in the harbor of Havana, Cuba, much of the public clamored for the U.S. to declare war on Spain, believing the Maine’s loss to have resulted from foul play by the Spanish. As a result, interest in all military services increased. The Corps benefited from this curiosity. The articles building up to the war provided favorable coverage of the Corps while reiterating aspects of its traditional image. The journalist described the Corps as “picturesque” and “attractive.” Citing the traditional ignorance of the institution, the journalist decried that the Corps had not received credit for its “peerless efficiency.”  

Another article went an additional step, explaining how some even believed the Corps to be the “finest body of soldiers in the world,” again reflecting an idea that had been suggested increasingly beginning in

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10 “Uncle Sam’s Marines Ashore and Afloat Where They Are,” Boston Journal, 10 April 1898, 9.
the 1890s. Still, ignorance about what purpose the Corps served remained. One article recounted how a young woman visiting a ship was intrigued by the unexpected presence of soldiers. As a result, her guide faced the typical “trouble” of having to “explain what a Marine was.” The Spanish-American-Cuban War would bring more media attention to the Corps, but it would not alleviate the public’s confusion about the institution.

The Corps played two very different roles during the Spanish-American-Cuban War. On the one hand, in June of 1898 it helped secure a beachhead for the Navy needed to control Guantanamo Bay, which would provide a safe harbor during hurricane season. Marines would be put ashore to prevent Spanish troops from attacking the U.S. Navy. On the other hand, it helped man the secondary naval gun batteries during naval battles, especially during the Battle of Santiago in July of 1898. As opposed to larger

11 “Duties of the Marine Guard; All about the Soldier and Sailor Too of the American Navy,” Sioux City Journal, 1 May 1898, 10. For similar comments about the Royal Marines at this time, see John R. Black, Young Japan: Yokohama and Yedo, vol. 2 (London: Trubner & Co., 1881), 387. Black explained how a Royal Marine officer had helped make Japanese Marines into an elite just as they were in Great Britain. Also see “The National Defences,” Fraser’s Magazine, Dec. 1859, 643-660: 650 and Mrs. J.D. Leather-Culley, On the War Path: A Lady’s Letters from the Front (London: John Long, 1901), 99. For other positive comments, see Sir Henry Keppel, A Sailor’s Life Under Four Sovereigns, vol. 2 (London: Macmillan, 1899), 305. As an 1872 dictionary explained, Marines had been the “butts of the sailors, from their ignorance of seamanship” but they had become “deserved appreciated as the finest regiment in the service.” John Camden Hotten, The Slang Dictionary (London: John Camden Hotten, 1872), 156.

naval guns, secondary batteries consisting of smaller naval gunnery and rapid-fire guns targeted the personnel of the opposing vessels.\textsuperscript{13}

As seen by First Lieutenant Henry Cochrane’s suggestion that the Corps become a body of naval artillerists in 1874, Marines had sought to acquire some kind of naval gunnery role for decades. Commandant Charles McCawley had been pushing for the Corps to secure this role for almost ten years. In 1893 the institution’s new School of Application, which trained future officers and enlisted men, received two six-pound rapid-fire guns of the type found on secondary batteries. The School of Application appears to have propounded the notion that Marines were naval artillerists, as at least one young officer believed this to be the case.\textsuperscript{14} Many naval officers, however, actively opposed Marines being assigned to the secondary battery, as this would inhibit their removal from naval vessels. The ultimate decision, however, was in the hands of the Secretary of the Navy Hilary A. Herbert. In 1896 he decided to assign Marines to the secondary battery.

Marines’ efforts to exploit their role in the Battle of Santiago demonstrated how they sought to connect their contributions to the battle’s successful outcome.

Summarizing the Marines’ contributions, Commandant Charles Heywood felt

\textsuperscript{14} James Breckenridge to Mother, 19 Feb. 1899, James Breckenridge Papers, MCASC.
vindicated by his decision to push the Navy Department to include Marines on the secondary batteries. He believed this decision demonstrated how the Corps had adapted to technological change. He argued that the reports of Spanish officers showed that the secondary guns, which Marines had an important role in manning, had caused the most damage.15

Major Richard Collum supplemented the official view. Writing in retirement, he revised and updated his History of the United States Marine Corps for the second time in 1903.16 No longer having to rely on naval officers to include brief mentions of Marines in their accounts, Collum could revise his work to focus on the Corps. Collum accepted the view that the Spanish wreckage from the battle clearly demonstrated that the Marines’ secondary batteries caused more destruction than the “heavy guns” manned by sailors. This belief had begun circulating after Spanish naval officer Captain Don Antonio Eulate cited the effect of the Marines’ secondary batteries on his ship the Vizcaya, one of the few ships close enough to American ships to be within range of the batteries.17 This was so

16 Collum’s treatment of the war is unusual in that he did not proceed chronologically. First including numerous after-action reports written by Marines about their contributions to naval gunfire, he subsequently began recounting how the Marines had treated Spanish prisoners in the wake of the war. Only at the end did he return to the Corps’ role in securing Guantanamo.
17 Captain Eulate was quoted in an Associated Press article as saying that the secondary batteries’ fire was critical. The article also cited an anonymous Spanish officer who found the batteries’ fire to be effective against his vessel. See “Marines Fought Nobly. Their Work at the Secondary Batteries Helped Largely to Destroy Cervera’s Fleet,” 25 July 1898, 2; James William Buel, Hero Tales of the American Soldier and Sailor As
self-evident, Collum believed, that “no further comment on the skill and endurance of the Marines [was] required.”18

The individual after-action reports Collum included in his History unsurprisingly largely supported this opinion. Captain R. Dickins noted that his Marines maintained their bearing throughout the entire engagement despite “occupy[ing] the most exposed position.”19 Dickins implicitly contrasted the sailors’ relatively safe positions at the main guns behind turrets with those of the Marines to celebrate the bravery of his men. Newspaper articles supported this distinction, using almost the same words as Dickins.20 Captain Littleton Waller enthusiastically reported that the Indiana’s commanding officer had informed him that he viewed Waller’s men as the “best” in the squadron.21 Despite Waller’s report of this naval officer’s enthusiasm, the written report of the officer

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*Told by the Heroes Themselves and Their Comrades, the Unwritten History of American Chivalry* (New York: A. Holloway, 1899, 174. Early reports claimed the secondary batteries were rendered useless by being out-of-range. “Bombardment of Santiago Particulars of the Second Attack by the American Fleet,” *Sioux City Journal*, 13 June 1898, 2.

18 Collum, *History* (1903), 324. Also see the report of Marine Captain Murphy issued by the Navy Department and quoted in “Praise for the Marines,” *NYT*, 11 Aug. 1898, 4.


20 “Marines Fought Nobly. Their Work at the Secondary Batteries Helped Largely to Destroy Cervera’s Fleet,” 25 July 1898, 2.

21 Collum, *History* (1903), 331.
appeared much more tempered. He noted that Marines only “equaled in excellence” the Indiana’s sailors.  

Perhaps because they did not have the same stake in writing after-action reports that would impress the Commandant, enlisted Marines appeared less likely to make claims for the Corps at the expense of the Navy. Private Henry Hill praised Commander Schley, for he “deliberately placed himself on the most conspicuous place” on the Brooklyn during the Battle of Santiago. Hill noted that all under his command agreed that Schley was a “fighter.” Hill, then, did not seek to downplay the bravery of naval officers. This emphasis on fighting reflected changing ideas about masculinity as more aggressive. Boxing, for example, became an important activity aboard ship. This activity imbued both the Navy and the Corps, making it an aspect of a shared corporate identity of naval culture.

In appraising the importance of the secondary batteries, moreover, one naval officer dismissed them as only important “accidentally.” Lieutenant F.K. Hill implied that the battery would not have been effective if the U.S. Navy had faced a viable

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22 Ibid., 333.
23 “Schley Was Cool: A Marine Tells How the Commodore Bore Himself is the Battle with Cervera,” The Sun, 25 July 1898, 6.
opponent. Some historians have questioned the significance of the Marines’ contributions to naval gunnery, but contemporary Marine officers did not doubt it. They assimilated the accolades as part of their evolving identity.

Some journalists also suggested the importance of Marines, delineating between them as fighters and sailors as the operators of naval guns. One article published in 1899 explained this division of labor. The journalist claimed that sailors embraced the Marines “among their most successful fighters” during the Spanish-American-Cuban War. A Marine corporal offered a similar view, albeit with very different implications. To be a Marine was to be a “good deal more of a man.” Whereas steel armor protected sailors at their posts in the gun turrets, the Marine claimed there was “nothing between him and eternity” but his uniform shirt to protect him.” A masculine ideal of courage distinguished the Marine from the sailor, at least in this particular Marine’s opinion. Another article published a month later similarly distinguished the fighting characteristics of sailors and Marines, although for a slightly different reason. Drawing on the prevailing image of the sailor as a brave yet “impetuous” figure as seen before,

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26 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 130.
27 “Increase of the Marine Corps,” Washington Times, 10 Jan. 1899, Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
28 The quoted Marine did note that sometimes sailors did not have time to “get behind the steel” nor did they “always want to” in “Marines of Our Navy: Numerous and Varied Are the Duties Assigned to Them,” Indiana State Journal, 29 June 1898, 6.
the journalist argued that sailors could be useful in martial encounters of short duration but could not endure “sustained” conflicts because they lacked discipline. In this way, the sailor’s image worked as a foil for the Corps’ strengthening reputation as an institution of warriors. The journalist even argued that this way of fighting was so characteristic for the sailor that the Corps had been formed during the American Revolution precisely to provide the Navy with a reliable force of fighters.

How to divvy up responsibilities between sailors and Marines had long been a source of controversy. The determination of Marines to take on naval gunnery assignments from the 1890s had thrown them into direct competition with sailors. During most of the nineteenth century, Navy and Marine duties aboard ship differed. Sailors ran the ship and fired its main guns. Marines were sharpshooters, firing small arms onto the decks of enemy vessels and boarding and repelling when required. In some ways the transition from sharpshooting to naval gunnery was a natural one, but it resulted in a strong rivalry between sailors and Marines. If Marines were going to be competing against sailors in the same tasks, how could they differentiate themselves in a meaningful way to justify their contributions? They had to try to demonstrate they were

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29 “Soldier and Sailor, Too,” 24 July 1898, Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
30 For hints of this competition, see Willard H. Kelly, “Not Private M’Neall,” Washington Post, 25 Dec. 1898, 12. The seaman wrote to the newspaper to inform them of mistakenly identifying a Marine private for undertaking a heroic act instead of a Gunner’s Mate.
elite gunners capable of outperforming the naval gunners, in part because of their military background as soldiers.

The Navy considered its gunners to be its elite sailors, chosen only from the best. Naval gunnery thus became a highly contested ground that spurred some Marine antagonism. During the 1890s, for example, Captain Robert Meade alleged that naval gunners had scaled the walls of the Navy Yard to avoid having their alcohol confiscated by Marines.31 In a letter outlining the reasons for the Corps’ importance, Meade implicitly pointed to the purpose Marines served in preserving order. Meade also suggested that Marines actively sought out new duties aboard naval vessels, and that Marines did this in addition to already working far longer hours than sailors. Meade’s suggestions, however biased, characterized the approach that Marines could and would do anything that became more common as they felt more threatened aboard ship.

Meade also acted similarly to other Marine officers in pointing back to historical events seeking to correct a record largely formulated by naval officers. He believed they had misrepresented past events. In particular, he cited the Battle of Mobile Bay during the Civil War, during which Admiral David Farragut had famously steered safely through a minefield in order to defeat Confederate vessels. Meade expressed outrage

31 Meade eventually was forced into early retirement for writing a “disrespectful” letter to the Department of the Navy. See “President Punishes Meade,” NYT, 14 Aug. 1903, 1. He appears to have been as eager to clash with Marine officers as he was with naval officers. See “Major Meade Has Been Removed,” Boston Morning Journal, 30 Dec. 1897, 1.
that accounts credited sailors for naval gunnery that he believed really had been accomplished by Marines.32

Meade was hardly alone in his cynical interpretation of the naval officers’ motives. In an article explaining how Marines differed from sailors, one journalist even suggested that the Navy sought to hold back Marines. He described how the Marine was the “most competent of the fighting force on shipboard whenever he [was] allowed to compete on equal terms with his sailor shipmate, and in target practice is without a rival.”33 The article’s opening paragraph had begun lamenting the ignorant person he referred to as “Mr. Landlubber” who spoke of the sailors’ “desperate fighting” at Guantanamo, which was in fact undertaken by Marines. Similarly, journalist J.S. Van Antwerp claimed that Marines had been ignored since Guantanamo and even accused naval officers of failing to praise Marines in their reports.34 Antwerp might have been a little impatient in his lament. The Department of the Navy released the reports of Marine officers in August.35

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33 This particular article appears to have been syndicated as it appeared in more than one newspaper. See “What Marines Are,” Grand Rapids Herald, 17 July 1898, 12 and Duluth News-Tribune, 26 Sept. 1898, 4.
Meade’s letter, however, made no mention of the Corps’ capture of Guantanamo, which was very much akin to what naval officers envisioned as an advanced base. Rather, Meade focused almost exclusively on the role of Marines at sea, where he had spent the war aboard the *New York*. A somewhat intractable character, Meade was a well-known Marine officer who had been in the Corps since the Civil War. He epitomized the close family ties between some Marine and naval officers. His father was Commodore Richard Meade, USN, his brother was Rear Admiral Richard W. Meade, USN, and his father-in-law was Rear Admiral Hiram Paulding, USN.

Despite these close ties, Meade was an ardent proponent of the Corps, in no way holding back his opinion on sailors when he believed the Navy was seeking to limit the influence and role of Marines. Meade noted that there was “no work the marine cannot do,” exemplifying the way that Marines justified themselves in terms of the variety of roles they could fill.* Rather than focus on one or two ways to justify Marines, Meade made a more sweeping claim that the quality of Marines enabled them to meet any task. Marines were also the most pugnacious. Meade emphasized that Marines in the Spanish-American War not only “formed a large proportion of the fighting force of every ship” but that the heavy casualties suffered by the Marines in comparison to the rest of the services would “give evidence that the marines were well at the front.” Like

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Captain Dickins, Meade praised the willingness of Marines to embrace the toughest fights fearlessly. For two hundred years Marines had almost always served alongside sailors in combat. In the process, they often felt maligned about the praise they received after the fighting was done. Because they could not make persuasive claims to have single-handedly defeated their opponents, they instead pointed to their willingness to sustain casualties as proof of their loyalty and their qualities as fighters. Broad statements pointing to the prowess of Marines were much easier to set forth than clearly substantiated arguments detailing their precise contributions.

The traditional enmity between Marines and sailors is difficult to gauge. How much of it was expressed by naval officers claiming to speak for sailors is a point to consider. One enlisted account of life at sea published in 1906 had little to say about Marines either way. Thomas Beyer, in providing another twist on the expression “Tell it to the Marines,” included one story in a chapter of sea stories about an enlisted Marine who, dressed in his full uniform, presented himself as a colonel aboard another ship so as to partake of the fine wine available in this particular vessel’s ward room.37 Beyer could not vouch for the story’s authenticity as a marine “was at the bottom of it.”38 This story depicted the Marine not as a highly disciplined presence aboard ship but as a

38 Ibid., 195.
whimsical creature who could not always be trusted. Another account suggested a more complex relationship between Marines. One naval gunner suggested sailors and Marines responded to authority differently. Sailors were more questioning, while Marines were “accustomed to obey orders without comment.” As for the relationship between sailors and Marines, the gunner had mixed views. Sailor Russell Doubleday noted his sadness when Marines he had become friends with were assigned to another ship. He also spoke of the traditional enmity which was “supposed to exist,” discounting it in the particular case of a well-respected Marine who had just died. In another vignette Doubleday seemed to poke fun at the tendency of Marines to emphasize their history and traditions. Arriving in Guantanamo Bay, sailors pointed to the base Marines had established, wondering what it was. From there they proceeded to discuss the Corps’ history, its motto, and its claim to be the oldest institution. That they were joking becomes apparent when one of the sailors “produced an ancient book from his ditty box, and proceeded to read . . . in a loud, sonorous voice” the legislation creating the Corps in November of 1775. This scene suggested the extent to which

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40 Ibid., 289. His work makes no mention of his rank. Doubleday was a naval reservist. Doubleday, 6. One journalist’s account suggests Marines and bluejackets were friends. See “Soldier and Sailor, Too,” 24 July 1898, Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
41 Doubleday, *Gunner*, 82.
42 Ibid., 214-215.
sailors were familiar with the tendency of Marines to stress Collum’s History. As a naval reservist, Doubleday did not have the same extensive service as most sailors. That he dealt with some of these issues in his work suggests the extent to which they were firmly implanted in the culture of naval life. Others seem to have used the traditional enmity between naval and Marine officers when it suited their purpose and to have discarded it when it did not.43

Sailors and Marines had limited contact, however, in its only real battle on land during the Spanish-American-Cuban War. The Corps had an opportunity to test its soldiering skills even before the Army had departed from its staging camps in the United States, and it received extensive press coverage because of it. In early June 1898, before hostilities broke out into general conflict, the Navy ordered Marines ashore to capture a base at Guantanamo in order to provide a sheltered harbor during hurricane season and allow for the resupply of its vessels.44 Guantanamo not only provided an excellent natural harbor but was located only about forty miles away from Santiago,

43 “An Annapolis Clique After Capt. Wynne?,” NYT, 6 June 1906, 2.
where naval vessels had established a blockade of Spanish naval vessels by May.

Arriving at the beach at the upper reaches of the large harbor, naval guns from vessels offshore, including the cruiser Marblehead and the Oregon battleship, easily destroyed a Spanish camp. The Marblehead’s Marine guard of about 40 Marines then landed to hold the camp in case the Spanish returned. On the afternoon of June 10 the Marblehead’s captain, Commander Bowman McCalla, ordered the more than 650 Marines of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Huntington’s battalion ashore.

The Marines had arrived on a recently-commissioned naval transport, the Panther. Commanding the Panther was Commander George C. Reiter, who was unhappy at receiving what he believed to be the unglamorous job of transporting Marines from one location to another. The tension between Reiter and his executive officer and the highest-ranking Marine, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Huntington, was characteristic of the strain over precedence aboard ship between Marine and naval officers. Reiter, for example, took the punishment of Marines into his own hands, excessively ordering one Marine found “gambling” to be placed in double irons for ten days.

Marines aboard the Panther, then, probably were more than happy to land on June 10 and begin establishing a camp of their own. These activities proceeded

46 E.R. Hagemann, “’My Dear Bobby’: Letters from a Marine Corps Colonel to His Son during the Spanish-American War,” Marine Corps Gazette (Nov. 1979), 78.
unchecked until the night of June 11, when a small group of Spanish soldiers killed two Marines on patrol before opening fire on the main camp area.

In what Major Henry Clay Cochrane would dub “the 100 hours war,” Marines came under fire for three nights. Exhausted, they determined to seek out the Spanish inland to put an end to the constant attacks. The arrival of Cuban reinforcements helped with this decision. A Cuban officer suggested attacking the Spanish base at Cuzco Well, the only source of clean drinking water for miles, located about two miles away from the Marines’ position. On June 14, Captain George F. Elliott and about 160 Marines, supported by fifty Cubans, secured the only nearby water supply, thus effectively ending the Spanish attacks on their base. Although they faced a larger force of about 500 Spaniards, they were able to make it to high ground quickly, despite being discovered before reaching their position. Marines thus gained a positional advantage because the Spanish troops remained in the valley. A separate, smaller detachment of Marines provided additional firepower, flanking the Spanish to prevent their retreat. When the USS Dolphin offshore added its navel gunnery to the battle, it accidentally began firing upon the smaller detachment of Marines. As a result, Marines needed volunteers, who would run the risk of being fired upon by Spanish troops, to signal to the ship to cease firing. After four hours, the Battle of Cusco Hill ended when the Spanish retreated to a safer position, allowing Marines to burn the Spanish camp and destroy the well.
The cool signaling of the Marines under fire was described by author and journalist Stephen Crane, who accompanied Captain Elliott on this mission while acting as an aide because other officers could not be spared. Michael C.C. Adams has discussed how certain military events become memorialized more so than others, often through art. In “The Red Badge of Courage Was His Wig-Wag Flag,” published in The New York World, the novelist applied his famous Civil War title to a Marine’s actions. Crane’s account was not a straightforward rendition of the battle as it unfolded but rather a selective description of some of the participants’ actions and characteristics during battle.

Crane focused most closely on Sergeant John Quick, the second Marine to signal to the Dolphin to cease firing. As he stood unprotected in reach of the Spanish fire so that the Dolphin could read his signals, Quick exemplified “tranquility in occupation. He stood there amid the animal-like babble of the Cubans . . . and the whistling snarl of the bullets, and wig-wagged whatever he had to wig-wag without heeding anything but his business.” Crane romanticized the Marines, distinguishing them from the Cubans who

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48 One literary critic notes some differences in this story, suggesting he romanticized warfare far more than he had done in Red Badge of Courage. See Michael Robertson, Stephen Crane, Journalism, and the Making of Modern American Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 139.
49 Stephen Crane, Wounds in the Rain: A Collection of Stories Related to the Spanish-American War (London: Methuen & Co., 1900), 189. The Corps would use the image of a Marine signaling in its recruiting material as late as 1915. See U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Publicity Bureau (hereafter USMCRPB), U.S. Marines: Duties,
also participated in the Battle of Cuzco Hill against the Spanish. Fearless while under fire, Quick displayed emotion only when the flag caught upon a cactus, although even then it was only irritation. With this description Crane dramatically brought his report to a close, heightening the sense of Quick’s bravery as being something so extraordinary that no additional words were required, not even further description as to whether or not the Marines carried the day against the Spanish.

The actions of Marines appeared more striking when contrasted with the Cuban “other.” The Cubans provided a literary foil to set off the distinctive qualities of American troops and, more specifically, Marines. Whereas the Cubans fired their rifles as if they were “squirt-gun[s],” the “firing-drill of the marines was splendid. The men reloaded and got up their guns like lightning” in a way that was “rock-like.”\(^{50}\) He similarly contrasted between the more childish or animal-like Cubans, clad and shod in the uniform of the U.S. Navy (even if some of the Cubans preferred to wear their shoes around their necks), and the Marines, who appeared “very businesslike and soldierly”

in their “linen suits and black corded accouterments.”51 As opposed to the “shrill, jumping Cubans,” the Marines were “toiling, sweating.”52 With these adjectives Crane suggested Marines made real contributions while Cubans simply acted in an over-excited manner.

Dennis Showalter has suggested that Stephen Crane’s portrayal of the calm Sergeant John Quick helped create an image of the Marine that contributed to the Corps’ claims to being an elite institution.53 Even before the war, however, journalists had described Marines being sent off to war as eminently collected and emotionless about the affair. One journalist’s report described the “stolid indifference” of a detachment of

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51 Ibid., 100. Crane stated that the Navy had clothed those Cubans. Ibid., 98. For the changing opinion of American troops regarding Cubans see Trask, 209-211. For the view that the Cubans hindered the U.S. military see Russell A. Alger, The Spanish-American War (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1901), 276.

52 Louis Perez has suggested that in writing the history of the war Americans erased Cuban contributions out of the war. See The War of 1898: The United States and Cuba in History and Historiography (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998. One account argued that the Cubans did their best work with the Marines. See W.A. Goode, With Sampson Through the War (New York: Doubleday & McClure, 1899), 167-168. The commanding Marine officer at Guantanamo’s view of the war, however, changed because of his new view of the Cubans. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Huntington wrote to his son that he was glad he did not enlist as he believed most Cubans to be “black” for whom the average American citizen could not help but view “them as inferior.” See E.R. Hagemann, “‘My Dear Bobby’: Letters from a Marine Corps Colonel to His Son during the Spanish-American War,” Marine Corps Gazette (Nov. 1979), 78. For an analogous example, Amy Kaplan argues that journalists and some Rough Riders erased the contributions of African Americans. See “Colored Troops at Santiago,” Washington Post, 10 July 1898, 6 and Amy Kaplan’s chapter entitled “Black and Blue at San Juan Hill” in The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002): 121-145.

“trained warriors” who were being ordered to the USS New Orleans.54 Only when an onlooker wondered aloud if they could be members of the Salvation Army did a Marine express any emotion.55 The journalist thus hinted at the frustration of Marines regarding the public’s ignorance of the Corps. As such, Crane’s work probably resulted in far more people learning about the Corps, but it is doubtful how significant it was in creating a unique image for the Corps. Naval officers, for example, were also described as being cool under pressure, especially during the Battle of Santiago.56

The coverage the Marines received during Guantanamo differed from sailors in regard to the sense that Marines faced overwhelming odds. When Marines landed at Guantanamo it initially appeared that they would not face any opposition. When Spanish soldiers surprised two Marines on outpost duty, however, Spanish bullets did such damage to the Marines that it appeared that the Spanish had used machetes to kill them. As a result, the press initially reported that the Spaniards had mutilated the Marines in an egregious breach of international law. Subsequent accounts of the so-

54 The U.S. Navy had purchased the vessel from the Brazilian Navy the previous month and thus presumably was in need of a Marine detachment. See “Government Buys Vessels,” Duluth News-Tribune, 15 March 1898, 1.
55 “Detachment of the United States Marine Corps,” Boston Journal, 10 April 1898, 2.
56 See, for example, “Hobson’s Cool Daring in Sinking of the Merrimac,” Springfield Republican (Mass.), 5 June 1898, 1.
called “100 Hours War” would depict a gallant band of Marines fighting against overwhelming odds.57

The Corps’ success at Guantanamo, however, was not enough to make an explanation of what the institution did unnecessary.58 Astonished to see the fighting abilities of “generally ornamental soldiers,” one journalist provided readers with a brief history and description of the Corps, assuming his readers’ ignorance of any specifics relating to Marines.59 He described the institution as:

a sort of amphibious corps that are not always rightly esteemed in time of peace. The army regards them as only a part of the decorative equipment of the navy, while the navy looks on them as landsmen who are of no use on shipboard.60

With a mission still uncomfortably overlapping that of both the Navy and the Army, the Corps struggled with the public’s ignorance.

At times even journalists appeared confused. One article that began by recounting the curiosity of visitors who knew nothing about the Corps featured the ironically misspelled headline, “The Mariners.”61 In particular, journalists propagated confusing and incorrect suggestions about the relationship of Marines to the Navy. One

58 For an example see “The U. S. Marines: the Distinguished Record Made by the Soldiers of the Navy,” New Haven Evening Register, 19 Aug. 1898, 11.
59 “First in the Fight,” Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
60 Ibid.
article reported that Congressman Thomas Butler’s son had been commissioned in the Navy when, in fact, he had become a Marine officer. Another newspaper, which had published the letters of Private Patrick Ford explaining in great detail to his parents the role of Marines, described Ford’s profound love for the Navy. Since Ford had provided his parents with a number of details about the Corps, including that the Corps was the “oldest” military branch, it seems likely that any allegiance he had to the U.S. military was to the Corps, not the Navy.

In appraising the importance of the Spanish-American-Cuban War to the Marine Corps, historians have stressed the extent to which this conflict seemed to resolve all of the Marine Corps’ institutional problems almost instantaneously. According to this interpretation, the war created a clear mission for the Corps as a body of imperial soldiers who would work in concert with the Navy to secure advanced bases. The U.S. acquisition of imperial bases did temporarily quell general discussion about whether the nation needed a Marine Corps. If the Army had been subject to almost constant critiques

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64 “Marine Life on the Marblehead,” *Sunday World-Herald*, 10 July 1898, 5. Until surviving the Maine’s destruction in February of 1898, Fords’ parents had no idea where he was after his disappearance years earlier. He earned the Medal of Honor for participating in the cutting the underwater cable lines at Cienfuegos under the false name under which he had enlisted of James Meredith.
65 An advanced base would be defended by Marines and designed to support the Navy in offensive operations by providing a safe place for ships to refuel, repair, and accomplish other necessary tasks.
during the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Marine Corps appeared as the exact opposite. It had deployed efficiently and had suffered few casualties from disease.\(^6^6\) Congress responded to the Corps’ successes during the war by approving personnel increases. As a result, the Corps nearly doubled in size to a force of more than six thousand.\(^6^7\) Some believed the Corps was finally receiving the recognition it deserved.\(^6^8\) As one journalist explained, the institution’s recent activities had “disarmed” its critics, especially those within the Navy Department who consistently had opposed increasing the Corps’ size or missions.\(^6^9\) The attacks of some naval officers against Marines would continue, however. Ten years after the war the Corps would find itself removed from naval vessels altogether due to an executive order issued by President Theodore Roosevelt.

In the meantime, however, the Corps could take comfort that it was receiving much more favorable attention. The public remained confused about its role, but journalists provided complimentary reporting. Its efforts at Guantanamo in particular put the Corps in the spotlight as a brave group of men prepared to take on

\(^{66}\) The expression “tell it to the Marines” was prevalent enough that one commentator used it in comparing the Army’s higher casualties numbers from disease. The author stated that Army officials might claim that “disease was inevitable . . . but, in view of the record made at Guantanamo Bay, we may say to them, seriously and respectfully, rather than flippantly—‘Tell that to the marines!’” George Kennan, “George Kennan’s Story of the War: The Santiago Campaign,” The Outlook, 22 Oct. 1898, 475.


\(^{68}\) “United States Marine Corps,” Army and Navy Journal, 23 May 1903, 942.

\(^{69}\) The journalist did not specify who in the Navy Department opposed the Corps in “1000 More Marines,” Boston Daily Advertiser, 10 Oct. 1898, 7.
overwhelming odds and emerge victorious. As one song about the Corps published after the war suggested:

We hear about the navy and naval heroes grand . . . .
Of gallant tars in jackets blue who hitch their flopping jeans,
But not as often as we might about our brave marines. . . . .
They are not exactly soldiers like soldiers on the land,

They are not exactly sailors, and may not understand
Just how to splice the main brace on a dark and stormy night,
But at Guantanamo they’ve shown how they can fight.70

The song conveyed the traditional feeling that the Corps did not receive the attention it had merited. It also pointed to the perennial confusion over how to categorize a Marine. As the songwriter explained, however, the Marines’ actions at Guantanamo suggested the important lesson was that they could fight, not that they did not know as much about ships as sailors.

The Spanish-American-Cuban War and the passage of the Naval Personnel Bill of 1900 brought an influx of new officers. Unlike Marine officers commissioned between 1884 and 1897, few of these officers attended the Naval Academy. As Peter Karsten has shown, the Navy sought to create a homogenous officer corps, a practice that began at

the Naval Academy. The cadre of Marines who received its baptism in imperial wars thus escaped the Navy’ four-year indoctrination program.

Many wrote home enthusiastically to share their pride in being Marines rather than soldiers or sailors. The cousin of well-known Marine officer Littleton Waller, First Lieutenant William Upshur, wrote to his parents about an article that seems to have denigrated the Corps. Upshur took affront at a journalist who had suggested that the Corps “offered a refuge to many men who were out of employment and who were not fitted to enter the Navy!” (emphasis in original). Upshur disagreed vehemently, believing that a Marine was:

just as intelligent, was more matured, had better physique, and was cleaner and had far better discipline than a blue jacket – furthermore that in nine ships out of ten in the Atlantic fleet – it would be found that the Marine Guard, could take on board more coal . . . could out pull any divisional boat crew – and could and did make as good or better scores at target practice than any blue jacket division . . . .

The above is an actual statement of fact.

Marines, Upshur suggested, were equal if not outright superior to sailors at all their duties, even when it came to the most miserable and physical task of coaling a ship. In another letter he reminded his mother, who appeared to be unconvinced about the


72 First Lieutenant William Upshur, USMC to Dr. John N. Upshur, 19 Jan. 1908, William P. Upshur Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Library (hereafter William Upshur Papers).
Corps’ importance, that her idea about Marines playing “a very poor second fiddle” to the Navy was simply incorrect.73

Second Lieutenant Earl Ellis, who had spent two years as an enlisted man in the Corps, initially spent more time among soldiers than he did sailors. As a result, he defined the Corps in opposition to the Army. Traveling aboard a transport with about 800 soldiers and 150 Marines afforded Ellis an opportunity to compare the two services. In a long letter written while crossing the Pacific on the way to the Philippines, he expressed his happiness that he was “going to soldier at last.”74 After describing his travels across the continent and his first impressions of life at sea, he spent most of the letter belittling the Army’s less favorable appearance and discipline as compared to Marines. Summing up his thoughts, he described how, “the more I see of the other branches of the service the better satisfied I am with the Marine Corps—‘small but mighty.’” This sense of the Corps as a David as opposed to the Goliaths of the other branches was characteristic of nineteenth-century Marines. In another letter describing his first post in Cavite, he expressed his happiness at “being a Marine,” agreeing with a
fellow officer who believed that the Marines were “a chosen few.”75 Again, Ellis connected the quantitative insignificance of his institution with its qualitative significance.

Enlisted accounts, while much rarer, reflect similar if not as enthusiastic attitudes. Disappointed in his search for work in Boston, Frank Keeler enlisted in the Marine Corps because the uniforms of sailors and Marines impressed him.76 Just as service in the Philippines provided Ellis with the opportunity to distinguish between Marines and soldiers, Keeler’s service in Cuba similarly led him to notice differences between the institutions. When commanded to attack Manzanillo, Cuba, he remarked: “The idea that 650 Marines could take a powerful built fort where 20,000 men had failed was preposterous. There were times, however, when I thought that a hundred marines would and could do as much as [a] thousand Army Men.”77 Still, Keeler tempered his comment by crediting this ability to the Corps’ possession of superior rifles. In regard to the Navy, however, Keeler’s sense of the Corps’ superiority helped him bear the whims of naval officers when, in one case, a naval officer ordered Marines to do the sailors’ “work of scrubbing.” The knowledge that Marines were “all picked men” helped to ease

75 Earl Ellis to Tad, 18 April 1902, Earl Ellis Papers, MCASC. The same letter talks about some of the affectations of Marine officers in the Philippines.
77 Ibid., 20.
his unhappiness on the uncomfortable journey to Cuba. Keeler never expanded on what particular characteristics distinguished Marines from sailors and soldiers, and it is difficult to determine what influences shaped his sense of identification with the Corps. Still, his mention of the Marines’ transformation upon landing in Cuba from “sea-dogs to land-lubbers as the novelist says, ‘Soldier and Sailor too’” suggests the contributions of outsiders in shaping the Corps’ identity. The phrase coined by Rudyard Kipling helped to popularize the notion that the Marine could fulfill any mission.

For all of Keeler’s enthusiasm, however, the reality was that many Marines who fought at Guantanamo had enlisted only a few days before stepping foot on a naval transport that would take them to Florida for training before arriving in Cuba. In private letters to his son, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Huntington explained that the troops who left the United States in April of 1898 under his command had “little idea of obeying orders,” although he had hopes they might improve. Still, buoyed by more positive reporting in the 1890s and the enthusiastic outpouring of support for the military, especially the Navy, during the Spanish-America-Cuban War, the Corps began benefiting from an improved image. Individual

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78 Ibid., 5.
79 Ibid. There is no indication of when Frank Keeler wrote his journal although the use of the word journal implies it was produced around the time of the Spanish-American War.
80 E.R. Hagemann, “‘My Dear Bobby’: Letters from a Marine Corps Colonel to His Son during the Spanish-American War,” Marine Corps Gazette (Nov. 1979), 78-81: 78. Huntington also confided to his son that far from being fearless, his Marines were rather “scared” at Guantanamo.
Marines began discussing more openly their pride in their institution and its purported superiority. Its next military engagement would reinforce that trend. Like those Marines at Guantanamo, Marines would face similar odds during their next conflict in China. This time, however, they would face it alongside an alliance of western troops.

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With an American empire came added responsibilities for the Marine Corps. Many Marines sent to help garrison naval stations in the Philippines found themselves dispatched to China to help quell the Boxer Rebellion, a movement to free China of western imperialism and Christianity. After early successes in the countryside, the Boxers gained momentum and swept toward Peking (today’s Beijing), where they targeted the European legations.

In contrast to the relative ease with which the U.S. had acquired new possessions during the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the China Relief Expedition of 1900 appeared more harrowing.81 Marines felt overwhelmed against the odds and argued against allies.

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81 For example, see the headline, “Story of the Tien-Tsin Fight: None of the Americans Expected to Escape,” *NYT*, 25 July 1900, 2. One *Washington Post* article wondered if the 50 Marines within the legation were still alive. See “Recruiting the Marines,” 21 July 1900, 2. Another article described how 76 Marines guarded the legation protecting Westerners. “China Gets Worse Civil Foreigners in Pekin [sic] are under Arms to Fight,” *Morning Oregonian*, 11 June 1900, 1.

particularly the Russians, who wanted to press on regardless. The first contingent of slightly less than fifty Marines arrived on the USS Newark in the harbor of Tangku on May 28. They began marching for Tientsin where, arriving before any other foreign troops, they awaited a train for Peking where they would protect the westerners holed up in Peking’s Legation Quarter against the vast “horde” of Boxers outside. It quickly became apparent that the Legation Quarter needed reinforcements. The Boxers had destroyed segments of the railroad from Tientsin to Peking, but a U.S. sailor was able to make enough improvements to the trains to move within twenty-five miles of the city where they encountered significant Boxer resistance.

Marines under Major Littleton Waller sent from the Philippines arrived in June. As this group of Marines traveled to Tientsin on June 20 it encountered more Boxer resistance. The Boxers were overcome on July 13-14, thanks to a combined effort of more than 2,000 allied troops, which included British, Germans, Italians, Japanese and Russian troops. On June 21, the Legation Quarter came under attack after westerners ignored a

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in China, see George B. Clarke, *Treading Softly: The U.S. Marines in China from the 1840s to 1890s* (Pike, NH: Brass Hat, 1996), especially 19-46.
83 The word “horde” was commonly used to describe the Boxers. See, for example, “Battle is Going On,” *Washington Post*, 24 June 1900, 1 and W.N. Pethick, “The Struggle on the Peking Wall,” *Century Illustrated Magazine*, Dec. 1900, 308.
Chinese ultimatum to leave Peking in twenty-four hours. Troops supporting the Quarter immediately began strengthening their defenses. Boxers would begin probing weaknesses in the Quarter, attacking various segments of the defenses, which included the substantial “Tartar Wall” manned by Marines. Activities calmed down around the middle of June until a relief force of more than 18,000 troops arrived in the middle of August. After a ten-day march from Tientsin, this force easily cleared Peking of opposition.

The Marines’ defense of the Legation Quarter furthered the image of a beleaguered, small group of men fighting off a much larger group in a manner reminiscent of Guantanamo. Newspaper articles published during the siege questioned whether Marines were even alive, creating an air of heightened suspense.84

The China Relief Expedition also afforded Marines an opportunity to make various claims about being “first,” a tendency that was becoming increasingly important. Moreover, they could compare themselves to other imperial soldiers participating in the joint Western operations.85 Marines disparaged French troops, who

84 “Recruiting the Marines,” Washington Post, 21 July 1900, 2.
they described as dirty and undisciplined, as opposed to the impressive appearance of Japanese and British-Indian troops.86

While informally ranking the other troops with whom they came in contact, Marines expressed their confidence that they were “as good” as the others.87 Marines were not yet assured enough to claim that they were the best, as they would by the time they became involved in World War I, but they were certainly becoming surer of themselves. Private Oscar Upham, for example, recorded in his journal the following encounter with Chinese troops:

They keep up their sniping all day but we have taught them to respect us (during the truce a Chinese Colonel in command on the wall was holding conversation with our officers; he eagerly asked who those men were that wore the big hats? On being told they were American Marines, he shook his head and said, “I don’t understand them at all; they don’t shoot very often, but when they do I lose a man; my men are afraid of them.”)88

On one level, Upham’s words hinted at the defensiveness of Marines in needing to tutor observers in the Corps’ martial abilities. On another level, his words reflected an emphasis on demonstrable differences, such as marksmanship, between Marines and

other American servicemen. Other Americans confirmed the impressive marksmanship of the Marines, a result of the dedicated efforts since the 1890s to improve this aspect of their service. Like Upham, Sergeant George Herbert was also enthusiastic about being a Marine. After participating in a military effort to reassert foreign control over Tientsin, he wrote, “We are Russians, French, Germans, Italians, Britishers and last but not least 10 American Marines and we have been into every-thing so far and lost but 5 men. I don’t know how long I shall be here, but as long as I stay I’m going where these Yankee Marines go. They are daisies!” Arriving in a later contingent of Marines, Lieutenant H.J. Hirshinger recounted in a letter home how the “indomitable American Marine” had come to the “rescue” of some Russian troops as he passed through Tientsin.

Even as they proudly distinguished themselves from others, Marines forged strong friendships with other troops in China, especially British ones. In some ways this was not an entirely new development. United States Marines and Royal Marines had worked together during joint operations in Egypt (1882) and again in Nicaragua (1899), where British and American Marines alternated command and exchanged uniform buttons. These connections strengthened during the China Relief Expedition,

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89 See Hooker, Behind the Scenes, 23, 65 and 186-187.
90 Sgt. George Herbert, USMC, 2 July 1900, George Herbert Personal Papers, MCASC.
91 Allan Millett, however, suggests that not everyone was complimentary of Marines. Millet, Semper Fidelis, 689.
however.93 While serving together in defending Peking’s Legation Quarter, Captain John T. Myers, USMC led both United States Marines and Royal Marines in what was hailed as the “bravest and the most successful event of the whole siege.”94 During this decisive moment, about 60 British and U.S. Marines and 15 Russian sailors attacked Chinese forces in one of the few successful offensive attacks in the defense of the quarter. Myers’ success strengthened the allies’ defensive position significantly.95

In his revised edition of History of the United States Marine Corps published in 1903, retired Marine Major Richard Collum commemorated the service of Royal Marines during the Napoleonic Wars with a remarkable frontispiece. Napoleon, presumably on his way to exile in Elba, was depicted critically appraising a group of Royal Marines aboard the Bellerophon. Perhaps the picture was meant to capture the blurry boundaries between the U.S. and Royal Marines toward the end of the nineteenth century. Journalists increasingly reported on possibilities for the U.S. Marines in light of developments for the Royal Marines.96 U.S. Marines naturally looked to the Royal

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93 For the case of the U.S. Army, see Coffman, The Regulars, 24. Examples of this friendship from the Marine perspective include First Lieutenant H.J. Hirshinger, USMC, “An American Marine Officer’s Trip to China with the China Relief Expedition, July, 1900,” H.J. Hirshinger Papers, MCASC.
95 Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 140.
Marines, but this tendency gained increasing importance as the U.S. became an imperial power and naturally looked to the world’s strongest imperial power as a model.97

Perhaps for Collum, the painting of an exiled Napoleon reviewing Royal Marines aboard ship also suggested the abilities of Marines to fight equally well on land and sea. Legend within the Royal Marines has it that Napoleon remarked on the occasion that a great deal “might be done with a hundred thousand men such as these.”98 Certainly, Collum had seized upon the U.S. Marine Corps’ participation in land warfare during the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars as evidence of the Marine’s soldierly value.99 Still, his choice of the image from the Bellerophon seems to suggest that he himself was unsure as to what direction the Corps should take.100

The U.S. Marine Corps’ long-standing relationship with the Royal Marines coexisted with similar ties to other British troops as well, especially the Royal Welch

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98 http://www.royalmarinesregimental.co.uk/histctrad27.htm. Accessed 10 August 2008. This is the official site of the British Royal Marines. The caption for the picture reads: “Napoleon apparently inspected the Royal Marines under Captain Marshall and commented, ‘Much might be done with a hundred thousand men such as these.’” Also see “What Napoleon J. Said of the British Army and Marines,” The Globe and Laurel, 7 May 1896, 80.
99 Collum, History (1903), 369.
100 Collum’s work provided an important foundation upon which journalists and the Corps could draw quotations for articles explaining the Corps. However, the Corps did not seem to embrace Collum emphasis on November 10, 1775 as the institution’s birthday like it does today. Rather, the Corps chose to celebrate its reestablishment in 1798. As a result, the Corps celebrated its centennial just after some of the most important events of the Spanish-American War in July of 1898. “Centennial of the Marine Corps,” St. Louis Republic, 12 July 1898, 2. As was common among articles describing the Corps’ history, this article did cite Collum, including the Continental Marine Corps’ establishment on November 10, 1775.
Fusiliers. Serving side-by-side for more than four months during the China relief Expedition, the two forces sometimes merged their troops. Their service together signified that former enemies (the Royal Welch had been present at the Battle of Bunker Hill) were allies. At the end of the expedition, the Royal Welch even presented the Marines with a loving cup. The relationships forged during these joint operations were not set aside at the end of the expedition. The U.S. Marines subsequently sent official greetings on the national holiday of Wales.

Even as British colonial military culture seeped into the Corps, Americans prided themselves on retaining their more democratic instincts. One correspondent noted the differences between British officers dining on gourmet fare served by Indian servants and American officers helping themselves to the same food eaten by the troops. He wrote that the “American officer prides himself upon the fact that he lives exactly as do the men in the ranks.” If life at sea is any indication, officers had far better food and drink aboard ship. Still, Marine officers like Lieutenant Smedley Butler liked to stress the

101 Annual Report of the Navy Department 1900 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 1120; Collum, History (1903), 407; Thomas, Old Gimlet Eye, 67. For the Royal Welch Fusiliers see Robert Graves, Good-Bye to All That (New York: Anchor Books, 1989; reprint, 1929), 85. Also see Philip Caputo, A Rumor of War (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), 22 for his Vietnam-era memories of “Mess Night.” Based on the British Army’s tradition, the Corp’s Basic School, the six-month course for newly-commissioned Marine officers, hosts a mess night and houses trophies received from the Royal Marines, Welch Fusiliers, and other British regiments.


103 Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 137; Graves, Good-Bye, 86.

104 Sharf and Harrington, China 1900, 218. For other manifestations of this sentiment see C.J. Hicks, “The Life of a Jack Tar,” The Independent, 20 Aug. 1903, 1979.
democratic and more puritan tendencies of Americans. Butler, for example, described how the aristocratic British officers were “seated in state” while he and his fellow officers dined on a chicken that had “walked entirely too far in its life.” Americans applied the same perspective to the matter of uniforms. Finding that the Marines’ uniform was not as elaborate, Lieutenant H.J. Hirshinger focused on the fact that the Marines had demonstrated the “mettle of which the American soldier is made, and that it was not necessary to put on fine feathers to make a soldier.” Hirshinger also celebrated the U.S. Army cavalry, in a rare show of interservice solidarity.

The push toward the idealization of a more democratic culture was the result of several currents in American society. The treatment of enlisted troops within the U.S. military was gradually improving. Moreover, the difficult conditions of the Boxer Rebellion—including brutal heat and limited supplies including food and water—helped to diminish distinctions of rank. Major Littleton Waller’s presence seems to

105 Thomas, Old Gimlet Eye, 52. Marines had only one meal to eat per day as they marched toward Peking. See “Report of the Major General Commandant of the United States Marine Corps,” Annual Report (1900), 1118.
106 First Lieutenant H.J. Hirshinger, USMC, “An American Marine Officer’s Trip to China with the China Relief Expedition, July, 1900.” H.J. Hirshinger Papers, MCASC.
107 Ibid. Hirshinger described the cavalry’s “reckless dare devil soldiery.”
109 On the difficulty of the Boxer Rebellion, see Major Littleton Waller, USMC to Frank Bearss, 28 June 1901, Littleton Waller Papers, MCASC. He characterized the duty as “one of the most trying known in modern times.” See Myerly, Spectacle, 115 for how difficult campaigns decreased the differences between officers and men in the British Army. Smedley Butler, from the possibly biased and patronizing perspective of an officer,
have facilitated this process as well. Except in regard to his very questionable decisions during the Philippine War, which will be discussed in the next segment, Waller has not received the historiographical attention he deserves, as his contributions to the Corps’ developing identity are largely unknown.110

While it is difficult to show concrete connections, one can infer that as a young officer Waller was influenced by Henry Cochrane’s efforts to shape the Corps’ identity. Although the early friendship between the two men seems to have ended by the early twentieth century, they corresponded in the nineteenth century when Waller was a young officer. Waller, in addition, appears to have made his own contributions to the Marine Corps’ identity, albeit by example rather than in writing. With the transition toward a more educated and American-born Marine Corps, the clear demarcation between officers and enlisted men seems to have muddied at the beginning of the twentieth century. Signs of this process included the increased possibility for non-commissioned Marines to be commissioned as officers.111 These efforts began during the

described how an “easy and friendly relationship prevailed between officers and enlisted men on the march. We were sharing the same hardships.” Thomas, Old Gimlet Eye, 50 and 71. This source is more problematic because Butler was looking back on his memories of the Corps.

