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I am submitting herewith a thesis written by John Creigh Hendrickson entitled "Pathway to Professionalism: The Development of Professionalism in the United States Marine Corps Between the World Wars." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

Charles W. Johnson, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of The Graduate School

PATHWAY TO PROFESSIONALISM: THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS BETWEEN THE WORLD WARS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
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John Creigh Hendrickson
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my "Sea Daddy"

Major Thomas Porter Bartleson, Junior, USMC (Ret.)

Guadalcanal-New Guinea-Cape Gloucester-Peleliu

Korea

Whose support, assistance, and encouragement made this possible.

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with professional development within the officer corps of the United States Marine Corps during the period between the two World Wars. The primary sources were the Marine Corps Lineal Lists for 1924, 1931, 1935, and 1939, from which statistical information on professional education, sea service, expeditionary service, pre-commissioning background, and age-in-grade were derived. Biographies, memoirs, and oral histories provided much other useful information on Marine officers. During the period covered in this thesis, the percentage of officers who had received professional education rose from eighteen percent to seventy percent and a new system for promotions brought age-in-grade figures into line with desired figures. By 1939, the Marine Corps had advanced in professional standing and was nearly on par with the Army and the Navy.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

On February 23, 1945, a vast invasion fleet stood off the coast of Iwo Jima. Aboard the command ship Rocky Mount the Secretary of the Navy, James Forrestal, and Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, the commander of the Fleet Marine Force, watched through their binoculars as a small party of Marines fought their way to the top of Mount Suribachi. As the Stars and Stripes unfurled, Forrestal turned to Smith and said gravely, "Holland, the raising of the flag on Suribachi means that there will be a Marine Corps for the next five hundred years."[1]

On one level, Forrestal was referring to the various attempts which the Army and the Navy had made over the preceding century to abolish the Marine Corps. On another level, it can be seen as an acknowledgment that the Corps had come into its own as a trained body of professionals with a distinctive, specialized mission. In 1945, the Marine Corps comprised nearly half a million men and women, with six reinforced divisions in the field, five aircraft wings, and a host of specialized technical and training units. Yet only six years before, in early 1939, the Corps had numbered only 17,000 enlisted men, and fewer than 1200 officers, and it had never fielded a unit larger than a brigade. During World War II the Marine Corps expanded nearly thirty-fold.[2]

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[1] Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, Coral and Brass, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, 261.

[2] United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970, Washington: Government Printing Offices, 1976, 1141.

This thesis will argue that the professionalization of the officer corps during the period between the World Wars laid the groundwork for the Marine Corps' successful wartime expansion. During World War II the Marines made eleven successful amphibious assaults against defended shores; until World War II it had been widely held in military circles that ships could not fight fortifications. The Marines' success in war was based on the development of a workable doctrine for amphibious warfare. Development of doctrine was important, but it was not the only element of professionalization that equipped the Marines for war. Internal reforms radically altered the system of promotion, which ultimately meant that the Marine officers who waged amphibious warfare were not only educated in their specialty, but also of an age and physical fitness to perform their jobs. The development of doctrine and reform of the promotion system were structural evolutions, but the process of education, to a large degree, left the initiative to the career goals and preferences of its officers.

This thesis will attempt to define and measure the process of professionalization in the Marine Corps by examining it chronologically, with emphasis on the Marine Corps' status in 1924, 1931, 1935, and 1939. For each of these years I will examine the Corps' overall activities, as well as developments in its schools, the relative amounts of sea service and expeditionary duty, the overall mix of its officers' educational backgrounds, as well as the growth of Marine Corps aviation. In addition, it will track the individual progress of ten Marines whose later careers suggest that they embodied professionalism in the Marine Corps; these ten officers all rose to prominence during or after World War II, and four of them became Commandant between 1944 and 1960.

The careers of these officers also overlapped and interlocked, and that is part of the process as well.

This thesis began as a tightly focused study of the three years which a Marine officer named Evans Fordyce Carlson spent in Nicaragua, 1930-33. Carlson, who later introduced the phrase "Gung Ho" into the English language, had many formative professional experiences in Nicaragua, and at one time I believed that his tour of duty there had professionalized him. Later, I realized that professionalization is not merely a few crucial events, but a continuous process. Carlson made his reputation as a jungle fighter in Nicaragua, but an individual reputation and professionalism are by no means the same thing. I also realized that Carlson's career in the Marine Corps between 1922 and 1939 could not be understood by itself, but needed to be seen in the context of how the Corps was professionalizing as an institution, and how other officers constructed careers for themselves. In this context, professionalization can be described briefly as the process by which officers are prepared, through both formal education and experience in the field and at sea, to perform effectively and with the means at hand, the various tasks assigned to the Marine Corps. Professionalization also describes the institutional changes in primary mission, educational policies, organizational structure, and, specific to the Marine Corps in the 1930's, the reform of the promotion system.

While there is a large body of sociological literature on the professions, little of it deals directly with the military, and almost none of it treats the Marine Corps. The only work on the development of professionalism in the Marine Corps is Jack W. Shulimson's The Marine Corps' Search for a Mission, 1880-1898. Doctor Shulimson, a staff historian at the Marine Corps Historical Center in Washington, D.C., holds a

Ph.D. from the University of Maryland, and identified several specific elements of professionalism which were introduced in the late nineteenth century: Annapolis-educated officers, a school for all new officers, fitness reports, and written examinations for promotion, all of which occurred at the instance of the Navy.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of Shulimson's work to this thesis was his application to the Marine Corps of the concept of jurisdiction pioneered by the sociologist Andrew Abbott. In The System of Professions, Abbott postulates that professions exist in relationship to each other, and work out jurisdictions over various fields of endeavor. Since the Marine Corps is much smaller than either the Army of the Navy, and resembles the former while serving the latter, it must find a specific jurisdiction over which it exercises control in order to justify its existence, or risk absorption into one of the larger services.

It is my contention that the development of the doctrine and techniques for amphibious landing operations by the Marine Corps during the period between the two World Wars constituted the assertion of jurisdiction over a specialized field of military activity. In a recent conversation, Dr. Shulimson agreed with my statement that the Marine Corps found its jurisdiction in those areas where the jurisdictions of the Army and Navy failed to meet, such as the so-called Banana Wars, and areas in which the jurisdictions of the Army and the Navy potentially overlapped, especially landing operations. Had the Marine Corps failed to assert jurisdiction over its specialty, it probably would have been absorbed by one of the other services.

The development of a specific mission was not the only part of the process of professionalization of the Marine Corps, although it was one of the cornerstones. In

order to work out a series of identifiable, measurable hallmarks of professionalization, I used not only Abbott's and Shulimson's works, but also Samuel P. Huntington's The Soldier and the State. Although published forty years ago, Huntington's work provided ideas for specific elements of professionalization that were applicable to the Marine Corps. Marine officers used knowledge acquired in Army and Navy schools to create a system of schools for the Corps, because specialized schooling is one of the basics of a profession, and continuing education is one of its corollaries. The development of amphibious doctrine was the distinctive feature of the Marine Corps Schools, as the Naval War College only considered landing operations as an ancillary to the Fleet, and the Army schools paid minimal attention to landing operations.

Another element of professionalism is control over entrance into the profession. This thesis will demonstrate that the Marine Corps both raised and maintained standards for commissioning during the interwar period, providing the Corps with new officers who had higher initial levels of education.

Another element of professionalization is the development of standards for the retention and advancement of officers. This applies especially to the Marine Corps during the interwar period. Until 1934 the Marine Corps promoted solely by seniority through the grade of colonel; only general officers were selected. As one officer later commented derisively, "All you had to do to make colonel was to live and not get a general court [martial]."[3] As a result, and this thesis will demonstrate so statistically,

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[3] General Gerald C. Thomas, USMC, Oral History Transcript, 1966, Marine Corps Oral History Collection (hereafter, OHC), Marine Corps Historical Center (hereafter, MCHC), Washington, D.C., 109.

the officer corps of the Marines aged considerably until 1935, when the advent of promotion by selection began weeding out the least fit and promoting the best qualified. After 1935, the average age and time in grade in each rank dropped, sometimes drastically, so that by the outbreak of World War II, Marine officers were suited to their tasks by both training and age. The importance of the introduction of promotion by selection cannot be overstated; while most writers have paid relatively little attention to the issue, I noticed that three of the ten officers covered in this study observed in their memoirs or oral histories that the introduction of selection was the most important development in the interwar Marine Corps. I had interviewed a number of senior retired Marine officers during the early 1980's, and a review of my notes confirmed that many Marines thought that selection was a critical innovation.[4]

The choice of the ten officers whose careers are tracked in this study was, to an extent, based on retrospect. While the system of promotion by seniority stagnated all officers' careers until the introduction of a system of promotion by selection in 1934, all of these officers advanced rapidly in rank between 1935 and 1939. More importantly, all rose rapidly in rank and responsibilities during the Second World War, and continued to rise in the postwar Marine Corps. All but one of them became general officers on active duty. They include four officers (Archer Vandegrift, Clifton Cates,

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[4] Author interviews with Gen. Gerald C. Thomas, USMC (Ret), November 11, 1983; Lt. Gen. Merwin H. Silverthorn, USMC (Ret), March 27, 1984; Brig. Gen. Richard W. Hayward, USMC (Ret), November 9, 1983; Brig. Gen. John S. Letcher, USMC (Ret), August 14, 1981 and April 2, 1984; Brig. Gen. M. Lamar Curry, USMC (Ret), November 22, 1981 and April 2, 1984; Brig. Gen. George R. E. Shell, USMC (Ret), November 22, 1981.

Lemuel Shepherd, and Randolph Pate) who rose to the pinnacle of the Corps, the post of Commandant, and four others who were, or might have been candidates for the post: Holland Smith, Gerald Thomas, Merritt Edson, and Merrill Twining. Of the remaining two, Lewis Puller became the most decorated Marine in history, and Evans F. Carlson, probably the most controversial officer of his era, introduced new concepts of tactics and leadership, and was responsible for introducing the phrase "Gung Ho" into the English Language. Since he was the original focus of this thesis, I have depicted Carlson's career in greater detail than the others.

I believe that the roots of their success, both during and after World War II, can be traced directly to their education and experiences in the period between the World Wars. All ten of them attended professional schools, went to sea, and served on expeditionary duty in the Caribbean and/or China. Several of them carved out personal niches in specialties, such as marksmanship and continuing education.

These ten were also chosen because they represented an age cohort of eight officers who were born within a relatively short span (1893-1898, plus one born in 1903), and were distributed across the promotion "hump" which stagnated promotion after the First World War. The two older officers, Smith and Vandegrift, both acted as role models for many of the younger officers. It is also worth noting that the careers of eight of these ten officers intersected in the Guadalcanal campaign of 1942-43, a battle which in many ways set the tone for the Corps' conduct of the remainder of the Pacific war. In that sense, it is also a group biography of the "Guadalcanal Gang" which dominated the upper ranks of the Corps until 1960.

All of the statistical information in this thesis was derived from the Marine Corps Lineal Lists for 1924, 1931, 1935, and 1939. I originally chose these years because they represented certain critical years in the career of Evans F. Carlson. His name first appeared on a Lineal List in 1924; by 1931, he was a first lieutenant serving in Nicaragua; in 1935 he was in China and received promotion to captain; in 1939, only three days short of promotion to major, he resigned his commission, only to return as a reserve major two years later. On further reflection, I believe that the selection of these years is justified on other grounds. Nineteen-twenty-four represented the midpoint of John Lejeune's lengthy commandancy: 1931 was the second year of Ben Fuller's commandancy, when the Marine Corps was in many ways at a low point; 1935 was the second year of John Russsell's commandancy, when the Corps had been reorganized around the Fleet Marine Force and promotion by selection had just begun; 1939 represented the midpoint of Thomas Holcomb's commandancy, the last year in which the Corps was at its interwar strength, and a point at which promotion by selection had been in effect long enough to have a significant impact on the officer corps. Information from the Lineal Lists enabled me to compile accurate statistics on age-in-grade, professional educational attainments, expeditionary duty, service at sea, and pre-commissioning educational background. Much of the argument contained in this thesis is presented in four chronological chapters, each of which has a section in which the overall situation of the Marine Corps within a given span of years is presented, followed by a biographical section which follows the careers of these ten officers during the time frame, and then a statistical section. While much of the

information in the statistical section may appear to be laborious, the information is necessary to support the argument.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

While there is a vast body of popular literature on the Marine Corps, and especially on World War II, there is relatively little scholarly literature on the subject, and most of it has been produced by Marines. The current standard history of the Marine Corps is Allan R. Millett's Semper Fidelis, published in 1980 and revised in 1994. Millett, who recently retired from the Marine Corps Reserve as a colonel, is General Raymond E. Mason, Professor of History at Ohio State University, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1966. In this scholarly, deeply researched and highly readable work, Millett treats the development of amphibious doctrine in the interwar period thoroughly, as well as the development of the Schools, but barely mentions the introduction of promotion by selection, although his recent biography of General Gerald C. Thomas, In Many a Strife, treats the issue in detail from the point of view of a junior officer.

Prior to the publication of Semper Fidelis, the standard history of the Marine Corps was Robert Heinl's Soldiers of the Sea, published in 1962. Heinl was a Yale graduate and was commissioned in 1937; he served extensively in World War II and Korea. While not an academic, Heinl demonstrated impressive scholarship and touched on many of the same elements of professionalism which I had identified, although he failed to integrate them into a positive concept of professionalization.

The Marine Corps itself produced one of the most useful texts for my study; Progress and Purpose: A Developmental History of the U.S. Marine Corps, 1900-1970, appeared in 1970 under the aegis of the History and Museums Division of

Headquarters, Marine Corps. Written by Kenneth Clifford, A Marine reserve lieutenant colonel who holds a doctorate from the University of London, Progress and Purpose presents a detailed account of the development of amphibious doctrine, both before and after the First World War, and identifies the key figures who championed the development of landing operations. Clifford's work also treats at length the developing relationship in the 1930's between the Marine Corps Schools, the Fleet Marine Force, and the Marine Corps Equipment Board. Despite a thorough treatment of the development of amphibious doctrine, Clifford's work does not tie these developments to other events and issues in the interwar Corps, and does not mention the advent of selection.

The first work which treated the subject of the Marine Corps' development of a mission was Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl's The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War, published in 1950. While most of the book chronicles the island campaigns of World War II, the authors also presented a history of the development of amphibious doctrine during the years between the two World Wars. While accurate, the picture which emerges is highly synthetic, never relating the contributions of individual Marines to the development of amphibious doctrine, nor situating the development of doctrine within the larger debate over the Corps' primary mission.

There are several main sources of material to support this thesis. As mentioned earlier, the annual Marine Corps Lineal Lists for 1924, 1931, 1935 and 1939 were the source for much of the data which could be converted into statistics. Second, four of the ten officers wrote memoirs, and five of them were the subjects of interviews by the Marine Corps Oral History Program. Three of them have also been the subjects of

formal biographies. Third, I have drawn extensively on articles written by officers for the Marine Corps Gazette between its inception in 1916 and 1939, believing that the officers' writings constitute a body of work in progress regarding their relationship to their profession and the sister services. It is also important to note at this juncture that the process of professionalization is not only a retrospective one in which the present attempts to make sense of the past; at least a few Marine officers were consciously aware that such a process was taking place. In writings and speeches from the early 1920s there are references to "our profession," but the contexts make it clear that they were referring to the profession of arms as a whole, and in a traditional, gentleman-warrior sense.[5] By the late 1930's, however, several Marine officers were thinking about professionalization in a formal, theoretical sense, and identified the profession of arms as a highly specialized, technical one in which formal education was at least as important as field service.

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[5] Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune, "Preparation," Marine Corps Gazette 7 (March 1922), 53-55 (hereafter, MCG); William L. Rodgers, "Address to the Graduating Class of Marine Officers at Quantico on June 9, 1923," MCG 8 (June 1923) 88-93.

CHAPTER III: THE PROFESSION OF ARMS

While law and medicine have been regarded as professions since the Middle Ages, the roots of modern military professionalism can be traced to the late seventeenth century, when expanding European nation-states began to recognize the necessity of maintaining permanent military establishments. Standing armies required permanent units, a fixed system of ranks, a code of discipline, and regular pay. While noble blood and military prowess had been considered virtually synonymous during the Middle Ages, the new armies recognized mastery of arms as the most important criterion for military leadership. Consequently, promotion by seniority became a fixed element of regular armies, equating length of service with experience and curbing the power of aristocratic officers.

The military had become a profession in the sense that its officers had a strong sense of corporate identity and served the interests of the state as a whole by guarding it against external invasion or internal insurrection. Since most officers, whether noblemen or commoners, were reliant on private income, they also became professional in the sense that remuneration was not their primary motivation for serving. With the opening of the first military academies in the early eighteenth century, the profession of arms had come to be distinguished by corporate identity, service to the state, and professional education, hallmarks which persist to the present day.

At the same time that nation-states were developing standing armies, advances in naval construction, navigation, and gunnery, plus the narrow confines of the seas around Western Europe, necessitated a fighting man who was both soldier and sailor.

Men were needed who could snipe at enemy officers and sailors from the fighting tops, lend a hand on the main guns, form the backbone of landing parties on hostile shores, and protect officers from mutinous crewmen. While France and Netherlands selected proven sailors and gave them infantry training, Britain chose to recruit a regiment of men from seaside towns and send them to sea. Known as "The Lord High Admiral's Regiment," this unit became permanent in 1741 and in 1802 received the title of Royal Marines.

It was from the British tradition that the Continental Congress authorized the recruitment of a battalion in 1775, known as the Continental Marines. During the Revolutionary War the Continental Marines served both afloat and ashore; they raided Nassau, in the Bahamas, in 1776 and served with John Paul Jones on his cruise around the British Isles. The Continental Marines went out of existence after the Revolution, but in 1798 Congress authorized the United States Marine Corps. One of their first exploits was a march from Egypt to what is now Libya, "the Shores of Tripoli," and they served with the Army in Florida during the Seminole War. A battalion of Marines accompanied Winfield Scott's army on its march to Mexico City in 1847, the "Halls of Montezuma." Most of the Marines' time was spent in guarding navy yards and serving afloat, where Marines made shore landings to protect Americans from local turmoil in the Caribbean and the East Indies. Occasionally, they staged punitive raids to avenge the honor of insults to American citizens, or the flag. The Corps' Commandant from 1820 to 1859, Archibald Henderson, had to fend off several attempts to merge the Marines into the Army or the Navy, and began to realize that the survival of the Marine Corps was dependent upon superior performance of its duties. A Marine officer was a

jack of several trades, but the master of none. Prior to the Civil War, there were never more than 57 officers and 1800 men in the Marine Corps.

From its inception the United States Army was organized into separate branches of infantry, artillery, and engineers. The United States Military Academy at West Point was founded in 1802 and provided its officers with a common education and specialized instruction in the branches of arms, especially fortifications, but not all Army officers were West Pointers; some received direct commissions from civil life, and a few rose from the ranks. Specialized instruction of officers in artillery techniques began as early as 1828, but the Army did not begin regular professional education for its officers until the 1880's, and the first schools were for the combat branches. Between 1885 and 1910 the Army perfected its educational system, erecting a hierarchy of combat branch schools, support branch schools, staff schools and, at the apex, the Army War College. Unofficial branch associations were organized, each with a quarterly journal. Between 1900 and 1940, with the exception of the First World War, the path to professionalism in the Army followed a fairly predictable pattern of troop duty, school, staff service, and duty in the insular possessions.[6]

The Navy followed a different path to professionalism. In the early nineteenth century, naval officers believed that the only element of their profession which could be learned from a book was celestial navigation, and that the ship at sea was the proper school for officers. The United States Naval Academy at Annapolis was not founded

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[6] Timothy K. Nenninger, The Leavenworth Schools and the Old Army: Education, Professionalism and the Officer Corps of the United States Army, 1881-1918, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978, 3-18.

until 1845, but its graduates quickly monopolized commissions, providing all new officers with a common education. The United States Navy pioneered the use of all-steel, steam-powered warships, but turned its back on them after the Civil War, returning to sail assisted by steam. Due to wartime expansion and post-war contraction, the Navy had a "hump" of officers of approximately the same age and grade, which retarded promotion.[7]

The Naval Institute was founded in 1872 and its publication the Proceedings, appeared the following year. The Naval War College was founded in 1884, but had little initial impact. By 1890, the Civil War fleet was obsolescent, some of the most senior officers had begun to retire, and the rapid pace of technologization and bureaucratization of the civilian world began to catch up with the Navy. New, all-steel cruisers and battleships were launched, and the appearance in 1892 of Alfred Thayer Mahan's The Influence of Sea Power on History gave younger officers ideas about how the new fleet might be used to keep sea lanes open around the world. At the same time, the western frontier was closing, a twenty-five-year period of internal growth and consolidation was ending, and, although America's merchant fleet was small, many eyes began to look for an expansion of trade with Asia. Although the United States had neither allies nor enemies, senior naval officers began to think strategically, the Naval

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[7] Peter Karsten, The Naval Aristocracy: The Golden Age of Annapolis and the Emergence of Modern American Navalism, New York: Free Press, 1972, 23-34.

War College started to plan for potential future conflicts, and junior officers began to specialize in such fields as gunnery, engineering, and communications.[8]

By comparison, professionalization in the Marine Corps progressed differently, if at all. Many of the nineteenth-century officers had failed at Annapolis or West Point, including two Commandants. The Marine officer's duties were narrow: all he needed to know for service afloat or ashore was some small-unit infantry tactics, a little gunnery, and how to mount a guard. Versatility, the idea that any Marine officer could perform any of the duties asked of him, was a hallmark of the Corps. Marine commissions were obtained solely through political connections, and it was said in Washington that the letters "USMC" stood for "useless sons made comfortable." In 1882, one wag wrote that "the Marine Corps officer wears corsets and parts his hair in the middle. He also has a pedigree and a sword. He carves out his career with his pedigree." [9] Educational standards were non-existent. The Marine Corps also suffered from a post-Civil War "hump" which retarded promotion; lieutenants commissioned in the 1870's did not attain the rank of captain until they had served for nearly twenty years. The Marines were far from the elite force which its early nineteenth century Commandant, Archibald Henderson, had envisioned, and their officers were not

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[8] Ronald Spector, Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession, Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 1977, 1-18, 38-49.

[9] Boston Sunday Transcript, January 15, 1882, HQMC Scrapbook, 1880-1889, National Archives, Record Group 127, quoted in Allan R. Millett, Semper Fidelis, New York: Macmillan, 109.

regarded as professional equals by the Army or the Navy.[10] By 1900, Army and Navy officers were becoming specialists in the management of violence, but Marine officers rarely went beyond the direct supervision of the small-scale application of violence. The Marine Corps occupied a narrow functional strip between the Army and the Navy, where the duties of each failed to overlap, but it had no distinctive role.

The Marine Corps began taking its first small steps toward professionalism in 1882, when a surplus of Annapolis graduates forced the secretary of the navy to allow them to accept Marine commissions. From 1882 to 1898, all new Marine lieutenants were Naval Academy graduates; there were fifty-one of them, and from their numbers came the five Commandants who led the Corps from 1914 to 1936. In 1892 the Corps set up a School of Application for new officers at the Marine Barracks at "Eighth and Eye" in Washington, D.C. Although all new officers attended the School of Application, it was relocated several times, which provided for neither continuity nor curriculum development.[11]

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[10] Karsten, Naval Aristocracy, 82-83.

[11] Jack Shulimson, The Marine Corps' Search for Mission, 1880-1898, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993, 18-53.

CHAPTER IV: THE MARINE CORPS AND AMERICA'S RISE TO WORLD POWER

The Marine Corps, 1898-1916

During the Spanish-American War the Corps was temporarily expanded to 98 officers and 3,142 men[12]; new appointments were made from civil life, and included some who had failed at Annapolis. As a result, new Annapolis graduates refused to accept Marine commissions, as they understandably had no desire to serve under those who had formerly been their juniors at the Academy, and who had failed to graduate. With the permanent expansion of 1900 to 174 officers and 5,414 men[13], new Marine officers again came from civil life; a very few men were commissioned directly from the ranks, but the backgrounds of the majority of new officers resembled those commissioned before 1882, although they were somewhat better educated. Many new officers were the sons of Navy or Marine officers. One officer who was appointed in 1900 noted that the officers of his generation "lived hard, fought hard, and drank hard. Liquor was accepted as the rule."[14]

After 1898 the Marine Corps grew with the Navy, which had more ships and shore stations and thus needed more Marines. As the Corps grew between 1900 and

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[12] Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics, 1141.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Frederic M. Wise and Meigs O. Frost, A Marine Tells it to You, Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1929, xiii.

