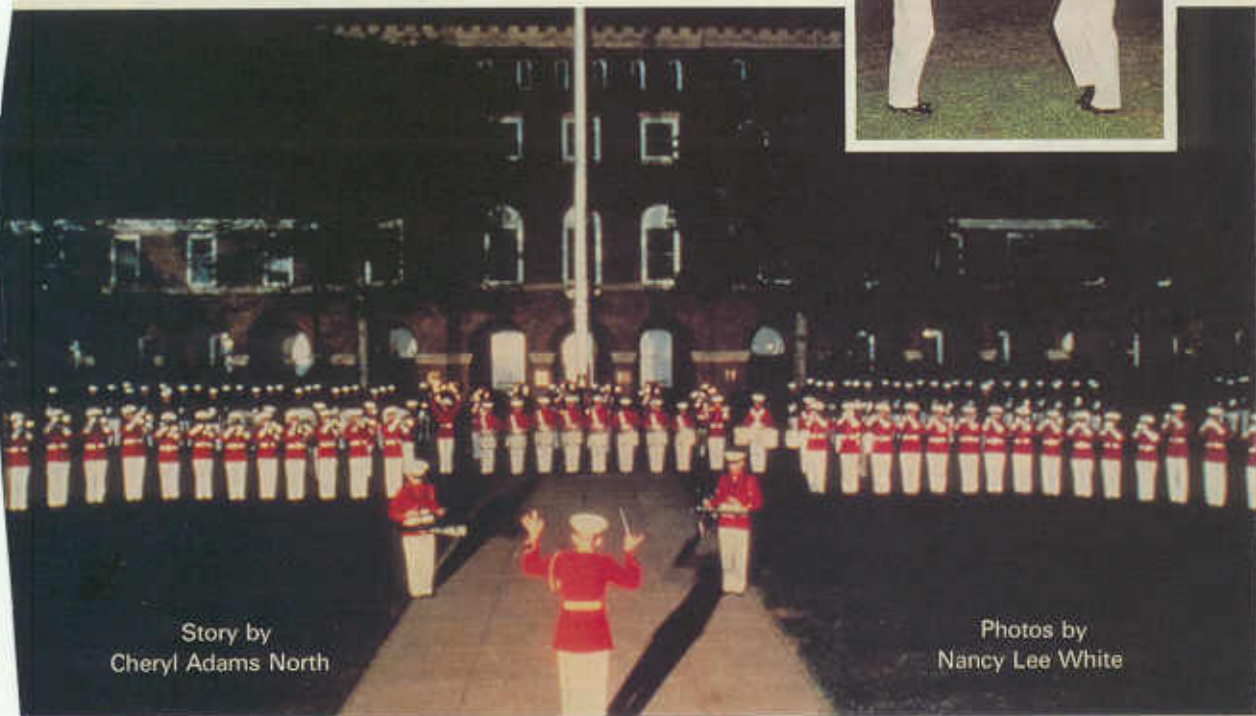


Marine Barracks Washington, D.C.

"Oldest Post of the Corps"



USMC Photos



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The Friday Evening Parade

Military reviews and ceremonies have been performed at the "oldest post of the Corps" since its beginning in 1801. However, in the early 1900s, presidential inaugurations and other official functions called for an increasing number of parades and ceremonies to be held at the Barracks. As the years passed, the ceremonies became more formalized, and by 1934, the Barracks held its first season of regularly scheduled weekly parades.

Initially called "Sunset Parades" because they were held in late afternoon, the ceremonies ran from April through the first week of November

(TOP INSET) Two members of the Silent Drill Team exchanged rifles the "ceremonial" way. (ABOVE) The U.S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps performed during the Barracks' Friday Evening Parade. (BELOW) The Marine Band also performed during the Evening Parade.



(to include the Marine Corps birthday).