110 Vernon L. Williams has been writing a biography of Waller for many years. See James C. Bradford, Quarterdeck and Bridge: Two Centuries of American Naval Leaders (Annapolis, Naval Institute, 1997), 436.

111 The Navy does not seem to have been as accepting of these changes. See “Navy Department Scandals,” Los Angeles Times, 11 March 1902, 8.
Spanish-American-Cuban War and were formalized by the passage of the Naval Personnel Act of 1900. Marines hoped that this change would encourage better recruits to enlist.\footnote{Collum, \textit{History} (1903), 359.}

During the China Relief Expedition, Waller’s actions appeared in sharp contrast to those of U.S. Army officers, at least as they were remembered in retrospect by Marine officer Smedley Butler.\footnote{For other indications of this from Waller, see Colonel Littleton Waller, USMC to Second Lieutenant Edwin McClellan, USMC, 27 June 1910, Edwin McClellan Papers, MCASC.}

Major Waller and his Marines camped on a filthy flat piled high with Chinese fertilizer. . . . A trim orderly came to the Major with the message, “The General’s compliments, sir, and he invites the major to move his bedding roll up the hill and spend the night there.”

“Present my compliments to the General and tell him that Major Waller will stay with his men.”\footnote{Harllee, \textit{Marine}, 65. Waller’s actions could be interpreted as being more paternalistic than democratic. For the interest he took in enlisted Marines who had served under him in the past, see Littleton Waller to Magill, 27 Dec. 1909, Personal Book, Littleton Waller Papers, MCASC. For a private who considered Waller his only friend, see Littleton Waller to Richards, 26 March 1910, \textit{Ibid}.}

Ignoring the privileges of rank, Waller remained with his men, suggesting he wanted to encourage his enlisted Marines by choosing to remain with them in unpleasant circumstances in a gesture designed to improve morale and esprit de corps.\footnote{It is also possible that Waller’s decision was motivated by \textit{noblesse oblige}. For this tendency as a pattern in American labor history see Matthew Frye Jacobson, \textit{Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples At Home and Abroad, 1876-1917} (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 133.} Examples such as this would become more common in the years to come. It is easy to view such
an example cynically. However, there are a number of reasons to give this incident some credence. First, existing photographs from the Boxer Rebellion show Waller napping on the ground without any regard to rank. Second, U.S. military officers did pay increasing attention to the morale of enlisted men. Finally, the Corps had a tradition of placing more trust in enlisted men than was the case in other services. On smaller naval vessels, for example, Marine sergeants commanded Marine Guards without immediate oversight from Marine officers. This practice probably helped to bridge some of the divide between officers and enlisted men more than in other military services.

Despite their avowedly more democratic approach to warfare, Marines appear to have acted just like other western troops at times, especially in regard to looting. Some Marine officers adamantly stated that their troops had not participated in the looting of Peking. Others emphasized a far different picture. One Marine officer described how those Marines that did not participate in the early days of the looting soon made up for lost time. Another Marine characterized his fellow Marines as ““generally

116 For one journalist’s account that suggested good relations between enlisted men and officers see “Spirit of Harmony among Marines,” [1898], Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
117 Photograph, Waller Papers, MCASC.
118 “Soldier and Sailor, Too,” 24 July 1898, Clipping, Henry Cochrane Papers, MCASC.
119 “No Looting by Americans,” NYT, 12 September 1900, 7.
120 Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 41. Also see Hooker, Behind the Scenes, 191; Preston, Besieged in Peking, 217; Larry Clinton Thompson, William Scott Ament and the Boxer Rebellion: Heroism, Hubris and the “Ideal Missionary” (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2008), 195. For other critical accounts of western behavior in China including Americans see Paul A. Cohen, History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and
demoralized’ and ‘behaving badly,’ with instances of rape, sodomy, and looting, and the brig full.”121 This looting took place despite a conference in which reputedly both the British and Americans argued against looting, in opposition to the Japanese, French, and Russians.

If looting did not present Marines in the most favorable light, capitalizing on various “firsts” that appeared to be especially gratifying for Western imperial powers helped to promote their reputation. As one American noted, the various powers jostled to lead the march into Peking to rescue those Europeans trapped in the legation quarter. American naval officer Captain Bowman McCalla urged on his sailors and Marines at “the double-quick” to ensure they were first to arrive at the Legation Quarter.122 Unfortunately for his ambition, it appeared that Sikh troops managed to arrive first.123

Others emphasized the Marines’ claim to be the first westerners to open the gates to the Forbidden City, along with other claims to be first.124 Major Thomas Wood would become incensed upon reading an issue of Leslie’s Weekly to discover that a journalist

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Myth (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 184. For concerns about “demoralization” in regard to guarding a large amount of bullion removed from a bank for protection, see Annual Reports (1900), 1168.
122 Hooker, Behind the Scenes,” 125.
credited the U.S. Army for arriving first in China. Finding such information to be “manifestly false and misleading,” he wanted the publication to issue a correction that would receive just as much attention as the original and erroneous article. When Leslie’s Weekly failed to issue a correction, Wood wrote once again to the editor threatening to discredit the magazine in the service newspapers. It seems Wood might have been a bit hasty in writing the second letter, given the original article was published on October and a correction was issued in November. The correction mentioned the small contingent of Marines in Peking as well as Waller’s Marines, noting that “American marines were first in the fighting in China; they will ever be first wherever they can have their own way.” Regardless of whether Wood overreacted, he sought to promote an image that would gain increasing importance for the Corps in the early twentieth century. With missions that could overlap with both the Navy and the Army, Marines emphasized their efficiency and readiness for any task. In the coming years, such firsts would gain importance for those Americans looking to enter the fight first, especially during World War I. In recollecting his service, for example, William L.

125 Major Thomas Wood, USMC to General Charles Heywood, USMC, Nov. 6, 1900, Letters Received, RG 127, NARA.
126 John A. Sleicher to Major Thomas Wood, USMC Nov. 5, 1900, Encl., Major Thomas Wood to General Charles Heywood, USMC, 6 Nov. 1900, Letters Received, RG 127, NARA.
Adams noted how learning the Marines were among the first western troops to land during the Boxer Rebellion inspired him to enlist.\(^{127}\)

This sense of being first remained a part of the Corps’ historical memory because it signified its characteristics of readiness and efficiency. In a 1915 edition of the Marine Corps’ Recruiter’s Bulletin, for example, Private Hundertmark reminded readers “that it was a Marine who first entered Peking, that it was a Marine who opened the portals of the ‘forbidden’ city to the world at large.”\(^{128}\) The question of who would enter the Forbidden City first had also been a matter of thorny debate between the representatives of the participating nations. In the formal opening of the Forbidden Palace, Marines actually entered last.\(^{129}\) Marines, however, could claim they were the first based on a brief moment when they entered the Palace to hang their flag and spent two hours inside before being ordered out.\(^{130}\) This incident represented the desire of Marines to continue the tradition of being the first to raise flags in foreign locales. They had raised the first flag in the so-called “Old World” during the Tripolitan War of 1801-1805 and in


\(^{129}\) Arnold Henry Savage Landor, China and the Allies, vol. 2 (London: William Heinemann, 1901), 374. One Marine suggested this “first” helped motivate him to enlist although he stated that Marines were “among the first” to enter.

various other places, including recently at Guantanamo after going ashore. Marines attached importance to raising the first flag because it demonstrated they had, indeed, been the first to arrive.

The Boxer Rebellion had provided a small institution with frequent headlines for months. Journalists had recounted the daring and courageous acts of a small contingent of Marines within Peking’s Legation Quarter, as well as the exploits of Marines in concert with other troops on the march to Peking to provide reinforcements. In some ways participation in the China Relief Expedition fueled the Corps’ sense that it was something special. Marines believed themselves to be equal to many of the imperial soldiers with whom they fought, even as they celebrated their sense of being different. Awash with a sense of patriotism and nationalism stoked by victories during the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Marines readily embraced their imperial mission in China. As Waller remarked about the Marines with whom he served in China, “They have made history, marked with blood . . . . They were the first in the field, and, please God, they will remain until the last man, woman and child is relieved from the toils of these barbarians.”131 Unlike their mission in the Philippines, which would be far more controversial, these Marines had few qualms as to whether their mission justified the sacrifices they made.

131 Annual Reports (1900), 1151.
If the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion provided the Marine Corps with mostly positive experiences, the Philippine-American War proved to be a depressing contrast. Instead of rescuing Europeans and Americans from what they perceived to be Asian barbarity, Marines would find themselves being rescued from themselves in the Philippines. Not only did the Corps’ service in that region differ significantly from what it had experienced previously, but it marked the first time a significant number of Marines experienced long-term service on land. By 1901, one third of the Corps was stationed in the Philippines, a total of 64 officers and 1,934 men. The Navy scattered the Marines around sixteen naval stations, including the large bases of Cavite and Olongapo, where they guarded naval property and carried out some


133 Linn, *Philippine War*, 207.
pacification duties. These latter chores allowed the Navy gradually to nudge the Army out of the area, thus preserving its sphere of authority.\textsuperscript{134}

Over time, the Corps was assigned additional duties, which individual Marines embraced eagerly. The Navy sent Marines to Samar in the fall of 1901 in support of General Jacob H. Smith’s 6\textsuperscript{th} Separate Brigade after insurgents killed a number of soldiers. While much of the Philippines was peaceful, the island of Samar remained populated with insurgents. General Lukban, the son of a wealthy family, had arrived in Samar at the end of 1899 accompanied by 100 soldiers. Declaring himself to be the Philippine Republic’s governor of Samar, he formed an alliance with a fanatical Christian group. When American troops arrived in Samar, Lukban and his supporters took refuge in the jungles.

Pacifying Samar became a top priority for Major General Adna R. Chaffee after what became known, at least from the U.S. perspective, as the Massacre of Balangiga. On the morning of September 28, 1901, townspeople and insurgents in Balangiga attacked and killed 48 of 74 U.S. soldiers of the 9\textsuperscript{th} Infantry as they ate breakfast. As a result, the commanding naval officer in the Philippines offered 300 Marines to Chaffee,\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid., 207; Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 152.
who welcomed their assistance. One Marine recalled his surprise upon learning Marines would be sent to Samar, as he considered pacification to be the Army’s “work.”  

Upon arrival Waller met with Smith. Like Major Littleton Waller, Smith was known for being of short stature and for being a fighter who did not have much respect for the way insurgents waged war. Smith informed Waller that he was to kill every person over the age of ten regardless of sex and that his goal should be to turn Samar into a “howling wilderness.” Returning to his Marines, Waller reportedly informed one of his officers, Captain David Porter, that he would seek out only males able to use weapons.

Although the Corps did not play a major role in the Philippines, the assignment of these Marines to what would become the notorious island of Samar would open another important chapter in the institution’s history. Whereas previously Marines had served in short-term landing parties in conjunction with sailors, now they would engage in a far different scale and scope of warfare. Service in the Philippines presaged what would become one of the institution’s major responsibilities well into the 1930s: occupying nations while carrying out a combination of military and pacification duties.

135 John Clifford Papers, MCASC.
It also presaged some of the embarrassing public attention the Corps would draw to itself.\textsuperscript{137}

Initially Marines were eager to help suppress the insurgency. The Massacre of Balangiga had sparked a keen desire for revenge among the Marines, in part because they had served alongside the 9th Infantry during the Boxer Rebellion.\textsuperscript{138} Marines similarly enjoyed serving under Waller because, as Sergeant Henry Glenn explained, he was a “born fighter” who Marines “loved.”\textsuperscript{139}

Marines did not find much fighting at first. Carrying out operations along the coastal areas gave insurgents the advance warning they required to flee. Finally, Waller learned of an important insurgent base deep in the jungle at Sojoton, which was believed to be a “last rallying point.”\textsuperscript{140} Conducting a reconnaissance mission up the river where the base stood atop a seemingly unassailable cliff alerted the insurgents to the Marines. The insurgents responded by reinforcing their base. When Marines returned, they began...

\textsuperscript{137} For one of the most notable, see U.S. Senate Select Committee, hearings, “Inquiry into Occupation and Administration of Haiti and Santo Domingo,” 2 vols., 67th Congress, 2d. Session, 1921-1922.
attacking the complex of cliffs and camps that had taken the insurgents more than three years to build. Caught by surprise upon the Marines’ return, insurgents had no time to destroy the bamboo ladders that the Marines used in some places to climb up the 200-foot high cliffs. The Marines scaled other cliffs without man-made assistance.\textsuperscript{141}

As depicted in the press, not only were Marines naturals at counterinsurgency but they could also handle “anything anywhere.”\textsuperscript{142} Waller celebrated the ability of his men to scale cliffs hundreds of feet tall, describing it “as a new feature of warfare.”\textsuperscript{143} He also believed the successful mission sent the message to the insurgents that there was no place the Marines could not reach.\textsuperscript{144} Congratulations flowed in from others serving in the Philippines. Major General Adna R. Chaffee begged Waller to give each Marine his “high appreciation of the manly heart and soldierly spirit which makes light of obstacles and is never daunted.” He also “hope[d] Providence will guide the footsteps and make brilliant the sight of marine and soldier battling for peace in the dense wilderness of Samar.”\textsuperscript{145} Chaffee’s faith would be put to the test several months later.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} The Marines’ attack was celebrated in a poem published in several newspapers. Ironically, the Marines were erroneously described as “mariners,” continuing the tradition of journalists’ and the public’s errors regarding spelling the word Marine. See “At Sojoton,” \textit{NYT}, 6 Dec. 1901, 8.
\textsuperscript{143} “Attack by Marines,” \textit{Army and Navy Register}, 23 Nov. 1901, 418.
\textsuperscript{144} U.S. War Dept., \textit{Annual Reports of the Secretary of War} (1902), 443.
\textsuperscript{145} Maj. Gen. Adna W. Chaffee, USA to Maj. Littleton Waller, USMC, 30 Nov. 1901, copy in Philippines Subject File, Historical Detachment, Quantico, Virginia (hereafter HD). Even in the wake of Waller’s disastrous expedition lasting from December of 1901 to February of 1902 Waller received accolades for his actions. For General Smith’s praise, see “Lively in Philippines,” \textit{Washington Post}, 17 Feb. 1902, 8. Waller’s
On December 28, 1901, Waller, accompanied by more than fifty Marines and thirty-five Filipino scouts and porters, set off on an ill-fated journey into the mountainous jungles of southern Samar. Ignoring the warnings of two Army officers who had just returned from a similar and much better supported mission, Waller later wrote he desired “some knowledge of the people and the nature of this heretofore impenetrable country.” He also sought to determine for Gen. Smith if a telegraph cable could be placed across the interior of the island along the Sojoton trail, the same trail the Army had just attempted to find unsuccessfully during a twelve-day mission. Due to substantial rainfall, dangerous rapids forced the expedition to discard its boats and continue on foot. Constant wading through the river quickly took its toll on the Marines. By January 3 rations had been reduced severely, and they had lost the trail. Waller thus decided to split the expedition in two groups. He and those Marines in the best

court martial was not ordered until March 6, 1902. Other Marines made similarly religious-inspired comments in their writing. See Pvt. Patrick Ketcham, USMC, “Soldiers and Marines of Famous Hikes,” 1902, John H. Clifford Papers, MCASC. The cultural aspects of nature, especially in regard to insurgency, could benefit from more studies. One relevant work includes John Lindsay-Poland, Emperors in the Jungle: The Hidden History of the U.S. in Panama (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). Lindsay-Poland is more interested in how U.S. culture facilitated the environmental degradation of Panama than with exploring the imperial identity of soldiers, however.

146 The Corps employed some porters while others were prisoners of war. Joseph L. Schott, The Ordeal of Samar (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), 197.
147 Copy of Littleton Waller to Senior Squadron Commander, Cavite, PI, 25 Jan 1902 Philippine Subject Files, HD. Waller suggested that he had discussed finding a trail several times with Smith but did not say that Smith had ordered him to find a trail.
condition would seek to make their way back as quickly as possible in order to send a
relief party. Within a few hours this group found a clearing that contained food. Waller
sent a porter back to inform the party, but the porter returned without delivering the
message, stating that the purported presence of insurgents in the area made him fearful.
By January 6 Waller and his party arrived back at their original position, having found
an inhabited clearing with natives able to guide them back to their base.

In the meantime, the rest of the Marines under Lieutenant Alexander S. Williams
slowly tried to reach safety. They were not in good enough condition to make it more
than about three miles a day. Along the way, ten Marines were left behind as they could
no longer continue on. They would die where they fell. The native porters also proved a
threat. At one point three of the native porters attacked Williams and tried to kill him.
Williams also charged that they withheld food from the Marines. The survivors among
Williams’ party were finally rescued on January 18. They had marched about 180 miles.
Almost immediately upon their return, ten of Williams’ porters would be summarily
executed for treachery on Waller’s orders. Waller would later be court martialed and
subsequently acquitted, with eleven favoring this decision and two opposing it. In
defending himself, Waller pointed to historical precedent as recently as the Boxer
Rebellion for executing prisoners, as well as the fact that Smith had ordered him not to
take any prisoners.
The extent to which Waller might have wanted to show up the Army might have been a factor in his decision to make this expedition. Other Marine officers certainly wanted to prove they could accomplish more than the Army. Writing almost a year after this expedition, Second Lieutenant Earl Ellis noted that the Army was “exceedingly jealous” of the Corps’ ability to cover far more territory with fewer men. The Marine Corps, he stated, was able to carry out jobs the Army had not been able to complete.\(^{148}\) Ellis’ words reflected the developing belief among his fellow officers that Marines could outperform both sailors and soldiers at their mission. Ellis was determined to beat the Army at all costs, even ensuring that Marines skilled at baseball were stationed at his post so as to win the Manila baseball league. The fact that the Corps and the Army fulfilled such similar duties might have motivated his desire to use anything to demonstrate a Marine’s superiority over a soldier. Ellis was not alone in such a perspective. As future Commandant George Elliott reported to the Commandant, Marines could capture and hold any coastal city unlike the Army, which always “publish[ed] the point of attack to the natives.”\(^{149}\) In 1910 Waller would incorporate this competition more jokingly into a letter regarding the purchase of a vacuum cleaner,

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\(^{148}\) Earl Ellis to Mother, 21 May 1902, Earl Ellis Papers, MCASC.

writing, “I know you don’t want the Army to get ahead of us on a thing like this.” If Waller hoped to beat the Army at its own game, an ill-conceived and over-confident expedition in the jungle was not the best way to accomplish this goal.151

Interpretations of Waller’s disastrous expedition have run the gamut from highly critical to forgiving.152 In the school of military historiography that seeks out lessons from victories and failures, many historians have focused on whether or not Waller used sound judgment in undertaking this operation.153 Brian Linn, for example, argues that Waller “consistently relied on physical courage and endurance to make up for deficiencies in planning and judgment.” To support this interpretation he cites an offensive operation Waller participated in during the China Relief Expedition against overwhelming numbers that resulted in the abandonment of ten dead Marines on the

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150 Littleton Waller to Frank L. Denny, 10 Jan. 1910, Copy in Personal Book, Littleton Waller Papers, MCASC.
151 One song about the Army’s soldiers mocked the Marines’ expedition in Samar rhyming: “About another soldier man I’d like to say a word: / He’s neither fish nor flesh nor fowl, but he is a bird, / He finds his way o’er foreign seas by sun and moon and star, / But he could not find his way across the Island of Samar. / Chorus: So make way for the web-foot man / The good U.S. Marines. / They need four guides for every man, / Out in the Philippines.” This poem pointed to the difficulty of establishing exactly what a Marine did except to travel long distances. It also mocked the purported reliance of Marines on large number of guides. This poem suggests that where soldiers and Marines served together members of both services were likely to define themselves against each other. W.E. Christian, Rhymes of the Rookies: Sunny Side of Soldier Service (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1917), 36.
153 Military historians have debated the extent to which useful lessons can be gleaned from the study of military history. Similarly, military historians have debated about whether they should provide guidance for the military. For examples of this debate, see Martin van Creveld, “Thoughts on Military History,” Journal of Contemporary History 18 (October 1983), 549-566: 556 and 560-563 and Michael Geyer, “War and the Context of General History in an Age of Total War,” Journal of Military History Special Issue 57 (October 1993), 145-163: 147-8.
battlefield. Waller, however, had voiced his objections to this operation but was overruled by the Russians. Upon seeing that he was one of the few to hold this opinion, Waller deferred to the majority opinion. It seems more likely that the difficulty of waging joint operations, rather than Waller’s poor judgment, might explain this particular event.

By assuming that certain constants go into planning and judgment irrespective of time and place, Linn views Waller’s actions simply as constituting bad judgment. While Waller’s decision was unsound, cultural forces at work in Samar and in this type of imperial warfare as a whole also shaped his decision. As Craig Cameron has suggested, the tactics and strategy of war are indivisible from the culture that help to produce them. Cameron stresses that military historians have made a false dichotomy between a study of doctrine—viewed as rational and scientific—and of myth and imagery. A better approach, he argues, begins with the premise that doctrine itself is a cultural construction. Cameron might overstate the extent to which “practical developments were usually secondary to imagination in shaping ground combat,” but his approach

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154 Linn, “We Will Go Heavily Armed,” 278.
155 Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1900, 1150.
156 Ibid.
157 For some of Waller’s thoughts about joint operations during the expedition, see Collum, History (1903), 393. For the praise of two superior officers who recommended him for promotion based upon his work during the China Relief Expedition, see Ibid., 403-4.
helps provide a path to understanding why Marines and soldiers often acted as they did.\textsuperscript{158}

Culture was an integral part of the way in which Marines thought about and functioned during imperial wars.\textsuperscript{159} Waller’s ultimate acquittal led John Philipps Sousa to comment, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, that a “marine always fights fair.” But how did one fight if the opponent did not play by one’s own rules? Waller’s view of natives led him to discard the rules that dominated western warfare. In fact, a similar way of thinking about what were known as “small wars” pervaded both American and British military mindsets.\textsuperscript{160} Two critical elements were the view of the opponent as a savage who avoided direct confrontation and the challenge of the environment. While environmental factors such as heat or difficult terrain admittedly are physical variables, the way in which they are viewed and handled can be culturally

\textsuperscript{158} Cameron, \textit{American Samurai}, 7. Unfortunately, this historiography has not been fully developed yet. For some examples of this type of work, however, see James Belich, \textit{The Victorian Interpretation of Racial Conflict: The Maori, the British, and the New Zealand Wars} (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990) and Heather Streets, \textit{Martial Races: The Military, Race, and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914} (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

\textsuperscript{159} For example, see Michael Adas, \textit{Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), especially pages 184-187 in regard to the connections between western attitudes and military technology.

constructed, as will be seen in the case of the Marines’ experience in Samar. How 
Marines viewed insurgents was characterized by frustration with the refusal of 
insurgents to fight on an open battlefield, their treachery, and other characteristics. In 
describing the clothing belonging to insurgents he had found in a boat, Waller began 
describing the “uniform of an insurgent officer” before correcting himself, continuing, “I 
mean a coat with four pockets and a pleat or band around the wrist.” Waller revised his 
use of military terminology to avoid describing the insurgents as military opponents. 
Similarly, Waller testified that during one expedition his Marines encountered natives 
who had “swarmed on the beach with their bolos waiting for the [Marines] to land. 
There was no doubt about their intention to slaughter these men.” If he had 
considered this a military engagement he would have expected the men awaiting the 
Marines to seek to kill them. Instead, he viewed their actions as more evidence of the 
natives’ perfidiousness.


163 U.S. War Dept., Annual Reports for the War Department (1902), 445.
164 “Defense of General Waller,” 2, Waller subject file, HD.
Scholarship about the relationship between imperialism and masculinity sheds some light on the Marines’ experience in Samar. Gail Bederman has emphasized the shift from a Victorian culture of civilized manliness to one of primitive masculinity during the late 1890s and early 1900s. Men like Teddy Roosevelt, she argues, are key examples of this. The wealthy Easterner could have spent his life in a luxurious setting, but instead he sought out war and adventure. Bederman states that for a time these traits of civilized manliness and primitive masculinity coexisted. The Marines’ experience in Samar seems to represent an example of this shift. While in the jungle of Samar, these purported fighters expected the Filipinos to care for them. Sergeant Harry Glenn, who described the Samar expedition in *The Wide World Magazine*, which highlighted stories of exotic adventure around the globe, depicted both sides of Waller. He could be a masterful fighter, but he could also be a caring father figure.

Describing the exhausted band of Marines searching for a way out of the jungle, Glenn explained that the sentry and Waller had remained awake, suggesting Waller’s desire to protect his men outweighed his need for sleep. The same situation occurred the next

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165 See, for example, Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood*.
167 For Glenn’s heroics, see *Annual Reports for the War Department* (1902), 442.
night. This time, however, one of his captains slept the night with his head in Waller’s lap.  

Warwick Anderson has suggested that the “white masculine gaze was often more a nervous glance than a commanding stare,” hardly the look of a colonial overlord. At an early point in their imperial careers, Marines certainly evidenced a certain hopelessness that is at odds with their behavior in other settings. Waiting for rescue to arrive, Marines became frustrated with their Filipino porters who “became sulky, practically refusing assistance to the white man.” As Marines suffered from the constant rain and lack of food, the porters constructed temporary shanties and procured additional food due to their knowledge of plants. Marines complained that the porters refused to share this knowledge. Eventually, Marines began to worry that the porters would turn on them. As one naval officer reported, the “time came when no white man could carry a rifle, and those not lost were in the hands of the natives; under the altered condition, it required considerable diplomacy” to manage the porters. The contrast between the Marines’ experience in the jungle and that of the porters is striking. Far from being the tough fighters of lore at Guantanamo or Peking, these Marines could not

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171 “Waller Had Very Hard Experience; Himself and Men Starve While Crossing Samar; Native Carriers Get Sulky and Try to Kill Leader of the Famous Expedition,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, 13 March 1902, 8.
even carry their weapons. As a result, the porters ended up carrying most of the rifles.

No wonder, then, that it became difficult to control them. As one Army general
ironically pointed out in the fallout from the expedition, even more Marines probably
would have died without the porters’ assistance.172

Samar demonstrated that imperialism was not a “picnic,” as one newspaper
headline suggested.173 As this reality set in and some became more cynical about their
role in the Philippines, some Marines turned to the model of the British. Indeed, Waller
defended his actions in ordering the shooting of the eleven Filipino porters by arguing
that he had seen the British do exactly that in Egypt to deal with the “treachery” of the
natives.174 Waller argued “he had every right to believe that his acts were approved, so
far as the American forces were concerned. He knew they were approved by those of
other nations.”175 He stated emphatically that “[n]either my people nor the world will
believe me to be a murderer.” Rhetoric aside, many Marines appeared to rally around
Waller, finding his execution of the porters to be a pragmatic solution that civilians

172 General Chaffee, who had praised Waller so heartily after Sojoton, expressed this sentiment clearly.
174 “Waller Goes Free,” The Washington Post, 14 April 1902, 1. For discussions of atrocities in the Philippines,
see Richard E. Welch, Jr., “American Atrocities in the Philippines: The Indictment and the Response,” The
Pacific Historical Review 43 (May, 1974), 223-253. Welch emphasizes that the press was slow to react to events
in Samar and, even then, relatively forgiving of his actions. See especially pages 244-247. For an account that
largely exonerates Waller given the extreme circumstances he faced in Samar, see “Waller Trial Record,” The
1902, 711-712.
175 “Maj. Waller Speaks in His Own Behalf,” Los Angeles Times, 12 Apr. 1902, 3.
sitting back home just could not understand, having not seen the treachery of the Filipinos firsthand.\textsuperscript{176}

Linn has questioned why Marines would have chosen to celebrate Samar. Indeed, it seems obvious from a modern perspective that the killing of eleven porters in an event that drew national attention would not be something an institution would want to draw attention to, let alone celebrate. Furthermore, Linn suggested that by any measurable military definition of success, such as “distance” or “enemy opposition,” it in no way equaled more “epic marches.”\textsuperscript{177} Defining the event in pure military terms ignores the extent to which Marines themselves sought to memorialize Samar in ways that became engrained in the institution, whether or not the institution wanted this event to be memorialized.\textsuperscript{178} Marines celebrated their conquest of the environment in a way that mirrored the European adventures of the nineteenth century who sought to undertake similar feats.

These feats often relied on making distinctions between the natives, who made their homes in these jungles, and the white Marines. The hardening of racial discourses

\textsuperscript{176} Captain David D. Porter to Senior Squadron Commander Cavite P.I, 8 Feb 1902, Philippines Subject Files, HD. A penciled notation on the report suggests Porter intended it for Major Waller. “Friends of Waller Claim Conspiracy,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, 9 March 1902, 4.
\textsuperscript{177} Linn, \textit{Philippine War}, 317.
\textsuperscript{178} For the shaping of memories of war see Gary W. Gallagher, \textit{Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood & Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War} (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).
that had occurred in the late nineteenth century began to seep into how the Corps imagined itself as a white institution.\textsuperscript{179} This trend was reinforced throughout the ranks in training. By World War I, the Corps had established one of its major training bases in Parris Island, South Carolina. Marines from the north noted their surprise traveling through the south. Arnold Davis seemed to view his travels through the Carolinas as a journey to a foreign land, describing the region as “practically undeveloped country, except for Negroes . . . . On the way through Carolina we would get off at each station and talk to the natives—some fun.”\textsuperscript{180} Immersed in an unfamiliar region, some recruits characterized white southerners as lazy, observations traditionally made by Marines when venturing into foreign countries.\textsuperscript{181} During his journey, Gerald Clark never “saw a white man work in about 500 miles and darn few niggers. I think after the war I’ll move down here as the people seem to live without working.”\textsuperscript{182} A month later, he remarked regarding the absence of women on the island, which was inhabited solely by Marines and some African Americans who had lived there for generations,

Guess there are some nigger women on the island. That is all outside of the Officers [sic] wives. Havent [sic] been invited up to any officers homes for


\textsuperscript{180} Arthur Davis to Mother, 26 June 1918, Davis Papers, MCASC.

\textsuperscript{181} See Chapter One for examples during the Mexican War.

\textsuperscript{182} Gerald Clark to Folks, 31 July 1917, Gerald Clark Papers, MCASC.
dinner as yet so haven’t gotten acquainted with any and if you go near a niggers home you’re liable to be put in the bug (prison) besides being ashyiated [sic] by the smell. Gee but these Coons are dirty. We give our hogs up in Iowa better shelter and keep them cleaner.183

Early training reinforced a bifurcated world between white and the other, one that would only intensify for those engaged in military operations and occupations abroad. Newspapers articles reinforced this imagery well before the establishment of boot camp in Parris Island, depicting Marines as troops engaged in fighting the racial “other.” In explaining what a Marine was in 1908, one unnamed journalist explained how the Marines were always the first to arrive in troubled areas, “whether it is a dark mixup over in Hayti [sic], a brown squall down toward the isthmus or a yellow squabble in China.”184 The article implied that Marines would be sent wherever intransigent natives were not behaving themselves. Lest this use be seen as belittling the Marines’ prowess for real battle, the article explained that the Marine was “onto the job, whatever it may be. He is part soldier, part sailor, part policemen, part guardian of government property and all fighting man.”185 Whatever task the Marine was assigned to carry out, there should be no doubts as to the fact that he was “the real fighter,” as the article’s headline suggested.

183 Ibid., 1 Sept. 1917.
184 Despite the more glamorous image of China, Matthew Jacobson contends that Americans made very little distinction between such places. Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues, 117.
185 “The Marine is the Real Fighter,” Grand Rapids Press, 8 May 1908, 15.
Unlike the U.S. Army, which had tried to incorporate African-American soldiers at various times, and the U.S. Navy, which had various races in the ranks of stewards, the Marine Corps remained almost exclusively white until ordered to incorporate African Americans in 1941.\(^{186}\) Littleton Waller sought to maintain these barriers, writing in 1911:

We have a man enlisted at Cincinnati . . . and while absent over leave he was discovered to be a negro. He is white, but his brothers and sisters are black, his grandmother being very dark. If the men discover the truth the man will not be safe. I am recommending that the man be discharged on account of being undesirable for the service.\(^{187}\)

Whether or not Waller genuinely feared for the new Marine’s safety or simply wanted to maintain the institution’s whiteness is unclear. As an article in a Georgia newspaper more pointedly mentioned in 1907 about a recently-opened recruiting station, one of the

\(^{186}\) In 1898 Commandant Charles Heywood stated that “no colored men have ever been enlisted in the Marine Corps.” See Heywood to Secretary of the Navy John Davis Long, 18 Nov. 1898, Press Copies of Letters Sent to the Secretary of the Navy, RG 127. For the process of this incorporation, see Melton A. McLaurin, *Montford Point Marines: America’s First Black Marines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007). The public made a similar connection between the Corps and whiteness. The first African-American Marines were harassed when wearing their uniforms, and earlier sightings of African Americans in Marine garb received comment. See “Negro Wears Blouse of U.S. Marine, Starts Chase,” *The Recruiter’s Bulletin*, June 1915, 17.

Corps’ “good feature[s]” was that “negroes [were] not eligible.” Moreover, the Corps was the “oldest branch of the service and [had] always maintained its distinctive characteristics.”

A sense of being “white” shaped the Marines’ understandings of their successes and failures. When Waller attacked the fortified cliffs of Sojoton, he celebrated the ability of Marines to penetrate territory where no “white troops” had ever been, perhaps implicitly comparing the Corps’ success to the Army’s failure. Waller used similar terminology in regard to his failed expedition, explaining the relief of the Marines who made it out of the jungle. He described how the survivors had “accomplished what no white troops had done before.”

Marines serving in the Philippines in subsequent years would suggest that they might do their duty to their country, but that did not mean they would like it. As Private David Erickson stated,

I am only a common soldier-man, in the blasted Philippines,  
They say I’ve got Brown Brothers here, but I dunno what it means,  
I like the word fraternity, but still I draw the line,  
He may be a brother of “William H. Taft,”  
But he aint’ no friend of mine.

190 David Erickson, “The little brown brothers,” Diary, 1 Oct. 1905, David Erickson Papers, MCASC.
As with Waller, the treachery of Filipinos—as referred to at a later point in the poem where he lamented the reported practice of Filipinos burying Americans alive after coating them with sugar—troubled Marines. Unlike historians who point to Waller’s bad leadership, Marines and observers of other branches pointed to the treachery and the skin color of the Filipinos. Samar signified the horrors of “uncivilized” warfare, which would become a significant portion of the Corps’ mission for the next thirty years. Marines had only the highest respect for their brothers-in-arms who had managed to survive despite the best efforts of “savages.” Waller even pointedly labeled the Filipinos the most treacherous he had encountered.

The experience that both officers and men shared, strengthened by defining themselves against the “savage” other, led to a diminishing sense of the distance between officer and enlisted. One Marine described the lasting bonds between enlisted Marines and their officers forged on Samar:

> there were several famous officers of the Marines who knew the survivors by the marks the jungles and the horror had left [on] the enlisted survivors. These officers’ headquarters were always open and perhaps the quarters were crowded with other officers, and an enlisted man or a former enlisted man with haunted

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191 Ibid.
193 Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Year 1902, 972.
eyes came softly in, the word passed gently like a whisper, “Stand gentlemen, this man served in Samar.”

As has been discussed, the distance between enlisted and officer was already beginning to diminish to some extent due to larger cultural currents. In a small institution bound together by this seminal event, it is quite possible that this broke down barriers faster in the Corps than would have occurred otherwise, or in different branches for that matter. This was not just a one-sided occurrence in which officers behaved paternalistically, although that may have been a factor. Some enlisted Marines noted that the trial had reduced distinctions between the ranks as they simply struggled to remain alive.

While a great deal has been written on how nations remember the memories of war, less has been done on how soldiers themselves recall their experiences. Perhaps

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195 In suggesting a more formal organization for the Corps, one officer pointed to the march through the jungle as an event that had drawn them together. The “tradition of the way they faced that grave danger” could be maintained by a particular regiment, thereby increasing an individual’s pride in belonging. Captain Henry C. Davis, “A Plea for a Permanent Regimental Formation in the United States Marine Corps,” Proceedings 29 (1903), 213-216: 214.
196 Writing in 1933, former Marine Sgt. Eugene Dooley concluded his comments about the Samar Campaign by stating that the officers he served with “showed good judgment [sic], and I cannot speak too highly of them. They did all that they could do for the sick and wounded men, and . . . [they] suffered just as much hardship as the enlisted men did.” See “Letter of Eugene Dooley,” 1933, John H. Clifford Papers, MCASC. Also see Glenn, Pursuit of Captain Victor, II,” 464.
197 Even those works that appear relevant focus more on society’s experience at large. See Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century (New York: Cambridge University
the 1857 Indian Mutiny can serve as a parallel, at least in the extent to which the British
felt betrayed by the treachery of an indigenous population. In this instance, Hindu and
Muslim soldiers mutinied in widespread violence that lasted more than a year for a
number of reasons, including what they perceived to be British insensitivity to their
religious and cultural practices. In remembering their losses, especially those of women
and children, the British used physical markers such as tombs and memorials.198 Marines
might not have established physical markers, but they used other physical acts, such as
standing when a veteran of Samar entered the room, and writing to memorialize their
service and the service of those comrades who had lost their lives in the Samar
expedition. As one Marine wrote two decades later while giving an overview of the
Corps’ history, Samar was a “wild” place where:

no white troops had ever before been, filled with hostile savages, and much cut
up by streams and jungle. They were misled by their native guides, were lost in
the wilderness, and suffered untold privations. A number of men died on that
march, but Waller brought his battalion through, marching clear across the
island.

Press, 1999). Other works include Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (New York: Oxford
University Press, 2000); Patrick Hagopian, The Vietnam War in American Memory: Veterans, Memorials, and the
Politics of Healing (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009); T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, and
Michael Roper, eds., The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration (London: Routledge, 2000); J.M. Winter,
Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century (New Haven: Yale
University Press, 2006).
198 Bernard S. Cohn, “Representing Authority in Victorian India,” in Inventing Tradition, 179.
Rather than blaming Waller’s faulty decisions, Marines blamed the environment and, most especially, the treachery of their guides.\textsuperscript{199} Overcoming the odds of imperial warfare was seen as a feat.\textsuperscript{200}

With the mostly negative public attention they received from Samar, some considered the implications of imperial warfare more carefully. They had stressed good sportsmanship and gentlemanly actions during the Spanish-American-Cuban War, such as in regard to the treatment of Spanish officers, but the Spanish had followed the same rules as the Marines.\textsuperscript{201} By contrast, “benevolent assimilation” might be the official stance of the U.S., but individual Marines were more likely to view themselves as


\textsuperscript{200} Willis J. Abbot’s summary was more temperate. See Soldiers of the Sea: The Story of the United States Marine Corps (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1918), 264. For accounts not written by Marines that similarly focused on the guides’ treachery as the reason for the deaths of the Marines, see Elisha Benjamin Andrews, The United States in Our Own Time: A History from Reconstruction to Expansion (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), 849. One act of so-called “treachery” included taking the college ring of a Marine officer. Henry Clay Kinne, Iniquity in High Places as Revealed in the American-Spanish-Filipino Wars of 1898, 1899, and Subsequent Years (San Francisco: 1908), 117. For this treachery as a common depiction of indigenous people, see Jacobson, Barbarian Virtues, 111.

\textsuperscript{201} For similar problems in the U.S. Army, see Linn, Philippine War, 64. “Defense of Major General L.W.T Waller,” Subject file, Philippines War, HD. Waller contrasts the more civilized way that the Marines cared for wounded Spanish troops during the Spanish-American War with the treachery of insurgents in Egypt, the Philippines, and elsewhere. Also see John Clifford, History of the First Battalion of U.S. Marines (Pike, New Hampshire: Brass Hat; 1930), 50 and 56. Clifford served as a Marine during the Spanish-American War. Collum notes how the treatment of Spanish prisoners was “characteristic of American methods” in warfare in History (1903), 336. Spanish officers even received claret wine during their imprisonment. Ibid., 339.
responsible for carrying out the “white man’s burden.” Second Lieutenant Earl Ellis’ letters reveal the imprint of imperial service. The experience of the Philippines bound Marines more closely to the British example, not based on a sense of a shared language and heritage but on the correct way of dealing with the “other.” Arriving in the wake of Waller’s acquittal, Ellis cynically remarked that the British knew the best way to handle the natives. In his opinion, American citizens were too innocent to appreciate what was required to wage this type of warfare.

Whereas both U.S. Marines and soldiers had differentiated themselves to some extent from European troops during the Boxer Rebellion on the basis of their more democratic characteristics, now they looked more directly to the British example. In adapting to imperial warfare, Marines wrote home detailing new additions to their accouterments, such as swagger sticks. Benedict Anderson has contrasted colonial armies, which he characterizes as a glamorized force interested in “glory, epaulettes, personal heroism, polo, and an archaizing courtliness among its officers,” to militaries maintained for the protection of the nation-state, concerned with professionalism,

202 Earl Ellis to Ralph Ellis, 10 Sept. 1902 and Earl Ellis to Mother, 3 June 1902, Earl Ellis Papers, MCASC. For similar cynicism among some volunteers in the Army, see Linn, Philippine War, 117.
203 Earl Ellis to Father, 8 Aug. 1902 and Earl Ellis to Mother, 24 Feb. 1903, Earl Ellis Papers, MCASC.
discipline, and technology. For an institution already interested in tradition, it would be an easy step to adopt traits of imperial armies.

Ellis also described the comradeship his fellow officers experienced while serving in the Philippines. For the first time a large number of Marine officers were stationed together or nearby on land as compared to the much smaller detachments of Marines on naval vessels, allowing a shared culture to develop more rapidly.

After the relative highs of the Spanish-American War and the Boxer Rebellion, Samar was the Corps’ baptism into the difficulties of imperial warfare. Increasingly describing themselves as elite soldiers, their performance in Samar seemed to suggest otherwise. Helpless in the jungle without native assistance, Marines appeared overcome by the challenging physical environment.

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A poem published in 1904 reflected the evolution in identity for Marines participating in the Corps’ early imperial operations. Separate stanzas of the poem connected the Marine’s job to the duties of both the Navy and the Army. One stanza described how the Marine would be found “at the back of the gun ‘till the battle’s won, the bulwark of the fleet.” The poet reiterated the Corps’ belief that Marines furnished the most critical naval gunnery, as reflected in the reports of Marine officers during and

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205 Earl Ellis to Tad, 18 April 1902, Earl Ellis Papers, MCASC.
after the Spanish-American-Cuban War. The next stanza focused on the Corps’ recent imperial conflicts:

Guantanamo to Samar, on the Chinamen’s heathen ground,
He’s left his dead as with steady tread he fought the world around.
Horse and foot and guns, he one and all combines,
As he backs the ships’ big guns, or charges the enemy’s lines.206
No flowers for his grave . . .

Although the Corps would face larger challenges in the future, Guantanamo, Samar, and Peking left their imprint on the Corps. Not only did the poet emphasize the ability of the Marine to fulfill any mission, but he also suggested that no matter how emotion-laden the conflict, the Marine would remain “steady.” Finally, with the mention of the barren grave, the poet continued to echo generations of previous Marines who lamented the fact that their institution remained unappreciated. Of all the elements in the thread that suggested the greatest progression in the Corps’ identity, however, most prominent was the idea that Marines could carry out any mission—even one for which they had no training or experience (the horses). It would be easy to discount this confidence as bombast, and such a conclusion would be correct in terms of the institution’s mission capabilities. This piece of doggerel, however, reflected the idealized vision of what the Corps wanted to be, perhaps even needed to be to resolve the perennial question of why it was needed.

206 Quoted in Army and Navy Journal, 30 Jan. 1904, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127, NARA.
Despite the successes of the Spanish-American-Cuban War and other imperial conflicts, Marines remained unsure of their reception. After facing a severe crisis in the 1890s when naval officers attacked the utility of Marines aboard ships, the Spanish-American-Cuban War appeared to offer a temporary respite. Almost overlapping involvement in the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Boxer Rebellion, and the Philippines War, however, progressively challenged the Corps to adapt to new forms of warfare. At the same time, it threw the institution into close contact with U.S. soldiers as well as the troops of other nations in a way that convinced some Marines that they were better able to fulfill the missions of both soldiers and sailors. Still, it would quickly become clear that the Spanish-American-Cuban War did not settle the question of the Corps’ institutional instability once and for all. In 1908 President Theodore Roosevelt would order Marines off naval vessels in a move that, once again, forced the Corps to fight for its existence.

The early efforts of nineteenth-century Marines like Henry Cochrane and Richard Collum began to bear fruit at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the years between 1905 and the outbreak of World War I, this image would receive an additional boost from the Corps’ increased recruiting and publicity efforts, as well as more formalized and standardized training.
4. “There’s Nothing that a Marine Can’t Do:” Publicity in the Corps, 1905-1917

The Corps’ growing responsibilities in America’s imperial domain seemed to promise a secure future. In the wake of the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Corps acquired new imperial duties that kept it busy around the world from the Caribbean to China and the Philippines. Despite the negative publicity it received in the Philippines after Major Littleton Waller’s summary execution of eleven natives, the institution had received positive attention during the Spanish-American-Cuban War and the Boxer Rebellion. Moreover, the public was more interested in hearing about the nation’s military services, including the Corps.2

The Corps would face difficulties on other fronts, however. Lingering tensions between some naval officers and Marine officers would reassert itself within a decade. A small group of naval officers had long sought to remove Marines from naval vessels due to what it viewed as their pernicious effect on morale. These officers found a receptive ear in President Theodore Roosevelt, who ordered Marines off the Navy’s ships in November 1908. He accepted the arguments of naval officers that Marines took up valuable space aboard ship and could be better used to respond quickly to overseas

1 “There’s Nothing a Marine Can’t Do,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 13 Nov. 1916, 8.
operations situations if permanently based on land where they could be assembled quickly.³ Not all Marines were eager to accept this change. Some worried that if they relinquished all or part of their sea-going mission, they would lose one of the traits that differentiated them from soldiers. With the help of friends in Congress, the Corps soon recovered its mission afloat, fulfilling its traditional role as guards, orderlies, and gunners on the secondary batteries.⁴

Despite this temporary setback, or perhaps in part because of it, the Corps became increasingly adept and active in shaping its image in subsequent years. Marines had always appreciated and courted support in Congress, but in the wake of the Spanish-American-Cuban War they began more consistently to woo the American public. The establishment of a Publicity Bureau in 1911 enabled the Corps to formalize its recruiting materials and practices. Simultaneously, it began to think more carefully about how it wanted to shape the public image of a Marine.

Developing a public image had important ramifications for the Corps’ developing identity. Whereas nineteenth-century officers had worked together sporadically in small groups to foster change, efforts to mold identity increasingly

³ “No Marines on Ships: Sailor-Soldiers by New Order to be Kept Ashore,” NYT, 13 Nov. 1908, 1.
⁴ For the argument that Congressional support of the Corps’ traditional role at sea was motivated by the desire to rein in the Executive Branch, see Lt. Col. Kenneth J. Clifford, USMCR, Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1900-1970 (Washington, D.C.: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, 1973), 14.
would be institutionalized. Between 1905 and the outbreak of World War I, the Corps implemented, strengthened, and refined the institutional apparatus necessary to foster this developing identity. Unlike much of the nineteenth-century image shaping in which Marine officers engaged, during the twentieth century enlisted Marines would also participate in this process.

