

## The First Evening Parade: 5 July 1957



*The Evening Star, Saturday, July 6, 1957*

**On July 5, 1957, the first Evening Parade was presented at the Barracks. To be precise, it was not called the "Evening Parade" at that time, but was instead referred to as the "Moonlight Parade." For many years, dating back at least to the 1920's, the Barracks held "Sunset Parades" on Friday evenings at 5:30 p.m., but never one at night.**

**The purpose of this discussion is to recall the background and history of the Evening Parade. We are in the process of developing the facts from 50-year old memories of those who participated, and will record them here as we develop them. Because a "generation gap" has occurred over the intervening years due to changes which have occurred, we will try to demonstrate to the reader the context in which the first Evening Parade should be viewed:**

### **Life at the Barracks in 1957**

**While the "bricks and mortar" within the quadrangle of the buildings bordered by 8th and 9th, and by G and I Streets Southeast have the same appearance now as they did 50 years ago, life at the Barracks has undergone a profound change.**

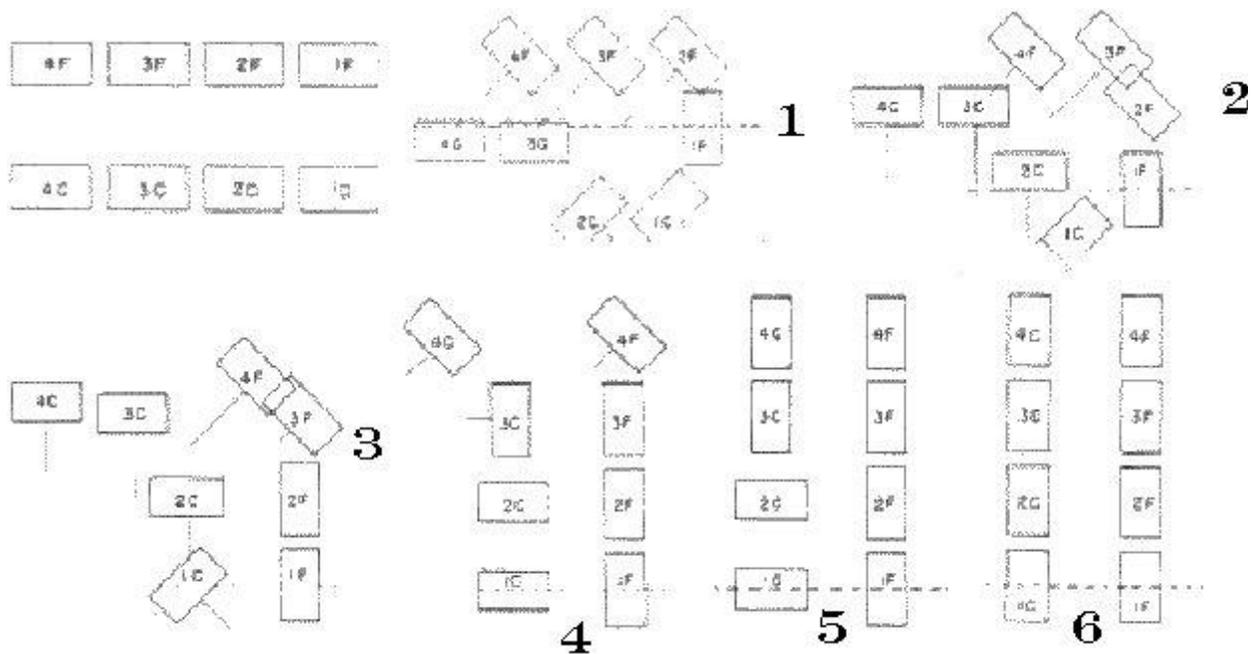
**In 1957, there were no "off campus" buildings other than the old schoolhouse (a block away) which served as a storage facility (its original use was to house the Marine Corps Institute). Within the quadrangle, every inch of space was being used to house the officers and troops, the Marine Band and Drum and Bugle Corps, a Post Exchange, mess hall, basketball court, barber shop, a "slopshute" and many offices needed for executing the mission of the Barracks.**

