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The First Leathernecks: A Combat History of the U.S. Marines from Inception to the Halls of Montezuma

Don Burzynski

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To mark the two hundredth anniversary of the War of 1812, author and noted historian Don Burzynski sheds some rare and exciting light on the part played by the nascent United States Marine Corps in that pivotal conflict and on their development in the turbulent years leading up to America's second war with Great Britain. There's not much in the official record of that time but Burzynski uses his passion and background to fill in the blanks and produce a stirring tale of the trials, errors and successes that led the Marine Corps's vaunted reputation as the worlds' premiere amphibious fighting force. It took two centuries to forge the modern Marine Corps, but it was the War of 1812 that set the Corps on the path to renown and established their high standards of dedication, loyalty and combat prowess. It was the Marines' accurate and devastating musketry coupled with their skill at manning cannon aboard the American warships of the period that resulted in victory at Lake Erie, Bladensburg, Baltimore and New Orleans. Despite their demonstrable value in those battles, success in combating the slave trade while serving at sea with the U.S. Navy, and their singular contribution in quashing piracy off the coasts of North Africa, the Marines were forced to fight for their survival on home turf. Burzynski accurately and interestingly covers the internecine wars of the period between Marines, their supporters and such luminaries of the time as President Andrew Jackson and other politicians who often sided with Admirals bound to disband the Corps. This untold story is an exciting, exhilarating tale of the most formative years of the United States Marine Corps. It goes a long and insightful way toward explaining how and why "Send in the Marines!" became a viable and reliable diplomatic ploy throughout the early years of American history.

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