These efforts paid fruitful dividends during the Veracruz Incident of 1914, when the Corps constructed a narrative that furthered its publicity needs and reflected its intensifying identity. Observers might note the bravery of both sailors and Marines, rarely singling out either branch for distinction. Marines’ accounts, however, stressed sailors’ military failures. Celebrating their leading role in the landing parties that quickly brought the city under control within days, Marines discounted sailors’ contributions. This self-promotion at the expense of the Navy would increase in the years leading to World War I, as Marines stressed that there was “nothing” that a Marine could not accomplish.6

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The Spanish-American-Cuban War and the ensuing responsibilities that devolved upon the Corps seemed to presage a relatively secure existence. Not only did

5 Intensified recruit and marksmanship training, for example, provided opportunities to convey this identity and strengthen the sense of difference through the quality of its shooting.
6 “There’s Nothing a Marine Can’t Do,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 13 Nov. 1916, 8.
the institution have important duties to carry out but, for perhaps the first time in its history, it did not have to struggle continually to find recruits. Some journalists even suggested that the Corps was having an easier time with recruiting than other military branches. In the spring of 1908, for example, one journalist contrasted the institution’s popularity with that of the Army and Navy, both of which were struggling to recruit and re-enlist men. This observer believed that the image of the Marine as a fighter in contrast to the sailor assisted to some extent with the Corps’ successful recruiting.

Seeking to explain the Corps’ new found appeal, one journalist suggested that the Marines were viewed as “first on the firing line” after they were “row[ed] . . . to shore” by sailors. The journalist distinguished the martial abilities of Marines with those of

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7 “Plenty of Marines: Supply Exceeds Demand—Army and Navy Need Men,” New York Daily Tribune, 8 March 1908, 8. It is also possible, however, that this popularity was fall-out from the popular world cruise of 1907, which attracted the most recruits since the Spanish-American War. “Men Rush to Enlist,” Washington Herald, 12 Nov. 1907, 3. The Navy, on the other hand, believed it suffered because it had more stringent citizenship standards for recruits. See “Nine Recruits Join Uncle Sam’s Navy,” Duluth News-Tribune, 5 Oct. 1907. 6. The Commandant’s annual reports provide further insight into the Corps’ strength. The commandant reported in 1906 that believed Corps would soon be recruited to “full strength.” Annual Reports (1906),1092. Due to “high wages” and plentiful job opportunities, however, the Corps struggled to find recruits throughout 1907 Annual Report (1907), 1279. The Corps was full or almost full in 1913 and 1914. See Annual Reports (1913), 530 and Annual Reports (1914), 463. In the wake of the Veracruz Incident, however, the Navy halted recruiting while the Marine Corps continued to recruit, suggesting that many were more eager to enlist as sailors than Marines. See “Men Still Sought for Marine Corps,” Montgomery Advertiser, 2 May 1914, 6. Other newspapers actually recorded a waiting list, one of 78 recruits. “U. S. Marine Corps Recruiting Halted,” Boston Morning Journal, 10 July 1915, 13; “Recruiting Marines a Simple Proposition,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 16 April 1916, 6. Individual recruiting stations broke records despite general economic prosperity, which marked a departure from nineteenth-century recruiting patterns. “Many Recruits Signed Marine Corps Makes New Record in Enlistments, Oregonian, 1 Oct. 1916, 14. For economic prosperity see “To Put U. S. Navy in Second Place,” Dallas Morning News, 1 Oct. 1916, 2 and “Prosperity Hits Navy Increase Era of Business Gain Tends to Keep Enlistments below Normal” Duluth News-Tribune, 2 June 1916, 14.
sailors, who simply provided a means of transportation.\(^8\) One cartoon made a similar contrast. It depicted a sailor reading an advertisement encouraging sailors to enlist in the Corps for service in Cuba. The sailor considered convincing one of his friends to transfer from the Navy to the Corps, noting that when he received orders to Cuba he would be “scared to death.” Another scene in the cartoon juxtaposed the same sailor busy scrubbing the deck with a Marine idling away his time at sea. Despite the Marine’s idling, it was the Navy who had the “soft” or easy service in contrast to the Marine’s “hard” duty on land (Figure 6).\(^9\)

\[\text{Figure 6: “Pretty Soft for Jeff in the Navy, Yes, Indeed, Pretty Soft.”}\]
\[\text{Tulsa Daily World, 6 June 1912, 6.}\]

\(^8\) For a similar but earlier example, see “Uncle Sam’s Marine Corps,” \textit{San Antonio Express}, 20 July 1900, 6. The article stated that everyone recognized that the Marines were the “fighting men on board Uncle Sam’s ships, as against the bluejackets, who ‘man, sail and steer.’”

Such distinctions would become starker over the course of the next decade, especially from the Corps’ perspective. Marines even suggested that the Corps had a superior historical record. How the Corps had acquired such a record while serving in the Navy’s shadow for much of the nineteenth century was not explained. To state that the Corps had made a historical record of its own that the Navy envied suggested that the historical foundation created by Marines in the nineteenth century had begun helping to remake the Corps’ image in some circles.

This argument emerged after President Theodore Roosevelt issued Executive Order 969 in November of 1908. Roosevelt set forth the following duties for the Corps: 1) garrisoning navy yards and naval stations, 2) serving as the first defenders for naval stations outside the continental United States, 3) manning whatever types of other defenses might be erected outside the continental United States, 4) garrisoning the Panama Canal, and 5) providing expeditionary forces on land. In effect, this order removed Marines from naval vessels, relegating them to land by not setting forth any duties at sea.

As previously discussed, a small cadre of naval officers had been working diligently to remove Marines from naval ships since the 1890s, but their efforts had always been thwarted by the Secretary of Navy and other forces. In 1908, however, anti-

10 “No Marines on Ships: Sailor-Soldiers by New Order to be Kept Ashore,” NYT, 13 Nov. 1908, 1.
Marine naval officers found an eager supporter in President Theodore Roosevelt.

Roosevelt, who had been appointed Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1897, was familiar with the debates about the usefulness of Marines at sea. The same year as his appointment, for example, Roosevelt had presided over a board that discussed, among other matters, whether Marine officers should be absorbed into the Navy.11

Roosevelt had a number of reasons for seeking the removal of Marines from ships. Deeply interested in naval history, Roosevelt had become an ardent proponent of navalism.12 Navalists argued for a more aggressive Navy that advocated departing from the more limited American naval tradition of protecting American commerce and its shores. To acquire such a Navy required not only the acquisition of a fleet of battleships but first-rate sailors. As a result, some naval officers began arguing in the 1890s that Marines had to be removed from naval vessels.

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11 Commandant Charles Heywood, USMC to Hon. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the Board of Reorganization of the Navy Personnel, 22 Nov. 1898, Press Copies of Letters Sent to the Secretary of the Navy, 1895-1899, RG 127, NARA.
Several other reasons influenced Roosevelt’s decision. As a Progressive, Roosevelt would be more likely to accept the view of anti-Marine naval officers who regarded the Corps’ service aboard naval vessels as an antiquated tradition. Marines took up precious space aboard ship, for example, that naval officers believed could be better used by sailors. Roosevelt, moreover, would not be the last U.S. president to believe that the Corps had far more influence in Washington D.C. political circles than it should. His opinions coincided with that of Commander William Fullam, the naval officer who had spent more than fifteen years seeking the removal of Marines from the Navy’s ships.16

Upon learning of Roosevelt’s order, many high-ranking Marine officers reacted strongly to the news, believing that the order “doomed” the Corps to extinction.17

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14 “Marines Ordered to the Indiana,” *New York Herald*, 9 Nov. 1895, 6.
16 “Status,” 158.
17 “Officers are Admonished to Cease Comment on President’s Marine Order,” *The Evening Star*, Nov. 21, 1908; “Commander of the U.S. Marine Corps, “ Clipping, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. Under a picture of the Commandant, the caption stated that officers considered this the “severest blow” possible to the Corps. For similar remarks see “No Marines on Ships: Corps Assigned to Shore Duties by President,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 15, 1908, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. Also see A Friend of the Corps, “Passing of the Marine Corps,” *The New York Sun*, Nov. 30, 1908, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. While it is unclear what they discussed, a group of officers stationed in the northeast met secretly for four hours to discuss the order, suggesting that they did not embrace the decision. “Marine Corps Men Gather in Secret,” *Washington Evening Times*, Dec. 20, 1908, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. Officers present at the meeting included: Col. T.N. Wood, Major Charles S. Hill, Capt. Carol Carpenter, Capt F.M. Buttrick, Col. Frank Halford, Maj. Harry Davis, Maj. Harris Leonard, Capt. T.F. Lyons, and Capt. W.H. Parker.
Commandant George Elliott’s initial pragmatic response was a striking exception. Unlike more outspoken officers, Elliott did not view the decision as a “death knell.”

Elliott had heard rumors of this change in the Corps’ service as early as 1906. And, at a meeting with Roosevelt in 1908, Elliott was tasked with setting forth the Corps’ duties on shore. Believing that the Corps was overextended with other duties, Elliott either agreed with Roosevelt’s plan or at the very least acquiesced to it. As he would state before the House Naval Affairs Committee called in January of 1909 to examine Executive Order 969, the Corps refused to “die by the slow method of tuberculosis.” If necessary, however, the institution “would do so with our boots on and leave the ships entirely.” If the Corps were to be stripped of its traditional role at sea, Elliott wanted to position his institution to accept the change that he hoped would come quickly for the sake of the Corps’ pride.

Elliott’s opinion changed dramatically, however, when rumors began circulating that the Army might absorb his institution. The news that the Army would be sending troops to Hawaii in a role similar to one traditionally filled by Marines infuriated him.
even more.22 With the removal of Marines from naval vessels, it appeared possible that the Corps’ duties would overlap dangerously with those of soldiers.23

The short-term effects of Roosevelt’s order also had profound implications for the Corps’ identity. Observers suggested that the Marine Corps would do well to consider a name change. If they were to be stationed on shore, one journalist mused, the “name marines had best be dropped” and they might as well become part of the Army.24 According to another journalist, the severance of the traditional ties between the Navy and the Corps turned Marines into “humble infantrymen.”25 The powerful image of the Marine as a “soldier an’ sailor too”—suggested by Rudyard Kipling for Royal Marines but quickly adopted by American Marines—would be another casualty of Executive Order 969.26 Marines would simply be soldiers from here on out if Executive Order 969 remained in effect. They would lose many of the distinctive qualities they had begun embracing, including the boost to their public image they had received from Kipling’s famous poem.

22 Ibid., 612.
23 Ibid., 452, 480, and 498; Conrad Reid, “The Marines Are Always in the Way,” George C. Reid Papers, MCASC.
24 “Proud Record of the Marine Corps,” New York Daily Tribune, 29 Nov. 1908, 4. For a similar comment also see “What Duty for Marines,” Boston Transcript, 2 Dec. 1909, Clipping, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. Various committees in the House began fighting over whether or not the Corps should remain part of the Department of the Navy or become integrated into the Army. “Are Marines Land or Water Warriors,” Duluth News-Tribune, 22 Dec. 1908, 11.
The Corps also worried about the order for recruiting purposes. Recruiters doubted they could inveigle recruits with the prospect of serving as glorified “watchmen” on shore at naval stations.27 The prospect of more glamorous service seeing exotic locales such as China, moreover, appeared much dimmer without sea service.28 As a result, the Corps worried it might lose its recruiting “edge” against the Army.29 A number of Marine officers found the implications of Executive Order 969 upsetting, and they sought to voice their opinions. Commandant Elliott, however, had forbid Marines from commenting on the president’s order. In response, Marine officers expressed their displeasure in non-verbal ways.

Among his many progressive efforts to improve the military services, Roosevelt had begun instituting more stringent physical tests for service members in 1908.30 Officers would have three days to either walk fifty miles, ride ninety miles on horseback, or cycle one hundred miles. Many military officers, especially more elderly ones,

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27 “Marine Corps Has Fine Record,” The Morning Telegraph, 27 Dec. 1908, Clipping, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. Similar wording was used in “Marines Have Fought a Hundred Little Wars,” Baltimore Sun, 6 Dec. 1908, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127.
28 For the numerous prospects that sought to join the military to serve in China see, “Anxious for China Service. Many Want to Enter the Army or the Marine Corps,” Kansas City Star, 11 July 1900, 1; “United States Marine Corps. Some Interesting Facts about a Branch of the Naval Service,” Springfield Republican, 10 Aug. 1900, 5.
resented this decision. Some Marine officers, however, embraced it. 31 The month after Executive Order 969 had been issued, five Marine officers determined to complete the test in one day. Four officers walked while Colonel Littleton Waller rode on horseback. 32

If Elliott forbade them from speaking publicly, determined Marine officers sought to make their point in other ways. Not only were they prepared to carry out their duties, Marine officers suggested, but they were ready to do so in an exceptional manner.

In some ways the impulse for this reaction might have come as a response to the dominant image of nineteenth-century Marines. Sailors had characterized Marines as lazy, believing that they did not have as many duties aboard ship as sailors. 33 Some naval officers continued to maintain this image. As Commander C.H. Davis, Jr., USN

33 Perhaps this tendency was enhanced by the practice aboard ship of denoting those who did not participate in watch as “idlers” in both the U.S. and Royal Navies. For this definition, see Commodore Stephen B. Luce, USN, Text-Book of Seamanship. Rev. and enlarged by Lt. Aaron Ward, USN (New York: D. Van Ostrand, 1884), 293. A number of officers, including Marines, fell under this category. See Charles Nordhoff, Nine Years a Sailor (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1866), 55-56 and James Fenimore Cooper, The Two Admirals, A Tale in Two Volumes, vol. 1 (New York: Stringer & Townsend, 1849), 168.
Nordhoff argued that the Marine officer in particular had a very easy life aboard ship, especially in peacetime. Nordhoff, 57. Nordhoff had a more positive view of enlisted Marines, stating they had a “thankless” task of guarding the vessel. Ibid., 120. For general references to Royal Marines as idlers not based on watch, see Francis Davenant, What Shall My Son Be? Hints to Parents (London: S.W. Partridge & Co., 1870), 70-71. Davenant argued that by this period the image of Royal Marines had improved.
wrote in 1896, the word Marine was a “synonym for idleness, worthlessness, and vacuity of intellect.”

In response, Marines would seek to prove the opposite was true. They took on as many duties as possible in an effort to preserve their sea duties. The addition of new duties allowed Marines to argue they were the “jack[s] of all trades.” Naval officers, however, resented the Corps’ efforts to expand their duties. This practice had begun with the launching of the battleship Indiana in 1895. Its commanding officer Captain Robley D. Evans, USN argued that the ship simply did not have room for Marines. Secretary of the Navy Hilary A. Herbert ignored Evans, deciding to put Marines on the Indiana. Herbert required them to participate in all duties, however, including coaling.

Marine historians have viewed Executive Order 969 as a positive step for the Corps. Because some naval officers suggested that Marines provide an expeditionary service similar to what they provide today, it is easy to view this incident teleologically

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34 Commander C.H. Davis, Jr., USN to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 22 April 1896, William Fullam Papers, LOC.
35 [?] to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 20 April 1896, William Fullam Papers, LOC.
36 “Status,” 495, 482-3, and 544.
37 “Marines Ordered to the Indiana,” New York Herald, 9 Nov. 1895, 6.
as a logical progression toward the current paradigm. Naval officers wanted Marines to be transported aboard naval vessels wherever they were needed to provide instant service, a mission the Corps still fulfills today in the form of Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs). This aspect of the debate, however, was ancillary to the larger argument about why Marines needed to be removed. The Executive Order and the battles surrounding it had less to do with what mission the Corps should fill and far more to do with clashing identities.

Practical observations did not always dominate the debates between naval and Marine officers. During their testimony in January of 1909 before the House Naval Affairs Committee in which representatives queried the soundness of Executive Order 969, officers of both services did at times discuss aspects of the Marines’ removal in practical terms. Marines, for example, argued that it would be costly to replace Marines with sailors because, among other reasons, sailors received more pay. Commander

39 See, for example, Clipping, Washington Post, 29 Dec. 29 1898, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127. One newspaper reported that Elliott was interested in looking into the prospect of using Marines aboard transports to be ready for any potential conflicts. “Marines Taken From Warships,” Baltimore American, 13 Nov. 1908, Clipping, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127.
40 See, for example, Merrill L. Bartlett, “Ben Hebard Fuller and the Genesis of a Modern Marine Corps, 1891-1834,” The Journal of Military History 69 (Jan., 2005), 73-91: 76. That Fullam sought to have the Marines commanded by a naval officer suggests that Heinl’s view that Fullam hoped for the abolition of the Corps is more likely.
41 “Army and Navy Gossip, Washington Post, 20 Dec. 1908, E2; “Marines Taken from Warships,” Baltimore American, 13 Nov. 1908, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127.
William Fullam, USN argued, however, that cost was irrelevant. It was more important to put an end to the Corps’ favored position over the Navy.\textsuperscript{42}

Considering that some naval officers had spent more than twenty years trying to rid naval vessels of Marines, some of the naval officers who testified were remarkably hazy as to what Marines would do when put ashore.\textsuperscript{43} When questioned by committee members, for example, Rear-Admiral John E. Pillsbury admitted he had given little thought to what would be done with the Marines once they were moved to the shore.\textsuperscript{44} If the primary purpose of removing the Marines was to task them with a different mission, as naval officers argued, than this was a startling oversight.\textsuperscript{45} Pillsbury’s

\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Status}, 156.
\textsuperscript{43} When asked to explain why the Royal Marines had been removed from the Royal Navy and subsequently reintroduced, Commander Sims cited the British tendency toward “excessive conservatism,” the same conservatism that led them to what he implied as the illogical tendency to wear red coats. \textit{Ibid.}, 526. Fullam made a similar comment about the extent to which comparisons between the British and U.S. navies were irrelevant because of the extent to which “caste” was a factor in Great Britain. \textit{Ibid.}, 564.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Ibid.}, 448-449. When questioned as to whether the sailor could serve just as ably on shore as the Marine, Pillsbury agreed that he could. \textit{Ibid.}, 458. Another naval officer admitted to not having considered the possible expense or the effect of Marines on this decision. \textit{Ibid.}, 475. This led one committee member to suggest dryly that perhaps sailors be brought ashore to guard naval stations. Naval officer Captain Marshall stated how easy it would be to recruit more bluejackets to fill the duties of Marines both at sea and on shore if the Corps were abolished, which he did not view as problematic given that soldiers could easily take on the Corps’ jobs. \textit{Ibid.}, 473 and 481. However, Marshall contradicted himself by immediately stating that “marines ha[d] always come to the front when the Army has tumbled down.” \textit{Ibid.}, 481. For another naval officer who felt that soldiers could easily fill the role of Marines, see \textit{Ibid.}, 498. For one critical editorial of Pillsbury’s comments see “The Marine Corps,” \textit{New York Sun}, 11 Jan. 1909, Clipping, HQMC Scrapbook, RG 127, NARA.
\textsuperscript{45} Many naval officers believed that the Committee did not really want to hear their opinion. The committee’s chairman, Representative Thomas Butler, had a son in the Marine Corps, convincing some naval officers that the Corps was nothing more than a respite for the sons of Congressional members who could not find employment elsewhere. Heinl, \textit{Soldiers of the Sea}, 156. The image of the nineteenth-century Marine officer as a well-connected supernumerary continued to linger in the minds of some naval officers.
remarks suggest that some naval officers wanted to remove Marines to help in creating the kind of Navy culture they envisioned, not to task the Corps with more expeditionary service.

Beginning in the 1890s the line between soldier and sailor had blurred increasingly. For Marines to be useful at sea, naval officer Lieutenant John F. Meigs argued, they needed to increase their duties aboard ship at which point they might as well be made into sailors. At the same time naval officers sought to make sailors more soldierly. Marine and naval officers perceived the “New Navy” to be an “army afloat.” To be a powerful Navy, then, naval officers believed that sailors had to be infused with the kind of esprit de corps, or the military’s version of corporate identity, that they saw in Marines.

Naval officers argued that they simply could not create this kind of esprit de corps in sailors as long as Marines served at sea. The most ardent proponent of the Marines’

46 Lieutenant J.F. Meigs, USN to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 15 Nov. 1890, William Fullam Papers, LOC.
47 “Lieut. Fullam’s Paper: It Is Being Discussed Throughout the Navy,” NYT, 7 Dec. 1890, 2 and Captain Harry Glass, USN to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 7 Dec. 1890, William Fullam Papers, LOC. Glass, however, found Fullam to be excessively critical of Marines. While supporting Fullam, Captain P.F. Harrington, however, believed he was “on the losing side” because the Corps had too many supporters. Captain P.F. Harrington, USN to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 11 April 1896, Ibid. For similar sentiment see Captain Richard Wainwright to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 5 May 1896, Ibid.
48 Naval Department, The New York Times to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 22 Nov. 1890, Ibid.. For the Commandant’s protest to the Secretary of the Navy for Fullam’s attacks, see 14 April 1896, Press Copies of Letters Sent, 1895-1898, RG 127. For enlisted sailors writing to object to Marines, see Commandant Charles Heywood to Secretary of the Navy, 21 May 1896, Ibid.
49 Admiral Stephen B. Luce, USN to Lieutenant William Fullam, USN, 24 Nov. 1896, William Fullam Papers, LOC
removal, Commander William Fullam, wanted to remove Marines from naval vessels because they demoralized sailors. Fullam believed that the role of orderly aboard ship unfairly rewarded Marines with the “most honorable station” possible. As a result, they were “looked up to as the elite corps aboard ship, and that has been the secret of their success in a way—that they have insisted upon their being the elite corps.” The fact that Marines filled these roles suggested that sailors could not be trusted, thus damaging morale. This tendency was amplified because Marine officers created the impression that Marines were superior to sailors, or so Fullam suggested. The presence of a sort of

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50 Pillsbury made similar comments. He noted that it was not conducive to the sailor’s morale to have someone who was in no way a “better” person over him. Status, 460. When Fullam claimed that the presence of Marines aboard ship privileged Marines over sailors, Commandant George Elliott interpolated him. Elliott countered that the fourteen sailors serving aboard vessels in the position of master-at-arms were over the Marines and yet that did not injure the Marines’ morale. Ibid., 448-450. For others who argued similarly, see Ibid., 460, 469, 516. Fullam’s argument that Marines be used as advanced base forces was ancillary to his comments. See Ibid., 559-560.

51 Ibid., 548. One naval officer suggested that “select” bluejackets be given the privilege of doing this duty. Ibid., 596. Other naval officers believed that sailors would not relish this duty. Ibid., 602.

52 Ibid., 541-2. Similarly, Fullam stated at a latter point in his testimony that journalists tended to mention Marines rather than Marines and sailors when describing landing parties. Ibid., 562. A perusal of one landing in 1907, however, reveals that sometimes Marines were mentioned, sometimes bluejackets were mentioned, and sometimes both were mentioned. See “United State May Intervene in War Blue Jackets and Marines Landed Step is Taken to Protect American,” Aberdeen American, 22 Mar. 1907, 1; “Blue Jackets Landed in Honduras,” Albuquerque Journal, 22 Mar. 1907, 4; “U. S. Marines in Honduras. Regarded a Diplomatic Move,” Charlotte Observer, 22 Mar. 1907, 1; “He Lands Marines,” Dallas Morning News, 22 Mar. 1907, 1; “Navy Takes Precautions to Protect Americans. Bluejackets and Marines Landed from the United States Gunboat,” Duluth News-Tribune, 22 Mar. 1907, 1; “U. S. Blue Jackets and Marines Landed at Honduran Ports Will Protect Interests of All,” Grand Forks Herald, 22 Mar. 1907, 1; “Marines Landed in Honduras. Cities Gunboats Patrolling Both Coasts of Warring Republics of Central America,” Lexington Herald-Leader, 22 Mar. 1907, 1. One headline in particular must have satisfied Fullam. See “Fullam Lands Blue Jackets. To Guard American Interests during War,” Montgomery Advertiser, 22 Mar. 1907, 1.
“foreign detachment” impinged on the homogeneity of the Navy, thus threatening its corporate identity.53

The debates in this Congressional inquiry appeared to be tied to the success the Corps had begun to have in defining itself as an elite institution. Those naval officers who supported the Corps, Fullam suggested, should be removed from the Navy. Only those who were “willing to make the American blue jacket the equal of any soldier in the world” should be allowed to serve.54 The battle over the Marines’ role can better be understood as cultural warfare over what a sailor would be and what a Marine would be rather than as a contest to define the Corps’ mission. The Corps’ attempts to define itself as an elite institution had collided with the goal of some naval officers to improve the morale of sailors. These naval officers greatly resented the suggestion that the Corps was a superior institution as well as the coverage that it received in newspapers.

53 Status, 491 and 500. For another naval officer’s use of the same word, see Ibid., 582. Also see “Lieut. Fullam’s Paper: It Is Being Discussed throughout the Navy,” NYT, 7 Dec. 1890, 2. Captain Charles Badger, USN, however, disagreed. He believed that the force was “homogenous” except for the minor difference in the Marine’s uniform. In 1895, the Secretary of the Navy had issued a report suggesting that the presence of Marines improved morale by providing a competitive “spirit” aboard ship that could improve efficiency. Status, 640.

54 Status, 575. The following naval officers testified in favor of the Corps: Rear Admiral Schley, Rear Admiral Willard H. Brownson (ret.), Rear Adm. Royal R. Bradford (ret.), Rear Adm. Caspar F. Goodwin (ret.), Capt. Charles J. Badger, Commander Templin M. Potts, and Commander Charles A. Grove.
The attitude that Marines were superior to sailors infused Marines of all ranks. Some avowed that Marines had been put ashore because sailors envied Marines. The idea that sailors would be jealous of Marines represented the way that Marines sought to rework the traditional relationship between sailors and Marines. The relationship had always been adversarial, but Marines had often been the butt of sailors’ jokes as epitomized by phrases like “tell it to the Marines.” Now Marines argued that they provided the true fighting force of the Navy Department. One Marine professed that sailors would “play but a small part in time of war.” The Marine, he suggested, was the true “fighting man” aboard naval vessels. Because of his discipline, the Marine could be “called upon for everything” during the heat of battle.

As seen, naval officers disagreed vehemently with this view of Marines as elite troops. They also sought to make sailors more like Marines. But Marines had “won” this round. In response to Executive Order 969, Congress decreed that the personnel aboard ships had to include at least eight percent of Marines. In the coming years,

55 The unknown writer did not explain why sailors would be jealous of Marines, other than to also point out that sailors had come to view Marines as “interlopers.” See “Get Down To Hard Pan,” Grand Rapids Press, 16 Nov. 1908, 10. As one recruiter stated, Marines did not have to “wash decks or do any such chores.” See “Offer No Sea Duty Now,” Kansas City Star, 24 Nov. 1908, 8. For an example of tensions between sailors and Marines on naval bases, see “Terpsichore Lets War Dogs Loose: Marines at League Island Order Jackies off Dance Floor in Former’s Barracks, Philadelphia Inquirer, 15 Nov. 1903, 4.
Marines would also gain another weapon that would help them reshape their image even more.

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President Harry Truman once described the Marine Corps’ publicity machine as something akin to the best propaganda efforts of Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin. The Corps had been engaged in improving its image since the nineteenth century, but between 1905 and 1917 it took critical steps to establish an institutional structure capable of reaching the public and earning its admiration.

For an institution whose existence had been threatened so often in the past, the desire to secure public approbation does not appear very surprising. The need to meet increased manpower requirements in the wake of the Spanish-American War, however, provided an additional impetus for this goal. Having increased from slightly more than

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2500 men before the Spanish-American-Cuban War to more than 9000 by 1908, the Corps needed better recruiting to meet its continuing manpower requirements.\(^59\)

Prior to the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Corps recruited in a rather ad hoc manner, with recruiting stations frequently closing when current needs were met. Few formalized rules or regulations existed, and the officers in charge of recruiting stations communicated frequently with the Commandant regarding the possibility of making waivers for potential recruits.\(^60\) Additionally, recruiters had some leeway in seeking men in each district, sometimes writing to headquarters with new ideas.\(^61\)

Letters written between recruiters and headquarters attest to the importance Marines attached to “reaching the better class of man.” The Corps preferred to fill its ranks with upstanding, hard-working American citizens rather than relying on those desperate for employment. They debated the most effective venue for reaching potential recruits, such as placing advertisements in street cars or working with places such as employment agencies or even the Salvation Army.\(^62\)

\(^59\) In 1896 the Corps had 2676 Marines. With the passage of the Naval Personnel Act (1899) in the wake of the Spanish-American War it increased to 6263 Marines. By 1908 it had 9854 Marines, a number it would more or less maintain until the passage of the National Defense Act of 1916, which increased the institution to 15,630 Marines. Heinl, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 610-11.

\(^60\) For one recruiter’s difficulties, see Captain William Brackett, USMC, “When the Corps Was Short,” *Bulletin*, June 1915, 3.

\(^61\) L.J. Magill to James Breckinridge, 11 Jan 1905, enclosure, in James Breckinridge to Mother, 11 Jan 1905, James Breckinridge Papers, MCASC.

Recruiters depended heavily on formulaic newspaper ads which emphasized pay and travel. These classified ads did not differ much from those the Corps had used during the Civil War. A 1910 advertisement published in the help wanted section of a newspaper simply called for “able-bodied men,” setting out age and citizen requirements, mentioning matters of pay and benefits, and holding out the inducement of travel.63

The recruiting messages continued to feature the institution’s ties to the Navy. A 1901 classified ad in a Philadelphia paper called for “Marine Corps U.S. Navy Recruits.”64 In part, the Corps probably benefited from the depiction of naval vessels, given the public’s admiration for the Navy, which had been fostered by such dramatic events as Admiral Dewey’s victory at the Battle of Manila. The Army and Navy Journal, for example, complimented the Corps on a popular billboard featuring a uniformed

63 Untitled, Dallas Morning News, 2 Nov. 1910, 12. This article did not differ dramatically from one published shortly after the conclusion of the Spanish-Cuban American War: untitled, New York Herald, 27 Dec. 1898, 15. For similar albeit less-detailed classifieds, see untitled, Dallas Morning News, 14 March 1907, 12; untitled, The Kansas City Star, 21 Oct. 1903, 12; untitled, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 6 March 1904, 1; untitled, The Duluth News Tribune, 27 March 1905, 6; untitled, Grand Forks Daily Herald, 1 Feb. 1906, 7; untitled, Morning Oregonian, 1 Jan. 1912, 17. One ad simply highlighted an opportunity to “see the world.” See untitled, Omaha World Herald, 23 Dec. 1906, 10. By contrast, a 1911 ad placed by the Navy stated that sailors were the “finest body of picked men in the world.” For other uses of the same language, see untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 9 July 1911, 2. Also see untitled, Duluth News-Tribune, 28 May 1911, 22; untitled, The Kalamazoo Gazette, 2 July 1911, 14; untitled, Wilkes-Barre Times, 30 Sept. 1911, 2.
64 The contact in the ad was a Marine officer, Captain J.E. Mahoney, USMC. See untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 30 Aug. 1901, 10. Mahoney appears to have copied the ad from his predecessor, Major W.P. Biddle, USMC, untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 16 Aug. 1899, 10 and untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 18 March 1900, 1. The last of these particular ads appears to have been published in 1903. See untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 27 June 1903, 12. An article published the subsequent week made no mention of “U.S. Navy Recruits.” See untitled, Philadelphia Inquirer, 1 July 1903, 10; 21 Aug. 1903, 12; 31 Oct. 1903, 12; 9 Aug. 1905, 10.
Marine standing in front of the battleship *Kearsarge*. Even Navy recruiters used this image.\(^{65}\) The rationale behind how Marines selected naval vessels seems to have been based more on personal association than anything else.\(^{66}\) At this point, individual recruiters had some initiative at the local level in deciding how to reach recruits, but the Corps lacked the bureaucracy to direct actively wider discussions about the best means of reaching the public.

Despite the lack of formalized bureaucracy, the Corps had increased successes in recruiting. During 1907, for example, the Corps pulled its classified advertisements from newspapers after meeting recruiting expectations.\(^{67}\) In November of that year it had its best recruiting month in history despite Marines earning substantially less than sailors.\(^{68}\) The Marine Corps even allowed Army and Navy recruiters to take recruits interested in the Corps from their offices.\(^{69}\)

Individual recruiters conveyed a number of sentiments to journalists that reveal how they viewed their institution, or at the least how they wanted to sell it to potential

\(^{65}\) *ANJ*, 24 Sept. 1904, 421. A search in the database *America’s Historical Newspapers* shows that the words “Marine Corps U.S. Navy Recruits” only appeared in this newspaper, suggesting the extent to which individual officers had latitude in publishing classified advertisements at the local level.

\(^{66}\) James Breckinridge to Mother, Jan. 19, 1905, James Breckinridge Papers, MCASC. When launched, the *Kearsarge* had been noted for its impressive secondary-battery which made it highly-advanced at the time. Perhaps this fact explains the vessel’s choice for ads. See “Battleship *Kearsarge*: To Be Most Powerful of the Defenders of American Rights,” *NYT*, 24 Nov. 1895, A20.

\(^{67}\) “Marine Corps Now Complete,” *Morning Oregonian*, 29 Dec. 1907, 2.


\(^{69}\) “Lively Scramble for New Recruits,” *Duluth News-Tribune*, 8 Jan 1908, 12.
recruits. Sergeant Joseph Gallagher noted that the Corps had been “lost” in the Navy until the Spanish-American-Cuban War when it finally received the recognition it deserved. He believed that the public maintained an image of the Marine as simply kept at sea to serve as a repository for the “longest and most importable of the sailors[’] yarns.” Gallagher was at a loss to explain why the Corps had been ignored for so many years, especially considering the “picturesque nature of its duties.”

Newspaper articles emphasized the multiple places Marines traveled, and often coupled these descriptions with stories of men who reenlisted after missing the Corps after having experienced civilian life.

While the Corps lacked some of the organizational structure to communicate with the public, it did not lack a message. Drawing on many of the themes articulated by nineteenth-century Marine officers, one article even expanded on the Corps’ merits. It described the Corps, incorrectly, not only as the nation’s oldest military service but as having been in “continuous existence” since its establishment in 1775. It described how when the United States “was without either army or navy in its early years this faithful corps was its only defense.” Moreover, the article proclaimed that no other service had “richer traditions” and explained how it had always upheld its motto of “Semper

70 “Macon is Excellent Recruiting Station,” Macon Daily Telegraph, 2 Feb. 1908, 5.
Fidelis.”72 The article suggested that prior to the Spanish-American-Cuban War, the Corps had been known almost solely for its Marine Band, led by the well-known composer John Philips Sousa. The article also held out the inducement of promotion to the ranks of non-commissioned officers. Scattered throughout the world at imperial outposts, sergeants were “monarchs of all they survey[ed].”

This article, published in an Idaho newspaper in 1909, appears to have been closely tied to the Corps. The highly-favorable article included six illustrations as well as a large box of text stating “Duties, Experiences, Opportunities, Pay.” These words would become the title of the Corps’ recruiting pamphlets published beginning in 1912. This article seems to have been drawn from an edition of the pamphlet written prior to the Publicity Recruiting Bureau’s establishment in 1911 that was never released because the Corps had already met its recruiting goals for the year.73 The wording in the first and second paragraphs, for example, overlapped greatly with the release of the first official pamphlet by the Recruiting Publicity Bureau. This article suggests, then, that much of the message the Recruiting Publicity Bureau would propagate had already been envisioned prior to the Bureau’s establishment.

72 “Uncle Sam’s Soldiers of the Sea,” Idaho Statesman, 26 Sept. 1909, 8.
73 A predecessor appears to have been ordered by Commandant George Elliott and written by Major Charles McCawley in 1908. It does not appear to have been issued because the Corps had found the necessary recruits by this point. “Plenty of Marines: Supply Exceeds Demand—Army and Navy Need Men,” New York Daily Tribune, 8 March 1908, 3.
This is not to say that the Corps consistently conveyed this message, however, as based on the institution’s continued reliance on prosaic classified ads. Still, individual recruiters expressed many of the advantages that would become the staples of the Publicity Bureau. Writing to a local newspaper the month after Executive Order 969, First Lieutenant J.J. Meade, USMC explained that the Corps’ history was “filled with deeds of valor and patriotism, probably more than any other branch of the service, because of the mobility of action and the esprit de corps, which can be called ‘worship.’” Meade claimed that the Corps’ history was impressive for a practical reason—its readiness—as well as its corporate identity or esprit de corps. Meade also held out the inducement of promotion. The Corps offered “exceptional” opportunities because a man could enlist and, in time, rise as far as the office of Commandant. The Publicity Bureau would draw extensively on these themes, suggesting to the recruit that the Corps offered a path to self-advancement in an institution that had a unique spirit and identity largely responsible for its peerless history.

The Corps would reign in some of the claims in a very similar article published in 1912, but the overall message would remain consistent. The 1912 article, for example, explained more accurately that the Corps had been disbanded after the American

Revolution but had been reestablished in 1789.\textsuperscript{75} That the article had the same title as the 1909 article suggests, once again, the role the Corps had in the article’s production and dissemination.

With the establishment of the Recruiting Publicity Bureau in November of 1911, the Corps put its informal and decentralized recruiting efforts behind it.\textsuperscript{76} The Bureau’s establishment set the stage for other changes in recruiting. In September of 1912 the Corps began offering formal training to Marines before they embarked on recruiting duty. Moreover, the Corps would not enlist recruits until they arrived at recruit depots where they could change their minds and be reexamined by naval doctors and more experienced Marine officers. The Corps believed this contributed significantly to reducing the number of medical discharges needed.\textsuperscript{77} Still, they continued publishing classified ads similar to those they had published in the past.\textsuperscript{78}

\textsuperscript{75} “Uncle Sam’s Soldiers of the Sea,” \textit{Kalamazoo Gazette}, 6 June 1912, 11. Despite the ultimate success of the Bureau, it seems to have begun with little fanfare. In the sections on recruiting in his annual reports to the Secretary of the Navy, the Commandant did not mention the Bureau in either 1911 or 1912. Similarly, states that sources for the Bureau’s early efforts are available but does not cite any of them. Lindsay, \textit{This High Name}, 16.


\textsuperscript{77} United States. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Naval Affairs, \textit{Hearings Before Committee on Naval Affairs of the House of Representatives on Estimates Submitted by the Secretary of the Navy, 1912}, 62nd Cong., 3rd sess., 13 Feb. 1912, 582.

\textsuperscript{78} Untitled, \textit{Grand Forks Herald}, 10 June 1913, 7.
Before these steps were taken, thought, the Corps had to find recruits. The Bureau served as a central clearing house for the production of posters, recruiting pamphlets, and other materials. Quickly discovering that its first location was simply not large enough, the Bureau moved to a location affording 9,000 square feet, twice the amount it had previously occupied, by early 1915. The need for substantially more space suggests the extent to which the Corps initially had not envisioned the Bureau becoming such a large enterprise.

Hand-in-hand with the Corps’ creation of a means to convey its message to the public came major changes in determining what message it wanted to communicate. The way in which the Marine Corps viewed newspapers, for example, changed dramatically. Rather than simply buying advertisements as they had in the past, Marines actively began seeking to influence the content of newspaper reporting on the Corps.

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79 For example, the Corps printed a calendar that recruiters could distribute to anyone interested. Recruiters would use this opportunity to converse with those seeking calendars, hoping to obtain names of potential recruits. Sgt. Joseph Ascheim, “A Good Way to Get Names for the Publicity Bureau,” Bulletin, March 1915, 2.

80 “More Room for Publicity Bureau,” Bulletin, Jan. 1915, 16.

This change aligned with practices in the commercial sector. As Sergeant Clarance Proctor noted, businesses focused less on “giv[ing] notice” and more on shaping public opinion. 82 The most effective way of achieving this goal, Proctor believed, was through “product differentiation.” 83 The Corps, then, had to articulate the advantages of its institution. It had to demonstrate its superiority not only to its primary competitors, the Army and Navy, but also to the civilian job market. 84

The Corps had been expanding its reach since the Spanish-American-Cuban War. It faced challenges in recruiting, however, including the fact that its enlistment term was longer than in the Navy. As a result, the Corps sought to expand its focus from its traditional recruiting grounds on the East Coast, especially cities located on the Atlantic Ocean, to the entire nation. 85 Developments in transportation such as automobiles would aid in these efforts.

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Transportation might enable recruiters to reach untapped markets, but it certainly did not ensure that anyone would know what the Marine Corps did. To persuade the public of the Corps’ merits, the Bureau launched a “comprehensive” campaign designed to ensure that people became just as familiar with the Corps as they were with the Army and the Navy. Like those advertisers trying to “create acceptance and demand” for “new products,” the Bureau struggled to determine the best way to make every household familiar with an institution that, ironically, had existed since the nation’s founding.86 One of the easiest ways was to set forth images of a more glamorous life to working-class recruits in cities and in the countryside (Figure 7).

In 1905, recruiters in Chicago had established a small publicity office that worked to provide press releases to the public, presaging the birth of a structure like the Publicity Bureau. The Bureau would issue press releases, often accompanied by photographs, to thousands of newspapers.87 With its press campaign the Bureau hoped

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86 Norris, Advertising, 48.
87 One article stated that the Bureau sent press releases to 20,000 newspapers. “More Room for Publicity Bureau,” Bulletin, Jan. 1915, 16. In another article, however, the Bulletin’s editor stated that the Bureau issued articles twice a week to 3000 newspapers. “Our Press Department,” Bulletin, Nov. 1915, 12. In the same issue, however, the Bulletin stated that that the articles were issued three times a week. “Attention! Everyone!” Bulletin, Nov. 1915, 24. It is unclear exactly when the Bureau started issuing formal press releases to newspapers to be run as articles but given that the Chicago Publicity Bureau under William Harllee had done so in 1905 it seems unlikely that the Bureau had not acted similarly relatively soon after its formal establishment. The Bulletin’s first issue does mention how a sergeant wrote an article for a local paper at that establishment’s office.
to create stories “embroidered” just enough to ensure that newspapers used the information in articles that presented the Corps’ point of view. The Bureau sought to convey a number of themes, including the message that “every old Tom, Dick, and Harry isn’t eligible to enter its ranks.” The Bureau used superlatives as commercial

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advertisers did to distinguish their product from that of their competitors.89 As the
Bureau matured, it tied its claims to elitism to specific qualities that it believed
distinguished it from other branches.90

Although the Bureau issued its stories to newspapers all across the nation, it
recognized the importance of local recruiters in making the stories relative for their
communities by reaching out to local journalists.91 These efforts appear to have paid
dividends for the Corps when it came to securing favorable and free publicity. Over a
five-month span, one sergeant’s efforts to procure coverage for the Corps led a small
Missouri newspaper to write sixteen articles about Marines.92 Not only did these articles
help bring the Corps to the public’s attention, but contact with journalists afforded
recruiters an opportunity to end the perennial confusion about what exactly a Marine

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89 Norris, Advertising, 26.
90 The Bulletin’s first issue, for example, suggested the Corps “enjoy[ed] a reputation second to none as a
small but highly trained corps.” Capt. Frank E. Evans, USMC, “First Aids to Publicity,” Bulletin, Nov. 1914,
2. Also see Sgt. Frank Busch, USMC, “The Recruiting Sergeant’s Troubles,” Bulletin, Jan. 1915, 16; Pvt. C.
Overlooked Advantages of Military Service,” Bulletin, May 1916, 12. For outsiders’ purported confirmation
92 Sgt. James F. Taite, USMC credited Major A.S. McLemore, USMC for the success of the bureau in
used this technique before the Publicity Bureau’s establishment although the extent to which it was officially
couraged is difficult to ascertain. See, for example, “Capt. Harlee’s Great Capture,” Dallas Morning News, 4
Sept. 1907, 12. The Dallas Morning News published extensive reports of recruits obtained in the area
suggesting that the recruiting officer for that area had developed especially strong ties with the paper.
did.\textsuperscript{93} One officer met with reporters on an individual basis to ensure they understood the Corps’ role, and some reported making increasing headway in educating the public about their institution.\textsuperscript{94}

National newspapers and magazines gladly used the articles they received from the Bureau in what appears to have been largely the form in which they received them from the Bureau. This can be seen in the duplicate articles that appeared in newspapers around the country. Often the only difference might be the headline.\textsuperscript{95} Most editors queried for their opinion of the articles’ quality responded very favorably. Not only small publications but even major newspapers with the resources to undertake their own reporting used the Bureau’s releases.\textsuperscript{96} Only a few expressed concerns about the

\textsuperscript{93} The Bulletin did feature short tidbits that demonstrated how some members of the public remained ignorant of the various services, including the Corps. See “Want to be Submarine;” Bulletin, Dec. 1914, 11.

\textsuperscript{94} Captain William E. Parker, USMC, “The Recruiting Officer and the Newspaper,” Bulletin, June 1915, 16. Despite these efforts, some newspapers refused to make clear to the Bureau’s satisfaction that the Corps was a distinct institution from the Navy. Sgt. Frank T. Brown, USMC, “Publicity Station at P.P.I.E.,” Bulletin, Oct. 1915, 3.

\textsuperscript{95} See, for example, “Blushing Through Our Tan,” Bulletin, Oct. 1916, 16.

\textsuperscript{96} For the many newspapers that used the Bureau’s articles see, “Press Bureau Checks Up and Receives Some Wonderful Replies,” Bulletin, Aug. 1916, 10. A search of the “America’s Historical Newspapers” Database reveals some of the specific subjects that were discussed and which newspapers were receptive. Papers in Wilkes-Barre, Penn., Duluth, Minn., and Olympia, Washington, for example, published very similar articles. The Miami Herald made these connections more explicit. It noted that its source for one article was “The Marine Bulletin.” This article explained that recruits who had worked as cooks were the most likely to desert. The article noted that “[d]esertions from the marine corps are very light at all times: the average marine considers that the service offers better advantages than anything he could find in civil life . . . and were it not for the cooks the ‘oldest branch of the service’ would have an almost clean slate with regard to desertions.” (For another article citing “a Marine Corps Bulletin” as a source, see “The United States Marine Corps,” Charlotte Observer, 1 April 1916, 4.) In focusing on cooks as being the only unsatisfied ones in the Corps, recruiters managed to incorporate important recruiting themes into a short article. “Cooks Will Desert,” Miami Herald, 18 Nov. 1915, 2. The same article was also published as “Of All Deserters
propriety of taking the Marine Corps’ accounts at face value. The city editor of Washington D.C.’s The Star, for example, pointed out that the element of “propaganda” evident in some stories tended to undercut the “good human interest” of the releases.97

While the Bureau played a critical role in providing the Corps with favorable publicity, its activities had another equally important consequence. With the publication of the first issue of The Recruiter’s Bulletin in 1914, the Bureau provided a forum for nurturing and disseminating the Corps’ identity. All recruiters received a copy of the Bulletin. The Bureau also mailed out enough copies of the Bulletin so that one in twenty

Cooks Are Called the Worst,” Morning Olympian; 16 Nov. 1915, 1. The article mentioned “New York” as a by-line, thus providing another way to track the influence of the Bureau. The Charlotte Daily Observer published variations of the Bureau’s articles in quick succession. After printing a story about Sergeant Major Deaver’s retirement on November 26, it printed the experience of a “local boy” in Haiti the next day followed by the article about the probability of cooks deserting the next day, thus helping to keep the Corps constantly before the eyes of newspaper readers in Charlotte. See “With $100,000 Deaver Retires Form Marines,” Charlotte Daily Observer, 26 Nov. 1915, 9; “Landed in Haiti,” Charlotte Observer, 27 Nov. 1915, 7; “Cooks Will Desert,” Charlotte Observer, 28 Nov. 1915, 16. The Miami Herald included a brief article regarding the Corps’ history the same day it printed an article concerning the Commandant’s desire to increase the institution’s size. “The U. S. Marine Corps,” Miami Herald Record, 27 Dec. 1915, 2 and “Will Modify Demands for More Men,” 1. The Morning Olympian even published more than one release on the same day right next to each other. “7-Year-Old Enlists; Snorers Are Isolated,” Morning Olympian, 4 Jan. 1916, 4. The Corps took another approach to desertions in 1916, suggesting that those with “artistic temperaments” were especially likely to desert. The emphasis on the masculinity of Marines was intensifying in the years leading up to World War One. “Tapering Fingers Mean Anything but Stability,” Idaho Statesman, 28 Aug. 1916, 3.