**Small by today's standards, the number of officers and enlisted in 1957 totaled less than 900. They consisted of the Ceremonial Guard Company, MCI Company,**

Headquarters and Service Company, the U.S. Marine Band and the Drum and Bugle Corps. The Barracks were fully occupied, with MCI Company quartered in the upper deck in the Northern portion, H&S Company in the center, and Ceremonial Guard Company in the Southern portion. Everything was geared to ceremonial considerations, such as stripes painted every 30" on the pavement in front of the offices under the arcade which were used to practice "perfect" strides. Another example was the painted footprints of the basic "squads drill" movement described below, which was on the parking lot pavement near the gas pump.

At that time, the Ceremonial Guard Company had four platoons, each of which was a silent drill team, each having a separate drill routine, and one of the four platoons was always at Camp David, being rotated every week or two. Each of the platoons was a "complete" ceremonial unit, and for funerals at Arlington Cemetery used its own personnel to serve as body bearers and firing parties. MCI Company had three complete ceremonial platoons (with the same height requirements as the Ceremonial Company) which participated in all types of parades and ceremonies in funeral corteges.

Even the basic drill was totally different from today's. In 1957, we used the pre-World War II "squads drill" in which each squad consisted of two ranks of four, as opposed to today's "FMF drill," in which each squad consists on one rank of 8 Marines. A ceremonial platoon today appears as 3 ranks of 8 Marines, whereas in the "squads drill" the platoon appeared as two ranks of 12 Marines. The basic maneuver for each squad in the old drill was "squad right", in which the squad would move so as to face 90 degrees from their starting position in six counts.



As can be seen, this was no simple movement, as each man's movements were different from all others, and in a "squads left" movement, each man's movements were different from those he used in executing "squads right."

The effect of this drill on the Parade was awesome. At the "march-on," the platoons marched in a column of squads (4 abreast, six ranks deep), and when they arrived at their assigned locations and executed a "squads right" (in the case of CGC) or "squads left" (in the case of MCI Company), the entire companies moved into two ranks, 36 men abreast! The same effect was had when beginning the pass in "review" at the north end of the parade deck - each platoon marching in a column of squads, and using the 6-count "squads left" movement, became 2 ranks of 12 abreast. Having 12 abreast as they passed the reviewing officer was most impressive, and took hours of practice to keep perfect alignment.

Another essential movement was "right by squads" (used after passing in review just prior to reaching the south end of the parade deck) so as to change from 2 ranks of 12 to 6 ranks of 4 -- in this movement, the right squad stayed straight, while the other two executed "squads right" and an immediate "column left." In addition, the pre-World War II drill requirements were used for "parade rest" and "at ease" for both officers and enlisted.

And, of course, there was no night-lighting.

## **Parades at the Barracks**

Parades, or formal guard mounts have been a part of Barracks life since its founding in 1801. Full dress Friday Sunset Parades at 1730 are reputed to have begun just after World War I, and the Tuesday dress parade at the Marine Corps War Memorial (the "Iwo Jima Monument" in Arlington, VA) began in September of 1956.

In the mid-1950's, there were other parades as well, primarily due to the fact that President Dwight D. Eisenhower, a former Army General, loved military ceremonies. Whenever a visiting head of State arrived, he was greeted at the Military Air Transport Service (MATs) Terminal at the north terminal area of National (now Ronald Reagan) Airport by a joint honor guard consisting of the Army Band, and a ceremonial company of troops - a platoon from each of the armed services. From there a motorcade would take the dignitary across Memorial Bridge, then east on Constitution Avenue, where he would be met at 15th street (at the Washington Monument) by an all-service Parade contingent (the Marine Band, and a ceremonial battalion consisting of two companies from each of the armed services). The Parade would proceed East to 12th, North on 12th through the federal triangle to Pennsylvania Avenue, and then West to the front of the White House, where the dignitary would be greeted at the front door by the President. In early 1958, the route was shortened (north on 15th to Pennsylvania, then west to the White House). These Parades (with mixed armed services and police cordons the whole route) were held at least once every month or so.

