Early United States Marine Corps History

War of 1812 - World War I

Purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce you to the rich and varied history of the Marine Corps from 1812 to 1918.

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Lesson Objectives

- **Identify the <u>two key battles fought during the War of 1812</u>**

- **Identify the importance of <u>Archibald Henderson</u> in Marine Corps history**

- **Identify the origin of the "<u>Blood Stripe</u>" on the Marine Corps Dress Blue uniform**

- **Identify the significance of the Marine <u>NCO sword</u>**

- **Identify the significance of Marines' involvement in the <u>Spanish American War</u>**

Lesson Objectives

- **Identify the <u>two Marines</u> awarded <u>two Medals of Honor</u>**

- **Identify the Marine considered the <u>"Father of Marine Corps Aviation"</u>**

- **Identify the significance of the <u>Battle of Belleau Wood</u> in WWI**

- **Identify the <u>origin of the term "Devil Dog"</u>**

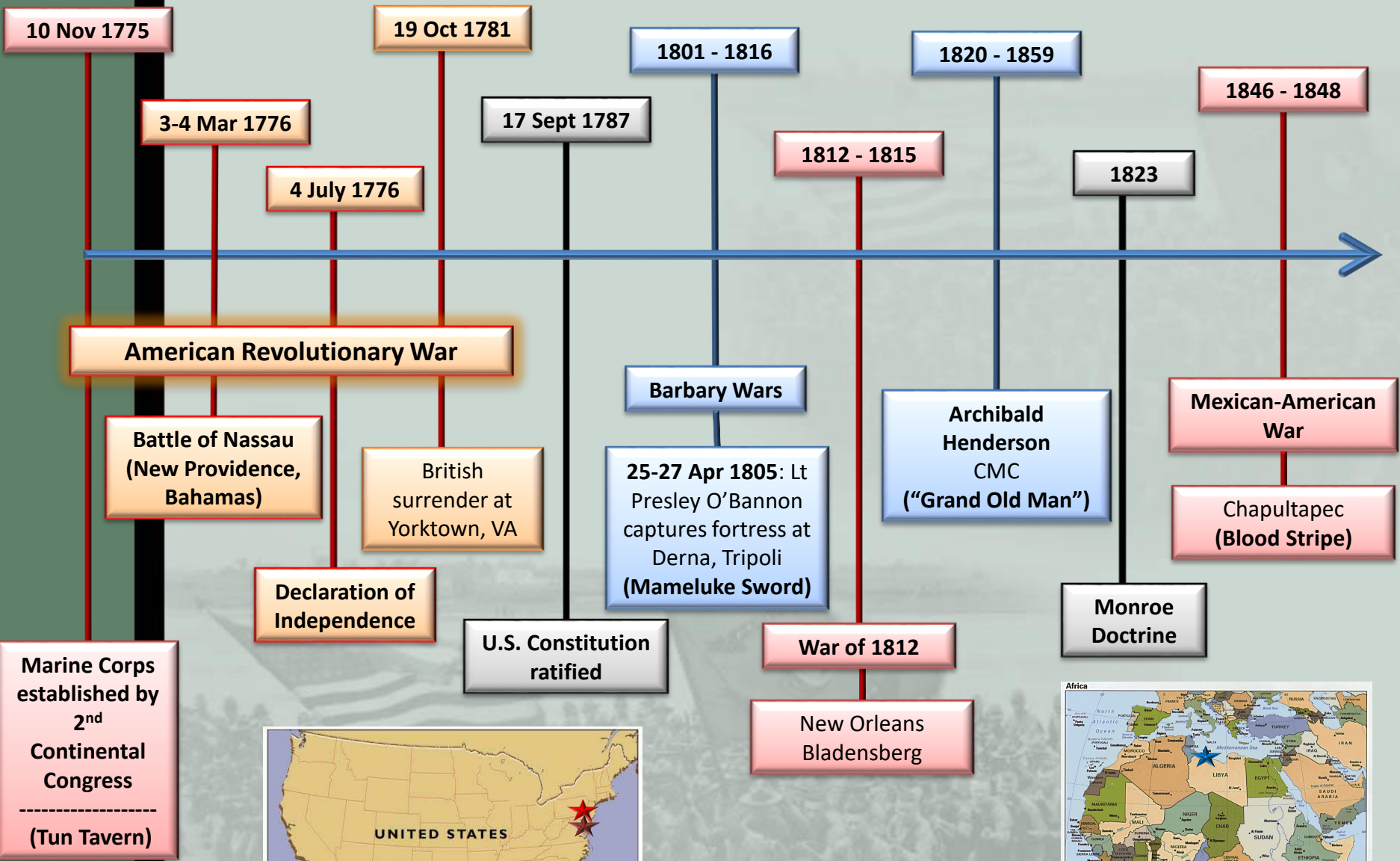- **Identify the significance of the <u>French Fourragere</u>**

Lesson Objectives

- **Identify the <u>date that the Armistice was signed</u> to end WWI**

- **Identify the <u>first female Marine</u>**

- **Identify the <u>13th Commandant</u> of the Marine Corps**

- **Identify significance of <u>Marine Mail Guards</u>**

USMC HISTORICAL TIMELINE

1861 - 1865

1900

1903

1906

1914

1918

1901

1903 - 1916

1909-1913

1915 - 1934

1898

Banana Wars

U.S. Civil War

Boxer Rebellion

Panama

Cuba

Mexico

World War I

Philippine Insurrection

Dominican Republic

Nicaragua

Haiti

Spanish-American War

- **Belleau Woods ("Devil Dogs")**

- Soissons
- Chateau Thierry
- St. Mihiel
- Meuse Argonne
- Mont Blanc

(Fourragère)

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WAR OF 1812

1812-1815

The War of 1812

- The United States declared war on Great Britain on June 18, 1812

- War lasted until February 18, 1815

- The central dispute surrounded the <u>impressments</u> of American sailors & soldiers by the British and choking off U.S. trade with France.

- The Marines fought bravely in several famous land battles including the **Battle of Bladensburg** outside of Washington, DC and the **Battle of New Orleans**

Battles at Sea and on Lakes

Of four major sea battles, Marine Corps marksmanship was decisive in winning three.

<u>1813</u>: Marines defeat British in bloody Battle of Lake Erie.

