

Oldest Post

THE Nation's Capital had recently been moved from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. It had witnessed the swearing in of the third President and was experiencing early strains of expansion. The clamor of a city in the making filled the air as President Thomas Jefferson and his friend, LtCol William Ward Burrows, rode their horses along the still unpaved streets in 1801.

The President and the Commandant of the Marine Corps were searching for a site on which to erect the Capital's Marine barracks. There were two prime considerations; the barracks would have to

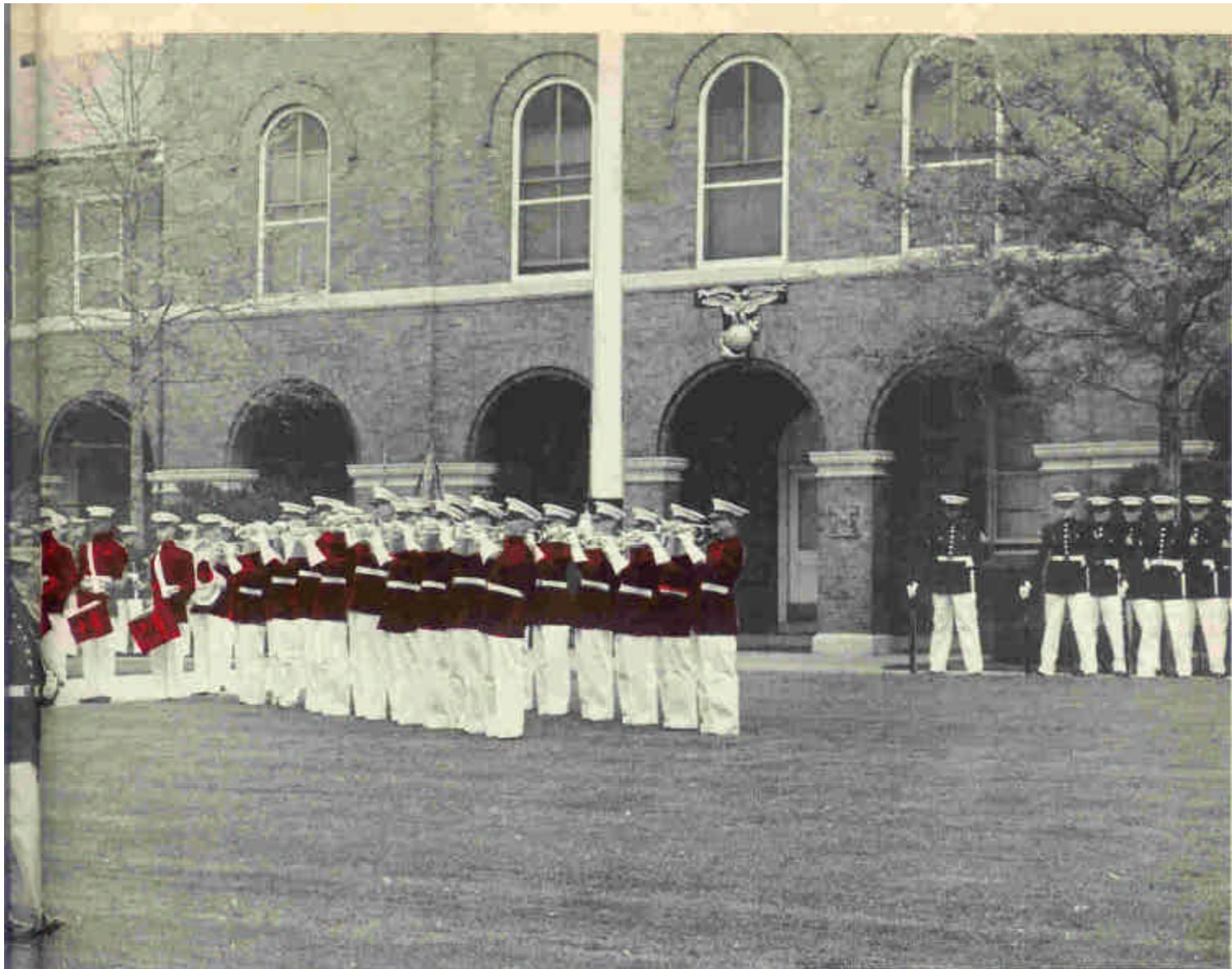
be within easy marching distance of the Capitol and near the Navy Yard. They finally chose "square number 927," and it remains the site of Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., today—better known as Marine Barracks, Eighth and Eye.

