

Ladies and gentlemen, friends, relatives, Sailors and Marines. First let me say thank you for allowing me to be your guest of honor tonight. As it is, this is even more of a special day as it marks not only 30 years ago when I first enlisted but makes my 30th Marine Corps Ball. The Ball is special meaning to me because it keeps traditions alive. This particular ball also has special meaning as it's where I proposed to my wife 11 years ago (obviously she accepted) as those of you that have been around us each year are reminded.

Now that you've heard my BIO, I guess you know a little about me. What you don't know is more of the personal side. I can't remember when I didn't want to be a Marine. I probably had camouflaged diapers. I guess most of it was instilled from my family as most of them were Marines. Our family dates back to the Revolutionary War. The first Montney (Joseph) fought on a Merchant ship. The French Embassy's records show that he was from Marseille and he was an officer who operated cannons aboard ship. He served under Marquis de Lafayette along with his 2 brothers who fought in the war of 1812. I brought an article tonight that was published on my family while I was stationed at HQMC. You're more than welcome to come by and read it.

The main goal of my enlistment was to make Gunnery Sergeant. As any Marine will tell you, the rank has a special and unique meaning. While attached to naval vessels, Navy personnel didn't want to do some of the less rewarding work (like manning the guns), so they assigned the job to the Marines. To no surprise, the Marines became the best at it and because of that the Navy gave them their own rank – Gunnery Sergeant. I guess for me, this goal started way back when I was a child.

As our country grew so did the need to defend it. The Montneys have been involved in every war and battle since the founding of our country. At one point in history 7 male Montneys all enlisted in the Civil War. They were all stationed with different units assigned to different locations. All 7 had made a pact that once the war was over; they'd all meet at a designated place (of course, a bar). The war ended, they met one by one at a bar located in Hyde's Park, NY. The story continues that they mended each others clothes, gave haircuts and all crossed the river to surprise their family.

Families mean a lot to me as I'm sure they do to you. The most significant thing about families, for me, is trust. It's also one of the key principles to being a Marine. It doesn't matter which era or generation a Marine is from, the trust is always there. It's instilled and bred in from the beginning. There are many terms and definitions for this word trust. Some call it Band of Brothers. Most refer to it as "esprit de corps", an unhelpful French phrase that means exactly what it looks like - the spirit of the Corps. But what is that spirit, and where does it come from?

The Marine Corps is the only branch of the U.S. armed forces that recruits people specifically to fight. The Army emphasizes personal development (an army of one), the Navy promises fun (let the journey begin), and the Air Force offers security (it's a great way of life). Missing from all of these advertisements is the hard fact that it is a soldier's trade to suffer and perhaps to die for his country, and to take lives at the risk of his own. Even the music of the services reflects this evasion. The Army's Caisson Song describes a pleasant country outing over hill and dale, lacking only a picnic basket. Anchors Aweigh, the Navy's celebration of the joys of sailing, could have been penned by Jimmy Buffet. The Air Force song is a lyric poem of blue skies and engine thrust. All is joyful and

invigorating, and safe. There are no landmines in the dales nor snipers behind the hills, no submarines or cruise missiles threaten the ocean jaunt, no bandits are lurking in the wild blue yonder.

The Marines' Hymn, by contrast, is all combat. We fight our country's battles, first to fight for right and freedom, we have fought in every clime and place where we could take a gun, in many a strife we've fought for life.

The choice is made clear. You may join the Army to go to adventure training, or join the Navy to go to Bangkok, or join the Air Force to go to computer school. You join the Marines to go to war.

By signing the enlistment contract grants no status in the Corps either. The Army recruit is told from his first minute in uniform that "you're in the Army now, soldier". Navy and Air Force enlistees are sailors or airmen as soon as they get off the bus at the training center. The new arrival at Marine Corps boot camp is called recruit, or private, or worse (much worse), but not Marine. Not yet; maybe not ever. He or she must earn the right to claim the title, and failure returns you to civilian life without hesitation or ceremony.

My recruit platoon, Platoon 1710 at San Diego, California, trained from October through January of 1974. Earlier that year, in Vietnam the Marines were taking two hundred casualties a week. Yet our drill instructors had no qualms about weeding out a quarter of their 112 recruits, graduating only 69. Note that this was post-enlistment attrition; every one of those who were dropped had been passed by the recruiters as fit for service. But they failed the test of boot camp, not necessarily for physical reasons (at least two were outstanding high-school athletes for whom the calisthenics and running were child's play). The cause of their failure was not in the biceps or the legs, but in their spirit. They had lacked the will to endure the mental and emotional strain, so they would not be Marines. Heavy commitments and high casualties notwithstanding, the Corps reserves the right to pick and choose.