## **The Motivation For the Evening Parade**

No definitive history has been located which pinpoints the motivating factor underlying the first Evening Parade. However, for those who served at the Barracks at the time, the prevailing "scuttlebutt" was as follows:

The then-new Barracks CO, Col Leonard F. Chapman, following Barracks SOP, took the Barracks ceremonial schedule to the then-new Commandant, Randolph McCall Pate, for approval. General Pate told Col Chapman that he had been warned by previous Commandants to try to find a way to avoid having to entertain guests for hours on end following the Sunset Parades. The problem was due to the fact that the guests usually arrived for the 1730 parade at 1630-1700, and were unfed until after the parade, thus making it necessary to have cocktails, a buffet dinner and dessert, which usually lasted until late in the night.

Col Chapman told the Commandant that while he could anticipate some problems, the answer was relatively simple - have a later parade and invite the guests for cocktails before the parade, and then see the guests off to the parade, at which time the Commandant's duties as host would end.

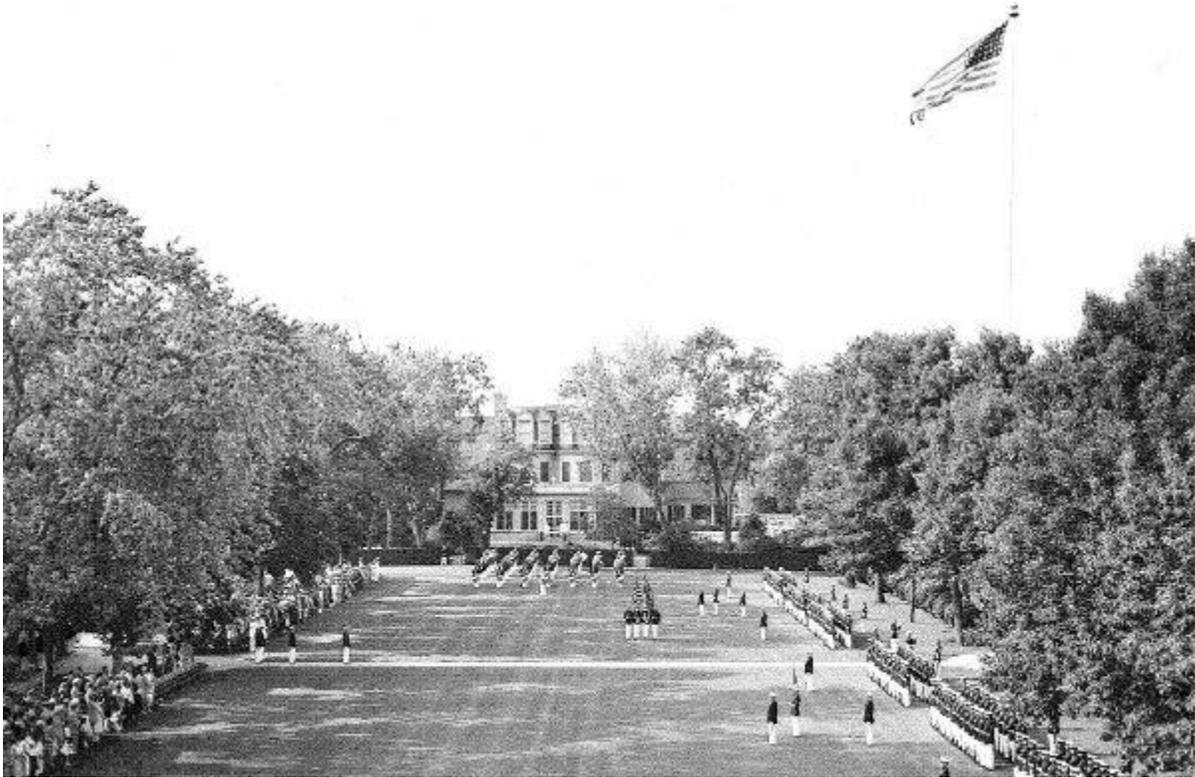
## **Planning For the Evening Parade - Initial Resistance**