The basic format for what would eventually become the Friday Evening Parade was envisioned in 1934 by Colonel Emile P. Moses and Major Lemuel C. Shepherd Jr. (who later became 20th Commandant). The two Marines, commanding officer and executive officer of the Barracks, pictured the parade ground (the center of the Barracks' quadrangle structure) as a beautiful outdoor stage, bordered by the row of trees and shrubs in front of the officers' quarters and administrative offices. The Commandant's

house, with its Georgian-Federalist design, stood at the north end of the field, while the Marine Band Hall completed the four "walks" of this outdoor theater.

In the winter of 1956-57, under the direction of Col Leonard F. Chapman Jr., the Barracks CO and future 24th Commandant, an experimental idea for the Evening Parade was developed. Chapman believed the parade should adhere to strict regulations—that all drill be generally to "the book" with no fancy theatrics, tricks or "Queen Anne" salutes, which were popular in drill routines at the time.

The first Evening Parade, as we know it today, took place on July 5th of 1957, and in the three decades that have passed, little has changed. Naturally, some modifications and im-

provements have been made since that initial "experiment," but the basic contents of the parade remain the same...the music, the march, the pass in review...they're all there, just better with age.

Chapman wanted a ceremony that would withstand the test of time—a performance that would symbolize the pride and professionalism, the "esprit de corps," the history and tradition of the United States Marine Corps. And he got it. In the process, he also started a new tradition—one that is

known exclusively to the Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C.—the Friday Evening Parade.

(Evening Parades take place this year at 8:45 p.m. every Friday, from May 11 through August 31. For more information or reservations, call (202) 433-0661.)



The Sunset Parade


On the 179th birthday of the Corps (November 10, 1954), a bronze monument 78 feet tall was unveiled at the Arlington National Cemetery. The monument, depicting the flag raising on Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima, was dedicated by President Dwight D. Eisenhower "in honor and in memory of the men of the United States Marine Corps who have given their lives since November 10, 1775."

Those words are burnished in gold on the base of the Marine Corps War Memorial, frequently called the Iwo Jima monument...the site of the "new" Sunset Parade.

Also inscribed on the granite base, which supports the six 32-foot figures, are the names and dates of every major campaign and battle the Marines have fought in since the founding of the Corps... New Providence Island,

Tripoli, Vera Cruz, Bull Run, Manila Bay, Tientsin, Belleau Wood, Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, Chosin Reservoir, Vietnam, Lebanon and Grenada, to name but a few.

Many Marine Corps engagements are listed, but it's Iwo—one of the most grueling battles of all time—that the monument depicts. It is symbolic of the courage displayed by the Marines who fought there. Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, World War II commander of the Pacific Fleet, said of these heroic Marines, "Uncommon valor was a common virtue." These



The Color Guard of the Marine Corps, the marching Marines of "A" and "B" Companies, and the Drum and Bugle Corps posed for this publicity photo at the Marine Corps War Memorial, where they perform in the Sunset Parade.



Hundreds of spectators flock to the Iwo Jima flag-raising statue on Tuesday evenings throughout the summer months to see the Sunset Parade. The parade features the precision drill of the Silent Drill Team, and the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps' "concert in motion."



USMC photo

immortal words are also engraved in gold on the base of the memorial.

Since the first Sunset Parade was held at the Memorial in September 1956, each week throughout summer, marching and musical units from the Barracks perform there to pay homage to "all Marines who have died to keep their country free."

Originally, the "Two" Sunset Parade wasn't a parade at all. It consisted of a formal guard mount and colors ceremony, concluding with a three-volley salute. Today's Sunset Parade is an elaborate performance, featuring the Marine Drum and Bugle Corps with its "concert in motion" and the precision drill of the Silent Drill Team.

This spectacular show takes place this year on Tuesday evenings at sunset, from May 29 through August 21. Reservations are not required; the grassy slopes of the memorial grounds form a picturesque natural amphitheater, which is always open to the public.

(Author's note: Information for the Friday Evening and Tuesday Sunset Parades was compiled from news releases and brochures provided by the Marine Barracks Public Affairs Office.)

The Marching Marines: "A" and "B" Companies

"The Marines from 'A' and 'B' Companies, contrary to popular belief, don't get here because of the way they look. They get here because they're good Marines," said Captain Mike Campbell, "A" Company's former commanding officer.