1915 junior officers moved up far more rapidly than they had in the late nineteenth century; the retirement of Civil War veterans and expansion eliminated the promotion "hump." The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine provided the Marine Corps with a new lease on life. Although Theodore Roosevelt used his own doctrine sparingly, his successor, William Howard Taft, was more willing to use the Marines to protect the lives and property of Americans and foreigners during Caribbean upheavals, and Woodrow Wilson was even more willing than Taft to use Marines to enforce his policies. When Wilson stated that he would "teach these Latin-American Republics to elect good men," he was, in effect, appointing the Marines as tutors in democracy, a role for which they were hardly trained. In 1914 the Marines landed in Vera Cruz, and withdrew seven months later. In 1915-16, Marines occupied both halves of Hispaniola; they remained in the Dominican Republic until 1924, and in Haiti until 1934. With the rise of constabularies in the Caribbean, the Marine Corps had found a distinctive niche which the Army did not want and could not legally perform, and which the Navy could not fill by itself.[15]

The Marine Corps also found itself with another new role, this one dictated by the Navy. With the rise of the all-steel battleship navy, the character of ships' crews began to change. The rough, foreign-born jack tar was replaced by a native-born American, sometimes with a high-school education. Naval officers believed that Marines were no longer necessary to keep crews in line, and that the presence of

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[15] Millett, Semper Fidelis, 88-102; Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 68-81.

Marines retarded the growth of a self-disciplined crew.[16] Some naval officers thought that the Marine Corps should be abolished, but those who had read Mahan understood the critical necessity of overseas coaling stations to seaborne commerce and thus, by extension, to the Navy whose job was to protect commerce. Some naval officers, supported by a few Marines, thought the Corps should be organized as a seagoing force to seize and defend advanced operating bases for the Fleet.[17]

From its inception, the concept of an advanced base force was antithetical to the duties that Marines had traditionally performed. One of the basic assumptions about the role of an advanced base force was that it would seize an undefended island or remote harbor, fortify it, and defend it against an enemy who would attack from the sea. It was built around a blend of new technologies, including fixed naval guns, searchlights, wireless and telephonic communications, mines, field fortifications, light mobile artillery and, after 1914, aviation for long-range scouting. Officers who had graduated from Annapolis understood the potential of the advanced base force, as did some of the better-educated post-1900 officers, but the old-timers who predated the admission of Annapolis graduates to the Corps were unimpressed by the idea, and many of the new post-1900 officers were cutting their professional teeth in small Caribbean conflicts. In addition, the training for advanced base work was physically arduous,

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[16] Lieutenant William F. Fullam, "The Organization, Training, and Discipline of the Navy Personnel as Viewed from the Ship," United States Naval Institute Proceedings (hereafter, USNIP), 22 (1896), 83-116.

[17] Ibid.; Lieutenant Colonel John G. Miller, USMC, "William Freeland Fullam's War with the Corps," USNIP 101 (November 1975), 37-45.

often involving the hauling of heavy guns over long distances under adverse conditions. The only time the Marines actually seized and defended an advanced base was at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in 1898, and even when advanced base units were formally constituted, they were likely to be diverted to employment as "State Department Troops" in the Caribbean or Central America.

Although the Army and Navy had had service associations and professional journals for many years, which are considered to be among the hallmarks of a distinct profession, the Marine Corps did not have an association until 1913, when the Marine Corps Association was organized by a group of officers at Guantanamo. The Association's function was protective; President Roosevelt had removed the Marines from the Fleet, and Taft had restored them, but Marine officers were suspicious of anything that appeared to narrow their duties, and thus decrease their utility.[18] One of its founders, Colonel John Lejeune, had served with an advanced base force, but in the same year he applied to the Commandant to be assigned to the next overseas operation, because "I wanted the field experience which could be gained only on expeditionary duty, and because I felt convinced that one's military reputation could be advanced only through the instrumentality of active service in the field."[19] Lejeune's statement makes an interesting point: he was, at the time, concerned with developing a reputation, which is based on others' perceptions of one's actions. Becoming a professional was another matter: while building an individual reputation is a part of an officer's

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[18] Robert D. Heinl, "An Association Was Formed," Marine Corps Gazette (hereafter MCG), 47:4 (April 1963), 14-17.

[19] John A. Lejeune, Reminiscences of a Marine, Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1930, 194.

professionalization, the process is also dependent upon objective criteria, such as formal education and breadth of experience. It was entirely possible for an officer to have a high reputation within the service based on combat exploits, but that officer might also be wholly ignorant of trends within the service or society which could radically alter the role he was expected to perform.

Several events in 1915-16 gave the Marine Corps a role which further distanced it from the Navy and reinforced its separate identity. Large bases were acquired at Quantico, Virginia, and San Diego to house an advanced base force for each ocean; for the first time, the Marines had adequate space for training, and were away from the supervision of navy yard commanders. Recruit raining, which had been conducted in small groups at navy yards, was centralized and standardized at a new base in Parris Island, South Carolina. The Marine Corps Gazette began publication in 1916, and the lead article in the first issue, written by John Lejeune, was titled "Mobile Defense of an Advance Base."[20] The second issue of the Gazette contained a lengthy article by Major John Russell, like Lejeune an Annapolis graduate, and was titled "A Plea for Mission and Doctrine."[21] That issue, and the next three issues, contained replies to Russell's article by a number of officers; they indicated that very few Marine officers had any concept of the Corps' role, other than general support of the Navy, and the concept of doctrine seemed to puzzle many officers. One officer suggested the appointment of a board of Marine officers who were graduates of the Army War

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[20] John A. Lejeune, "Mobile Defense of an Advanced Base," MCG, I:1 (March 1916), 1-15. Dr. Jack Shulimson believes that the article was written for Lejeune by Major Earl Ellis.

[21] John A. Russell, "A Plea for Mission and Doctrine," MCG, I:2 (June 1916), 109-22.

College to prepare a draft mission statement, which would then be circulated among all of the officers for review and comment. Another officer, who was an Annapolis graduate, thought that only the Navy was qualified to define the Corps' mission. Some replies suggested that Russell's plea was incomprehensible, and irrelevant to the Corps' day-to-day activities.[22]

The Marine Corps, 1916-1924

Although absorbed with its own problems in the Caribbean, the Marine Corps kept one eye trained on the developing war in Europe. The Naval Act of 1916 increased the authorized size of the Marine Corps to 350 officers and 10,000 men,[23] and Congress allocated funds to purchase permanent homes for the advanced base force at San Diego and Quantico, Virginia, near Washington, D.C.; these were the Corps' first permanent bases outside of navy yards.

At the time of America's entrance into World War I, the Marine Corps comprised 776 officers and 27,000 enlisted men.[24] Although the War Department was lukewarm about the use of the Marines in France, Navy Secretary Josephus Daniel and Major General Commandant George Barnett began recruiting aggressively under the slogan, "First to Fight." Only two months after the declaration of war the Fifth Marine

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[22] Ibid.; various authors, "Discussion of a Plea for Mission and Doctrine," MCG 1 (June 1916), 188-205; 1 (September 1916), 331-39; "Continued Discussion of a Plea for Mission and Doctrine," 1 (December 1916) 403-08.

[23] Bureau of the Census, Historical Abstracts, 1141.

[24] Ibid.

Regiment sailed for France, but the commander of the American Expeditionary Forces, General John J. Pershing, broke the unit down into small service and security detachments.

Marine recruiting progressed rapidly, and was highly selective. The Corps did not accept draftees, and of the nearly quarter of a million men who tried to join the Corps, only sixty thousand were accepted. To help meet the demand for new officers more than two hundred long-service enlisted men received temporary commissions and no new regular commissions or permanent promotions were given after the beginning of 1918. The new base at Quantico was organized as a training center for Marines on their way to France. A second regiment, the Sixth Marines, went to France and was paired with the Fifth Regiment to form the Fourth Infantry Brigade, AEF, a component of the Army's Second Infantry Division. While nearly all of the officers and men of the Fifth Regiment were regular Marines who had entered the Corps before the war, the Sixth Regiment was made up of wartime volunteers, and sixty percent of the enlisted men were former college students.[25]

The brigade's first action was at Belleau Wood, east of Paris, in June, 1918. Previously, the Marines had always fought superior numbers of poorly armed and poorly led native troops. At Belleau Wood they took on equal or superior numbers of highly trained, well-armed, veteran German infantry and ejected them from heavily fortified positions. Although the Marines went on to fight more battles, Belleau Wood became the crucible of the Corps, and from it emerged many aggressive young officers

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[25] Millett, Semper Fidelis, 144-48; Heinl, Soldiers of the Sea, 97-128.

who believed that the Marines had proved themselves to be, at the very least, the equal of the Army.[26]

Major General John Lejeune took over command of the Second Infantry Division in mid-1918, and became the first and only Marine officer ever to command an Army division. Under his leadership the Second Division inflicted more casualties upon the enemy, captured more prisoners, and seized more artillery pieces than any other division in the AEF. Even so, Pershing tried to block the deployment of a second Marine brigade to France, and upon its arrival, broke it down into service units to prevent it from being paired with the Fourth Brigade to create a Marine division. Despite Lejeune's successes with the Second Division, it remained an article of faith among Army officers that Marines were not suited by training or experience to command large formations in the field.[27]

The Marine Corps ballooned to seventy-five thousand men by the end of 1918. Only 32,000 Marines made it to France, but more than 12,000 became battle casualties, including 2,457 Marines who were killed in action or died of their wounds.[28] The war also brought the Marine Corps to the attention of the American public. Press regulations forbade the mention of any unit by name, but references to the Marines were technically within the regulations. At Belleau Wood reporter Floyd Gibbons of the Chicago Tribune went into action with the Marines and was so badly wounded that

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[26] Asprey, At Belleau Wood, 211.

[27] Millett, Semper Fidelis, 150.

[28] Reference Section, Marine Corps History and Museums Division, Subject Files, "USMC Casualties and Strengths," 1976.

initial reports indicated that he had been killed. As a tribute, his friends in the AEF Censorship Office let his most recent previous articles, which lauded Marine valor, go through uncensored. Gibbons's paeans to the Marines boosted morale and made the Marines public heroes, but they also fostered a lingering resentment of the Marine Corps among Army officers who had served in France.[29]

After the Armistice the Marine Corps demobilized rapidly. Congress set a post-war ceiling of 27,400 Marines, but authorized funds for only 18,000 men. The bill provided for one thousand regular officers, an increase of 650 over the 1916 ceiling, and there were many temporary wartime officers who wanted permanent commissions.[30] In 1919 General Barnett appointed a board under the direction of Brigadier General John Russell to select officers for the existing vacancies. The son of an admiral and an Annapolis graduate himself, Russell reportedly instructed the members of his board to use formal education and social acceptability as their primary criteria.[31] When the board's results were announced in early 1920 there was a strong reaction from veterans of the Fourth Brigade, who felt that their service in France had

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[29] Robert Asprey, At Belleau Wood, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965, 167, 175-77, 214-15, 312, 327-30.

[30] Merrill L. Bartlett, Lejeune: A Marine's Life, 1867-1942, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993, 153; Bureau of the Census, Historical Abstracts, 1141.

[31] Brigadier General Robert H. Williams, "Those Pesky Boards," MCG 66 (November 1982), 92.

not been properly rewarded. Even General Barnett felt that the Russell Board had not been fair to the officers who had served in France.[32]

George Barnett had been appointed Commandant in 1914, the first Naval Academy graduate to hold the office, and the first appointed under a rule that limited the occupant to a single four-year term. He was reappointed in early 1918, but whether his reappointment was for another full term, or maybe for the duration of the war, has never been clear. During the war Barnett offended Navy Secretary Daniels over several issues, including a bill to give the Commandant a third star. In 1920 Daniels set out to remove Barnett.[33] He enlisted the assistance of Congressman Thomas Butler of Pennsylvania, the chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, and Butler's son Smedley, who had returned from France as a brigadier general at the age of thirty-seven. Smedley Butler advised his friend John Lejeune that Barnett was on his way out and that he, Lejeune, would be the next Commandant. Lejeune, who was also a close friend of Barnett's, was put in a difficult position. Butler told him that if he did not want the job, another candidate could be found. On June 20, 1920, Barnett was given ten days' notice that he was to be replaced by Lejeune. On his last day in office Barnett gave Lejeune a ferocious tongue-lashing for his perfidy, but Lejeune could only reply, "my hands were tied."[34] Lejeune quickly created a new, but essentially

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Benis M. Frank, "The Relief of General Barnett," Records of the Columbia Historical Society of Washington 1971-72, 679-93; Merrill Bartlett, "Ouster of a Commandant," USNIP 106 (November 1980), 60-65.

[34] General Clifton B. Cates, Oral History Transcript, OHC, MCHC, 67.

powerless, position for Barnett as Commander of the Department of the Pacific, with headquarters in San Francisco. This allowed Barnett to regain the second star he had lost when he was removed from the Commandancy.[35]

Upon Lejeune's elevation to the Commandancy, Smedley Butler became the commander of the base at Quantico. Butler began a program to beautify the post, organized a football team to compete with colleges, and began the construction of a thirty-thousand-seat stadium. He organized highly publicized re-enactments of famous Civil War battles, which were attended by the President and many members of Congress, and provided the Marine Corps with excellent press. In the autumn of 1923 the battle of New Market, in the Shenandoah Valley, was selected, but days of torrential rain almost kept the force from marching from Quantico to New Market.[36]

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[35] Ibid.; Bartlett, Lejeune, 147.

[36] Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Fleming, Captain Robin Austin, and Captain Charles Braley, Quantico: Crossroads of the Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., 1978, 42-44, 47-49.

CHAPTER V: THE MARINE CORPS IN 1924

The State of the Marine Corps

One of Lejeune's first acts as Commandant was to set aside the findings of the Russell Board. He appointed Brigadier General Wendell Neville, former commander of the Fourth Brigade, to prepare a new list. Neither education nor social standing played a role in the board's deliberations. The Neville Board radically rearranged the ranks and seniority of junior officers, giving preference to officers who had seen action in France and former long-service enlisted men; nearly two hundred of the latter received permanent commissions.[37]

Under Lejeune's leadership the Corps embarked upon an ambitious program of professional education for its officers. Barnett had approved the formal organization of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, but Lejeune breathed life into the Schools. He instituted a three-tiered curriculum, with a Basic School for all new officers to replace the old School of Application. A Company Officers Course taught first lieutenants and captains the fundamentals of company command and battalion staff work, and a Field Officers Course for majors and lieutenant colonels taught battalion command and staff procedures for higher formations, as well as preparing its graduates to attend the Naval War College. The curricula for these courses, colloquially known as the "Junior" and "Senior" courses, were borrowed directly from the Army, and corresponded with those of the School of the Line and the School of the Staff at Fort Leavenworth. The

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[37] Williams, "Those Pesky Boards," 92.

Schools' first Commandant was Colonel John C. Beaumont, a Fourth Brigade veteran who had graduated from the School of the Line at Leavenworth, and the Schools began with a strong Army imprint.[38]

Lejeune also initiated the Candidates for Commission Course, which allowed outstanding enlisted men between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-seven to take an intensive, six-month-long course of instruction to obtain a commission. It was held at the Marine Barracks at "Eighth and Eye" in Washington, D.C.[39]

A few Marine officers had attended the Army and Naval War Colleges since 1910, and a number of Marines had gone to AEF schools in France during World War I. Lejeune was himself a graduate of the Army War College, and in 1920 he obtained permission from the War Department to send Marine officers to Army schools. Each year, five Marine officers were to be detailed to each of the Army War College, the Command and General Staff College, the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, as well as aviation, quartermaster, motor transport, and signals schools. Marine officers of the rank of major and above were eligible to attend the Naval War College.[40]

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[38] First Lieutenant Anthony A. Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 1945, unpublished typescript, Breckinridge Library, Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico, Va., 1945, 25-29.

[39] Major Clyde H. Metcalf, "A History of the Education of Marine Corps Officers," MCG, 20 (May 1936), 47.

[40] Metcalf, "A History of the Education of Marine Corps Officers," 47-53; Brigadier General Dion Williams, "The Education of a Marine Corps Officer," MCG 17 (August 1933), 17-19.

Lejeune also took steps to stabilize officer procurement. The wartime expansion and post-war contraction had left the Corps with a mixture of Annapolis men and those from civil life at the top, with more civil appointees filling the field grades, and a mixture of officers from all sources in the junior ranks. From 1920 onward the Corps received new officers from three sources: Annapolis, college ROTC programs which were rated as 'Distinguished' by the Secretary of War, and the enlisted ranks. As a result, most new officers had college educations, but qualified enlisted men still had an opportunity to receive a commission. Direct appointments from civil life - the "useless sons made comfortable"- ceased altogether.[41]

Yet another element of professionalization was sea service. As former Commandant George Barnett wrote in 1924, "the real reason for the existence of the Marine Corps is naval, [and] the definition of a marine is a sea soldier, and until he has been to sea, he cannot be a sea soldier."[42] Prior to 1898 sea service had constituted a major portion of a Marine officer's career, but in the years between 1898 and 1920, expeditionary service took precedence. By the end of the First World War all of the officers above the grade of captain had been to sea, but among company grade officers, only the senior third of the captains had been to sea, and none of the lieutenants had

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Major General George Barnett, "Sea Training of Marine Officers," USNIP 50 (March 1924), 938.

any sea service.[43] If the Marine Corps' primary duty was to support the Navy, a Marine officer needed "to go to sea, gain the sea habit, and learn how best to do his full share for his ship, the Fleet, and the Navy."[44]

Expeditionary duty occupied a large proportion of the Marine Corps' attention, and, along with sea duty, constituted one critical element of the attributes which made a Marine officer a professional, and distinguished him from his peers in the other services. For the officers who joined the Corps during and after the First World War, service in the tropics made up the major part of the training that made Marines into specialists in small wars. By 1931, eighty-nine percent of Marine officers had served overseas; as one officer who was commissioned in that year observed, "if you hadn't been to Haiti, or Nicaragua, or China, you were just completely out of the swim."[45] While expeditionary service in China did not involve the hard jungle campaigning that characterized service in the tropics, it did expose Marine officers to a distinctly different culture, and the Marines who served in China between 1937 and 1941 often came into contact with the Japanese Army, which was soon to become their enemy.

Aviation had been a part of the Marine Corps since 1914, when a scouting squadron was organized as part of the Advanced Base Force. During the First World War Marine aviators took on the task of bombing the German submarine pens on the

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[43] Navy Department, Register of Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the United States Navy and Marine Corps, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924, 407-441 (hereafter Lineal List).

[44] Barnett, "Sea Training of Marine Officers," 938.

[45] Lineal List for 1931, 452-493; Brig. Gen. C. L. Banks Transcript, OHC, MCHC, 1974, 6.

North Sea, which neither the Army nor the Navy wished to attempt. After the war, the Navy's General Board decided that the Marine Corps could retain its own aviation units, with the understanding that they could be called upon to serve directly with the Fleet, if necessary. In 1920 Congress voted aviators a fifty-percent pay hike, so long as they remained qualified to fly, and the number of officers applying for aviation training at Pensacola rose sharply, even though the number of aviators killed in accidents annually was about equal to the number who completed flight training.[46]

In 1922 Lejeune attempted to replace promotion by seniority with a new system in which examining boards would use fitness reports to select the best-qualified officers for promotion, a policy which the Navy had adopted in 1915. There was an instantaneous outcry from the officer corps at large, and especially from the officers who had been appointed and risen rapidly between 1900 and 1915. Most officers endorsed a system that would purge the least fit, but the majority opposed promotion by selection, arguing that it would be vulnerable to outside political influence. Many also felt that, in as small an organization as the Marine Corps, selection was too likely to be influenced by personal friendships, distant kinship, or factional loyalties. As one officer observed, "the junior officers of the Corps have already been 'selected' by the actions of the Neville Board, and that is enough selection for now."[47]

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[46] Lieutenant Colonel Edward C. Johnson, Marine Corps Aviation: The Early Years, 1912-40; Washington, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1977, 5-10, 20-26, 27-30.

[47] No author, "Promotion by Selection," MCG 7 (March 1922) 46-52; Various authors, "Promotion By Selection (Comments on Article in Last Issue)" MCG 7 (June 1922) 185-200;

Lejeune had inherited an officer corps which had become factionalized through both background and experience, and that factionalism directly affected officers' ideas about the relative priority of its various missions, and in turn affected the curriculum of the Schools. Many Marine officers, especially those commissioned between 1900 and 1915, had seen a decade or more of expeditionary duty, but no more than a year or two at sea, and had not attended any professional school other than the School of Application. They had wide experience in tropical campaigns, could speak Haitian Creole and "bullcart" Spanish, and regarded themselves as "practical" officers. They had a low opinion of professional schooling and had every reason to believe that the Corps' primary mission would always be intervention in the tropics. They insisted that the First World War had been a one-time event, unlikely to be repeated. Smedley Butler, who had never attended any school, and had spent barely a year at sea, but had more than a dozen years of expeditionary service, was the most visible member of this faction.[48]

Those Marines who had served in France with the Fourth Brigade, especially the young officers who had been commissioned during the war, had a profoundly different concept of the nature of war, which strongly influenced their ideas about the Corps' primary mission and how it should prepare for it. In France the Marines had played a small but brilliant role in a vast, complex, highly technological conflict between industrialized nations in arms, and they had seen first-hand the combination of weapons

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Various authors, "Promotion By Selection," MCG 7 (September 1922), 265-270. The specific quotation is from page 191.

[48] Bartlett, Lejeune, 7-8.

and complex logistics. Fourth Brigade veterans had a strong group consciousness; many had been decorated in France, and all wore on their left shoulders the braided red-and-green fourragere of the Croix de Guerre, which had been awarded to the Brigade as a unit. The First World War had not provided an opportunity for the deployment of the Advanced Base Force, and there was no guarantee that a future conflict would provide a primarily naval role for the Marine Corps. They believed that the Marine Corps needed to train to Army standards and be ready to field a full division to act as an adjunct to the Army in future large-scale conflicts, and that the curriculum of the Schools should emphasize defensive warfare and co-ordination with larger forces.[49]

Among the officers who had not served in France there was some bitterness toward the Fourth Brigade veterans, whom they collectively referred to as "AEF Heroes." The Fourth Brigade veterans felt that their brother officers who had served only in the tropics simply didn't get the point: warfare had changed permanently. The factions were not watertight compartments, and many officers had strong friendships with those whose views on mission differed from their own.[50]

There was a third faction, perhaps more properly described as a coterie or clique, because of its relatively small size. This group was made up of senior officers, nearly all of whom had graduated from Annapolis in the 1890's, and most of whom had attended the Naval War College. While most of these officers had seen service in the

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[49] Ibid.; Brig. Gen. Victor Bleasdale Transcript, 1967, OHC, MCHC, 181-96; author interview, Lt. Gen. Merwin H. Silverthorn, USMC (Ret), March 27, 1984.