The Battle Of Bladensburg

- **Near the town of Bladensburg, Maryland (6 miles from Nation's Capital)**

- **114 Marines & Sailors attempted to block a force of 4,270 British troops advancing on D.C.**

- **Stopped three charges before being outflanked and driven back**

- **British used superior numbers**

  - Continued to march through the Capital

The Battle Of Bladensburg

- **British burn Capitol & White House**
- **The Commanding Officer of the British reported:**

   "They [Marines] have given us our only real fight."

The Battle Of New Orleans

http://www.history.com/topics/battle-of-new-orleans/videos

Battle fought after war already ended

The Battle Of New Orleans

- 9,000 British landed near New Orleans

- Marines and Sailors fought <u>delaying action</u> in the bayous, buying Gen. Jackson 9 days to build defenses in the city

- British assaulted and bombarded American position under cover of heavy fog

- On <u>8 Jan 1815</u>, British launched final frontal assault

  - 2,100 British killed in 25 minutes after fog lifted, exposing lines of troops to musket and grapeshot fire

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GROWTH OF THE MARINE CORPS

1815-1836

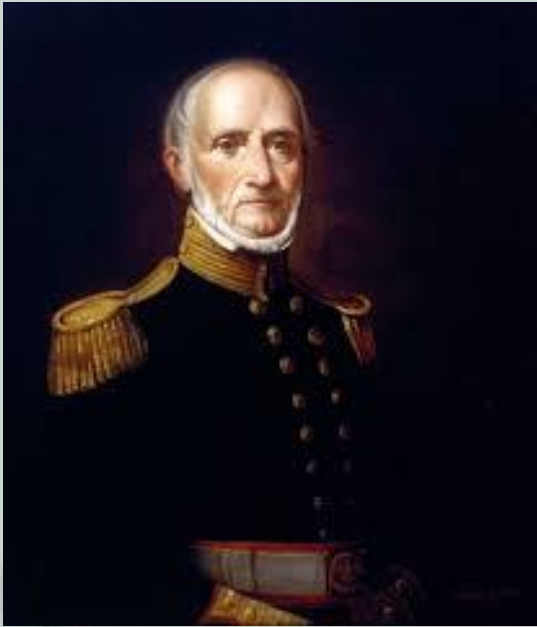# Growth of the Corps

- **In the period between 1815 and 1836, the United States did not engage in any foreign wars.**

- **Lieutenant Colonel Franklin Wharton, Commandant from 1804 to 1818, focused on improving the disciplinary system, and improving health and living conditions in Marine quarters.**

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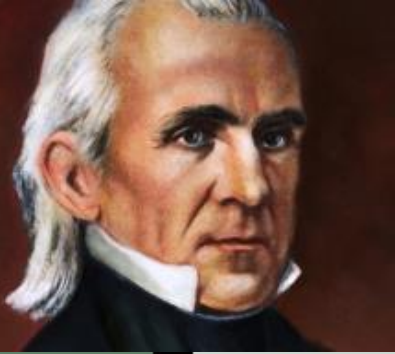
Archibald Henderson

Decorated for bravery on USS Constitution, "Old Ironsides," during War of 1812.

Officially became 5th Commandant Jan 1820 - Oct 1859 (39 yrs)

Known as the "Grand Old Man of the Marine Corps"

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Archibald Henderson

- **Introduced higher standards of personal appearance, training and discipline**

- **Began "Force in Readiness" concept**

- **Reputation of the Corps surged during his time as Commandant**

- **1830: Successfully prevented the Marine Corps from being absorbed into the Army**

Archibald Henderson

- **1836-1837 — Fought the Creek & Seminole Indians in Florida & Georgia**

- *"Gone to Florida to fight the Indians. Will be back when the war is over"*

- **Led the Marine Corps during several years of war with Mexico over California and Texas**

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Review Questions

- **What are the two key battles fought by Marines during the War of 1812?**
  - **Bladensburg & New Orleans**

- **Who was nicknamed the "Grand Old Man of the Marine Corps"?**
  - **Archibald Henderson**

- **How long did he serve as Commandant?**
  - **39 years**

- **Why should the Battle of New Orleans never have taken place?**
  - **The War of 1812 was already over**

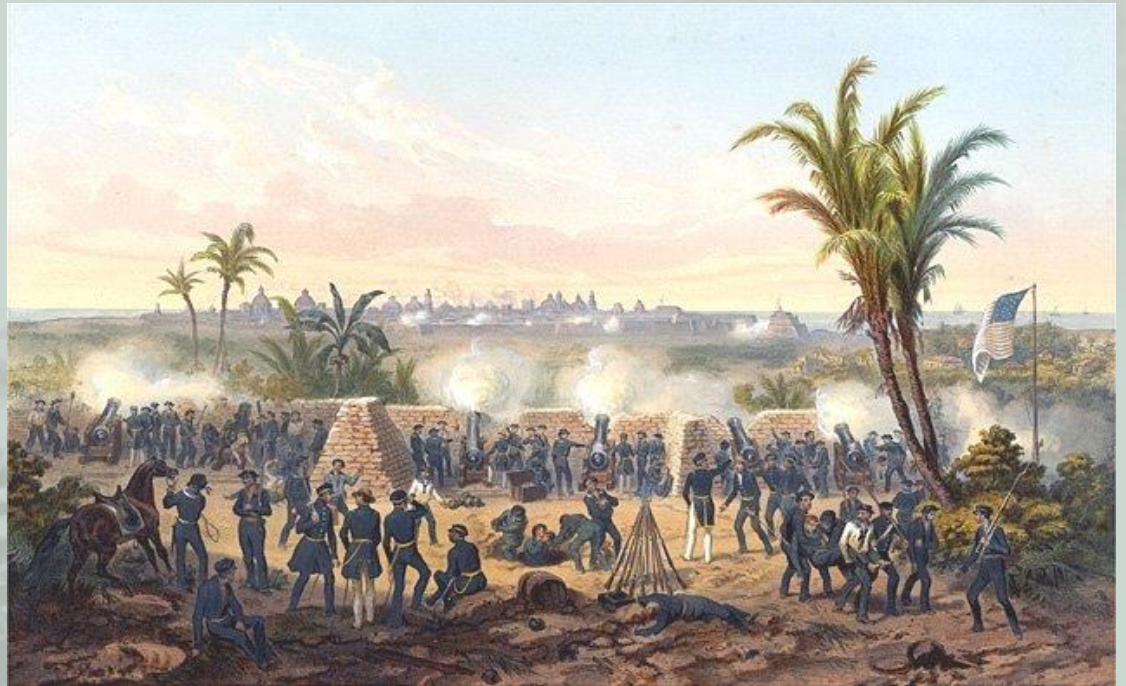# **MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR**

1846-1848

The Mexican-American War

- From 1836 to 1846, Mexico and the US had many disputes over the boundary near the **Rio Grand river**.

- In <u>1846</u>, <u>President Polk</u> addressed Congress asking for and receiving a declaration of war against Mexico.

   - First year of war was fought in California.

   - Second year, Marines joined forces with Army and landed at <u>Vera Cruz</u>.

- The decisive battle of the Mexican War was the US attack on **<u>Chapultepec</u>** (The Halls of Montezuma), a castle that protected the road to Mexico City.

The Mexican-American War

The landing in <u>Vera Cruz</u> on <u>9 March 1847</u> was first large scale amphibious landing.

Conducted by a 12,000 strong Army, Navy and Marine Corps landing force; the largest until <u>World War II</u>.

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The Mexican-American War

The Battle of Chapultepec

- **Chapultepec was a fortress that sat on top of a high plateau which controlled the approaches to Mexico City.**

- **Fortress was heavily reinforced by the Mexicans.**

- **Marines were involved in the <u>bloodiest battle</u> during Mexican-American War.**

The Mexican-American War
The Battle of Chapultepec

- **As the assault began, they were met with a hail of cannon and small arms fire.**

- **<u>Brave leadership</u> and determination of the <u>officers</u> and <u>NCOs</u> leading the assault <u>won the battle</u>.**

era, Camp Johnson

The "Blood Stripe"

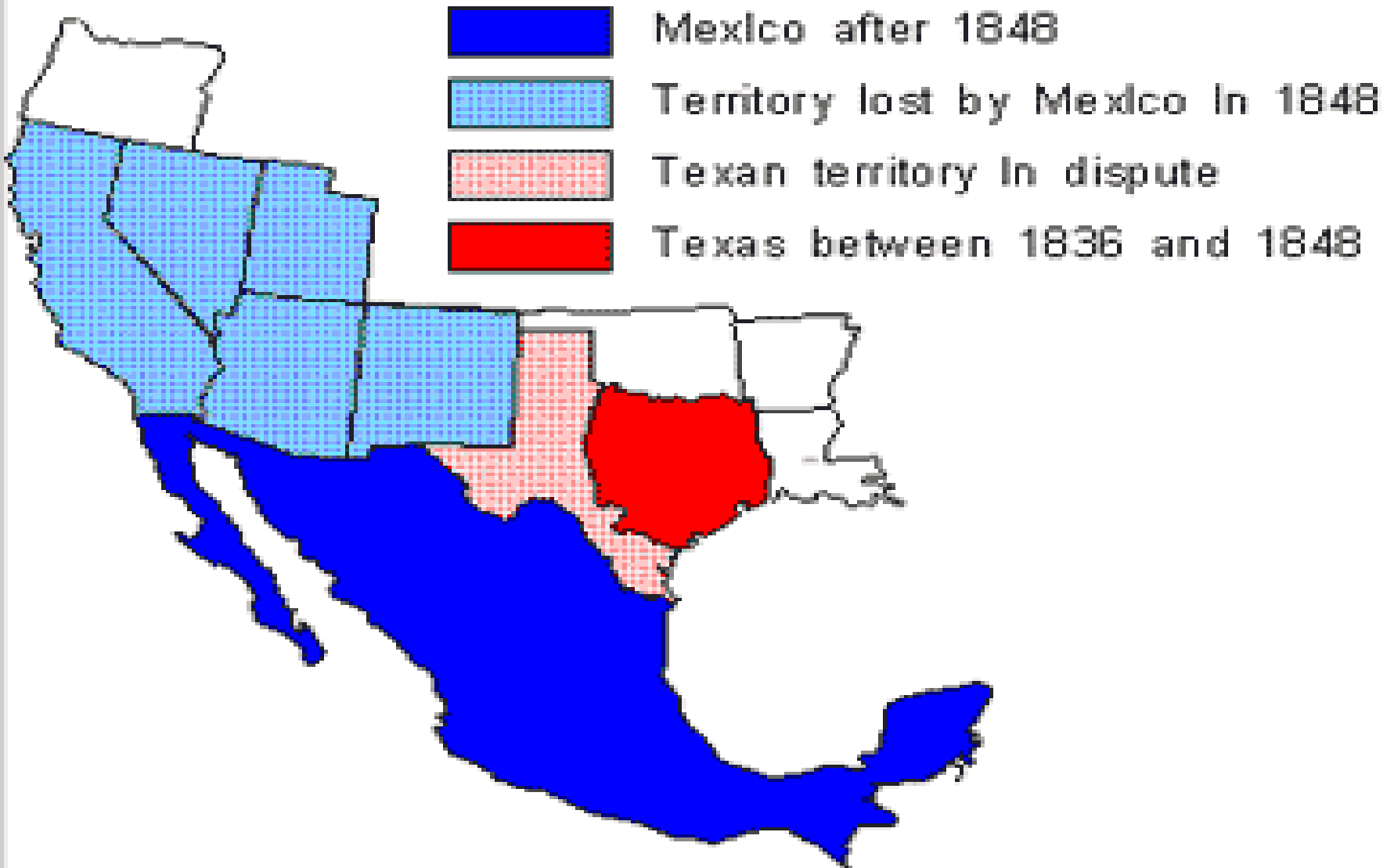- **The scarlet trouser stripe on Dress Blues commemorates the blood shed at Chapultepec.**

- **90% of casualties at Chapultepec were Marine Officers and Noncommissioned Officers**

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Results of the Mexican War

MEXICAN WAR, 1846-48: Causes and Results

- Mexico after 1848
- Territory lost by Mexico in 1848
- Texan territory in dispute
- Texas between 1836 and 1848

Review Questions

- **What famous battle near Vera Cruz involving Marines took place during the Mexican-American War?**
  - **The Battle of Chapultepec**

- **What do Marine NCOs and Officers wear on their Dress Blue uniforms to honor those who fought in the Battle of Chapultepec?**
  - **The Blood Stripe**

UNITED STATES CIVIL WAR

1861-1865

The Civil War

- **1861 country found itself in an entirely different situation.**

- **30% of the Marine Corps officers resigned to fight for the south.**

- **These were dark days for the U.S.**

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The Civil War

During the prelude to war, an 86-man Marine detachment under Lt Israel Greene was detached to arrest the abolitionist John Brown in 1859.

Marines captured Brown in less than 5 minutes.
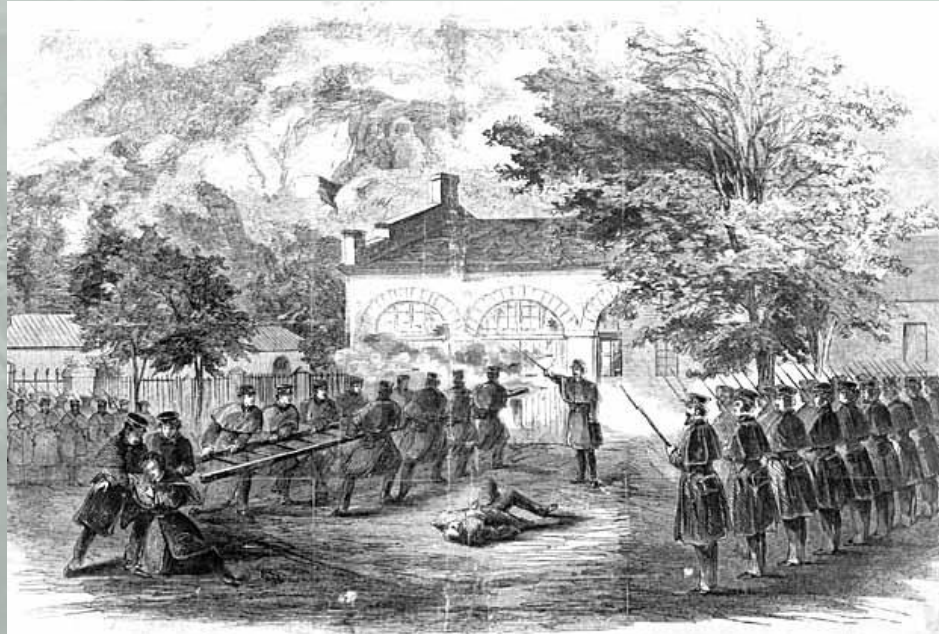
The Civil War

The seed of the modern day Marine Corps.

First dedicated amphibious Marine unit was formed, to assist in the naval blockade of the Confederacy.

First Marine Awarded the Medal of Honor

Cpl John F. Mackie

Today In USMC History

15 May 1862: Corporal John Mackie, the first Marine to earn the Medal of Honor, was commended for service in the USS GALENA during action against Confederate shore batteries at Drewry's Bluff which blocked the James River approaches to Richmond.

(Photo found on civilwartalk.com)

First Marine Awarded the Medal of Honor

17 other Marines awarded the Medal of Honor during the Civil War.

Marines continued to perform traditional roles on board Navy ships and limited land action with the Army.

1862-1912   1913-1942

NCO Sword

Prior to the Civil War, Marine Officers exchanged the Mameluke sword for an Army Infantry sword.

After the war, Marine Officers reverted back to the Mameluke sword and passed down the Army Infantry sword to the Marine NCO's.

Review Questions

- **Who was the first Marine to earn the Medal of Honor?**
  - **Cpl John Mackie**

- **Prior to the Civil War, what replaced the Mamaluke sword for Marine officers?**
  - **Army infantry sword**
  - **Later became the *NCO Sword***

SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

1898

Spanish American War

Photo # NH 46774 Diving on MAINE's wreck

Photo # NH 98920   Officer's Club at Deer Point, Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, 28 June 1979

- <u>1897</u>: Relations w/ Spain deteriorate
- <u>Feb 1898</u>: Spanish sink *USS Maine* in Havana Harbor
- U.S. declares war → Very prepared for war
- Navy blocks Spanish ships to prevent reinforcements
- Marines land at Guantanamo Bay→ Secure advanced naval base

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<u>Spanish American War</u>

- **Marines attack Spanish water supply (Cuzco Wells)**
  - **As Marines move towards town, they are in danger from enemy fire & supporting NGF**
  - **<u>Sgt John Quick</u> exposes self to enemy fire IOT direct NGF onto the enemy**
  - **Sgt Quick's actions allow Marines to seize Cuzco Wells**
  - **He earns <u>Medal of Honor</u> for his actions**

Spanish American War

- **12 Aug 1898: War ends**

- **This war transforms the U.S. into a power on the world stage**

- **Congress doubles the size of the Marine Corps due to its success**

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BOXER REBELLION (CHINA)

1900

Boxer Rebellion

- **"Boxers"** were a Chinese organization dedicated to the elimination of all Westerners from China

- **May 1900**: 50,000 Boxers attack western delegations

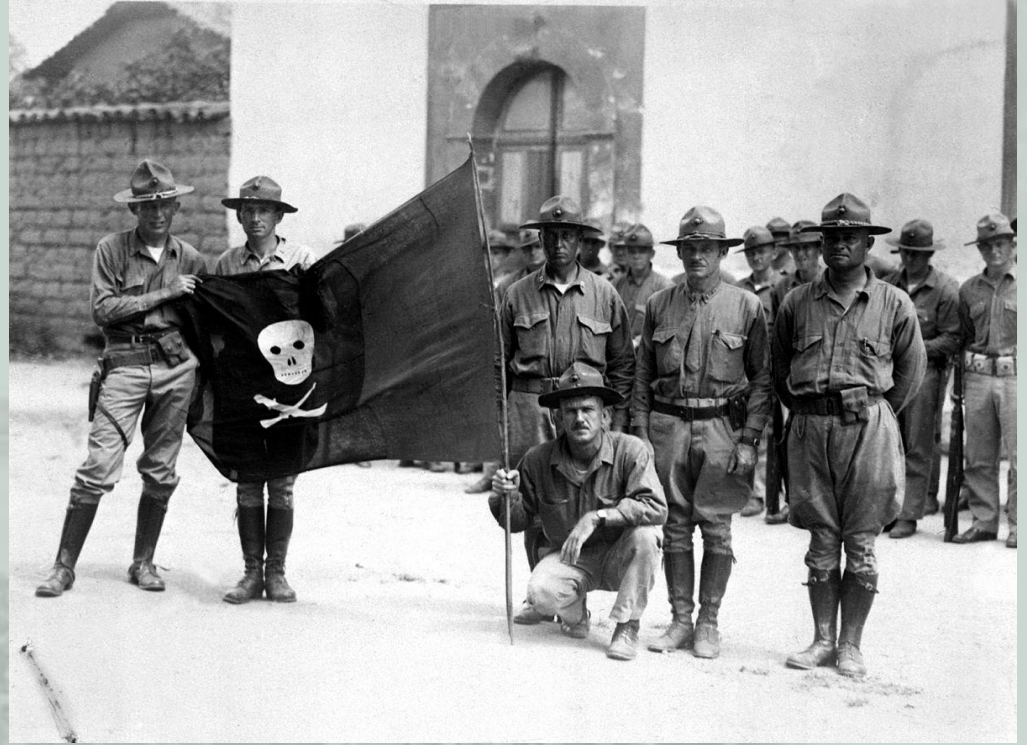- **Marines defend a wall of the western compound**

