

246th Birthday Message from General Berger, CMC

Posted on October 25, 2021



On 10 November 1970, Commandant Chapman challenged all Marines, active and inactive, young and old, deployed or recently returned from combat, “not to look back, but instead, to look to the future.” He insisted that we celebrate our anniversary, “not as an end of almost two centuries of dedicated service, but as preparation for new service, new dedication, and new achievement.” Those sage words resonate across time and are as applicable today as they were 51 years ago.

Our Corps holds to traditions that link us to the elite warriors who wore the uniform before us, but the traditions we hand down through the generations go far beyond tangible displays, symbols, or customs. The most important traditions that link us to our past and must be carried into the future are the intangible ones—traditions of courage, trust, discipline, loyalty, respect, perseverance, adaptability, and leadership. Today, 246 years since our warfighting legacy began, we celebrate those traits that have been forged in all Marines—past and present.

The character of Marines, our unwavering commitment and relentless pursuit of excellence, remains unchanged from that of past generations, even as the character of warfare is ever-changing. These changes will require us to do what Marines do best—adapt and innovate to win any battle or respond to any crisis. Just as Marines who fought in Iraq and Afghanistan over these past 20 years adapted to the demands of protracted counterinsurgency operations—which would have been all too familiar to the Marines of 1970—we will adapt to the demands of the present and future, while learning the hard lessons from our recent past.

We can’t know for certain where future battlefields will be, or how our methods of warfighting will be redefined as threats to our Nation evolve, but we can ensure that the Marines who fight those battles will be forged of the same courage, spirit, and warfighting excellence as all Marines before them.

We who serve today represent an unbroken chain that stretches back 246 years. As we mark our anniversary, we remember those who went before us, and as we look over the horizon to “new service, new dedication, and new achievement,” solemnly swear to uphold their example of honor, courage, and commitment.

Happy 246th Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,



David H. Berger
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