[50] Ibid.

tropics, and a few in France, all had extensive sea service. Few of them had seen much combat. For the most part, they were not charismatic leaders, and failed to cultivate the networks of loyal subordinates which characterized the Fourth Brigade veterans and the tropical campaigners. They maintained that the primary mission of the Corps was the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases, and believed that the Marine Corps Schools should focus on the development of a doctrine for overseas landing operations. Although their numbers were small, they included such men as John Russell, Ben H. Fuller, Eli K. Cole, Dion Williams, Ellis Bell Miller, and John Lejeune, and their views were much in evidence in the pages of the Marine Corps Gazette. Although the issue of promotion by selection tended to split the other factions horizontally, with junior officers favoring selection and senior officers opposed to it, many of the senior officers who emphasized the Corps' amphibious role were strongly in favor of selection.[51]

While Lejeune inherited ongoing interventions in Haiti and Santo Domingo, his interest in landing operations continued. In 1920 the General Board of the Navy gave the problem of developing a plan for landing operations in the Western Pacific to the Marine Corps. Japan's new possessions in the Marianas, and mandates in the Marshalls and Carolines, stood astride America's sea lanes from Hawaii to Guam, the Philippines, and China. Lejeune asked Major Earl Ellis, a former enlisted man who had served in Haiti and France, to prepare a tentative plan for defending and recapturing American bases. In 1921 Ellis completed a thirty-thousand-word study titled "Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia." Ellis identified a number of key problems which would

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[51] Bartlett, Lejeune, 7-8; Lieutenant General Victor Krulak, USMC (Ret), First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1984, 73-82.

have to be overcome, including coral reefs, shore defenses, and the development of suitable landing craft.[52]

As Commandant, Lejeune stood in a unique position to manage the factions: he had ample credentials as a tropical campaigner, had been the senior Marine in France, and had also graduated from Annapolis and the Army War College. Lejeune understood that the Corps had to meet the needs of foreign policy by providing men for duty in the tropics, provide Marines to serve the Navy both ashore and afloat, as well as to educate his officer corps and develop a doctrine for landing operations. Although events often predetermined Lejeune's priorities, he always kept his eye on the advanced base force as the Marine Corps' true mission; in 1923 he wrote that "[w]e are working . . . for the welfare and upbuilding of the entire naval establishment and not in the interest of any clique or faction."[53]

Careers to 1924

Holland McTyeire Smith was born in Seale, Alabama, on April 20, 1882. His father was a successful attorney and both of his grandfathers had been Confederate soldiers. Graduating from Alabama Polytechnic Institute (now Auburn University) and the law school of the University of Alabama, he joined his father's firm in 1903. After two years in his father's shadow he approached his congressman about a direct

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[52] John J. Reber, "Pete Ellis, Amphibious Warfare Prophet," USNIP 103 (November 1977), 53-64; Louis Morton, "Origins of Pacific Strategy," MCG 41 (August 1957), 36-43.

[53] Bartlett, Lejeune, 7-8; John A. Lejeune, "The U.S. Marine Corps," MCG 8 (December 1923), 243.

commission in the Army. None was available, and the congressman suggested that Smith apply to the Marine Corps. The young lawyer had never even heard of the Marines, but he took the examination and was commissioned in 1905. After graduating from the School of Application he served in the Philippines, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. Called "Hoke" by his friends, he was more widely known by the nickname "Howlin' Mad," which was partly engendered by his hatred of the Navy, which stemmed from several incidents in which he felt that naval officers had insulted or humiliated his Marines.[54]

During the First World War he was sent to France as the commanding officer of the Sixth Machine Gun Battalion, and was later the adjutant of the Fourth Marine Brigade at Belleau Wood. He was the first Marine officer to graduate from the Army's Staff College at Langres, and was then posted to the headquarters of the staff of the First Army Corps, where he planned the communications for the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne operations.[55]

After returning from occupation duty in Germany, Smith attended the Naval War College in 1920-21, which he found to be "bogged down in obsolescence."[56] He discovered that "[n]obody took landings seriously . . . naval minds refused to contemplate the endless new problems that must be solved to make a landing

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[54] Smith, Coral and Brass, 23-25, 28-42, 68; Norman V. Cooper, A Fighting General: The Biography of Gen. Holland M. "Howlin' Mad" Smith, USMC, Quantico: Marine Corps Association, 1987, 5-10, 11-18, 22-30.

[55] Smith, Coral and Brass, 43-46; Cooper, A Fighting General, 31-41.

[56] Smith, Coral and Brass, 47.

successful." [57] Perhaps because he argued so vigorously with the Navy over the need to study landings, Smith was next posted to the Joint Army-Navy Planning Committee in Washington, where he was the junior member and the only Marine. His insistence on the need for realistic training for Marines was one factor in the decision to conduct fleet landing exercises in the Caribbean in 1924.[58]

Alexander Archer Vandegrift was born in Charlottesville, Virginia, on March 13, 1887. His father was a prosperous building contractor and both of his grandfathers had served the Confederacy. After attending the University of Virginia for two years he approached his congressman about a direct commission in the Army. His experience was almost identical to Holland Smith's: he was told that there were no vacancies in the Army, but there were a few in the Marine Corps. Though he had never heard of the Marines before, he took the examination and was commissioned in 1909. At his first posting he incurred the wrath of his commander for lying about returning late from leave, was court-martialed, and reduced five numbers on the Lineal List.[59]

Sent to Nicaragua in 1912, he became a favorite of Smedley Butler, who nicknamed him "Sunny Jim" for his cheerful disposition in combat (Sunny Jim was a cartoon character of the day; Vandegrift's contemporaries called him "Arch" or "Vandy"). More tropical service followed in Vera Cruz and Haiti, and he graduated from the Advanced Base School in 1915. During the First World War he again served in Haiti, and received orders to France in October, 1918. He was about to leave for the

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[57] Ibid., 49.

[58] Ibid., 47-56; Cooper, A Fighting General, 42-46.

[59] A. A. Vandegrift, Once A Marine, New York: W.W. Norton, 1964, 5-21.

States when the Armistice was declared. "The big one, the war to end wars, had come and gone and I had missed it. This was a personal calamity of tremendous proportions. . ." [60]

Vandegrift returned to the States in early 1919 and was assigned as the quartermaster at Norfolk. The Fourth Brigade was demobilizing after its return from France, and Vandegrift was swamped with equipment of all kinds. He foisted the job off on Holland Smith and returned to Haiti in 1919 as a colonel in the Gendarmerie, but it was a long time until Vandegrift could joke about the incident with Smith.[61]

In 1923, at Smedley Butler's suggestion, he requested duty at Quantico. He commanded a battalion of the Fifth Marines during the "Mud March" to New Market in the fall of 1923, and endured numerous jibes concerning the condition of the roads in his native state. One evening an officer from the North remarked within his hearing "Just think of it! My grandfather fought for four-and-a-half years to keep this miserable state in the Union. I can't imagine why."[62]

The scion of an old Tennessee family, Clifton Bledsoe Cates was born on his father's farm on the banks of the Mississippi River, near Tiptonville, Tennessee, on August 31, 1893. After attending Missouri Military Academy he entered the University of Tennessee, where he lettered in football and baseball, and earned a law degree in 1916. At the outbreak of the First World War he was preparing for the bar examination and had never even heard of the Marine Corps. A friend of Cates' was the son of the

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[60] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 21-33.

[61] Ibid., 34-53; Cooper, A Fighting General, 42.

[62] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 60-63.

University's dean, and when his father asked for some likely names to be nominated for temporary Marine reserve commissions, he suggested Clifton Cates. He was commissioned in June, 1917, and went to France the following January with the Sixth Marines. At Belleau Wood he took over his company when his commander was badly wounded, and eventually received the Army's Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, and several mentions in dispatches, as well as two wounds. His peers nicknamed him "Lucky" because of several narrow escapes, including an incident in which most of his trousers were blown off by a shellburst.[63]

Cates was planning to return to civilian life in 1919 until he accidentally encountered General Barnett in Washington. The two had never met, but Barnett recognized Cates, complimented him on his record in France, and asked him to reconsider his decision to leave the Corps. Cates was uncertain, and Barnett offered him two months' leave to make up his mind. Cates accepted the offer, and within ten days was ready to go back to duty. He was appointed Barnett's aide, was present when Lejeune relieved him, and heard what passed between the two. Although the Russell Board had placed Cates "way, way down"[64] on its list, the Neville Board placed him second on the list of officers to be retained in the service, and he became a regular captain in 1920. After his relief as Commandant, when Barnett became commander of the Department of the Pacific, he took Cates with him as his aide, but "it was three

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[63] "General Clifton B. Cates, USMC (Ret)" Biographical File, Reference Section, MCHC; Cates Oral History Transcript, OHC, MCHC, 1-9.

[64] Cates Oral History Transcript, 62-68, 71; Karl Schuon, U.S. Marine Corps Biographical Dictionary, New York: Franklin Watts, 1963, 36-37.

years totally wasted, because we didn't have a thing to do."[65] In 1924 he became commander of the Marine detachment on board the battleship California, home-ported in San Francisco.[66]

Lemuel Cornick Shepherd was born in Norfolk, Virginia, on February 10, 1896. His father, a wealthy doctor, was descended from an old Tidewater family, in which "all of the men fought for the Confederacy."[67] His mother was the daughter of a Nantucket whaling captain, and he was proud of his descent from the Starbucks and the Coffins, the island's oldest families. He was about to graduate from the Virginia Military Institute when war was declared in 1917, and he was able to obtain a Marine Reserve commission within a few days. Sent to France with the Fifth Marines, he led a platoon at Belleau Wood, Soissons, and Mont Blanc Ridge, receiving the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, and several wounds. The Neville Board placed him sixth on the list of officers to be retained, just four numbers below Clifton Cates, whom he had met in France. Shepherd returned from occupation duty and became General Lejeune's aide, living in the barracks at "Eighth and Eye;" he was also detailed as a social aide at the White House. His good looks, courtly manners, and brilliant war record made him the acknowledged social leader of young bachelor Marine officers in Washington and Quantico. In 1923 he was sent to Brazil in command of the Marine detachment at the Brazilian Exposition in Rio de Janeiro. Returning to the United

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[65] Cates Oral History Transcript, 68-69.

[66] Ibid., 71.

[67] General Lemuel C. Shepherd, USMC, Oral History Transcript, OHC, MCHC, 275, 282.

States the next year, he was assigned to command the Marine detachment aboard the USS Idaho, which was home-ported in Norfolk.[68]

Merritt Austin Edson was born in Rutland, Vermont, on April 25, 1897. The Edsons had been small farmers in rural New England since the seventeenth century, and there had not been a soldier in the family since King Philip's War in 1676. As a boy he was small and wiry, and he had wavy red hair. Merritt was formal, reserved, and quite religious, and his family thought he would grow up to become a Congregationalist minister, though he learned to shoot at an early age and killed his first deer at fourteen. He entered the University of Vermont in 1915 and enlisted in the school's Reserve Officer Training Corps unit, which was part of the Vermont National Guard. When President Wilson ordered American troops to the Mexican Border in 1916 his company was activated and served on the Texas Border for six months. He returned to college and, at the outbreak of the World War, sought an Army commission. His service in the Guard entitled him to some seniority, but just how much was unclear, and while the matter was being sorted out he became impatient and enlisted in the Marines. Commissioned a second lieutenant in 1917, he went to France in September of the next year, just too late to see action. After his return to the States he spent two years at Quantico as the registrar of the Marine Corps Institute, a new trade and correspondence

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[68] Ibid., 277, 291, 295, 351-54, 357; Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 196-98; Allan R. Millett, In Many a Strife: the Life of General Gerald C. Thomas, USMC, Annapolis, Naval Institute Press, 1993, 90.

school for enlisted men, and helped coach the base rifle team. In 1922 Edson completed flight training and was posted to a Marine observation squadron on Guam.[69]

Gerald Carthrae Thomas was born in Slater, Missouri, on October 29, 1894. His parents were both from families that had left the Virginia piedmont at the end of the Civil War, and it was not until he was past thirty that he learned that his great-grandfather had been a Confederate colonel who was killed in 1864. Jerry Thomas grew up in Bloomington, Illinois, where his father was a foreman in the railroad maintenance shops. By 1917 he was a junior at Illinois Wesleyan, living at home, working several odd jobs, and spending most of his spare time at the Sigma Chi house. When the war broke out, at the suggestion of a former employer, he went to Chicago and enlisted in the Marines. After basic training at Parris Island he sailed for France with the Sixth Marines. As a sergeant he commanded a scouting squad for the battalion intelligence officer; he then took over a platoon at Belleau Wood, was gassed, and received a battlefield commission.[70]

At war's end he decided not to return to college, because he lacked more than a year's credits, and was concerned that the chemical engineering program he had been studying had been made obsolete by the war. Besides, "I loved the bands and the brass buttons."[71] Returning to the States in 1919, he immediately applied for duty in Haiti,

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[69] Jon T. Hoffman, Once a Legend: the Life of "Red Mike" Edson of the Marine Raiders, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1994, 2-38.

[70] Millett, In Many a Strife, 3-12, 13-44.

[71] Author interview, Gen. Gerald C. Thomas, USMC (Ret), Washington, D.C., November 11, 1983.

correctly suspecting that this might help him obtain a permanent commission. The Neville Board rated him a senior second lieutenant, and he was promoted to first lieutenant on July 4, 1921. He saw more action in Haiti and became acquainted with Archer Vandegrift. In 1923-24 he was a student in the Junior Course at Quantico, where most of his classmates were former long-service enlisted men, few of whom had even attended high school. Apparently no one studied very hard, and Thomas ranked only twenty-third in a class of forty. In the summer of 1924 he went to sea with the Marine detachment aboard the USS Tulsa, a new cruiser built for Caribbean conditions and home-ported in Panama.[72]

Randolph McCall Pate was born in Beaufort, South Carolina, on February 11, 1898, the son of an old, well-to-do Low Country family. He was Lemuel Shepherd's second cousin. He enlisted in the Army in October, 1918, and was discharged the next summer. He then entered Virginia Military Institute, from which he graduated in 1921, receiving a Marine reserve commission. In May 1923 he received a regular commission, attended Basic School at Quantico, and was immediately posted to the Second Marine Brigade in Santo Domingo.[73]

Evans Fordyce Carlson was born in Sidney, New York, on February 26, 1896. His father, the Reverend Thomas Alpine Carlson, was the son of a Norwegian miner who had migrated to California for the 1849 Gold Rush, and Thomas Carlson spent most of his long ministry serving Congregationalist churches in rural New England.

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[72] Millett, In Many a Strife, 69-70, 75-79, 89-92; Thomas Oral History Transcript, 88-89.

[73] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 168; "General Randolph M. Pate, USMC, Deceased" Reference Section, MCHC.

His mother, born Joetta Evans, was descended from Captain Jack Evans of Virginia, who had served on Washington's staff in the Revolution, but her branch of the family had sided with the Union during the Civil War. Her father was an attorney in the U.S. Customs Service. Evans Carlson chafed under the restrictions placed on a minister's son in turn-of-the-century New England, ran away from home at twelve, and was gone for three months. By the age of fourteen he had left home for good and worked as a surveyor's assistant on a New Jersey railroad.[74]

On Election Day, 1912, he enlisted in the Army; he was six feet tall and had little trouble convincing the recruiting sergeant that he was twenty-two. Told that he was too tall for the cavalry, he chose the field artillery. Sent to the Philippines in 1913, he helped emplace the heavy guns on Corregidor. "At first I tried to drink with the boys. Then I noticed that they were a lousy bunch, and that the few who got ahead were sober and reliable."[75] He was promoted to corporal within a year, and was

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[74] Michael Blankfort, The Big Yankee: the Life of Carlson of the Raiders, Boston: Little, Brown, 1947; Helen Foster Snow, "Evans Carlson: His Own Sketch" unpublished typescript, 1940, in possession of the author, 15-17. Helen Snow was the first wife of Edgar Snow, and while Carlson was visiting the Snows at Baguio, in the Philippines, over Thanksgiving weekend, 1940, he told Helen Snow the story of his life. She took shorthand notes and transcribed them later. While not well written, "His Own Sketch" contains many characteristics of oral memoirs, and details which she could not have obtained from any source but Carlson himself. Carlson's son, Col. Evans C. Carlson, USMC (Ret), has pointed out many errors in "His Own Sketch," but I believe that it is still a useful source, when used in conjunction with other materials.

[75] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 20.

assistant first sergeant by the end of his enlistment. Released into the Reserves in 1915, he found work as a surveyor's assistant near Riverside, California, and soon married Dorothy Seccombe, his landlord's daughter.[76]

He was recalled to active duty in 1916, served on the Mexican border, and received a regular commission in 1917, the same year his only child, Evans Charles Carlson, was born in an Army tent hospital in Arizona. In September 1918, by then a captain, he was sent to France as assistant adjutant general of the Eighty-seventh Infantry Division. The division was called to the front in early November, and arrived just in time to hear the last guns on November 11. After the Armistice he remained in France and served as an aide to General Pershing, for which he received a commendation.[77]

Believing that his lack of formal education or combat experience would hinder him, he resigned from the Army in late 1919. He spent the next two years as a salesman for Del Monte Foods in Montana, Texas and Oregon, but he disliked the work, and his wife returned to her family in California, taking their son with her. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in April 1922, was sent to the Candidates for Commission School at "Eighth and Eye," and was appointed a second lieutenant on January 15, 1923.[78]

Carlson was immediately posted to Quantico, where his long experience with Army draft animals earned him the job of Post Stables Officer. When the East Coast

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[76] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 106-09; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 20.

[77] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 110-16; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 20-24.

[78] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 116-26; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 24-25.

Expeditionary Force began preparing for its annual fall maneuvers, Carlson went to the Army's horse and mule farm in the Shenandoah Valley to select animals for the exercise. Carlson became a hero to Smedley Butler when his animals were able to free dozens of stuck vehicles during the infamous "Mud March," but he deflected the praise, commenting that "Old Ned will always do a good job if you just give him a chance." Old Ned was the generic term for an Army mule.[79]

The winter maneuvers of 1924 soon provided Carlson with another opportunity to put his skills to use. The maneuvers were held on Culebra and Vieques, two islands off the eastern tip of Puerto Rico, and Carlson went down as part of the advance party in December, 1923. His primary task was to clear the islands of thousands of cattle, who had to be ferried to the mainland and later returned. When the maneuvers ended he received a letter of commendation.[80]

While on liberty in San Juan, Carlson met Etelle Sawyer. A native of Maine and a graduate of Wellesley, she had been sent to Puerto Rico to organize Girl Scout troops. Carlson soon proposed to her, and they were married in April, 1924. Upon returning to Quantico after a brief honeymoon, Carlson was surprised to find new

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[79] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 25-26; Muster Rolls of U.S. Marine Corps, June through October, 1924, National Archives, Record Group 127; Gen. Merrill B. Twining, USMC (Ret), No Bended Knee: The Guadalcanal Campaign, Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996, 140.

[80] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 26-27; Brig. Gen. Dion Williams, "The Winter Maneuvers of 1924," MCG 8 (March 1925), 43.

orders awaiting him: he was posted as second-in-command of the Marine detachment aboard the battleship Nevada, which was dry-docked in Bremerton, Washington.[81]

Merrill Barber Twining was born in Monroe, Wisconsin, on November 28, 1903. His father was the president and chief stockholder of the local bank, and Merrill was the youngest of six sons. The family's roots stretched back to colonial New England, and they had come to Wisconsin in the 1820s with land grants from the War of 1812. As Twining later commented, "In direct lineal descent since the Revolutionary War my people have always been in the Armed Forces in time of war."[82] His grandfather was a major in the Union Army. In 1913 his father moved the family to Oregon, where the Twining brothers spent most of their spare time fishing, hunting, and hiking. All five of Merrill's brothers served in the First World War, but his age precluded him from doing anything except for applying to Annapolis, which allowed fifteen-year-olds to take the entrance examination, because "my desire was to get into some part of the Armed Forces."[83]

Twining found the Naval Academy a "very cold, austere place, and for the most part, a very unpleasant place."[84] Although he ranked only 247th among the 413 members of his class, the Commandant of Midshipmen tried to dissuade him from entering the Marines. Prospective Marine officers were warned about the Corps'

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[81] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 128-32; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 27.

[82] General Merrill B. Twining, Oral History Transcript, 1975, OHC, MCHC, 3; Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 223.

[83] Twining Oral History, 13.

[84] Ibid., 14.

seniority system, and were told that they might still be captains in the Marine Corps when their Academy classmates were becoming captains in the Navy. This was the standard Academy practice toward midshipmen who wanted to become Marines, except for the sons of Marine officers and the chronically seasick.[85]

Twining graduated from Annapolis in 1923 and was immediately posted to the Basic School at Quantico. Quarters were limited, so he lived in a boarding house with several other recent Academy graduates. The atmosphere was often quite rowdy, causing another resident, Evans Carlson, to seek quieter quarters. Twining participated in the "Mud March" from Quantico to New Market, and then entered flight training at Pensacola, but was washed out at the end of the course.[86]

Lewis Burwell Puller was born in West Point, Virginia, on the York River, on June 26, 1898. His ancestors on both sides had been small farmers in Tidewater Virginia since the seventeenth century, and he was distantly related to many eminent Virginians, as well as an Army officer named George Smith Patton. His grandfather, Major John Puller, had ridden with Jeb Stuart's cavalry until his death in action at Kelly's Ford in 1863. Puller was a cadet at Virginia Military Institute in 1917-18, but enlisted in the Marines in August, 1918, and received a reserve commission. Discharged the next summer, he immediately re-enlisted as a corporal and was quickly posted to Haiti, where he was appointed a lieutenant in the Gendarmerie. His energetic leadership of native troops earned him the respect of the Gendarmerie's chief of staff,

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[85] United States Naval Academy Alumni Association, Register of Alumni, Annapolis: The Association, 1967, 110; Twining Oral History, 19.

[86] Twining, No Bended Knee, 140.

Archer Vandegrift, who saw officer potential in Puller, and repeatedly encouraged him to apply for a commission.[87]

Statistics to 1924

In 1924 there were three major generals; the average age was fifty-eight, and they ranged from fifty-four to sixty-four, and had been commissioned in the Marine Corps between 1884 and 1892. All three were Annapolis graduates, but only General Lejeune had been to a senior service school. Every one of them had served overseas and at sea; they averaged nearly nine years of expeditionary duty, and six years at sea.[88]

The six brigadier generals ranged in age from forty-three to fifty-seven, with an average age of fifty-two. They had been commissioned between 1890 and 1899; three were Annapolis graduates, and the other three had been commissioned from civil life in 1899. Two of the six had attended the Army War College. All had served overseas and at sea; the average amount of expeditionary service was nine years, but the average amount of sea service was less than half of that. In 1924 three of the six were overseas, two in Haiti, and one in Santo Domingo.[89]

There were thirty colonels in 1924. The oldest was sixty-four, the youngest forty-five, and the average age was fifty-one. They had been commissioned between

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[87] Burke Davis, Marine! The Life of Lt. Gen. Lewis B. ("Chesty") Puller, USMC (Ret.), Boston: Little, Brown, 1962, 6-15, 16-19, 20-38; Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 59.

[88] Lineal List for 1924, 406-07.

[89] Ibid.

1884 and 1899, and the average time in service was twenty-eight years. Some had been colonels since 1915, and the average time in grade was four and-a-half years. The eight most senior colonels were Annapolis graduates, and the rest had been commissioned from civil life between April and October of 1899. Twelve of them had attended Army schools, and ten were graduates of the Naval War College; in all, half of the colonels had professional schooling. Six of them were overseas in 1924, and all had expeditionary service, with an average of eight years overseas. All of them had been to sea, and the average sea service was three years.[90]

Among the thirty-eight lieutenant colonels the oldest was fifty-four, the youngest forty-two, and the average age was fifty-one, the same as for colonels. All of them had been appointed from civil life between 1899 and 1903, and thirty of them had been commissioned in 1900 alone. None had been lieutenant colonels for more than four years, and the average time in grade was three years, seven months. Seven were graduates of the Senior Course at the Marine Corps Schools; three had attended Army schools, four had graduated from the Naval War College, and one was a naval aviator; altogether, thirteen (thirty percent) had formal schooling. In 1924 eight were overseas, and three at sea. All had been to sea, and all had served overseas; the average amount of time overseas was eight years, and the average amount of sea service was four years.[91]

The one hundred and eighteen majors, including Holland Smith and Archer Vandegrift, averaged forty-one years of age; the oldest was forty-seven and the

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[90] Ibid., 410-11.

[91] Ibid., 412-13.

youngest was thirty-seven. All had been commissioned between 1903 and 1910. One hundred and nine had been commissioned from civil life, and the remaining nine had risen from the ranks; enlisted men had been permitted to receive regular commissions in 1903. Forty-seven majors had completed the Senior Course at Quantico, eight had graduated from Army schools, five from the Naval War College, and five were naval aviators; in all, forty-seven percent had professional schooling. All had been to sea, and all had served overseas; the average amount of expeditionary service was more than five years, and the average amount of sea service was two and-a-half years. In 1924 twenty-five were overseas, and five at sea.[92]

There were three hundred and twenty-nine captains; they ranged in age from twenty-seven to forty-nine, and the average age was thirty-five. Clifton Cates stood eightieth on the list of captains, and Lemuel Shepherd was four numbers below him. The captains had begun their commissioned service between 1910 and 1917, and included twenty-one Annapolis graduates, all from the classes of 1915, 1916, and 1917. Of the remaining captains, 154 had been commissioned from civil life and 154 from the ranks; the second figure included college men who had left school to enlist in the Marines and received temporary wartime commissions, as well as 92 former enlisted men who had between ten and twenty-five years in the ranks.[93]

Sixteen captains had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, and fourteen from the Junior Course. Four had attended Army schools, and eighteen were

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[92] Ibid., 412-17.

