

250 YEARS OF THE MARINE CORPS



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The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Spotlights Louisiana During Nationwide Marines Across America Program

MCHF marks the achievement of Louisiana Marines as part of the Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary Celebration

TRIANGLE, Va. (May 20, 2025) – The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation (MCHF) today celebrates Louisiana Marines as part of the organization's yearlong *Marines Across America* program to mark the Marine Corps' 250th Anniversary. The program highlights Marines who embody the values of honor, courage, and commitment within their communities and showcases the contributions Marines make in their local communities or nationally following their active-duty service.

"Marines have always made their mark on the battlefield, but it's important to remember they've also made their mark in their hometowns and communities," said retired Marine Major General James Lukeman, President and CEO of MCHF. "As we celebrate 250 years of the Marine Corps, we honor the significant contributions that Marines in Louisiana have made to our country. It's an opportunity for all residents of Louisiana to commemorate this historic milestone and show their appreciation for all Marines who stand ready to protect our nation and continue to put Marine values to work in their communities and professional lives."

Notable Marines with Louisiana ties include:

- [James Carville](#): Well-known for leading Bill Clinton's successful 1992 presidential campaign, James Carville is a consultant, author, and frequent guest on political television programs and podcasts. Carville served two years in the Marine Corps before earning his degree at LSU, where he later received his law degree, and beginning his political career. (New Orleans, La.)
- [Carl Dunn](#): With a background in law enforcement that spans nearly four decades, Carl Dunn currently serves as the first elected African American chief of police in Baker, Louisiana. A Marine Corps veteran, Dunn has been honored with letters of commendation from state police leaders and was named Louisiana's Outstanding Officer of the Year. (Baker, La.)
- [Don Thanars](#): Serving 21 years with the Marine Corps, Don Thanars was deployed overseas for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Enduring Freedom. Since his retirement, he has been an active member of the St. Tammany

Parish community, serving on the Board of Commissioners for the Harbor Center. Thanars also performs in the music ministry at Living the Word International. (Slidell, La.)

- [Tonya Leis](#): A Marine Corps veteran who served for more than eight years, Tonya Leis is currently the vice president of operations for the Southwest Louisiana Veterans Association. The nonprofit was formed in 2015 to give back to veterans in the state. (Lake Charles, La.)

“The list of notable Marines from Louisiana is impressive and showcases how they used the values and skills they learned in the Marine Corps to become leaders in their communities,” said MajGen Lukeman. “Today marks a special opportunity to recognize these extraordinary men and women for their service to our nation as well as their communities.”

The *Marines Across America* program continues throughout 2025, leading to the official 250th birthday of the Marine Corps on Nov. 10, which will be marked nationwide with official cake-cutting ceremonies taking place at all 50 state capitals.

Members of the public are encouraged to join the anniversary celebration and *Marines Across America* by sharing stories of Marines they know, both active and retired, who make a difference in their communities and in their professional lives. Submissions may be made through the [Marine250.com website](https://Marine250.com) or via social media using the hashtag #MarinesAcrossAmerica.

About the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation:

Dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of Marine Corps history, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation was established in 1979 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. The Foundation supports the historical programs of the Marine Corps in ways not possible through government funds. The Foundation provides grants and scholarships for research and the renovation, restoration and commissioning of historical Marine Corps artifacts and landmarks. The Foundation secured the necessary funding for the construction of the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Heritage Center, located in Triangle, Virginia, and continues to expand programs at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and beyond its walls. For more information, visit MarineHeritage.org.



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