The normal boot camp was a twelve-week course of training. Chemical warfare training, swimming classes, hand-to-hand combat, close order drill, the ultimate discipline builder; marksmanship training, the heart of combat effectiveness; and classes on the history, customs and traditions of the Corps.

History classes in boot camp? Stop a soldier on the street and ask him to name a battle of World War One. Pick a sailor at random to describe the epic fight of the Bon Homme Richard. Everyone has heard of McGuire Air Force Base, so ask any airman who Major Thomas B. McGuire was, and why he is so commemorated. I am not nit-picking, and there is no scorn in this criticism. As it is, both our oldest children are active duty Navy as well as our new son-in-law. I can't say enough of how proud I am of them that they serve. All of the services have glorious traditions, the point I'm making is that no one teaches the young soldier, sailor or airman what his uniform means and why he should be proud to wear it.

But ask a Marine about World War I, and you will hear of the wheat field at Belleau Wood and the courage of the Fourth Marine Brigade. Faced with an enemy of superior numbers entrenched in tangled forest undergrowth, the Marines received an order to attack. It was insane. Artillery support hadn't been invented yet, so the Brigade charged German

machine guns with only bayonets, grenades and a determined fighting spirit. A bandy-legged little barrel of a gunnery sergeant, Daniel J. Daly, rallied his company with a shout. "Come on, you sons a bitches! Do you want to live forever?" and they would have given him the Medal of Honor except for a technicality. He already had two. French liaison officers, hardened by four years of trench bound slaughter, were shocked as the Marines charged across the open wheat field under a blazing sun and directly into enemy fire. Their action was so outdated on a twentieth-century battlefield that they might as well have been swinging swords. But the enemy was only human; they couldn't stand up to this onslaught by the Devil Dogs. So the Marines took Belleau Wood.

Every Marine knows this story, and dozens more. Stories that include names like Tripoli, Okinawa, Pelilu, Iwo Jima, Chosin Reservoir, Kae Shan and most recently names like Fallujah, Nasiriya, Najaf, and Tikrit. We are taught them in boot camp as a regular part of the training. Every Marine will always be taught them. You can learn to don a gas mask anytime, even on the plane en route to a war zone, but before you can wear the emblem and claim the title you must know of the Marines who made that emblem and title meaningful. So long as you can march and shoot and admire the legacy of the Corps, you can take your place in the line.

And that line is unified in spirit as in purpose. A soldier wears branch of service insignia on his collar, and metal shoulder pins and cloth sleeve patches to identify his unit. Sailors wear a rating badge that identifies what they do for the Navy. Marines wear only the eagle, globe and anchor, together with personal ribbons and their prized marksmanship badges. There is nothing on a Marine's uniform to indicate what he or she does, or what unit the Marine belongs to. You can't tell by looking at a Marine whether you are seeing a truck driver, a computer operator, or a machine gunner. The Corps explains this as a security measure to conceal the identity and location of units, but the Marines define that differently. No, the Marine is nebulous, even anonymous (we finally agreed to wear nametags only in 1992), and by conscious design. Every Marine is a rifleman first and foremost, a Marine first, last and always. You may serve a four-year enlistment or even a twenty-year career without seeing action, but if the word is given you'll charge across that wheat field. Whether a Marine has been schooled in automated supply, or automotive mechanics, or aviation electronics, is immaterial. Those things are secondary - the Corps does them because it must. The modern battle requires the technical appliances, and since the enemy has them, so do we. But no Marine brags perfection of them. Our pride is in our marksmanship, our discipline, and our membership in a fraternity of courage and sacrifice.

The Marines have become a wholly American institution -- like baseball players, cowboys, and astronauts -- in the eyes of most Americans. Marines indeed may be extreme, but America loves them, extremism and all. And fortunately for America, her enemies in the war against terror will continue to shudder upon hearing, "the Marines have landed."

"For the honor of the fallen, for the glory of the dead", Edgar Guest wrote of Belleau Wood, "The living line of courage kept the faith and moved ahead." They are all gone now, those Marines who made a French farmer's little wheat field into one of the most enduring of Marine Corps legends. Many of them did not survive the day. But their action has made them immortal. The Corps remembers them and honors what they did, and so they live forever. Dan Daly's shouted challenge takes on its true meaning - if you hide in the trenches you may survive for now, but someday you will die and no one will care. If you charge the

guns you may die in the next two minutes, but you will be one of the immortals. All Marines die, in the red flash of battle or the white cold of a nursing home. In the vigor of youth or the infirmity of age all will eventually die, but the Marine Corps lives on. Every Marine who ever lived is living still, in the Marines who claim the title today. It is that sense of belonging to something that will outlive your own mortality that gives people a light to live by and a flame to mark their passing.