Unimproved roads have given way to modern thoroughfares. The frame buildings have grown into a steel and stone metropolis. Eighth and Eye, however, has never acquired the modern look and stands today a symbolic remnant of Marine Corps history and tradition.

Marines originally played an important role in providing security for the city and its dignitaries. To-

day, their earlier duties as guards have been supplemented and diversified. This augmentation includes their participation in official state and civil ceremonies. It extends to providing special security details for the President of the United States and visiting dignitaries of state in addition to operating the Marine Corps Institute.

Col Paul G. Graham is the Barrack's commander. Two distinct characteristics envelop life at Eighth and Eye. "Old Corps" tradition and standards are enshrined, alongside "New Corps" ingenuity. The result is a smooth-flowing, highly-competent command.



In 1801, when President Jefferson and Commandant Burrows were looking for a spot to build a Marine barracks in the Nation's Capital, they finally chose "square number 927." Today, MB, Eighth and Eye, can pull rank on any other post in the Corps. . . .

Story by LCpl Julius V. Brown

Photos by MSgt Larry C. Shockey

The Barracks Marines are probably best known for their "in garrison" parades, which began in 1934 with the advent of the Sunset Parade. They were conducted every Friday afternoon during the spring and summer months. The Sunset Parade remained essentially a family affair for Marines and their guests until 1957. At this time the parade time was changed to 9 p.m. and floodlights were introduced. The Marine Barracks Evening Parade, as it is now called, has attracted the steadily increasing interest of "official" Washington, area residents, and each summer's heavy influx of tourists.

In 1963, Marine Barracks returned a 1962 visit by President John F. Kennedy by staging this floodlighted ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House.

Precision performance by the Marines on the field is one factor behind the continued appeal of this ceremony. Consistent high quality is maintained only through many hours of rehearsal. Drill for individuals and small units begins indoors during the winter. Full-scale rehearsals start about a month before the opening of the season in mid-May.

Equally important to the parade is the work of specialized behind-

the-scenes personnel. Groundskeeping crews, with hard work and mysterious mixtures of grass seeds, keep the parade field one of the few areas in Washington that stays green all summer. The lighting crew's split-second timing, largely responsible for the dramatic impact of the ceremony, draws praise at every performance. The bulk of parade support is devoted to the handling of visitors to the Barracks. Each parade spectator, from the cabinet member to the casual tourist, is treated as an honored guest of the Marine Corps.

In addition to the Barracks Evening Parades, which end in late



(ABOVE) Some of the Barracks Marines are assigned to the Marine Corps Institute at the Navy Yard,



Official USMC Photo

(BELOW) Eighth and Eye Marines passed in review during the inauguration of President Richard M. Nixon.

(ABOVE) Commensurate with its ceremonial duties, Eighth and Eye furnishes Marines for funeral details.



Official USMC Photo

OLDEST POST (cont.)

September, the Marines from the Barracks pay homage to those whose "uncommon valor was a common virtue" each Tuesday from June through August at 7:30 p.m. This ceremony is held at the Marine Corps War Memorial, north of Arlington National Cemetery.

In the shadow of the statue's 32-foot-high figures, two companies from Eighth and Eye parade in this full dress ceremony. Highlights of each evening at the Memorial are appearances by the U. S. Marine Drum and Bugle Corps and the Silent Drill Platoon.

After the Marines have passed in

review, three memorial volleys are fired by riflemen in position at the base of the monument. Then follow the lonely notes of Taps, evoking memories of those who made the highest sacrifice in their country's defense.

The Marine Barracks has also been the home of the United States Marine Band since 1801. Shortly after its arrival in Washington, the band was requested to play for President John Adams at the Executive Mansion. This White House engagement became a tradition so well established that today, the names "Marine Band" and "President's Own" are synonymous. It was at the Barracks that John Philip Sousa, during the time he was leader of the Marine Band, wrote many of his immortal

marches.

LtCol A. F. Schoepper is director of the musical organization which has the distinction of being America's oldest military band. Through the years, visiting kings, queens and heads of state have been serenaded by its music. Its muffled drums escort war dead to their final resting place, and its fanfares herald inaugurations and the dedication of buildings and monuments.

Numerous commitments make it impossible to assemble the entire band for any single appearance. The band's versatility makes it highly popular and it is not unusual for every bandsman on the roster to be engaged simultaneously, playing in either a concert orchestra, a tour band, a marching band, string ensemble or a dance orchestra. Drum



(ABOVE) Sentries who guard the Barracks' main gate are noted for their alertness and sharp appearance.

Major, MSgt James R. Donovan, places its present strength at 138.

The task of perpetuating the image of the razor-sharp "parade ground" Marine, in a wide variety of public appearances, falls to the Silent Drill Platoon, a unit of Guard Company. The platoon is famous for its 10-minute precision drill sequence without a verbal command.

Included in this drill is a "mirror rifle inspection" climaxed by a very difficult double throwback of the regulation M-1 rifle.

The Drum and Bugle Corps is another Eighth and Eye star attraction. It represents the elite of Marine "field musics" selected from units around the world. It had its origin in the drummers and fifers first authorized on the Marine table of organization in the 18th century.



(ABOVE) Col Paul G. Graham, Barracks CO (C), chatted with SgtMaj L. C. Tuttle and Maj L. R. Gaboury.

(BELOW) Barracks Marines are probably best known for their "in garrison" parades which began in 1934.





SgtMaj Louis Tuttle is the Barracks Sergeant Major at Eighth and Eye.

OLDEST POST (cont.)

The Drum and Bugle Corps is a part of H&S Company and it is held in high regard by 1stSgt Robert L. Cowan, who joined the company in the fall of 1968. He echoes the Drum Major, MSgt Gary L. Losey, in proclaiming "it's the best."

Voluntary study as a means of improving morale and raising the general educational level of military personnel was conceived by the Marine Corps shortly after World War I. In order to put this plan into operation, the Marine Corps Institute was activated in January 1920. MCI Company has the task of running this complex which is located



Guard Company is the only Eighth and Eye unit which is housed at the Navy Yard. Its main gate is believed to be the oldest post guarded by Marines.

at the Washington Navy Yard. Marines in the Company are selected primarily for their knowledge in a specific MOS.

Guard Company is the only unit at Eighth and Eye that is actually housed at the Navy Yard. The gate to the Yard is believed to be the oldest post guarded by Marines and has been so guarded since 1801. Marines from the Barracks also provide the color detail for the Navy Yard.

