

Polished troops stand at rest position during colorful pre-parade ceremonies at Marine Barracks, Eighth and I streets S.E., the oldest post (1801) of the corps.



Spectators await start of Sunset Parade (Evening Parades are held later, under lights). At left: Col. Jonas M. Platt, barracks commander; MaJ. Gen. Henry R. Poige, reviewing officer.

## Marine Parade

By A. L. SINGLETON

Star Staff Writer

**I**T WAS TWILIGHT, and civilian visitors were gathering by the score at the old Marine Barracks in Southeast Washington.

In the mixed glow of barracks lamps, a fading sun and a pale rising moon, their pastel summer clothing contrasted sharply with the brilliant hues of Marine "dress blues."

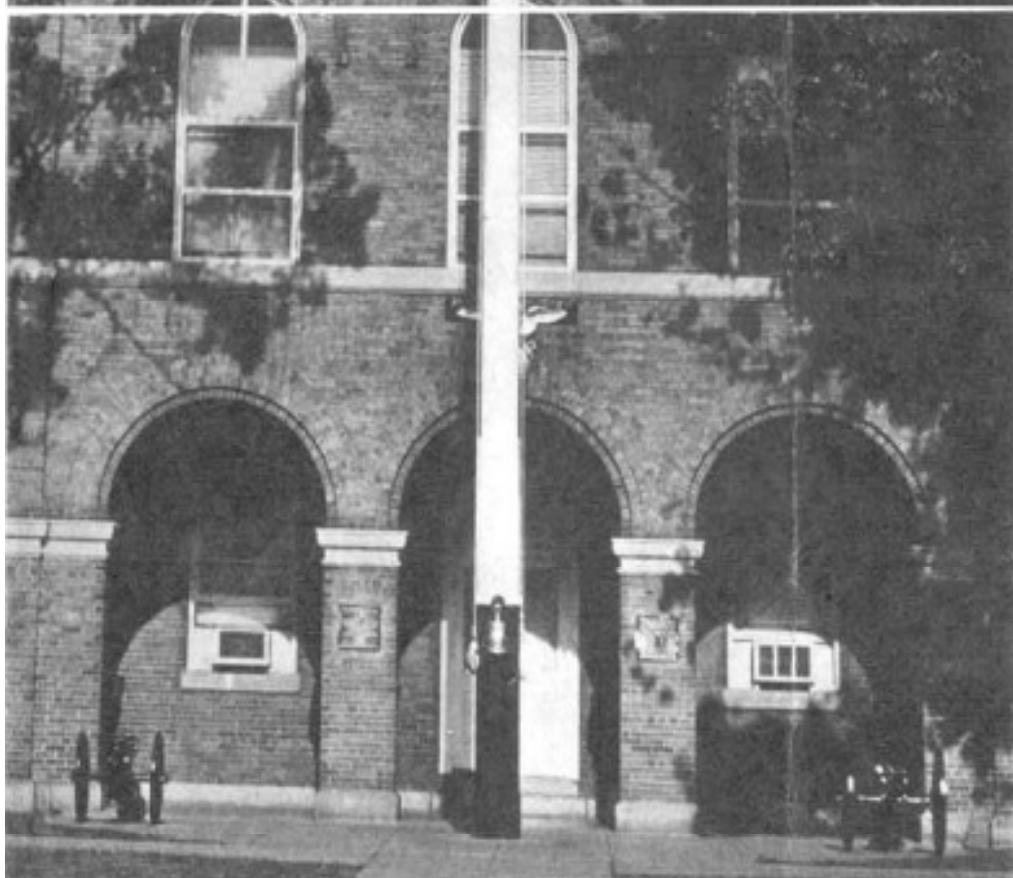
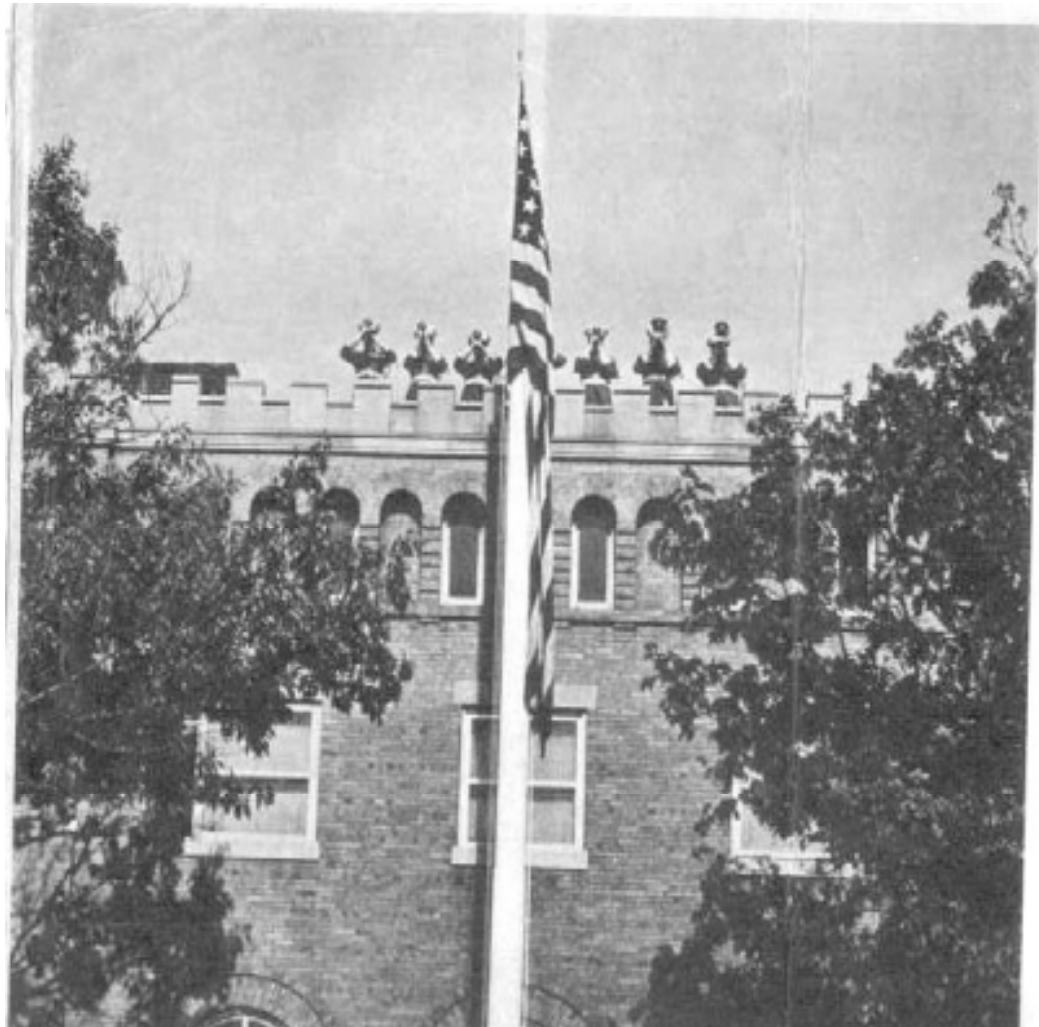
Except for their modern attire, they might have been attending an 1890 concert in the park. The illusion was easy to achieve, for rows of stately trees surrounded them on a lush green parade ground—a spot where John Philip Sousa himself had held sway seven decades before.

