

10 November 2026

**A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS**

For 251 years, the United States Marine Corps has been our Nation's premier expeditionary force in readiness. Born from the sea and forged in the fires of conflict, Marines have fought, and won, in battles all over the world. From our first amphibious landing 250 years ago at Nassau to the volcanic sands of Iwo Jima, and from the bold invasion of Inchon to the mountains of Afghanistan, we have always marched forward with rifles in hand. The Marines who came before us paved our legacy in sweat and blood. They built a foundation of excellence and proved time and again that Marines remain ready to answer the call.

As we reflect on our proud and illustrious history and commemorate the founding of our Corps, we must take inspiration for the future. We are marching forward, as we always have, to fight and win our Nation's battles in every clime and place. We're preparing every day by innovating and evolving. Through our ingenuity, ruthless adherence to standards, and sheer grit, we continue to demonstrate the unmatched lethality of our expeditionary naval forces.

Today, the operational demand for Marines is high. At this very hour, 40,000 Marines are forward deployed and stationed around the world to secure liberty and to strike when our adversaries test our resolve. Just as always, Marines are ready to go wherever the Nation needs us, whenever it needs us.

Sergeant Major Ruiz and I could not be prouder of your dedication to upholding our legacy as America's *Soldiers of the Sea*. This is who we are, and we are up to the challenge. We are honored to stand beside you as we prepare for the fights ahead. Happy 251st Birthday, Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

Eric M. Smith
General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps