



Marines



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Marine Corps Today

Royal Marines

Ancient Marines

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The first documented use of Marines as a class of soldier in a standing army belongs to the Greeks and Romans. Themistocles, leader of the Athenians, issued a decree that his navy "enlist Marines, twenty to a ship" to turn back a Persian attack. Rome had special legions of "Milites Classiarii" or "soldiers of the fleet". Roman Marines served through out the remainder of the empire's life, not only at sea but also on land.

During the Dark Ages, Vikings performed many ship to shore raids. Although not as orthodox as their predecessors, their amphibious tactics would qualify them as Marines.

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October 28, 1664 is the birthday of the Royal Marines. The Royal Marines were formed during the early stages of the second Dutch War. King Charles II sanctioned the formation of the Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot, the first Regiment to be formed specially for service afloat. He decreed "That twelve hundred land soldiers be forthwith raised, to be in readiness, to be distributed into his Fleets, prepared for Sea Service [where] twelve hundred men are to be put into One Regiment". The regiment was raised mainly from the Trained Bands of the city of London with Colours flying, drums beating and bayonets fixed.

As early as 1740, England had raised four battalions of 3,000 men for service against Spain. These men were known as "Gooch's Marines", after their leader Colonel William Gooch. In 1741 Gooch's Marines secured Guantanamo Bay, Cuba as a British fleet base. (US Marines landed and secured Guantanamo Bay, Cuba from the Spanish later in June of 1898)

Another name associated with Gooch's Marines is Admiral Edward Vernon. He was taken by a young Marine officer in the regiment for a home he built at Little Hunting Creek, Virginia; he called it "Mount Vernon". "The officer was Lawrence Washington, and upon his death the home passed to his younger brother, our first president.