Children scampered on the grass, chattering and tugging at their parents. Women, some of whom held broad-brimmed hats against a warm but wayward wind, talked animatedly with their escorts and each other. The men, many in uniform, waited more calmly on the visitors' benches flanking the field.

Now the voices of the crowd became still, and suddenly audible was the soft rustling of leaves and summer dresses, stirred by a passing breeze.

Attention was focused on a young Marine, who strode stiffly to midfield, about-faced, and whipped a bugle to his lips. He poised several seconds, then

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In a dramatic parade moment, a line of trumpeters appears atop the barracks to sound Adjutants Call. At night, the effect is striking as a spotlight hits the flag and men behind it.

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sounded the shrill notes of *First Call*, heralding another Evening Parade—the most remarkable show of its kind this side of Buckingham Palace.

The parades are held every dry Friday evening during warm weather months in this oldest Marine Corps post, which occupies a city block with main entrance near Eighth and I streets S.E. Established in 1801, the barracks survived the British raid of 1814 when many public buildings of the city, including the White House and the Capitol, were burned.

The parade ground, about the size of a football field, is the courtyard of the barracks. Offices and quarters for enlisted men line two sides of it, and on the north is the official residence of the Commandant (now Gen. Randolph McO. Pate). On the west are dwellings of other high-ranking officers of the corps.

Headquartered here are units in which an uncommonly proud organization takes an uncommon pride. There's the Marine Band, as old (18 years in November) and as famous as the corps itself, the Drum and Bugle Corps, the Marine Corps Institute (a correspondence school for Leathernecks) and the Ceremonial Guard Company, whose members are chosen for their military bearing and proficiency at precision drill.

Always a site for formal Marine rituals, the barracks has been used for weekly public parades since 1934 as the result of an idea by the post executive officer (now retired Gen. Lemuel Shepherd, a former Commandant). Called Sunset Parades, they quickly attained traditional status.

Although Sunset Parades still are held at 5 p.m. during spring and fall, Evening Parades at 9 p.m. were instituted for summer months two years ago. And except for the name and time of day, both spectacles are like this particular one:

Close on the dying echoes of *First Call*, a drum beat began, muffled inside the quarters to the

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As flag is lowered and Marines salute, a boy follows suit. The camera distracts his sister.



While the band plays on, Corporal Chesty relaxes. The Marine mascot, a three-year-old bulldog, observes parades from post of honor near reviewing stand.

south. To its measured cadence, the 148 white- and woodwind members of the band and the drum and bugle corps are performing a march.