[93] Ibid., 416-27.

naval aviators. In all, fifty-four captains, sixteen percent of the total, had attended professional schools.[94]

Ninety percent of the captains, 297 in all, had served overseas; in 1924, seventy-eight captains were overseas, and the average amount of expeditionary service was two years. Only one hundred and eleven (thirty-four percent) had been to sea, and the average amount of sea service was only six months. In 1924, twenty-three captains were at sea.[95]

The two hundred and seventy-five first lieutenants ranged in age from twenty-six to fifty, and the average age was thirty-two. Merritt Edson stood sixty-fifth on the list, and Gerald Thomas stood two-hundred-and-eleventh. They had between four and eight years of commissioned service, and none had more than four years in grade, though the average was just over three years.[96]

There was only one Annapolis graduates among the first lieutenants, and 117 officers who had been appointed from civil life; 157 (fifty-seven percent) had enlisted service, and of that number, eighty-five had more than five years in the ranks, and forty-three had more than ten years' enlisted service.[97]

Fifteen first lieutenants had graduated from the Junior Course at Quantico, and eighteen were naval aviators; together, only eleven percent had professional schooling.

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid., 428-37.

[97] Ibid.

Eighty-three percent of the first lieutenants (227) had overseas service, and sixty-one were overseas in 1924. On the other hand, only eighty-one (29 percent) had been to sea, and in 1924, only twenty-seven were at sea.[98]

The one hundred and sixty second lieutenants ranged in age from twenty-one to thirty-six, and the average age was twenty-five. Randolph Pate stood sixty-sixth among them, Evans Carlson was one-hundred-and-first, and Merrill Twining stood one-hundred-and-thirty-third. None had more than four years commissioned service, and the average time in grade was two years, four months.[99]

Almost half (seventy-seven) had graduated from Annapolis, and thirty-seven (twenty-three percent) had graduated from distinguished ROTC programs. Forty (twenty-nine percent) had been commissioned form the ranks, and many of them, like Pate and Carlson, had prior service in the First World War. As second lieutenants they were not eligible for any school except Pensacola, and ten of them had been designated naval aviators.[100]

Sixty-eight second lieutenants, almost forty-three percent, had served overseas, and forty-three were overseas in 1924. By contrast, only seven had been to sea, including three who were at sea in 1924.[101]

In 1924 the average age in the rank of major general was fifty-nine, and the average brigadier was fifty-two. Among both colonels and lieutenant colonels, the

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 436-441.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

average age was fifty-one, while the average major was forty-one. The average captain was thirty-five; the average first lieutenant, thirty-two; and the average second lieutenant was twenty-five. There were captains of forty-nine, first lieutenants who were fifty, and the oldest second lieutenant was thirty-six. Under the seniority system, the Marine Corps already had the potential for stagnation due to excessive age in grade and a crushingly slow pace of promotion.[102]

Altogether, a total of 182 officers had attended 221 courses. There were fifty-two naval aviators. One hundred and two had graduated from the Marine Corps Schools, seventy-three from the Senior Course, and twenty-nine from the Junior Course. There were nineteen graduates of the Naval War College, eleven of the Army War College, plus seventeen Leavenworth graduates, and ten officers who had completed the course at the Infantry School at Fort Benning.[103]

Some 787 Marine officers had served overseas, more than three-quarters of the total, and 225 were overseas in 1924, in Haiti and Santo Domingo. Fewer than half (394) had been to sea, and only sixty-one were at sea, serving in thirty-four vessels.[104]

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[102] Ibid., 406-41.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

CHAPTER VI: THE MARINE CORPS FROM 1924-1931

The State of the Corps, 1924-1931

Between 1924 and 1931 the Marine Corps' human resources were stretched to the limits by a new round of expeditions. The Marines left San to Domingo in 1924, but the First Brigade remained in Haiti. Fleet landing exercises continued in 1925, but were indefinitely suspended thereafter, because most of the Marine Corps were going overseas. Except for a small landing on Oahu in 1932, there would be no landing exercises again until 1934.

After the Nicaraguan civil war of 1912 the Marines had maintained a legation guard of one hundred men in Managua. Its presence cast a certain chill over Nicaraguan politics, and the Conservative Party was able to hold on to power until 1924, when an unprecedented coalition ticket, made up of disaffected members of both parties, captured the presidency. At the State Department's request the Marines left Managua in 1925, although many Nicaraguans predicted that revolution would soon break out. Two months after the Marines' departure the Conservatives rebelled, and a bloody civil war ensued. Marines were landed on both coasts to protect foreign lives and property, but avoided the fighting.[105]

By late 1926 the two parties had reached a military stalemate, and the Liberals asked the United States to intervene. President Coolidge sent former Secretary of War Henry Stimson to Nicaragua as his personal representative, and Stimson worked out a

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[105] Neill Macaulay, The Sandino Affair, Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1967, 24-30.

settlement that was acceptable to both sides. The Treaty of Tipitapa called for the voluntary disarmament of the populace and the organization of a non-partisan, Marine-officered constabulary, the Guardia Nacional, which was to be the nation's sole military force. The Marines were to remain until the Guardia had assumed police duties and the 1928 presidential elections had been held.[106]

The Marines might have been able to leave Nicaragua in 1929, but two events prevented their departure. Not long after the Treaty of Tipitapa went into effect a minor Liberal general, Augusto Sandino, refused to turn in his weapons and marched his army of three hundred men into the mountainous country along the Honduran border. A handsome, charismatic man with great oratorical gifts, Sandino espoused a kind of Indo-Hispanic nationalism, strongly laced with socialism, which was long on rhetoric, but short on specific proposals. He blamed North American aggression for all of Central America's problems. His message was appealing, and he had broad, if not deep, support among the Nicaraguan peasantry. Sandino announced that he would not accept the results of any American-sponsored election, and would not lay down his arms until the last Marine had left Nicaragua.[107]

By mid-1927 the Marines were involved in a seesaw guerrilla war with the Sandinistas, and by November of 1928 there were 4400 Marines in Nicaragua, including electoral personnel. Sandino threatened to disrupt the polling, but was unable to do so, as Marines escorted the voters to the polls. The Liberal candidate, General Jose Maria Moncada, won handily, and both he and his Conservative opponent

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[106] Ibid., 31-42.

[107] Ibid., 48-61.

formally requested the United States to keep the Marines on duty until after the next election, in 1932. With Sandino still active, the United States had little choice but to keep the Marines in Nicaragua.[108]

While trouble brewed in Nicaragua, the political situation in China was heating up. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his Kuomintang Party consolidated power over South China in 1925 and began the Northern Expedition to unify the nation and curb foreign influence. By early 1927 Chiang's forces were approaching Shanghai, the center of foreign investment, and many Westerners feared a bloody repeat of the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. The Fourth Marine Regiment was dispatched from San Diego to Shanghai in February, 1927, and was soon followed by the reactivated Sixth Regiment, and Smedley Butler came out to command both regiments which, with supporting artillery and aviation units, were designated the Third Marine Brigade. As the locus of the war moved northward, Butler shifted his headquarters from Shanghai to Tientsin. By mid-1927 he had more than 4400 Marines under his command. Often flamboyant and outspoken, Butler surprised his critics by demonstrating tact and diplomacy in dealing with Chinese officials and other Western leaders. The civil war concluded in 1929, and at a review of Chinese troops, Marine officers were forced to hide their outrage when a Chinese unit marched by with a banner identifying it as 'The Sandino Brigade.' Butler brought the Brigade home in 1929, although the Fourth Marines remained in Shanghai.[109]

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[108] Ibid., 105-133.

[109] Clyde H. Metcalf, "The Marines in China," MCG 22 (September 1938), 35-37, 53-56.

The two simultaneous large expeditions taxed the Corps' resources; shore stations were stripped to the minimum, and courses at the Marine Corps Schools had to be suspended in 1927-28 because most of the instructors had been sent to Nicaragua.[110] In 1928, fifty-four percent of the officers in the Marine Corps were overseas; by mid-1929 the figure stood at forty-five percent, and by mid-1931, twenty-eight percent were still overseas.[111]

Although preoccupied with affairs in China in Nicaragua, General Lejeune had not lost sight of the issue of promotion by selection. He wanted to leave a revamped system of promotion to the Corps "as an heritage,"[112] and wrote to Smedley Butler in China that "the ambitious and energetic officers have for too long a time been carrying a major portion of the burden, and those who are not able to keep up with the procession should be separated from the active list."[113] Lejeune further noted that "unless some measure of the kind is passed, I feel that our whole Corps will blow up in fifteen or twenty years, as there is no hope ahead for anything but stagnation and old age under the existing laws."[114] Despite Lejeune's best efforts, and those of Smedley Butler's father, Congressman Thomas Butler, the selection bill failed to pass Congress.

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[110] Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 36-37.

[111] Lineal List 1928, 428-69; Lineal List 1929, 433-74; Lineal List 1931, 452-93.

[112] Letter, John A. Lejeune to Smedley D. Butler, August 22, 1927, Smedley Butler Papers, Box 2, Archives, Marine Corps Research Center, Quantico, VA.

[113] Lejeune to Butler, November 16, 1927, 3, loc. cit.

[114] Lejeune to Butler, November 24, 1928, 2, loc. cit.

General Lejeune retired in 1929 and became Superintendent of Virginia Military Institute. He was succeeded as Commandant by Major General Wendell "Whispering Buck" Neville, who had commanded the Fourth Marine Brigade in France. Neville was already in poor health and died in July of 1930, after only sixteen months in office. His death opened the door for Smedley Butler, who had become the senior major general in 1929, to assume the Commandancy. By 1930, however, his influence was waning, as his father had died in 1928. The flamboyant Butler had also made himself obnoxious to both President Hoover and Navy Secretary Charles Francis Adams, and they selected a junior brigadier general, Ben Fuller, as the next Commandant, using the pretext that Fuller had originally been commissioned five years before Butler. Butler was outraged at being passed over, and vowed to remain on active duty until he reached the mandatory retirement age, which was sixty-four; considering that Butler had been born in 1881, he could have stayed on active duty until 1945, if he had lived that long. He finally saw the handwriting on the wall, and retired in September, 1931; he was barely fifty, and had served for thirty-three years, but his era was drawing to a close. The Corps gave him a memorable farewell at Quantico, which was attended by many of his long-time loyal subordinates, including Archer Vandegrift and Evans Carlson.[115]

Ben Hebard Fuller was already sixty when he assumed the Commandancy in 1930. A graduate of Annapolis and both war colleges, and a former Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools, Fuller had long been an advocate of advanced base work as the Corps' primary mission, but he was not a vocal supporter. In a highly equivocal

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[115] Hans Schmidt, Maverick Marine: General Smedley D. Butler and the Contradictions of American Military History, Lexington, University Press of Kentucky, 1987, 205-09, 212-13.

message to the Corps in 1930 he mentioned the importance of training for landing operations, but noted that "We must not sacrifice education for peacetime duties in order to educate ourselves for our war job." Described as methodical and uninspiring, "Uncle Ben" Fuller was not the sort of man to take strong stands on issues affecting the Corps, such as promotion by selection, and most of his attention was devoted to keeping the Corps' funding at an adequate level.[116]

Careers 1924-1931

At the end of his tour with the Joint Army-Navy Planning Staff, Holland Smith went to the Caribbean, where he selected Culebra and Vieques, two islands off the eastern tip of Puerto Rico, as the site for the Fleet Landing Exercises of January, 1924. As an umpire, he noted many problems, but believed that they could be overcome, and strongly advocated continued exercises. In 1924 he was posted to Haiti as chief of staff of the First Marine Brigade. He returned to Quantico in mid-1925 as base chief of staff and began the Senior Course in the fall of 1926. Smith hated the course, and was frequently at odds with his instructors, who "were excellent theorists, . . . but had never been in action and therefore could not handle situations which refused to square with theory," and exhibited "the same degree of outmoded military thought as I had found at the Naval War College."[117] Smith's primary objection was to the "emphasis placed on

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[116] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 81-83; Major General Ben H. Fuller, "The Mission of the Marine Corps," MCG 15 (November 1930) 7-8; Clyde H. Metcalf, History of the United States Marine Corps, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939, 543-44.

[117] Smith, Coral and Brass, 57; Cooper, A Fighting General, 45-47.

defensive tactics." He believed that the Corps' mission was offensive, and that mobility was essential. He nearly failed the section of the course on communications, even though he had written several successful communications plans for the First Army Corps in France. Smith graduated with satisfactory marks in 1927, but was so openly at odds with the staff of the Schools that he may have destroyed any chances of returning as an instructor, even though his academic credentials were as strong as most of the staff's.[118]

In 1927, he asked to be assigned to quartermaster duty at the Marine Corps Supply Depot at Philadelphia. He wanted to send his son to the elite Penn Charter School to prepare for Annapolis; although the elder Smith hated the Navy, he understood his son's desire not to stand in his shadow. He also believed that quartermaster duty could give him some practical insight into the complicated subject of logistics. On July 9, 1930, after ten years as a major, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel.[119]

Archer Vandegrift finished his tour of duty as commander of the First Battalion, Fifth Marines at Quantico in the summer of 1925 and was assigned as a student in the Senior Course at the Marine Corps Schools. Vandegrift attended the course the year before Holland Smith did, and from his point of view it was a valuable experience. He thought that the instructors were an "earnest and well-balanced group," even though the curriculum was in transition from refighting the First World War, "we were not yet ready for amphibious studies." Vandegrift worked hard, graduated second in his class,

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[118] Smith, Coral and Brass, 57-58; Cooper, A Fighting General, 48-49.

[119] Smith, Coral and Brass, 58; Cooper, A Fighting General, 49-50.

and was offered a slot in the next year's class at the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth. As much as he wanted to go to Leavenworth, Vandegrift turned down the assignment to accept an offer of a position as Smedley Butler's chief of staff at San Diego.[120]

Not long after his arrival at San Diego, the Marines went on Mail Guard duty. When they returned to San Diego in January of 1927 Vandegrift was named commanding officer of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines, which he quickly began to prepare for expeditionary duty. It appeared that the unit was going to be sent to Nicaragua, where Vandegrift had served in 1912, but orders suddenly arrived sending them to China. When more Marines were sent to China to form a brigade, Smedley Butler selected Vandegrift as his Operations Officer, where he worked for the brigade chief of staff, Colonel Ellis Bell Miller. Miller told Vandegrift to prepare three operational plans, two for attack if the lives of Americans were endangered, and one for withdrawal if the situation exploded. Vandegrift returned to the States in 1929 and was appointed Assistant Chief Co-ordinator of the Navy's Bureau of the Budget, which gave him a thorough education in government appropriations, inter-service relations, and Washington politics.[121]

Clifton Cates finished his tour of sea duty in 1925 and was posted to the Fourth Marines at San Diego. He was ordered to recruiting duty before the regiment went to China and spent the next two years in Spokane and Omaha. He was usually able to fill his quota on the first day of each month and spent most of his time fishing, hunting,

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[120] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 66.

[121] ibid., 68-76.

and relaxing. A former star athlete himself, Cates developed a network of college coaches who helped him identify prospects for Marine Reserve commissions. In 1927 he was assigned to the American Battle Monuments Commission in Washington, D.C. In 1929 he was ordered to join the Fourth Marines in Shanghai, since the officers who had gone to China in 1927 were due for rotation, and Cates was due for an overseas tour, having been in the States since the First World War. Duty in Shanghai was routine until the so-called "Chapei Incident" of 1931. Japanese troops attacked the Chinese quarter of the city in retaliation for the assassination of one of their officials by a Chinese nationalist. Cates' Marines were posted along Soochow Creek, which divided the American Sector from Chapei. The Japanese assault employed infantry, artillery, tanks and airplanes. One of his corporals later recalled a grim-faced Cates looking through his binoculars at the carnage across the creek, and remarking something to the effect that every officer in the regiment who had not served in France needed to come down and take a good look at a "real war."[122]

Lemuel Shepherd finished his tour of sea duty in 1925 and was assigned as commander of the Sea School Detachment at the Marine Barracks in his hometown of Norfolk. The school's function was to prepare enlisted men for sea duty, and Shepherd subsequently wrote an article about the school for Marine Corps Gazette. In April 1927 he went to China with Smedley Butler's Third Marine Brigade, serving in Tientsin and Shanghai before returning to the States in 1929, but he had remarkably little to say

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[122] Cates Oral History Transcript, 71-80; author interview, Lt. Col. Charles T. Lamb, USMC (Ret), March 27, 1982. Lamb was the corporal in Cates' company in Shanghai.

about the experience when he was the subject of an oral history interview in 1970. In 1930 he was posted to the Gendarmerie d'Haiti.[123]

Merritt Edson returned from Guam in 1925 and was posted to an aviation squadron at Quantico. After several crashes due to failing depth perception he lost his flight status. In 1926-27 he was a student in the Junior Course, finishing first in his class, with the highest marks that had yet been achieved. In 1927 he qualified as Distinguished Marksman on the rifle and pistol and helped coach the Marine Corps team at the National Rifle Matches at Camp Perry, Ohio, the mecca of competitive shooting. In December of that year he was promoted to captain. In 1928 he was ordered to sea duty aboard the USS Denver of the Caribbean squadron. Edson had no previous sea duty, but his tour afloat turned into expeditionary duty when he led the Denver's Marine detachment ashore on a foray against the Sandinistas who were operating on Nicaragua's east coast. Edson used whaleboats, dugout canoes, outboard motors, and the assistance of friendly natives to penetrate far up the Coco River into the rebels' base camps, where he was able to surprise the enemy and destroy their supply dumps. On August 7, 1928, he had a stand-up fight with the Sandinistas, whom he defeated, and he was awarded the Navy Cross for the operation, which had broken new tactical ground in riverine operations. Jungle conditions had forced him to grow a beard, which earned him the sobriquet "Red Mike." With the Navy Cross and a picturesque nickname, he had made his reputation as a fighter.[124]

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[123] Shepherd Oral History Transcript, 357-58; Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 196-98; Captain Lemuel C. Shepherd, "The East Coast Sea School," MCG 11 (March 1927), 36-42.

[124] Hoffman, Once a Legend, 42-46, 47-92.

In 1929 Edson was assigned to the Basic School in Philadelphia as an instructor in tactics, and he formed a friendship with Holland Smith, who was the quartermaster. Edson began to weave his Nicaraguan experiences into the curriculum, and expressed his opinion regarding the Corps' mission and how the Schools should support it when he noted that "here at the Basic School the young officers should be given plenty of instruction in 'Small Wars' and 'Overseas Operations,' with less emphasis placed upon instruction as part of larger forces. As a matter of fact, this criticism applies to our entire system of schools."[125]

While Jerry Thomas's new ship, the USS Tulsa, was undergoing sea trials, he attended a dance in Charleston, South Carolina, and met Lottie Capers Johnson; she was the daughter of a wealthy local physician and the granddaughter of Ellison Capers, who had been a Confederate general at the age of twenty-six and was later the Episcopal Bishop of South Carolina. When he married Lottie Johnson the next year he acquired several relatives in the Marine Corps, for his new wife was a cousin of William Capers James, a captain who was Thomas's age, and a cousin by marriage of Major Ralph Stover Keyser, a Fourth Brigade veteran who was a close friend of Archer Vandegrift's. After his tour on the Tulsa, Thomas spent two years as quartermaster of the Marine Barracks in Charleston. In 1927 he was sent to the Army's Motor Transport School near Baltimore, where he got along well with Army officers and learned motor vehicle maintenance and repair from the ground up. His next assignment was as motor transport officer at Parris Island, where most of the vehicles had been sidelined for repairs. In 1929 he was posted to Haiti, where he served a tour as aide to the

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[125] Ibid., 97-100.

commander of the First Marine Brigade, and renewed his acquaintance with Lemuel Shepherd. On his return to the States in 1931 he found that his letter requesting another school assignment had gone astray. Fortunately, his previous commander, Colonel Richard Cutts, took the matter up with his own brother-in-law, General John Twiggs Myers, who was in charge of school assignments at Headquarters. Thomas's orders to the Army's Infantry School at Fort Benning arrived just in time for him to begin the 'junior' course in September, 1931.[126]

"Ran" Pate returned from Santo Domingo in late 1924 and was assigned first to San Diego, then to the Marine Barracks at Puget Sound, Washington, where he was promoted to first lieutenant in 1926. He went to China in 1927 with the Fourth Marines in 1927 and shared a cabin with Evans Carlson on the voyage. He served there until 1929, when he was posted to the Marine Barracks at Parris Island, only a few miles from his hometown of Beaufort, South Carolina. In 1931 he began a two-year tour as executive officer of the Marine detachment aboard the USS Mississippi.[127]

Evans Carlson's tour on board the Nevada was interrupted in late 1924 when he received orders to report to Pensacola for flight training. He did well until the final check, which he was forced to take in an unfamiliar plane with a Navy instructor he did not know, and was washed out. Assigned to San Diego in 1925, he served in the Fourth Marines until Smedley Butler took over the base in 1926. Butler appointed Carlson as his assistant base maintenance officer, a job in which he supervised the planting of thousands of trees, because Butler wanted San Diego to be a showplace like

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[126] Millett, In Many a Strife, 92-97, 98-108.

[127] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 168.

Quantico.[128] When the Marines went on Mail Guard duty in 1926 Carlson was given command of a large detachment in Portland, Oregon, and he received a personal letter of commendation from Butler for his services. "You always do the right thing," wrote Butler, "and it is one of the misfortunes of this wretched system of promotion we have that you are only a lieutenant. I only wish I could make you a major . . . you are one 'hell' of a fine officer."[129]

When the Mail Guards were disbanded Carlson returned to San Diego and was appointed the operations officer of Archer Vandegrift's Third Battalion, Fourth Marines. He went out to Shanghai in February, 1927, and was promoted to first lieutenant in September. In August of the next year he was appointed as the regiment's intelligence officer. One of his duties was to cultivate journalists, and he soon met a young reporter named Edgar Snow, who was trying to work his way around the world. Carlson soon heard rumors that Snow had been a communist organizer in the United States; he knew that they were untrue and was able to quash them, thus preventing Snow's expulsion from Shanghai.[130] In 1929 Carlson was a member of the American delegation at the ceremonial interment of Sun Yat-sen's remains at Purple Mountain, near Nanking. It was his only trip into the interior of China, and he saw Chiang Kai-shek and many other prominent Chinese. While in Shanghai, Carlson read The

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[128] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 132-34; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 27-28.

[129] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 133-34.

[130] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 134-56; John Maxwell Hamilton, Edgar Snow: A Biography, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988, 52-53; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 28-29, 45-46; Author interview, Helen Foster Snow, Madison, CT, November 4. 1984.