Marines call it esprit de corps.

I'd like to share with you some additional facts I've picked up along the way:

I like the fact that you always know where you stand with a Marine! With Marines, there is no middle ground or gray area. There are only missions, objectives and facts.

I like the fact that if you are a self-declared enemy of America, that running into a Marine outfit in combat is your worst nightmare! And that your health record is about to get a lot thicker or be closed out entirely!

I like the fact that Marine's are steadfast and consistent in everything they do. Regardless if you agree with them or not;

That Marine's hold the term 'politically correct' with nothing but pure disdain.

That Marine's stand tall and rigid in their actions, thoughts and deeds when others bend with the direction of the wind and are as confused as a dog looking at a ceiling fan!

I like the fact that each and every Marine considers the honor and legacy of the Corps as his personal and sacred trust to protect and defend.

I like the fact that most civilians don't have a clue what makes us tick!"... And that's not a bad thing. Because if they did, it would scare the hell out of them!

I like the fact that others say they want to be like us, but don't have what it takes in the "pain-gain-pride" department to make it happen.

I like the fact that the Marine's came into being in a bar, Tun Tavern, Philadelphia, 1775, and that Marine's still gather in pubs, bars and slop chutes to share sea stories and hot scoop.

I like the fact that Marine's take care of each other in combat and in time of peace.

I like the fact that Marine's consider the term "Marine's take care of their own" as meaning we will give up our very life for our fellow Marines, if necessary.

I like the fact that Marine's know the difference between "chicken salad" and "chicken shit" and aren't afraid to call either for what it is!

I like the fact that Marine's have never failed the people of America and that we don't use the words "can't", "retreat", or "lose".

I like the fact that the people of America hold Marine's in the highest esteem and that they know that they can count on us to locate, close with and destroy those who would harm them!

I like Marines and being around Marines.

I like the fact that a couple of years ago an elected member of congress felt compelled to publicly accuse the Marine corps of being "radical and extreme".

I like the fact that our Commandant informed that member of congress that was absolutely correct and that he passed only his thanks for the compliment.

I like the fact that Marines are Marines first regardless of age, race, creed, color, sex, national origin or how long they served or what goals they achieve in life!

I like Marines, because being a Marine is serious business. We're not a social club or a fraternal organization and we don't pretend to be one. We're a brotherhood of "warriors" -- nothing more, nothing less, pure and simple.

We are in the ass-kicking business, and unfortunately, these days business is good. But don't worry about that. What you need to remember is that the mere association of the word "Marine" with a crisis is an automatic source of confidence to America, and encouragement to all nations who stand with us.

As Marines, our message to our foes has always been essentially the same. We own this side of the street! Threaten my country or our allies and we will come over to your side of the street, burn your hut down, whisper in your ear "can you hear me now?"... then secure your heart beat.

I like our motto: "Semper Fidelis" and the fact that we don't shed it when the going gets tough, the battlefield gets deadly or when we hang up our uniform for the last time.

I also like what President Ronald Regan said in 1985, "Some people spend an entire lifetime wondering if they made a difference. The Marines don't have that problem."

Finally - As I tried to think of a way to wrap all this up, it occurred to me that the Services could be characterized by different breeds of dogs' you know, like people often say people walking their dogs look like their pets. Now, I don't want offend anybody, and I'm sure each of you will have his own opinions, but these were my favorites.

For me, the Air Force was pretty clear. They reminded me of a French Poodle. The poodle always looks perfect...sometimes seems a bit pampered...always travels first class. But don't ever forget that the poodle was bred as a hunting dog and in a fight it's very dangerous.

The Army is kind of like a St. Bernard. It's big and heavy and sometimes seems a bit clumsy. But it's very powerful and has lots of stamina. So you want it for the long haul.

The Navy is a Golden Retriever. They're good natured and great around the house. The kids love 'em. Sometimes their hair is a bit long...they go wandering off for long periods of time, and they love water.

The Marines were bit of a problem. I don't see the Marines as an English Bulldog, like Chesty did. In fact, I actually see the Marines as two breeds, Rottweilers or Dobermans, because Marines come in two varieties, big and mean, or skinny and mean. They're both very territorial. They're aggressive on the attack, and tenacious on defense. They've both got really short hair, and they always go for the throat. That sounds like a Marine to me!

To the old Corps – Gung Ho!, to the New Corps – OO-Rah! and to all - Semper Fi.

Happy Birthday Marines and God Bless America.