97 “Press Bureau Checks Up and Receives Some Wonderful Replies,” Bulletin, Aug. 1916, 10. A few made similar comments. See Ibid., 11. In one case the Wilkes-Barre Times published two Bureau articles on the same page. See “Marine Recruits Prove Tempting to School of Fish,” 4 Mar. 1914, 3 and “Local Marine Boy Has Straight Aim,” 4 March 1916, 3. It appears that Stubbe, who contributed to the Bulletin on several occasions, must have submitted the letter that was the basis for “Marine Recruits Prove Tempting” to the Bureau as it was published the following day in a Charlotte paper. See “Good Liars among Marines,” Charlotte Daily Observer, 5 March 1916, 9.
Marines would receive one, with the idea that copies would be passed around.98 Primary concerns of the Bulletin included sharing tips about how to form a favorable impression with recruits and selecting quality candidates. The Bulletin also provided insights into the Corps’ history and military operations in hopes of providing more fodder for securing recruits. Finally, the Bulletin provided a forum for recruiters—who functioned as an elite within the Corps’ enlisted ranks—to discuss their lives, families, and feelings about the Corps. The Corps wanted only its best representing it on the streets of American cities, and the experiences of recruiters differed in many respects from those of the rest of the institution. The average recruiter could and did often spend years in one location. In fact, some recruiters worried that they would lose their comfortable jobs.99

Despite functioning as an elite within the institution, recruiters demonstrated a much better sense of the realities of the Corps than did the average advertising executive. Although the Corps had planned to use a professional advertising agency beginning in 1912, Congress vetoed this decision.100 Ironically, this decision might have assured the Bureau’s increasing success in ensuring the word “Marine” became recognizable to a broad segment of the population.

99 For a more light-hearted commentary on this fear, see “Adios Trabajo,” Bulletin, April 1915, 15.
100 Lindsay, This High Name, 11.
T.J. Jackson Lears has stressed the way that professional advertising consisted of “mystification in the guise of demystification.” Certainly, one professional advertiser’s suggestions for the Corps’ publicity efforts reflected this approach. The advertiser believed it would be more effective to avoid mentioning the fighting aspect of life in the Marine Corps and to focus, instead, on “opportunity.” At least one Marine found such an approach troubling. After praising a previous Bulletin article for providing a clear explanation for the philosophy underpinning the Corps’ training, Sergeant George Kneller expressed his distaste for what he saw as the clear manipulation inherent in the professional advertiser’s advice. While Kneller had no problem with pointing to the practical applications of the Corps’ training in an incidental way, he very much opposed the advertiser’s suggestion to avoid mentioning the “cannon and the uniform.” Kneller believed this approach would require recruiters to “practice a form of hypocrisy and resort to subterfuge.” His opinion was consistent with a prevailing philosophy among recruiters that honesty profited the Corps in the long run. Recruiters preferred to obtain a smaller number of top-quality men who would complete training than to waste...
precious resources on weak candidates. Similarly, they repeatedly stressed the value of being completely straight-forward with candidates to ensure, again, that they enlisted only those most likely to be happy with their choice based on a full knowledge of what military service entailed. As one Marine wrote, life in the Corps was “not a bed of roses.” While one recruiter essentially agreed, he took this analogy one step further to argue that the Corps’ had fewer “thorns” than any other branch. No doubt recruiters, when faced with the problem of meeting impending quotas, did depart from this approach. Still, this candor held out the prospect of challenge that the Corps would stress increasingly in the following decades.

Emphasizing the high physical standards it required of Marines provided one avenue for illustrating this theme. Recruiters linked the elite qualities of the institution

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104 Sergeant Louis F. Zanzig, USMC, “Good Advice from Indianapolis,” Bulletin, Dec. 1914, 13; “Quality Before Quantity in Final Standing Consideration,” Bulletin, Oct. 1916, 8. Evans used the same phrase “superior article” in one of his Bulletin articles. He noted that the Corps had the “best to offer the prospective warrior,” in part because the institution was the nation’s oldest. Capt. Frank E. Evans, USMC, “The Lure of the Fighting Man,” July 1915, 1.


106 Sgt. Thomas G. Sterrett, USMC, “New Landing Force,” Bulletin, April 1915, 14. For the same phrase, see Pvt. Wm. A. Honing, USMC, “Training the Marine Recruit,” Bulletin, July 1917, 9. Given the recruiter’s general reputation for saying anything necessary to gain a recruit, it is interesting the number of letters purportedly written by Marines in training thanking the recruiters for their honest representation of life in the Corps. For examples see “Praises Work at Norfolk Depot,” Bulletin, June 1915, 16. While it would be difficult to prove a definite link, a popular recruiting poster of the 1970s depicted a drill sergeant yelling at a recruit with the headline, “We don’t promise you a rose garden.”

to the physical qualities it required of its Marines. One sergeant rhymed, for example, that Marines were the “best of men / That Uncle Sam can get, / And if you’re not perfect in eye and limb/ You’ll be rejected, you bet!”\textsuperscript{108} Similarly, the Bulletin’s editor commented that Marine recruiters should have little difficulty in meeting with success due to their “superior article.”\textsuperscript{109} By emphasizing stringent physical and mental standards, the Corps demonstrated that it was an elite playing to society’s image of the ideal virile man.\textsuperscript{110} Additionally, this approach contrasted the adventure of life in the Corps to the oppressive aspects of factory life. Those who had to stand for long stretches of time wearing poorly-made shoes were most likely to suffer flat feet, which one sergeant said could result in the rejection of “otherwise perfect men.”\textsuperscript{111} It is unclear

\textsuperscript{108} See, for example, Evans, “The Lure of the Fighting Man,” Bulletin, July 1915, 2.
\textsuperscript{109} “The Recruiting Situation,” Bulletin, June 1916, 16. One recruiter made a slightly different argument, stating that the superior advertisement was more important than the reality as to whether the product was superior. Capt. Frank E. Evans, USMC “Carrying the Message,” Bulletin, May 1915, 4.
\textsuperscript{110} Lears stresses the Anglo-Saxon emphasis on physical perfection among professional advertisers. Fables of Abundance, 169 and 172. Also see Paul A. Kramer, “Empires, Exceptions, and Anglo-Saxons: Race and Rule between the British and United States Empires, 1880-1910,” Journal of American History 88 (Mar., 2002), 1315-1353. The Bureau appears to have issued one story regarding a recruit who, despite missing some fingers, appeared to be a talented marksman. He was rejected not only because of the difficulty that would ensue while drilling but also because his hand would not be pleasant to view. “His Trigger Finger Made No Difference,” Wilkes-Barre Times, 30 Aug. 1916, 6; “Perfect Mexican Rejected by U. S. Sea Soldiers as Unfit,” Morning Olympian, 12 July 1916, 1; “Bar Web-Footed Men as of No Use in Marine Corps,” The Duluth News Tribune, 14 Nov. 1915, 8. Numerous stories informed readers of the Corps’ strict standards for enlistment. See “Only 3 Percent Able to Pass Marine Test,” San Jose Mercury News, 3 Jan. 1917, 3. For other comments describing the Corps as the most “physically fit,” see “Uncle Sam’s Marines Ready to Fight at the Drop of Hat,” Duluth News-Tribune, 2 May 1915, 11.
\textsuperscript{111} “Marine Corps Bars Flat Feet: 18 out of 100 Applicants Fail,” Duluth News-Tribune, 4 Nov. 1915, 9. This article appears to be one that was issued to recruiters who were allowed to elaborate. One sergeant cited these figures to the Duluth paper the same day that a paper in Washington quoted Capt. Frank Evans with almost identical statements. See “Flat Foot’ Keeps 18 per Cent of New Yorkers out of Navy,” Morning
exactly what message the Bureau sought to convey with this warning. Perhaps the
Bureau sought to motivate factory workers to enlist quickly, suggesting they might
become “unfit” to join before too long.

Olympian, 4 Nov. 1915, 1. That the headline mentioned the Navy whereas the article cited the Marine Corps
demonstrated the uphill battle the Corps faced in portraying itself as a distinct institution.
Either way, men from a working-class background played a critical role in the Corps’ early publicity efforts. The fact that the Corps did not rely on advertising executives with privileged backgrounds could explain some of the institution’s recruiting successes.\(^{112}\) As has been seen previously, some enlisted Marines seem to have taken a pride in the Corps as an elite institution. What has not been seen, however, is if or how enlisted Marines contributed to forming the Corps’ identity.\(^{113}\) Often in charge of their own sub-recruiting districts, enlisted Marines added their recruiting experiences and ideas to the *Bulletin* and, in the process, helped mold the Corps’ identity in a forum largely free from the influence of the Commandant and Headquarters.\(^{114}\)

The *Bulletin* also afforded a creative outlet for enlisted Marines to contribute to the shaping of the Corps’ identity. Doggerel had been a popular pastime for Marines for decades, but now they had a place to showcase their efforts.\(^{115}\) Stationed aboard the U.S.S. *Mayflower*, for example, Private K.A. Painter sent in an illustration depicting his

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\(^{112}\) Lears, *Fables of Abundance*, 154 and 196-7. The Corps acquired the assistance of noted marketing firm J. Walter Thompson during World War II, by which point the Corps had already honed the themes it wanted the public to accept.

\(^{113}\) One tradition attributed to enlisted Marines was that of rendering salutes to Civil War veterans. “Military May Honor Veterans of Civil War with Officer’s Salute,” *Morning Olympian*, 9 June 1916, 1. The article suggested that Sgt. Edward Callan had produced a resolution which was subsequently introduced to Congress by Representative L.C. Dyer.


\(^{115}\) The high literacy rates of the United States no doubt futhered these tendencies. For literacy rates see Norris, *Advertising*, 9. For what appears to be a Bureau release regarding the reading preferences of Marines, see “Sea Soldiers of Uncle Sam Not Strong for Light Fiction Books,” *Morning Olympian*, 10 May 1916, 1.
interpretation of how Latin American nations “recruited” their troops, implicitly contrasting the involuntary enlistment of troops in Caribbean nations to those of Marines (Figure 8).

Over time the Bureau’s culture could have imprinted itself on the institution’s broader corporate identity. One illustration, for example, depicted a going-away dinner for a sergeant who was going to become an officer, showing enlisted Marines and officers mingling (Figure 9). The rise of Thomas Sterrett from private to major epitomizes the possibilities for talented enlisted Marines to contribute significantly to
the Publicity Bureau and, ultimately, to the Corps. Sterrett had been in the Corps for about ten years when, as a sergeant, he was assigned to the Bureau in 1915. Seeking to convey to the public that Marines existed, Sterrett emphasized the idea that they were “‘red-blooded he-men.’ Then he began elaborating the thought that it wasn’t so

Figure 9: Farewell Dinner.  
darned easy to be a Marine.”116 This description, as set forth by Sterrett’s brother, was not entirely accurate. The Corps had been suggesting its selectivity for much longer. Sterrett, however, helped to promote this idea more vigorously, and he found a receptive audience among young men eager for war.117 As one article explained, Sterrett was the “man who sold a trade-marked soldier to the U.S. public—the U.S. Marines.” Sterrett had helped distill some of the facets that Marines had long emphasized about their institution in a way that the public could recognize. During his time in the Corps, the phrase “Tell it to the Marines” had begun to be a “slogan which meant business” rather than a joke told by sailors as it had been during the nineteenth century.118 Sterrett encouraged the use of this slogan in recruiting material used for World War I (Figure 10).119 During the war, he also helped oversee the creation of a series of striking posters depicting Marines engaged in various duties undertaken by a professional advertising agency, Donovan and Armstrong.

117 For examples of Sterrett’s more over-the-top publicity efforts, see Maj. Thomas G. Sterrett, USMC, “Teaching Devil Dogs New Tricks,” Carry On 5 (Jan. 1919), 29. Sterrett, for example, told of a Marine in a hospital who had informed his doctor he knew he was “done for” but that at least the Germans could “kill us, but they can’t lick us.”
119 “Uncle Sam’s Money Pays for Marine Corps Advertising,” Printers’ Ink, 4 July 1918, 100-101. Copies of these advertisements can be seen in File 1070 (Advertising), HQMC General Correspondence, 1913-1938, RG 127, NARA.
Despite disseminating an increasingly focused and powerful image, the Corps began struggling to remain competitive by around 1916. The Army’s manpower needs were increasing dramatically, and both the Army and the Navy began to use publicity in a manner similar to the Bureau.\textsuperscript{120} In response, Marines unleashed a wealth of creative ideas to bring their institution into the limelight. While some ideas verged on

\textsuperscript{120} For suggestions of the better quality of the Corps’ recruiting material, see “Spokane Reporter Converted: Prefers Marines Because of their Picture Books,” \textit{Bulletin}, March 1916, 5.
outlandish, many represented the Corps’ traditional determination to do more with fewer resources. On one occasion, a party of Marines set out with journalists in tow to rid the New Jersey coast of sharks that had been terrorizing swimmers.\textsuperscript{121} The expedition did not result in any shark deaths. The story, however, was released through the AP wire, thus making its way to North Carolina, where one recruiter found himself besieged with applicants interested in joining the Corps to participate in similar expeditions.\textsuperscript{122} Another recruiter ignited a debate throughout Boston. After hearing a Civil War veteran bemoan the public’s ignorance of the national anthem, the recruiter alerted a Boston journalist, who published an article on the subject. After this article prompted a city-wide discussion, the recruiter took advantage of public interest to pass out 5000 small cards with the anthem’s lyrics and an abbreviated history of the Corps. Marines distributed all of the cards in less than an hour.\textsuperscript{123}

Not all of the ideas contributed to the \textit{Bulletin} focused solely on securing favorable public opinion, however. The suggestions of enlisted Marines had important effects on the institution’s practices and ceremonies. Many of these ideas sought to

\textsuperscript{121} “Expert Shark Hunters Organize for Crusade July 21, 1916,” \textit{The Montgomery Advertiser}, 21 July 1916, 10. An even more bizarre example is the publication of a Marine’s prophecy that World War I would end in 1916. The Marine was the afore-mentioned Sterrett, then a gunnery sergeant. For just two examples of this press release, see “Sergeant Predicts End of War and an Attack upon U.S,” \textit{The Grand Forks Daily Herald} (North Dakota), 31 Dec. 1915, 4 and “A Dire Prophecy,” \textit{Idaho Statesman}, 2 Jan. 1916, 2.


ensure that Marines remained connected to their institution. The Commandant, for example, adopted the suggestion that Marine retirements be celebrated with more “ceremony.”124 Recruiters believed that insuring the good will of retiring Marines would help to secure future recruits. Others suggested the formation of a national organization

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124 Sgt. John F. Cassidy, USMC, “Lack of Publicity,” Bulletin, June 1915, 5. Cassidy’s suggestion seems to have been a pragmatic one designed to revive an old tradition so that retiring Marines would leave the service with positive memories of the Corps, therefore leading to increased publicity for the Corps once the Marines returned home. Also see Gunnery Sgt. Edward C. Smith, USMC, “Securing Results; Retirement Order a Great Aid,” Bulletin, Feb. 1916, 11 and Sgt. George Kneller, USMC, “Ten Years Hence: The ‘Big Day’ Then and Now,” Bulletin, Aug. 1916, 3. Another Marine suggested that all Marines honorably discharged be presented with a pin upon leaving the service. Sgt. Leslie C. McLaughlin, USMC, “Distinctive Pin for Marines is a Novel Suggestion,” Bulletin, Sept. 1916, 10. By February 1917 an honorable discharge button was in use. See “Honorable Discharge Buttons,” Bulletin, Feb. 1917, 3. That former Marines did continue to take an interest in the Corps is evident. See “Our Letter Writing Friends Provide Much Material For Recruiting Argument,” Bulletin, Sept. 1916, 13. When the Corps’ highest-ranking enlisted Marine retired in 1915 he received “honors” normally only provided to officers. “After 30 Years in Service He Retires. They Honor Jimmy Deaver and They Do it up in Style When He Quits His,” Olympia Daily Recorder (Washington), 13 Nov. 1915, 1. It is possible that the Bureau released this article. Although Deaver retired at the Puget Sound Navy Yard, notice of his retirement was printed in other newspapers including “Marine Corps Veteran Retires on Full Pay,” Duluth News Tribune, 13 Nov. 1915, 13 and “Unusual Honors for Enlisted Men,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 13 Nov. 1915, 7. The Bureau seems to have issued a press release highlighting Deaver’s example as a way that a Marine could enter the service with “no capital” and by one’s “own efforts” could acquire a significant fortune. The article was accompanied by a photograph of Deaver standing in front of a dollar sign. “U. S. Marine Retires with Large Fortune Made in Real Estate,” San Jose Mercury Herald, 23 Nov. 1915, 9. Also see “With $100,000 Deaver Retires Form Marines,” Charlotte Daily Observer, 26 Nov. 1915, 9. The same article was published as “America’s Wealthiest Marine Retired after Long Service,” The Anaconda Standard (Montana), 24 Nov. 1915, 13. This article, however, was significantly shorter yet featured the same photograph included in the Bulletin. Deaver’s career had previously been highlighted on the pages of the Bulletin. See “Dean of Recruiters,” Bulletin, Dec. 1914, 5. That former Marines continued to be interested in the Corps, especially as World War I began to become more of an issue, is evident in the hundreds who sought to rejoin the Corps. At this time the Corps did not have a reserve. See “Hundreds of Ex U. S. Marines Volunteer For Service in the Old Corps in Case of Emergency,” Charlotte Observer, 30 June 1916, 1. Steps toward establishing a reserve would soon follow. See “To Open Training Camp for Marine Corps Reserves Captain Logan Foland Will be in Charge,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 9 July 9, 1916, 1.
for those with prior service in the Corps. Enlisted Marines seem to have taken a particular interest in such organizations. As the Bulletin noted, for example, Marines established an organization in 1915 for those who had served in the Spanish-American War. All of the organization’s committee members were enlisted Marines.

In providing a forum for discussion of historical and other matters, the Bulletin also helped solidify some of the Corps’ traditions. Captain Frank Evans, for example, noted that of all the services the Corps was the only institution to have its own “song.” He decried the fact, however, that so many different versions of the song circulated among Marines. The tendency of Marines to add verses to this song after each expedition, he claimed, only aggravated the problem. In hoping to “standardize” the


127 The “song” was finally solidified in the late 1920s. Capt. Frank E. Evans, USMC, “‘The Halls of Montezuma': Call for All Versions of Song,” Bulletin, Feb. 1916, 7. The Corps is now known as the only institution to have an institutional “hymn.” The title, “‘Marines’ Hymn’ Recalled,” however, suggests others were referring to it as a hymn already. See New York Times, 24 Apr. 1924, 3. One of the stanzas published in this article stated: “Admiration of the nation, / We’re the finest ever seen/ And we glory in the title of / United States Marine.” For other mentions of the “hymn”, see “The Marines’ Hymn,” The Daily Herald (Biloxi, MS), 5 May 1914, 7. A copy was published in a column of poetry after a Private Stratton Phillips stationed in Honolulu mailed the “hymn” to his hometown newspaper. “Poems, Old and New,” Colorado Springs Gazette, 2 May 1915, 10. Despite the Bureau’s efforts, the Corps’ traditions had yet to be standardized completely. Evans’ article seems to have inspired the Bureau to issue an article about the Corps’ song. See the very similar articles “Favorite Song of the Marines,” suggesting the article was a
song known as “The Halls of Montezuma,” Evans suggested purging the song of those verses containing “undignified or bombastic lyrics.” By 1914, for example, the hymn stated that the Marines were ‘the finest ever seen.” By the end of World War I, however, this part of the hymn had been replaced with a more modest statement about Marines guarding Heaven.

As much as the Bureau encouraged new ideas, it retained much of the foundation established by Collum and others, especially when it came to stressing the institution’s legacy. In seeking to “force” journalists to discuss Marines when they wrote about soldiers and sailors, one Bureau member hoped that such articles would no longer be characterized by the “utter exclusion of the oldest branch of the service” as was so typical.128 His emphasis on the Corps as the “oldest” military branch reflected Collum’s legacy in stressing its lineage as a justification for its continued existence.129

Bureau release: Wilkes-Barre Times, 25 Feb. 1916, 12; “Catchy Marching Song of U. S. Marines,” Columbus Daily Enquirer (Georgia), 29 Feb. 1916, 14; “U. S. Marine Corps Has Marching Song Distinctive of Self,” Salt Lake Telegram, 3 March 1916, 20. If the latter article’s headline was penned by a Marine recruiter, it suggests he sought to emphasize how the Corps differed from other organizations and had a song to match its unique identity. That it was identical to the other articles, however, suggests that the recruiter did not in this case tailor the press release as he saw fit. The Colorado Springs Gazette had referred to it as a “song” in 1914. “American Marine, Soldier of Sea, Makes Whole World His Stage,” 23 Jan. 1914, 12.


129 For other references to the importance of the Corps being the oldest branch, see Sgt. Edward A. Callan, USMC, “Following Them Up,” Bulletin, May 1915, 5.
Still, some began rethinking the traditional dependence on discussing the origins of Marines as far back as the ancient world. As late as 1914, articles printed in publications favorable to the Marine Corps continued to stress the institution’s roots in the “days of the Phoenician galleys.”\textsuperscript{130} By 1916, however, the Bulletin’s editor no longer believed that beginning articles with such distant references assured favorable reception.\textsuperscript{131}

Whereas Collum had hammered the same points home repeatedly, the Bureau tried any approach that might be of benefit. It issued a number of articles ranging from the humorous to the serious detailing why potential recruits had been rejected. The Bureau used humor as a way to get at the human-interest angle so welcomed by journalists.\textsuperscript{132} One story, for example, recounted how recruiters were on the verge of swearing in William James when, seeing a cat, he ran outside screaming in fear.\textsuperscript{133} The


\textsuperscript{133} “Afraid of a Cat Rejected as Marine,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 5 Feb. 1917, 1; “Wanted to Fight but Could Not Stand Cats,” \textit{Morning Olympian}, 10 Feb. 1917, 4. Another story recounted how a recruiter had made no mention to stop a potential recruit from leaving after the potential recruit began crying after hearing a sentimental song about mothers. “Recruit, Hearing ”Mother” Played, Weeps, Goes Home Refuses to Enlist after Listening Street to Street Piano,” \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}, 1 Jan. 1916, 1. The recruiter noted that someone who burst into tears upon hearing a song might not be the best candidate to endure the sound of “bursting shell[s] in battle.” In doing so, the Bureau reinforced the theme that it was the organization to join for real fighting. Other examples include “Recruit Couldn’t Pass Test but He Had One Good Puzzle,” \textit{Morning Olympian}, 13 April 1916, 4. Despite refusing overly-sentimental recruits, the Corps apparently felt it needed
Corps changed its mind about enlisting James. The Corps used its small size to its advantage. William James’ irrational fear of a harmless cat demonstrated that he was not a “real man” and thus unworthy of becoming a Marine. Marine posters had stated their desire to recruit “men” since the nineteenth century, but the addition of the word “real” suggested that only some men had what it took. 134 Despite such rhetoric, Marines took steps to ensure that worthy candidates received some help to meet the institution’s educational standards. Minnesota recruiters, for example, opened a “night school” for physically-qualified recruiters who had not received enough education.135

For all of its confidence that the Corps was the best military service and that a Marine “could do anything,” the institution took a decidedly more pragmatic approach to show it could be more sympathetic to civilian family members of Marines and even pets. See “Little Girl Pleaded for ‘Life’ of Dog,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 20 Oct. 1916, 6. The article was published in multiple newspapers suggesting it was a Bureau production. Such an article would have furthered the desire of some Marines to ensure that even children understood the role of the Corps. For example, see “Teach Children Duties Marine Corps,” Columbus Daily Enquirer, 15 March 1916, 1. The impetus for the article appears to have been Sgt. Frank Stubbs’ comments to a local newspaper about the need for citizens to understand that the Corps was “distinct” from the Army and the Navy.


135 “Young Men Study for Entry into Marine Corps,” Montgomery Advertiser, 10 Dec. 1916, 2. The article indicated that the night school would be expanded to the Corps’ recruiting stations throughout the country.
to its recruiting posters. Unlike the more idealistic posters it would issue in subsequent decades, the Corps continued to emphasize benefits such as pay and travel opportunities. Other recruiters stressed the educational advantages of the Corps. Many recruiters believed that the prospect of a paycheck or the opportunity to learn a trade was one of the best inducements the Corps had.

When it came to releasing articles to newspapers, the Bureau took far more creative steps. Some articles, for example, appear to have been designed to spark pride in local residents. After the Corps issued a list of those who had obtained an expert marksmanship rating, the Bureau released a skeleton article that recruiters could edit as they saw fit to include names of local Marines. One printed article cited the “many interesting experiences and adventures” of Oral R. Marvel, who was stationed in China. The article stressed that his officers considered his qualifying as a marksman as “little

short of marvelous” given that he was “scarcely more than a recruit.” In the future, they “expect[ed] him to break many marksmanship records.” Two other Marines located in different cities received almost identical commendations, suggesting that Marvel’s actions were not quite as exceptional as the article portrayed. Other articles mentioned one of the Marine’s local relatives, perhaps seeking to rectify the traditionally negative images of enlisted serviceman by demonstrating their hometown ties to presumably respectable citizens.140

Similarly, the suggestion that the Corps could make a man “better” reinforced the sense of belonging to an elite institution even as it offered recruits the sense that the Corps offered a practical road to self improvement.141 In many ways this message resonated with Americans because it “appeal[ed] to the deep-seated desire of Americans for middle-class status.”142 The Corps could stress that the Marines provided a path for

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141 For the idea that the Corps could improve a man see Gus R. Fisher, “Too Old to be a Marine,” Bulletin, July 1916, 14; “A Recruiter’s Varied Experiences,” Bulletin, Dec. 1914, 16. For a recruit that traveled a great distance to enlist, see “He Came Down from Alaska to Enlist,” Bulletin, Jan. 1917, 22. Sgt. Benjamin Sayers, USMC liked to use an admiral’s comment that the Corps was the “best and most efficiency military body.” See “Luck, Confidence and Ability are Working Tools of Successful Recruiters,” Bulletin, June 1916, 3. For others emphasizing that the Corps was the best military institution see Cpl. Fred W. Staehle, USMC, “On Booming Business,” Bulletin, Feb. 1916, 21.
142 Norris, Advertising, 47.
enlisted Marines to be commissioned as officers. As a result, it strongly resisted any suggestions that it was designed to reform reprobate characters or provide a last resort for the unemployed. Others suggested that challenging potential recruits to live up to the traditions and standards of the Corps helped secure future Marines. An “emotional” rather than a “rational” appeal would be the hallmark of American advertisers in the first decades of the twentieth century, and some of the Bureau’s articles certainly exemplified this approach. A “crack military body” was no “dumping ground for incorrigibles,” one headlines screamed to its readers. The Corps


144 “Wants No Rum Hound; Marine Corps Not Refuge for Dipsomaniacs,” The State (Wheeling, W. Va.), 11 Aug. 1916, 9; “Only Real Men Can Hope to Join Uncle Sam’s Carefully Trained Marine Corps. Four out of Five Applicants Fail,” Wilkes-Barre Times, 13 April 1916, 7; “Explain the Service to Everybody,” Bulletin, Jan. 1915, 13; Porch Climber Wants Liberty to Join Navy,” Idaho Statesman, 19 Nov. 1916, 1. Although the headline mentioned the Navy, the article was about the Marine Corps, which points to the continuing confusion among journalists about the Corps’ relationship to the Navy. The article stated that the Corps would prefer to eschew the prisoner’s skill with a rifle in preference for keeping its institution “uncontaminated.” Their claims to the contrary, for the use of alcohol in the Corps see Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 153. The Bureau, however, cited examples of the wholesome nature of Marines, citing one case of a Marine detachment that had voted 97 to 11 against restoring the canteen, which supplied liquor. See “Marines Vote Against Restoring Sale of Liquor in Their Ranks,” Morning Olympian, 31 March 1916, 1. For debates about alcohol in other organizations, see Paul Michel Taillon, “‘What We Want Is Good, Sober Men:’ Masculinity, Respectability, and Temperance in the Railroad Brotherhoods, c. 1870-1910, Journal of Social History 36 (Winter, 2002), 319-338.


146 Norris, Advertising, 44.
wanted only those who would work to “maintain” the Corps’ first-rate reputation, which it had begun to regard as secure by 1914, even if some members of the public remained ignorant of the institution. Recruiters, Sergeant Zanzig argued, had a responsibility to ensure they selected the recruits most likely to identity with the Corps, which, given its “wonderful” history, could “afford to be particular.”

While the debate encouraged by the Bulletin led to a variety of ideas, it did not necessarily help Marines create or solidify what professional advertisers sought: a trademark. One recruiter believed that a standard image associated with the Corps would be the best way to assure public recognition. He suggested the figure of the “Hiker,” which to him seemed “emblematic of an ideal Marine—attractive, rough and ready, prepared, and commanding respect.” The term “hiker” had gained popularity during the Corps’ service in the Philippines because of the distances Marines had to cover on foot while searching for insurgents. This recruiter’s vision of the model

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148 For a discussion of trademarks or branding, see Nancy F. Koehn, “Henry Heinz and Brand Creation in the Late Nineteenth Century: Making Markets for Processed Food,” The Business History Review 73 (Autumn, 1999), 349-393.
150 For example, officer Hiram Bearss was nicknamed “Hiking” for his service in the Philippines. For his biography see Clark, Hiram Iddings Bearss, 38 and 97. For other references to hiking see “Long Hike Made by U. S. Marines,” Wilkes-Barre Times, 11 Aug. 11, 1916, 2. The article stressed the ability of Marines during a “hike” in the Dominican Republic to adapt to unfavorable conditions in unfriendly settings. Another headline stressed how the “hike” demonstrated the Corps’ “ability.” See “Good on Land; Too Long March
Marine linked the institution to its expeditionary service on shore rather than its service aboard naval vessels. In a similar vein, others stressed the Corps’ appeal to a “prospective warrior.”

While recruiters might argue about trademarks on the pages of the Bulletin, the Bureau’s recruiting pamphlets seemed to stress the idea of the “soldier of the sea,” a theme that would have been largely meaningless if Roosevelt’s Executive Order 969 had remained in effect. Beginning in 1911, the Corps published a pamphlet entitled, U.S. Marines: Duties, Experiences, Opportunities, Pay. Although the Bureau made slight changes from edition to edition, for the most part it began each edition with a general summary of the institution’s duties, then moved on to discuss practical benefits, typical service, and other relevant aspects of military life. An early edition, for example, sought to ensure that potential recruits clearly understood the Corps’ unique role. Despite the inability of the public to distinguish between sailors and Marines, the pamphlet stated, people recognized the Marine “as being a man who is thoroughly onto the job, and lets it go at that.” Whatever mission the Corps fulfilled, it was up to the task. After

explaining what a Marine was and did, the pamphlet reprised Collum’s techniques of linking the service to the ancient Greeks and the Royal Marines.153 These paragraphs were omitted from subsequent editions of recruiting pamphlets, perhaps as the institution became more confident of its success in projecting its image. Almost every edition, however, featured Rudyard Kipling’s descriptions of the British Royal Marines (Figure 11):

An’ after I met ‘im all over the world, a doin’ all kinds of things
Like landin’ ‘issel with a Gatlin’ gun to talk to them ‘eathen kings;
‘E sleeps in an ‘ammick instead of a cot, an’ ‘e drills with the deck on a slew . . .
‘E’s a sort of bloomin’ cosmopolouse soldier and sailor too.154

The phrase “soldiers of the sea” allowed the Corps to distinguish itself from the Army and the Navy while stressing its diverse duties. The Bureau reinforced this theme with the concept of “two-in-one” service, which it hoped would appeal to those seeking adventure.155

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153 The Bureau did communicate with the Royal Marines on at least one occasion. See “Hands across the Sea,” Bulletin, May 1916, 30.
Figure 11: “An’ after I met ‘im all over the world.”

Landings of the type mentioned in the Kipling poem also increasingly graced the cover of these pamphlets (Figure 12). One Marine described the cover illustration as picturing “four stalwart Marines charging over a Robinson Crusoe island, with their rifles all set. A palm tree or two swayed in the breeze. Beyond was the blue sea, with a
grim battleship riding at anchor.”156 This romanticized depiction of the Marines not only stressed the inducement of glamorous travel but suggested the variety of their duties. From the Bureau’s perspective, at least, it was “much more satisfactory to be a Marine than a bluejacket” because one was always “charging gallantly into something or other, and the papers at home talk about you.”157 Part of the reason that newspapers mentioned the Marines so frequently, of course, was the Bureau’s success in flooding newspapers with articles about the Corps.

As the Corps’ first institutional magazine, the Bulletin filled a particular institutional need. It provided a forum for recruiters to discuss the best methods for securing quality recruits. And, until the establishment of additional magazines by 1916, it drew attention from other Marines who enjoyed reading it.158 Another ramification of the Bulletin’s very success was realization of the need to provide a service magazine for...

157 Ibid.
all Marines. One sergeant expressed his support for this idea because he was tired of reading national military publications only to find the Corps relegated to a small section.\textsuperscript{159} Suggestions poured in for the new magazine’s title. Corporal Thomas W. Dench looked to the Royal Marines’ publication “Globe and Laurel” and suggested “Hemisphere and Eagle.”\textsuperscript{160} Sergeant James Taite believed that “no more appropriate name could be given than ‘Semper Fidelis,’ the motto of [the] grand old Corps.”\textsuperscript{161}

\textsuperscript{161} “Semper Fidelis,” Bulletin, July 1915, 16.
Similarly, Marines of all ranks worked to ensure favorable publicity for the Corps. In a condolence letter to a Marine’s father, First Sergeant Francis Fisk cautioned the father not to share his letter with any publication. He explained that his request was not because he was “ashamed of what I have said” but because “we (the U.S. Marines) don’t care for publicity of that sort.”\textsuperscript{162} Fisk did not provide his reasoning for such a request, but to include such an appeal in a condolence letter suggested the extent to which he considered the Corps’ reputation to be of the utmost importance.

Fisk’s letter also represents the extent to which individual Marines believed that the public remained ignorant of the Corps. Fisk felt it necessary to explain what a Marine was even to a family member. As a result, Fisk specified in his letter to the father that his “son was a mighty fine Marine (soldier).” Marines recognized the confusion that attached to their ambiguous military role. As late as 1916, some of the Corps’ members still assumed that the term “Marine” was not yet self-explanatory despite the Bureau’s best efforts.

\textsuperscript{162} 1st Sgt Francis Fisk, USMC to B.C. Awkerman, 21 Aug. 1916, John J. Awkerman Papers, MCASC. For another example see Capt. Frederick Henry Delano, USMC to Mother, 24 Feb. 1914, Franklin H. Delano Papers, USAHMI. After his Marines participated in a Mardi Gras event while stopping in the port city of Mobile, Alabama, Delano wrote that although he might not enjoy such events—in part because they made it more difficult for him to maintain control of his Marines—he “suppose[d] they have to be done to keep the service in the public eye.” For a description of the events, see “King’s Parade Opens Mardi Gras at Mobile. Number of Visitors Estimated at 20,000—Marines and Jackies in March,” \textit{Columbus Daily Enquirer} (Georgia), 24 Feb. 1914, 1.
In 1927, Marine officer Smedley D. Butler drew on his experiences as a major during the Veracruz Incident as the basis for his novel Walter Garvin in Mexico. As depicted in the novel, First Lieutenant Walter Garvin, Butler’s fictional hero, accepted a dangerous spy assignment deep in Mexico’s interior. In response, an admiring admiral wondered, “Is there anything an American marine won’t try?” The admiral’s comment represented the way that the relations between the two institutions had begun to change, at least from the perspective of many Marines. Marines depicted themselves as capable of any and all tasks. Above all, though, they were “always fightin’ men,” as one poet rhymed.

Marines increasingly suggested that sailors should leave the fighting to them. This argument arose out of tension between the two branches that had originated in late-

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nineteenth-century debates regarding the purpose of Marines aboard ship. Butler’s vignette, then, reflected views developed well before the novel’s publication in 1927. Marines like Butler would continue to draw upon the Veracruz Incident’s importance long after the short military operation concluded.165

The themes that Butler stressed in 1927 represented the exaggerated direction Marines had begun taking in representing themselves early in the twentieth century. In the months subsequent to the Veracruz Incident, the Corps even issued the first edition of a pamphlet entitled The U.S. Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon. This pamphlet celebrated the accomplishments of Marines by reprinting various editorials and cartoons while largely ignoring the Navy’s participation.

Individual Marines propagated similar views stressing their abilities. In wording that anticipated Butler’s fictional anecdote, a journalist in Veracruz asked Colonel John A. Lejeune if “there was anything the marine could not do.” Lejeune replied that, in fact, the answer to the question was yes. Escorting the reporter over to look at the variety of duties occupying his Marines, he stated that they were incapable only of being “idle.”166

165 As one unknown author described them, “They are the sort of men who can take Vera Cruz or form a guard of honor for the Prince of Wales and do both jobs shipshape. They are the blood brothers to the French Legion, . . . the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police and the Texas Rangers. They are princes of good fellows, and they’re wild cats when they’re riled. See “U.S. Marine Corps: A Man’s Game,” USMCRPB, 1921, Thomas Granley Papers, MCASC.
166 “U. S. Marines Work in Any Position,” The Philadelphia Inquirer; 14 June 1914, 10. The article also noted that no other service member had “worked harder . . . nor endured as many hardships” as Marines.
Marines seized opportunities to demonstrate to the public the many roles they could fill in serving the nation.

Recalling his time in the Corps, Lejeune noted that he viewed the institution’s successes in Veracruz as “crucial” to its future. But what made a two-day military operation followed up by a relatively short and easy military occupation so important? Lejeune did not specify. As becomes evident when exploring sources written during or after the Veracruz Incident, however, Marines drew upon this operation to demonstrate their superiority to sailors. Not only did individual Marines represent themselves as capable of undertaking landing operations, they did so in a way that portrayed sailors as being incompetent in these situations. The Publicity Bureau amplified the voices of individual Marines, seizing on favorable articles to reinforce its improving and strengthening image.

Between the Spanish-American War and World War I, Marines and sailors had participated in similar operations throughout the Caribbean. Over time the Corps increasingly became an occupation force, including in Cuba (1906-1909) and Nicaragua (1912-1933). In Veracruz Marines and sailors would gain control of the city, and Marines and soldiers would subsequently occupy it for six months. Soon after, the Corps began its long-term occupations of Haiti (1915-1934) and the Dominican Republic (1916-1924).

Marines had a number of responsibilities in carrying out these occupations. They protected American property and lives, undertook military operations against insurgents, and trained indigenous troops to act as constabulary forces. Training constabulary forces to act as militarized policemen was in some ways a natural outgrowth of one of their traditional roles as military policemen aboard naval vessels and guards at Navy Yards.

Some Marines might have wanted to believe that their participation in such efforts signified that they were the best soldiers. In reality, though, the government’s decision to send Marines to trouble spots around the world was practical: western powers viewed Marines as international policemen, part of a transient gunboat diplomacy rather than as members of long-term occupying armies. Gunboat diplomacy relied on the use of naval power and the threat of military force to convince weak nations to agree to stronger nations’ peacetime demands. Marines thus functioned as the stick in President Theodore Roosevelt’s “big stick” diplomacy, which combined more formal diplomatic efforts with the threat of military force.

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168 The term gunboat diplomacy became increasingly popular in the nineteenth century. For the view of Marines as international policemen, see Littleton Waller to Frank Bearss, 28 June 1901, Littleton Waller Papers, Marine Corps Archives and Special Collections, Gray Research Center, Quantico, VA (hereafter MCASC) and Hans Schmidt, *Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1987), 44.
Consequently, the Marine Corps, the smallest and least known of the military services, repeatedly found itself in the spotlight during American “police actions.” The Navy and the Corps might serve on the ground together, but media representations often focused on depicting the Marines’ active role in carrying out U.S. foreign policy. One newspaper cartoon, for example, showed boats full of Marines in the act of landing in Haiti. Sailors acted more passively, with a naval officer observing the landing from the ship’s bow and a group of sailors throwing an anchor overboard (Figure 13).169

In 1914, however, the Marine Corps and the Navy shared the spotlight during the Veracruz Incident. President Woodrow Wilson had been frustrated with the Mexican Revolution, which had begun in 1910. After General Victoriano Huerta orchestrated the murder of President Francisco I. Madero and then succeeded him, Wilson called for Huerta to resign. Huerta refused. Ignoring the traditional diplomatic practice of recognizing governments that displayed a modicum of stability, Wilson determined instead to unseat Huerta from his new position.

169 For a similar cartoon focused more on advancing American economic interests see “Uncle Sam, the Admirer of U.S. Marines, Should Own This One,” Baltimore American, 7 January 1912, 12.
Tensions increased during the Tampico Affair of April 9, 1914. The Navy had been sitting offshore in case it needed to protect American lives and property during the revolution. When Mexican troops ordered a handful of U.S. sailors on a supply run off a small vessel at gunpoint and subsequently detained them, Rear Admiral Henry T. Mayo, USN, demanded a 21-gun salute as a formal apology. The Mexican government
demurred at such a request, arguing that the arrest had been a regrettable mistake. Mexican troops had assumed the sailors were pro-revolutionary troops. They had detained the Americans less than an hour before higher-ranking officers could resolve the situation which had resulted, in part, because of a language barrier.

Wilson supported Mayo’s demand. Perhaps conveniently, he viewed the arrest in light of similar incidents, suggesting the Mexican government did not respect American rights.³⁺ Wilson received the excuse to use military force that he had been looking for upon learning that a German ship would be arriving in Veracruz on April 21. The ship carried weapons for Huerta, thus breaking the U.S.-imposed arms embargo on Mexico.³⁷ Wilson therefore resolved to land troops in order to stop the shipment’s arrival. Because the Navy did not want to disrespect German sovereignty by seizing the weapons from the German ship, it decided to violate Mexican sovereignty instead. The Navy would capture the customs house to prevent the ship from unloading its cargo.

Despite expecting little resistance, naval officers still wanted more troops for an invasion. Threatening weather, however, compelled Rear Admiral Frank F. Fletcher, the highest-ranking naval officer at Veracruz, to begin the invasion without the desired

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³⁷ Ironically, the weapons had been purchased in the United States from Remington. John S.D. Eisenhower, Intervention! The United States and the Mexican Revolution, 1913-1917 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), 117.
reinforcements.172 Beginning the morning of April 21 about 11 a.m., the Naval Brigade commanded by Captain W.R. Rush, USN began landing. The Naval Brigade was divided into the First Marine Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Wendell C. Neville, USMC and the First Seaman Regiment under Lieutenant Commander Allen Buchanan, USN. The First Marine Regiment had 22 officers and 578 Marines while the First Seaman Regiment had 30 officers and 570 sailors.173 Of those troops 502 Marines and 285 sailors would participate in the initial landing.

Sailors received orders to secure the primary objective, the Custom House.174 Within the hour the landing party had established a headquarters, captured the post office and telegraph station, and set up a post for signaling messages to naval vessels in the harbor. Marines focused on securing the train station to limit the arrival of Mexican reinforcements.

The Mexican government had ordered regular troops to withdraw, making the initial landing very easy. Mexican Army officer General Gustov Mass, however, had armed local militia troops and prisoners to resist the U.S. landing.175 By noon these and other Mexicans began shooting at the landing party. A sailor signaling atop a rooftop to

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174 Sweetman, 67.
175 The prisoners ironically had been imprisoned because they had resisted military service. Quirk, *Affair of Honor*, 80.
a ship in the harbor quickly fell dead, the first American casualty. Americans would not capture any additional ground that day.

Despite this resistance, the U.S. gained control of the town in two days, aided by the landing of additional troops early the next morning. These sailors and Marines had almost immediately received sniper fire. As a result, naval officers determined they had to gain control of the entire town to put an end to the sniping. Going house to house, U.S. troops had control of the city before noon that day.

Some historians have suggested that the Marines handled the resistance they encountered relatively easily while sailors faced more difficulties. According to Marine historian Allan Millet, Marines “fought ashore with more skill and fewer casualties than the seamen’s regiments.” Indeed, over the course of the two days the Navy would suffer more casualties than the Marines. Fifty-nine sailors and naval officers were wounded compared to thirteen Marines, and fifteen sailors died compared to four Marines.

U.S. sailors took many of their losses from the steep resistance they encountered at the Mexican Naval Academy, where cadets ambushed them. In the best argument for naval incompetence, Captain E.A. Anderson, USN, ordered his sailors to march up the

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176 Three other sailors would be wounded or killed in the same location that day as they kept communication open between ship and shore.
177 Eisenhower, Intervention!, 116.
178 Millett, Semper Fidelis, 173.
streets on April 22 in perfect formation, much to the dismay of his younger officers. In doing so, Anderson ignored the more cautious advice of Captain W.R. Rush regarding the best way of proceeding through the streets. It could be argued, then, that the Navy’s most costly blunder during the Veracruz Incident demonstrated faulty and inexperienced leadership rather than the inability of sailors to fight. Despite more than three decades in the Navy, Anderson had never experienced ground combat. Other sailors performed far more admirably. One sailor, for example, drew sniper fire in his small vessel, which enabled naval gunners located on ships to see and destroy the snipers’ positions

Given the few incidents of actual combat, it is possible that the perspective of those Marines who believed they had fought better than sailors has influenced the secondary literature to some extent. Robert Quirk suggests the Navy fought “crudely and ineptly—if with valor.” One of his sources for this conclusion, though, is Old Gimlet Eye, Smedley Butler’s memoir co-written with journalist Lowell Thomas. Not only was this source produced about twenty years after the invasion, but Butler was well known for disliking the Navy. As a captain, for example, Smedley Butler

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179 Sweetman, Landing at Veracruz, 103.
180 Eisenhower, Intervention!, 120.
181 Ibid., 116-117. For other examples of sailors’ proficiency and bravery, see Sweetman, Landing at Veracruz, 110-111.
182 Quirk, Affair of Honor, 95.
demonstrated a lively disdain for the Navy. Reporting on a military exercise in 1902, Butler wrote that he wanted to prove to the Navy that Marines “could stand anything without a complaint. . . . In three days and a half we had done as much as the Navy had in three weeks and had cut through rock that they had pronounced impassable without blasting.” The Corps would use the argument that Marines could complete any task more effectively and efficiently as a justification for its existence as well as a simple way to convey what it did to the public.

Marines in Veracruz certainly took this rhetorical approach. They depicted an image consistent with the Publicity Bureau, suggesting that the Bureau’s efforts resonated with individual Marines. In normally formulaic after-action reports, Marines distinguished the Corps from the Navy to find it lacking. Captain William Harllee’s report exemplified this tendency. He noted how the “only case of excessive drinking was by a man re-enlisted from another service.” Suggesting that men of other military services could not meet the Corps’ high disciplinary standards, Harllee recommended that the Corps stop recruiting men who had served in the Army or Navy.  