Education of Henry Adams, from which he derived the critical lesson that life is a continuous school, and that a lack of formal education cannot prevent one from learning.[131]

Carlson returned to the States in 1929 and immediately applied for duty with the Guardia Nacional in Nicaragua. He reported for duty in Managua in May of 1930 and was sent to command the district of Jalapa, which was the last outpost before the Honduran border, and a hotbed of Sandinista activity. He had a Marine sergeant as second in command, and thirty-five native troops. One night in July he was called out by a report that bandits were looting the village of Portillo, three miles away. Carlson led a squad of a dozen men to Portillo, picked up the bandits' trail, and followed them all night long, finally catching up with the tail of the column just before dawn. Carlson started the fray with a blast from his shotgun: in the ten-minute fight three of the enemy were killed or mortally wounded, and several more injured. Carlson's men recovered nearly all of the items that had been looted from Portillo and returned them to their owners. He had been in the service for nearly eighteen years, but it was the first time he had seen combat, and it was the only time a Guardia column had ever tracked and caught a Sandinista column at night. Thereafter, Carlson's district remained remarkably free of bandit raids, in large part because he kept his men on the trail constantly, visited every part of his district, and knew many trails that were not on the Marines' maps. At the end of September his commanding officer prepared a fitness

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[131] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 225; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 29, 48.

report which gave Carlson high marks in all categories, and he noted that "This officer is a distinct asset to the Guardia Nacional."[132]

A relapse of malaria brought him back to Managua at the end of 1930, and after he had recovered he was appointed the Commander of the District of Managua and Corazo, which surrounded the national capital. The job was similar to a county sheriff's, and he had two hundred men working under him in twenty posts.[133]

On March 31, 1931, the city of Managua was destroyed by an earthquake and a fire. At least one thousand of the city's 60,000 residents were killed, many more injured, and most of the population fled the city. Carlson was given charge of the Earthquake Relief Force, which was responsible for fighting the fires, feeding the homeless, tending the injured, and burying the dead. His experience in coping with the earthquake and its aftermath can be compare to dealing with the destruction caused by a major surprise attack in wartime. Carlson drove himself to exhaustion and was felled by another malaria attack. In April 1931 he was sent home to recuperate. While convalescing, he was notified that he had been recommended for the Navy's Distinguished Service Medal. This was a signal honor, for only one Marine officer

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[132] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 158-63; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 29-32; Captain Evans F. Carlson, Guardia Nacional, "Report of contact with bandit group at Pasmata, July 10, 1930" National Archives, Record Group 127, Series, 202, File 52; author interview, Bgen M. L. Curry, November 24, 1981; "Fitness report of Captain Evans F. Carlson, GN, September 30, 1930, National Archives, RG 127, Series 193, File "E. Carlson."

[133] National Archives, RG 127, Series 202, File 18.0, "Monthly Record of Events, Department of Managua and Corazo," January 24, 1931.

below the rank of colonel had ever received the award. In September, he attended Smedley Butler's retirement ceremonies at Quantico.[134]

After completing Basic School at Quantico in 1924, Merrill Twining was sent to flight school at Pensacola, but was washed out in early 1925. He was on duty at the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor in 1927 when Butler stopped on his way to Shanghai, and Twining went on to China with him. He was promoted to first lieutenant and returned to the States in late 1928; after a brief tour at "Eighth and Eye" was assigned to the office of the Judge Advocate General of the Navy in Washington. He processed routine legal paperwork during the day and attended George Washington University Law School at night, with the Marine Corps paying his tuition.[135]

In 1923, Lewis Puller was still a sergeant in the Marine Corps, serving as a lieutenant in the Gendarmerie. At Archer Vandegrift's urging he applied for a commission and was sent to the Candidates' Class at "Eighth and Eye." Commissioned in March, 1924, he completed Basic School the next year, which had just been moved from Quantico to Philadelphia. After routine jobs at Philadelphia and Quantico he was sent to flight training at Pensacola, but, like Carlson and Twining, was washed out. After two years' duty at Pearl Harbor he was sent to Nicaragua in 1928 and commissioned in the Guardia Nacional. Puller spent nearly three years in the Guardia and commanded a mobile force, known as "Company M," whose sole duty was to rove

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[134] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 163-66; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 29, 34; RG 127, Series 193, File "E. Carlson," Letter from the Jefe Director, Guardia Nacional, to Secretary of the Navy, recommendation for Distinguished Service Medal for Capt. Carlson, May 12, 1931.

[135] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 223-24.

the mountainous Central Area in search of the bandits. Puller used his extensive field service in Haiti as a guide, and surprised the Sandinistas frequently, for which he was awarded his first Navy Cross. He was promoted to first lieutenant in 1929. By this time, his swaggering walk and tough exterior had earned him the nickname "Chesty." When Managua was destroyed by the earthquake, he drove all night to offer his services, and Evans Carlson gave him the toughest job of all: supervising the burial of more than one thousand dead. Perhaps as a reward for his services in Nicaragua, Puller was assigned to the Infantry School at Fort Benning, where he was Jerry Thomas's classmate in the 'junior' course.[136]

Statistics 1924-1931

In 1931 there were three major generals in the Marine Corps; the youngest, Smedley Butler, was only fifty, and the oldest was sixty-two; the average age was fifty-five. None had more than two years in grade, but they had between commissioned between 1891 and 1899. Only the Commandant, General Fuller, had graduated from Annapolis; the other two major generals had been appointed from civil life. Fuller was also the only major general with formal schooling. All had been to sea, and all had served overseas. The average sea service was three years, but the average expeditionary service was ten and-a-half years.[137]

There were six brigadier generals in 1931, and their average age, fifty-eight, was higher than the average age of major generals, which was skewed by Smedley

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[136] Davis, Marine!, 38-58.

[137] Lineal List 1931, 452-53.

Butler. The oldest brigadier was fifty-nine, the youngest, fifty-two. They had been in grade for up to eleven years, and the average was more than five years. All had been commissioned between 1893 and 1899, and they included three officers from Annapolis and three appointed from civil life. Three had attended the Army War College, one had graduated from the Naval War College, and the youngest, Randolph Carter Berkeley, was the first graduate of the Marine Corps Schools to become a general officer. All had been to sea and served overseas; the average amount of sea service was more than six years, and the average time spent on expeditionary duty was nine years and ten months.[138]

The thirty colonels ranged in age from forty-nine to fifty-nine, and the average age was fifty-three, a two-year increase over the 1924 average. Like the brigadiers, they had an average of five years in grade, and as much as eleven. All had been commissioned between 1900 and 1902, and except for two former enlisted men, all had come from civil life. Twenty-six of the thirty had professional schooling, including twelve graduates of the Senior Course, fourteen who had graduated from Army schools, and eleven had attended the Naval War College. Two were attorneys; by 1931 the Lineal List included graduation from law school as a professional designation, since Marine officers could be assigned to duty with the Judge Advocate General of the Navy. In 1924 only half of the colonels had professional schooling; by 1931, the figure had risen to eighty-seven percent. In 1931 there were seven colonels overseas, three in Haiti, two in China, and two in Nicaragua.[139]

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[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid., 458-59.

Among the thirty-seven lieutenant colonels the youngest was forty-eight, the oldest was fifty-four, and the average was forty-nine, a two-year decrease from the 1924. The average time in grade was three and-a-half years, though some had nine years in grade. They had been commissioned between 1900 and 1905, and the average time in service was twenty-seven years. All had been appointed from civil life. Twenty-six had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, thirteen from Army schools, and ten had graduated from the Naval War College. Four were attorneys. Thirty-five of the thirty-seven lieutenant colonels, ninety-five percent of the total, had some professional education; in 1924, the figure had been only thirty-four percent. All had served overseas and aboard ship; the average amount of expeditionary service was more than eight years, and the average sea service was three years, six months. In 1931 six lieutenant colonels were overseas.[140]

The one hundred and twenty-three majors averaged forty-three years of age; the oldest was fifty-one, and the youngest was thirty-seven. The average time in grade was seven and-a-half years, and some, like Archer Vandegrift, had been majors since 1920. All had been commissioned between 1904 and 1916. One hundred and four had been appointed from civil life, nine from the ranks, and ten officers at the bottom of the list had graduated from Annapolis.[141]

Eighty-nine of the majors had graduated from the Senior Course, and four from the Junior Course. Thirty-one had completed Army schools, ten had graduated from the Naval War College, and eight were naval aviators. Altogether, one hundred and twelve

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[140] Ibid., 458-61.

[141] Ibid., 460-65.

had professional schooling or designations; this was ninety-three percent, nearly double the percentage in 1924. All had served overseas, for an average of six years, and all had been to sea, for an average of two and-a-half years. In 1931, twenty-five majors were overseas, and six were at sea.[142]

The average age of the 329 captains was forty-one; the oldest was sixty, the youngest, thirty-three. The average time in grade was seven years, and some had been captains since 1918. A few had been commissioned as early as 1916. Only ten captains were Annapolis graduates, all of them from the classes of 1915 through 1917; one hundred and sixty-nine (52 percent) were civil appointments, and one hundred and fifty were former noncommissioned officers, of whom one hundred and twenty-one had more than five years' enlisted service prior to 1917.[143]

While only fourteen captains had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, one hundred had completed the Junior Course. Sixty-four had graduated from Army schools, and twenty-three were naval aviators. Seventeen were attorneys. In all, two hundred and twenty-one captains (67 percent) had some type of professional schooling; by contrast, in 1924 only sixteen percent had professional designations; the percentage had quadrupled in seven years.[144]

All but two captains had served overseas, for an average of nearly five years. One hundred and seventy-six (53 percent) had been to sea for an average of nine

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 464-75.

[144] Ibid.

months; in 1924, only thirty-four percent had been to sea. In 1931, ninety-one captains were overseas, and eighteen were at sea.[145]

The two hundred and seventy-five first lieutenants ranged in age from twenty-nine to fifty-eight, and the average age was thirty-four, a two-year increase over the 1924 figure. The average time in grade was five years, and some had been first lieutenants since 1921; some had first been commissioned in 1917, and none later than 1925. Thirty-two percent were Annapolis graduates, almost as many had received civil appointments, and the remaining thirty-seven percent had been enlisted men, including thirty-two long-service noncommissioned officers.[146]

Forty-two first lieutenants had graduated from the Junior Course at Quantico, twenty-two from Army schools, and forty-five were naval aviators. Ninety-five had professional schooling or designations; while this was only thirty-five percent, it was almost six times the percentage in 1924, which had stood at six-and-a-half percent.[147]

All but four of the first lieutenants had been overseas, for an average of more than three years. Since 1924, due to the expeditions to China and Nicaragua, the figure had grown from eighty-three percent to ninety-eight percent. Forty-seven percent had been to sea; in 1924, only twenty-nine percent had sea service. In 1931 there were one hundred first lieutenants overseas, and seventeen were at sea.[148]

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[145] ibid.

[146] Ibid., 476-85.

[147] Ibid.

[148] Ibid.

The two hundred and seventeen second lieutenants ranged in age from twenty-two to thirty-three, and the average age was twenty-six. Some had six years service in grade, and the average was four and-a-half years. One hundred and five (48 percent) were Annapolis graduates, sixty-five were graduates of Distinguished ROTC programs, and forty-seven were former enlisted men. Only two had attended Army schools, and thirty-six were naval aviators; the overall professional education rate was eighteen percent, triple the 1924 figure. One hundred and eight (49 percent) had served overseas, but only fourteen percent had been to sea. The foreign service figure was only slightly above that for 1924, but the percentage with sea service had more than tripled. In 1931 there were thirty-nine second lieutenants overseas, and eighteen at sea.[149]

Between 1924 and 1931 the number of Marine Corps officers with some type of professional schooling had more than tripled, from 182 to 643. Those 643 officers had completed 701 schools; there were 346 graduates of Quantico, including 142 graduates of the Senior Course, 210 of the Junior Course, and six officers who had completed both schools. There were 165 graduates of Army schools by 1931, and thirty-five officers had completed the course at the Naval War College. There were thirty-five attorneys, and the number of naval aviators had more than doubled, from 52 to 114. Despite two large expeditions, one of which had temporarily closed the Marine Corps Schools, the Marine Corps could claim by 1931 that sixty-three percent of its officers had professional schooling.[150]

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[149] Ibid., 484-93.

[150] Lineal List 1924, 406-07, 410-41; Lineal List 1931, 452-53, 458-93.

Except for the major generals, the average age of every rank from second lieutenant through brigadier general had increased, and the maximum time in grade for colonels was eleven years, for lieutenant colonels, nine years; for majors, eleven years, for captains, thirteen years; for first lieutenants, ten years; and even among second lieutenants there were officers who had six years in grade. The officer corps was aging and stagnating through lack of promotion.[151]

Nine hundred and five officers, ninety percent of the total, had served overseas, and 532 (52 percent) had served at sea. In 1924 only 787 had been overseas, and 394 to sea; it would appear that sea service had suffered during the expeditionary years, expanding from 40 percent to 52 percent. In 1931 there were 269 officers serving overseas. The number of officers at sea was 61, the same as in 1924, and they were serving aboard 33 vessels, including two aircraft carriers.[152]

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[151] Ibid.

[152] Ibid.

CHAPTER VII: THE MARINE CORPS, 1931-1935

The State of the Corps, 1931-1935

In 1931 the Marine Corps was in many ways at a low point. Money was a major part of the problem, as the Depression made public funds scarce, and President Hoover was no friend of the armed forces. In fact, many Marine officers believed that Hoover hated the Corps because of a supposed altercation in China in 1900 between Hoover and several Marine officers, in which they threatened to jail the future president. While the number of officers in the Marine Corps remained steady at just over one thousand, enlisted strength fell to 14,876 in 1933, its lowest level during the entire interwar period. Hoover had proposed to reduce the Marine Corps by twenty-five per cent, but by mid-1935, with the navalist Franklin D. Roosevelt in the White House, the enlisted strength had grown to 16,100 men. A further Hoover economy was a pay cut; Congress agreed with Hoover that the military's annual thirty-day leave should be considered an unpaid furlough, and reduced annual compensation by eight-and-one-third percent.[153]

By 1931 the Second Marine Brigade had handed over peacekeeping responsibilities to the Guardia Nacional, and all Marines, except for Guardia officers,

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[153] John R. M. Wilson, "The Quaker and the Sword: Herbert Hoover's Relations with the Military," Military Affairs 38 (April 1974) 41-47; Thomas Oral History Transcript, 110; "Recent Legislation Affecting the Marine Corps," MCG 17 (August 1932), 3-10; Bureau of the Census, Historical Abstracts, 1141.

were pulled back to Managua, where they numbered barely a thousand men. The State Department quietly announced that the United States would no longer be responsible for the safety of foreign lives and property in Nicaragua, thus renouncing the Roosevelt Corollary. The Nicaraguan elections of 1932 went off smoothly, and the last Marines left the country on January 2, 1933.[154]

The incoming President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, wanted to institute a "Good Neighbor Policy" in Latin America, and announced that the Marines would be withdrawn from Haiti. The First Marine Brigade left Port-au-Prince on February 15, 1934, after a nineteen-year occupation. Thus ended the Banana Wars, although many Marine officers continued to believe that political unrest in Latin America would persist, and that it would only be a matter of time until another intervention would be necessary. The only vestige of the expeditionary era was the Fourth Marines, who remained on duty in Shanghai.[155]

The return of Marines from the tropics enabled the Marine Corps Schools to resume the study of landing operations. A graduate of the Senior Course, Randolph Carter Berkeley became the first general officer to command the Schools, and instituted a major revision of the curriculum. All of the material from Leavenworth and Fort

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[154] Macaulay, The Sandino Affair, 217-18, 220-22, 235-41.

[155] Ivan Musicant, The Banana Wars: A History of United States Military Intervention in Latin America from the Spanish-American War to the Invasion of Panama, New York: Macmillan, 1990, 233-34.

Benning was to be discarded, and the instructors were ordered to develop a new curriculum based on the Corps' structure and needs.[156]

Landing operations and small wars doctrine were to be emphasized, and in early 1931 a board of three majors and one naval lieutenant commander was appointed to study landing operations. The chairman was Major Charles Barrett, a Fourth Brigade veteran and a close friend of Lemuel Shepherd's. As Major Pedro del Valle, another member of the board, remembered, "Charlie Barrett was the boss man in that shop, and the rest of us were made to learn."[157] The board looked at many earlier landings, including Gallipoli, and determined that dispersion of the landing force in many small boats was the safest way to deliver as many men as possible to the beach. While it had long been held that ships could not fight fortifications, the board concluded that naval vessels could deliver effective fire to suppress enemy defenses if naval officers could be persuaded to bring their ships close inshore. It was further determined that aviation could play a critical role in support of a landing, and that a unified command and communications system would be necessary. The board also determined that the Navy's whaleboats were unsuitable for landings, but was unable to suggest any practical alternatives. Some of the board's findings were published in Marine Corps Gazette, and the final study, which was completed in January, 1932, was titled Marine

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[156] Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 37-43.

[157] Oral History Transcript, Lt. Gen. Pedro del Valle, USMC (Ret), 1973, MCOHC, 69.

Corps Landing Operations, but it was not published or distributed, and would sit on the shelf for more than a year.[158]

In 1932 Major General John H. Russell became the Assistant Commandant. Russell was concerned with two issues: the development of landing operations and the institution of promotion by selection. On December 7, 1933, the expeditionary brigades on both coasts were consolidated into the Fleet Marine Force. The change in name was not merely cosmetic; the Fleet Marine Force technically became a part of the United States Fleet, and its specific mission was to be the seizure and defense of advanced bases for the Fleet.[159]

At the same time that the Fleet Marine Force was being organized, the Marine Corps Schools resumed the study of landing operations. In the fall of 1933 classes for the Senior Course were suspended, and the students and faculty went to work on revising and expanding the Marine Corps Landing Manual, which Barrett's board had completed the previous year. By 1934 the Schools had completed the Tentative Landing Force Manual, a detailed work that covered every aspect of landing operations that could reasonably be envisioned. The Marine Corps now had a doctrine for amphibious operations, and in 1934 the Navy finally had the resources to resume

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[158] Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 39-43; Major Pedro del Valle, "Ship to Shore in Amphibious War," MCG 16 (February 1932), 11-16; Lieutenant Walter Ansel, USN, "Naval Gunfire in Support of a Landing," MCG 17 (May 1932) 23-27; Major Pedro del Valle, "Boats in the Landing Attack," MCG 17 (May 1932) 30-34.

[159] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 189-90; John H. Russell, "A New Naval Policy," MCG 18 (August 1933), 13-16; ibid., "The Birth of the FMF," USNIP 72 (January 1947), 49-51.

landing exercises. The Fleet Marine Force returned to Culebra and Vieques to test the doctrines embodied in the Tentative Landing Force Manual, and the results of the exercises were reported back to the Schools, to be used in further revisions of the Manual.[160]

Promotion by selection was finally enacted in 1934. The legislation was steered through Congress by Representative Colgate Darden of Virginia, who had been a Marine aviator in the First World War. Using figures supplied by Headquarters, Marine Corps, Darden pointed out that the officer corps was aging and projected what the situation would be in 1943 if selection were not enacted. Headquarters had determined that "no first lieutenant should be over the age of 28, no captain over 35, no major over 42, no lieutenant colonel over 49, and no colonel over 56."[161] By 1933, however, the average first lieutenant was 34, the average captain was 42, the average major 45, the average lieutenant colonel 52, and the average colonel was 55. Ninety-nine percent of the first lieutenants were overage, as well as all of the captains, seventy-two percent of the majors, and ninety-eight percent of the lieutenant colonels. Even among colonels, twenty-nine percent were overage. The figures projected for 1943 were even worse; if the seniority system was not revamped, by 1943 all of the first lieutenants, captains, majors, and lieutenant colonels would be overage, as well as eighty-eight percent of the colonels.[162]

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[160] Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools, 44-50; Clifford, Progress and Purpose, 43-48.

[161] No author, "Legislation: Personnel and Pay," MCG 19 (May 1934), 18.

[162] Ibid., 21.

Darden pointed out that the ages and ranks in the Fourth Marine Brigade in 1918 had corresponded fairly closely to the desired age-in-grade figures; Lejeune had been fifty-one when he commanded the Second Division, and Neville had become a brigadier general at forty-eight. The colonels of the Fifth and Sixth Regiments had been in their mid-to-late forties, and the battalion commanders in their mid-to-late thirties. Company grade officers had ranged in age from thirty-five down to twenty-one. It was clear that a grossly overage Marine Corps would not be fit for field service in 1943, and Congress passed the selection bill.[163]

In practice, selection meant that each year the senior four-sevenths of the officers in the grades of first lieutenant through lieutenant colonel would have their records examined by promotion boards, which would use fitness reports as their primary source of information. Any officer not selected for three consecutive years would have to retire upon reaching the maximum age in grade, or immediately, if beyond the maximum age. Second lieutenants were to be promoted automatically after three years of service, and senior brigadiers would become major generals when vacancies occurred, but all other vestiges of seniority disappeared. Those selected for promotion retained their relative seniority; when an officer had risen to the top of the list of selected officers in his grade, he was said to have "made his number" and was eligible for promotion upon the retirement or promotion of an officer in the next higher grade, providing he passed his written and physical examinations. The promotion boards were instructed that "in determining an officer's fitness for promotion, administrative staff duty performed by him under appointment or detail, and duty in

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[163] Ibid. 23-24.

aviation, or in any technical specialty, shall be given weight by the Board equal to that given line duty equally well performed."[164]

Ben Fuller retired in 1934 and was succeeded as Commandant by John H. Russell. Russell was already sixty-one when he received the appointment, and thus could not serve a full four-year term as Commandant, but he was on excellent terms with President Roosevelt. Smedley Butler, who had become an anti-government gadfly in retirement, wrote to Roosevelt to try to block Russell's appointment, identifying him as part of a clique which "had been working for years to navalize the Marine Corps," but Russell had the backing of Fuller, as well as Lejeune, who continued to exercise some behind-the-scenes influence in the Corps.[165]

Careers 1931-1935

Holland Smith finished an "undramatic" tour as quartermaster at Philadelphia in 1931. During his years there he and his wife held frequent open houses for the young lieutenants at the Basic School; the school was outside his bailiwick, so he was able to develop an avuncular relationship with many young officers which would eventually pay off in World War II. Smith so favorably impressed his son's Annapolis roommate, Victor Krulak, that the young man decided that he would take his commission in the Marine Corps.[166]

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[164] Ibid., 28.

[165] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 189-90; Schmidt, Maverick Marine, 212-14.

[166] Smith, Coral and Brass, 58; Cooper, A Fighting General, 49-50.

In 1932 Smith was appointed Fleet Marine Officer of the U.S. Battle Force aboard the USS California, home-ported at Long Beach. That year the Fleet held a landing exercise on Oahu. Although the Marines waded ashore and seized their objective, Smith saw many severe problems. The equipment --especially the whaleboats-- was unsuitable, training was inadequate, and, worst of all, there was "a lack of coordination between the assault force and the simulated gunfire and air protection." Furthermore, Smith "realized how badly prepared we were and how urgent was the need for further study and improvements in our methods. The doctrine of amphibious warfare was still in the theoretical stage."[167]

Smith left the Battle Force in mid-1933 and became the commanding officer of the Marine Barracks at Washington Navy Yard (not to be confused with the nearby "Eighth and Eye"), an assignment that did not even rate a mention in his memoirs. He was promoted to colonel in May, 1934, after only four years as a lieutenant colonel. In early 1935 he became chief of staff of the Department of the Pacific in San Francisco. He shook up a lazy staff and inspected posts as far away as Pearl Harbor. He also noticed large quantities of oil and scrap metal being shipped to Japan and began to suspect that war in the Pacific was in the making.[168]

Archer Vandegrift's four years at the Bureau of the Budget ended in mid-1933 and he went on duty at Quantico in a "changed and changing Marine Corps." The Commanding Officer of the East Coast Expeditionary Force was Major General Charles H. Lyman, and Vandegrift was appointed the F-1, or Force Personnel Officer. Late that

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[167] Smith, Coral and Brass, 58-59; Cooper, A Fighting General, 49-51.

[168] Smith, Coral and Brass, 59-62; Cooper, A Fighting General, 49-51.

year the East Coast Expeditionary Force became part of the Fleet Marine Force, and Vandegrift continued as F-1. The FMF was understrength, with two small infantry regiments, artillery, engineers, and aviation, but, "it reflected the practical application of the new amphibious theories being worked out in the neighboring Marine Corps Schools." That practical application was the Fleet Landing Exercises, which were finally revived in 1934.[169]

On May 29, 1934, after fourteen years as a major, Vandegrift was promoted to lieutenant colonel. He had applied for assignment to a senior service school and had just received orders to attend the Naval War College when the commander of the Legation Guard in Peiping, Colonel P.M. Rixey, requested Vandegrift as his executive officer. Once again, Vandegrift turned down a school assignment to work for a superior who had specifically requested his services. Before he sailed for China he saw his only son and namesake graduate from Virginia Military Institute and receive a regular Marine Corps commission. In 1935 Rixey rotated home and Vandegrift took over the Guard. His command had spent the previous winter indoors, and suffered badly from pneumonia. Vandegrift took the men out into the countryside for maneuvers frequently, even in Peiping's cold winters; the pneumonia rate dropped away to almost nil and the Marines became fit and energetic.[170]

Clifton Cates returned from duty with the Fourth Marines in Shanghai in mid-1932; he had been promoted to major on April 1, 1932, after nearly twelve years as a captain, and was sent to the Army Industrial College in Washington, D.C. The school's

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[169] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 78.