At the staff meeting on Monday the following week, Col. Chapman announced to his staff consisting of Joe Lepp (S-1), Larry Marousek (S-3), Bud Schmid (S-4), and the ceremonial company commanders Bob Lyons (CGC) and John Haggerty (MCI) that he wanted an Evening Parade. The initial question was "at what time?" and Col. Chapman replied "under the lights." One of those in attendance said that a "lengthy exchange" followed, and that "if you had a score card, it would have read one vote for (guess who?) and all the rest against the idea." Major Schmidt was vehement in his objections, saying that the logistics of night-lighting would be a nightmare, as no one could anticipate how much lighting would be needed or where it could be placed until detailed testing was done.

It was either Major Schmid or Major Marousek who finally responded "Colonel, it just can't be done." and Col. Chapman, blinking his eyes and twitching his neck, responded with a thin smile, "The more you say it can't be done, the more I'm convinced it can be done. If there are no more comments, gentlemen, let's adjourn and begin the planning process today."

## **From Planning to Parade!**

To most, it would seem an easy task to change a 5:30 p.m. parade into an Evening Parade. However, it turned out to be far more complicated than that.



A typical "Sunset" Parade  
(Photo courtesy of Col Roy Batterton, USMC (Ret))

**The first problem was determining a proper time for the new parade. The basic decision was whether to have the parade before dusk, at dusk, or at night. During the summer, Washington, DC is on Eastern Daylight Time, and for most of the summer full darkness does not occur until approximately 9:00 p.m. If the new parade was to be scheduled for that time, major logistical problems were involved in getting adequate lighting for the event, as the Barracks had none.**

**While the initial decision to have the parade at a later hour was made, the final decision as to how late it should start was deferred until LtCol Roy Batterton (the Barracks XO) returned from the Bermuda Tattoo (done after sunset "under the lights") with a recommendation. His recommendation, enthusiastically agreed to by Col Robert Heintz (HQMC's representative at the Tattoo) was that having it in total darkness "under the lights" as done in Bermuda was extremely impressive, and that the 9:00 p.m. time should be used. For a most interesting account of these events by Col Batterton (including his observations about Col Chapman and a paragraph on the beginning of the tradition of beer mugs for Barracks officers), see [www.centerhouse.org/battertonparade.pdf](http://www.centerhouse.org/battertonparade.pdf).**

### **The Lighting Problem**

**Powerful spotlights were needed to show the ringing of the bell and the entry of Chesty (the Bulldog mascot), as well as the troops in formation, the Marine Band and Drum and the Bugle Corps, the drill team and the troops as they would "pass**

in review." In addition, a narrow spotlight would be needed for some parts of the parade, such as the presentation of the National Colors and the introduction of the Marine Battle Color with its many pennants and battle stars, which is kept at the Barracks because it is the oldest post in the Marine Corps.

Major Schmid, the S-4, issued an immediate query throughout the Marine Corps for lighting equipment, which was provided by the photographic unit at the Marine Base in Quantico, Virginia. Supplying electricity for the lights was another problem, due to the antiquated electrical set-up of the Barracks, and the problem was worked out with PEPCO, the local power company. Yet another problem was where or how to mount the lights, not knowing whether the parade was a "one-shot" effort, or would be adopted as a fixture for the future. The lights were hung in the trees in front of the houses known as "Officer' Row," and a "jury-rigged" lighting system control panel was operated by 1st Lt. Gerald Hepp, Ass't S-4 (he had served at the Barracks as an enlisted man in 1948-49 as a member of the first USMC silent drill team).

A unique problem with the lighting was drill teams. A local newspaper said as follows, as it discussed the preparations with Col. Chapman:  
"Lighting the silent drill team presented another problem. Men practicing with bayonet-tipped weapons can't be expected to see what they're doing with light glaring in their eyes, so the technicians have to light in and around them. Since there are four separate drill teams with different routines, the lighting has to be different for each of them." Note: For an excellent description of the details of the lighting problem by Bob Cappock, who was assigned to the Electrical Section, see [www.centerhouse.org/capocklights.pdf](http://www.centerhouse.org/capocklights.pdf).