184 Capt. William Harllee, USMC to Col. John A. Lejeune, USMC, “Report on operations at Vera Cruz, Mexico, April 21st, 1914 et. seq.,” 1 May 1914, Robert Heinl Papers, MCASC. Naval officers reported favorably on the behavior of the troops. See Sweetman, Landing at Veracruz, 144.
The Corps ideally might expect more of its Marines, but that did not guarantee Marines would meet these standards. Despite the Navy being much larger than the Corps, more Marines than sailors were brought to trial for a number of offenses in 1914. These offenses included assaulting or threatening to assault an officer, disobeying an officer’s order, and drunkenness on duty. During the 1913 fiscal year fifteen sailors were court martialed for incidents involving drunkenness compared to twenty-four Marines.\(^{185}\) Likewise, in the 1914 fiscal year the Judge Advocate General reported that it had court martialed an equal number of Marines and sailors for drunkenness.\(^{186}\) These figures suggest that Harllee’s comments represented some wishful thinking on his part.

Whether or not Marines behaved better than sailors in actuality, Marines expressed the belief that the Corps produced the best-disciplined soldiers. As Colonel Lejeune noted in a private letter to Commandant Barnett: “So far as I can learn there was not one case of over-excitement or nervousness, or anything resembling nervousness on the part of a single individual. All officers and men were perfectly cool, deliberate, and courageous.”\(^{187}\) From their perspective, Marines acquired these traits through better training and marksmanship. One Marine officer recollected that the sailors just

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\(^{186}\) *Ibid.*, 104. Twenty-six sailors and Marines were court martialed for this offense in each branch. The Judge Advocate divided drunkenness into several categories. The categories have been combined in the numbers cited here.

\(^{187}\) Quoted in Col. John Lejeune to General George Barnett, 22 May 1914, George Barnett Papers, MCASC.
“rush[ed] through the streets” while Marines drew on their “training in Indian warfare,” going through the houses with pick axes rather than exposing themselves in the streets.\footnote{Albert Catlin, \textit{With the Help of God and a Few Marines} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1919), 255. Quirk describes a similar tactic, albeit with more tempered wording. Quirk, \textit{Affair of Honor}, 100.} Marines also stressed the Navy’s poor marksmanship. After sailors erroneously fired on Marines, a number of officers recommended that sailors be put back aboard ship as soon as possible.\footnote{Clark, \textit{Hiram Iddings Bearss}, 118. The accidental shooting of a Marine by a high-strung sailor performing guard duty at night probably enhanced this feeling. See “Bravery of Badger’s Men,” \textit{New York Times}, 24 Apr. 1914, 2. One Marine wrote home informing his parents that about six Marines had been killed, two due to the mistakes of sailors. “Local Boy Writes from Mexico,” \textit{Aberdeen Daily News} (South Dakota), 1 May 1914, 5. Also see “What Ryan Saw at Vera Cruz,” \textit{Los Angeles Times}, 7 May 1914, 12. For the eagerness of some Marines to shoot without orders, see Harllee, \textit{Marine from Manatee}, 152. For issues between the Navy and Marines regarding the cessation of friendly fire, see 153.} Similar occurrences elsewhere in the Caribbean reinforced this belief. Smedley Butler regretted what he considered the Navy’s undisciplined fire in Haiti, noting that the sailors had been “shooting at everything that walks.”\footnote{Thomas, \textit{Old Gimlet Eye}, 202. For a similar suggestion made by a sailor about Marines, although in regard to hunting, see “Surveying in Moro Land,” \textit{Our Navy} (Aug. 1914), 54-55: 55.} As stated previously, Butler relished the opportunity to criticize the Navy, especially if it made the Corps look better. Butler believed that these sailors could improve, however, simply by serving closely with Marines and thereby acquiring some of their attributes. Marines used the claim to be better marksman as an important distinguishing factor between themselves and sailors.

The way that Marines interpreted their performance at Veracruz helped to reinforce the argument that sailors should focus on their nautical duties rather than
seeking to become more soldierly. This debate had begun in the nineteenth century with
the transition from sail-powered to steam-powered vessels. While from today’s vantage
point it might seem natural that Marines would be tasked with ground combat more so
than sailors, this development was not a natural one. To argue that technology dictated
these developments is to miss the extent to which naval officers sought to create a more
cohesive institutional culture for the Navy.

These arguments prompted Marines to suggest that they could outfight sailors.
One Marine officer even believed that naval officers would agree that Marines had
outperformed sailors. Lieutenant Colonel Wendell Neville, who had commanded the
First Marine Regiment at Veracruz, hoped to see increased numbers of Marines aboard
ships so that sailors would not have to be landed ashore during military operations.
Neville’s opinion contrasted with the view of some naval officers that Marines should be
transported when the need arose rather than being a permanent fixture aboard
battleships. Neville, however, confidently stated his belief that naval officers would
agree with him.191 Rather than limiting Marines to transports, Neville advocated
increasing one of the Corps’ traditional roles at sea.192 Drawing on the institution’s

Marines ashore at Veracruz, Mexico from April 21, 1914 to April 30, 1914,” 11 May 1914, George Reid
Papers, MCASC.
192 Indeed, some naval officers probably would have agreed with Neville. Commander Yates Stirling wrote
that sailors simply could never be trained as extensively to fight on land as Marines due to their naval
success at Veracruz, Neville sought to augment Marines’ roles aboard naval vessels in a way that harkened back to more recent debates between naval and Marine officers. As discussed already, in November of 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt had issued Executive Order 969. Ultimately, however, Congress ensured more Marines would serve aboard ships than before. Neville’s views, then, did not represent a new development. Rather, they epitomized the war of words waged between some naval and Marine officers since the 1890s.

Articles published in the Bulletin regarding Veracruz exemplified this approach, as well as the tendency of some Marines to suggest exaggerated interpretations of their contributions. Sergeant A.S. Campbell explained how Marines landed first at Veracruz, demonstrating their unique training as a “mobile, straight-shooting expeditionary force.” His account ignored the reality that sailors and Marines had participated in the same landing party. It represented the way that Marines bombastically sought to erase 

duties. See Commander Yates Stirling, USN, Fundamentals of Naval Service (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1917), 479. Stirling titled this particular chapter “The Sailor as a Soldier,” suggesting how naval officers were still debating how soldierly sailors should be.
sailors from the record or make claims that improved the Corps’ image at the Navy’s expense.\textsuperscript{193}

Campbell suggested that Marines’ actions had made naval participation in the occupation virtually irrelevant. They had “paved the way” for sailors. During the initial phase of the occupation, moreover, Marines “had the situation so well in hand that the bluejackets had been returned to their ships.”\textsuperscript{194} Campbell conveyed the same attitude as Neville and other Marines, arguing that Marines could take care of matters without assistance from sailors. In reality, though, the removal of sailors had nothing to do with the Marines’ accomplishments and everything to do with the fact that naval officers needed the sailors back aboard their vessels to maintain readiness.\textsuperscript{195} Similarly, Captain Frank Evans made soldiers appear almost superfluous. He noted that Marines left little for the soldiers who arrived to assist with the occupation but to “police and clean” the streets of Veracruz.\textsuperscript{196}

Some historians have suggested that contemporary newspaper articles conveyed a similar perspective. Allan Millett argues that newspaper correspondents largely

\textsuperscript{193} This claim was made elsewhere in the \textit{Bulletin}. See Sgt. Francis E. Turin, USMC, “Suggested Handbill,” Dec. 1916, 26. For a Marine who claimed sailors and Marines landed contemporaneously see Catlin, 254. Also see \textit{Annual Reports of the Navy Dept.} (1914), 141.

\textsuperscript{194} Sergeant A.S. Campbell, USMC, “Workin’ the Suburbs,” \textit{Bulletin}, May 1915, 3

\textsuperscript{195} \textit{Annual Reports of the Navy Dept.} (1915), 141; “Funston to Land at Vera Cruz To-Day,” \textit{New York Times}, 27 Apr. 1914, 3; Quirk, 106-7; Sweetman, \textit{Landing at Veracruz}, 125.

focused on the Corps’ exploits even though more sailors than Marines were present by the second day of operations.\footnote{Millett, \textit{Semper Fidelis}, 174.} As Millett does not point to any specific articles, it is difficult to determine how he arrived at this conclusion. Certainly, numerous newspaper headlines printed prior to the landing at Veracruz pointed to Marines being sent to the fleet without mentioning sailors.\footnote{Examples of such headlines are numerous. A few include: “Marines Ready to Seize Road to Mexico City,” \textit{New York Times}, 24 April 1914, 1; “Battle Scenes at Ojinaga, That Rebels Are Storming. Double Marines on U. S. Warships off East Mexico,” \textit{The Philadelphia Inquirer}, 9 Jan. 1914, 1; “Marines Ordered from the Zone to Reinforce U. S. Ships; Department Says Change is Made,” \textit{Miami Herald Record}, 9 Jan. 1914, 1; “Uncle Sam Will Not Land Marines at Vera Cruz If Huerta Collapses,” \textit{The Bellingham Herald} (Bellingham, Washington), 26 Jan. 1914, 1.} Some of these articles suggested, as discussed earlier, that journalists assumed Marines would be at the forefront of such military operations. Others simply pointed to troop movements rather than highlighting the possibility of action for Marines alone.

Newspaper articles covering the actual landing, however, rarely singled Marines out at the expense of sailors. These articles also seldom stated the precise number of representatives from each service.\footnote{“3 Sailors Killed, 25 Wounded in New Vera Cruz Fight,” \textit{Washington Post}, 24 April 1914, 1; Henry M. Hyde, “Record of Uncle Sam’s Week of Activities against Mexico,” \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune}, 26 April 1914, 4.} For the most part journalists made little distinction between the contributions of sailors and Marines. In some cases, journalists even praised the bluejackets’ courage and marksmanship.\footnote{One article did suggest that sailors “behaved as well under fire as the marines” implying that some did expect Marines to outperform bluejackets in military operations of this nature. For articles that mentioned}
In the months immediately following the Veracruz Incident, however, the Corps received more favorable publicity. The increased attention probably resulted from the Publicity Bureau’s practice of flooding newspapers with press releases. Various articles praised Marines in ways that erased sailors’ contributions. One article explained how nearly 3500 Marines had captured Veracruz in four hours, inaccurately depicting the time it took to subjugate the city as well as ignoring the presence of sailors altogether.\(^{201}\)

A June issue of *The World’s Work* similarly featured multiple photographs depicting the bluejackets and Marines but did not make any qualitative comments suggesting one service performed better than the other, see “American Flag Again Flies Over Vera Cruz,” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 April 1914, 1; “Wilson Faces War with a United Mexico,” *Los Angeles Times*, 23 April 1914, 11; “Deadly American Marksmen Kill Mexicans By Scores as Battle Rages in Streets and on Rooftops of City,” *Washington Post*, 22 April 22, 4. An Associated Press article printed on April 23 received a wide gamut of headlines ranging from “Vera Cruz Quieted by Sharp Shelling and Gallant Work of the Bluejackets,” *The Atlanta*, 23 April 1914, 1; “Twelve Marines Slain in ‘Peaceful’ Occupation”, *Los Angeles Times*, 23 April 1914, 15. The article “Days of Fighting in Vera Cruz”, *Los Angeles Times*, 24 April 1914, 13 stated that the “most spirited action” of the day was the conquest of the Naval Academy which, once completed, allowed the sailors to continue on.

Another article’s sub-headline stated that “U.S. Marines landed without opposition” but continued with the statement that after the Mexicans made up their mind to fight back the “Bluejackets . . . Poured in Such a Fire that Mexicans Were Soon in Disorder.” See “United States Has Seized Vera Cruz 4 U.S. Marines Killed, 20 Wounded, Over 200 Mexicans Killed in Fight,” *The Atlanta*, 22 April 1914, 1. Other headlines that mentioned both sailors and Marines without making any distinctions between the two included: “Take All of Vera Cruz: Americans Complete the Occupation of the City Today following the Arrival of Re-Enforcement,” *Kansas City Star*, 22 April 1914, 1; “Stars And Stripes Now Floats over Vera Cruz. Four Americans Killed 20, Wounded; 200 Mexicans Dead,” *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 22 April 1914, 1; “Vivid Description of Vera Cruz Told by Herald’s Correspondent United Press Writer Gives Thrilling Account,” *The Daily Herald* (Biloxi, MS), 13 May 1914, 8. One article did reverse the more usual listing of bluejackets and then Marines. See “Conflict between United States and Mexico Began Tuesday,” *Perry Republican* (Oklahoma), 23 April 1914, 1.

“taking of Vera Cruz by American Marines.”\footnote{“The Taking of Vera Cruz by American Marines,” The World’s Work (June 1914), 126-7.} The issue did not include similar photographs of sailors.

Other articles rewrote earlier incidents in the Corps’ history to highlight Marines’ contributions while expunging sailors from the historical record. Well-known war correspondent James F.J. Archibald and Berton Braley wrote an article entitled “Soldiers and Sailors, Too” that was published in Colliers’ a month after the capture of Veracruz. Only briefly mentioning Veracruz, it recounted a number of the Corps’ historical contributions. The article explained how Marines could handle any military duties with which they were tasked. This approach coincided with the interview Colonel John A. Lejeune had given to a journalist, as previously discussed. The article also expanded on the various “firsts” that Marines were so keen to stress.

Like those Marines who submitted articles to the Bulletin making claims that Marines had landed first, this article stressed the achievements of Marines while downplaying those of sailors. The article mentioned, for example, how the Navy’s “first battle” had been “won entirely” by Marines.\footnote{James F. J. Archibald and Berton Braley, “‘Soldiers and Sailors, Too,’” Collier’s, 23 May 1914, 12-13 and 30.} Archibald and Braley did not state which
battle they referred to, but it seems likely they meant the capture of an English fort in New Providence, Bahamas in April 1776.²⁰⁴

If Archibald and Braley had simply focused on this event as a “first” in the Corps’ history this interpretation would not be novel. After all, the Corps’ only published institutional history took this view. As Marine officer Richard Collum explained in *History of the United States Marine Corps*,

[o]n this occasion, the first that had ever occurred in the regular American Navy, “the Marines under Captain Nichols behaved with a spirit and steadiness that have distinguished the Corps from that hour down to the present moment.”

The exact “first” that Collum sought to celebrate is unclear. He simply could have viewed it as the Corps’ first landing party, or perhaps he referred to the first capture of a foreign objective.²⁰⁵ Whether it constitutes the first battle which the Corps won single-

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²⁰⁴ Captain William E. Parker, USMC also wrote that this battle had been “won by the Marines.” See “The United States Marine Corps,” *New Outlook*, 25 Nov. 1914, 687. Earlier accounts had been more sanguine. One article suggested more fairly that Marines took a “major part” in the landing. See “The Marines and the President’s Order,” *The Outlook*, 23 Jan. 1909, 132.


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handedly for the Navy, however, appears doubtful. Even Marine historian Robert Heinl, an ardent supporter of the Corps, did not consider this event to constitute real battle.206 After all, the commanding Marine officer at the landing encountered little resistance.207 Even if it could be considered the Navy’s first battle, however, it would have been incorrect to assert that the Corps had won the battle single-handedly. As the naval officer who ordered the landing wrote in his after-action report, two hundred Marines had landed under command of a Marine officer while fifty sailors had landed under command of a naval officer.208

Just as Marines suggested not only that they had landed first in Veracruz and had made the most critical contributions, some Marines rewrote history to imply that Marines had always acted thusly since the Navy’s very first battle. This historical representation helped to counter the lingering belief maintained by some people that, as one Marine sergeant quoted in the Archibald and Braley article explained, Marines were “supernumeraries—kind of ornamental decorations around a ship.”

206 Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 6.
207 The Marines encountered “alarmed” residents, and the occupants of the fort quickly fled after firing three shots. See “Extract of a letter from a captain of marines on board the ship Alfred, dated New-London, April 10,” The Remembrancer, or, Impartial repository of public events, part two (London: J. Almon, 1776), 212-213.
208 See “Extract of a letter from Esek Hopkins, Esq; commander in chief of the American fleet, to the President of the Congress, dated on board the ship Alfred, New-London harbour, April 9, 1776,” The Remembrancer, or, Impartial repository of public events, part two (London: J. Almon, 1776), 211-212.
The Corps now suggested its history demonstrated how the Navy owed much of its success to the fighting Marines. The third edition of *U.S. Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*, published in 1917, adopted the approach of Archibald and Braley. In a new addition to the pamphlet, a section entitled “Historical Sketch” proclaimed that at New Providence the “first battle of the American Navy . . . was fought and won by the Marines.”209

This interpretation was both consistent and inconsistent with the foundation established by Collum’s *History of the United States Marine Corps* published in 1890 and 1903. On the one hand, Collum sought to provide a straight-forward and impartial commentary of the Corps’ contributions in contrast to the twentieth-century Publicity Bureau’s willingness to twist history to suit its purposes. On the other hand, this emphasis on being first reflected the claim, however shaky, that Collum had made for the Corps being the oldest U.S. military service.

Still, *The Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon*, first published in 1914 to capitalize on the Veracruz Incident, might have appeared to share Collum’s approach by virtue of its format.210 Page after page sung the praises of the Corps’ achievements, its long history, and its unique service to the nation. Nothing appeared to be written by a Marine

except for the obvious exception of the institution’s hymn. As a result, a reader might have been more inclined to accept the sentiments expressed in the pamphlet as produced by unbiased journalists than if Marines had written the articles.

The editorials reflected the extent to which the Bureau and journalists more generally drew on the historical foundation Collum had established. In the first edition of History, for example, Collum had stressed the Corps’ origins within the framework of the American Revolution. In his second edition, however, he pushed the origins further back to the first colonial Marines of 1740.211

One editorialist used a similar approach. The article claimed that the Corps had yet to receive proper appreciation despite having “borne the brunt of the fighting” throughout the nation’s “naval history.”212 The editorial thus legitimized the Corps’ claim to be “always fightin’ men” in regard to its long historical record. Marines were not just always occupied with fighting current conflicts, but they had always been engaged in this manner. Like the Archibald and Braley article that explained how Marines had won the Navy’s first major battle, this editorial again ignored sailors.

211 Technically the first edition was published under the name of Almy Aldrich, a journalist. Collum, having been obliged to leave the country prior to his work’s publication, had to leave the editing to Aldrich. Unhappy with the final version, he made some changes and published it again in 1890, this time under his name.

212 “Our Marines no Strangers in Mexico,” editorial in New York Telegram, 23 April 1914. Reprinted in The Marines (“Soldiers of the Sea”) in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon (New York: USMCRPB, 1914), n.p. I have not found any evidence to support that these editorials were written by the Bureau and then reprinted by the newspapers but, given the Bureau’s practice of sending out press releases, it is indeed possible.
Marines might have felt justified in this interpretation because they believed they deserved more recognition. Indeed, the editorials reprinted in the 1914 pamphlet submitted this view. They also suggested the public should appreciate the Corps even if the Navy and the Army would not. Marines, one editorial proclaimed, deserved “special distinction.” The other services “look[ed] upon the Marines as the hewers of wood and the drawers of water,” the paper said. This comment suggested the Corps was engaged in the more laborious tasks that other services might want to avoid. Sailors had depicted Marines as idlers who had escaped unpleasant tasks, such as coaling, in the nineteenth century. Now, however, Marines countered this image, presenting themselves as eager to undertake any job, no matter how miserable.

In willingly accepting any task, Marines relegated soldiers and sailors to a more passive position. The Marine’s readiness to undertake these tasks whether in peace or war made him “noble,” as one illustration suggested (Figure 14). The sailor might continue to view the Marine as the odd-man-out on a ship, as represented by the use of the term land-lubber, and the soldier might ignore the Marine altogether, but the Marine

213 For the continuing power of this theme in the Corps’ history through much of the Cold War, see Aaron B. O’Connell, Underdogs: A Cultural History of the United States Marine Corps, 1941-1965, Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2009.
214 A poem reprinted in U.S. Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon suggested the Army and the Navy might have “scornful doubt[s]” about the Corps. See U.S. Marines in Rhyme (1914), n.p.

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defensively clung to the notion that he provided an essential service. This particular illustration probably depicted the Marines’ 1912 intervention in Cuba to protect U.S. business interests, including mines and plantations, threatened by Cuban rebels. The illustration portrayed a Marine on the center stage in an active stance while other types of troops stood behind him, simply observing and even slouching, particularly the sailor on the right.

A poem published in the Naval Academy’s 1914 yearbook made a similar suggestion. It contrasted how Marines maintained the empire during peacetime while soldiers slept:

And in the piping times of peace
    When soldiers sleep in camp,
    Upon the further outpost, then,
        Of Uncle Sam’s frontier,
    Marines are found to hold the ground
        And keep our honor clear.216

This invocation of empire would have reinforced the Marines’ sense of self, says historian Gail Bederman, for the frontier was a “crucible in which the white American

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216 This poem suggests that the Corps’ identity was even reaching students at the Naval Academy, who had to choose the Navy or the Marine Corps after graduation. Unknown author, “Leathernecks,” in The Log of the Naval Academy, 8 May 1914, Typescript, George Barnett Papers, MCASC.
race was forged through masculine racial conflict.”217 Serving on imperial frontiers, the Corps defined itself against two “others”. On the one hand it distinguished itself from the Army and the Navy. On the other hand it defined itself against the racial “other.”

The Corps praised itself not only for undertaking more imperial missions but for accomplishing jobs the other services supposedly could not. Private C. Hundertmark’s poem published in the *Bulletin* in 1915 captured this conceit:

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The man from the Navy threw up his hands
And said that it could not be done
The man from the Army gave up in despair
Before he had ever begun.

And still the job was finished on time,
As neatly as ever was seen.
The man who did it against all odds
Was a United States Marine . . .
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Not only could the Marines accomplish what other services found impossible, they could do it “neatly”, displaying the discipline that Marines believed distinguished them from other military services.

The Corps interpreted its performance in Veracruz as further proof of the institution’s importance, especially in light of the sailors’ purportedly poor martial skills. The Corps used this incident to buttress its argument not only that Marines could do anything but that sailors should leave the fighting to Marines. This approach helped to reinforce the Corps’ justification for its existence and also simplified the Corps’ perennial task of explaining to the public what exactly a Marine did. The press and the public increasingly came to view Marines as fighters, in part because of the Publicity

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Bureau’s effectiveness, but also because journalists viewed Marines as the outward face of U.S. intervention in the Caribbean. Marines might share the spotlight with sailors during the Veracruz Incident, but they would seize on this opportunity to contrast themselves with sailors and soldiers and find them wanting. Not only would Marines try anything, as Butler’s fictional admiral suggested, but they would do anything and everything better than the Navy and the Army, especially fighting.

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Despite the importance of the Veracruz Incident and other expeditionary duty to the Corps, the Bulletin provided somewhat spotty coverage of the Corps’ imperial duties. This lacuna changed in 1916 with the birth of the Marine Corps Gazette. This publication, which focused many of its articles on the Corps’ expeditionary missions, resulted from the establishment of the Marine Corps Association. Colonel Littleton Waller and some of the officers with whom he was serving in Cuba had established a similar organization in 1911, but it proved to be short-lived. The efforts of Marines to

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219 One article cited the interest of Captain Harold C. Snyder, the head of the Marine Corps’ Publicity Bureau in 1913, in the Association. See “United States Navy,” Washington Post, 29 June 1913, ES2.
220 About one fourth of the Corps’ officers were serving together in Cuba at the time. This constituted the most Marine officers to serve together up to this point in history. It was a significant number, considering the extent to which Marine officers were generally scattered aboard naval vessels or at naval bases in small contingents. Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 158. For naval officers’ suggestions that permanent regiments could strengthen the Corps’ cohesion, see Status, 525.
establish an organization proved more successful in 1913. By the fall of 1915, almost half of the institution’s current and retired Marine officers had joined.221

Documenting and circulating the Corps’ history was a key goal of the Association. The Gazette served as a forum to discuss the “aims, purposes and deeds of the Corps” and helped to promote the exchanging of views about how to improve the Corps.222 In short, the Association and its publication served to strengthen the Marine Corps’ historical foundations as well as its esprit de corps. The more technical articles of today’s Gazette would suggest the magazine solely existed as a forum to discuss professional matters. In fact, the original purposes of the Gazette were to “increase its esprit, disseminate information on professional subjects and place in permanent form historical data that now lacks that form.”223 The Association determined that one of the most effective means of “present[ing] in permanent and authoritative form historical phases of the corps’ history that have hitherto been neglected” would be through a publication.224 History had been important to nineteenth-century Marine officers such as Richard Collum, but now a group of officers was formally stating the importance they attached to propagating the Corps’ history and establishing elements of its historical record. As one advertisement promoting the Gazette stated, one of the magazine’s 

224 Frank E. Evans, “Then and Now,” 52; “Marine Corps Association,” 75.
strengths was its fictional work, which had “as its central figure this varied service” of the Corps.\textsuperscript{225} If history had been at the core of some nineteenth-century Marine officers, more romanticized stories were seizing the imaginations of some twentieth-century Marines.

Although the \textit{Gazette} and \textit{Bulletin} had different purposes, they both ultimately worked to further the Corps’ identity. Marines who served in the Bureau made many contributions to the \textit{Gazette}. Captain Frank Evans, who played an integral role at the Bureau, for example, served as the \textit{Gazette’s} first editor. Evans’ articles helped to glamorize expeditionary service and the role that Marines played in undertaking these missions. In a 1917 \textit{Gazette} article, Evans noted that the public might consider the years following the Spanish-American-Cuban War as uneventful but they were anything but that for Marines. He characterized these years as a period of vital interest to the Corps for almost incessant demands for expeditionary forces whipped the Corps . . . into a veteran body of seasoned offices and men to whom the seizing of coast towns, the razing of supposedly impregnable native strongholds, and the secrets of bush fighting and street fighting in tropical countries became an open book.\textsuperscript{226}

The Corps’ duties between the Spanish-American-Cuban War and World War I had turned Marines into hardened fighters.

\textsuperscript{225} Advertisement, \textit{International Military Digest} 3 (March 1917), 176.
\textsuperscript{226} Capt. Frank E. Evans, USMC, “The Marines Have Landed,” \textit{Gazette} 2 (Sept 1917), 213
Evans injected into the pages of the *Gazette* a note of glamour and romanticism that was difficult to find in other professional journals, perhaps because the Association viewed its mission less as providing a forum for professional development and more as one for promoting esprit de corps. In one article, Captain Walter N. Hill drew on the purportedly exotic culture of Haiti. Searching for a translator, Hill almost wanted to give up until two natives led him towards an old, white-haired Negro. Up from the crowd rose the exclamation: “Here comes the Englishman!” Bewildered at the confusion, the old man stood still until I laid my hand on his arm and said: “I am the white man, Captain Hill, the white captain. Can you understand me?”

The atmosphere of acclamation with which he was reputedly greeted and his repeated reference to his whiteness presaged the fictional descriptions of Marine authors that would flourish in the 1920s. While the *Gazette* did include articles of a far more professional nature, its treatment of the Corps’ history and its expeditionary duties embroidered the suggestion put forth by the Bureau and individual Marines that they, as picked men, could handle any task. What had once been a virtual unknown was now a larger-than-life swaggering Marine.

An article in the inaugural issue of the *Gazette*, “How the Marine Corps Recalls Sergeant John P. Poe, Jr.,” depicted the ideal masculine Marine who sought nothing

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more than the opportunity to fight. Poe served in the U.S. Army, various militias, and the Marine Corps. The article noted how he had died fighting in Europe during World War I, where he had finally found his opportunity to see battle with the British Army.

Despite serving for just three months in Panama in 1904, Poe had somehow made such an impression that the Corps felt his death with a “peculiar force.” A graduate of Princeton University, where he made his mark on the football field, Poe refused a commission as a second lieutenant because as he explained, “nobody expects anything of a second lieutenant. They do of a sergeant.” Poe, however, wanted nothing more than to have the opportunity to spend his time fighting. His words suggested the importance Marine officers sought to attach to non commissioned officers. Not only did segments of the Corps such as the Bureau actively seek to promote the Corps as a vehicle for social betterment, but some viewed the relationships between officers and enlisted Marines as something that distinguished the Corps from other branches, as previously discussed. Imperial service heightened this tendency because enlisted

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Marines became officers within the constabularies of native troops, thus allowing for a rise in their status.230

Like the Bulletin, the Gazette sought to strengthen the institution’s corporate identity. In doing so, the publication drew on the Bureau’s tendency to romanticize Marines. Increasingly, Marines would promote more glamorized images of themselves, shifting away from the historical and non-fictional approach of nineteenth-century Marines to a fictional and exaggerated one during World War I and the subsequent decade.

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President Theodore Roosevelt’s Executive Order 969 might have triggered an important reaction in the Corps. Subsequent to being ordered off of naval vessels the Corps seems to have become more fervent at self-promotion. Newspaper articles began to articulate a more highly-defined notion of self which contained an appeal not only to recruits but to the general public. Marines not only belonged to the oldest and most traditional institution, but they belonged to the best one. Their institution consisted of the nation’s true fighters. Naval officers might offer a host of reasons why sailors should become more soldierly, but as military operations demonstrated, sailors simply did not have the skills to contribute, or so Marine officers suggested.

230 See, for example, Navy Dept., Annual Reports of the Navy Department for the Fiscal Year 1916 (Washington, D.C.: 1917), 763.
With the Publicity Bureau’s establishment in 1911, the Corps gained the ability to focus more sharply on its public image, as well as the capacity to disseminate it far more effectively. Thanks to involvement in operations such as the Veracruz Incident, Marines pointed to their image as fighters in opposition to sailors. The Bureau helped in this process, rewriting history in a way that would celebrate Marines while omitting sailors from the record, as was the case for the Marines’ landing in the Bahamas in 1776. The Bureau treated the Corps’ involvement in Veracruz similarly, suggesting that Marines had done the true work. Marines had paved the way for the sailors’ landing even as Marines handled the occupation well enough on their own that sailors could be returned to their true place aboard ships.

The Corps maintained its confidence in its ability to perform any mission upon the declaration of war against Germany in 1917. Relatively easy military engagements such as Veracruz would pale in comparison to what it would find itself facing “over there.” Still, with the idea that there was nothing a Marine could not do firmly internalized, the institution would find itself fighting alongside the Army in a way heretofore unseen in its history.

By 1918, the Marine Corps announced its relation to other military services on the first page of its recruiting pamphlet:

U.S. Marines are often confused with sailors of the Navy. They are not sailors—they are soldiers! When you see a soldier with a globe, anchor and eagle on his
hat, cap or helmet you may know that he’s a U.S. Marine. That’s the distinguishing badge—the trade mark of his service! It means that particular soldier belongs to an organization that is almost always mentioned in the same breath with the Foreign Legion . . . and the famous Texas Rangers.

Now Marines were soldiers, but soldiers set apart by their corporate identity, in this case symbolized by the emblem of the Corps: the eagle, globe, and anchor. Although no doubt some of this emphasis on soldiering reflected the need for recruits in World War I, it correspondingly continued trends focusing on marksmanship and other soldierly skills that had been institutionalized in the previous fifteen years. It also suggested the Bureau’s increasingly bombastic tone which it had adopted as early as the Veracruz Incident. World War I provided impetus to refine this identity, especially after the Corps managed to convince many observers of its inimitable fighting prowess. During this war, Marines left their sea legs behind, joining the Army in France as part of the American Expeditionary Force, an act that led some Marines to deemphasize the Corps’ identification with the Navy in the process of telling their stories.

232 See “Soldier or Sailor? Speak Up, Marine!,” The Stars and Stripes, 17 May 1918, 6. This headline symbolized the identity issues facing the Marine Corps during World War I.
5. From the *Bulletin* to the Battlefield: Marines in France, 1917-1918

They tell the story of some distinguished visitors
Who were passing along the cots in a military hospital in France.
On one of these cots lay a man quite still, with his face buried in the pillow. Something
about him caused one of the visitors to remark, “I think this must be an American soldier.”
From the depths of the pillow came a muffled voice—“Hell, no; I’m a Marine!”

This apocryphal story represents the newfound confidence and the increasing
internalization of the Corps’ strengthening identity among Marines during World War I.
Not only did this particular Marine assertively clarify his military affiliation amidst his
suffering, he did so in a manner that assumed his audience would be familiar with a
Marine, which rarely had been true for much of the nation’s existence. Nineteenth-
century Marines might have been content to describe themselves as soldiers. Their
twentieth-century counterparts, however, were not. Marines would continue to believe
that they fulfilled many of the same duties as soldiers, but in a manner that
demonstrated their elite status. Told in several variations, this story also demonstrates
the extent to which the war provided opportunities to create myths that celebrated the

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Corps’ increasingly well-defined image and identity. Service alongside the Army during World War I provoked many to think more clearly about what differentiated the two services. The initial training that recruits received prior to their arrival in France only encouraged this tendency. That their identity owed much to the Publicity Bureau has been demonstrated in the previous chapter. The Corps applied many of the same themes promulgated by the Publicity Bureau to its training regime. As a result, recruits learned not only requisite military skills but also about what it supposedly meant to be a Marine.

Now that the institution had emphasized the array of missions Marines could undertake easily, it had the opportunity to demonstrate that its public relations efforts rested on a solid foundation of reality. The Publicity Bureau had enthusiastically honed an assertive voice, and this approach paid enormous dividends at the beginning of the war. Despite its rapid increase from 10,346 to 33,076 men between 1916 and 1917, the Corps secured recruits easily.2 Powerful slogans like “first to fight” resonated among individuals who eagerly seized the chance to do what they saw as their duty.3

Upon arrival “over there,” the Marines found themselves in a new situation, the likes of which the institution had never faced. While they had participated in segments

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of previous land wars including the Mexican-American War and the U.S. Civil War, their contributions had been largely ancillary. In France, however, Marines found themselves side by side with the doughboys of the U.S. Army. As a result, they sought to retain their distinctiveness despite being absorbed within the over-arching framework of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Scholars have shown how the presence of the “other” often works to stimulate identity formation.\(^4\) Whereas the Corps had often struggled to define its relationship to the Navy over the past century, it found it easier to stress its superiority over the Army. Both the Army and the Corps had soldiers, but the Corps claimed to have superior troops best used in specific types of fighting. World War I also enabled the further crystallization of the Corps’ identity with the presence of additional types of “others.” Marines reconciled new experiences—including service alongside African troops and the enlistment of female Marines—with their institutional identity as a highly-masculine elite fighting force.

In June of 1918 the Marine Corps faced the biggest battle it had ever seen at the Battle of Belleau Wood. In an almost month-long battle to stop a German drive on Paris, the Corps suffered the greatest losses in its history to that point. With the surrender of

\(^4\) Edward Said, for example, set forth the idea of “orientalism” in which so-called westerners defined themselves in opposition to their constructed notion of an exotic “east.” See Orientalism (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). Scholars have drawn on this idea in a number of ways. See, for example Dane Kennedy, ““Captain Burton’s Oriental Muck Heap’: The Book of the Thousand Nights and the Uses of Orientalism,” Journal of British Studies 39 (July 2000), 317-339.
Russia, Germany had hoped to transfer its troops from the eastern to the western front for a spring offensive designed to defeat the Allies before Americans could join the war fully. As the French retreated before the German troops, Marines and soldiers found themselves rushed to the front in a desperate attempt to halt the German advance. From June 1 until June 5 the 6th Marine Regiment and 9th Infantry Regiment mainly engaged in defensive warfare, holding the line they had established on the road between Chateau Thierry and Paris. June 6, however, marked the beginning of offensive action, or what one scholar has described as a “futile bloodbath of inexperienced Marines.”

These enormous casualties occurred in large part because Marine and Army officers embraced the tenets of open warfare, or maneuver warfare, as opposed to trench warfare. One author describes maneuver warfare as “out-thinking an opponent” rather than relying on “brute strength.” Instead of launching a frontal assault, maneuver warfare focuses on determining and moving to a position where the opponent demonstrates weakness and will be unable to react quickly enough to reorient its forces. As envisioned by General John J. Pershing during World War I, open warfare would

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rely on elements such as advance scouts, irregular formations, and individual initiative. The AEF would force the Germans out from the trenches to fight a war of “movement.”

When officers saw a wide open field in front of them at Belleau Wood as opposed to the trenches so common elsewhere, they assumed they had encountered the ideal conditions for open warfare. The thickly forested area of Belleau Wood behind the open field, though, hid the reality that the Germans were well dug in and protected. As a result, Army Major General James Harbord launched the 3rd Battalion 5th Marines and the 3rd Battalion 6th Marines into German machine gun fire. By the end of the day the Marines had suffered more than 1000 casualties. The Marines that did make it across the wheat fields found themselves face-to-face with well-protected German machine gun nests and without much artillery support. Mark Grotelueschen argues that Harbord decided against significant artillery support because it ran counter to open warfare’s emphasis on the individual infantryman’s contributions. Although Marines did make small gains on June 6, they would not control Belleau Wood until Harbord discarded the tenets of open warfare.

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8 Ibid., 213.
The human costs over the course of the battle were enormous. There were 9,777 American casualties at the Battle of Belleau Wood, of which 5,183 were Marines.\(^9\) Surveying the remains of his Sixth Regiment, Lt. Colonel Frederic Wise found the scene heart-breaking. His Marines had sustained a sixty-percent casualty rate at the Battle of Belleau Wood.\(^10\) When his wife asked him how his Marines were, he responded, “There aren’t any more Marines.”\(^11\)

Despite the costs, the Corps received an outpouring of publicity for its share of the fighting at Belleau.\(^12\) While the Bureau continued its policies of self-promotion, fortuitous events also contributed to some of the Corps’ publicity. At Belleau Wood, for example, the AEF’s censorship policies led to Marines being mentioned and not soldiers. Soldiers understandably resented the acclaim Marines received since they had fought at Belleau as well.

By the end of the war, the institution began downplaying some of its efforts at self-promotion. In part, this ironically suited the Bureau’s claim that the institution’s

\(^9\) Axelrod, Miracle at Belleau Wood, 228. About 1000 Marines died compared to about 800 soldiers. At this point there were about 60,000 Marines stationed throughout the world. About 14,000 Marines were serving in France in June of 1918. The casualty rate for Marines was thus about thirty-seven percent of the Marines stationed in France or nine percent of the entire Corps. See Maj. Edwin N. McClellan, The United States Marine Corps in the World War (Washington, D.C.: Marine Corps Historical Branch, HQMC, 1920), 10.
\(^10\) Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 238.
\(^11\) Ibid., 244. Wise’s wife volunteered in a French hospital during the war.
\(^12\) The Army had 2,395,742 soldiers in 1918 compared to the Corps’ almost 75,000 Marines. Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army, enlg. ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 599 and Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 611.
achievements were just part and parcel of a Marine’s everyday activities. Some, such as Marines who experienced combat, however, challenged the all-encompassing identity that the institution sought to project. It was one thing to write home proudly of one’s thoughts about the Corps during training or before arriving on the battlefield. After the fact, though, some dissenters wondered if the Corps had needlessly sacrificed its own men.

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After the U.S. declared war, the Marine Corps quickly had to triple its manpower. The contacts with journalists that the Corps had established over the previous years helped to assure it could, for the most part, meet its increased manpower requirements with ease. As early as September of 1917, it confidently announced that it would design its publicity to attract recruits over the long term rather than just meeting

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13 This is not to say that the public fully understood the Marine Corps’ purpose or its relationship to the Navy. Many articles continued to explain the differences between the Corps and the Navy. See, for example, “The Call For Marines: Who The Marines Are,” Colorado Springs Gazette, 15 May 1917, 9. This particular article drew on the traditional overview provided by Marines, which looked back to the institution’s establishment in 1775. Also see a very similar article: “Marines Fine Fighters; Public Now Curious to Learn About Sea Soldiers,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 6 May 1917, 4. The article stressed the Corps’ more traditional roles, such as serving as orderlies and guards at sea rather than emphasizing its expeditionary duties. See “Life of Marine Very Appealing to Average Man. Smartness of Dress and Drill Adds Greatly to Enchantment of the Life,” Wilkes Barre Times Leader, 24 April 1917, 12.
present needs. With the increased patriotic fervor of many U.S. citizens, moreover, the Corps not only found a receptive audience but also many who clamored to enlist.

The institution received more than its share of tailor-made reporting. Newspaper companies such as the Hearst Corporation went out of their way to publicize the Corps, especially during recruiting drives. This was consistent with the American approach to favor publicity and propaganda over conscription. Other publications took similar steps. The managing editor of the popular magazine Leslie’s not only wrote a very favorable article about the Corps under a pseudonym but provided a full page advertisement at no cost. That the Corps had cultivated a strong relationship with the press also helps to explain some of the institution’s acquisitions in manpower. Second Lieutenant Charles Cushing, for example, had worked as a journalist and editor for several well-known publications, including Collier’s. The

institution first assigned Cushing to the Publicity Bureau before eventually sending him to France.\footnote{18}

The Bureau continued many of its pre-war techniques of insuring publicity, including the practice of providing articles that could be modified to fit local needs. It released articles to more than 2000 newspapers three times a week in cities and towns where the Corps had recruiting stations.\footnote{19} From recruiters the Bureau solicited articles of “[f]reak, human interest, and especially patriotic incidents” because it believed this approach would secure the attention of a variety of people, especially those unlikely to read serious articles.\footnote{20} In addition, it turned information it had received from its “field correspondence” into articles, releasing them back to the recruiters to modify as they saw fit for local newspapers.\footnote{21} Many newspapers eagerly ran such articles. Over a six-month span, Sergeant Julius T. Richards found almost one hundred articles in local newspapers, many accompanied by photographs or illustrations.\footnote{22} These articles ranged from editorials to happenings at the recruiting office to more general stories about life in the Marine Corps.

While this approach built on the Bureau’s pre-war practices, it differed in the extent to which the exigencies of the war and general patriotic fervor enabled the Corps to increase the scale of its publicity. The institution found a wealth of opportunities to broadcast its message, often without cost, in streetcars, magazines, and other venues.23 If Americans had not heard of the Corps prior to the United States’ entry into the war, it is doubtful that many could have remained ignorant of the institution’s existence for long.24 As one Bureau representative noted, “if there is an American citizen who does not know who the Marines are and what they do, it is not the fault of the newspapers.”25 One recruiter believed that of all the military services the Corps had received a disproportionate share of publicity and that, as a result, newspapers no longer “confused” the institution with others.26 Efforts such as “Marine Week,” a massive campaign to obtain recruits, resulted in Marine recruiting paraphernalia being affixed everywhere. In one case a recruiter received permission to mount posters on every

24 Recruiters continued to report incidents of public confusion. Sgt. C.R. Baumgras, for example, was confused for a tobacco salesman. “Notes from Memphis,” Bulletin, July 1917, 24.
streetcar in Raleigh, North Carolina.²⁷ The Bureau encouraged this approach with a new feature in the Bulletin entitled “Keeping Our Corps in the Limelight.” This title implied that the Bureau’s efforts already had captured significant public notice. This segment generally featured more than a dozen ways that recruiters had secured attention from Marines posing with movie stars to dare-devil stuntmen dressed as Marines doing headstands on office building ledges.²⁸

Not only did the scale of publicity change, but the message the Bureau sought to convey began evolving. With the entry of the United States into the war, the Bulletin encouraged recruiters to jettison more conventional benefits of service such as pay, travel, or adventure. Now Marines began to stress more patriotic reasons for joining. After quickly issuing “rally round the flag” posters on the day that the U.S. declared war, the Bureau moved to stress the “first to fight” approach to assure recruits they would see battle.²⁹ Some commented that the Corps alone of the branches had devised a

slogan that resonated among so many.\textsuperscript{30} The Corps had plenty of precedent to point to, given its traditional participation in landing parties, which assured it would often be first to the fighting. As has been seen, moreover, individual Marines had worked hard in the preceding years to emphasize the Corps’ firsts. Still, the use of this slogan after the declaration of war held some risk in that the Marine Corps had no assurance that it would even see service in France. In reporting on Commandant George Barnett’s testimony to Congress, one journalist described how Barnett had made it clear how the “morale of the Corps would seriously be affected and the personnel offended” if the institution did not receive the opportunity to be at the forefront.\textsuperscript{31} Glad to have “delivered the advertising ‘goods,’” the Bureau released a collective sigh of relief in a June 1917 editorial when it announced that a regiment of Marines would be among the first American troops to arrive in France.\textsuperscript{32}

In conjunction with its patriotic appeal, the Corps stressed particular aspects of its legacy. The popular “spirit of 1917” poster epitomized this approach. Drawing on the precedent established by nineteenth-century Marines, the poster made connections

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\item “Coining a New War Cry,” \textit{Colorado Springs Gazette}, 13 July 1917, 10. For a similar view, see “Nation to be Placarded with Slogans of War,” \textit{Albuquerque Journal}, 24 March 1918, 2.
\item “Who Will Be First to Fight,” \textit{San Jose Mercury News}, 8 May 1917, 6.
\item “First to Fight in France,” \textit{Bulletin}, June 1917, 16. In surveying the Corps’ publicity efforts at the end of the war, professional advertisers believed the institution had met its promises in a way that should be an example for all marketing. William Almond Wolff, “Leading Advertising Experts Commend Success of Marines’ Publicity Campaign,” \textit{Bulletin}, Dec. 1918, 6.
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back to the “spirit of 1776.”33 In the same vein, the Corps described the Marines as the “minute men” of 1917, connecting their tradition of readiness back to those iconic volunteers who had fought for America’s freedom.34 Despite the institution’s desire to see service in France, it did not discard its traditional sea service on the poster, which referenced both land and sea. Scholars have tended to emphasize the “search for a mission” which purportedly shaped the Corps’ historical trajectory. They have periodized eras into types of warfare, such as “expeditionary” or “amphibious.”35 While this approach is useful for grasping changes in focus, it conceals the extent to which Marines themselves sought to avoid whittling down the institution’s role to just one mission, even as the possibility of involvement in a major land war loomed in front of them.

The Corps saw only dimly what its future might be during World War I. In one case, for example, the Bureau advised recruiters to focus on the prospect for “immediate action in the ranks of the men who man our warships’ torpedo guns.”36 This approach

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34 “Today’s Minute Men,” The State, 16 April 1917, 7. The article’s content was typical of Publicity Bureau releases.
35 One work that epitomizes this approach is Jack Shulimson, Search for a Mission (Allan Millett, for example, periodizes the Corps’ history as “soldiers at sea,” “colonial infantry,” “amphibious assault force,” and “force in readiness.” Millett, Semper Fidelis, v-vi.
36 Other recruiters continued to stress service aboard naval vessels. See “It’s a Life of Adventure is the Lot of the Marine,” Anaconda Standard, 17 May 1917, 8. Another article anticipated the war would provide plenty of opportunities for Marines to participate in landing parties as well as “clashes at sea.” See “What Can I Do
stressed the Corps’ more traditional duties at sea that had been threatened by President Theodore Roosevelt’s issuance of Executive Order 969. Still, the Marine was first and foremost a “soldier—not a sailor—and [would] not spend his entire enlistment on the ocean wave.” Marines took a broad view of the multiplicity of their duties. The popular phrases “sea soldiers” and “soldiers of the sea” suggested the variety of responsibilities that Marines could expect to encounter. As one outsider noted, Marines were “more than soldiers and more than sailors.” They were, in fact, “sailor soldiers” which enabled them to fulfill more missions. As a result, no troops could “strike more telling blows.”

