

## MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY CEREMONY

## 22-1. PROCEDURE AND GUIDE

a. The following procedure is prescribed as a guide for the conduct of the Marine Corps Birthday Ceremony. It is outlined on the basis of a Marine Corps post commanded by a general officer. At posts where no general officer is present, and in enlisted men's messes, modifications may be made as necessary to meet local conditions. Rehearsals must be conducted to ensure that the ceremony proceeds smoothly and precisely.

b. At a time selected for the commencement of the ceremony, a field music sounds attention and the officer in charge requests guests to clear the center of the dance floor. The adjutant takes post at the front of the cleared area. Drummers and trumpeters and other participants in the ceremony form at the main entrance to the ballroom. Escort draws swords. The adjutant's sword remains in scabbard throughout the ceremony.

c. On signal from the officer in charge, the doors to the ballroom are thrown open; the adjutant commands SOUND ADJUTANT'S CALL; the field music sounds ADJUTANT'S CALL; drummers take up the beat at the last note and, after a brief interval, drummers and trumpeters march onto the dance floor playing the "Foreign Legion March." Drummers and trumpeters march down a cleared lane to the far end of the dance floor, countermarch just in front of the adjutant, and followed by him, march back to the main entrance, countermarch again, and halt. Drummers and trumpeters then execute right and left step a sufficient distance to clear the entrance doorway. The adjutant moves behind the cake escort. The march is ceased upon the command of the drum major.

d. The band or orchestra commences playing "Semper Fidelis." Two colonels of escort enter the ballroom together, march down the dance floor, and when an appropriate distance from the far end of the ballroom, turn right and left in marching and take station on each side of the cleared lane facing inboard. They are then followed by two lieutenant colonels, two majors, two captains, two first lieutenants, and two second lieutenants, each pair taking station at double arms interval, the two lines thus forming two long sides of a hollow rectangle. General officers, if present, or other ranking personnel, enter the ballroom in pairs by the main entrance, march down the line of escorts to the end of the ballroom, halt, face about, and form a third side of the rectangle, leaving two spaces vacant in the center of the lines. When all are in position, the band or orchestra ceases playing.

e. The field music sounds "Attention." The commanding general and guest of honor, if one has been invited to participate, enter the ballroom together, march halfway down the line of escorts, and halt. The senior colonel of the escort commands PRESENT, ARMS. Officers of the escort salute. The appropriate musical honors will be rendered. The senior colonel of the escort commands ORDER, ARMS and the escort comes to the order. The commanding general and guest of honor move to the end of the line of escort (without music), halt, and face about, taking position in the center of the line of general officers.

f. The field music sounds "Attention." The color guard enters the ballroom, marches halfway down the line of escorts and halts, remaining at right shoulder arms. The senior colonel of the

escort commands PRESENT ARMS. The escort and color guard salute, and the band or orchestras the "National Anthem." The senior colonel of the escort then commands ORDER, ARMS. The escort comes to the order and the color guard returns to right shoulder arms. The color guard then marches forward to the end of the line of escorts, countermarches, and marches back down the line of escorts to a position in front of the drummers and trumpeters, then executes a second countermarch and halts. The color guard then executes left and right step, halting in front of the drummers and trumpeters.

g. The field music sounds "Attention." The band or orchestra plays "The Marines' Hymn" and the cake escorts (four second lieutenants) enter the ballroom. Between them they push a serving cart on which are placed the birthday cake and a Marine sword. The adjutant follows the cake. The cake escorts slowly roll the cake down the line of escorts to a position in front of the commanding general. The cake escorts then sidestep 1 pace) halt, and face inboard toward the cake. The band or orchestra ceases playing. The adjutant faces about and reads the traditional birthday message. He then retires by marching the length of the ballroom.

h. The commanding general steps forward, gives a short talk on the significance of the Marine Corps birthday, and introduces the guest of honor, if one is present. The guest of honor then makes a few remarks. When the addresses are completed, the senior cake escort steps forward, takes the sword from the cake cart, and passes it over his left forearm, grip forward, to the commanding general. The band or orchestra plays "Auld Lang Syne" while the first slice of cake is being cut. The commanding general places the first slice of cake on a plate handed to him by one of the cake escorts, and passes the plate to the guest of honor. After tasting the cake, the guest of honor returns the plate to one of the escorts who places it on the serving cart. The commanding general then cuts and presents pieces of cake to the oldest Marine present and the youngest Marine present, in that order.

i. Upon completion of this part of the ceremony) the color guard, upon order of the color sergeant, closes by executing right and left step and comes to right shoulder arms. The color sergeant commands FORWARD, MARCH and the band or orchestra commences playing "Semper Fidelis." The color guard then marches forward to the end of the line of escorts, countermarches, and marches between the line of escorts and out the entrance way. When the colors have cleared the dance floor, the commanding general with the guest of honor march forward between the line of escorts and out the entrance way. When they have cleared the entrance, they are followed in a similar manner by the remainder of the general officers, marching out in pairs.

j. As the last general officer clears the ballroom, the cake escort steps forward, faces right and left, and rolls the cake serving cart forward to the line where the general officers were standing. The cake escort then faces about toward the entrance and remains in position until the conclusion of the ceremony, when all members of the cake escort assist in passing the cake to the distinguished guests present.

k. Upon completion of the cake escort's movements, the two colonels come to carry swords, march forward to center line of the ballroom, face toward the entrance door, and march off the dance floor together through the entrance way. They are followed successively by the remainder of the escorts, the band or orchestra continuing to play until the last officers of the escort have cleared the dance floor. The band or orchestra ceases playing. The drummers and trumpeters close by side-stepping to the right and left, take up the beat, march the length of the dance floor, countermarch, and march back down the floor and out of the entrance way. As the last trumpeter clears the entrance way, the doors are closed, thus concluding the ceremony.

22-2. VARIATION

It is recognized that considerable variation must be made in this ceremony to conform with the configuration of the dance floor or in the absence of a band or field music. Examples are:

a. When the ceremony is conducted at posts where there is no general officer commanding, the senior line officer will follow the procedure outlined above for the commanding general. At such posts, the escorts will be formed from appropriate ranks present.

b. When the ceremony is conducted at noncommissioned officer's or other enlisted messes, appropriate ranking noncommissioned officers will preside and form the escort.

c. Where the ballroom is of sufficient size, two officers or enlisted personnel of each rank will be assigned to the escort.

d. Where practicable, the following uniform will be worn:

(1) Officer, evening dress or blue dress.

(2) Enlisted, blue dress.

e. The birthday cake will be mounted on a mess serving cart or similar conveyance covered with scarlet and gold bunting.

f. Where swords are not available, escort will execute hand salute at appropriate commands.

g. Guests may be cleared from the center of the ballroom by stretching white lines, supported by second lieutenants or noncommissioned officers, moving from center line of dance floor toward either side to provide required space for the ceremony.