Boxer Rebellion

- **Relief force arrives 54 days later**
  - **Marines still defending!**

- **Marines received 33 Medals of Honor for actions during Boxer Rebellion**

- **Pvt Dan Daly earned 1st MoH → Single handedly held off wave after wave of Chinese attacks.**

BANANA WARS

1901-1934

Banana Wars

- **Main export from regions were bananas**
  - **Philippines**
  - **Panama**
  - **Dominican Republic**
  - **Cuba**
  - **Nicaragua**
  - **Haiti**

- **"Force-in-Readiness"**
  - **U.S.'s primary enforcer of foreign policy & protector of American interests**

  - **Marines continue action in these areas for over three decades (1901-1934)**

- **1903: Panama was primary concern**
  - **Major John A. Lejeune leads Marines to prevent Columbians from interfering with construction of Panama Canal**

VERA CRUZ & HAITI

1914

Vera Cruz

- **1914: Mexico was target for Marines after Mexican President assassinated by Gen Huerta**

- **Maj Smedley Butler ignores gunfire and walks down center of streets in Vera Cruz to point out snipers and inspire his men**

- **1st Marine officer awarded the Medal of Honor**

- **Under Colonel Lejeune, Marines took the city after many hours of house to house fighting**

Haiti

- **<u>1914</u>: Two Haitian presidents murdered**
  - **Govt collapsed**
  - **Unrest in Haiti threatened European intervention**

- **Marines sent in to restore order**

- **"Cacos" rebels & bandits responsible for problems**
  - **Cacos disarmed or sent to jail by Marines**

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Haiti

- **"Cacos" strike back & trap Marine detachment**

- **<u>Maj Smedley Butler</u> breaks through defenses & rescues trapped Marines**

- **Maj Butler then leads 24-man detail into Caco stronghold and takes over supposed impenetrable fortress**

- **Awarded 2nd Medal of Honor**

Smedley Butler

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Haiti

- **GySgt Dan Daly** attacks 400-strong Caco force with 35 Marines

- **Awarded 2nd Medal of Honor**

Dan Daly

DEVELOPMENTS OF THE MARINE CORPS

Developments of the Marine Corps

- **Field Radio**
- **Motor Transport**
- **Training Exercises**
- **Marksmanship**
- **Aviation**
  - **Close Air Support**

- **1918: Opha Mae Johnson**
  - **1st female Marine**
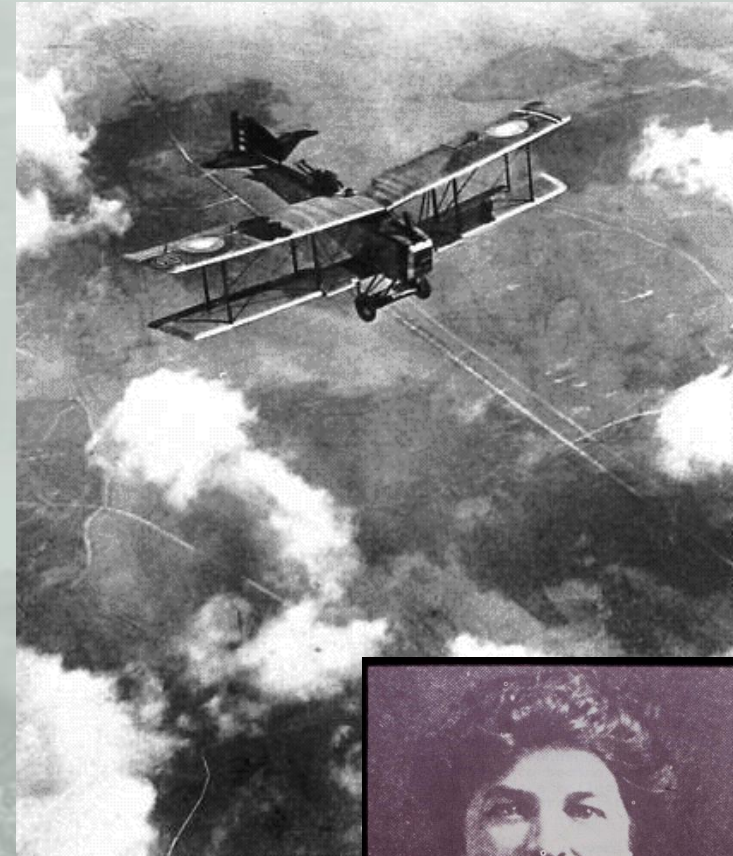
Marine Corps Aviation

- **1912**: **2ndLt Alfred A. Cunningham** became 1st Marine to earn naval aviation wings
  - **"Father of Marine Corps Aviation"**