Lieutenant Charles Cushing, who had served as a journalist prior to joining the Corps, described the institution as a “large fighting force so completely equipped in all

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37 See Chapter 3 for this discussion.
38 “A State of War,” Bulletin, April 1917, 4. The article reiterated that a Marine would spend his “time first on the spot when trouble threatens” and, once again, on the “torpedo guns.”
39 Outsiders often referred to the institution in the same manner. See “What Others Say About the Marine Corps,” Bulletin, June 1917, 3. For just a few examples see “Enlist as Marines; Are Both Sailors and Soldiers, Then,” Grand Forks Herald, 13 April 1917, 8; editorial, The Quantico Leatherneck, 14 Nov. 1917, 2.
branches that it can act as an independent army.”41 To suit its purposes the Bureau interpreted the variety of the Marine Corps’ missions as proof of the service’s superiority. As a result, the Corps had to find recruits that were “just a little bit better.”42 By focusing on the quality of the fighting it provided, Marines escaped the traditional muddle it faced as being neither sailor nor soldier. Unlike others in an “age of specialization,” Marines argued they functioned as one of the “few surviving jacks-of-all trades.”43 The Corps sought to make a virtue of its traditional approach amidst great technological change. The Corps’ ability to find recruits for World War I quickly impressed one newspaper editor, who described the changing perception of Marines:

Up to a short time ago the Marine Corps was the most unpopular branch of the armed forces. Its members were neither sailors nor soldiers. The jackies regarded them with mild contempt because of the Marines’ duty on shipboard, which was mostly police work. Soldiers looked upon them as half baked sailors. As fighting men the Marines were highly regarded on all hands.44

This particular editorial stressed the difficulty of assigning a particular mission to the Corps that sailors or soldiers could respect. Marines were neither fully soldiers nor fully

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42 “‘Soldier and Sailor, Too’: The Marines Are the Real Soldiers of Fortune,” Kansas City Star, 5 April 1917, 22. This particular article heavily resembled the Bureau’s releases, evidenced by quotes from Rudyard Kipling, descriptions of the Corps as the oldest U.S. military branch, and several verses of the Corps’ hymn. For other references to Kipling, see “Soldiers of the Sea,” Wilkes-Barre Times, 9 April 1917, 1.
44 “The Power of Publicity,” Bulletin, June 1917, 11. This article reprinted a St. Louis Post Dispatch editorial.
sailors. It was only their “fighting” prowess that legitimated their existence. While the editorial’s reasoning left something to be desired, it did illustrate the direction in which the Corps was seeking to justify itself. The editorial reflected the idea promoted during Veracruz of Marines as “fightin’ men.” To win the public’s approval by focusing on its battle prowess was easier than selling it on what duties it filled. The Corps reinforced the idea that it could achieve the impossible in a wide array of assignments. One Bulletin article, for example, praised the bravery of a Marine for his first attempt at a “loop” in a seaplane, a “feat” that naval aviators had considered “impossible.” As the base paper of the Corps’ overseas training camp in Quantico, Virginia, joked, “the only thing a marine could not do or was not expected to do was to perform the services of a deck hand on a submarine” because, of course, such a feat really was impossible. In effect

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45 It is difficult to determine how potential recruits received the Corps’ recruiting appeals. Surveys conducted years after World War I reveal a range of motives for entering the war. These responses are somewhat problematic, though, in the extent to which the respondents’ perspective might have changed greatly after seeing combat. Former Marines recalled a number of reasons for selecting the Corps, including the desire to be surrounded by people “who knew how to fight.” This was the case for PFC George H. Donaldson, 78th Company, 6th Marine Regiment. Others, like Pvt. Anders Peterson, 6th Machine Gun Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, were drawn by the “first to fight” rhetoric. See Department of the Army Questionnaire, World War I Veterans’ Survey Project, U.S. Army Military History Institute (hereafter USAMHI).
46 “Marine Officer Loops the Loop in Seaplane,” Bulletin, March 1917, 32.
47 Questions Hurled on Furlo [sic],” Quantico Leatherneck, 1 Dec. 1917, 1. For other references that played up the similarities in the words “submarine” and “Marine,” see “Today’s Minute Men,” The State, 16 April 1917, 7; James S. Carolan, “One Punch’ Sergeant Fighting for Enlistment,” Bulletin, Aug. 1917, 15. For an article stressing the variety of the Corps’ duties which appears to be a Publicity Bureau release, see “U. S. Marine Most Diversified Soldier in the World,” Colorado Springs Gazette, 23 May 1918, 9. A book about the Navy even included a chapter that mentioned that the Marine’s motto was, “There’s nothing I can’t do.” See Elaine Sterne, Over the Seas for Uncle Sam (New York: Britton Publishing Company, 1918), 108.
the Corps constituted a “complete army—infantry [], artillery, cavalry, aviation, signalmen, etc, fully equipped in all branches to get right on the job.” Given that Congress had considered merging the Marine Corps into the Army during the Civil War, the Publicity Bureau’s decision to emphasize its ability to fulfill these traits appears risky. By emphasizing its elite fighting capabilities, however, individual Marines celebrated their claims to be essential to the nation.

The Bureau suggested that carefully selecting only the best candidates assured the institution’s versatility. The acceptance rate of recruits during the war was about one in four. One recruiter noted that the Corps’ admission test was so severe that applicants who passed could “readily enter the Army or the Navy.” By stressing its selectivity, the Corps helped to reinforce its image as an elite institution. “Quality not

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48 “Who Will be First to Fight?,” San Jose Mercury Herald, 8 May 1917, 6. To say the Corps had cavalry in a formal sense was a bit of a stretch, though. See “The Secret is out there are Horse Marines,” Duluth News-Tribune, 13 Jan. 1918, 2. For another article mentioning cavalry, see “Picked Men Are Only Ones Who Can Get in Marines” Tulsa World, 28 July 1918, 4. Charles Phelps Cushing described the Corps similarly in “First to Fight on Land or Sea,” The Independent, 26 May 1917, 371.


50 Of the 239,274 men seeking enlistment in the Corps during the war only 60,189 were accepted. Alan Axelrod, Miracle at Belleau Wood: The Birth of the Modern U.S. Marine Corps (Guilford, Conn.: The Lyons Press, 2007), 12. The recruiting numbers of one station demonstrate the difficulty of recruiting. An office in Buffalo, New York had a total of 1,953 applicants over the course of a year of which the recruiters initially accepted 789, of whom 409 were rejected for not meeting the physical standards. 290 were transferred to the recruiting depot and 220 finally enlisted, although more than ten percent of the 220 were reenlistments. Capt. William E. Parker, “Marine Corps Recruiting,” Infantry Journal 11 (Sept/Oct, 1914), 226-233: 230-231.

51 “Could You Join the Navy or the Army,” Idaho Register, 14 April 1916, 3.
quantity” was the order of the day for Marine recruiters, at least ideally.52 Recruiters, just as they had done before the outbreak of war, continued to stress that life in the Corps was not a “bed of roses.” In this way the Corps appealed to the enthusiasm for virile masculinity sweeping through society as a whole.53 The word “man,” for example, acquired an increasingly gendered connotation. No longer was it simply a biological fact. Rather, it was an idealized concept that had been seeping into the Corps’ rhetoric since 1914. The Corps did not just seek men but “real men.”54 The individual who embraced and fulfilled the challenges set forth by the institution could take pleasure in knowing he was not just a “man” but a “man” (emphasis in original).55 Making his own signs for a recruiting drive, one sergeant enjoined potential recruits on the front of one sign, “Be a man. Join the Marines.” The back stated: “If you’re afraid to be in the


thickest of the fight, don’t join the Marines.”56 While it is impossible to determine what every individual Marine thought being a man meant, the Publicity Bureau drew on male insecurities to draw some to the Corps as a means of demonstrating their understandings of manhood.57

The Bureau attached its messages of masculinity, exclusivity, and versatility to the Corps’ icons and slogans, which changed to some extent over the course of the war. By January 1918, for example, the Bureau had discarded its slogan of being the “first to fight,” suggesting it was no longer “tactful.”58 The motives for this shift are unclear, as is whether the other services were offended by this slogan. Perhaps the Corps recognized that while it might be among the first to fight, it would not be alone in doing so, as it could have claimed in previous conflicts such as the Spanish-American-Cuban War. Instead, the Corps would increasingly stress its “globe, eagle, and anchor” device as an effective distinguishing symbol. Known today as the “eagle, globe, and anchor,” the Corps borrowed this symbol from the British Royal Marines, adopting it in 1868 after making minor modifications. Recruiters sought to keep the device “constantly” in the public eye, in part because they still believed that the public’s perennial inability to

recognize a Marine had yet to be resolved.\textsuperscript{59} One \textit{Bulletin} cartoon highlighted these difficulties, pointing to the failure of many citizens to recognize Marines. One observer asked a confused citizen, “Don’t you see tat (sic) thing on his cap”\textsuperscript{60} Rather than rely on distinctive uniforms, the Bureau hoped a symbol might be more recognizable. The AEF’s requirement for Marines to wear the Army uniform while in France bolstered this approach.\textsuperscript{61} The uniform might change, but the device remained as the “one unchanging mark by which we may be identified.”\textsuperscript{62} By forming 3,800 “sturdy” Marines into the shape of the globe, eagle and anchor and photographing them from the air, for example, the Corps tried to keep this symbol in the “limelight.”\textsuperscript{63} One advertiser noted that this symbol represented the institution’s “service on land, on sea and in the sky. And if

\textsuperscript{59} “The Marine Corps Publicity Conference,” \textit{Bulletin}, Feb. 1918, 7. Whereas recruiters previously seem to have debated these issues through the forum of the \textit{Bulletin}, public discussion occurred at this recruiters’ conference. Recruiters first visited the recruit training depot at Parris Island, South Carolina then journeyed to Quantico where they witnessed the Corps’ more advanced training. Sgt. William H. Cayan, USMC, “Publicity Sergeants’ Educational Tour,” \textit{Bulletin}, March 1918, 15.
\textsuperscript{61} “The Globe, Eagle and Anchor,” \textit{Bulletin}, Feb. 1918, 16. Today this symbol is known as the eagle, globe, and anchor.
\textsuperscript{63} “Keeping Our Corps in the Limelight,” \textit{Bulletin}, March 1918, 8.
anybody makes his trade-mark good at all times and under all conditions,” it was a Marine.64

The Corps was not content simply to have the symbol denote the institution’s varied duties. The Bureau romanticized the symbol, attaching to it meaning that it sought to convey to individual Marines. Rather than simply signify the variety of locales in which the Corps had served or denote the branch of service, it became a symbol of what it meant to be a Marine. During recruit training future Marines were told that to wear the globe, anchor and eagle was the “greatest honor in the world bestowed on a man. The men get this spirit drilled into them.”65 Recruits such as Private Julian Carlisle eagerly imbibed this symbolism. In one letter Pvt. Carlisle stressed the importance of the “Good Old Marine Spirit.”66 The Bureau described how the inculcation of this spirit during training was the “most important acquirement” for Marines.67 Rhetoric mirrored

66 “Well Pleased Marine Writes Sergeant,” Bulletin, Feb. 1918, 30. Mentions of the Corps’ unmatched esprit de corps were not limited to issues of the Bulletin. For an enlisted Marine’s letters home mentioning spirit, see Arthur Davis to Mother, 7 July 1918, Arthur Davis Papers, MCASC. For an officer’s perspective on this “all-pervasive spirit” see Catlin, With the Help of God, 32. Also see Josephus Daniels, Our Navy at War (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1922), 216.
67 “The Marine Corps Publicity Conference,” Bulletin, Feb. 1918, 7. For other mentions of this spirit see Editorial, Bulletin, Dec. 1917, 36; “Thousands Enjoy Big Thanksgiving; Big Feed Here,” Quantico Leatherneck, 1 Dec. 1919, 1; “Marines’ Spirit an Asset, Cooper Says,” Quantico Leatherneck, 24 Nov. 1917, 1. The word “spirit” also had a slightly different connotation when used in regard to the Corps’ “fighting spirit” that purportedly distinguished Marines from other military branches. See “Chafing at the Bit,” Bulletin, Feb.
this shift. A newspaper article entitled, "Join the Marines If You Would be a Military Nobleman," stressed the appeal of membership in a kind of elite brotherhood. Using adjectives commonly associated with medieval knights, one recruiting poster challenged men to live up to the standards set by other Marine fighters. Like knights of old, Marines were “stalwart, square, and valorous” (Figure 15). By October 1918, the Bureau stressed that all Marines belonged to the “great order” of the Globe, Anchor and Eagle, with the symbol’s name now being capitalized to signify the reverence with which the institutional symbol should be viewed. The Bureau appears to have first mentioned this “order” in what appeared at the time to be the Bulletin’s last issue. With the onset of the draft, the Bureau ceased its efforts to find recruits. Now, the magazine would


become *The Marines’ Bulletin*. Its purpose would be to increase the individual Marine’s sense of attachment to the Corps, and it would be disseminated by providing each officer and one out of every twenty Marines with a copy of each issue.\(^7\)

While the Bureau adopted some of the idealized values associated with knights, it adapted the rhetoric of noblemen with its connotation of hereditary aristocracy to accord with its emphasis on the ability to rise through the ranks and become an officer.

\(^7\) “Distribution of Bulletin,” *Bulletin*, Nov. 1918, 24. By February of 1919, however, the publication was once again *The Recruiter’s Bulletin*. 

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While many military institutions continued to maintain a strict hierarchy between officers and enlisted troops, the Corps broke down some barriers by insisting that all Marines belonged to a special brotherhood, as typified elite military institutions in general.\textsuperscript{72} Whereas society had long considered officers to be gentlemen, it had viewed enlisted service members as representative of society’s lowest orders.\textsuperscript{73}

The Bureau was not alone in propagating these views. \textit{The Quantico Leatherneck} described how local residents had come to view all Marines as “gentlemen.” Perhaps this suggestion served the practical purpose of calming local residents who worried that an influx of Marines might threaten the community.\textsuperscript{74} That does not seem to have been the primary motive for the article, however, which explained how Marine training not only turned a recruit into a man, but also enabled the acquisition of “gentle” traits to form a complete gentleman.\textsuperscript{75} Given the clear delineation between officers and enlistees


\textsuperscript{73} For an overview of the public’s perception of the military and various segments of it, see Robert C. Kemble, “Mutations in America’s Perceptions of Its Professional Military Leaders: An Historical Overview and Update,” \textit{Armed Forces & Society} 34 (Oct. 2007), 29-45.

\textsuperscript{74} For works on the military and morality during the war, see Nancy K. Bristow, \textit{Making Men Moral: Social Engineering during the Great War} (New York: New York University, 1996). For Col. Catlin’s suggestion that the Americans provided a more moral environment in France than some of the other allies, see Catlin, \textit{With the Help of God}, 27.

\textsuperscript{75} “Virtue in Uniform,” \textit{Quantico Leatherneck}, 2 Feb. 1918, 2; editorial, \textit{Quantico Leatherneck}, 1 Dec. 1917, 2. For others who used the word gentleman in regard to Marines of all ranks, see “Military Briskness and Courtesy,” \textit{Bulletin}, April 1918, 16 and William H. Richardson, “Marines Work Together like Clockwork,” \textit{Bulletin}, March 1918, 13. While it had been assumed that officers were gentlemen in the nineteenth century, the idea that enlisted men should be considered gentlemen as well was new. For an enlisted Marine who
during the nineteenth century, this step spoke to a major change in military culture, including a more idealized vision of military service.76

At the same time, the Corps stressed the quality of enlisted recruits it received to enhance the notion of a well-connected brotherhood. The Bureau publicized well-known recruits ranging from former congressmen to the Secretary of the Navy’s son who chose to enlist rather than accepting commissions.77 In enlisting, former Congressman Edward Denby stated that all could not “begin as officers.”78 Just as gratifying to the institution were the college athletes who chose the Corps as well as those with well-off families or important jobs.79 The decision of one highly-regarded track team member dressed in uniform at the University of Minnesota to enlist in the Corps, for example, encouraged

used the phrase “a soldier and a gentleman” see “Letters from a Marine to His Mother and Father,” Malcolm Aitken Papers, USAMHI. British proponents of this chivalric ethos hoped that they could inculcate this spirit into the lower classes thereby strengthening their “character.” Girouard, Return to Camelot, 250 and 252.


77 “Congressman’s Son Likes the Service,” Bulletin, Nov. 1917, 13. The article noted that the son was training with the son of a “millionaire” as well as others with prominent professions. For the Army’s critique of the National Guard for its unseemly democratic tendencies, see Keene, World War I, 50.


more than 500 others to follow in his footsteps. Historian Peter Owen has concluded that college-educated Marines who could have qualified for commissions in other services enlisted in the Corps and served in the infantry in disproportionate numbers compared to other services. Marines recognized this trend at the time. The same article that had celebrated the fact that all Marines could be considered to be “gentlemen” described how one could “see the bank president’s son toting the same rifle as the file leader who may be the son of the village blacksmith.” This rhetoric provided yet another means of favorably comparing the Corps to other purportedly less democratic services.

Advocating the benefits of volunteers over draftees, Major William Harllee testified before Congress that the “caste system” preferred by the Army did not provide enough opportunity for enlisted men and deleteriously “forb[ade]” them from

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80 Peter Owen, To the Limits of Endurance: A Battalion of Marines in the Great War (College Station: Texas A&M University, 2007), 2-3.

81 Editorial, Quantico Leatherneck, 24 Nov. 1917, 2. First published in November 1917, this paper was the idea of Cpl. W.L. Foster, USMC, who was on leave from his job as a journalist. Marines worked on the paper in addition to their regular duties with the staff transitioning frequently due to Marines being shipped overseas. “Two Executives ‘Shove Off’ Leaving One with New Leatherneck Staff,” Quantico Leatherneck, 19 Jan. 1918, 1. Col. Catlin, for example, recalled that sixty percent of his Marines had attended some sort of college. Catlin, With the Help of God, 19. Another article mentioned that the Corps was securing recruits from the “very best families” rather than from “undesirables.” See “The Marines and Their Appeal to Maryland Young Men,” Baltimore American, 10 June 1917, 24. This approach also reinforced the democratic rhetoric of the war, perhaps helping to diffuse some of the class tensions that had arisen in some nations. Paul Fussell, The Great War and Modern Memory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 84. Increasingly literate troops in European and American armies, alike, took exception to the benefits and superior comforts that many officers received. Beaumont, Military Elites, 18. It also reflected the influx of Progressive ideas about democracy into the institution. Zieger, America's Great War, 2.
“associ[ating] with [their] superiors.” The Publicity Bureau seems to have encouraged rhetoric like Harllee’s. An article released through the International Syndicate that appears representative of the Bureau’s press releases pointed to the “democratic fellowship” that existed between enlisted Marines and officers, even at social functions. In departing from the slogan of “first to fight,” the Corps moved to consider a slogan that stressed the possibility of rising from the ranks to receive an officer’s commission. The phrase “Climb to the Shoulder Straps,” referring to the shoulder straps on officers’ uniforms, spoke to the Corps’ determination to meet its need for officers from enlisted Marines rather than qualified civilians. The Corps even published a pamphlet explaining this climb (Figure 16).

In 1917 Commandant George Barnett had begun barring civilian applications for officer commissions, moving instead to grant them to enlisted Marines. The Bureau

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82 “‘Caste’ in Army Bitterly Assailed,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 9 Jan. 1917, 18. This was not the first time Harllee had used this type of rhetoric. See “Opportunity for Men in Ranks to Win Commissions,” Charlotte Observer, 18 Dec. 1916, 9.

83 “Coming up from the Ranks,” Miami Herald, 5 July 1918, 5. Some enlisted Marines stressed similar themes. Upon leaving his recruiting position for service in France, Sgt. Frank Stubbe, USMC wrote that he had been “been treated with more consideration while serving under Captain Patterson than I ever would have received in a like capacity on the outside.” See “Farewell from Wilkes-Barre, PA,” Bulletin, July 1917, 19.

84 “Nation to be Placarded with Slogans of War Today,” Albuquerque Journal, 24 March 1918, 2. One article explaining Army rank to its readers advised that shoulder straps were “generally the best identification of an officer.” See “Rank in the American Army and How It is Ranked,” Anaconda Standard, 18 Nov. 1917, 8.

highlighted stories of Marines who had made this transition. One *Bulletin* cover story detailed the rise of a Norse immigrant from private to lieutenant colonel.\(^8^6\) Some Marines viewed this bridging between the ranks as a way to strengthen what the Corps believed was an esprit de corps second to none.\(^8^7\) It also served the more pragmatic

purpose of providing recruiters with another incentive to lure recruits, and it may help
to explain one of the reasons the Corps attracted college students to its enlisted ranks in
a far greater proportion than other services.88

Many recruits did not even need the inducement of a possible commission to join
the Corps. Novelist Thomas Boyd, who served as a Marine during World War I,
expressed the attractiveness of the Corps’ propaganda as propounded by the Bureau to
potential recruits. He projected the emotions he experienced at the recruiting station
onto his main character, William Hicks:

He was supposed to be a soldier. He had enlisted with at least the tacit
understanding that he was some day to fight. At the recruiting office in
Cincinnati the bespangled sergeant had told him: “Join the marines and see some
real action.” And the heart of William Hicks had fled to the rich brogue and
campaign ribbons that the sergeant professionally wore.89

Writing after the fact, Boyd considered much of the recruiter’s efforts to be
propaganda.90 Others, however, perceived real differences between how the Army and

88 For one mention of the Corps’ ability to attract college students see “Coming up from the Ranks,” Miami
Herald, 5 July 1918, 5.
89 Thomas Boyd, Through the Wheat: A Novel of the World War I Marines (Lincoln: University of Nebraska
Press, 2000), 1-2. Not only was Boyd highly sensitive to the existence of rank, he appears critical of the
institution’s culture as a whole. He described Marine officers as the “white-collared fighters for democracy.”
Ibid., 84. He found even enlisted leadership hypocritical and hesitant to share the lot of the “common”
soldiers. Ibid., 40, 65 and 75. He did consider some officers to be heroes, however, including Major Berton W.
Sibley. See “Memorable Portraiture,” The Bookman (May 1925), 344. Regarding the importance appearance
sometimes played in the decision to enlist, also see Joseph Edward Rendinell, One Man’s War: The Diary of a
Leatherneck (New York: J.H. Sears & Company, 1928), 4 and Malcolm D. Aitken, Department of the Army
Questionnaire, World War I Questionnaires File, USAMHI.
90 Recruiters certainly did not always keep their promises. One Marine who ended up fighting in some of the
major battles in France noted he had been promised service in China if he enlisted. PFC William A. Dodge,
the Corps treated prospects. Arthur Davis felt compelled to join given the challenge offered by the Corps as well as its reputation for training and instilling discipline. Other recruits had flocked to the Corps, drawn by its promise of “first to fight.” Eliot Mackin could not resist joining the Corps in light of the media attention following the June 1918 Battle of Belleau Wood. In the wake of this costly victory, the Corps challenged potential recruits to: “Join the Marines if you can!” Others, however, recalled more practical reasons for choosing the Marine Corps. For some, the institution offered a way to avoid the draft and service in the Army. Others perhaps bought into the Bureau’s rhetoric that Marines were the best fighters, as seems to have been the case

75th Company, 6th Marine Regiment, World War I Veterans’ Survey Project, USAMHI. These surveys were conducted in the 1970s. For more information on this project see Hermine Scholz, World War I Manuscripts: The World War I Surveys (Carlisle Barracks: USAMHI, 1986). With the surveys the institute also received a number of letters, diaries, and other memorabilia from the war that helps supplement the problem of memory contained in some of the surveys.

92 Arthur Davis to Aunt Ginnie, 7 June 1918, Arthur Davis Papers, MCASC.
94 Elton E Mackin, Suddenly We Didn’t Want to Die: Memoirs of a World War I Marine (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1993), 1; see also Frank E. Goodnough Papers, MCASC.
95 The importance of the draft to the Corps’ rhetoric will be discussed in greater detail further on in this chapter. PFC Brownell, Lessiter and Cpl. Peter P. Bymers, 6th Marine Regiment, Army Service Experiences Questionnaire, World War I Veterans’ Survey Project, USAMHI.
for George Donaldson. He wanted to be surrounded by people “who knew how to
fight” if he was going to see battle.96

For all of the Bureau’s emphasis on masculine fighters, it also stressed a more
sensitive, manly attachment to the institution.97 A special supplement to one Bulletin
edition made clear the consensus among recruiters that successful recruiting required a
strong attachment to the institution. This focus on “love” drew on one of the key aspects
of chivalry, but it substituted a romanticized view of an institution for the idealized
worship of women.98 Sergeant Clarence Barry found it difficult to write of his feelings
because he had never experienced a “love affair in real earnest.” He made claims that
can be interpreted as ranging from naïve and romanticized to downright ignorant. He
believed that only the “Legion of Honor” might be able to claim such a “spirit of
fellowship” as existed in the Corps.99 By looking to an institution created by Napoleon
Bonaparte to reward merit with chivalric symbolism, Sergeant Barry highlighted the
stress the Corps put on a brotherhood of knights. As another recruiter noted, this trait

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96 PFC George H. Donaldson, 78th Company, 6th Marine Regiment, Army Service Experiences Questionnaire,
World War I Veterans’ Survey Project, USAMHI.
97 For the difference between manliness and masculinity, see Bederman, Manliness and Civilization, 19.
98 Girouard, Return to Camelot, 188. This turn was made easier by the element of brotherhood so essential to
knights. Ibid., 217.
1918, 2. He perhaps made this link in the context of French soldiers fighting in France. See “Marines Of
France-Some War Memories,” Times Picayune (New Orleans), 27 Jan. 1918, 43.
set the Corps’ “aristocracy” apart from the other military branches. Captain D.W. Blake took such feelings one step further, describing recruiters in religious imagery. The recruiter served as the “Father of the Corps” as well as the “Son” and as such he “Loves, Honors, and Obeys. He knows the Corps, its history and traditions.” This view put recruiters at the very center of the Corps’ institutional culture. They had a responsibility not only to obtain recruits but to serve as caretakers of the Corps’ distinctive identity. Nor were all recruiters content simply to find prospective Marines willing to fight in France. Although recruiters frequently remained at their stations for long periods of time, Sergeant Frank Stubbe, an enthusiastic contributor to the Bulletin, felt his “conscience” no longer allowed him to remain on recruiting duty. He had served for ten years without seeing real action, and the stories he had heard from those he had recruited motivated him to ship over to France.

The Bureau’s efforts to promote a love for the Corps did not cease once recruits had been secured. The Bureau encouraged the indoctrination of trainees with the same “spirit” and love of the Corps it expected its recruiters to manifest. It urged recruits to write of their training experiences, and the Bureau seized upon those letters in which

100 Ibid., 6. For the British Army’s difficulty in incorporating working-class men during World War I, see Fussell, Great War and Modern Memory, 13.
recruits seemed to have internalized the institution’s identity. One of the ways the Corps sought to inculcate this spirit was through speeches during boot camp. The Bureau stressed the power of the speeches given by Edwin Denby, a former Congressman and successful businessman. Despite such credentials, Denby epitomized the Corps’ rhetoric by enlisting during the war because, as he stated, all “cannot begin as officers.” Tasked with speaking to recruits at Parris Island, Denby “open[ed] their eyes to the significance of membership in the historic Corps.” Denby viewed this process as a “vital step in the making of a Marine, the value of which can hardly be overestimated.” One officer concluded that no one was better equipped to “flood the minds and hearts of his hearers with the spirit of the Marines.” A recruit’s affiliation with the institution was as much of a goal as was learning how to aim a rifle or march in formation. This trend persisted even after recruits had left their initial training. The commander of Quantico, Virginia’s Overseas Training Camp noted that Marines did not only receive practical military instruction but officers continued to work to fill young Marines “full to bursting with the spirit of the Corps . . .” Numerous recruits eagerly

imbibed this approach. One recently-commissioned officer wrote enthusiastically of how the Corps sought to turn recruits into “Marines for life.” 108 During training the rhetoric of challenge used by the Publicity Bureau encouraged recruits to take pride in their accomplishments. Drill instructors continued this rhetoric, reminding recruits that they were unworthy of being Marines. 109 One recruit remarked, “It seems as difficult to become a marine as to be elected to office or make a million $.” 110 To complete training and become, as one recruit phrased it, a “full fledged” Marine held enormous significance for some. 111

As recruits neared the completion of training, many expressed their great pride in the Corps. 112 Initially attracted by the “First to Fight” recruiting posters, Mel Krulewitch later reflected that, as the end of boot camp neared, “the miracle of the

108 Clifton Cates to Mom, 1917, Clifton Cates Papers, MCASC.
109 For recruits who felt this way, see Jackson, His Time in Hell; Asa J. Smith Diary, 14 Dec. 1917, Asa J. Smith Papers, MCASC. Craig Cameron offers a different interpretation of this tendency, suggesting that instructors made recruits feel insecure because of the Corps’ purported inferiority complex. He argues that recruits were taught to “perform to some abstract standard of behavior, a standard so high that it was intended to compensate for the marines’ sense of inferiority.” See American Samurai: Myth and Imagination in the Conduct of Battle in the First Division (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36. More seriously, he charges that the Marines’ need to live up to this high standard led them to pay a “price in blood incommensurate with their accomplishments.” Others suggest that training of this nature serves a practical purpose, including boosting morale. As Heather Streets has argued, the morale one gains from an elite identity can pay dividends on the battlefield. See “Identity in the Highland Regiments in the Nineteenth Century: Soldier, Region, Nation” in Steve Murdoch and A. Mackillop, eds., Fighting for Identity: Scottish Military Experience c. 1550-1900 (Boston: Brill, 2002), 213-214.
110 Asa J. Smith Diary, 3 Dec. 1917, Smith Papers. Also see Victor D. Spark Papers and Gerald Bertrand Clark to Ed and Family, 16 Dec. 1917, Gerald Bertrand Clark Papers, MCASC.
111 Vincent B. Grube Papers, MCASC; Gerald Clark, 31 July 1917, Gerald Clark Papers, MCASC.
Marines broke through . . . There quickened in the march that first hint of assurance, that swagger in the swing into line.”\textsuperscript{113} Other Marines connected their institutional pride to other historically elite warriors. One newly-minted Marine believed that his training had made him the “greatest thing since Caesar’s legions.”\textsuperscript{114}

When not being indoctrinated, recruits benefited from training methods that had become increasingly standardized and formalized since the 1890s. In 1891 the institution established formal training known as the School of Application for officers and an eight-week training program for enlisted Marines in 1905. By 1913, the length of training had been increased to three months. The ideal length of training between Marines and soldiers did not differ greatly. The Army decided upon a fourth-month training program in the United States before shipping its soldiers over to France to receive additional training.\textsuperscript{115} In reality, though, both the Army and the Marine Corps’ training regimes differed due to war-time exigencies.\textsuperscript{116} As Peter Owen has pointed out, some newly commissioned Marine officers received nowhere near the requisite training to prepare them for combat.\textsuperscript{117} In its training camps, the Corps stressed drilling and the

\textsuperscript{113} Krulewitch, Now That You Mention It, 28.
\textsuperscript{114} “The Rivalry” in Henry Berry, Make the Kaiser Dance (New York: Doubleday, 1978), 117.
\textsuperscript{115} Weigley, History of the United States Army, 374.
\textsuperscript{117} Peter Owen argues that recruit training was “effective, albeit anachronistic” for enlisted Marines but not nearly as solid for officers. Because the Navy sought to hand as few Naval Academy graduates over to the Corps as possible, Gen. George Barnett decided to write to administrators at the nation’s top colleges asking
rifle range, reflecting the Corps’ growing emphasis on marksmanship in the previous decades. The generally poor quality of Marine marksmanship had so dismayed Commandant Charles Heywood that he had begun instituting reforms as early as the 1890s. As a result, by 1911 Commandant George Biddle could report that the Corps’ rifle team had won the most important rifle match in the United States.

The Corps also designed its training to ensure recruits could endure the mental and physical rigors of war. The “open warfare” so favored by Army officers stressed the infantryman’s morale as one of the most critical factors for wartime success. Historians have argued that the U.S. military believed it could use maneuver warfare to break the stalemate of the trenches and reliance on attrition warfare that had characterized the European armies on the western front. Officers such as General John J. Pershing faulted for their recommendations for officers. More than 500 officers ultimately received their commissions this way. Owen, To the Limits of Endurance, 7.

119 “Report of the Major General Commandant,” Annual Reports of the Navy Department (1912), 529.
Europeans for their purported desire to avoid offensive warfare. U.S. officers sought to apply the mythical skill of American riflemen honed in frontier warfare to European battlefields, believing it could be decisive. While recognizing the realities of trench warfare, Colonel Dion Williams still believed that only open warfare could bring an end to the war. Successful open warfare depended on traits such as a strong esprit de corps and a “close acquaintance between officers and men,” thus illuminating another reason for the emphasis on the Corps’ democratic brotherhood.122

As has been discussed, the Corps encouraged recruits to attach themselves emotionally to their institution. Not only did the Corps stress that it was the finest military institution, but it did so by envisioning an inferior “other” through comparisons to the Army and the Navy. As the Marine novelist John Thomason remarked, esprit de corps could be “defined as esteeming your own corps and looking down on all the other corps.”123 Remarking on his son’s transformation, one father felt compelled to write to Commandant George Barnett regarding how the institution’s esprit de corps had “permeated his system with the feeling that the most important and capable branch of the service is the Marines.”124 Gerald Clark proudly wrote that Marines were better than

123 John Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, xiii.
124 Chas. W. Alban, letter to Major General George Barnett, 13 Aug. 1918, typescript in George Barnett Papers, MCASC.
sailors and soldiers because they passed a more exacting physical examination.125 Marines also encouraged competition in the training process to marginalize differences and promote a shared sense of the Corps as an elite institution. Recruits were taught that enlisted Marines ranked far above Army officers when it came to the ability to soldier. Victor Sparks noted that he and his fellow recruits “sustained our morale by believing that a Marine private was superior to an Army Lieutenant and a Marine N.C.O. superior to an Army Captain.”126 Arthur Davis imbibed these lessons so well that he reminded his relatives of the differences between soldiers and Marines in four separate letters written between June and September of 1918. In one letter, he emphatically stated, “for Heaven’s sake, don’t address me as ‘Corporal.’ I repeat, that I am not in the National Army and the Marines don’t make men “Corporals” in a few weeks.”127 Davis stressed the challenge of being promoted in the Corps, suggesting it signified a far greater achievement than in the Army. Whether or not this was the case, the newly-trained Marine eagerly accepted the same prospect of challenge that the Publicity Bureau had held out to its potential recruits. In another letter Davis wrote, “You must remember I am not in the National Army; that is a picnic compared to what

125 Gerald Clark, letter to “Ed and Family,” 16 Dec. 1917, Clark Papers, MCASC.
126 Spark Papers, MCASC; also Gerald Clark to “Ed and Family,” 16 Dec. 1917, Clark Papers, MCASC.
127 Arthur Davis, letter to mother, 24 July 1918, Arthur Davis Papers, MCASC.
Davis expressed his pride in the Corps because of the obstacles he had to overcome. He was hardly alone in his sentiments. One of his friends who had enlisted in 1917 and served in Cuba wrote to Davis to tell him that he wouldn’t “swap for any branch of the service . . . When you get in the Marines you can look any militia-man, National Guards-man, draft-man, Officers or privates, in the eye and know in almost every instance that you have something on them.” Davis’ friend made no mention of the Navy, with which the Corps had such close historical connections. Rather, he mentioned only those serving as soldiers. Whereas the Corps’ relationship with the Navy had been the source of identity formation in the past, now the overlapping roles that Marines and soldiers filled on the battlefields of France became increasingly important.

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Once in France, competition with the Army flourished because of the Corps’ inclusion in the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), largely composed of and led by soldiers. The first group of Marines to be sent to France arrived in June of 1917. Commanded by Colonel Charles Doyen, most Marines in the Fifth Brigade found themselves assigned to work as laborers and military policemen. Their initial arrival in

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128 Ibid., 21 July 1918.
129 Quoted in Arthur Davis, letter to Aunt Ginnie, Ibid., 7 June 1918.
France did not seem auspicious for upholding their identity as elite fighters. Some of these Marines felt that the Army conspired to limit their opportunities to fight on the front lines. One Marine’s adaptation of the Corps’ hymn made clear the frustration many experienced:

We are working side by side with Huns
And nigger stevedores
But if the Army or the Navy
Ever gaze on Heaven’s scenes
They will find the roads are graded
By United States Marines

Marines resented anything that kept them away from fighting, especially when it entailed serving with what they considered to be the undesirable “other,” expressed here in denigrating ethnic and racist terms. It was common knowledge among Marines that African Americans did not serve in their ranks. To be tasked with manual labor rather than the fighting they had expected only made their job more insulting. In his


131 In addition to the references in Chapter Four, also see Sgt. Edward L. Nye in “My Argument as to Why a Man Should Enlist in the Marine Corps Rather than the Army or the Navy,” discussion supplement, Bulletin, Oct. 1917, 4. Nye boasted that one advantage of the Corps was that a recruit’s “associate[s] [would be] exclusively ‘white men.’”
study of twentieth-century soldiers, Andrew Kindsvatter notes that being assigned to hard labor of this type could hurt morale.132

Marines responded to these perceived slights by drawing on what they had learned at boot camp. Their position within the American Expeditionary force even worked to amplify their Marine identity. As Private Elton Mackin described:

We looked like the army men . . . We wore the army uniform, and only an occasional insignia here and there on pistol holsters, caps, and such identified us as Marine Corps—until you heard us talk. We were proud of many things, not least of all the fact that we were the outcasts of the AEF—the leathernecks. We kept our fierce self-conceit and pride.133

Just as a common language proved crucial in separating recruits from their civilian lives, a common language of Marines helped distinguish them from the soldiers, who had sheer numerical superiority. Because their garbing in Army uniforms had diminished one clear distinction, they had to take other measures to ensure that they remained clearly distinct from soldiers.

How they were selected provided another means of distinguishing between soldiers and Marines. To be drafted was a “disgrace,” some Marines believed.134 This rhetoric reinforced the institution’s elite status as a volunteer as opposed to a conscript

134 Victor D. Spark Papers, MCASC. Officially, however, the Publicity Bureau sought to urge recruiters not to perpetuate such an idea. For other comments on the draft see Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, 43.
force. For this and other reasons Marines described soldiers very critically. One Marine claimed a National Guard officer was shocked to hear that Marine officers frequently led their troops into combat. In another case enlisted Marine Frank Goodough found an Army officer to be cowardly while participating in a joint mission. After soldiers and Marines took cover in ditches seeking protection from artillery fire, Marines eventually continued on when the fire ceased. Goodnough noted that the Army officer must have determined to move back to safer ground, as he never saw the soldiers again. The enlisted Marine’s criticism reflected the belief propounded by the Publicity Bureau and boot camp that enlisted Marines more than equaled the officers of other services. In another case, a Marine officer who had requested a change of command upon learning of his wife’s illness changed his mind after hearing that a soldier rather than a Marine would replace him. The extent to which tensions festered on both sides explains the tendency of publications such as the Second Division’s The Indian to regret the many who did not understand that Marines and soldiers were “pals.” Still, some

135 Boyd, *Through the Wheat*, 162. The issue of draftees versus volunteers is discussed in more detail in this chapter.
137 Frank E. Goodnough Papers, MCASC. For another critique of soldiers, see Scanlon, *God Have Mercy on Us!*, 95-96.
139 *The Indian*, vol. 1, no. 3, 7.
Marines did recognize the contributions of soldiers. After the Battle of Saint-Mihel, Elton Mackin noted that the Army had “carried the load.”

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In terms of the Corps’ image during World War I, the Publicity Bureau would receive the most attention for Belleau Wood and devote the most effort to emphasizing it in the years after the war. The Corps’ performance in the struggle for Belleau Wood has been the subject of debate, particularly because of the accolades that Marines received during and after the battle. Some have questioned whether the Corps needlessly sacrificed its troops, while others have simply regretted that soldiers did not receive as much recognition as Marines. In the aftermath of World War I, when soldiers and Marines were looking to shore up their respective institutional legacies, some Army officers were especially dismissive of the Corps. Army Major General Joseph Dickman, for example, concluded that the Battle of Belleau Wood might have been “magnificent” but it was not “really war.” It could be better described as a “glorious” but “unnecessary

140 Mackin, Suddenly We Didn’t Want to Die, 169.
sacrifice.” Of course Army officers were dismissive of others besides the Marines in seeking to highlight their achievements.143

Some enlisted Marines who fought during Belleau similarly dismissed the attention they received. Private Malcolm Aitken found the commotion over the Battle of Belleau Wood unnecessary. He was glad simply to have survived.144 Similarly, Corporal Warren Jackson despised the brutality and death he witnessed on the battlefield, and his account of the war lacks the hyperbole and seemingly excessive pride in the Corps that characterized some perspectives. Novelist and Marine Thomas Boyd described slightly different sentiments. He dismissed the officers’ attempts at indoctrination or, as he described it, at seeking to instill a “peculiar” spirit in them.145 By contrast, Colonel Albert Catlin, perhaps sensitive to the Army’s critique of the Corps, wrote after the war that he did not want to “overemphasize” the battle’s “importance” to the war as a whole.146 That caveat did not keep him, however, from believing that the Marines “whipp[ed] more than four times our weight in Germans” who fought in “protected positions.”147 The

143 Jennifer Keene, Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 118.
144 Pvt. Malcolm Aitken, Aitken Papers, USAMHI.
145 Boyd, Through the Wheat, 168.
146 Catlin, With the Help of God, 181.
147 Ibid., 176-177.
Bureau and higher-ranking Marines were more likely to celebrate Belleau Wood than many enlisted Marines.

Given how close the Germans were to breaking through and marching onto Paris after the French troops began retreating, French citizens might be forgiven for having a different opinion of Belleau Wood’s importance. Some historians agree. World War I historian Michael Neiberg views the battle as a “significant setback” for the Germans. Mark Grotelueschen sees the importance of the battle in part due to the psychological advantage it gave to the American troops, not only in their first major combat of the war but their first offensive engagements. The AEF was largely untested prior to Belleau Wood, and soldiers and Marines learned a great deal during the course of the almost month-long battle. Grotelueschen notes, moreover, that many works focus on the Marines’ costly engagements of June 6 yet ignore similar failures by soldiers. He and others have pointed to Major General James G. Harbord’s decision to limit the use of

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149 Michael S. Neiberg, *The Second Battle of the Marne* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 79. Also see Neiberg’s quoting of General Robert S. Bullard that the Marines had “saved the allies from defeat” at Belleau Wood on *Ibid.*, 44.

150 Grotelueschen, *AEF and the Way of War*, 208-209.

151 *Ibid.*, 207. When asked if Belleau Woods was the most “brilliant action” of the war, one Army officer replied that he believed the most important test was efficiency and that “there were a dozen Belleau Woods in the Argonne” and elsewhere. Lt. Col. Frederick Palmer quoted in The Society of the First Division, *History of the First Division During the World War, 1917-1919* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1922), 362. How Marines and soldiers at Belleau could have fought with their utmost efficiency at their first major encounter is not addressed.

artillery as highly flawed. The question arises of how much blame to assign to Harbord’s subordinate Marine officers for their failure or inability to sway the Army officer who commanded them and how much should be placed on Harbord.153

Regardless of the actual conduct of the battle, journalists and the Publicity Bureau created a different story. The articles published in the days after the AEF began offensive operations suggest that either the press made major errors in covering the battle or that the Publicity Bureau was busy providing newspapers with highly optimistic accounts of the battle. Some articles, for example, bore no resemblance to the slow progress of the Marines on June 6 and June 7. One article claimed that Marines had advanced almost two miles in only a few days.154

Accurate or not, the publicity the Marines received caused tensions between soldiers and Marines, as they had also fought at Belleau Wood. In the wake of this battle, one Marine cynically believed the AEF had assigned soldiers a specific mission just “so they could be cited.” He suggested they could certainly try “to keep up with the

153 Ibid., 214-15. For other critiques of Harbord’s planning see Millett, Semper Fidelis, 302.
154 “Huns Flee like Cattle before Bayonets of Death Defying Soldiers of the Sea,” Wyoming State Tribune, 7 June 1918, 1; “Marines Smash through German Lines and Deal Death to Shock Troops,” Idaho Statesman, 8 June 1918, 1. This article claimed that one of the “toughest of all the objectives, Belleau wood . . . was swept by the Marines without serious trouble.” See Lowell Mellett, “American Marines Drive Forward at Thierry and Repulse Germans To-Day,” Wilkes-Barre Times, 8 July 1918, 1. Another article claimed this achievement occurred four days later. “American Marines Have Entirely Cleared Belleau Wood of Enemy Slaughtering Many Germans,” Jonesboro Daily Tribune, 12 June 1918, 1. For the tight censorship of journalists during the war see Stephen L. Vaughn, Encyclopedia of American Journalism (New York: Routledge, 2008), 85.
Marines,” but they would never really measure up to them.\textsuperscript{155} Other Marines did not necessarily see their role at Belleau Wood as of critical importance until they read reports in the newspapers. After viewing a headline entitled, “US Marines Save Paris,” one Marine came to appreciate what he and his fellow Marines had recently accomplished. Some Marines even found the jealousy of soldiers unwarranted. Gunnery Sergeant Glenn Van Doik composed a poem to justify the praise that Marines had received:

\begin{quote}
They saved fair city, of Paris,
With legs, arms, blood and life,
So why shouldn’t they get the credit?
Now the world is through with strife
\hspace{1em} . . . The best fighter,
\hspace{1em} The best soldier
\hspace{1em} The world has ever seen
\hspace{1em} And none were ever bolder,
\hspace{1em} Than the United States Marine.\textsuperscript{156}
\end{quote}

Asserting that Marines had paid a heavy price for the accolades of the public and the press, Van Doik also believed that their efforts demonstrated that they soldiered better than the Army.

At times competition between Marines and soldiers could be good-natured. One Marine recalled how soldiers teased them regarding what they believed to be excessive

\textsuperscript{155} John McHenry Jr., letter to Mother, 10 July 1918, John McHenry Jr. Papers, MCASC. He also suggested in a letter dated 2 July 1918 that the Army was doing its best to “suppress” any praise for Marines.\textsuperscript{156} Gunny Sgt. Glenn Van Doik, \textit{Poetic History of the American Devil Dogs}, copied in journal of Patrick Moran, Patrick Moran Papers, MCASC.
media attention accorded to the Corps after the Battle of Belleau Wood. While waiting for lunch one day, soldiers began joking with Marines:

‘Where were the Marines at Chateau-Thierry?’
Answer: ‘In the newspapers!’
Then the Marines would yell back: ‘America’s selected men! Yah, you got patriotic as hell after they tied a rope around your neck and dragged you in!’ Back they would come with ‘Draft dodgers! Draft dodgers!’
Then we would all line up together and eat.157

The idea that the Corps chose or “selected” its men to meet its high standards was contrasted with those soldiers who the draft “selected.”158 Despite the rhetoric Marines espoused of serving alongside drafted soldiers, volunteers formed the main body of those who saw the earliest fighting.159 The idea that potential draftees would select the Corps, however, coincided with the way that the institution emphasized military service more as a noble calling than something that should be forced. The Corps, however, had to be careful how much emphasis it placed on the distinction between draftees and volunteers. One issue of the Bulletin informed recruiters that Headquarters did not approve of posters stating “Don’t Be A Conscript—Join NOW—Avoid Being Drafted.”160

In August of 1918, however, the Corps was forced to accept draftees. The Bureau

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157 Scanlon, God Have Mercy on Us!, 140. For other competitive teasing between soldiers and Marines see “The Rivalry” in Berry, Make the Kaiser Dance, 2.
159 Throughout 1917 more men volunteered then were drafted. Kindsvatter, American Soldiers, 1.
responded by making it clear draftees would have to select the Corps and they would still had to meet its stringent entrance requirements.