"We (Barracks personnel) go to the School of Infantry and screen them for clean records—they have to be able to obtain a top secret security clearance. Only about a third of those selected at the screening will get cleared. The clearance is approved by the Secretary of the Navy, and the investigation goes all the way back to birth."

Why the top secret clearance? Because part of the Barracks' mission is to provide special security for the President.

Both "A" and "B" Companies have three platoons of "marching" Marines. "A" Company has the Silent Drill Team, which is the 1st Platoon, and two other marching platoons. "A" Company also has the Color Guard Section (the United States Marine Corps Color Guard), which includes the "parade four,"

led by the Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps.

"B" Company, commanded by Capt David Close, has the Body Bearer Section. The section consists of 18 Marines who provide burial (funeral) support in the National Capital area, particularly for funerals at Arlington National Cemetery.

Marching Marines are always in the spotlight, and assignment to either company is considered prestigious. Getting orders to one of these unique units is not random luck of the draw. Marines are thoroughly screened in advance before being considered for assignment to 8th and "I".

Screening involves three things: a clean record, height requirement of 5'10" to 6'3", and an exceptional ability to drill. Once Marines pass the screening, they receive orders to the Barracks and are assigned to either "A" or "B" Company.

When they arrive, they attend Ceremonial Drill School, which is held by each company. Training lasts 15 days, during which time, the Marines learn basic drill, a lot like they did in boot camp, but to a much higher degree. They drill intensely and extensively to refine and sharpen their skills.

Those who excel at drill may be selected to try out for the Silent Drill Team. Approximately half of the Marines in each drill school ask to try out. As part of the selection process, they head for Corpus Christi, Texas, with the rest of the team (and the Drum and Bugle Corps) for their annual three-week training.

In all, about 40 Marines attend the Texas training. Twenty are veteran team members, and the other 20 hopefuls are there to try out.

There are approximately 37 Marines on the Silent Drill Team, but only 27 to 29 march at a time, depending on the ceremony. Each year, about 20 new Marines are needed to replace those members of the drill team who rotate to the Fleet Marine Force or get out of the Corps.

Once tryouts are held and the training completed, the Silent Drill Team accompanies the Drum and Bugle Corps on the West Coast tour. Then it's back to 8th and "I" for more training to prepare for the hundreds of ceremonial commitments that lie ahead.

These include the Friday Evening and Tuesday Sunset Parades, joint-

services street parades, and White House ceremonies. The Marines of "A" and "B" Companies are at the heart of these events.

The Silent Drill Team

Twenty-four men in dress blue/white uniform march onto the parade ground... silently... effortlessly.

They carry M-1 rifles with bayonets fixed. The rifles' wooden stocks have a high-gloss shine—put there by hand, individually by each Marine, through repeated sanding and oiling. The shine is indicative of the pride these young men take in their job as members of the United States Marine Silent Drill Team.

Without a single command, the Marines begin a spectacular 10-minute precision drill routine, twirling their rifles and tossing them high in the air, with nonchalant ease and always in perfect symmetry.

They form up, still without a word being uttered, and begin a very dangerous drill movement, wherein they twirl their rifles with bayonets fixed and march through each other's ranks. An audible gasping of breath can be heard from the crowd.

In a moment, the maneuver is completed and "Oohs!" and "Ahs!" trickle through the audience. This is quickly replaced with a thunderous round of applause. But that, too, lasts only a minute, as the Marines continue their flawless performance.

Soon, one Marine comes forward—the rifle inspector—and walks slowly down the single line of Marines. Carefully eyeing each man, he stops in front of one of them. An instant later, the two Marines perform a "mirror" movement, where the rifles are twirled, tossed, caught and balanced at the exact same time in the exact same way.

Precision. Perfection. The epitome of discipline and bearing associated with being a Marine... That's the Silent Drill Team.

They call themselves "dogs" as in the infamous Marine Devil Dog. They pronounce it "dawg" with the inflection peculiar to young, "highly motivated, truly dedicated, lean, green Marines."