- **WWI**: Marines flew 14 bombing raids & shot down 12 enemy planes

Combat Camera, Camp Johnson
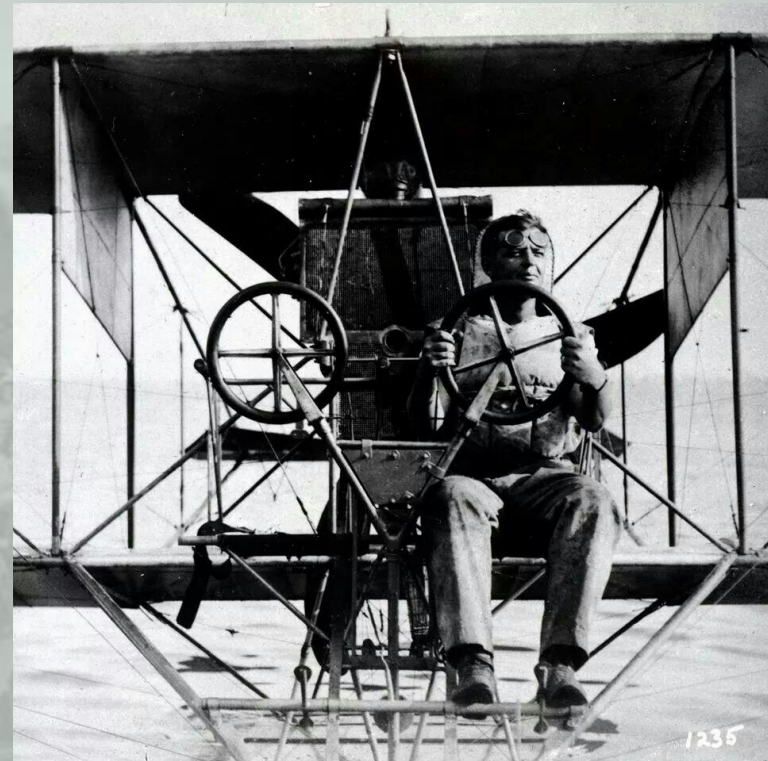
Review Questions

- **Significance of Marines' involvement in the Spanish American War?**

  - **U.S. becomes power on world stage & Congress doubles size of the Corps**

- **Who are the two Marines awarded two Medals of Honor?**

  - **Dan Daly & Smedley Butler**

- **Who is considered the "Father of Marine Corps Aviation"**

  - **A.A. Cunningham**

- **Who was the first female Marine?**

  - **Opha Mae Johnson**

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World War I

- **April 1917: U.S. declares war on Germany** *(Central Powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary)*
  - **Sinking of *RMS Lusitania***

- **Marine Corps greatly expands its numbers to fight**
  - **Began war with:**
    - **511 officers**
    - **13,214 enlisted**

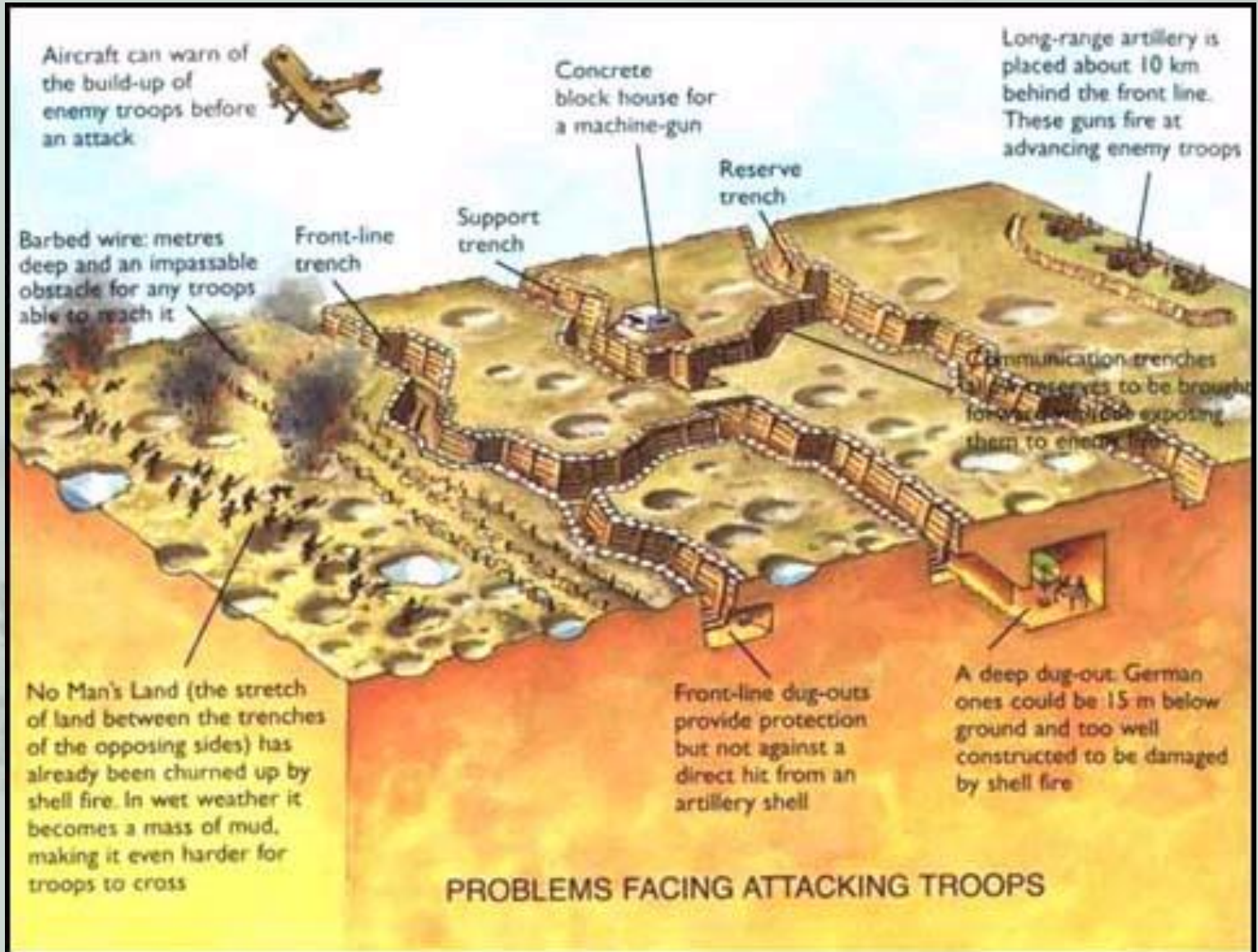- ***"First to Fight"***
  - **Recruiting slogan**