[170] Ibid., 80-86.

mission was to prepare officers to manage large-scale industrial expansion and resource development in wartime. The College ranked well up in the Army's hierarchy of schools, but Cates "didn't get too much out of it." His detail to the College had been arranged by the Quartermaster General of the Marine Corps, Hugh Matthews, and Cates feared that the job might lead to a permanent assignment as a quartermaster, which many Marine officers looked upon as a dead end. The only thing that impressed Cates at the Industrial College was a series of lectures on industrial mobilization by an Army major named Dwight Eisenhower.[171]

Cates was then assigned to the Seventh Marines, a new regiment of the Fleet Marine Force which was just being activated at Quantico. Despite President Roosevelt's new "Good Neighbor" policy, the FMF was embarked in transports and sent to the coast of Cuba in May, 1934, where it sat offshore during the Batista revolution. Cates and a few other officers went ashore to prepare a plan for evacuating American citizens, but the situation settled down and the Marines returned to Quantico.[172]

In the autumn of 1934 Cates began the Senior Course at the Marine Corps Schools. The curriculum was catching up with developments in amphibious warfare and the Tentative Landing Force Manual was the new bible. There were only twenty students in the class, and the second half of the year was given over to practical problems. The staff and students were divided into three working groups, and using information provided by the Naval War College, each group was charged with the

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[171] Cates Oral History, 87-88.

[172] Ibid., 88-90.

planning of an actual operation. Cates's group was tasked with planning the capture of the island of Truk, Japan's major air and naval base in the eastern Carolines, which potentially threatened America's sea lanes to the Philippines and China. For Cates and his colleagues, getting over the coral reef would be the most difficult part of the operation, and the current equipment was clearly inadequate.[173]

Lemuel Shepherd was finally promoted to major in April 1, 1932; like Cates, he had been a captain for almost twelve years. He returned from his four-year tour with the Gendarmerie d'Haiti in 1934 and was posted to the Marine Barracks at "Eighth and Eye" in Washington. The appointment had been requested by the new Major General Commandant, John Russell, who had known Shepherd in Haiti. The Barracks had grown shabby and lax during General Fuller's tour as Commandant, and Shepherd's specific mission was to smarten up the post.[174]

Merritt Edson finished his two years as an instructor at the Basic School in the summer of 1931. The School's commanding officer was sorry to lose him, commenting that he had done "very excellent work [and was] one of our best officers." He tried to regain his flight status; even though his depth perception had improved, he had an abnormally fast heartbeat and so was disqualified.[175]

Edson's next post was also at Philadelphia, where he was appointed ordnance and war plans officer. His primary task was to build up the Corps' competitive

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[173] Ibid., 91-92.

[174] Shepherd Oral History, 363-64; Brig. Gen. Robert H. Williams, USMC (Ret), The Old Corps, Annapolis:, Naval Institute Press, 1982, 91-92.

[175] Hoffman, Once a Legend, 101-02.

shooting teams, but money was extremely tight. Even so, Edson's team won the National Matches at Camp Perry in 1934 and 1935, earning him a personal letter of commendation from General Russell, who noted that "the results of your team give ample evidence of your excellent leadership."[176]

Jerry Thomas graduated from the Army's Infantry School at Fort Benning in 1932. The school was undergoing what would later be called the "Benning Revolution" under the leadership of Colonel George C. Marshall. The instructional staff included Lt. Col. Joseph Stilwell, Major Omar Bradley, and Captain Joseph Lawton Collins. Thomas got along well with Army officers and was especially impressed by realistic night-fighting exercises. He continued to read military history every evening, and finished the course with a B+ average.[177]

Thomas got ample opportunity to put his education to work in his next assignment, which was as an instructor at the Basic School. His promotion to captain came just as the course began. He had been a first lieutenant for more than eleven years, and finally reached the grade for command of a company, a task for which he had felt himself qualified for more than a decade. He was the principal instructor on weapons, which had been covered extensively at Fort Benning, and he followed the Benning practice of teaching with a minimum of notes. Between the first and second years of his tour he obtained a copy of the Marine Corps Landing Manual, with an eye to using it in teaching amphibious operations. The tour as an instructor usually lasted three years, but his wife's cousin by marriage, Col. Ralph Stover Keyser, selected him

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[176] Ibid., 101-05.

[177] Millett, In Many a Strife, 108-10.

for the Senior Course at Quantico in 1934. He was the most junior officer in the course that year, and worked in the same planing group with Clifton Cates, studying the seizure of Truk. Thomas's chief contribution to the plan was the idea that the force needed to concentrate on the seizure of one critical island within the atoll, and he began to appreciate the need for coordinating infantry landings with air support.[178]

Randolph Pate finished his tour on the USS Mississippi in mid-1933 and reported to Fort Benning. He underwent the same training as Jerry Thomas had, and graduated high in his class. On May 29, 1934, he became a captain, after seven years as a first lieutenant. He was then posted to Quantico and appointed an instructor in the Operations section of the Junior Course. Perhaps he had found his métier in the Schools, for several of his peers and students noted that he was an excellent instructor.[179]

On October 1, 1931, just after his return from Smedley Butler's retirement ceremonies, Evans Carlson was awarded the Navy Cross. His recommendation for the Distinguished Service Medal had been pending for nearly six months, but there had been only one previous instance of this medal being awarded to a first lieutenant, and the Navy Cross was a junior decoration at the time. In mid-November 1931 he returned to Nicaragua and became the chief of police of Managua. He inherited a network of informants and expanded it, and by the end of January, 1932, had discovered a clandestine communist party in the city. In a report to the head of the Guardia Nacional, Carlson noted that "[t]here are indications that communist agents are at work

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[178] Ibid., 111-17.

[179] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 168.,

within the city. . . reliable agents have been recruited to insinuate themselves into the organization"[180] A month later, after gathering more evidence, he executed a series of five simultaneous no-knock raids on the leaders of the group, arrested them, and had the foreigners within the group, who were the majority, deported. He had no illusions that he had stopped the movement completely, for in his report he noted that "the work of the communists in Nicaragua has been temporarily frustrated by the arrest of the principal leaders."[181]

Later in the year he played a critical role in supervising the November elections and the ensuing American withdrawal. His reports indicate that he was closely acquainted with all of the main figures in Nicaraguan politics, and he noted that "One group . . . is betting that [President] Moncada will turn over the presidency, but that shortly after the Americans leave Nicaragua [,] Moncada will take command of the Guardia Nacional and throw out the [incoming] Sacasa regime." When the Marines

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[180] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 165-66; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 34; National Archives, RG 127, Series 202, File 74, "Record of Events, First Company, January 1, 1932, to January 31, 1932."

[181] National Archives, RG 127, Series 39, File "From Boxes 611 & 612," Record of Events, First Company, 1 February - 29 February, 1932; RG 127, Series 202, File 73.0, "Capture of Communists in the City of Managua, February 22, 1932.

withdrew on January 2, 1933, Carlson was the last Marine to board the last train to leave Managua.[182]

While Carlson was still in Managua, he had been contacted by Colonel Fred D. Kilgore, the commanding officer of the Fourth Marines in Shanghai, who asked him to return as the regiment's intelligence officer. He arrived in Shanghai in March of 1933 and had barely settled back into his old job when Colonel Kilgore died. At that time the position of adjutant at the Legation Guard had just become vacant, and Carlson felt that his commitment in Shanghai had been fulfilled.[183]

In September he moved to Peiping, where he and Etelle renewed their friendship with Edgar and Peg Snow. Carlson's duties in included those of school officer and morale officer, so he set up a school to teach elementary Chinese to the enlisted men. He was himself taking Chinese lessons every morning and kept well ahead of his pupils. By teaching the Marines to be a bit more respectful of the Chinese, Carlson was able to reduce significantly the number of disciplinary problems within the Guard. Peiping was a crossroads for international celebrities, and the Carlsons played host to the novelist John P. Marquand, the boxer Gene Tunney, and the French paleontologist and theologian, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Evans and Etelle also became good friends

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[182] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 36-37; National Archives RG 127, Series 202, File 74.0, Intelligence report, Captain E.F. Carlson to the Jefe Director of the Guardia Nacional, December 13, 1932.

[183] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 37; RG 127, Series 193, File "Captain E. F. Carlson," "Request for assignment to duty with the 4th Marines upon completion of duty in Nicaragua," Evans Carlson to the Major General Commandant, October 15, 1932.

with the American ambassador, Nelson T. Johnson, and his wife Jane, who was a sorority sister of Etelle's.[184]

In May of 1934 Carlson wrote to Major Julian Smith, the former chief of staff of the Guardia Nacional, and noted that "from the nature of the handwriting on the wall, the best place for a Marine officer right now is at sea. The Marine is finally coming into his own as a sea-soldier. I should like to get back to the states next year, get in a year at school somewhere, and then go to sea -- unless another Constabulary looms on the horizon!"[185] Carlson had good reason to believe that another constabulary role for the Marines might be in the future, for at the time he wrote, Clifton Cates and the Seventh Marines were sitting off the coast of Cuba. The "handwriting on the wall" of which he wrote was almost certainly the Lineal List, for most of the officers who had been commissioned a year or two before Carlson were either at sea aboard the Navy's new cruisers or at school at Quantico. His reference to going to school "somewhere" suggests that he was open to the possibility of attending an Army school; he was, after all, a former Army officer and he was then serving with Lewis Puller, who had graduated from Fort Benning in 1932. On January 1, 1935, after more than seven years as a first lieutenant, the selection board promoted him to captain.[186]

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[184] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 37-39; Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 166-69; Author interview, Helen Foster Snow, November 4, 1984.

[185] Letter, Evans F. Carlson to Colonel Julian C. Smith, May 26, 1934, Julian C. Smith Papers, Marine Corps Personal Papers Collection, MCHC, Box 2, File "1934."

[186] Lineal List 1934, 528-30; Muster Roll of USMC, January, 1935.

Merrill Twining graduated from George Washington University Law School in 1932 and was sent to the Marine Barracks at Pearl Harbor. After two uneventful years he was assigned to command the Marine detachment at the naval air station at Sunnyvale, California, near San Francisco. On May 1, 1935, he was promoted to captain, after seven years as a first lieutenant. Later that summer he received orders to report to the Basic School in Philadelphia as instructor in military law.[187]

Lewis Puller reported to Fort Benning in September 1931, where he was Jerry Thomas's classmate in the junior course. Colonel Marshall was a fellow VMI alumnus, and seemed to find Puller's outspoken comments on warfare amusing. Puller did not get along well with some of the Army instructors, and when Major Omar Bradley asked him why Marines were sent to Benning, he replied that he had "been here four months, and still hadn't figured out why." Jerry Thomas thought that Puller's "mouth worked faster than his brain," and that he was far too easily provoked by anti-Marine jibes from Army officers.[188]

After graduating from Benning, Puller was reassigned to the Guardia Nacional, and arrived back in Nicaragua in time to fight one of the largest engagements with the Sandinistas, an attack on a railroad that occurred only six days before the Marines' withdrawal. For his leadership, he was awarded a second Navy Cross.[189]

Puller was next assigned to the Legation Guard in Peiping, where he renewed his acquaintance with Evans Carlson. He was given command of the Horse Marines,

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[187] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 223-24.

[188] Davis, Marine!, 59-66; Millett, In Many a Strife, 108-09.

[189] Davis, Marine!, 67-76.

the only mounted unit in the entire Corps. His favorite pastime was polo, but one day after a chukker he was having drinks with several officers and commented that the Colonel's polo pony was "the sorriest nag he'd ever seen, and it were his, he'd shoot it before he'd ride it." Puller's remark got back to Colonel Rixey, who called him into his office and made him pledge not to drink during the rest of his tour, or face the consequence of a bad fitness report.[190]

Although Puller had spent more than ten years in Haiti, Nicaragua, and China, he had never been to sea. In mid-1934 he became the commander of the Marine Detachment aboard the flagship of the Asiatic Fleet, the USS Augusta. The Augusta's skipper, Captain Chester Nimitz, warned Puller that his two predecessors had been relieved as unsatisfactory, and that he had better smarten up the ship's guard or face the same consequence.[191]

Statistics 1931-1935

In 1935 there were three major generals. The oldest, Commandant Russell, was sixty-three, the youngest was fifty-eight, and the average age was sixty. While Russell had been promoted to major general in 1933, the others had been promoted in 1935. Russell had graduated from Annapolis and received his commission in 1894, but the other two had been appointed from civil life in 1899. Although Russell had not attended any professional school, the other two major generals had graduated from both

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[190] Ibid., 77-81; Author interview, Lt. Gen. James P. Berkeley, USMC (Ret), Lexington, VA, September 23, 1983.

[191] Davis, Marine!, 82-86.

war colleges. All had served overseas and at sea; the average amount of expeditionary service was nearly twelve years, and the average time at sea was six and-a-half years.[192]

There were seven brigadier generals, an increase of one over the 1931 figure. The oldest was sixty, the youngest fifty-six, and the average age was just short of fifty-eight. All had been commissioned from civil life in 1899 and 1900. Two had graduated from the Senior Course, four from the Army War College, and four from the Naval War College. Only two of the seven had no professional schooling. All had served overseas, and all had been to sea; the average amount of expeditionary service was eleven and-a-half years, and the average amount of time at sea was nearly five years.[193]

In 1935 there were forty-two colonels, an increase of twelve over the number on duty in 1931. The oldest was fifty-nine, the youngest was fifty-one, and the average age was fifty-five. Some had been colonels since 1924, but the average time in grade was only two years, seven months. With one exception, the colonels were all civil appointees who had been commissioned between 1899 and 1909; that exception was the paymaster, who had graduated from Annapolis and received his commission in 1893. Twenty-four colonels (57 percent) were graduates of the Senior Course at Quantico, eighteen had graduated from Army schools, and seventeen from the Naval War College. One was a naval aviator. Altogether, thirty-eight of the forty-two (90 percent) had some type of formal schooling; this was only a slight increase from the 1931 figure of

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[192] Lineal List 1935, 510-11.

[193] Ibid.

eighty-seven percent, but the number of officers in the grade had been increased by forty percent. All of the colonels had served overseas, for an average of eight years, but only thirty-nine had been to sea, for an average of three years. In 1935 only two colonels were overseas, both of them in China.[194]

There were eighty-three lieutenant colonels in 1935, more than double the number on duty in 1931. They ranged from thirty-nine to fifty-eight, and the average age was nearly forty-nine. Although some had been lieutenant colonels since 1927, the average time in grade was less than two years. The most senior had originally entered the Marine Corps in 1904, but the most junior had not come in until 1917, and the two most junior officers on the list, including Clifton Cates, had been at the very top of the Neville Board's list of officers to be retained in the service after the First World War. Ten were Annapolis graduates, sixty-seven had been commissioned from civil life, and six were former enlisted men.[195]

Sixty-four lieutenant colonels, some seventy-seven percent, had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico; two of these officers had previously completed the Junior Course. Thirty-five were graduates of Army schools, and thirteen had graduated from the Naval War College. Six were naval aviators. When the attorneys and translators of foreign languages (a new official designation earned by passing a formal examination) were added in, eighty-two of the eighty-three lieutenant colonels had some type of professional schooling or designation.[196]

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[194] Lineal List 1935, 514-15.

[195] Ibid., 514-19.

[196] Ibid.

All of the lieutenant colonels had served overseas, for an average of nearly seven years, and all but three had served at sea, for an average of two years, eight months. In 1935 five lieutenant colonels were overseas, and four were at sea.[197]

In 1935 there were 155 majors, an increase of thirty-two over the 1931 figure. The youngest was thirty-eight, the oldest sixty, and the average age was forty-four, a one-year increase over 1931. A few had been majors since 1920, but the average time in grade was just under three years. While some majors had been commissioned as early as 1908, the average amount of commissioned service was eighteen years, and the most junior majors had not received permanent regular commissions until 1921. Six were Annapolis graduates, twenty-nine had risen from the ranks, and 120 had been appointed from civil life.[198]

Nearly half of the majors (seventy-five) had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, and sixty-three of them were graduates of the Junior Course; twelve had completed both courses. Sixty-three majors had attended a total of eighty courses at Army schools, and ten were graduates of the Naval War College. Twelve were naval aviators. When those with law degrees and translator designations were added in, one hundred and forty-three majors, some ninety-two percent of the total, had formal professional schooling or designations, a figure almost identical to the percentage in 1931, which was ninety-five percent.[199]

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[197] Ibid.

[198] Ibid., 518-23.

[199] Ibid.

All of the majors had served overseas, for an average of nearly five and-a-half years; one hundred and thirty-one (85 percent) had been to sea, for an average of just under two years. In 1935 six majors were overseas, and two at sea.[200]

The three hundred and eleven captains ranged in age from thirty-two to sixty-four, and the average age was forty-two. A few had been captains for as long as fifteen years, and the average time in grade was more than five years. They averaged more than fourteen years of commissioned service, and some had been commissioned as early as 1917. Fifty-three captains (17 percent) were Annapolis graduates, one hundred and eighteen (38 percent) had been commissioned from civil life, and one hundred and forty (45 percent) were former enlisted men.[201]

Fifteen captains had attended the Senior Course at Quantico, and 120 (39 percent) were graduates of the Junior Course. Seventy had completed Army courses. One had attended the Naval War College, and thirty-six were naval aviators. When the twenty-eight attorneys and translators are added in, 246 of the 311 captains had formal schooling or designations, some 79 percent of the total; in 1931, the figure had been 67 percent. All of the captains had served overseas, for an average of nearly five years, and 208 (67 percent) had served at sea, for an average of eleven months. In 1935 twenty-eight captains were overseas, and twenty-five were at sea.[202]

In 1935 there were three hundred and thirty first lieutenants; the oldest was forty-six, the youngest was twenty-four, and the average age was thirty-one, a three-

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[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid., 524-35.

[202] Ibid.

year decrease from 1931. Some had served fifteen years in grade, and the average time in grade was more than three years. While a few had as much as sixteen years of commissioned service, the average time in service was seven and-a-half years. One hundred and seventy-six (53 percent) were Annapolis graduates, eighty (24 percent) had graduated from distinguished ROTC programs, and seventy-four (23 percent) were former enlisted men.[203]

Ten of the first lieutenants were graduates of the Junior Course at Quantico, thirty had completed Army schools, and seventy-one (21 percent) were naval aviators. In all, 113 (34 percent) had formal schooling or designations, a figure which was only one percentage point below that for 1931.[204]

There were seventy-nine second lieutenants in 1935; the oldest was twenty-six, the youngest was twenty-one, and the average age was twenty-four. None had more than two years in grade or in service, and the average was one year, four months. Sixty-nine of them (88 percent) were Annapolis graduates, nine were former enlisted men, and only one had graduated from a distinguished ROTC program. None had yet received professional designations, although fifteen of them were students at Pensacola. Only three had served overseas, but thirty-six of them, almost half, had been or were at sea in 1935.[205]

Between 1931 and 1935 the number of Marine officers with professional schooling or designations rose only slightly, from 643 to 647, but the average number

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[203] Ibid., 534-45.

[204] Ibid.

[205] Ibid., 544-47.

of courses completed by those who had been to school was 1.52, while in 1931 that figure had been only 1.1, so the depth of education had increased, if not the breadth. A way of looking at this figure is to say that in 1931, only ten percent of the school-trained officers had attended more than one course; by 1935, over half of the school-trained officers had attended two schools. There were 446 graduates of the Quantico schools on active duty, an increase of 94 over 1931, and 42 percent of all Marine officers had attended Marine Corps Schools. The number who attended Army schools grew, as did the number of graduates of the Naval War College, and there were 126 naval aviators on duty, an increase of only fourteen over the 1931 figure. In 1931 there had been forty-one officers who had graduated from Fort Benning or Fort Sill; by 1935 that number had doubled, to eighty-two.[206]

Despite the consolidation and advances in professional education, the officer corps had continued to age. Except for lieutenants, the average age in every grade had increased or remained stable; the average time in grade for most ranks had decreased slightly, but the maximum time in grade had grown longer, with first lieutenants, captains, and majors who had served fifteen years in grade.[207]

Between 1931 and 1935 the number of officers who had served overseas dropped slightly, from 905 to 865; even so, eighty-six percent of the officers had served overseas. In 1931 there were 532 officers who had been to sea; by 1935, there were 738. The number of officers at sea in 1935 was 103, double the 1931 figure.[208]

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[206] Lineal List 1931, 452-53, 458-93; Lineal List 1935, 510-11, 514-47.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

CHAPTER VIII: THE MARINE CORPS FROM 1935-1939

The State of the Corps, 1935-1939

John Russell retired in 1936 and was succeeded by Brigadier General Thomas Holcomb, the Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools. Holcomb's appointment came as a surprise to most of the Corps, as he was only a brigadier and had held that rank for barely a year. He was, however, a long-time friend of President Roosevelt's. A descendant of Commodore Joshua Barney of Revolutionary War fame, Holcomb was the scion of a wealthy Delaware family. He was commissioned in 1900, at the age of twenty-one, and, while a member of the Legation Guard in Peking in 1909-11, he became the first Marine officer to learn Chinese. During the First World War he commanded a battalion of the Sixth Marines at Belleau Wood, Soissons, and the Argonne Forest, and was awarded the Navy Cross, four Silver Stars, and a Purple Heart. Holcomb had little service in the tropics, and only five months at sea, but had graduated from the Army Command and Staff School at Fort Leavenworth and both war colleges. In an interesting display of factionalism, Holcomb commented in 1939 that, if war came, all of his regimental commanders would be Fourth Brigade veterans. That factionalism was still alive was also noted by a much younger officer who had been commissioned in 1932; Robert H. Williams noted that there were visible groups of Fourth Brigade men and Banana War veterans; while he did not believe that they were

factions as such, he observed that "each group . . . took a little satisfaction in having one of its own living in the Commandant's House."[209]

Politics and money came to influence the role of the Fleet Marine Force, and in turn, the curriculum of the Marine Corps Schools. By 1936 an increasingly isolationist and pinch-penny Congress was examining the clause that defined the Corps' mission as the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases. Seizure was an aggressive act, and the United States did not want to inflame an increasingly aggressive Japan by maintaining such a force, so more emphasis was put on the defensive nature of the Fleet Marine Force. As a result, new defense battalions were organized, which were equipped with naval guns, field artillery, and anti-aircraft weapons. The Schools added a Base Defense Weapons Course, which was designed for company grade officers and was staffed by graduates of Fort Sill and the Army's Coast Artillery School. One of the instructors thought that the new school produced "jacks of all trades, and masters of none, because the three types of gunnery taught were so conceptually different that no one learned any of them thoroughly."[210] As far as the importance of the defense battalions was concerned, one officer recalled: "All of a sudden, defense battalions were being touted as 'the coming thing' in the Marine Corps, just like the FMF had been touted back in 1934 and '35. I'd been passed over for promotion once already, so

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[209] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 106-08; Oral History of BGen Donald Curtis, 1974, 29; Williams, The Old Corps, 115.

[210] Millett, Semper Fidelis, 336; Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 46; Author interview, BGen M. L. Curry, USMC (Ret), Lexington, VA, November 24, 1981.

[requesting duty with a base defense battalion] seemed like the smart thing to do at the time."[211]

The Junior and Senior Courses continued as before, and landing operations constituted nearly half of the curriculum. The Schools' faculty was organized into a Landing Operations section and a Small Wars section, and the latter went to work producing the Small Wars Manual, which was published in 1940.[212] The Annual Fleet Landing Exercises continued in Puerto Rico, Panama, and California. The results of the exercises were evaluated by the Schools, which continued to try to improve the Tentative Landing Force Manual by applying experience to doctrine. The Marine Corps Equipment Board, which had been organized in 1935, began to look for existing civilian equipment which could be adapted for amphibious use. Students in the Senior Course continued to plan for the defense or seizure of Pacific islands, including Guam and the Japanese Mandates. The features of Truk and Saipan became familiar to the students.[213]

Japanese aggression in China had angered Americans since 1931, but the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 again focused attention on the safety of American lives and property in China. After the Panay Incident the Sixth Marines were

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[211] Author interview, BGen James P. S. Devereux, USMC (Ret), Towson, MD, September 18, 1985. In 1941, then-Major Devereux commanded the Marines on Wake Island.