By contrast, the traditional sense of close competition with the Navy subsided in France. Perhaps accelerating a process that had begun at the beginning of the twentieth century regarding the way that Marines viewed sailors, Marines argued that even sailors believed that Marines were elite fighters. Marines contrasted their role in France with the more limited role on land of sailors. As William Scanlon recalled,

we passed quite a few long-range naval guns, manned by gobs [sailors]. We hollered at them, but they didn’t seem to know what it was all about. We tried to tell them we were Marines, but I think they understood us to ask, were they Marines? because they began to get chesty and look important.161

Scanlon implicitly contrasted Marines as fighters with the sailors who stood out of harm’s way manning the long-range naval guns. A journalist similarly distinguished between the Navy, which “does the sailing,” and the Marines, who “do the fighting.”162

Other Marines suggested that sailors regretted their decision to join the Navy instead of

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161 Scanlon, 301. For similar sentiments expressed from a sailor’s perspective rather than a Marine’s see “The Boys in the Navy,” Anaconda Standard, 2 June 1918, 15.

162 It would not be surprising if the Publicity Bureau had produced this particular article. “Don’t Forget the Marines,” Colorado Springs Gazette, 8 May 1917, 4. That some in the Navy began to feel that this was the case as well can be seen in a poem published by a sailor in training. See “The Boys in the Navy,” Anaconda Standard, 2 June 1918, 15. That a sailor used this term suggests that this was not simply a derogatory term developed by the Marines. The use of the term “gob” to describe sailors had become increasingly common after 1910. Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels prohibited recruiters from using the term by 1919. Jonathan Lighter, “The Slang of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe, 1917-1919: An Historical Glossary,” American Speech vol. 47, no. ½, 58. For its continued use see, for example, “Gobs’ Play Host to Navy Officers,” New York Times, 26 June 1921, 20. The term seems to have in some ways replaced the more traditional reference to sailors as bluejackets. Also see Paul Dickson, War Slang: American Fighting Words and Phrases Since the Civil War, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 2004), 65-66.
the Corps. A sailor was likely to “bemoan his fate. He sees the marines, and his eyes turn green with envy. Had he but had the foresight he too would have enlisted in the finest branch of the service.”163 One article even claimed Marines were more at home on naval vessels than sailors.164

The words of one Marine poet, however, suggest that the Corps was even more dismissive of soldiers.165 Regarding the occupation of Germany, the Marine suggested that he expected the Army to lag even behind the Navy, even though that service had little experience soldiering. As he rhymed, “[t]he Marine Corps will be leading / When we’re marching on the Rhine, / The Navy will be trailing / And the Army far behind.”166 With the Navy providing less of a direct threat to the Corps’ existence, Marines could afford to suggest that even sailors could out-soldier the Army.

Despite the extent to which individual Marines often reflected the attitudes the Publicity Bureau had worked to amplify since its establishment, the Bureau did not rest on its laurels. Even before the battles had ceased, the institution quickly worked to mythologize elements of the Corps’ experience in France. In perhaps the most

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163 “Sad Tale, Mates; Gob is Mourmful,” Quantico Leatherneck.
164 “Take a Lesson from a Marine,” Quantico Leatherneck, 17 Nov. 1917, 4.
165 Another song made no mention of the Navy at all: “Oh, the infantry, the cavalry, the dirty engineers, / They couldn’t lick a leather-neck / In a hundred thousand years.” Scanlon, God Have Mercy on Us!, 72. After one Marine sang this stanza in a novel, one Marine purportedly responded that he must have spent the previous evening in a safe location eating the rations of combat Marines if he felt like singing. Boyd, Through the Wheat, 142.
166 “Fumes from the Incinerator,” Quantico Leatherneck, 2 Feb. 1918, 2.
important case, the Corps developed a symbol that represented the institution’s belief in its fighting prowess. This was made possible by the purported comments of a German officer. After supposedly observing the tenacious fighting of the Marines he encountered, he wrote that Marines reminded him of “teufel heundel” or devil dogs.\textsuperscript{167} In a similar vein, Marines also referred to themselves as “devil hounds.”\textsuperscript{168}

Traditionally in Marine lore, the Corps had earned this sobriquet during the Battle of Belleau Wood. Given that the nickname had appeared in newspaper articles in May of 1918 before the Corps had seen much real fighting, however, it seems likely that the Publicity Bureau devised this nickname.\textsuperscript{169} As one article proclaimed, “Fritz, after his first clash with him dubbed him a “teufel hund,” which is perfectly good German for “devil dog.” The article further noted that the Marines were the third “fighting unit” to

\textsuperscript{167} Despite writing about the importance of “myth” in shaping the consciousness of Marines, even Craig Cameron does not cast doubt on the origins of what in all likelihood was invented. Cameron, \textit{American Samurai}, 24. Other articles mentioning the German newfound appreciation for the fighting prowess of Marines bear the hallmark of the Publicity Bureau. One article, for example, stated that the “greatest fighting man in the world is what a German writer recently termed the United States marine.” The purported German author then went on to say the second best was the “Canadian northwest police” with the third being the “Potsdam Guard.” See “Marines Greatest Of Fighting Men,” \textit{Cleveland Plain Dealer}, 21 June 1918, 19 and “One Minute Interviews,” \textit{Charlotte Observer}, 29 June 1918, 8. For other mentions of the Canadian Northwest Police to suggest the Bureau’s hand in this comment, see “Hats Off to the Marines!,” \textit{Buffalo Courier}, 16 Apr. 1914 quoted in \textit{Marines in Rhyme, Prose, and Cartoon} (1914), n.p. A novelist also picked up on this comparison, which, in this reference, was made by an English colonel rather than a German writer. See Everett T. Tomlinson, \textit{Sergeant Ted Cole, United States Marines} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), 11 and 27. Imagery regarding “devils” and “hell” was not uncommon. See Scanlon, \textit{God Have Mercy on Us!}, 72.

\textsuperscript{168} Catlin, \textit{With the Help of God}, 46 and 64.

\textsuperscript{169} For the AEF’s first real fighting in June see Grotelueschen, \textit{AEF and the Way of War}, 208. For appearances of the term see “Letter Writing Becomes a Rage among Marines,” \textit{Wilkes-Barre Times}, 25 May 1918, 4 and “Marine Recruiters In Princeton, Enlist Collegians In Whirlwind Campaign For 100 ‘Devil Dogs,'” \textit{Trenton Evening Times}, 4 June 1918, 4.
receive a nickname from the Germans." If the Germans so rarely devised nicknames for their opponents, it seems highly unlikely that they would have come up with one for the Marines prior to encountering them in any significant way.

In fact, it would have been far easier for the Bureau to concoct a nickname involving “devils” given the prominence of this word during the war. After all, the Bureau had released several articles linking the Marines with the elite French troops nicknamed the “Blue Devils,” another nickname purportedly devised by the Germans. In one article it stressed that both organizations consisted of “picked” men. These French troops had gained notoriety for their reputation of devising tactics capable of breaking through the stalemate of trench warfare. Some Marines were already familiar with these troops, having trained alongside them upon arrival in France. Similarly, the idea of a dog as a mascot could have been borrowed easily from the British Royal Marines, who had chosen a bull dog for their mascot. The symbolic meaning the bulldog

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170 “‘Devil Dog’ of America Huns’ Name for Marine,” Bellingham Herald, 5 June 1918, 10. The same article was printed in The Anaconda Standard, 6 June 1918, 6. For a very similar article, see “Marines Especially Disliked by Germans,” San Jose Mercury News, 22 May 1918, 10. One of the earliest instances of this term is in a 13 May 1918 article. See “‘Devil Dogs’ is Name Given Our Marines by Huns,” Albuquerque Journal, 1.

171 Other uses of the word “devil” suggest it held particular symbolic value during World War I as a way to describe the “hellish” nature of the battlefield. For uses of the word by Marines, see Catlin, With the Help of God, 94-95, 114, and 152.

172 “Blue Devils and Devil Dogs-The Perfect Blend,” The Miami Herald, 15 July 1918, 5. The illustrations that accompanied this article suggest it was a Bureau release. It was also published in more than one newspaper with the exact same headline. See Wyoming State Tribune, 15 July 1918, 6.

173 Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 164.
had acquired in nineteenth-century England as a creature that derived its worth from its fighting merits certainly accorded with the Publicity Bureau’s efforts.\textsuperscript{174}

Regardless of whether the Corp invented its new nickname or simply embraced the German officer’s characterization, it spread quickly, if not always accurately. One Marine learned of the nickname by reading a newspaper article.\textsuperscript{175} Twelve days after Marines learned of their new nickname, one Marine wrote home that they had been dubbed the “Green Devils.”\textsuperscript{176} Given the Corps’ green uniforms, such a nickname made sense, again especially considering the popularity of the so-called “Blue Devils.”

Marines also served alongside what Marine officer and novelist John Thomason described as “black devils,” or French colonial troops.\textsuperscript{177} His and other post-war accounts suggested that legends might have arisen during and after the war about the voluntary service of Marines with these troops, whom Thomason and others admired for their fighting prowess.\textsuperscript{178} These legends would have worked to affirm the Corps’ image as an institution of peerless fighters. Marines might have no desire to add African Americans to their ranks, but Thomason had no difficulty in celebrating the fighting

\textsuperscript{175} Scanlon, \textit{God Have Mercy on Us}, 111-112.
\textsuperscript{176} Arthur Clifford, 20 June 1918, Arthur Clifford Papers, MCASC.
\textsuperscript{178} Even cynical novelist Thomas Boyd was impressed by the fortitude of the French colonials. See Boyd, \textit{Through the Wheat}, 181 and 197.
prowess of these African troops who were “terrible” with the bayonet, meaning in combat at close quarters.\textsuperscript{179} He described them as the “only troops we ever met that could keep up with the Marines.”\textsuperscript{180} This respect coincided with the general trend in American society since the beginning of the twentieth century to celebrate a primitive masculinity.\textsuperscript{181} Some Americans might worry that too much civilization had diminished the nation’s virility, but Marines and the Publicity Bureau projected a confident image in their masculinity. Thomason described the enthusiasm of these African troops for the battlefield:

\begin{quote}
Killing, which is at best an acquired taste with the civilized races, was only too palpably their mission in life. Their eyes rolled, and their splendid white teeth flashed in their heads, but here all resemblance to a happy Southern darky stopped. They were deadly. Each platoon swept its front like a hunting-pack, moving swiftly and surely together. The lieutenant felt a thrill of professional admiration as he went with them.\textsuperscript{182}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{179} Dave Grossman argues that killing at close quarters is very difficult. a very different interpretation, see Joanna Bourke, \textit{An Intimate History of Killing} (New York: Basic Books, 1999) She argues that many revel in the opportunity to kill which the battlefield affords. In his memoir Colonel Frederic Wise described the British infatuation with the bayonet. Wise, \textit{A Marine Tells It to You}, 164.

\textsuperscript{180} John W. Thomason, \textit{Red Pants and Other Stories} (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1927), 26. It does not seem likely that many Marines served alongside African troops. It is likely that Thomason romanticized these troops. One Marine, for example, recalled that Moroccan troops never appeared where they were supposed to during one battle. See Edwin H. Simmons, ”Leathernecks at Soissons.” \textit{Naval History} (Dec. 2005), 24-33.


\textsuperscript{182} Thomason, \textit{Fix Bayonets!}, 105; “The Rivalry” in \textit{Make the Kaiser Dance}, 116. Thomason also commented unfavorably on the Haitians, against whom the Marines had fought, in comparison to these African troops. Thomason, \textit{Fix Bayonets!}, x.
In Thomason’s account, racism is ever present, but it can be suspended temporarily for those African troops. Physical resemblance aside, Thomason implied that African Americans were largely incapable of anything like these African troops who “marched like veterans” or could be characterized as “bon fighters.” Thomason connected the performance of Marines to these troops when he modified the story of a captured German officer’s diary, which purportedly had described Marines as “devil dogs” to one in which troops found a letter written by a dead German describing Marines as “savages” who killed “everything that moves.” In his study of World War I novels, Paul Fussell argued that one reaction to “mechaniz[ed]” and “industrialize[ed]” warfare was a reversion to myth, ritual, and folklore. For Marines who did not have the exact same experience as Europeans in the war, however, myth and folklore possibly served a very different purpose: one that furthered the institution rather than helping to think about the experience of war.

Thomason’s depictions of the Marines’ enjoyment of French colonial troops might have been fictional, but he was not the only one to recount such a story. Enlisted Marines purportedly snuck off to participate in night missions with these colonial troops

183 Ibid., 88-89. Others were more critical. Col. Frederic Wise noted in regard to a French colonial troop with a severed German head as a war trophy that “[a]pparently he had gone back to the barbaric war time instincts of the jungle from which he had come less than a year before.” Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 258.
184 Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, 27.
185 Fussell, Great War and Modern Memory, 115.
because they enjoyed the way these African troops killed with knives. Thomas Boyd, known for his more realistic novels, challenged Thomason’s portrayals, sarcastically wondering if his “battalion, or at least his company, must have been more bloodthirsty and warlike than most.” One general motivated his Marines by informing them that they would be fighting beside Moroccans known to be used “for work requiring dash and desperate bravery” and considered widely to be the “best shock troops” in France.” The image of the savage, heartless fighter might have resonated more strongly with Marines working back in New York at the Publicity Bureau than with troops on the battlefield. Similarly, more than one Marine in France expressed a preference for bawdy or profane songs over the “noble” words of the Marine Hymn. Other legends arose that worked to reaffirm the notion of Marines as elite fighters, often resulting from phrases uttered in the midst of battle. Reflective of the ethos of determination and invincibility that the Corps perpetuated was the following statement:

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186 Fix Bayonets!, 106; Berry, Make the Kaiser Dance, 116. Andrew Kindsvatter notes that some went AWOL for short periods of time as an act of resistance against the military. American Soldiers, 103. Also see Keene, Doughboys, 67-68. One private’s letter included in Col. Catlin’s account of the war suggests a different motive. Enlisted Marines held in reserve during Belleau Wood purportedly went looking for Marines in need of aid on the battlefield at night. Catlin, With the Help of God, 150. Another account suggests the tendency of replacements to go AWOL. See Owen, To the Limits of Endurance, 100-101 and 106.


188 James G. Harbord, Leaves from a War Diary (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1925), 324-325. For Marines with similar perspectives on the French colonial troops, see Scanlon, God Have Mercy on Us, 140; Malcolm D. Aitken, MCASC; Catlin, With the Help of God, 188.

189 Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, 68.
I have only 2 men left out of my company and 20 of other companies. We need support, but it is almost suicidal to try to get it here as we are swept by machine gun fire and a constant artillery barrage is on us. I have no one on my left and very few on my right. I will hold.190

World War I Marines were represented as unstoppable “supermen” who continued fighting no matter what the odds. A work published under the auspices of the Publicity Bureau characterized a Marine “fresh from the grit of battle” who had lost an arm and taken bullet wounds to the thigh and shoulder as “enough to kill an ordinary man, but the Marine lived.”191 If the incident was at all based on reality, the Marine’s experienced probably represents a case of what has been termed “combat narcosis,” in which adrenaline provides almost “superhuman strength and agility.” In this case, however, the Bureau distinguished from the “ordinary man” and the Marine.192 Such hyperbole upheld and even exaggerated the ideal images that had been constructed during the previous two decades. Some Marines internalized this rhetoric. Army officer Gen. James Harbord, whose legacy benefited from the performance of the Marines under his

190 Unlike other lines, this one was attributed solely to Lieut. Clifton Cates of Tennessee, a future commandant. Carl Andrew Brannen, Over There: A Marine in the Great War (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996), 64. The pugnacious remarks of another officer were equally beloved by Marines. When told by a French officer to retreat, the Marine officer responded with the words, “Retreat, hell! We just got here!” Determining who said this phrase provoked some conflict. It was variously ascribed to an Army colonel, future Commandant Wendell Neville, Captain Lloyd Williams, and Major Frederic Wise. See, for example, Jackson, His Time in Hell, 128. Regardless, the phrase was disseminated quickly from Marine to Marine. For other similar comments, see Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, 191.

191 Cowing and Cooper, Dear Folks at Home, 3.
192 McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 39-41.
command, was impressed that a Marine who had lost a hand and an eye and had been shot in both thighs wanted to return to the battlefield immediately.193

The press also perpetuated the image of the invincible Marine, grateful that fresh troops were pouring into a country tired of war.194 One French newspaper characterized the Marines as elite troops, noting that in such a young nation the Marines were “old, very old, for they date since 1775; [t]he ‘esprit de corps’ is developed with them as much as it can be in our ‘Elite Armies.’ It pleases them to fight, to abandon their coat, to lose their hat and meet the enemy with sleeves rolled up.”195 In interviews Marines helped to reinforce the notion of killing as a rather blasé affair, further strengthening the notion of Marines as elite warriors. One French newspaper reported that the Marines used the motto “We kill or get killed,” while an American newspaper celebrated the matter-of-fact way in which Marines went about the business of killing, even at close quarters:

An officer coming back from the Bois de Belleau . . . talked mildly of the exploit. “Tell me about the fight,” I urged. “There isn’t anything to tell,” said he. “We were ordered to take the woods and we took it. That’s all.” “Did your men do much bombing?” “The fact is,” said he, rather shamefacedly, it seemed, “my men must be a rotten lot of bombers. They like to dig ‘em out with the bayonet.”196

193 Harbord, Leaves from a War Diary, 296.
194 Axelrod, Miracle at Belleau Wood, 104.
196 Ibid.; Herbert Corey, “Our Men Put Fear In Germans’ Heart,” 13 June 1918, clipping, Ben Fuller Papers, MCASC.
Like John Thomason, who entitled his collection of World War I short stories *Fix Bayonets!*, this anonymous Marine officer celebrated killing at close quarters in contrast to using stand-off weapons. Colonel Frederic Wise believed the use of the bayonet to be essential in killing the German machine gun crews his Marines encountered at Belleau Wood.\(^{197}\) The extent to which Marines used the bayonet in battle is difficult to prove definitely. What is certain, however, is that rhetorically its purported use reinforced the image the Bureau worked to project. Individual Marines writing after the war reinforced this image, whether deliberately or not, in their own writing.

Dave Grossman and others have argued that this type of killing required the most courage for soldiers.\(^{198}\) In this case the purported willingness of Marines to engage in such types of fighting worked to support their image as elite fighters. Perhaps the emphasis on the bayonet served a practical purpose. For many, the randomness of shelling epitomized the worst of modern warfare.\(^{199}\) It was anonymous and completely unpredictable and could occur at any moment.\(^{200}\) A Marine had little control from shelling, especially giving the somewhat atypical experience of the American

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\(^{200}\) Kindsvatter, 49 and 59.
Expeditionary Forces. Unlike their French and British allies, Marines spent limited
time in formal trenches. Colonel Frederic Wise’s Sixth Marines, for example, spent a
short time in formal trenches in their first introduction to the front. In some of their
most intense fighting at the Battle of Belleau Wood, however, they found themselves
hastily improvising fox holes about a foot deep, which did not provide the same
protection as trenches. A bayonet, on the other hand, produced combat in which the
best fighter would win ideally. Historians have stressed how the image of dueling
fighters in aviation provided a new sort of “knight” during World War I. For the
average Marine, though, the bayonet could serve as the weapon of choice in a sort of
duel, one that gave him more power to combat the stress and terrors of the battlefield,

As one Marine wrote, the shell avoided those “whom the Gods had decreed should live.” “Belleau
Wood,” J.L. Tunnell Papers, MCASC. One poet wrote of the Marine who with “bayonet bent and cartridges
spent, / He wielded his piece like a maul; ’Til near him a shell—burst—and he fell.” See Neill Hitt, “He
Fought for Adventure They Said,” Devil Dog Ballads (privately printed, 1919), 5. Hitt dedicated the work to
Colonel A.S. McLemore, who played such an important role in the Publicity Bureau. Even this fatalism,
however, still allowed room to celebrate the receipt of the “insult” of “devil dog” which Marines
“cherished.” Dear Folks at Home, a celebratory collection of Marine letters, was also dedicated to McLemore.
Cowing and Cooper, v. As they wrote, “To him is due much of the love of the emblem that glows in the
heart of the United States Marine”, thereby making the connection between the Corps’ identity and the
work of the Publicity Bureau.

Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 180-190. Wise found himself ordered to one position precisely because he
was one of the few to have “trench experience.” Ibid., 255 and Axelrod, Miracle at Belleau Wood, 33.

Wise, 202, 216, and 230; Axelrod, 74-75. Axelrod further argues that some American officers believed
encouraging the digging of defensive positions harmed a man’s offensive fighting spirit. Ibid., 82. For one
Marine officer’s belief in the importance of trenches, though, see Catlin, With the Help of God, 31-32.

Adams, Echoes of War, 26.
one that represented a primitive weapon vastly different from that of the machine gun or the shell. 205

From the perspective of Marine officers, who themselves rarely carried weapons during the battle, the use of the rifle represented not only what distinguished Americans from Germans, but what separated U.S. Marines from other troops. In this way the Corps used the Battle of Belleau Wood to reinforce its image. There might be one machine gun for every ten Germans, and Marines might be badly outnumbered, but using only the “rifle, bayonet, and grenade” Marines would defeat them. 206 As Private Hiram Pottinger wrote, “We had nothing of our own except our rifles and bayonets, but that was enough for [the Germans]” who, as Sergeant Arthur Ganoe suggested, had a “horror of hand-to-hand fighting.” 207 Suggesting that this was indeed the case at exceptional times was Sergeant Dan Daly’s Distinguished Service Cross citation for capturing a German machine gun single-handedly with the “use of hand grenades and his automatic pistol.” 208 Marine officers consistently pointed to the Corps’ emphasis on precision marksmanship that began in basic training. Unlike soldiers who only learned

205 For the continuing power of the mythic duel during combat see ibid., 177.
206 Catlin, With the Help of God, 132.
207 Ibid., 173 and 205.
208 Ibid., 164. The citation noted, moreover, that he had assisted wounded Marines under fire at a latter point that same day.
the rudiments of taking care of and using a weapon, Marines spent three of their eight weeks honing their marksmanship.209

In thinking about the importance of Belleau Wood, the writer who helped Colonel Catlin write his memoirs compared it to Thermopylae, where a small cadre of Spartans had held off the Persians in one of the world’s most famous battles.210 The comparison was an apt one in many ways, given the small size of the institution. Still, the Corps had no illusions that the actual waging of the battle went well, plagued as it was by lack of communication and disorder.211 Regardless, Belleau Wood was the Corps’ coming-of-age story, the fulfillment of everything it had sought to become on paper since the late nineteenth century.

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She might as well have written a “Dear John” letter.212 Indeed, she joked that he could even have his ring back. In a letter to her fiancé Corporal Bill Smith, published in an issue of the Bulletin, one of the first female Marines appeared to write almost everything a Marine fighting in France would not want to hear. After informing Smith

209 Axelrod, Miracle at Belleau Wood, 18-19
210 Catlin, With the Help of God, x.
211 Catlin, With the Help of God, 82, 109, and 146.
212 This term has been used by troops describing the receipt of a letter informing them that their spouse or girlfriend wants to end a relationship. R.M. Duncan, “‘Dear John’, American Speech, vol. 22, no. 3 (Oct. 1947), 187. The letter, published under the headline, “Breaking the News to Bill,” played on the general fear of soldiers and Marines for the infamous “Dear John” letter announcing a break-up during a boyfriend’s overseas combat tour. In this case, however, the twist was, of course, that her decision to join the Marines was almost as shocking as a break-up.
that she had enlisted, Private Martha Wilchinski warned him not to be surprised if she received a croix de guerre, a medal awarded to those who displayed heroism during combat.\(^{213}\) She spoke condescendingly of his knowledge of military rank, suggesting he as a mere corporal might not understand what a colonel was (despite the fact that she was a private, a rank below her fiancé). She even questioned him as to why she had not received the German helmet of the soldier he had claimed to kill, wondering if he had really “got the fellow.”\(^{214}\) From her safe location in New York, she had the audacity to call into question his honor and challenge his manhood, overtly through the matter of the missing helmet and more subtly through mentions of military hierarchy. Her words likely would have fueled the misogyny often present during wars.\(^{215}\) That the Marine Corps’ Publicity Bureau could publish this letter through its official voice, The Recruiter’s Bulletin, appeared striking. Did this letter speak for Private Wilchinski or for the Publicity Bureau?

As one of the first female Marines to join the Corps, Corporal Martha Wilchinski was assigned to the Publicity Bureau along with four other female Marines. Her exact

\(^{213}\) Some women, especially nurses who served in France, did receive the croix de guerre. See Lettie Gavin, American Women in World War I: They Also Served (Niwot, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 258-259.

\(^{214}\) Comments epitomized the fixation of many civilians or rear-echelon troops for souvenirs, which some combat troops found extremely distasteful. See Wise, A Marine Tells It to You, 184; Catlin, With the Help of God, 30. Others had fewer reservations, though. Ibid., 193.

\(^{215}\) This tendency runs through a number of wars. See, for example, James S. Campbell, “For You May Touch Them Not: Misogyny, Homosexuality, and the Ethics of Passivity in First World War Poetry,” ELH 64 (Fall, 1997), 823-842; “‘She’s a Pretty Woman . . . for a Gook’: The Misogyny of the Vietnam War,” Journal of American Culture 12 (Fall, 1989), 55-65.
role in penning these letters is unknown. Two of the published letters were subsequently included in a chapter entitled “Lady Leathernecks” in the book Dear Folks at Home: The Glorious Story of the U.S. Marines in France as Told by Their Letters from the Battlefield. It is unknown precisely what role if any the Publicity Bureau had in the publication of this book. That there was some relation, however, appears likely given that the book’s editors dedicated it to the head of the Publicity Bureau. One of the work’s editors, moreover, had joined the Corps in August of 1918 and subsequently been sent to France where he was tasked with conducting historical research. As the editors of Dear Folks at Home described them, Wilchinski’s letters told the story of a “girl who had become a ‘lady leatherneck,’ that a real ‘he-man leatherneck,’ as the Marines call themselves, might take up his gun and march away to war.”216 This description stressed the femininity of the new Marines even as it amplified the masculine qualities of those Marines who would now be sent to France.

The 305 women who served in the Marine Corps during World War I have received scant historical attention.217 Their story has been told solely from the perspective of women’s history, showing the difficulties and challenges these Marines

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216 Cowing and Cooper, Dear Folks at Home, 15.
217 Edward McClellan, who served as the Corps’ first historian in an official capacity, does not mention more than 277 women, however. Edwin N. McClellan, The United States Marine Corps in the World War (Nashville: The Battery Press, reprint, 1920), 12 and 76. Most sources, however, state that 305 women served.
faced in serving their country. Many of these accounts rely on the same sources, even including the same quotes and telling the same stories. Female Marines have been celebrated as pioneers of military service in a way that often assumed an inevitable progression toward equality.

An approach that draws on gender rather than women’s history helps to reveal the incongruities and meanings with which the Corps wrestled as it sought to incorporate women. While liberal feminists have assumed that the inclusion of women in the military marks a step toward equality, other feminist scholars such as Anne McClintock suggest that nations have “sanctioned . . . gender difference.” Even as the Corps incorporated women it projected a more aggressive identity that was highly

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218 See, for example, the challenge of finding housing in Washington D.C. during the war and the emphasis (unsurprisingly) on the proficiency of these female Marines in Pamela Wood and Mary Bacon Hale, Women Marines Association (Nashville: Turner Publishing Company, 1997), 10.


221 Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (New York: Routledge, 1995), 353. For different types of feminism in regard to war, see Goldstein, War and Gender, 39-51. Cynthia Enloe, for example, can be considered a “postmodern” feminist. She posits that women fill a number of purposes during wartime, many of which appear “contradictory.” Ibid., 50.
masculine. Where once it simply had sought men, now it wanted “real” men.222 How did an institution with such a highly gendered identity make room for women.223 Did the Corps, which considered itself to be an elite military institution, include women differently than the Navy? In some ways, the incorporation of women simplified the gendered identity of male Marines. Female Marines did not drill with rifles or attend Boot Camp. Instead, they filled clerical positions that increasingly were becoming gendered as female in society at large.224 The presence of an “other”—that of the female Marines—sharpened the sense of male Marines as fighters first and foremost. The ultimate significance of female Marines was more about the boost to male identity than it was about equality for women or about bringing a desperate shortage in manpower to an end. The addition of female Marines symbolically created a “division of labor” based on gender, reinforcing the image of the male Marine as a fighter.

To understand the integration of women, it is essential to examine carefully the Marine Corps Publicity Bureau’s rhetoric. The Bureau took many steps to shape how

222 The Army also drew on similar rhetoric. “What Army Recruiters Are Doing While Calling Recruits to the Colors,” Bulletin, May 1919, 9.
224 During the war the number of females employed in positions such as clerk or operator rose tremendously. Zieger, America’s Great War, 144; Charles W. Wootton and Barbara E. Kemmerer, “The Changing Genderization of Bookkeeping in the United States, 1870-1930,” The Business History Review 70 (Winter, 1996), 555. Unlike other jobs, the percentage of women filling clerical jobs continued to rise after the war.
Marines would react to the incorporation of women. Private Martha Wilchinski even served on the editorial staff of the *Bulletin*. Of the woman who served as the model for Rosie the Riveter Cynthia Enloe wonders whether she was “maneuvered or empowered—or both?”225 The same can be asked of Wilchinski. How much of her own voice was revealed on the pages of the *Bulletin*?

The inclusion of women reveals lessons about the larger project of the Corps in shaping its identity. During the war, the Publicity Bureau mobilized ideas about family, home, military service, and gender in a number of ways to best serve its recruiting needs. It also played on men’s understanding of gendered roles to seek to control how men would act on and off the battlefield while in France. Finally, it incorporated women into the institution in a manner consonant with its image as an elite institution, even as it manipulated these women to make larger statements about male Marines. A Marine was a warrior who belonged with his brothers fighting in France, not sitting at a typewriter in a New York City office.

At the same time the Corps began proclaiming loudly that it was an elite institution. It repeatedly stated that a Marine could fulfill any mission with ease, far better than any other military service. These two trajectories of masculine and elite identity were interrelated. Whereas nineteenth-century ideas of manliness had stressed

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“self-mastery” and restraint, early twentieth-century notions of masculinity emphasized strength and virility.226

Given the hyper-masculine basis of its identity, then, it seems surprising that the institution decided to add women to its ranks in 1918. Even before the Corps began accepting a small number of women in August of 1918, however, some women had worked alongside recruiters in a volunteer capacity. The use of women provided a great deal of publicity for the Corps, relying on gender differences to shame men into joining.227 Even before the declaration of war against Germany, for example, one Marine recruiter claimed he had two women applications for every male.” 228 At one point, the Navy even considered enlisting a sole woman to highlight the urgent need for men.229

227 The Navy recruited in a similar manner. For the suggestion that the Publicity Bureau consciously sought to use women for these purposes, see Gavin, American Women, 25. For the use of shame as a gendered recruiting tactic see Goldstein, War and Gender, 272-274. For the use of shame in more coercive ways, see the way that government officials targeted draft-age men on the streets in the summer of 1918. Zieger, America’s Great War, 63. Also see Christopher Capozzola, “The Only Badge Needed is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America,” Journal of American History (Mar. 2002), 1354-1382 for the tradition of public vigilance and how it manifested itself during the war. Sonya Rose has pointed out that women often have a more important role in this than men. Rose, Which People’s War, 179.
228 “Women Can’t Serve on Battleships. Many Women Want to Enlist in Marine Corps,” Aberdeen Daily News, 28 March 28 1917, 1. This Associated Press article seems to have been based on somewhat erroneous information, however. It cited a Commander as its source, which is a naval rather than a Marine rank. Moreover, no women were yet being recruited as clerks for the Corps.
Dressed in uniforms similar to those of Marines, the Corps’ female volunteers implored men to do their patriotic duty. In Ohio, for example, a Marine recruiter used Mildred Rahrig, or Sergeant “Pep” as she was nicknamed, as his last resort to convince men to join.  

230 Similarly, an Oklahoma woman known as “Sergeantlette” Fletcher, who prided herself on her two Marine brothers serving in France, out-recruited the civilian men.  

231 While the formalization of the agreement was no doubt left to the Marine recruiters, women played an important role in convincing men to decide to enlist. Officers’ wives similarly helped at recruiting events and offered suggestions for more effective ways to reach the public.  

232 Recruiting officers even reached out to civilian women in some areas, especially those with cars who could reach a broader audience.  

233 Recruiters looked to a variety of women to help their recruiting efforts, in part because female volunteerism undermined the masculinity of those who declined to enlist in the Corps.  

Some of these women would be edged out, however, after the Corps took steps to incorporate female Marines into the institution in an official capacity.  

234 As Barton C. Hacker has shown, it was not until the nineteenth century that European governments sought to limit the supporting role women provided to armies. See “Women and Military Institutions in Early Modern Europe: A Reconnaissance,” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 6 (1981), 643-670.
moved to swear in the first females, it simultaneously prohibited females from volunteering as some had done previously. Less than a month after women were sworn into the Corps, the government had prohibited those women not serving in an official capacity to wear a uniform denoting any connection to any of the military services.\textsuperscript{235} Officials sought to control who could wear the uniform, thereby reinforcing official channels of military service, a process similar to what had already occurred in Europe.\textsuperscript{236} In this way the institution could control the use of gendered ideology.

Unlike the Army, the Navy and the Marine Corps both gained females for the duration of the war after Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels—whose wife participated in organizations promoting the right of women to vote—discovered that the Naval Act of 1916 had created a force of reserves referred to only as “persons,” unlike

\textsuperscript{235} It is unclear whether this had already been implemented but simply not enforced. See “Ban Put on All Military Clothing Women in Civil Life Usurping Privileges,” \textit{Duluth News-Tribune}, 26 Sept. 1918, 7.
\textsuperscript{236} Gould, “Women’s Military Service,” \textit{Behind the Lines}, 119-120. Gould, however, argues that whether or not women should wear uniforms centered on whether it was too militaristic for women to wear uniforms similar to those of males.
Army legislation which specified only “male persons” could be enlisted.237 By March of 1917 the Navy had decided to enlist women.

The tenure of female Marines in the Corps would be short. The first female, Private Opha Mae Johnson, enlisted on August 13, 1918. The Naval Appropriations Act of 1919 put both Navy and Marine females on inactive reserve, with the last female Marine being formally discharged by 1922. Having enlisted on four-year contracts, the women were placed on an “inactive” status until their contracts expired.238 Aping the Navy, which had made a similar move in 1917, the Corps argued that the addition of women would help compensate for the numerous casualties it was experiencing in France.239 Given the rate at which the Corps was suffering casualties, though, the decision to enlist only 305 women appears odd.240 While women in the Navy represented about two percent of its force for a total of 11,000 women, females

237 Capt. Linda L. Hewitt, USMCR, Women Marines in World War One (Quantico: History and Museums Division, 1974). 3. Ebert and Hall argue that gender was not specified because it was so “inconceivable” that women would be used, but this is arguable given that the Army did define who could join on the basis of gender. See The First, The Few, 1-3. 30,000 women did work for the Army, but they neither wore military uniforms nor were considered to be a part of the institution, even those who went to France. Zieger, America’s Great War, 141.
239 Women had first served in the Nurse Corps of the Army and the Navy since 1901 and 1908, respectively, but they were not considered to be a part of that military branch. See Jean Ebert and Marie-Beth Hall, The First, The Few, 1.
240 During its first major World War I battle, for example, the Corps lost more in one day than it had combined throughout its entire history, suffering more than 4500 casualties.
comprised less than a half percent of the Corps’ overall strength.  

That the Corps issued the call for women in the same month that active recruiting for males ceased, moreover, suggests that the inclusion of female Marines was less about freeing a man to fight and more about securing publicity.  

By January of 1919, moreover, the Corps sought to use its battlefield casualties desirous of continued service as clerks back in the United States. Given the Corps’ estimation that three female Marines would be required to do the clerical work formerly done by two male Marines, this gesture appears to be mostly symbolic. The recruitment of female clerks freed men who were “chafing under the restraint of unactivity (sic).” To be a Marine was to be a warrior, not an office clerk.  

Regardless of the Corps’ motives for enlisting females, almost 2000 women flocked to a New York City recruiting station after the Corps published ads calling for women. Enhancing its image as an elite institution, the Corps proclaimed that it would continue to maintain its tradition of seeking to challenge recruits. It insisted that

241 In World War II, moreover, Marine women would fill nearly half the positions required by the Corps within the continental United States during World War II.
242 “All Recruiting is Stopped in Nation,” Tulsa World, 10 Aug. 1918, 12.
it would not bend its standards for female Marines, which proved to be more of a rhetorical gesture than a reality.247 As some gender historians have argued, military institutions have communicated with women through highly paternalistic rhetoric and symbols.248 The female Marines who performed clerical duties and assisted with recruiting symbolically enabled more men to take on exclusively masculine roles consistent with the institution's identity as a highly aggressive brotherhood of warriors. Responsible for the Corps' public image and its recruiting efforts, it should be no surprise that the Publicity Bureau was most active in discussing and suggesting how women should be incorporated into the institution. In some ways the Bureau appeared to embrace them, leading the way for the institution as a whole. It noted its disapproval, for example, of any nicknames male Marines might devise for female Marines.249

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247 One article suggested some allowances for physical requirements would be lowered. "Women Can Enlist in Marine Corps," Tulsa World, 4 Sept. 1918, 10. This article appears to have been issued by the Bureau given that several newspapers published almost identical articles with slight variations, including the names of local recruiters. For instance, this particular article began with reference to the "famous" Marine Corps. These articles emphasized the recruits as "women" rather than girls. For other forms of this, see "To Recruit Women for Marine Corps," Lexington Herald, 3 Sept. 1918, 2 and "Marine Corps Clerical Reserve Offers Women Opportunities," Duluth Sunday News Tribune, 1 Sept. 1918, 4. The Corps also issued contradictory stances on whether husbands of female Marines able to provide for themselves would receive the same benefits afforded to female spouses of male Marines. For the promise that females would receive the same benefits see "Women Can Enlist in Marine Corps," Tulsa World, 4 Sept. 1918, 8. For the statement that male relatives of female Marines would not receive the same benefits as female dependents of male Marines received, see "Marines Ask Women to Supplant Males," Philadelphia Inquirer, 14 Sept. 1918, 8.

248 Higonnet and Jenson, Behind the Lines, 7.

Officially, female Marines were part of the “United States Marine Corps Reserves (F).” This name, of course, distinguished them from active-duty Marines. Still, it was far more professional-sounding than the nickname female Marines had acquired by the end of the war: Marinettes. The Bureau stressed it wanted only women who made a favorable impression, but this was not to say that it wanted only “pretty girls.” Women would be expected to uphold the standards that male Marines maintained in terms of dress and bearing rather than being selected for their beauty. It also stressed that the Corps desired women around thirty years old who could be considered “real” women. The use of the word real corresponded with its emphasis on “real” men. Still, the Bureau sent out contradictory messages. Despite the efforts that the Corps took to hire what it described as “experienced business women,” the Bulletin noted paternally that

250 Ibid., 10.
251 One of the earliest instances I have found of the term occurred in July of 1919. See “Yeomen(F) and Marinettes Pass in Final Review was Band Plays Jazz,” Washington Post, 31 Jul. 1919, 1. Whether or not jazz music would have been played for a celebration of men is unknown. For a similar use of the term the same day, see “Pretty Marinette Discharged With Excellent Record, Salt Lake Telegram, 31 July 1919, 16. This article continued one strain evident in the Bulletin by stressing her femininity. Similarly, the Secretary of the Navy discouraged the nickname Yeomanettes for yeomen (F). One female Marine made clear early on that she only wanted to be called Marine, noting that she had heard some were giving female Marines nicknames already. If Wilchinski’s letter published in the Recruiter’s Bulletin did not just reflect her own feelings, this suggests the importance the Bureau attached to not providing female Marines with nicknames. Pvt. Martha L. Wilchinski, “Breaking the News to Bill,” Bulletin, Sept. 1918, 26.
252 In this case the officer quoted in the article used both “girls” and “women” almost interchangeably in regard to desirable candidates. “Marines Ask Women to Supplant Males,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 14 Sept. 1918, 8.
women would be “made to understand” that “their work was serious.” Similarly, the Bureau praised women for quickly learning aspects of military life. The Corps expected women to drill each morning and to render all military courtesies such as saluting, although they drew the line at drilling with rifles. Those Marines responsible for training the “girls” found they did not consider such duties as distasteful as they had originally assumed they would be. How they learned the drill as fast as male recruits given that they neither received formal training nor drilled without rifles suggests that the Bureau projected the image it wanted regardless of the actual experiences of female Marines. Indeed, women Marines themselves remembered struggling to learn how to drill, as could be expected given their lack of training. The contradictions that characterized the Bureau’s approach are evident in its discourse and imagery. One Bulletin cover, for example, depicted a woman on the left holding an issue of the

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254 “Uniform Women Marines Will Wear,” Bulletin, Sept. 1918, 23. For a look at how the Marine Corps would continue to impose similar restrictions on female Marines well into the 1970s, see Maj. Linda C. Arms (ret), “Through the Looking Glass: A Historic Era of Transformation,” Gazette, Nov. 2006, 61. This decision was not unusual, given the reluctance in the past of almost all societies to provide women with weapons. Goldstein, War and Gender, 35. The two most notable historical exceptions to this were Soviet women during World War II who were used in a combat role both out of “desperation” and for propaganda purposes and Dahomey female warriors during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Ibid., 64-70.
255 “Girl Marines 100% Girls, These Marine Girls at Washington-Same Duties as Men Who Have,” Grand Forks Herald, 11 Feb. 1919, 7. For other indications that men might not have welcomed the inclusion of women, see “Marine Corps Enlists First Woman,” Anaconda Standard, 23 Aug. 1918, 4. For examples of women in other services greatly enjoying the opportunity to drill see Goldstein, War and Gender, 198.
256 “Girl Marines 100% Girls,” 7. For other indications that men might not have welcomed the inclusion of women, see “Marine Corps Enlists First Woman,” Anaconda Standard, 23 Aug. 1918, 4.
Bulletin showing a Marine fighting in France. She appears saddened, no doubt thinking of her boyfriend overseas. On the right, however, she appears in uniform. With the passing of a month, she has enlisted and is symbolically united with the male Marine in service to their country. This is not an equal relationship, though. Even as the male Marine salutes someone in the distance, the female’s arm remains restrained by his other arm (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Cover, Recruiters’ Bulletin (Nov. 1918).
In continuing the incongruities in the Bureau’s approach, another article asserted that these new recruits were “hundred per cent feminine Hun hunters.” Any suggestion that women Marines might be fighters was undercut by the assertion that these Marines were wholly feminine. The presence of female Marines only heightened the sense of male Marines that they were men by virtue of their otherness.\(^{258}\) As gender historians have argued, “war does not change but rather exacerbates the social and political order.”\(^{259}\) One journalist observing female Marines at drill described the palpable difference between the “husky, masculine” voice of a male Marine and the “high pitched” sounds of the female Marines.\(^{260}\) In this case the emphasis on voices worked to “overfeminize” Marines in a way that enhanced the male Marines’ masculinity.\(^{261}\) Those female Marines who did not drill with weapons now became distinct from male Marines who, freed to fight, were no longer broken into two categories of men: those who fought and those who supported the fighters. The incorporation of females into the office space

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\(^{258}\) Margaret and Patrice Higonnet describe how othering works in “The Double Helix,” *Behind the Lines*, 38. Unlike World War I female Marines, World War II female Marines would receive more formalized training. As General Thomas Holcomb stated during World War II, “They’re real Marines. They don’t have a nickname, and they don’t need one. They get their basic training in a Marine atmosphere, at a Marine post.” Lacy, *We Are Marines!*, 14.

\(^{259}\) Higonnet and Higonnet, “The Double Helix,” *Behind the Lines*, 41.

\(^{260}\) “Girl Marines 100% Girls, These Marine Girls at Washington,” *Grand Forks Herald*, 11 Feb. 1919, 7. Other journalists used similar adjectives to describe a female who disguised herself as a male only to be rejected by the recruiters of every military branch because the “sweetness” of her voice made it obvious she was a female. “Girl Tries to Enlist,” *The Washington Post*, 6 Aug. 1917, 6.

\(^{261}\) Sonya Michel uses this term regarding how the U.S. stressed the importance of a maternal role during World War Two. The Marine Corps, however, studiously avoided any hint of maternal roles, preferring for the most part to emphasize that these new Marines were just girls. See Sonya Michel, “American Women and the Discourse of the Democratic Family in World War II,” *Behind the Lines*, 160.
and men onto the battlefield reinforced the distance between male and female Marine rather than threatening it. Any sense that female Marines might be viewed as equals was undercut by the institution’s paternalist discourse. As Sonya O. Rose has argued in regard to British women during World War II, women could “participate” but they should not be “transformed by that participation.” The Bureau suggested females should consider saving a portion of their income for a “hope-box” in light of the fact that they would “get out of the Corps some day.” Service in the Corps was just a short-term job before achieving one’s true goals through marriage. Another Bulletin article placed equal stress on the feminine side of these new “girl” recruits, who joked that stating “I do” during their formal enlistment suggested a marriage ceremony. Subsequent to the enlistment ceremony, the “girls” wanted nothing more than to discuss the matter of what type of uniform they would receive. In fact, the first request of a newly-uniformed female Marine was for a mirror. Sonya Rose has denoted this emphasis on appearance as “sexualized femininity,” arguing that it was a “crucial component in the construction of gender difference.”

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262 Rose, Which People’s War, 123.
263 For other similar occurrences, see “Those Girl Marines,” Bulletin, Dec. 1918, 61; “Now the Girl, Not the Horse, Marine, Miami Herald Record, 26 Aug. 1918, 5. The title insinuated that the impossible—the notion that sea-going Marines would ride horses—was made possible, in this case by the addition of female Marines.
264 “Marinette’s First Request is Mirror,” newspaper clipping, Frank L. Martin Papers, MCASC.
265 Rose, Which People’s War, 134.
one’s appearance and one’s femininity in images as well. In one illustration published in The Recruiter’s Bulletin, a female Marine appears to be receiving military instruction from a Marine officer. In the background, enlisted Marines stand at attention, with inscrutable faces and question marks over their heads. As the officer adjusts her belt with a smile on his face, she smiles as well, her hand either gesturing in a salute or appearing to fix her hair (Figure 18).

![Image of illustration](image-url)

Figure 18: “Hurdling the Hatches.”  
The Bureau similarly suggested that the curiosity of male Marines largely centered on learning what type of uniform female Marines would don. Accompanied by pictures of three female privates wearing the new uniform, one article made no mention of the women’s contributions to the wartime effort. Rather, it sought to assuage male curiosity as to their new counterparts. The article wondered whether the recruits were “fair” or “dark” or “slender” . . . or “perhaps—perish the thought—they are not at all.”\textsuperscript{266} In reality, though, many male Marines would have been happy if the idea of female Marines turned out to be nothing more than a bad dream. While stationed in Texas, National Guardsmen teased Marine Raymond Stenback that the Corps was accepting women because Marines didn’t “do any fighting anyway.”\textsuperscript{267}

As Cynthia Enloe has argued, military institutions consciously have used “femininity” to their advantage by “maneuvering” to reach different groups of women with different messages to ensure all “feel special and separate.”\textsuperscript{268} When Enloe’s arguments are applied to the Corps, they suggest that the Publicity Bureau had to think deliberately about gender in order to recruit enough men during World War I.\textsuperscript{269} The determination of men to enlist was bound up with the militarization of women who

\textsuperscript{267} Diary, Raymond Stenbeck Papers, USAMHI; Diary; George Kase Papers, MCASC.
\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., 236. As she furthermore argues, “[p]aternity has survived because of its facile adaptiveness, not because of its rigidity.” \textit{Ibid.}, 285.
gave their tacit or more open consent to the process.\textsuperscript{270} What Enloe describes as “maneuvers” appears evident in the pages of \textit{The Recruiter’s Bulletin}. Even as the Corps projected a more aggressively masculine image, it incorporated stories that spoke to the institution’s regard for mothers. After hearing one mother tell of her son’s enlistment, a recruiter noted that “somehow one got the impression that all the heroes in the Lomas family were not men.”\textsuperscript{271} As depicted by the recruiter, the son’s enlistment marked his transformation from a boy to a man. Another short news article described a mother “sobb[ing]” in happiness at her son’s enlistment that fulfilled the family’s martial tradition.\textsuperscript{272}

Sadly, the energy the Bureau invested in writing about female Marines is not matched by a great deal of sources from the women themselves. One of the only sources is the highly problematic series of letters written by newly-minted female Marine Private Martha L. Wilchinski already mentioned. One of five women to be assigned to the Publicity Bureau, Wilchinski had graduated with a degree in journalism from New York University.\textsuperscript{273} Some of her comments support the common belief that the integration of women marked a step toward quality. In one article, for example, Wilchinski affirmed

\textsuperscript{270} \textit{Ibid.}, 248.
\textsuperscript{271} “A Mother’s Story of Her Son’s Enlistment,” \textit{Bulletin}, Aug. 1917, 14.
\textsuperscript{273} Wood and Hale, \textit{Women Marines Association}, 9.
her “hunch that the Marines would realize the necessity of women some day.” When summarizing the thoughts of the commanding officer of recruiting, she suggested his full approval of female Marines’ efforts. She even quoted him saying that he believed female recruits filled clerical positions better than did male Marines. In this regard, Wilchinski appears to be the model of the confident female Marine, simply biding her time for the military to recognize her ability to contribute to the war. Similarly, she signaled the importance she afforded to her military service by putting that loyalty before her fondness for her fiancé. In closing one letter, Wilchinski hoped that Corporal Smith would not be offended that she felt obliged to sign her name with her rank according to regulations rather than in a more “affectionate” manner as was her wont.