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World War I

4th Marine Brigade is first to arrive in France

- Settle in sector in trenches near Verdun

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World War I
TRENCH WARFARE

Aircraft can warn of the build-up of enemy troops before an attack

Concrete block house for a machine-gun

Long-range artillery is placed about 10 km behind the front line. These guns fire at advancing enemy troops

Reserve trench

Support trench

Barbed wire: metres deep and an impassable obstacle for any troops able to reach it

Front-line trench

Communication trenches allow reserves to be brought forward without exposing them to enemy fire

No Man's Land (the stretch of land between the trenches of the opposing sides) has already been churned up by shell fire. In wet weather it becomes a mass of mud, making it even harder for troops to cross

Front-line dug-outs provide protection but not against a direct hit from an artillery shell

A deep dug-out. German ones could be 15 m below ground and too well constructed to be damaged by shell fire

PROBLEMS FACING ATTACKING TROOPS

World War I

Life in the trenches 3:12

World War I

World War I
Trench Foot

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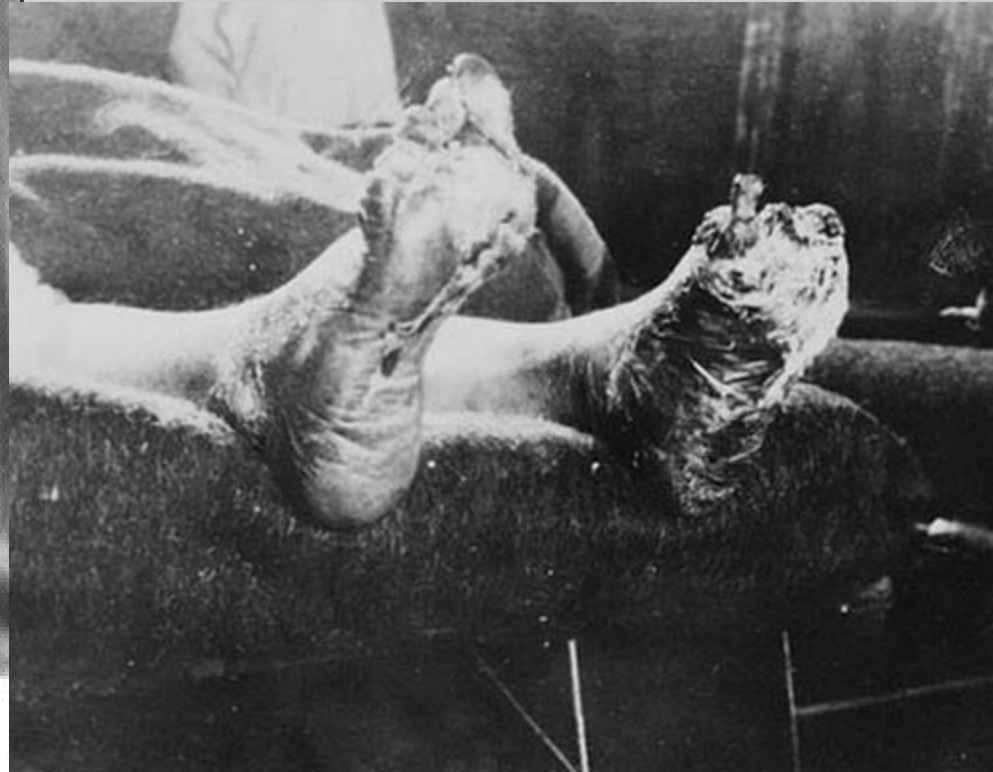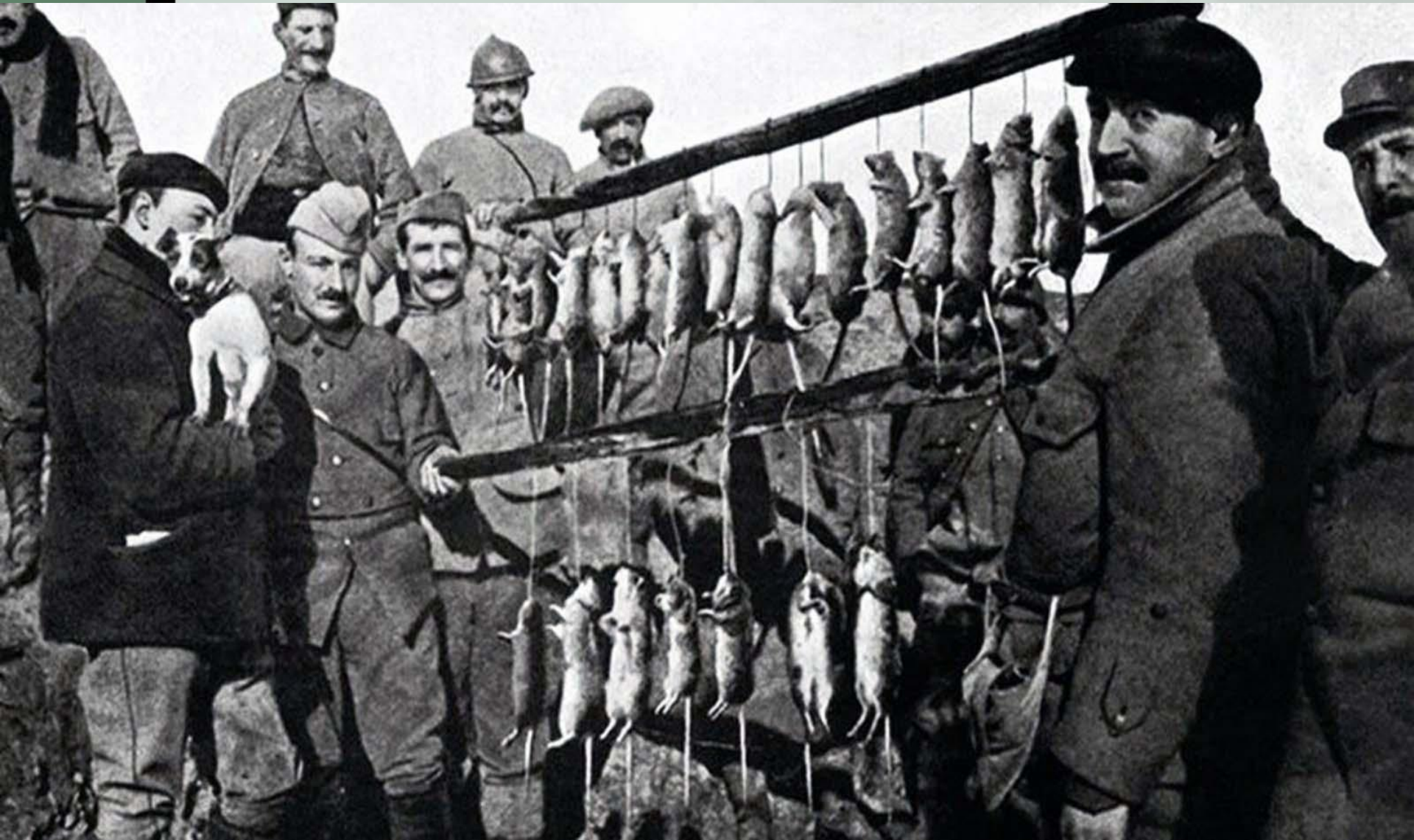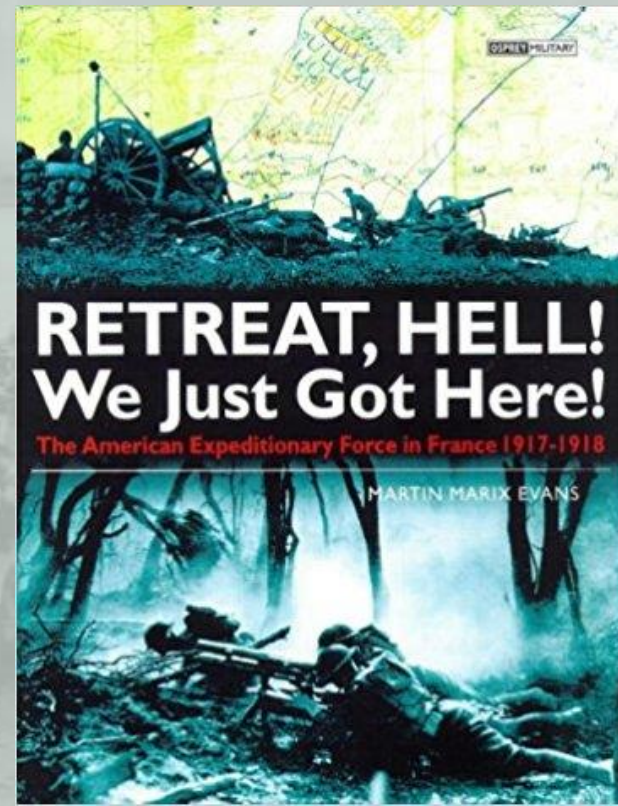
World War I