### "Input" by the Commanding Officer

The Barracks CO, Col. (later to be a 4-star general and USMC Commandant) Leonard F. Chapman was known for his attention to detail, as well as being a tireless innovator. He wanted to dramatize the fixing of bayonets (which had been done to a vocal "count"), and was told by the Band's Drum Major that he recalled that the old "1935 "Manual for Field Musics" contained music for "fix bayonets." Slight revisions were made to the music for drum beats, and "fix bayonets" was practiced by the troops many times prior to the Evening Parade.

#### FIX BAYONETS



(From the 1935 Manual)

The main flag was lowered in previous "Sunset parades," and Col. Chapman wanted the flag lowering ceremony continued in the Evening Parade. As a result of a special exemption, the Barracks became the only Marine Corps installation permitted to fly the flag until it was lowered during the Evening Parade, well past the normal retreat time. A question arose as to whether the parade announcer [S/Sgt Joe Larkin], hidden by a black-out curtain, should use a recording for the

presentation and explanation of the Marine Battle Colors. Col. Chapman quickly rejected this proposal on the basis that "machines can malfunction, but my Marines, when properly trained, never make mistakes." Yet another innovation was his direction that buglers be placed on the ramparts to signal that the parade was about to begin and for "taps" at the end of the parade.

### **Music for the Parade**

Also a traditionalist, Col. Chapman wanted to continue the Sousa-influenced music during the parade (although a notable exception was made for the Drum and Bugle Corps rendition of "Scotland the Brave" in its slow march): Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever" (during the pre-parade Band Concert), the "Washington Post" march, George M. Cohan's "Grand Ole Flag" (to "march on the colors"), the "Star Spangled Banner" for the presentation of the National Colors), and E.E. Bagley's "National Emblem" (by the Drum and Bugle Corps to "post the colors"), and Sousa's "Semper Fidelis" (for the "pass in review"). While the parade was to start at 9:00 p.m., the Band was to begin its pre-parade concert at 8:40 p.m.

### **Practice, Practice and More Practice**

Countless practices were held in the weeks leading up to the first Evening Parade, and, after the lights were installed, practices were held at night, making for an extremely long working day for the troops who began the day at 6:00 a.m. Since Marine Headquarters wanted a film of the parade, a special "dress rehearsal" was held a week ahead of time, and film crews from the Naval Photo Lab erected towers and dug pits in the parade deck for camera angles (word was passed that anyone found to have made eye-contact with the cameras would be denied a liberty pass for 90 days). It became obvious that the contrast between the white parts of the uniform (particularly the gloves) emphasized even the slightest mistake in executing commands (the cameras disclosed that some of the drill team (the Second Platoon of the Ceremonial Guard Company was selected as Drill Team for the first Evening Parade) had cut holes on the inside of the fingers of their gloves for improved handling of their rifles — new gloves were immediately issued), and the rehearsal was repeated over and over for the filming (until shortly after 2:00 a.m.). Unfortunately, the film was destroyed in a fire at the film lab, and was never seen at the Barracks.



One of the final afternoon "Sunset Parades"  
(MCI Company commanded by Capt. John Haggerty - Platoon Leaders (l-r)  
1st Lts. Steve Trimble, Rick Childress and Tom Lapham)

### **The First Evening Parade Approaches!**

**As parade day approached, the anticipated crowd size was proving correct, and a system had to be adopted to efficiently seat them, without mistakes. Although the "scuttlebutt" was they wouldn't be needed, some two weeks prior to the parade, Marine Corps Institute officers and SNCO course writers were ordered to report in "dress blues with medals," at the Barracks for duty as "supernumeraries" (today they are known as "parade hosts"). This caused problems, as few had polished medals (at the time, 8th & I was the only post in the Marine Corps where medals were polished), and the Band's metal polisher was very busy during that two weeks.**

**Even greater problems faced some of the officer course writers - reserve officers who were chosen to spend 90 days during the summer at MCI as course writers, most of whom either never had dress blues, or had them and were unable to wear them because they had been destroyed or moth-eaten. While white trousers and Sam Brown belts were issued by the supply room, these officers had to scramble to order dress blue uniforms and have them fitted, as well as obtain official Marine**