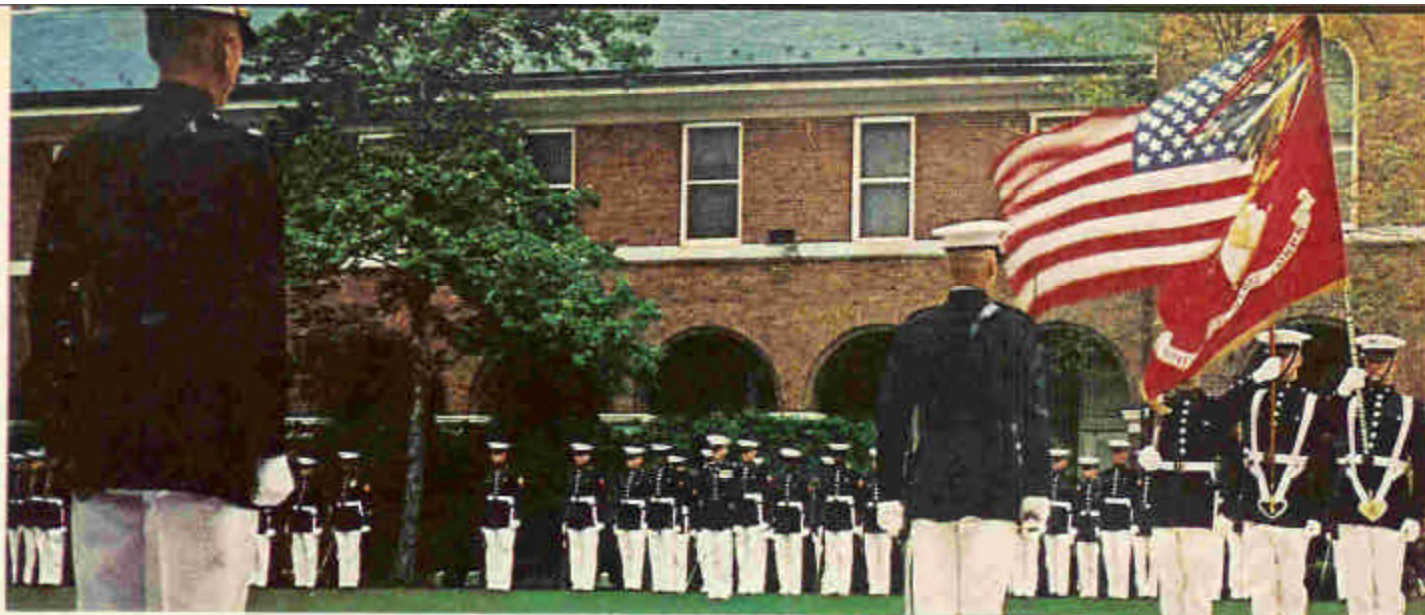
Commensurate with its ceremonial duties, Eighth and Eye, like any other post in the Corps, has normal barracks functions to perform. Mess, maintenance and administration go hand-in-hand with spit, polish and parades.

Marines at the Barracks are high caliber. An attempt is made to have only Vietnam veterans in the ranks.

This qualification in itself is not enough. The 8th & Eye Marine must have at least 18 months of active service time left or be willing to extend. He must have good vision and be at least 5 feet 10 inches tall. An immaculate record book is another requirement, along with a GCT of 100.

It is the privilege of Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C., to be entrusted with custody of the Marine Corps' Battle Color. The Color bears 38 streamers decorated with palms, oak leaf clusters and stars representing more than 200 awards and campaigns.

The Barracks is located at the intersection of 8th and I Streets in the Southeast section of Washington and covers the two-city-block area between 8th and 9th streets and G and I. Since its establishment



(TOP) Precision performances are demanded of Barracks Marines.



(ABOVE) SgtMaj Gary L. Losey leads the Drum and Bugle Corps.

(BELOW) Silent Drill Platoon executes double throwbacks with M-1's.

it has served many functions. Marine Corps Headquarters was located at the Barracks until 1901. It was also the training school for recruits and newly commissioned officers during that time. From the defense of Washington in 1814 to the seizure of Guantanamo Bay in 1898, Marines from Eighth and Eye have participated in nearly every major conflict.

At the north end of the Marine Barracks quadrangle stands the oldest public building in continuous use in Washington. It is the Commandant's house, official residence of all but the first two Commandants.

As the Commandant's house stands, a link with past and present, so does the history and tradition of the Marine Corps at Eighth and Eye, "the oldest post of the Corps."

END

