

A LEATHERNECK IN CONGRESS: MELVIN MAAS'S FIGHT
FOR A MODERN MARINE CORPS RESERVE

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my daughter, Alexandria,

and

my mother, Stacey Guill, Ph.D.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF AUTHOR

Timothy Guill graduated from the University of Idaho in 2003 with a degree in history. Timothy has focused his studies on 20th century American political and military history and he began his research on the Marine Corps Reserve and Melvin J. Maas in the spring of 2012. To aid in his research on Maas, he was awarded a grant from The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation in the summer of 2013. Timothy will be graduating with his M.A. in History from Boise State University in May 2014 and hopes to attend the University of Oregon to pursue a Ph.D. in Military History.

ABSTRACT

Melvin J. Maas was a Marine Corps officer, combat pilot, and member of Congress. Maas's unique view of American defense in the Interwar Period led him to promote the modernization of the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve, which resulted in the formation of a well trained pool of semi-professional personnel prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. This study first examines the evolution of the formation of the reserve system of the American Armed Forces during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in order to understand the state of the Marine Corps Reserve that Maas joined in 1925. As a marine reservist and a Representative from Minnesota, Maas was able to identify key areas for improvement within the Marine Reserve, Naval Reserve, and eventually the reserves of all the branches of the American military. With Maas as its focus, this analysis of the changing reserve system shows the importance he had on modernizing the Marine Corps Reserve, thereby greatly enhancing the ability of the Marine Corps to mobilize in both 1940 and 1950. Maas's direct alterations to the Navy and Marine Corps reserve system were essential to the creation of the modern reserve policies of all of the American Armed Forces, and thus aided greatly in improving the US defense structure after the Second World War. The primary sources consulted for this study include letters, journals, and other pertinent material from the Melvin J. Maas Collection located at the Minnesota State Archives in St. Paul and Congressional Records located at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

On a January morning in 1929, a man piloted his single seat attack aircraft above Washington D.C. As the wind howled past, the man, frustrated with the leadership of his nation, focused his gaze upon the Capitol Building as it came into view. Aware that President Herbert Hoover was presiding over a joint session of Congress, the pilot directed his approach in order to conduct a bombing run on the gathering that included the Chief Executive, the Cabinet, the two Houses of Congress, and the members of the Supreme Court. With no air defenses in place, the aircraft sailed toward its target unmolested. The pilot accelerated and pointed the nose of the machine at the skylights of the House, ensuring that his payload would affect the objective in the most catastrophic way possible. But, once his target neared, the pilot pulled back on his controls, narrowly avoiding crashing into the building. The faux surprise attack rocked by the Capitol, sending panicked representatives and senators racing for cover. However, as quickly as the event occurred, the plane was gone. No explosions. No casualties. The only damage left in the plane's wake were rattled windows and shaken legislators. Had the attacker somehow missed his intended target? Had there been some kind of weapons system malfunction? Neither. The pilot had executed a textbook bombing run and the weapons systems functioned perfectly, but no payload was dropped because the plane was not armed.

The pilot of the aircraft was not a crazed terrorist bent on a strike to decapitate the

American government, but rather a member of Congress himself. Extremely frustrated with his fellow legislators' lack of interest in American airpower, Representative Melvin J. Maas of Minnesota, a World War I veteran and member of the Marine Corps Reserve, believed that the only way to make his colleagues sit up and take notice of the destructive qualities aircraft represented was to stage a faux attack upon the Capitol. Maas's action helped change the minds of many of his contemporaries, but it also put him at odds, temporarily, with his commanding officers within the Marine Corps. Yet, the risk the stunt posed to his career within the Marine Corps pales in comparison to his passion about American defense, and the importance airpower had to its future.

Although Maas fought for broadening American airpower, there was another aspect of defense that this maverick from Minnesota would champion above all else: the continual improvement of the United States Marine Corps Reserve, an organization that he would be a part of for the majority of his life. Maas's dual role as a member of the House of Representatives and a Marine Corps Reserve officer gave him a unique insight into the plight of reservists during the Interwar Period (1919-1941). He employed this insight to continually shape the Marine and Navy Reserve programs, and his efforts eventually spilled over to the reserve forces of the entire American Armed Forces. The policies he created modernized the reserve forces, a core tenant of the post-World War II defense structure. Thus, he is partially responsible for strengthening the United States' ability to wage war in the latter half of the twentieth century. However, much like his faux bombing run against the Capitol in 1929, Maas has been generally forgotten.

