



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

Don Burzynski

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The First Leathernecks is an exciting and insightful recounting of the earliest and most formative phases in the history of the United States Marine Corps, including the War of 1812, a period in which the author is a recognized expert. Burzynski has gleaned what little information is available in documents from the time and filled in the blanks with his own extensive research and historical background. What has emerged from those efforts is one of the most thorough and interesting accounts of a pivotal period in American military history. The author's stirring prose is amplified by beautiful artwork created by noted Marine Corps historian and fine artist Charles Waterhouse.

The book covers the earliest days of the nascent US Marine Corps and extends to their participation in the Mexican War of 1848, including the War of 1812. (This release is timed to coincide with the bicentennial year of that conflict, and the ensuing renewed interest.) Even readers relatively unfamiliar with this crucial period in American history will be fascinated by Burzynski's tale of Marine combat in the battles of Lake Erie, Bladensburg, Baltimore, and New Orleans. It was the Marines' accurate and devastating musketry, coupled with their skill at manning cannon aboard the American warships, that ensured victory in these battles with Great Britain.

Despite their demonstrable value in those battles, their success in combating the slave trade while serving at sea with the US Navy, and their singular contribution in quashing piracy off the coasts of North Africa, the marines of the period were forced to fight for survival on home turf. Burzynski accurately and interestingly covers the internecine wars between marines, their supporters, and such luminaries as President Andrew Jackson and other politicians who often sided with American admirals eager to disband the corps.

This is an exciting, exhilarating tale of the most formative years of the US Marine Corps. It goes a long 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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