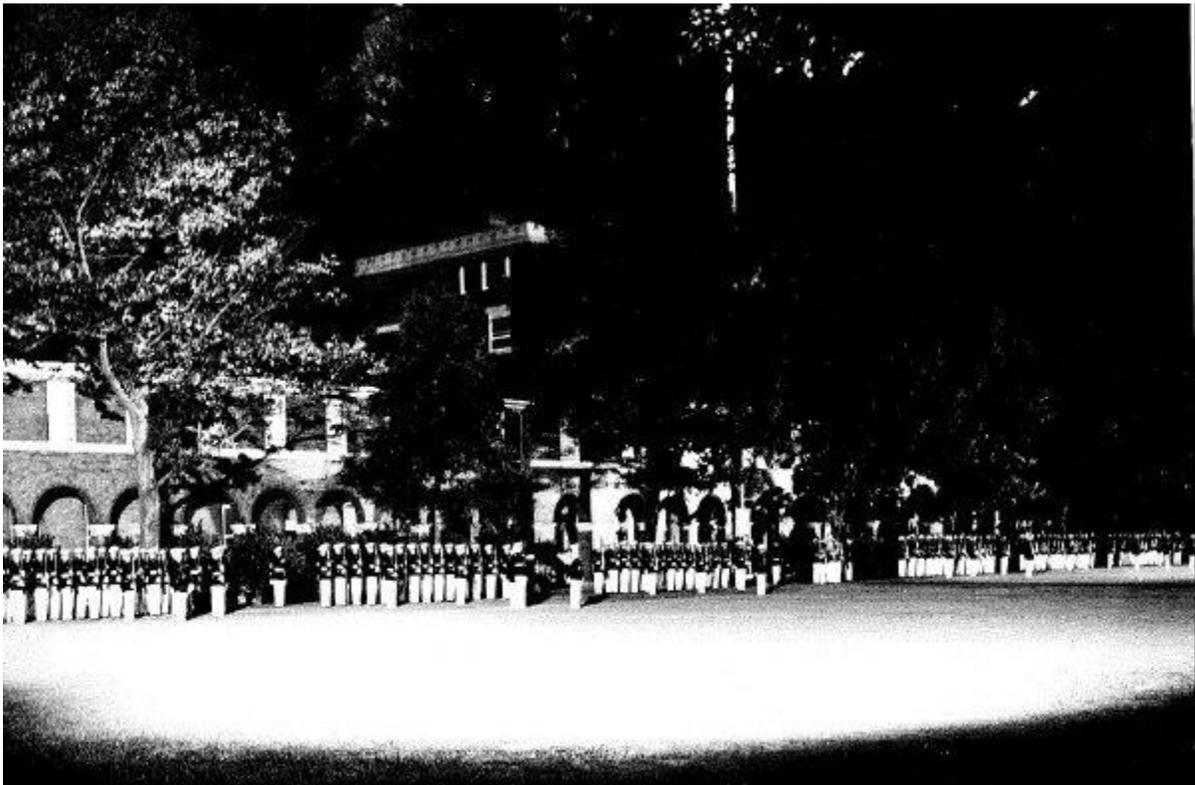
**Corps Mameluke swords of the proper length in time for the parade.**

**In the end, all problems were solved, and the "supernumeraries" assembled at the Barracks and were inspected by Capt. George Crist, and they were assigned to their posts to greet and seat the guests.**

**The Barracks was a bee-hive of activity on Parade Day. A large crowd was expected, and seats had to be obtained from the Band Hall, as well as temporary bleacher seating, all of which had to be carried and put into place by Barracks personnel, many of whom would participate in the parade. In addition, others worked to make the Barracks "shipshape" by mowing grass, painting, polishing brass, etc.**