Twice more the bugle sounded before a Marine moved to the post flagpole centered to the east and rang the traditional Navy timepiece, a bell, to declare the hour, 9 p.m.

On his departing heels came the mascot of the corps, a low-slung juggernaut of a bulldog named Chesty, leading another Marine by a leash.

Chesty, a fitting symbol of the corps, harking back to World War I days when Marines were known as Devil Dogs, is only 3 years old but is already a corporal, outranking some of his human handlers.

While the parade continued, he observed—and occasionally dozed—in his customary spot, under a tree near the reviewing stand opposite the flagpole.

Highlights of the program were brief concerts by the band and the Drum and Bugle Corps, which also executed a "Slow March" that heightened comparisons with performances of London's Coldstream Guards.

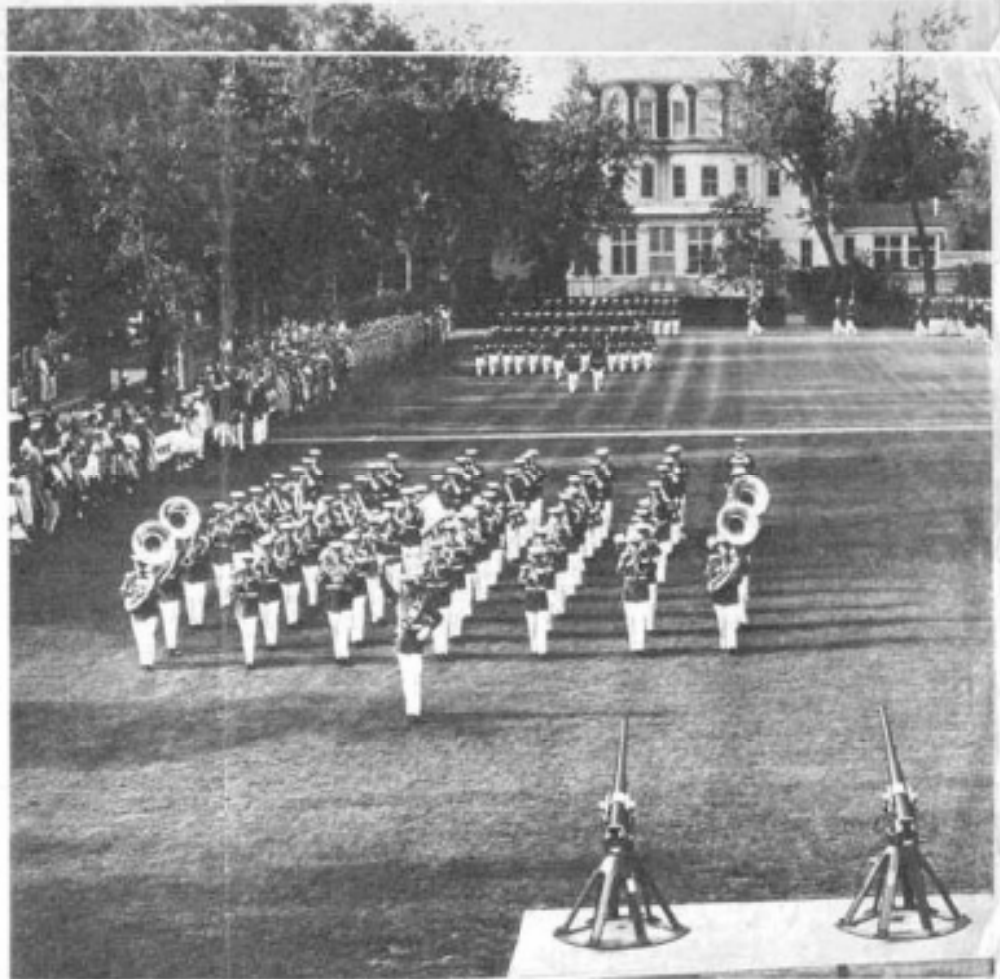
A silent drill team, whose maneuvers included a rapid midair exchange of bayonet-capped rifles, drew gasps from an awe-struck audience.

Figuring throughout the program was the Corps Color Guard, bearers not only of the National Standard but of the official Marine Battle Color, the only flag carrying streamers commemorating all Marine campaigns and citations.

In a climax to the evening of music and marching, the barracks troops—three platoons each from the Institute and the Ceremonial Guards—passed in review before a visiting dignitary. In rigid rows, their white-gloved hands swinging in time with their strides, they traversed the field in a rhythmic movement worthy of the finest watch.

When the review was completed, the colors were marched off the field, Chesty trotted home, and the troops and musicians filed back to quarters, accompanied on exit, as on entrance, by the slow beat of a solitary drummer.

In the hush that followed, the field lights went off, and the visitors arose slowly in the darkness, reluctant to break the spell. They left more quietly than they came, mildly amazed to learn outside that only an hour had passed since the show began.



Climactic point of ceremonies comes when crack troops pass in review. Commandant's house is in background. The barracks parade ground is a park that passers-by on busy Eighth street seldom see.