Maas's efforts to modernize the Marine Corps Reserve during the Interwar Period are greatly overshadowed by the Marine Corps' successful efforts to improve amphibious

operations during the same time span. The perseverance of famous marines like Victor "Brute" Krulack and Holland "Howling Mad" Smith helped to not only unravel the difficulties presented by the Gallipoli Campaign but also created a definable niche for the Marine Corps within American defense.¹ Their efforts led to a military innovation that was heralded by General Dwight Eisenhower as the key to Allied Victory in both Europe and the Pacific.² However, during the same period, the Marine Corps also evolved their Reserves from an underpaid, under-trained, and under-equipped force into a modernized organization that became the model for all branches of the American Armed Forces in the years following the Second World War. This transformation significantly strengthened the Marine Corps during the Pacific War and the Korean Conflict, and made the prolonged conflicts of the War on Terror possible. Yet, unlike the development of amphibious operations, the development of the modern Marine Corps Reserves receives very little scholarly attention, and the man responsible, Melvin J. Maas, even less.

Maas's continual efforts throughout the Interwar Period as a Congressman and as a Marine officer helped to reinforce the service's very foundation. His devotion to his chosen service and his rise in legislative influence made him an asset to the Marine Corps. Maas was a product of the Corps, and in return he helped produce a reserve force befitting its parent organization. The Marine Corps Reserve that Maas helped evolve aided in the service's efforts to secure permanence within the Department of Defense,

¹ Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1984), 71-100. Holland M. Smith and Percy Finch, *Coral and Brass*, (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1949), 59-79.

² G. W. Keiser, *The U.S. Marine Corps and Defense Unification 1944-47: The Politics of Survival* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982), 3-4.

became a critical component of the modern Marine Corps, and shaped the entire reserve system of the American military.

Military reserves are an essential aspect of modern militaries.³ Reserve components provide a flexibility to the projection of potential military might. A well organized military reserve essentially allows nations to mobilize military forces in sizes that would be fiscally impossible to retain on active duty during peacetime. This flexibility is the central reason for the creation of reserve systems, yet is by no means the only benefit. Reserves, if properly managed, serve a number of functions for military organizations. First of all, they provide a way to retain active duty veterans after the completion of their contracts. These veterans, typically serving as either officers and noncommissioned officers within reserve units, provide a great deal of guidance to the companies to which they are assigned. In addition, the reserves offer an opportunity for those interested in enlisting but not prepared to leave their civilian pursuits to devote themselves to a period of active service. Many times these individuals are enrolled in higher education and, upon achieving their scholarly endeavors, decide to become active duty officers. In this respect, the reserves serve as a way to both recruit and train officers for regular service.

Once activated, reserve forces greatly increase the size of their parent force. However, in the case of the Marine Corps during World War II and Korea, the reserves provided an initial surge followed by increasing numbers of new recruits. The newly augmented Marine Corps was able to integrate these large numbers of new marines into

³ O'Hanlon, Michael E. "What Role for the Army Reserve and National Guard?" *The Brookings Institution*. July 29, 1997. Accessed June 15, 2013. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/testimony/1997/07/29defense-ohanlon>.

units that were composed of both regulars and reservists who had served in the Corps for numerous years. This allowed for the pre-war and wartime structure to grow rapidly in size while retaining a high level of professionalism and esprit de corps. The ability to quickly increase the size of a given military force with a reserve component has since become a vital aspect in strategic planning.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the need for reserve forces within the American Armed Forces became apparent. As the branches of service became increasingly professionalized and wars for westward expansion came to a close, a shift in the approach to strategic affairs took place. Senior military leadership began looking outward toward potential military conflicts with foreign nations. With the possibility of various conflicts breaking out, the military needed to widen its potential pool of servicemen. Confined by a limited military budget, the reserves became an optimal way to gain the flexibility required to adequately prepare for a multitude of possible military confrontations. While the need for reserve forces was evident, and their creation a reality within the opening decades of the twentieth century, the management and maintenance of them was not keenly developed.⁴

Marines participated in the reserves on a volunteer basis and their access to training opportunities, pay, and treatment greatly affected participation and retention levels. The War Department and the Department of the Navy formed their initial reserve systems independently, with the War Department overseeing the Army Reserve and National Guard, and the Department of the Navy managing the Navy and Marine Corps

⁴ William T. Allison, Jeffery Gray, and Janet G. Valentine, *American Military History A Survey from Colonial Times to the Present*, 1st ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2007), pg. 180-204.