[212] Ronald Schaffer, "The 1940 Small Wars Manual and the 'Lessons of History,'" Military Affairs 36 (April 1972), 46-51.

[213] Clifford, Progress and Purpose, 47-59; Frances, "History of the Marine Corps Schools," 47-50.

dispatched to Tientsin; along with the Fourth Marines in Shanghai, they constituted the Second Brigade, but the locus of the war moved away from coastal areas in 1938, and many Americans either went home voluntarily or were recalled by their employers. The brigade was disbanded in 1938, and the Sixth Marines went home to San Diego, but the Fourth Marines remained on in Shanghai, which had been occupied by the Japanese.[214]

Between 1935 and 1939 the selection boards radically altered the age-in-grade figures in the Marine Corps. Between 1924 and 1934 only 162 officers had been retired, but between 1935 and 1939, 280 officers were retired.[215] In 1935 there had been one hundred and fifty former long-service enlisted men in the officer corps, most of them in the grade of captain; by 1939, only thirteen of them remained on duty. As Jerry Thomas later recalled, "the first boards got rid of most of the really bad drunks right away, because everybody knew who they were."[216] He also noted that "selection was something different. It proceeded to settle things down, and people got more serious. Drunkenness dropped off."[217]

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[214] Lt. Col. C. H. Metcalf, "The Marines in China," MCG 22 (September 1938) 56-58.

[215] Lineal Lists, 1924, 462; 1925, 468; 1926, 476; 1927, 480; 1928, 491; 1929, 403; 1930, 509; 1931, 517; 1932, 528; 1933, 536; 1934, 542; 1935, 554; 1936, 568; 1937, 582; 1938, 604; 1939, 612.

[216] Lineal List 1939, 584; Author interview, Gen. Gerald C. Thomas, USMC (Ret), Washington, D.C., November 11, 1983.

[217] Thomas Oral History, 109.

In 1937 Congress palliated the selection boards' actions by giving one-grade promotions to all retiring officers who had been decorated, or wounded in action. The law was made retroactive and applied to the Navy and the Marine Corps; while those who retired did not receive the pay of the rank to which they had been promoted, they were entitled to use the higher rank socially.[218]

Between 1935 and 1939 the average ages of general officers rose slightly, but the average age of colonels dropped from 55 to 53. The average lieutenant colonel dropped from 49 to 46, and the average major from 44 to 43. The most significant changes were among captains, whose average age dropped from 42 to 36, and first lieutenants, whose average age dropped from 31 to 27. Just as significant was the decrease in average ages was the decrease in time in grade. In 1935 there were colonels who had been in grade for eleven years, lieutenant colonels who had spent eight years in grade, and the most senior majors, captains and first lieutenants had held their ranks for fifteen years. By 1939 there were still about thirty senior captains who had nearly twenty years in grade, but they were special cases who had been permitted to remain until reaching retirement age. However, in every other rank, except for second lieutenant, no officer had more than five years in grade. Much of the dead wood had been cut away, and the junior officers who were selected for promotion moved up rapidly. Between 1924 and 1934 officers had moved up the Lineal List an average of about 22 numbers per year; between 1935 and 1939, those who were

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[218] No author, "Legislation," MCG 21 (August 1937), 24-26.

selected rose an average of 49 numbers per year; the pace of promotion had more than doubled.[219]

Careers 1935-1939

Holland Smith continued to note the flow of war materials to Japan from West Coast ports. His commander, General James Breckinridge, gave him such a good fitness report as chief of staff that he noted that it was the best fitness report that he had ever given any officer. In March of 1937 his tour in California ended and he was posted to Headquarters, Marine Corps, as Director of Operations and Training. Although he and Smith had had little previous contact, mostly in France, General Holcomb selected Smith for the position, which bore the primary responsibility for all war plans and operational training. Smith was aware that the biggest tactical problem facing the development of amphibious warfare was the lack of suitable landing craft. In 1937 Lieutenant Victor Krulak, who had been Smith's son's roommate at Annapolis, noted that the shallow-draft craft which the Japanese were using in the coastal waters around Shanghai had a bow ramp which could be lowered to discharge troops. Krulak was able to snap a few pictures of it, and built a model of the landing craft, which Smith presented to the Navy. The Navy ridiculed the design, insisting that Krulak was unable to tell the bow of a ship from the stern, but Smith was able to secure Krulak's appointment to the Navy Small Boat Development Board.

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[219] Lineal List 1935, 510-47; Lineal List 1939, 568-611; author's analysis of Lineal Lists for 1924, 1931, 1935, and 1939.

One of Smith's actions as Director of Operations and Training was to break up what he perceived as a 'China Clique' at Headquarters. Smith had never served in China, and he believed that the clique was too influential in the upper levels of the Corps, which brought him into conflict with General Holcomb and Archer Vandegrift, both of whom had extensive China service. Even so, Holcomb appointed him Assistant Commandant in early 1939, and in August he was promoted to brigadier general and given command of the First Brigade, Fleet Marine Force.[220]

Archer Vandegrift succeeded to command of the Legation Guard in 1935. Japanese expansion in North China caused some friction between Westerners and the Japanese, and Vandegrift once remarked to his opposite number, Colonel Mutaguchi, that "you people have an inferiority complex." Mutaguchi replied, "It is not so much that we have an inferiority complex, Colonel, but that you Americans and British have a superiority complex."[221] Vandegrift thought that the situation in Peiping was "potentially explosive . . . but still tranquil enough to allow us a pleasant albeit rigorous tour of duty."[222] On September 1, 1936, only a little more than two years after his promotion to lieutenant colonel, Vandegrift was promoted to full colonel.

In early 1937 Vandegrift received orders to report to headquarters as military secretary to the Commandant. Despite the situation in Asia, he expected to retire in 1939 with thirty years' service. As military secretary he was often involved in

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[220] Smith, Coral and Brass, 62-63, 74-91; Cooper, A Fighting General, 52-56; Krulak, First to Fight, 90-91.

[221] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 85-86.

[222] Ibid., 86.

assigning tasks and problems to different staff sections. He noted that " . . . Holland Smith functioned as a sort of chief of staff although eventually Holcomb used me as much as anyone to co-ordinate staff functions."[223] This overlap apparently caused some friction, because Smith once "angrily burst out" to Holcomb and Vandegrift "There are three people who have been working for two years to get me out of this job. It looks to me that with all that help it could be done." When Holcomb asked who the three were, Smith answered, "You, Vandegrift, and myself."[224]

Vandegrift later noted that "[t]he budgetary procedure proved the most educational of all activities at Headquarters," and that "you could have the most urgent need expressed in the most plausible and logical terms . . . nevertheless you had to prepare the groundwork very carefully by informal talks with certain Congressional figures."[225] In December, 1939, after only three years as a colonel, Vandegrift finally "made his number" for brigadier general, and pinned on his first star the following month.[226]

After commanding the Eastern Platoon Leaders Class at Quantico in the summer of 1935, Clifton Cates reported to the War Plans section of the Division of Operations and Training at Headquarters, Marine Corps. He had little to say about the experience when he recorded an oral history in the late 1960's, but his experiences as a student in the Senior Course had concentrated on the seizure or recapture of strategic islands in

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[223] Ibid., 86-88.

[224] Cooper, A Fighting General, 54.

[225] Vandegrift, Once a Marine, 89-90.

[226] Ibid., 92.

the western Pacific, including Truk, Saipan, and Guam, and the War Plans section was beginning to make use of the ideas generated in the Schools.[227]

Whether Cates was actually one of the China clique which Holland Smith 'busted up' at Headquarters is difficult to say, but he left War Plans in mid-1937 after a two-year tour. He went back to China with the Third Brigade in 1937, serving as commanding officer of the Third Battalion, Sixth Marines, the unit in which he had served in France in 1918. When the Brigade returned to the States he remained in Shanghai as a battalion commander in the Fourth Marines, where he had more opportunities to observe the Japanese Army at close range. In the early summer of 1939 he was given orders to report to the Army War College in September, and he returned to the United States via Asia and Europe, where he saw a world poised on the brink of war.[228]

Lemuel Shepherd received his promotion to lieutenant colonel on July 27, 1935, and finished his tour as executive officer at "Eighth and Eye" in the summer of 1936, having brought the barracks up to the standards which General Russell demanded. He was then assigned to the Naval War College and returned to Quantico in July, 1937. "I was assigned to command the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, and the Marine Corps Schools staff had gotten along far enough in the preparation of FTP-167 [the Tentative Landing Force Manual] to test out the doctrine and items of amphibious equipment recommended."[229]

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[227] Cates Oral History, 91-92.

[228] Ibid., 97-101.

[229] Shepherd Oral History, 376.

Shepherd was a member of a board appointed to develop a tank for the Marine Corps, but one of the chief problems was weight. The Quartermaster insisted that the tank should weigh no more than five tons, which was stated to be the maximum capacity of the cargo booms aboard the Navy's transports. The Marines' contractor, the Marmon-Herrington Corporation, asserted that five tons was far too light for an effective tank. An officer on the board checked with the Navy and found that the cargo booms on the transports would take a fifteen-ton load. The Quartermaster reluctantly raised the vehicle's weight limit to six tons, and a tank of that weight was produced, but it never saw active service.[230]

In the 1939 Caribbean exercises Shepherd surprised the planners by staging a successful night landing which came ashore at exactly the spot he had selected. This contradicted doctrine, which dictated daylight landings, but the planners had to consider Shepherd's success. That same year, they began to test the Higgins Boat, a flat-bottomed craft developed for use in the swamps of Louisiana. It had a solid bow, so the men still had to climb over the gunwales, but its shallow draft and flat bottom allowed it to ground on a beach, unload its men, and back out into deeper water. It would not be long before the Higgins Boat was mated with the ramp bow that Lieutenant Victor Krulak had seen in China, producing an effective landing craft.[231]

In 1939 Shepherd was appointed head of the F-3, or Operations, section of the Marine Corps Schools. His job was to take the distilled experience of recent FLEX landings and work it into the curriculum of the Schools. "It was during this period that

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[230] Ibid., 376-80.

[231] Ibid.

the amphibious doctrine of the Schools was originated, evolved and tested. When war came . . . we were able to successfully utilize the tactics and techniques developed at the Marine Corps Schools and tested in the Caribbean during this period."[232]

Merritt Edson wound up his long tour at Philadelphia by coaching the Marine Corps shooting team to another victory at Camp Perry. In February of 1936 he was promoted to major, and was posted to Parris Island, where he was the rifle range officer, and late that year he coached the team to another national championship, his fourth in a row. General Holcomb, himself a distinguished marksman, had been the first Marine ever to compete at Camp Perry, and took note of Edson's abilities as a shooter and coach.[233]

Edson had asked for assignment to China, but there were no billets available for junior majors at the time. Instead, he attended the Senior Course at Quantico. Nearly half of the coursework was devoted to amphibious operations, but there continued to be emphasis on small wars, bringing the Schools much into line with Edson's 1930 observations regarding the content of the curriculum. Although it would not be published until after he had left the Schools, much of the Small Wars Manual was written by Edson, including the chapters on aviation and staff work. He did not feel that the Senior Course was especially hard, and finished a lengthy article for Marine Corps Gazette about his Coco Patrol of 1928. At the end of the school year he received orders to report to the Fourth Marines in Shanghai.[234]

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[232] Ibid.

[233] Hoffman, Once a Legend, 106-08.

[234] Ibid., 109-110.

The Japanese assault on Shanghai was already underway when Edson reported to the Fourth Marines in August, 1937. Although there were more senior majors attached to the regiment, Edson was appointed the R-3, or regimental operations officer. The Chinese fought hard for the city, but were overwhelmed by the Japanese in November. For the next four years the Fourth Marines were a garrison in a city occupied by a third party. There were occasional scrapes with the Japanese, some of which were intentionally provoked to embarrass the Americans, but the Marines held their ground and their fire, and avoided serious confrontation. In July 1939, probably at General Holcomb's request, Edson was posted to Headquarters, Marine Corps, as Inspector of Marksmanship Training.[235]

Jerry Thomas completed the Senior Course at Quantico in June, 1935, and received orders to report to the Legation Guard in Peiping, which may have been arranged by Archer Vandegrift. During his first year in Peiping Thomas commanded one of the infantry companies, and in 1936 he became the adjutant. For Thomas, it was "two years of really marvelous duty, professionally and in every other way."[236]

Thomas's promotion to major came on July 1, 1937, just as his tour in Peiping came to an end. Vandegrift arranged for his assignment to the Army's Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Before Thomas left Peiping, Lt. Col. Graves Erskine, who had graduated from Leavenworth, told him "If you go to Leavenworth and pass that course, as I know you will, you will never be confronted with a military problem again that you can't solve." Thomas later found this to be true.

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[235] Ibid., 111-120.

[236] Millett, In Many a Strife, 116-22; Thomas Oral History, 115.

"I had an equal or better year than I had had at Benning. Leavenworth was a marvelous school." Although the Army officers were under "just terrific" pressure to succeed, Thomas and another Marine officer "didn't worry about it too much. We scooted on through." Thomas finished 81st among 228 graduates.[237]

In order to make the best use of Thomas's extensive schooling, the new personnel officer of the Schools, Graves Erskine, had Thomas posted to Quantico in 1938 as instructor in military history. He revised the curriculum to include generalship in Civil War battles, many of which were within easy reach of Quantico, and rewrote the material on Gallipoli. Thomas was also asked to prepare a study of Guam for the Schools, and noted that the island had many excellent potential landing sites, but that the coral reef was almost insurmountable. If vehicles could be developed that could cross the reef, the island could be invaded easily. The study did not sit well with some, and the executive officer of the Schools told Thomas, "You've ruined our Guam problem with your study." Thomas later observed "I had only told them the truth."[238]

Randolph Pate continued teaching in the Operations section of the Marine Corps Schools until 1937, when he was posted to Pearl Harbor. In June of 1938 he was promoted to major, after only four years as a captain, and in 1939 he was assigned to Headquarters, Marine Corps.[239]

Evans Carlson arrived at Quantico in October 1935 and was appointed aide to the base commander, Major General Charles Lyman, known to the Corps at large as

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[237] Millett, In Many a Strife, 122-26; Thomas Oral History, 121-22.

[238] Millett, In Many a Strife, 127-31; Thomas Oral History, 130-32.

[239] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 168.

"Haircut Charlie" for his strict standards. Within two weeks Carlson was tapped for a special assignment: the command of a new detachment to guard President Roosevelt at his favorite retreat, the polio sanitarium at Warm Springs, Georgia. Carlson, like most Marines, was apolitical, but when he met Roosevelt, "[m]y first impression when we shook hands was, 'Here is a man to save America.'"[240] Lemuel Shepherd, recently promoted to lieutenant colonel, was the senior officer present, and acted as liaison between the Guard and the President's staff. Carlson and his wife were guests for luncheon at the White House several times over the next two years.[241]

Although he had never even graduated from high school, Carlson was able to talk his way into a graduate seminar in international relations at George Washington University. For the first time, he began to think critically about America's role in world affairs. "I was shocked by what I learnt of our intervention in foreign nations. . I suppose that I had taken too much for granted about our American idealism. But I still believe that even while we worked under Dollar Diplomacy we followed a course of events that was of benefit to others as well as ourselves."[242] Carlson wrote several papers for the course and sold "Legal Basis for the Use of Foreign Armed Forces in China" to the Naval Institute Proceedings, and "Marines as an Aid to Diplomacy in China" and "The Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua" to Marine Corps Gazette.[243]

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[240] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 171-73; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 39-41, 47.

[241] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 171.

[242] Ibid., Snow, "His Own Sketch," 40-41.

[243] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 41.

During the summer of 1936 Carlson was an instructor at the Eastern Platoon Leaders Class at Quantico, commanding a company of eighty college students. One of them thought that "he was a very attractive personality, but he was very strict with us, almost a martinet."[244] Another member of the class recalled that "Carlson gave us a dose of Parris Island that summer. Lots of physical conditioning, strict discipline, but no hazing or anything like that . . . We really needed it."[245]

Carlson was a student in the Junior Course in 1936-37, where one of the instructors was his old friend Randolph Pate. He worked hard and graduated sixth in his class, and was selected for promotion to major in February, 1937, after barely two years as a captain. In March of 1937, while school was still in session, he went to Warm Springs again to prepare a new guard for the President. By this time, his career goal was "to specialize in Far Eastern affairs."[246] His high class standing and previous service in China qualified him for an appointment as language officer. The course was taught by private tutors in Peiping, lasted three years, and included the written and the spoken language. There were only a handful of Chinese-speaking officers in the Marine Corps, and General Holcomb, a sinologue himself, personally approved the

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[244] Author interview, Mr. Firman Bear, Alexandria, VA, January 16, 1985.

[245] Author interview, Col. William Pala, USMC (Ret), McLean, VA, January 22, 1985.

[246] Letter, Evans F. Carlson to Ambassador Nelson T. Johnson, February 21, 1937, Nelson T. Johnson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

assignment. During the early summer of 1937 he was temporarily assigned to the Office of Naval Intelligence for detailed briefings on the Chinese political scene.[247]

Before he left Washington, he was called to the White House for a brief meeting with the President. Roosevelt had learned of Carlson's assignment to China, and asked him to "drop me a line now and then - direct to the White House . . . . Tell me what's going on . . . . I'd like to hear what you say about it." The President also enjoined Carlson to keep the fact of their correspondence confidential. In fact, all of Carlson's letters were addressed to Marguerite LeHand, one of Roosevelt's secretaries, at her home address, and begin "Dear Miss LeHand."[248]

Carlson arrived in Shanghai in August of 1937, the same day that the Japanese began their assault on the city. It quickly became apparent that language school would have to wait, because Peiping had already been occupied by the Japanese. Carlson was traveling on a diplomatic passport and was temporarily detailed as an acting assistant naval attache.[249] He renewed his friendship with Edgar Snow, who let him read the typescript of a book he had just completed and planned to call Red Star Over China.

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[247] Ibid.; National Archives, Record Group 80, General Correspondence of the Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations to Major General Commandant, April 10, 1937; Secretary of the Navy to Major General Commandant, with copy to Captain Carlson, May 5, 1937.

[248] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 173-74; Letter, Marguerite LeHand to Evans F. Carlson, June 28, 1937, Presidential Personal File 4951, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Hyde Park, N.Y.

[249] Letter, Evans F. Carlson to Marguerite LeHand, August 20, 1937, FDR Papers, PPF 4951. The diplomatic passport is in the possession of Col. Evans C. Carlson, USMC (Ret), Columbia, S.C.

Snow told Carlson that the events and attitudes he had seen in the Communists' capital of Yenan were "something new under the sun." Carlson conferred with the military attaché, Colonel Joseph Stilwell, who was planning to go on an expedition with the Nationalists. Stilwell was happy to have Carlson investigate the Communists, about whom no reliable military information existed. The Communists had only just become a legitimate political party after the Sian Incident of 1936, in which Chang Hsueh-liang, a former warlord, had kidnapped Chiang Kai-shek and forced him to conclude a 'United Front' with the Communists.[250]

Carlson left Shanghai in November of 1937. A photograph taken by a young Hungarian named Robert Capa shows Carlson dressed in sturdy tweeds, looking more like a country gentleman out for a day of grouse shooting than a military observer. On December 18, Carlson wrote to Ambassador Johnson "This is probably the most interesting experience of my life."[251] Carlson went on to extol the selfless qualities he observed among the Communists, and their perseverance and ingenuity in opposing the Japanese. While some of his contemporaries thought that he over-idealized the Communists, Carlson himself commented in 1940 that "All of the time I was with the Eighth Route Army I thought of the parallel with the American Revolution, and I

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[250] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 188-90, 232; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 42-43; Barbara Tuchman, in Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 221-22; author interview, Helen Foster Snow, November 4, 1984.

[251] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 192-212; Evans F. Carlson to Nelson T. Johnson, December 24, 1937, Nelson Johnson Papers, Library of Congress.

remembered my ancestor who had fought in it."[252] Carlson may have been a trifle too quick to perceive the Communists as the heirs of Lexington and Concord, but he was the son of small-town New England, and in his previous tours in China he had seen all too much of the corruption and decadence of traditional China. To Carlson, the Chinese Communists were democrats who had the makings of a loyal opposition to Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang.[253]

In all, Carlson made five long marches with the Communists behind Japanese lines in North China in 1937-38. He emerged from the experience "feeling like an Olympic athlete"[254] and became fluent in the colloquial dialect. He met and interviewed all of the top communist leaders, including Mao Zedong, Chou En-lai, and Zhu Deh, the leader of the Eight Route Army. Carlson later wrote that Zhu Deh had "the kindliness of Robert E. Lee, the humility of Abraham Lincoln, and the tenacity of U.S. Grant."[255]

On one of his expeditions a torrential rainstorm confined him to a small village for several days, and he spent much of the time interviewing the Communist Eighth Route Army's assistant political commissar, Deng Xiaoping. Deng told him that the United States supplied most of Japan's imported war materials, and showed him a

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[252] Snow, "His Own Sketch," 44.

[253] Kenneth E.Shewmaker, "The American Liberal Dream: Evans F. Carlson and the Chinese Communists, 1937-1947" Pacific Historical Review 38 (1969), 207-17.

[254] Letter, Evans F. Carlson to Marguerite LeHand, March 4, 1938, PPF 4951, FDRL.

[255] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 195-251; Evans F. Carlson, Twin Stars of China, New York: Dodd, Mead, 1940, 66.

clipping from an English-language Shanghai newspaper which confirmed the story. Carlson was deeply disturbed by America's de facto support for Japan.[256]

A short time later he was interviewed by several western reporters, and he told them about the Chinese people's struggle behind Japanese lines; in particular, he asserted that the Japanese hold over most of North China was only a veneer, and he decided to go "on the record." The newspaper accounts of Carlson's interview angered the Japanese, who lodged a protest. He was informally reprimanded by the Naval Attaché, and he hastily decided to resign his commission and do whatever he could to get the United States to support China and stop supplying the Japanese. The commander of the Asiatic Fleet, Admiral Harry Yarnell, and Ambassador Johnson were able to persuade him to withdraw his resignation, and he returned home in late 1938 with a commendation from Admiral Yarnell. While he was in China his son Evans, who was a student at the University of California, joined the Marine Corps Reserve and began the Western Platoon Leaders Class.[257]

On his return to the States Carlson was given a job which was commensurate with his experience: Assistant Intelligence Officer of the Fleet Marine Force in San Diego. The commander of the FMF was Major General Louis McCarty Little, a Chinese-speaking officer who was an intimate friend of General Holcomb, and Holcomb may have arranged Carlson's assignment. Carlson had been selected for

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[256] Carlson, Twin Stars, 249-53; Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 239-42.

[257] Blankfort, The Big Yankee,; National Archives, RG 80, "Commendation of Captain Evans F. Carlson, USMC,"; author interview, Col. Evans C. Carlson, Columbia, S.C., August 18, 1995.

promotion to major in 1937, and he was scheduled to be promoted on May 3, 1939. If he had waited until August of 1940 he could have retired with twenty years' service, and received a promotion to lieutenant colonel on the retired list in recognition of his Navy Cross. Although he had spent seventeen years working his way up in the Marine Corps, Carlson felt the need to be completely free to write and speak his mind. On Friday, April 30, 1939, three days before his promotion was to take effect, he resigned his commission.[258]

Soon after his promotion to captain in May, 1935, Merrill Twining received orders to report to the Basic School in Philadelphia as instructor in military law. Although the tour usually lasted three years, he was detached in 1936 and attended the Infantry School at Fort Benning. Upon graduation in 1937 he was assigned a rifle company in the Fifth Marines at Quantico and participated in the Fleet Landing Exercises in the Caribbean in 1938. He spent most of 1938 as a patient at Bethesda Naval Hospital, where his case of stomach cancer was treated successfully. Upon his return to Quantico he was appointed the Intelligence Officer of the First Marine Brigade of the Fleet Marine Force, and on June 1, 1939, he was promoted to major. A month later he was posted to the Operations section of the Marine Corps Schools, where he helped Lemuel Shepherd over the many bureaucratic obstacles involved in developing a tank which would be suitable for the Marine Corps, even though the final

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[258] Blankfort, The Big Yankee, 249-72; Snow, "His Own Sketch," 12, 43; Muster Roll of U.S. Marine Corps, January, 1939.

model never saw service. Twining noted that many of the senior colonels had not yet accepted amphibious warfare as the Corps' primary mission.[259]

Lewis Puller lived up to Captain Chester Nimitz's expectations as commander of the Marine detachment aboard the USS Augusta, and was promoted to captain on July 27, 1935, even though he failed part of the promotion examination and had to take it over again. In 1936 he was detailed to the Basic School as instructor in tactics, where he wove his experiences in Haiti and Nicaragua into the curriculum. In 1937 he requested further formal schooling, but was turned down, as he still had two years left on his tour at the Basic School. In 1939 he requested to be assigned to the Fourth Marines in Shanghai, but was instead sent back to the Augusta.[260]

Statistics 1935-1939

In 1939 there were four major generals, an increase of one over 1935. The oldest, General Lyman, was sixty-four, and at home awaiting retirement. The youngest, Commandant Holcomb, was sixty, and the average age was sixty-two, a two-year increase over 1935. All had been in grade at least three years, and the average time in grade was three years, nine months. All four had been commissioned from civil life in 1899 or 1900, and every one of them had graduated from the Army War College and the Naval War College; in addition, Commandant Holcomb and General Louis McCarty Little were officially designated as translators of Chinese. All four had been overseas,

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[259] Schuon, Biographical Dictionary, 224; Twining Oral History, 67-71.