They're hot and they know it. And they show it, on and off the parade ground. They have a certain air about them... the way they walk, the way they talk, the way they carry themselves...

"You always carry a part of the

drill team with you, no matter what you do, where you are, in or out of uniform," said Lance Corporal John Beasley, who just completed his first year with the team.

According to Corporal Roy Chalmers, a two-year veteran and one of the incoming rifle inspectors, Drill Team Marines are the "baddest of the bad" (bad means good and baddest means best). But they are not beyond reproach. They know they are Marines like anyone else.

"At the School of Infantry, when they find out you're going to 8th and T, they start calling you 'pretty boy Marine,'" Beasley said. "But we're not water-walkers, we're just like other Marines in the Fleet," interjected one of last year's rifle inspectors, Cpl Steven Beckett. "They (Marines in the Fleet Marine Force) don't consider us *real* Marines because we silent-drill for a living. But we are real Marines. We go to the field just like they do," Beckett said.

Sitting there, proud and poised, these three young Marines seemed a bit tense, almost defensive, trying to *explain* their job and *defend* it. They take a lot of pride in being Marines and in being on the Drill Team. And they strive to be the best at both.

"Being on the Drill Team, it's your job to make the Marine Corps look good, the Silent Drill Team look good, and yourself—the Marine—look good," said Beasley.

When a Marine is constantly the center of attention, receiving all kinds of praise, it may be hard for him to keep his head out of the clouds. But these guys seem to have a pretty good handle on it.

"When we're on the parade deck, there is only one thing they (the audience) see—drill. So we have to be the 'baddest,'" explained Beckett. "But back at the Barracks, we're just like anyone else. We're Marines."

Silent Drill Team Marines may get a lot of attention, but they'll be the first to tell you that it's all relative. . . that sometimes being in the spotlight is what helps them keep things in perspective.

"When a retired Marine comes up to you, and he has tears in his eyes, and says, 'Seeing you Marines takes me back to my days in the Corps,' or 'I've never seen anything like that before,' that's really motivating. This guy could have been a Medal of Honor winner, but he's telling me I'm great," Chalmers said. "That's even happened before. We'll be visiting a VA hospital, and these guys are telling you how great you are, then they pull out a pocketful of medals. *They're* the heroes. All you've done is spin a rifle."

Beasley nodded his head in agreement. "Yeah, here are Marines who gave one of their body parts to protect their country, and they're giving *you* praise. Now that's motivating!"

In their travels around the coun-



Silent Drill Team Marines, from left to right, are Cpl Steven Beckett, one of last year's rifle inspectors, Cpl Roy Chalmers, a 1990 rifle inspector, and LCpl John Beasley, a second-year performer with the team.

try, the Silent Drill Team is on the road a total of 98 days, travels over 50,000 miles and performs at more than 200 shows each year. These Marines meet and perform for hundreds of thousands of people. With that many eyes on them, do they ever get nervous?

"The first time you march with the team, you're scared as hell!" explained Beasley, himself a newcomer. "Yep, that first time is hell! But the NCOs train you to handle the stress. The mental stress is a hundred times worse than boot camp. But once you've marched a few times, it gets easier."

Chalmers, a member of the rifle inspection team, said that before a new "dawg" is allowed on the parade ground, he's put through five times the actual pressure of a real performance. This is done via "peer pres-

sure" from the veteran members.

"Everyone on the team is watching you and putting on the pressure, 'Don't mess up!' That's what's really bad," Chalmers said. "That's a lot worse than the audience watching."

Beckett explained that the platoon sergeant is always hesitant to put a new Marine in his first show. "But you've got to do it sometime," he said.

What happens if a Marine does make a mistake? Team members refer to this as "spazzing," and how it's dealt with depends on what the mistake was, the frequency of error and how well the Marine recovered from it.

For example, a small spazz would be missing a movement, such as the rifle not hitting the shoulder properly

or perhaps not connecting with it at all. Chalmers said the Marine will usually put pressure on himself—"Oh no, I spazzed!"—knowing the other marchers saw his mistake. This "self-inflicted punishment" is usually enough to prevent the error from happening again. . . well, at least from happening too often.