RATS!

World War I

- **After 54 days of trench warfare, Marines ordered to protect Paris**

- **Marines move to front lines in Belleau Wood as French retreat**

- **Retreating French tell Marines to fall back saying advancement is impossible**

- **Capt Lloyd B. Williams:**

    "Retreat hell! ...We just got here!"

World War I

- **1,200 Germans well-fortified in 1 sq mile of woods**

- **6 June: Marines stall German offensive & counterattack up hill to direct front**
  - **Marines take hill by noon on first day**

- **(3) Marine Bns attack across wheat field toward Belleau Wood**
  - **Machine gun fire cut down many Marines**

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World War I

- **GySgt Dan Daly led one of the charges across the wheat fields**
  - *"Come on you sons of b-----s! Do you want to live forever?"*
  - **By evening, Marines pushed back German defensive line**

- **SgtMaj John Quick drove ammo truck through intense enemy fire to resupply Marines**
  - **Awarded Distinguished Service Cross & Navy Cross**

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World War I

- **<u>12 June</u>: Marines break last German defensive line**

- **<u>13 June</u>: German counterattack repelled by Marine sharpshooters from 400 yds**

- **Many massive German assaults behind walls of mustard gas**
  - **Marines give up NO ground!**

- **French renamed Belleau Wood, "Bois de la Brigade de Marine"**
  - **"The Woods of the Marine Brigade"**

World War I

Origin of the term "Devil Dog"

- **German high command classified Marines as "Shock Troops"**
  - **Term reserved only for finest military organizations**
- **Germans came to fear Marines**
- **"Teufelhunden"**

World War I

French award (3) "*Croix de Guerre*" to 4th Marine Brigade

- **1st at Belleau Wood**

- **2nd at Soissons**
  - **(18 Jul 1918) Gen Lejeune leads Marines after Belleau Wood to halt last major German offensive of WWI**

- **3rd at Blanc Mont**
  - **French come to standstill against Germans.**
  - **Request Marines**
  - **Gen Lejeune commands Army division with 2nd MarDiv**

World War I

Marines entitled to wear *French Fourragere* after earning 3rd Croix de Guerre

5th & 6th Marine Regiments are still authorized to wear

World War I

- **During last days of WWI, Marines continue to attack**
  - **10 Nov 1918: Marines prepare to attack across Meuse River**

- **11 Nov 1918: At 0400, Marines attack across Meuse River**
  - **Later that morning, Armistice signed & the war was over**

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Review Questions

- **What was the famous Marine recruiting slogan from WWI?**
  - **"First to Fight"**
- **From what battle did Marines earn the nickname "Devil Dogs"?**
  - **Battle of Belleau Wood**
- **Who gave them this nickname?**
  - **Germans**
- **What are the 5ᵗʰ & 6ᵗʰ Marine Regiments authorized to wear that was awarded by the French in WWI?**
  - **French Fourragere**

MARINE MAIL GUARDS

1921-1926

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Mail Guards

- **<u>1921</u>: Marines guarded the U.S. mail for 4 months due to robberies and fraud**
  - **Not one piece of mail was stolen**
- **<u>1926</u>: Marines were called back and achieved same results**

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General John A. Lejeune

- **13th Commandant of the Marine Corps**
- **Guided USMC toward amphibious assault role**
- **Established Marine Corps Institute**
- **Established Company Grade Officers' and Field Grade Officers' schools**
- **Organized Headquarters Marine Corps**

Review Questions

- **Who was the first Marine to lead an Army Division?**
  - **General John A. Lejeune**

- **What is Armistice Day called today?**
  - **Veterans Day**

- **Who was the 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps?**
  - **General John A. Lejeune**

Questions?

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