[260] Davis, Marine!, 84-87, 90-91.

and all had served afloat; the average time on expeditionary duty was eleven and-a-half years, and the average amount of sea service was five and-a-half years.[261]

There were eight brigadier generals in 1939, an increase of two over 1935. The youngest was fifty-seven, the oldest was sixty-four, and the average age was just short of sixty; like the major generals, the brigadiers had aged two years since 1935. None had more than five years in grade, and the average was two and-a-half years. All eight had been commissioned from civil life in between 1899 and 1904. Three brigadiers had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, three had graduated from the Army War College, and five from the Naval War College. Only two lacked formal schooling. All had served overseas and afloat, and the average amount of expeditionary service was ten years, while the average amount of time at sea was five and-a-half years.[262]

In 1939 there were fifty-five colonels, an increase of thirteen over the number authorized in 1935. The oldest was sixty-four, the youngest was forty-five, and the average age was fifty-three, a two-year decrease from 1935. None had more than five years in grade, and the average time in grade was two and-a-half years. The average amount of time in service was just short of thirty years; they had been commissioned between 1903 and 1916. Forty-three colonels had received civil appointments, three had risen from the ranks, and the nine most junior colonels had graduated from the Naval Academy in 1915 or 1916.[263]

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[261] Lineal List 1939, 568-69.

[262] Ibid.

[263] Ibid., 572-73.

Forty-five colonels had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, twenty-five had completed Army schools, and fifteen had graduated from the Naval War College. Three were naval aviators. In all, the fifty-five colonels had a total of 113 professional courses or designations; none was without professional schooling, and the average number of courses and designations was two per officer. All of the colonels had served overseas and afloat; the average expeditionary service was seven years, and the average time at sea was three years. In 1939, three colonels were overseas.[264]

In 1939 there were 106 lieutenant colonels, an increase of twenty-three over 1935. Although the oldest was fifty-eight, the youngest was only forty-one, and the average age was forty-six, a decrease of three years from 1935. None had served more than five years in grade, and the average time in grade was only a little over two years. While some had been commissioned as early as 1910, a few had not received permanent commissions until 1921, and the average amount of commissioned service was twenty-one and-a-half years. Seven were Annapolis graduates, twenty-two had been enlisted men, and seventy-seven had received civil appointments.[265]

Sixty-nine lieutenant colonels had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, and forty-three from the Junior Course. Fifty of them had completed a total of seventy-four courses at Army schools, and twenty had graduated from the Naval War College. Twelve were naval aviators. Only one of the 106 had not been to school, and the remaining 105 had completed a total of 278 courses. All of the lieutenant colonels had served overseas and afloat; the average amount of expeditionary service was five

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[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid., 574-77.

years, nine months, and the average amount of time at sea was two years, three months. In 1939, seven lieutenant colonels were overseas, and seven were at sea.[266]

In 1939 there were 185 majors, an increase of thirty over the 1935 figure. They ranged in age from thirty-six to fifty-two, and the average age was forty-three, a decrease of one year from 1935. The average time in grade was two years, and none had been majors for more than five years. Some had been commissioned as early as 1918, and the youngest had entered the service in 1923; the average amount of commissioned service was eighteen and-a-half years. Forty-eight majors were Annapolis graduates, forty-two had been appoined from civil life, and ninety-five (51 percent) were former enlisted men, although only twelve of that group had long service prior to World War I. Forty-eight majors had graduated from the Senior Course, one hundred and twenty from the Junior Course, and two had completed the new Base Defense Weapons Course. Fifty-five majors had completed ninety-eight Army schools, three had graduated from the Naval War College, and thirty-two were naval aviators. In all, one hundred and eighty-one majors, ninety-eight percent of the total, had received professional schooling or designations, an increase of six percentage points over 1935. All 185 had served overseas, for an average of five years, and 168 (91 percent) had been to sea for an average of nearly two years. In 1939, eleven majors were overseas and five were at sea.[267]

There were three hundred and fifty-seven captains in 1939, an increase of forty-six over the number in 1935. While the oldest was sixty-four, the youngest was only

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[266] Ibid.

[267] Ibid., 578-83.

thirty-three, and the average age was thirty-six; only four years earlier the average captain had been forty-two, so the average age had declined by six years in a four-year span. The average time in grade had dropped from over five years in 1935 to just three years in 1939. While there were a few former long-service enlisted men at the top of the captain's list, all of them had been passed over for promotion, and only thirty captains had more than five years in grade. While a few captains had twenty years of commissioned service, the average was eleven and-a-half years, a three-year decrease from 1935. Exactly half of the captains (178) were Annapolis graduates, 116 had been commissioned from civil life (32 percent), and the remaining sixty-three were former enlisted men, of whom only twenty-seven had long service in the ranks.[268]

Although only one captain had graduated from the Senior Course at Quantico, one hundred and twenty had graduated from the Junior Course, and fifteen had completed the Base Defense Weapons Course. Seventy-six captains had completed a total of one hundred and one courses at Army schools, and eighty-six of them were naval aviators. Two hundred and ninety-eight captains (83 percent) had formal schooling; altogether, they had a total of 409 professional courses and designations. Three hundred and fifteen captains had served overseas for an average of almost three years; three hundred and twenty-two of them had been to sea for an average of almost two years, so that the number of captains who had been to sea exceeded for the first time the number who had served overseas.[269]

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[268] Ibid., 584-95.

[269] Ibid.

In 1939 there were three hundred and four first lieutenants, a decrease of twenty-six from the number on duty in 1935. The oldest was thirty-one, the youngest was twenty-four, and the average age was twenty-seven, down four years from the 1935 average. While in 1935 there had been first lieutenants with as much as fifteen years in grade, by 1939 none had more than five years in grade, and the average time in grade had dropped from more than three years to only nine months. None had been commissioned officers for more than ten years, and the average amount of time in service had been cut in half, from more than seven years in 1935 to only three and-a-half years in 1939.[270]

Seventy-four first lieutenants (24 percent) were Annapolis graduates; twenty-four (8 percent) were former enlisted men, and more than two thirds (206) were graduates of Distinguished ROTC programs. While none of the first lieutenants had completed the Junior or Senior Courses at Quantico, thirty-two had completed the Base Defense Weapons Course, fourteen had completed Army schools, and forty-nine were naval aviators. Altogether, 101 first lieutenants (33 percent) had completed 129 courses. Two hundred and sixty-seven first lieutenants (88 percent) had served overseas, and 231 (76 percent) had been to sea. The average amount of foreign service was six months, and the average amount of service afloat was eight months. In 1939, thirty-eight first lieutenants were overseas, and twenty-two were at sea.[271]

In 1939 there were one hundred and sixty-four second lieutenants, an increase of eighty-five over 1935. The oldest was twenty-six, the youngest was twenty-one, and

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[270] Ibid., 594-605.

[271] Ibid.

the average age was only twenty-four. None had more than two years in grade, and the average time was one year and four months. Seventy-seven second lieutenants (47 percent) were Annapolis graduates, sixty-four were graduates of Distinguished ROTC programs (39 percent), and the remaining twenty-three (14 percent) were former enlisted men. While many second lieutenants were at school in 1939, the only graduates of formal courses were the ten naval aviators. Only four second lieutenants had served overseas, but eighty (49 percent) had been to sea.[272]

[272] Ibid., 604-11.

CHAPTER IX: CONCLUSION

By 1939 the Marine Corps had become a very different organization than it had been in 1924. The foremost difference was on the percentage of officers who had undergone formal schooling or received professional designations: in 1924 only 158 officers (16 percent) had formal schooling. By 1939, 791 Marine officers had been to school, exactly two thirds of the total, which had risen from 1020 in 1935 to 1187 in 1939. In 1924 there had been barely one hundred graduates of the Marine Corps Schools on duty; in 1939 there were 558, some 42 percent of the total, including 49 graduates of the Base Defense Weapons Course. In 1924 only ten officers had attended Army combat arms schools; by 1939 the figure was 117; ten percent of all Marine officers had graduated from either Fort Benning or Fort Sill. The number of naval aviators almost quadrupled, from 52 in 1924 to 192 in 1939, some 16 percent of the total on duty, and 63 of those 192 had attended advanced aviation courses at Army Air Corps schools, and seven had undertaken the formal study of aeronautics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1931 the officers who had been formally schooled had attended an average of 1.1 courses each; by 1935 the figure was 1.53 courses per schooled officer, and in 1939 the figure had risen to 1.62 courses per officer, despite a twenty-percent increase in the size of the officer corps since 1935. By 1939 the total number of courses completed and formal designations earned by Marine officers was 1,287, which was exactly one hundred more than the total number of officers on duty.

Expeditionary service had accounted for a large proportion of the Corps' activities during the interwar period. In 1924, 760 officers had served overseas (76 percent); by 1931, the figure had risen to 905 (89 percent); by 1935, it had dropped slightly. to 865, and by 1939 the figure was down to 796, some 66 percent of the total. Among officers of the rank of captain and above, nearly all had served overseas.

In 1924 only 394 Marine officers had been to sea. The number rose only to 532 by 1931, but to 738 by 1935, and to 836 in 1939. The percentage who had served at sea in 1924 was only 48.5 percent; by 1939, it had risen to seventy percent. In 1924 only 61 Marines were at sea; in 1931 the figure was the same, but by 1935 it had risen to 103, and by 1939, 123 Marine officers were at sea aboard 49 ships, including sixteen battleships, five aircraft carriers, and twenty-eight cruisers. If sea service was what distinguished a Marine from a soldier, by 1939 more than two-thirds were sea-soldiers, though fewer than half had been in 1924. In 1924 only 113 Marine officers were graduates of Annapolis, and they were concentrated at the top and the bottom of the Lineal List, including the generals, a few colonels, and some of the second lieutenants. By 1939, General Lejeune's program of procuring new officers from three sources had resulted in there being 393 Annapolis graduates in the officer corps (33 percent); although all of the generals had been appointed from civil life, there were Naval Academy graduates in every rank from second lieutenant through colonel, and half of the captains were Academy graduates. Like the increase in sea service, the growth of the percentage of Annapolis graduates in the Marine Corps had brought it closer to the Navy.

In addition to the steady influx of Annapolis graduates, there had been a transformation of those officers who had been appointed from civil life. In 1924 there had been 451 officers who had been appointed from civil life, and they were in every grade, nearly all of them had been commissioned between 1900 and 1915; only thirty were graduates of distinguished ROTC programs. By 1939, 134 pre-First World War officers had risen to the upper ranks, and there were 363 post-1920 ROTC men, of whom 265 had been commissioned between 1935 and 1939.[273]

In 1924 there were 370 officers who had formerly been enlisted men, and the majority of them were long-service, pre-World War I noncoms. By 1939 only 296 officers had been commissioned from the ranks, and nearly all of them were graduates of the Candidates for Commission Course. The number of officers commissioned from the ranks declined after 1935, in large part because the best prospects were identified before their twenty-second birthdays and sent to Annapolis, from which they usually returned to the Corps.

In 1924 there had been nine general officers, 186 field-grade officers, and 764 company-grade officers. By 1939 the number of generals had grown to twelve, not a significant increase in numbers, but the general officers who were on duty in 1939 were all nearing retirement, and only three of the twelve had significant roles in the Second World War. While the number of company-grade billets remained fairly level from 1924, when there were 764, and 1939, when there were 825 of them, that actually represented a decrease from eighty-two percent to seventy percent.[274]

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[273] Lineal List 1924, 406-41; Lineal List 1939, 568-611.

[274] Ibid.

There was, however, a major increase in the number of field-grade billets. In 1924 there had been 186 field-grade officers; by 1939 there were 346, an increase of eighty-six percent over 1924, and field-grade officers represented twenty-nine percent of the officer corps. This restructuring of the officer corps dovetailed with the actions of the selection boards in creating more vacancies in the higher grades for those officers who had been selected for promotion.[275]

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, references to the terms "profession" and "professional" were infrequent in the articles in Marine Corps Gazette in the early 1920's, and they were made in the context of the profession of arms as a historic, gentleman-warrior pursuit. By the late 1930's, however, at least a few Marine officers were writing about professionalism in a way that tied it to education, not tradition.

In 1937 Captain Paul Sherman, a naval aviator who had been commissioned after graduation from the ROTC program at the University of Massachusetts, wrote an article for Marine Corps Gazette titled "The Senior Profession."[276] Sherman discussed the nature of professions, and noted that soldiers and sailors had long seen themselves as professionals because they followed a non-commercial 'calling' which served the public at large by preserving the state. "Now it is submitted that the profession of arms is one of the most 'learned' of professions . . . many phases of education and experience go to make up the requirements of an officer in the service . . .his profession has become a highly specialized one." Sherman identified two critical elements which

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[275] Ibid.

[276] Captain Paul D. Sherman, "The Senior Profession," MCG 21 (August 1937), 39-40.

defined the Marine officer by the late 1930's: education and specialization, both of which had been lacking in the early 1920's.

When Major General Louis McCarty Little addressed the graduating class of the Basic School in 1935, he observed that "[y]ou have started your training at a school where you are taught the fundamentals of a highly specialized profession. Bear in mind that this is but the start. On your way to achieve your professional education, school will follow school until the end of your career."[277] A year later, Colonel C. J. Miller, who had been a member of the Barrett Board which had produced the original Marine Corps Landing Manual, observed, "The whole professional training and education of our young officers lies in an equitable distribution of duty with troops, at sea, on the staff of smaller units, and regular attendance at schools."[278]

In the final chapter of his 1939 History of the United States Marine Corps, Lt. Col. Clyde Metcalf, who had been appointed from civil life in 1912 and served with the Fourth Brigade in France, noted that "the rapid drift to a more and more complicated existence during recent years has found its counterpart in the activities of the U.S. Marine Corps."[279] The profession of arms had been "a comparatively simple and practical one, which could be readily learned by a few years of experience. The officers boasted of being practical soldiers, and any tendency towards theorizing of

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[277] Louis M. Little, "General Little Speaks Frankly to the Basic School Graduating Class," MCG 19 (May 1935), 30.

[278] C. J. Miller, "The Education and Training of Young Officers," MCG 20 (February 1936), 14.

[279] Metcalf, History of the U. S. Marine Corps, 545.

making their profession a scholarly one was looked on as entirely unnecessary."[280] Metcalf went on to point out the improvements in officer procurement methods, the developments in the Marine Corps Schools, and education in the schools of the other services. He also noted that "both officers and enlisted men . . . have been pressed into the same mold by the standardizing processes of our educational system, [and] colorful characters have practically ceased to exist in the organization."[281]

The increases in formal education, and the broadening of service at overseas and afloat had made the Marine officer into a distinct professional, who was ready to demonstrate his proficiency to his peers in the Army and the Navy. Yet all of the education would have been of little use if the Corps had not reformed its promotion system. The officer corps aged drastically between 1924 and 1935, and the increase in average ages was accompanied by increases in time in grade. Between 1935 and 1939 the average ages of general officers increased, but the average age in every other rank, except for second lieutenant, had decreased. In 1935 the average age in every grade except colonel exceeded the recommended maximum age in grade. By 1939 the average age of colonels, lieutenant colonels, and first lieutenants had fallen below the maximum age in grade. While the average age of majors, forty-three, was excessive, it was only one year over the maximum age; the same was true for captains, but it must be remembered that the average captain had been forty-two in 1935, the same as the recommended maximum age for majors.

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[280] Ibid.

[281] Ibid., 546.

In 1935 there were colonels who had served eleven years in grade, lieutenant colonels who had served eight years in grade, and majors, captains, and first lieutenants who had served for fifteen years in the same rank. By 1939, except for a few captains who had been passed over and were about to retire, no officer had served more than five years in grade. The actions of the promotion boards between 1935 and 1939 had weeded out 280 officers, more than had retired in the period between 1924 and 1934. By 1939 the Marine Corps officer was not only trained in his specialty, but was of an age to perform the duties commensurate with his rank.

Holland Smith had been informed by General Holcomb in 1939 that he could expect to succeed him as Commandant. Smith made it clear that he did not want the job, because it required political and diplomatic skills which his brusque manner precluded. During the early part of World War II he was engaged in troop-training duties, but he went out to the Pacific in late 1943 and, as a lieutenant general, commanded the Fleet Marine Force in the campaigns from Tarawa to Iwo Jima.

Archer Vandegrift's success as commander of the First Marine Division on Guadalcanal earned him the Medal of Honor and propelled him into the Commandancy in early 1944, where he became the first Marine to wear four stars. He oversaw the final expansion of the Corps to six full divisions, the equivalent of a field army. After the war the Corps was reduced to 75,000 men, but its institutional existence was preserved, and its primacy in the development and execution of amphibious warfare was legally confirmed.

Clifton Cates commanded a regiment on Guadalcanal and returned to Quantico to command the Marine Corps Schools. In 1944 he went back to the Pacific and

commanded the Fourth Marine Division on Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. He was slated to command an amphibious corps in the invasion of Japan, and succeeded Vandegrift as Commandant in 1948.

Lemuel Shepherd missed the Guadalcanal campaign, but led a regiment in the 1943 invasion of Bougainville. Soon promoted to brigadier, he was in succession the Assistant Commander of the First Marine Division, the commander of the First Separate Brigade on Guam, and the commander of the Sixth Marine Division on Okinawa in 1945. Like Cates, he would have commanded a corps in the invasion of Japan. Shepherd commanded the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, during the early days of the Korean War, and succeeded Cates as Commandant in 1952.

Merritt Edson raised the First Marine Raider Battalion at Quantico shortly after Pearl Harbor. Edson's Raiders went into action at Tulagi, near Guadalcanal, in August, 1942, and they were instrumental in preserving the First Division's perimeter during a massive Japanese assault in September. Edson was awarded the Medal of Honor, and Vandegrift quickly spot-promoted him to colonel and gave him command of a regiment. He served as chief of staff of the Second Marine Division at Tarawa, and received another spot-promotion, to brigadier general, pushing him far ahead of his contemporaries. He finished the Pacific war as commander of all service troops in the Fleet Marine Force. During the controversy over the unification of the armed forces in 1947, which threatened to reduce the Corps to a tiny ceremonial and guard force, Edson sacrificed his future career by taking early retirement and speaking candidly to Congress about the necessity of a Marine Corps to national security. Many officers believed that Edson's testimony saved the Marine Corps from virtual extinction. Had

he chosen to remain in the Marine Corps, he might have been a candidate for the Commandancy in 1956.

Gerald Thomas began the Second World War as operations officer of the First Marine Division. On Guadalcanal he rose quickly to become chief of staff, and was one of a small circle of officers upon whom Vandegrift relied. He was spot-promoted to brigadier general in late 1943, jumping ahead of many of his peers, and became the Director of Operations and Training at Headquarters, Marine Corps, in early 1944, when Vandegrift became Commandant. As such, Thomas was the eminence grise of the Marine Corps. Like Edson, he was deeply involved in the Corps' fight for survival in 1947. He later commanded the First Marine Division in Korea in 1951-52, and might have become Commandant in 1956, although his age would have precluded him from serving a full four-year term.

Randolph Pate was divisional logistics officer of the First Division on Guadalcanal in 1942, until malaria forced his evacuation. He served in amphibious planning roles in the latter part of World War II, and after the war he became Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools. He commanded the First Marine Division in Korea during the final weeks of that war, and succeeded his second cousin, Lemuel Shepherd, as Commandant in 1956.

Evans F. Carlson returned to the Marine Corps as a reserve major in 1941. Early the next year he raised the Second Marine Raider Battalion in California, using many of the methods and techniques he had learned from the Chinese Communists. He led the unit, widely known as Carlsons's Raiders, on a highly publicized raid on Makin Island in August, 1942. Soon thereafter, Carlson led the Second Raiders on a thirty-day

foray behind enemy lines on Guadalcanal, which effectively ended Japanese resistance on the eastern half of the island. As a staff officer in the newly formed Fourth Marine Division he was an observer at the invasion of Tarawa, and supervised most of the Division's planning for the assaults on Kwajalein, Saipan, and Tinian. During the Saipan campaign he was badly wounded while trying top rescue a wounded enlisted man who had been shot through both legs. Carlson received two more Navy Crosses, one for Makin and another for Guadalcanal, and was one of the best-known figures in the wartime Marine Corps, receiving wide public attention. The 1943 film "Gung Ho" starred Randolph Scott in a role which closely resembled Carlson, and was loosely based on the Makin raid. Carlson was medically retired in 1946 and was advanced to the rank of brigadier general in recognition of his decorations and his wound. He was a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for U.S. senator in 1946, until sidelined by a heart attack. In 1947 Henry Wallace considered Carlson as a potential running mate, but he died shortly thereafter.

Merrill Twining was on the staff of the First Marine Division on Guadalcanal, where he succeeded Gerald Thomas as operations officer, thus becoming part of Vandegrift's inner circle of advisers. He held important staff positions during the rest of the Pacific war, was later commandant of the Marine Corps Schools, and served as Assistant Commander of the First Marine Division in Korea. In 1960, by then a lieutenant general, he was a strong candidate for the Commandancy, but lost out to a slightly younger officer, David Shoup, who had been awarded the Medal of Honor at Tarawa. His older brother, General Nathan F. Twining, USAF, was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time.

Lewis Puller commanded an infantry battalion on Guadalcanal and New Britain, receiving his third and fourth Navy Crosses. Promoted to colonel, he commanded a regiment of the First Marine Division at Peleliu in 1944, and then returned to the States to train troops. His career seemed to be in eclipse until 1950, when he served as Assistant Commander of the First Marine Division in Korea, was promoted to brigadier general, and received his fifth Navy Cross, a record which will probably never be equaled. Although he believed himself to be in perfect health, he was medically retired in 1955, receiving promotion to lieutenant general for his decorations and wounds. His public fame might have made him a dark-horse candidate for Commandant in 1956, had he not already been retired.

All ten of these officers took advantage of the educational opportunities offered in the interwar period, all served on expeditionary duty in the Caribbean and/or China, and all except Vandegrift served afloat as well. With few exceptions, they had significantly more professional education and expeditionary service than their peers. While many of their contemporaries were retired during the late 19030's, these ten officers all benefited by the introduction of promotion by selection: their records enabled them top move upward, and their combinations of education and experience allowed them to excel.

The progress of their careers before, during, and after World War II demonstrates a major change in the way that Marine officers rose to the top of their profession. While Clifton Cates, for example, commanded every formation from a platoon to a division, officers such as Gerald Thomas, Randolph Pate, and Merrill Twining built their careers on success in the Schools and staff work. As technology

made warfare more complex, it reduced the proportion of military forces engaged directly in combat, and increased the size, scope, and importance of the planning and logistical aspects of war. Combat leadership was no longer the sine qua non of professional attainment: education and staff experience had become critical elements of the preparation of a Marine officer for high command.

In the days of the colorful character, an officer needed little formal education, and was known by a reputation that had been earned in the field. By the eve of the Second World War, both a sound basic education and further professional schooling were the hallmarks of a Marine officer. Advancement had once depended upon seniority; now it depended upon the attainment of a set of skills which could be measured objectively. Professionalism had progressed from a highly subjective personal reputation to a set of objective criteria which measured and weighed an officer throughout his career.

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