



MARINE CORPS RESERVE CENTENNIAL

EARLY YEARS 1916 - 1939

As U.S. involvement in World War I appeared more likely, increased manpower requirements necessitated a Reserve Force to augment the Regulars (Active Duty). On August 29th, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Naval Appropriations Act into law, creating the Marine Corps Reserve, which added more than 7,000 Marines to the fight. The law also enabled the Marine Corps to recruit women, which led to more than 300 female enlistments.

Reserve Marines seamlessly integrated into ground and aviation units, fighting side-by-side with the Regular Marines during decisive battles such as Belleau Wood, St. Michel, Soissons, and Meuse-Argonne.

Their collective contributions helped turn the tide of the war, validating the utility of maintaining a Marine Corps Reserve to quickly augment and support expeditionary units deploying anywhere around the globe.



Machine Gun Range - Quantico, VA, c. 1925. Annual summer training was one of the few times Reserve Marines were able to hone their combat skills due to funding constraints at the time.



Battle at Belleau Wood, France, 1918. The first major engagement of Marine forces during World War I consisted of both Regular and Reserve Marines. Belleau Wood was the iconic battle which established American and Marine Corps reputations internationally as an elite fighting force.
- Painting by Staff Sgt. Kris Battles, USMCR



Capt. Allen M. Sumner, USMCR, 1918. First officer to join the Marine Corps Reserve serving with the 6th Machine Gun Battalion in France. He was killed in action while leading an attack and awarded the Croix de Guerre for valor.



"Final Review" - Washington, DC, c. Sept 1918. During World War I, women served primarily in clerical roles. Today all occupational fields in the Marine Corps are open to women. They now constitute more than eight percent of the Force and are an integral part of the Marine Corps.

FINAL REVIEW OF WOMAN (F) & MARINE
WASHINGTON, D.C.



Memorial Day Ceremonies - Philadelphia, PA, May 1927. During this time frame Reserve Marines served for the honor and distinction of being Marines often without pay. The only pay they received was during their annual two week "Summer Camp" training.



De Havilland 4-B, c. 1918. Armament and ordnance for the light, two-seat day bomber consisted of one 0.303-inch Vickers machine gun for the pilot and one 0.303-inch Lewis gun on a Scarff ring mounting for the observer. Two 230 pound bombs or four 112 pound bombs could be carried.

Background photo: 2nd Lt. Charles Clark, USMCR, c. 1917. Clark was a flight instructor during World War I.

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