Beckett said there is usually one small spazz in every show because "every Marine is bound to spazz once in a while." But fortunately,

he added, the crowd doesn't notice.

That's a little spazz. A *big* spazz is another story.

"A big spazz is missing 30 seconds of drill," he explained, "which can happen to anyone in their first couple of shows. It's a mental block. Dropping your cap is another big spazz, but we cover for that and make it look like it was part of the show."

But the *BIG* spazz is dropping a rifle. This is the ultimate goof. The three Marines nodded in unison. "Dropping your rifle is worse than breaking the Ten Commandments!"

"If someone screws up—spazzes big—an NCO will talk to him, counsel him," Beckett said. "You want to bring him up because he's going to be feeling bad about messing up. You want to motivate him, but at the



Precision... Perfection. The epitome of discipline and bearing associated with being a Marine... That's the Silent Drill Team. And that takes a lot of practice. Silent Drill Marines train nearly year-round to achieve the precision perfect drill that the team is famous for. These photos were taken at one of the countless practice sessions held at the Barracks.



same time, you have to make sure it doesn't happen again."

While the other Marines serve a two-year tour with the unit, rifle inspectors and members of the inspection team (the Marines inspected during the show) may have their tours extended to three years. Marines from the inspection team usually take over as rifle inspectors the next year.

"Being rifle inspector is really high stress," Beckett said. "Sometimes I don't go to sleep at night. The rifle inspector has more eyes on him than any other person on the team. You're singled out. When you're out there inspecting, it's sort of like being a one-man show. It's really nerve-racking."

Being on the Silent Drill Team is a high-pressure job. It takes total concentration. Nothing else can enter the mind. Chalmers explained, "When you're out on the parade deck, you have to put everything behind you. . . block it out. You have to drill."

Perfection is what these Marines strive for, with each and every performance. And it will be the same perfect performance, no matter who is watching.

"It could be the President or a Boy Scout out there," Beckett said. "We always try to give them our best show."

And what a show it is!

The Marine Corps Color Guard

If the question "What's the difference between the Marine Corps Color Guard and the Color Guard of the Marine Corps?" was on an EST test, how many Marines would know the answer? Probably only those at 8th and "I".

In reality, the two terms actually mean the same thing. . . Well, sort of.

The Marine Corps Color Guard is a *section* of Marines—16 in all—who represent the Corps while providing color guard support for the Military District of Washington, D.C., and surrounding areas. This includes White House and Pentagon functions, military funerals, joint-service ceremonies, street parades. . . anywhere a Marine or joint color guard detachment is needed. Four-man teams rotate, handling all commitments.

One of these four-man teams is the Color Guard of the Marine

Corps—the Corps' *official* color guard. Known as the "big four" or "parade four," these Marines carry the Battle Color of the Marine Corps, which bears the streamers commemorating the military campaigns Marines have fought in. This is the color guard that travels around the country with the Silent Drill Team and Marine Drum and Bugle Corps.

The "parade four" is led by the Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps, the senior man on the team and senior Marine of the entire Color Guard Section. He is both platoon sergeant and platoon commander.

Sgt D'Juan R. Boyd held the title of Color Sergeant of the Marine



The Color Guard of the Marine Corps, known as the "Parade Four," is the Corps' *official* color guard. It carries the Battle Color of the Marine Corps.

Corps for the past two years. (It's a two-year tour.) This season, he has turned the honor over to Sgt Dean R. Keck.

The Color Sergeant is one of only four Marines to have the unique designation "of the Marine Corps" in his title. The others are the Commandant, Assistant Commandant and Sergeant Major (of the Marine Corps).

It is the Color Sergeant who always carries the national color. That is, unless the unit is supporting an official White House ceremony. And in that case, he has the individual honor of carrying the Presidential Color.

Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps is *the* senior billet for sergeants of Marines. And because this is one of the most respected positions a Marine sergeant can hold,

any sergeant in the Corps can be the Color Sergeant. . . that is, as long as he's between 6'3" and 6'5"—the height requirement for all Marines in the Color Guard.

Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps doesn't come from the Color Guard section; it's not a "promotion" from within. This Marine is hand-picked from the Fleet Marine Force.

All other members of the Color Guard are screened at the School of Infantry, in the same way the marching company Marines are, for assignment to 8th and "I". Once they arrive at the Barracks, they report to "A" Company and attend the Color Guard's Ceremonial Drill School, which consists of 15 days of basic drill and learning the ceremonial color guard manual. After completing drill school (and all do, even if they are "recycled"), the Marines are assigned to the Color Guard Section for duty.

The Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps isn't selected as a private first class or lance corporal out of SOI and sent to the Barracks as a marching Marine. He's a highly respected sergeant from the FMF who is selected by his unit and recommended all the way up, through every link in his chain of command. When he gets to the Barracks, he attends a brief ceremonial drill school with three other sergeants who have been recommended and selected from the FMF.

Many sergeants are recommended by their commands, but only the top four make it to 8th and "I" to try out for this elite position. Only one is selected to be the Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps.

Once the selection is made, the Marine returns to the Fleet Marine Force until his orders are cut, then he reports to the Barracks to begin training for his position. The outgoing Color Sergeant trains the incoming Color Sergeant. Other NCOs in the section assist with the training. Most often, they are the Marines in the "parade four."

The "parade four" are hand-picked, much in the same way as the Color Sergeant. However, they are picked by fellow members of the Color Guard.

In order to try out, the Marines must have a year's experience with the Color Guard, wherein they have performed in dozens of joint-service ceremonies. This serves as a type of "training ground."

(BELOW) The new Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps is Sgt Dean R. Keck. (RIGHT) The Barracks Color Guard Section and a detachment of Marines from "A" or "B" Company provide ceremonial support for funerals such as this one at Arlington National Cemetery.



Photo by Cpl J. D. Moore

"The tryout is very intense—you must be the epitome of the Marine Color Guard. The judging is that intense," explained Cpl Rodney Murphy, a former member of the "parade four." "They look at, in detail, everything from the slightest eye or hand movement, to the correct rifle position and movement. And you have to have total military bearing, total discipline. You can't react to any situation.

"For example," Murphy continued, "if something funny happens, you can't crack a smile. If something sad happens, you can't show any emotion. The spotlight is on you—the 'parade four'—and you *cannot* break discipline."

"You're also judged on your ability to talk to people and present a good image as a Marine," added Color Guard member Cpl Cedric Ray. "People come up to us and ask questions. We have to know how to react and what to say. Each one of us is a PR (public relations) person for the Corps."

New members are picked for the "parade four" each year, to give everyone in the section a chance to perform with the Color Guard of the Marine Corps.

In addition to the "parade four," also called the "A" team, a "B" team,



Photo by SSgt Matt Perez



Photo courtesy of Cpl Rodney Murphy

which serves as an alternate, is also selected. Marines in "A" and "B" teams have set positions as either color bearers or riflemen. All others in the Color Guard Section are cross-trained to be able to do both—carry colors or a rifle.

When Marines in the Color Guard aren't carrying colors or rifles, they provide the Barracks with ceremonial support where needed. Such is the case with the Friday Evening Parades, when they stuff parade programs into the brochures. But, on the other hand, it's one of the few times these Marines (excluding the "parade four" who are in the ceremony) can take off their packs and relax a little because they're not in the spotlight. Most of the time, they are.

"The Color Guard amazes me," said Campbell, "A" Company's com-

Barracks' Color Guard
Marines often participate in joint-service ceremonies similar to the one shown above.

mander: "The section is very heavily committed; these Marines are always on the go...and they do a tremendous job. They are exceptional Marines by anyone's standards."

(Next month, the conclusion of the "Oldest Post of the Corps" will feature the Marine Band, Drum and Bugle Corps, Body Bearers, the Marine Corps Institute and more.)