## **The First Evening Parade**

**As parade time approached the evening of July 5, 1957, the Sottile twins (Jim and Vince, of the 2nd plt, CGC) performed the "measured post" at the front gate, and Jim Donovan moved into position to unfurl the two-star flag of the reviewing officer. Promptly at 9:00 p.m., "Chesty," the Barracks mascot and his handler appeared, the ship's bell from the U.S.S. Smedley Butler was sounded with two rapid rings, and Chesty and his handler crossed the parade deck to begin the parade!**





(Photos of the First Evening Parade  
courtesy Col Roy J. Batterton, USMC (Ret))

**The units in the first Evening Parade were as follows (in order of appearance):**

**Parade Commander and Staff - LtCol Roy J. Batterton, USMC**

**U. S. Marine Band - M/Sgt (Drum Major) Edmund Demar, USMC**

**U.S. Marine Drum & Bugle Corps - M/Sgt (Drum Major) Chris Stergiou, USMC**

**Ceremonial Guard Company - Capt. Robert J. Lyons, USMC**

**1st Platoon - 1stLt J. W. Brown, USMC**

**4th Platoon - 1stLt E. Richard Savoy, USMC**

**2nd Platoon - 1stLt Richard M. Foster, USMC (performed silent drill)**

**Marine Corps Institute Company - Captain John W. Haggerty, USMC**

**1st Platoon - Stephen A. Trimble, USMC**

**2nd Platoon - 1stLt Richard W. Childress, USMC**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon - 1st Lt Thomas J. Lapham, USMC**

**U.S. Marine Color Guard - Sgt Glenn S. Tait, USMC  
(Color Sergeant of the Marine Corps)**



Parade Adjutant Maj "Bud" Schmid shakes hands with the reviewing officer following the first Evening Parade. LtCol Roy Batterton, the parade commander, is shown behind them.

### **It's a hit!**

**Primarily due to the countless practices and attention to every detail, the first Evening Parade went off without a hitch, and the crowd was audible in its appreciation.**

**From that first night, the Evening Parade became immensely popular, and Friday Sunset Parades became a thing of the past. Seating had to be increased each week, and requests for reservations increased exponentially. As proof of its popularity, videocassettes and DVD's of the parade are available for purchase at [www.goodtogovideo.com](http://www.goodtogovideo.com)**

**Why was it considered a better military parade than its older "Sunset" counterpart? One need to look no further to see the dramatic effect that a night-time performance has on a military unit, as seen at [www.centerhouse.org/dandb.asf](http://www.centerhouse.org/dandb.asf). (Turn up your sound!)**

### **The Evening Parade's Effect on the Troops**

**What were the practical effects of the Evening Parade? These are probably best summed up by the recent observations one of the NCO's who participated:**

**"The change from a sunset parade to an evening parade created several problems. First and foremost, it inconvenienced about 200 Marines, including me. Instead of**

being finished at 1930 and going on liberty, we wouldn't be finished until 2230, and this made for a long day, because everything started at the same time, it just ended later [at that time, all seating was on chairs from the Band Hall, which had to be set up before the parade and removed and returned to the Band Hall following the parade]. Secondly, a system for lighting the parade field had to be devised. Today, it is a very sophisticated lighting system, but in 1957 it consisted of flood lights hanging in the trees by ropes or chains. Many additional rehearsals were required to perfect the lighting of the various units in the parade . . . more troop inconvenience . . . no big deal! The lighting, on a warm summer evening, brought a plethora of winged creatures to feast on our flesh and drink our blood. At times, there were so many bugs swirling around the lights, it almost looked like it was snowing. At least the mosquitoes feasted on officer blood as well as enlisted blood. This was a small consolation, but it helped make it bearable. I don't know why, but the bug situation diminished and eventually it didn't appear to be a problem at all. Lastly, under the lights, any buttons, buckles or leather that weren't shined became very noticeable. In the afternoon, these things hadn't been noticeable and we could get away with less preparation.

By 1958, the evening parade had become one of Washington's leading tourist attractions. The number of spectators grew quickly, probably due to the cooler evenings and a later starting time. The chairs from the band hall were replaced with bleachers in order to accommodate the additional spectators."

Researched and Prepared by  
Steve Trimble  
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