Still, as seen in the opening paragraph, Wilchinski’s words epitomize Cynthia Enloe’s suggestion that military service could both empower and use women at the same time. In a subsequent letter, Wilchinski appeared occupied with everything but the supposedly critical clerical work for which women had enlisted. Rather, Martha was cleaning and dusting in case a general officer happened to drop by to inspect the offices. Similarly, the Bureau played up her femininity when referring to her in the Bulletin. For an article about the difficulties of finding recruits, for example, the headline described

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275 Cpl. Martha L. Wilchinski, USMC, “Colonel McLemore to Leave Headquarters Recruiting Head to Go to West Coast,” Bulletin, April 1919, 4. At the same time, he cautioned against using them in “publicity stunts” in a way that might “embarrass” or “show a lack of good taste.”
her as a “fair Marine.” Not only was the work of women not as important as it might seem, it was highly feminine. As Corporal Elizabeth Shoemaker recalled Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels remarked at a ceremony ushering veteran women out of active duty:

“We will not forget you. As we embrace you in uniform today, we will embrace you without uniform tomorrow.” All down the file of men standing at strict attention the line broke, and everyone roared with laughter. The Secretary of the Navy forgot he was talking to women.

Shoemaker implicitly reinforced gendered spheres of service with the assumption that the Secretary of the Navy would address women differently than he would men.

Indeed, the issue of uniforms caused some consternation to government officials far beyond speech-making. Different institutions chose to send different messages about uniforms. As Carol Burke argues, military institutions must determine whether they will outfit women in uniforms that closely resemble the male uniform or whether they will provide a more feminine version. Most frequently they have chosen a more masculine uniform. Some Marines found this practice unsettling, however. A note in

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277 Lacy, We Are Marines!, 13.
278 Enloe discusses the lengths that government officials have taken to assure the uniform conveys suitable messages. Maneuvers, 261-272.
279 Carol Burke, Camp All-American, Hanoi Jane, and the High-And-Tight: Gender, Folklore, and Changing Military Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 94.
280 Ibid., 95.
The Recruiter’s Bulletin discussing one young woman walking across the United States in order to drum up recruits noted that she wore “masculine khaki attire.”

The Navy’s earlier experience provides an example of the difficulties the Corps must have faced in incorporating women. The tendency of the yeowomen, the counterpart to the female Marine, to ignore aspects of the uniform regulations caused some consternation to naval officials, who chastised them for making unauthorized alterations or only wearing selected parts of the uniform. Many of these unauthorized changes to the uniform, however, had been necessitated by the Navy’s delay in making all components of the uniform available to women. Yeowomen, for example, shocked officials by wearing fur coats. They did not wear them necessarily to be “undemocratic,” as one naval officer accused them, but because the Navy did not set forth a uniform coat until September of 1918. By this point many yeowomen balked at spending additional money to purchase the new apparel. Another officer told the yeowomen they would have to cease adding “frills” to their uniform. He believed that

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281 “‘Universal Girl’ Recruiting,” Bulletin, June 1917, 32.
282 One rear admiral took particular umbrage that he had to remind the yeowomen of an order that had been issued prohibiting the wearing of fur and that they had the audacity to request to him that they be allowed to wear furs. “Yeowomen Ignore Order Against Furs,” Dallas Morning News, 17 Nov. 1918, 4. Also see “Yeowomen Must Put on Uniforms,” Washington Post, 21 Sept. 1918, 5.
284 Quoted in Ebbert and Hall, The First, The Few, 33-34.
the rivalry as to who could be the best dressed must cease, the implication being that vanity drove their actions.285

Whereas the yeowomen had a slightly more feminine uniform, the Marine Corps provided female Marines with a uniform closely modeled on the dark-green and khaki uniforms of their male counterparts.286 They also received the same “overseas cap” worn by the men.287 Like the yeowomen, female Marines made unauthorized additions to their uniforms. These additions, however, differed in intent. In addition to the changes mentioned already, yeowomen had a tendency to add unearned signs of rank and other insignia that dismayed naval officials, especially when they adopted medals awarded for excellent naval gunnery.288 Female Marines, by contrast, added the Sam Browne belt and the swagger stick to their repertoire.289 While Ebbert and Hall attribute the addition

285 “Yeowomen Must Cut out the Frills,” Pawtucket Times, 19 July 1918, 16.
286 Around the time the Corps was determining female uniforms the Secretary of the Navy emphasized that all yeowomen must be uniform in their appearance. “Yeowomen Must Put on Uniforms,” Washington Post, 21 Sept. 1918, 5. Millett, Semper Fidelis, 308. At one point the Navy appears to have considered requiring females to wear trousers. The official announcement that this would not be the case was the source for the following headline: “Yeowomen of the Navy Need Not Wear Trousers; Government Setsles Momentous Question by Designating Uniform,” Philadelphia Inquirer, 22 April 1917, 1. It is difficult to determine whether the word “momentous” was used somewhat in check, but the article also noted that this decision could only be reached after “solid deliberation.”
289 Ibid., 37-38. At least one woman Marine appears to have been fined twenty dollars for wearing this belt. See “Marinette’ with Service Record, is Visiting in City,” Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 28 Oct. 1919, 9.
of the Sam Browne to its flattering effects, it is just as likely that women adopted these particular elements because they symbolized authority.\textsuperscript{290}

Naval officials also chastised yeowomen for their conduct within the office, citing instances of chewing gum, sitting on tabletops, and gossiping. As a result, officials set forth a separate code of regulations that dictated the expected conduct for women.\textsuperscript{291} That the Navy needed to develop a separate set of rules based on gender speaks to the way that female participation enhanced the idea of multiple types of military service.

While this particular official found the women to be unmilitary, yeowomen suggested that men balked at accepting them as servicewomen. In one instance, for example, yeowomen complained that officers did not return their salutes. Officers defended themselves saying they did not realize that yeowomen were supposed to salute. While this could have been a miscommunication in which the Navy did not disseminate regulations clearly enough, the assumption on the part of naval officers that women did not salute suggests that they did not view them as fully military.\textsuperscript{292}

\textsuperscript{290} The Sam Browne belt, for example, served the practical purpose of helping officers and noncommissioned officers to carry a sword. For the symbolic importance of the sword see Myerly, \textit{British Military Spectacle}, 20.

\textsuperscript{291} “Yeowomen Must Not Sit on Desks; Navy Also Bars ’Idle Conversation,’” \textit{Pawtucket Times}, 23 May 1918, 11. Another account published only a few days prior told a different story, however, emphasizing that there had been no problems with the women. See “Yeowomen Are Succeeding, \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer}, 26 May 1918, 6.

\textsuperscript{292} “Navy Officers to Salute Yeowomen,” \textit{Pawtucket Times}, 17 May 1918, 23. By this point women had been serving for more than a year.
Not only did military institutions seek to demarcate between female and male service members, the Corps in particular sought to reconcile its male Marines to tasks often gendered as female. Even as the Corps added women it emphasized an all-encompassing, self-sufficient masculine ideal which recruits first encountered at boot camp. The Corps, for example, emphasized certain female practices that men had to reconcile with their sensitivity to a gendered division of labor.293 During boot camp, Marines learned how to do what they believed was a job fit only for females—cleaning.294 One Marine informed his aunt that despite being on liberty, his “company spent until 1:30 washing clothes. Tell mother she won’t have to hire Mrs. Wier when I return.”295 In a hyper-masculine world, Marines made this feminized task acceptable by taking pride in their fastidious appearance and discipline. The Bureau reinforced this idea, as evident in a letter published in Dear Folks at Home:

There’s washing and ironing. Yep, we do it. They aim to make MEN of us in the Marine Corps. (Please be sure to spell that “MEN” always in capitals.) You would think, though, they were making women of us, too. The first thing a Marine learns after discipline is cleanliness.296

293 For the shock of some Marines at seeing women working in France, for example, see Rendinell, One Man’s War, 49 and Jackson, His Time in Hell, 154.
294 Ibid., 6.
295 Arthur Davis, letter to Aunt Ginnie, 4 July 1918, Davis Papers, MSASC. For similar sentiments, see Jack Murray to Edith, 17 Jan. 1918, Jack Murray Papers, USAMHI.
296 Evans, Dear Folks at Home, 7. Similarly, one Marine wrote that in addition to military training boot camp was preparing him to “make any man a good wife.” See “With the Globe, Eagle and Anchor,” Bulletin, Sept. 1918, 15. Also quoted in Catlin, With the Help of God, 270.
The Corps created a world that made women redundant. One recruit wrote that he no longer needed the “toilet kit” that a female friend was making for him as the Corps had issued him one. He suggested that his father just take it and keep it for him as he had no space for “excess baggage.”297 As Sonya Rose has suggested, military or “heroic masculinity” has “allowed for the assimilation to masculinity of what, in other contexts and articulations, might be considered soft, feminine traits” because it is so closely tied to “power.”298 In fact, adopting feminine duties and tasks ironically made the man even more “masculine” because of the increased “independence and autonomy” it provided.299 The integration of female Marines did not challenge this sphere. Female recruits did not receive equal training and thus were not really Marines. Their addition enabled the tightening of the male fraternity of Marines, all of whom symbolically were linked by the prospect of combat in France.300 Some Marines, for example, worried that the lack of combat might lead others to find them “effeminate and of a lower caste.”301 Reflecting on the Corps’ participation in battles during 1918, the Commandant described

297 Catlin, With the Help of God, 278.
298 Rose, Which People’s War, 195.
299 Ute Frevert, Nation in Barracks: Modern Germany, Civil Conscription and Civil Society, trans. Andrew Boreham and Daniel Bruckenhaus (New York: Berg Publishers, 2004), 75. Frevert finds this tendency characteristic of “total institutions.”
300 On Armistice Day, only slightly over one third of the Corps was in France. George Clark, Devil Dogs: Fighting Marines of World War One (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 2000), 18.
301 Jackson, His Time in Hell, 120.
how Marines “met their crucial test like the real MEN they were,” using capitalization to reinforce this sense of masculinity.302

Real men could be found fighting on the battlefield, the Corps suggested. Still, it also allowed that feminine symbols could make their way there as well. The Sixth Marines, for example, celebrated a car in poem and letter affectionately dubbed Lizzie Ford that had been donated by Mrs. Elizabeth Pearce. It served as a reminder of feminine qualities on the battlefield where she brought “aid and comfort to the men at the front.”303 At the same time, Marine recruits were reminded that they were fighting for the women in their lives. While in Boot Camp an officer lectured Marines that they had the “easy part.” Men had the opportunity to “offer [their] lives in so noble a cause.” Women, by contrast, did not. They could “only work and work and work for us” and pray not only that their Marines would return from the war as pure and honorable as when they left.304 Women continued to do what the Corps believed was their duty by reinforcing aspects of the institution’s image. Just as Marines were “first to fight,” Marine wives were “first” to the battlefield in the aftermath of the fighting.305

303 Catlin, With the Help of God, 98. “Lizzie” featured prominently in the Corps’ rhetoric. For other examples, see a letter written by Major Frank Evans regarding the “affection for her that you can hardly comprehend” in Catlin, 136. He also described the car as the Corps’ “Joan of Arc.” Ibid., 137.
304 Catlin, With the Help of God, 291-292.
305 Arriving in France in November 1918, Commandant George Barnett’s wife was the first American woman to view the battlefields according to “Decked Marines’ Graves,” NYT, 29 Nov. 1918, 12.
Just as the Corps not only promoted a more aggressive form of masculinity but a manly one as well that emphasized virtue to its Marines, the Bureau projected multiple images to the civilian population at large. These ranged from more martial images designed to attract recruits to a more refined and softer image of the ideal Marine likely to appeal to women as well as those Progressives who viewed military bases as havens of immorality.\(^3\) In this vein, Corporal Wilchinski wrote to her fiancé Bill to warn him of the threat that French women posed to Marines. While it is entirely possible that Wilchinski was genuinely concerned about her fiancé, it is just as likely that the Publicity Bureau was directing her statement in a way typical of military institutions in its efforts to control the spread of venereal disease among troops.\(^3\) This motive would explain the circulation of a myth regarding the power of ether to cause men to lose their manly self-restraint. Marines ranging from Corporal Wilchinski to Colonel Caitlin recounted the story of the Marine who decried ether as “awful stuff” because after he was “coming to I made love to the nurse.”\(^3\)

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\(^3\) See, for example, the preference of wounded Marines for watching boxing rather than drinking tea: “Sparring Match Preferred to Afternoon Tea by Marines Given Choice of Two Forms of Amusements,” *Aberdeen Daily News*, 22 Aug. 1918, 6. That these two strands coexisted is confirmation of Bederman’s argument regarding the continuation of manly ideals even as masculine ones gained ground. Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 23.

\(^3\) For work on this subject, see Philippa Levine, *Prostitution, Race, and Politics: Policing Venereal Disease in the British Empire* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

\(^3\) Catlin, *With the Help of God*, 194.
Still, the Corps stressed that Marines made the best husbands. Combat veterans might denigrate other troops who had found time in France to marry, priding themselves on being too busy fighting to engage in thoughts of domesticity.309 At home, however, the Corps stressed the domestic virtues of Marines. One publicity photo, for example, showed two Marines teaching a female Red Cross volunteer how to knit. The accompanying photo description stated that one could assume these men would not be found helping their wives do the dishes.310 Nixola Greeley-Smith provided a similar perspective in the Bulletin. She believed girls would be better served by desiring Marines as husbands than wishing they might be men themselves. The Corps, she argued, made a man a “man of the world” and satisfied his quest for adventure. He returned from his service with “improved mind, manners, and earning capacity.”311 Rather than a nineteenth amendment seeking to end the “differentiation between the sexes,” she proposed to make it “illegal for a woman to marry any young man who has not served in the Marine Corps.” Greeley-Smith wrote her letter in somewhat of a light-hearted and joking manner. Still, the underlying theme reinforced the gendered division that the Corps worked to strengthen during the war, even as it added women to

309 Jackson, His Time in Hell, 247. For arguments about the symbolic importance of war brides, see Higgonet, Behind the Lines, 11-12.
its ranks. Moreover, the Bureau confirmed this image with cartoons and other notes, suggesting that marriage provided benefits to a Marine.

By 1919 female Marines found themselves on inactive duty, bringing an end to their service in the Corps. As poet Corinne Rockwell Swain suggested, the “marinette” had done her duty patiently throughout the war, but she was happy to exchange her uniform for more feminine finery. As Swain wrote: “Greeting you, dainty coquette / Fair as a rose after rain, / How can mere men-folk regret / Anne’s in her “civies” again?”312 At last, the female Marine could put aside her uniform and embrace her femininity, a change both sexes supposedly embraced. With the war’s end, the temporary dislocation had come to an end.

While it might be uplifting to celebrate the efforts and contributions of the first female Marines, it is perhaps more useful to understand how the addition of different societal subgroups can affect larger social dynamics within social institutions. Gender historians have focused on the ramifications of gendered, militarized discourse in regard to larger questions of citizenship, yet there is more work to be done on how these ideas animate institutions. The Corps deftly manipulated ideas about gender to serve its larger institutional needs ranging from recruiting to waging war. The greatest

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contribution of those 305 women who served during World War I might not have been the clerical work they did.

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The bombastic and aggressive tone that characterized the Publicity Bureau’s wartime strategy gave way to a more subtle approach once hostilities had ceased. The Marine Corps believed that favorable wartime publicity had secured its reputation with the public. Now, the Bureau hoped that it could let others speak for the Marine Corps. Ironically, this represented the goal Captain Richard Collum had articulated in his History of the United States Marine Corps. First published in 1884, Collum’s book set forth his goal of providing an objective account of the Corps’ past. Like Collum, the Publicity Bureau certainly could not be considered objective. Still, it was becoming more mindful of tactfully seeking out opportunities for self promotion.313 Given the extent to which individual Marine recruiters believed they needed to have a fervent belief in the Corps’ superiority to secure recruits, this trend represented a significant change.314 In part the

314 See, for example, the responses of Sgt. Taylor Hodnett, Cpl. James O. Clay, Sgt. Edward Howe, “How Necessary is Love of the Corps to Successful Recruiting?,” discussion supplement, Bulletin, Feb. 1918, 1-12. Sgt. George Mursick did not state that the Corps was the “best” but he did state that the recruiter must
Bureau pursued this approach because it was aware of tensions with the Army. Even early in the war some had raised questions about the Corps’ claim to be the nation’s finest military institution. By the end of the war, the head of the Publicity Bureau, Colonel A.S. McLemore, implored recruiters not to “claim to be first or best or use comparisons or superlatives in discussing itself.” More specifically in regard to World War I, McLemore emphasized that Marines should not single out their accomplishments in stopping the German push at the Battle of Belleau Wood. He even hoped Marines would “go out of their way” to pay tribute to the actions of soldiers who fought during those battles. Some Marines not connected to the Publicity Bureau followed this trend. In his account of the war, Col. Catlin stressed how he did not want to praise Marines at the expense of soldiers.

Convince the potential candidate of this fact. For those recruiters who believed it had the “best” spirit of almost any, see the responses of Sgt. Clarence C. Barry and Sgt. A.K. Carrick, ibid., 2 and 4, respectively. An editorialist mentioned the “criticism” he had heard as early as August of 1917 regarding the Corps’ purported “braggadocio” in “The Recruiting Campaign,” Bulletin, Aug. 1917, 16. Moreover, the editor stated that no “invidious comparisons” to other military branches had been made. For examples in the Bulletin during the war suggesting that the Corps led the way among the branches, see Sgt. Edwin K. Camp, “Wearing the Uniform is a Badge of Honor,” Bulletin, Oct. 1917, 12 and “Well Pleased Marine Writes Sergeant,” Bulletin, Feb. 1918, 30.

Cpl. Martha L. Wilchinski, “Colonel McLemore to Leave Headquarters Recruiting Head to Go to West Coast,” Bulletin, April 1919, 4.

For a similar view see Thomason, Fix Bayonets, xx.

Catlin, With the Help of God, 75-76. Also see Tomlinson, Sergeant Ted Cole, vi.
In part, the Bureau’s more subtle approach relied on allowing others to talk about the Corps. An article published in the same Bulletin issue in which McLemore encouraged Marines to temper their praise for their institution, for example, cited an Army officer’s “unbiased tribute” to the Marines fighting at Belleau Wood. In another issue the Bulletin’s editor noted the modesty of Marines serving in France. They did not “proclaim the deeds of their comrades by shouting from the housetops. That was done most thoroughly and enthusiastically by hundreds of persons outside of the Corps.”

The Bureau hoped this rhetorical approach would soothe tensions with the Army while establishing the impartiality of the praises heaped on it during and after the war. In some ways this more modest approach ironically helped to reinforce the Corps’ image as an elite institution. Extraordinary matters were rather ordinary affairs for such elite troops, Marines suggested.

The Bureau took a similar approach to the institution’s hymn. Perhaps recognizing that inter-service tensions over what the Army considered to be the excessive recognition of Marines might be counterproductive, the institution relegated

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320 Similarly, John Thomason wrote in his most popular novel’s introduction that “[b]eing a Marine, I have tried to set forth simple tales without comment.” See Fix Bayonets!, xx.
321 “Useless to Deny the Obvious,” Bulletin, March 1919, 8.
322 For examples see Catlin, With the Help of God, 164. One article explained that journalists had been “puzzled” by the Marines’ “reticence” regarding their exploits in France. See “Went to Fight, Not Talk,” Bulletin, January 1919, 30.
one of its traditional verses to the dust bin. Discarding the emphasis on the quality of its service as the “finest,” the Corps moved to stress that it would be guarding the streets of heaven, a role that emphasized its traditional police duties in a way that lessened the appearance of directly threatening the Army. Individual Marines continued to alter the hymn in response to their own service, however. The Bulletin printed one new stanza contributed by Private Thomas Dwyer in April of 1917, soliciting recruiters’ opinions of it. As the war progressed, however, the institution began seeking to standardize the hymn. The Corps also worked hard to promote the hymn, encouraging the release of recorded and printed versions. By August of 1919 the Corps even began taking steps to copyright its hymn.

In a similar vein, the Corps did not lose sight of the traditional dangers it faced when it appeared to fill roles similar to those of the Army. A history published in 1918 entitled Soldiers of the Sea continued to emphasize the Corps’ ties to the Navy. As

323 Background to the development of the hymn can be found in Chapter 4. For versions including the stress on the “finest,” see “Marines’ Hymn’ Recalled,” NYT, 24 April 1914, 3.
324 For an example of an individual Marine’s version see “Marines Greatest Of Fighting Men,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 21 June 1918, 19.
327 Joel D. Thacker, “History of the U.S. Marine Corps Hymn,” Paul Woyschner Papers, MCASC. This pamphlet provided an overview of the hymn’s background. Much of the discussion focused more on the adoption of the tune rather than of the lyrics.
328 For a discussion of how the Army sought at various times during World War II to accomplish this, see Krulak, First to Fight, 19.
Willis Abbott noted in his institutional history released before the war, Marines were not meant to be used as plain soldiers. Speaking in regard to battles such as Chateau Thierry, Abbott argued:

Gallant as their service there was it was not action of the sort for which the corps was designed. A body of less than 100,000 picked men is not the variety of troops which should be thrown into a general assault. . . . Picked men deserve picked service.

Abbott believed that Marines could make effective contributions to the war effort, but it should be solely in places where terrain and other “conditions demanded rather a small and highly efficient body of troops than a great army.” For just this reason, Marines preferred to be likened to other elite institutions. It became common, for example, for the Corps to be compared to the French Foreign Legion. It was the quality of the service that distinguished Marines from soldiers, a quality the Marines argued could not be replicated in other institutions given the Corps’ small size, which promoted a tight-knit brotherhood.

At the same time, the Corps’ new swagger became more evident in its rhetorical relationship with the Navy. Whereas a nineteenth-century journalist had described the “marines of the United States Navy,” by World War I it was much clearer that the Corps.

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was its own institution. Some nineteenth-century Marine officers sought to deal with the disparaging phrase, “Tell it to the Marines,” by dismissing it. Now, however, the phrase had been appropriated. The new meaning that the Bureau attached to this phrase epitomizes the way that the Corps sought to reverse its traditional relationship with the Navy. In explaining the phrase’s origins, for example, Marine John Thomason erased the sense of a sailor’s disparagement for Marines, now suggesting that the sailors used the phrase because the Marines “go everywhere and see everything, and if they say it is so, we will believe it.” Such a phrase outside of the context of World War I would be illogical, as Marines and sailors always traveled together. Now, however, Marines had the land experience to differentiate their service from that of sailors. As the publication Sunset opined in a play on a traditional slogan about the Corps, Marines were no doubt “tell[ing] it themselves” rather than having it told to them. As another magazine article exclaimed when heralding the Marines’ victories during World War I, “Remember when you exprest [sic] your contempt for your friend’s statement by advising him to tell it to the marines—the inoffensive, presumably useless, generally

331 “Marines on Shipboard: An Important Factor in a Navy,” New York Times, 7 April 1889, 16. “Jack” was a nickname for a sailor. This term had multiple meanings depending on whether a Marine or sailor was using it. The Corps appropriated it over time to refer to the great experience it had gained and all it had seen.
332 Thomason, Fix Bayonets!, xvii.
scoffed at marines, jibed at in song and story?" Now the joke was on those who had not appreciated the Corps prior to its heroic exploits on the battlefields of France. The press also drew on the Corps’ transformed image to single out Marines for accolades. In one cartoon with the caption, “Tell It to the Marines,” a German soldier’s surprise at the AEF’s ability to fight made no mention of soldiers (Figure 19). This cartoon, published shortly after the conclusion of the AEF’s fighting during the battle for Belleau Wood, epitomizes how the Corps received credit at the expense of the Army in a manner reminiscent of the accolades the Corps received after Veracruz at the Navy’s expense.

World War I allowed the Corps to reshape and resolve the traditional antagonism between sailor and Marine. This had been an incremental process, but the fact that the two branches did not compete directly during the war allowed the Corps to make this argument more convincingly. Numerous articles espoused the notion that none of the traditional hostility still existed. As one editorial remarked, “sentiments”

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334 “You Wouldn’t Dare To ‘Tell it to the Marines’ Now,” Literary Digest, 29 June 1918, 41.
335 For another cartoon with a slightly different version of the expression and a different context, see “If You Don’t Volunteer,” Fort Wayne News Sentinel, 17 Sept. 1918, 9.
had “gradually blended the two branches of the service into one harmonious body.”

Still, the Corps injected elements of its elitism in more subtle ways, such as by capitalizing Marine but not sailor.

Marines continued to take great pride in the institution after the war, and postwar organizations sprang up that continued to foster a sense of institutional

belonging. Marines joined the American Legion, composed of veterans of the AEF, but they also founded their own organizations, such as the Minnesota Marine Club, which described its purpose thus:

You and I as true Marines must sense a pride, a pride sponsored by the feeling that we belong to that corps, which in history from the battle of Lexington to the battle of Belleau Wood, has been a true champion of Americanism. A small body of men, picked from the large ranks of volunteers, closely united in a fraternal and influential way and firm followers of their everlasting slogan “Semper Fidelis,” have reaped the harvest of success with every venture they have ever undertaken.339

If World War I had helped to solidify the sense of brotherhood that many Marines felt, it also worked to resolve the Corps’ eternal problem in regard to mission. The Corps’ enormous sacrifices on the battlefield guaranteed it received the highest praise and respect, but the Corps also took steps to ensure it was clear it provided a different type of service than soldiers. Marines were elite troops, equal to the most prestigious military organizations in the world, and their use should reflect this reality. Even as they distinguished themselves from soldiers by virtue of the quality of their service, their time on land demonstrated that they could undertake any mission

339 Minnesota Marine Club, letter to General George E. Barnett, 29 Apr. 1920, George Barnett Papers, MCASC.
Conclusion

Despite the best efforts of some naval officers beginning in the early nineteenth century, the Navy never succeeded in removing Marines from its vessels and keeping them ashore. The relationship between the Corps and the Navy was an odd one in that naval officers provided some of the Corps’ strongest supporters as well as its most ardent detractors. Their attacks would intensify in the 1890s as naval officers argued that the transition from sail to steam made Marines irrelevant. In response Marines would begin seeking out new duties aboard naval vessels to demonstrate their usefulness. This decision blurred the line between sailors and Marines, however, and intensified the identity wars between the two services. Some naval officers had commented on the esprit de corps of Marines, contrasting the more easy-going sailor with the highly-disciplined and soldierly Marine in whom much trust was placed in aboard ship. Anti-Marine naval officers in the 1890s and the early 1900s claimed that this distinction diminished sailors’ morale, thus hurting the Navy’s ability to attract and retain personnel.

As demonstrated by the drastically different paths taken by the evolution of the U.S. Marines and the Royal Marines, technological change did not assure that the two military services would go in the same direction.¹ For the U.S. Marines, technological

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change only provided some naval officers with new ammunition in seeking to eliminate Marines from naval vessels. Royal Marines, for example, would go on to become more specialized commando forces, and the size of each nation’s Marine force flip-flopped between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The different evolutions of the two forces became especially noticeable around World War I. Scattered throughout Europe and elsewhere in the world, Royal Marines received little notice for their contributions to the war effort. By contrast, U.S. Marines basked in their contributions to the AEF, as has been seen. This pattern would continue during World War II, with U.S. Marines preparing to wage large-scale amphibious operations on Japanese-held islands in contrast to the Royal Marines’ increasingly commando-like missions. Today, the U.S. Marine Corps is a more conventional military force, with some Marines trained to carry out special operations in contrast to the Royal Marines, who are primarily focused on special operations.

After the Spanish-American-Cuban War, Marines would serve as an expeditionary force in readiness that would assist the Navy in establishing advanced bases and other tasks. In 1908, however, President Theodore Roosevelt accepted the arguments of the most vehement anti-Marine naval officers and ordered Marines ashore.

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2 There were about 19,000 Royal Marines and about 5,000 U.S. Marines in 1900. By 1949 there were more than 50,000 U.S. Marines and only about 13,000 Royal Marines. Heinl, “What Happened,” 169.
3 Ibid., 172.
Throughout decades of instability and tension, Marine officers sought to create an image of the Corps that would resonate with the public. The Corps suffered from the image put forth by some naval officers depicting Marine officers as useless and frivolous creatures. At the same time the Corps very rarely received independent recognition because it almost always acted so closely with the Navy. Marine officers would seek to resolve these problems for the Corps in the decades after the Civil War by producing one of the first institutional histories written by a military service member and by emphasizing the Corps’ claim, however weak, to being the oldest military service.

With the rising interest in imperialism, the Corps increasingly came into the limelight. In land operations during the Spanish-American-Cuban War and the Boxer Rebellion, it appeared as a small band of men facing overwhelming odds. In the Philippines, however, it would be tarnished by Major Littleton Waller’s decision to order the execution of eleven Filipino porters. Imperial service offered a number of challenges to the Corps even as it often provided a more positive image of the Corps. The Corps would receive attention for its actions independent of the Navy and be depicted as a brave group of fighters.

Individual Marines would increasingly take pride in their actions. This tendency was aided by the fact that the Corps was becoming larger and more organized and thus increasingly capable of undertaking more complex and independent operations. In the Philippines and elsewhere the Corps would step into roles more like that of the army
and, as a result, the Corps would seek to differentiate itself from that service.

Purporting to be elite troops was a first step in this differentiation. By World War I, when the Corps served alongside the army as part of the American Expeditionary Force, it would stress that it functioned as elite shock troops, not as regular soldiers. In this way the claim to be elite offered the Corps some flexibility in deploying different images of elitism.

These numerous forces received direction with the establishment of the Corps’ Recruiting Publicity Bureau in 1911. The Bureau enabled the Corps to centralize its image formation, providing the bureaucratic organization to bring Marines together to discuss matters of image and to distribute the resulting material. The Bureau flooded American newspapers with short newspaper articles that would bring favorable publicity to the Corps. The articles ranged from detailing the Corps’ actions abroad to providing human interest stories that would engage readers.

Over time, the Bureau extended its efforts into training, seeking to instill the Corps’ corporate culture into new recruits. Prior to World War I Marines recognized the institution’s small size as a benefit. The Corps’ identity could be strengthened because training could be “easily standardized” and “needed lessons [could] quickly permeate throughout the entire Corps.” Despite its strong traditions, it was also “peculiarly
adaptable.” Many Marines believed this was especially important during World War I because of the Corps’ great increase in manpower. In 1910 the Corps had 9,267 Marines. In 1918 it reached a height of 72,639 Marines, which diminished to 16,085 Marines by 1920. Marines serving after World War I looked back to the “Old Corps,” the institutional culture that had flourished before the Corps increased in size. Colonel Elisha Theall noted the importance of making sure that the “absorption” of recruits did not weaken the institution’s esprit de corps in a way that might weaken its “fighting efficiency.” As a result, training had to present recruits with an understanding of the importance of “pride, esprit and a sense of superiority in military affairs” (emphasis in original). The Corps had to indoctrinate each recruit so that the institution would continue to “render an account of itself which is at least equal to the publicity given to its efficiency.” In an honorable mention prize essay about esprit de corps, First Lieutenant Sidney J. Handsley wrote that with enough Marines continually going forth imbued with our creed, the Corps will become an immense brotherhood whose password is Tradition . . . . An invincible brotherhood, with faith and confidence in each other, inspired by tradition, and determined at all costs to add to such tradition.

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8 Ibid., 84.

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That Handsley found tradition most essential to perpetuating the Corps’ esprit de corps and to enabling it to achieve the “seemingly impossible” was not unusual given the particular reverence of Marines for tradition. In particular, he hoped that this esprit de corps might bind Marines more tightly into a brotherhood.

The “spirit” fostered by the Publicity Bureau was thoroughly accepted by most Marine officers, even if not all enlisted Marines or even officers accepted it. Moreover, it was implied that this spirit was timeless. It had “always” been one of the Corps’ “greatest assets,” claimed one commentator in 1925.\(^\text{10}\) By World War I the Corps had invented traditions that appeared to have always existed. Marine officers worked to preserve and instill an abiding appreciation of the Corps’ traditions. In one speech to Marines in 1922, Brigadier General George Richards wondered how nineteenth-century Marines could have possibly thought to adopt a more practical sword over the Mameluke sword given its symbolic connection to the Corps’ battle hymn, which mentioned Tripoli in the second line.\(^\text{11}\) Even outsiders mentioned the Corps’ traditions and history in ways that no doubt would have pleased nineteenth and early twentieth century Marine officers. In 1918, the Secretary of War Newton Baker described in his

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\(^\text{11}\) Brig. Gen. George Richards, USMC, “Don’t Give up the Ship,” \textit{Proceedings} 48 (1922), 2190. The article’s title reinforced the importance some Marines attached to remaining closely tied to the Navy to secure the institution’s existence.
annual report how Marines “with their fine traditions and honorable history” had been sent with soldiers to France.12

In 1919 the Corps would take steps to institutionalize historical work with the creation of the Historical Section, Adjutant and Inspectors Department, Headquarters, USMC. While the Corps had published an institutional history well before the Army, this time it played catch up.13 The Corps would also establish new traditions, including a birthday celebration which has become an elaborate ritual. Marine novelists such as John Thomason would also add to the exotic image of the Corps, describing scenes in China and around the world. This more romanticized image represented a reflection of the image that the Bureau had honed.

Some Marines, however, cautioned that the Corps must scale back its publicity, especially if it threatened its corporate identity. As Lieutenant Arthur Burks argued, some observers found the Corps too intent on publicity.14 Despite such detractors, Burks believed that the “Marine Corps has made a wonderful name for itself. When it is spoken of superlatives are strictly in order—‘cream of the country’s manhood,’ ‘He-men,’ and the like.”15 Burks seemingly believed that the Corps’ reputation could be

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15 Burks, “Selling the Corps,” 115.
adequately described by using images of masculinity. Others felt similarly, intervening to put a stop to publicity they felt threatened the Corps’ hyper-masculine ethos. In a 1927 Gazette article, Captain J.H. Platt wrote an article entitled, “The Perils of Publicity,” concerning a picture he had received while in France during World War I. The picture featured a female celebrity becoming an honorary non-commissioned officer, and it showed

a woman wearing a marine cap and a caricature of a Marine Corps blouse with the same chevrons that real men had worked for years to earn. With her were two marines of whom little need be noted here, save that one of them needed a hair-cut and the other wore his cap on the back of his head the better to display his pretty curls.¹⁶

In this description, the female’s donning of the Corps’ uniform challenged “real men.” She was flanked by Marines who bore feminine traits, as evidenced by one Marine’s long hair and the other’s “pretty” hair. Platt faulted the bad judgment of those responsible for what he regarded as publicity that “defile[d]” the Corps’ best traditions.

Aspects of the Corps’ image have remained relatively consistent over much of the twentieth century. Its image as an elite military institution has largely remained. As a result, the Corps has not struggled significantly with finding recruits. Still, it has been required to remain alert to the perils of becoming too much like the army. After repeated deployments to Iraq that mirrored the army’s deployments, Commandant James

Conway felt the need for the Corps to return more closely to the navy. More specifically, he sought to return the Corps to its “expeditionary roots, which means shipborne operations in close-to-shore areas” around the world. The Corps has relied on Marine Expeditionary Units as the foundation for these types of operations. These floating units of airpower consisting primarily of helicopters and infantry are the modern-day equivalent of nineteenth-century landing parties. They represent the bifurcation, for the most part, between sailors who focus on the maintenance and operation of the ship and those who concentrate on the fighting power. Sailors rarely accompany Marines on shore in landing operations. Marines, long having sought to differentiate themselves from the Navy, joke that they are the “men’s department of the Navy,” or suggest the Navy exists simply to transport them from one locale to the next.

To make these jokes, Marines had to reshape their relationship with sailors significantly. This was a long process in which Marines began to view themselves as fighters and members of an elite institution with a proud history and traditions. This history and an emphasis on traditions began to take shape in the late nineteenth century. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the Marine Corps increasingly drew on this historical foundation, particularly to reinforce its emergent identity.

18 Larger units than MEUs, which consist of about 2000 Marines, include Marine Expeditionary Brigades and Marine Expeditionary Forces. The MEU terminology came into use in the 1970s and 1980s. Millett, Semper Fidelis, 547.
In a novel targeted at adolescent boys in the 1920s, First Lieutenant Giles Bishop used prescriptive language to convey the change that occurred when Marines knew their history. Disturbed by his friend’s hazy knowledge of the Corps’ original duties, one boy urged him to read Collum’s History because it was the “best thing to make you get the right kind of ginger into your work. It will make you proud of your job and proud to be a U.S. Marine.” A knowledge of history infused the reader with esprit de corps, which had “kept this outfit up to snuff.” Bishop recognized the importance of historical knowledge in shaping and reinforcing the Corps’ identity. Without histories written by Marines like Collum, the Marine Corps knew that “no organized body of men could make a name for themselves.” \(^{19}\) Between 1861 and 1918 the Marines did just that. Through battles like Guantanamo and Belleau Wood the Corps received favorable publicity for its battles. At the same time individual Marines and, in the early twentieth century, the Publicity Bureau ably created a powerful image for the Corps that made the institution such a highly-respected military service that it finally meant something to be a Marine.

Appendix A: Variations of the Marine Corps’ Hymn

By World War I, the most established lyrics of the hymn were as follows:

From the Halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli,
We fight our country’s battles
On the land as on the 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.

From the Pest Hole of Cavite
To the ditch at Panama
You will find them very needy
Of Marines—that’s what we are;
We’re the watchdogs of a pile of coal,
Or we dig a magazine,
Though he lends a hand at every job,
Who would not be a Marine?

Our flag’s unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun.
We have fought in every clime or 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

Here’s health to you and our Corps
Which we are proud to serve,
In many a strife we have fought for life
And never lost our nerve
If the Army and the Navy
Ever looks on Heaven’s scenes
They will find the streets are guarded by
The United States Marines

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An article released less than a year later excluded the more self-deprecating second stanza that emphasized the Corps’ guard duties in Central America and elsewhere but otherwise was exactly the same. Other articles continued to print this stanza, however.

One version of the hymn had initially stressed that the Marines were the finest. It included an altered version of the first stanza which read:

From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli
We fight our country’s battles on the land and on the sea
Admiration of the nation we’re the finest ever seen
You’ll always find us on the job; the United States Marines

An article based on an interview with the Corps’ band director included this first stanza rather than the one mentioning the Corps as the finest in 1917.

Another version published in 1918 was far more simplified:

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2 “‘Teufel Hunden’ Getting Recruits Here While Outfits ‘Over There’ Are Hogging Glories in Decimating Rank of Kaiser,” Montgomery Advertiser, 17 June 1918, 3.

3 “Marines Greatest Of Fighting Men,” Cleveland Plain Dealer, 21 June 1918, 19.


From the Halls of Montezuma⁶
To the shores of Tripoli
We fight our country’s battles
On the land as on the 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.

Our flag’s unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun,
We have fought in every clime or 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.

Here’s health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve,
In many a strife we have 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
THE UNITED STATES MARINES.⁷

This version eliminated the verse that joked about “watching a coal pile,” which focused the hymn instead on the Corps’ experience in fighting.

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⁶ This version appears to be the most popular version by the end of World War I. For this version see Everett T. Tomlinson and Morgan Dennis, Sergeant Ted Cole, United States Marines (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1919), 13. For what appears to be a mockery of the Corps’ official hymn, see “In the U.S. Infantry.” This ballad’s first line began with “From the halls of Montezuma” and the last lines of that stanza stated, “We have marched and fought / As a soldier ought, / In the U.S. Infantry.” These words implicitly suggested that soldiers viewed themselves as better equipped than Marines for operations on land. See Major Gerald E. Griffin, USA, Ballads of the Regiment (New York: George U. Harvey Publishing Co., 1918), 8.

⁷ Abbot, 314-315.
# Appendix B: Rank in the Navy and Marine Corps

1895:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Marine Corps</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rear admiral</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commodore</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>Lieutenant colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant commander</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant, junior grade</td>
<td>First lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensign</td>
<td>Second lieutenant</td>
</tr>
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1908:

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<th>Marine Corps</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Admiral</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice admiral</td>
<td>Lieutenant general</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear admiral</td>
<td>Major or brigadier general</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 The Army and the Marine Corps had similar systems of ranking for officers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Captain</th>
<th>Colonel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>Lieutenant colonel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant commander</td>
<td>Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Captain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant, junior grade</td>
<td>First lieutenant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensign</td>
<td>Second lieutenant</td>
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1918:

<table>
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<th>Navy</th>
<th>Marine Corps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admiral</td>
<td>General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice admiral</td>
<td>Lieutenant general</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rear admiral</td>
<td>Major or brigadier general</td>
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<td>Commodore</td>
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<td>Major</td>
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<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>Captain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lieutenant, junior grade</td>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ensign</th>
<th>Second Lieutenant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Appendix C: Enlisted Ranks in the Marine Corps

1835:
Orderly sergeant
Sergeant
Corporal
Private

1880:2
Sergeant major
Quartermaster sergeant
Sergeant
Corporal
Private

1912:3
Sergeant major
Quartermaster sergeant
First sergeant
Gunnery sergeant
Sergeant
Corporal
Private

1 This list excludes ranks of musicians.
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David Bellamy Papers
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Louis L. Bloom Papers
James Breckenridge Papers
Smedley Butler Papers
Clifton Cates Papers
Gerald Bertrand Clark Papers
Arthur Clifford Papers
John H. Clifford Papers
Henry Cochrane Papers
Henry Conkey Papers
Edward A. Craig Papers
Richard B. Creecy Papers
Arthur Davis Papers
Henry C. Davis Papers
Perry Kid Dean Papers
Robert Denig Papers
Edward J. Doyle Papers
Joseph E. Duermit Papers
Earl Ellis Papers
David Erickson Papers
C.L. Fairbairn Papers
Logan Feland Papers
Frank Flanders Papers
John E. Fondahl Papers
Donald G. Forbes Papers
Ben Fuller Papers
Joseph Gold Papers
Frank E. Goodnough Papers
Thomas Granley Papers
William B. Greeley Papers
Ralph Greenlee Papers
William H. Greer, Jr. Papers
Vincent B. Grube Papers
John C. Harris Papers
Wilbur K. Hassell Papers
C.G. Henry Papers
George Herbert Papers
Frank Hill Papers
H.J. Hirshinger Papers
John A. Hughes Papers
Robert Hunter Papers
Robert Huntington Papers
Arthur B. Jacques Papers
George F. Johnson Papers
George Kase Papers
Allen C. Kelton Papers
Thomas J. Kilcourse Papers
Joseph B. Knotts Papers
Walter F. Kromp Papers
Milton C. Lindsay Papers
Charles G. Lon Papers
Charles H Lyman Papers
Frank Martin Papers
Charles L. McCawley Papers
George C. McClellan Papers
Frank McCulley Papers
John McHenry, Jr. Papers
Carl Berry Mills Papers
Patrick Moran Papers
Joseph Pendleton Papers
Constantine M. Perkins Papers
George Petry, Sr. Papers
George Reid Papers
Nicholas Retza Papers
L.S. Rose Papers
William Rossiter Papers
William J. Scheyer Papers
Charles W. Sension Papers
William Shaw Papers
John E. Smiley Papers
Asa J. Smith Papers
J. Earl Snively Papers
Victor D. Spark Papers
Helen Stote Papers
Wilbur S. Talbott Papers
Merrill Thompson Papers
George C. Thorpe Papers
John L. Tunnell Papers
Alexander Vandegrift Papers
Littleton W.T. Waller Sr. Papers
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Richard P. Williams Papers
Emil Wishnack Papers
Robert Wilson Papers
Paul Woyshner Papers
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George H. Cloud
Edward A. Craig
Marion Dawson
Pedro del Valle
Graves Erskine
George F. Good, Jr.
Samuel B Griffith
John M Hart
Leo D. Hermle
Thomas Holcomb
Samuel S. Jack
Joseph E. Johnson
Louis R. Jones
James J. Keating
Robert C. Kilmartin
Robert B. Luckey
John H. Masters
John C. McQueen
Vernon E. Megee
Ivan Miller
Richard B. Millin
Ralph Mitchell
John Munn
Alfred H. Noble
Dewitt Peck
Edwin A. Pollock
Bennet Puryear, Jr.
William W. Rogers
Joseph A. Rossell
Lawson Sanderson
Alan Shapley
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The Daily Herald (Biloxi)
Dallas Morning News
Duluth News-Tribune
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Fort Worth Star-Telegram
The Globe and Laurel
Grand Forks Herald
Idaho Statesmen
The Indian (newspaper of the Second Division, AEF)
Infantry Journal
The International Socialist Review
Journal of the Royal United Service Institution
Kalamazoo Gazette (Michigan)
Kansas City Star
The Leatherneck
Literary Digest
Los Angeles Times
Macon Daily Telegraph
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Omaha World Herald
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The Outlook
Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine
Pawtucket Times
Perry Republican (Oklahoma)
Philadelphia Inquirer
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Biography

Heather Marshall was born in 1976 in Fort Worth, Texas. After graduating from Texas A&M University with a B.A. in history in May of 1998 she married a Marine and became a “camp follower.” As a result, she moved to Quantico, Virginia, and Pensacola, Florida, before “settling” on Oahu where she continued her education at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, receiving an M.A. in American history in December of 2002. Her thesis was entitled, “Crucible of Colonial Service: The Warrior Brotherhood and the Mythos of the Modern Marine Corps, 1898-1934.” She subsequently published two essays, “The China Marines and the Crucible of the Warrior Mythos, 1900-1941” in Crucibles: Selected Readings in U.S. Marine Corps History and “‘There’s Nothing that a Marine Can’t Do’: Publicity and the Marine Corps, 1905-1917” to be published in New Interpretations in Naval History: Selected Papers from the Sixteenth Naval History Symposium.

She was a fellow at the West Point Summer Seminar in Military History, 2008 and is the recipient of two fellowships from the Marine Corps Historical Center and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation: the General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., Memorial Dissertation Fellowship in 2007 and the Lieutenant Colonel Lily H. Gridley Memorial Master’s Thesis Fellowship in 2002. She has received several prizes, including the Donald Johnson Award for Outstanding Master’s Thesis at the University of Hawai’i in 2004. She also interned at the Marine Corps University’s Research Archives in the summer of 2003.