Reserves. The earliest forms of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps Reserves were in place in the years preceding American entry into the First World War, and each was called upon to bolster the Armed Services. Even though the Navy and War Departments benefited from increased support both before and during the conflict, interest in military affairs began to wane shortly after victory was declared. With the respective departments dealing with the loss of both popular and economic support, the maintenance of the newly formed reserve systems began to falter. Without strong support within the top levels of leadership, the early reserve systems of the American Armed Forces were in danger of devolving into uselessness.

It was primarily through the efforts of Congressman and Marine Reserve officer Melvin J. Maas, who dedicated his entire life to ensuring that the Marine Corps Reserve remained a viable force during the lean years separating the World Wars, that prevented this from happening. Maas's initial training as a recruit in 1917 instilled an intense devotion to the service. Upon the completion of his active duty contract, he was the ideal candidate for the Marine Corps Reserve: a veteran, a promising NCO, and interested in becoming an officer. Yet, Maas was to be more than an outstanding officer who was willing to be called into service in the defense of his nation. He was also a member of the House of Representatives. Contravening the American military tradition of officers refraining from participating in politics, Maas, as a reservist, was able to fight for the interests of the Navy and Marine Corps, all while donning his uniform on a regular basis.

Throughout his career, Maas gained influence within Congress as he served on various military committees. In addition, he formed a special interest group, the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association (MCROA), in order to increase his political clout.

This combined leverage allowed Maas to alter legislation that directly affected the Marine Corps Reserve. As an active reservist, he had a firsthand understanding of the of Marine Reserve, specifically in terms of some of the difficulties its members experienced. With such intimate knowledge of the plight of early reservists, the legislation that Maas helped to pass prior to 1940 succeeded in making it the pool of highly trained, dedicated, and professional personnel it was originally intended to be. This transformation of the reserves proved to be a vital aspect of naval service during World War II.

Over 60% of all marines assigned to the Pacific War were reservists. They fought and died in every engagement in which the Marine Corps participated during the course of the conflict. Their amalgamation into the Fleet Marine Force in 1940 allowed the Corps to more effectively manage the influx of new marines throughout the course of the Second World War. Their contribution significantly affected the trajectory of the Marine Corps from 1941 to 1945. Yet, the Marine Corps Reserve and Maas are left out of much of Marine Corps history.

Soldiers of the Sea by Col. Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., one of the most comprehensive histories of the Marine Corps through 1965, mentions the Marine Corps Reserve a total of only seven times. Maas receives even less attention, mentioned only for his efforts to defend the Marine Corps against attempts to dissolve the force in the early 1930's.⁵ Heinl fails to recognize Maas's legislative efforts to improve the Marine Corps Reserve, or those of anyone else. Like the majority of Marine Corps historians, he focuses on the Corps' illustrious history, its colorful culture, and its mythos, which is unlike any other

⁵ Robert Debs Heinl, *Soldiers of the Aea, the United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962*. (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1962), 192, 293, 298, 307, 389, 545, 589, 297.

branch of the American Armed Forces. Unfortunately in Heintz's work, and in many other treatments of Marine Corps history, the Corps' reserve component is either mentioned sporadically or entirely omitted.⁶

The Marine Corps Reserve has published its own official history that details its origins and advancements through 1966.⁷ This work identifies Maas's contributions to the service, and even goes as far as dedicating the book to him. However, even in this specific history of the Reserves, the focus remains on the development of the organization as a military entity and the experiences of reservists at different times. The book fails to include a number of important pieces of legislation passed by Maas and the motivations behind much of his efforts. Furthermore, it only briefly touches upon Maas's career as reserve officers, which shaped his congressional attempts to improve the reserves.

Melvin J. Maas: Gallant Man of Action, by Gladys Zehnpfening, is the only historical work that focuses solely on Melvin Maas.⁸ This biography, originally published in 1967, examines Maas's life in depth and is part of a series entitled *Men of Achievement*. The stated target audience for this series is "high school students who may soon be entering the armed forces."⁹ While Zehnpfening presents a readable account of Maas's life, her writing lacks a broader exploration of his impact upon the larger

⁶ Aaron B. O'Connell, *Underdogs: The Making of the Modern Marine Corps* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012). Krulack, *First to Fight*. Philip N. Pierce and Frank O. Hough, *The Compact History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1960).

⁷ Reserve Officers of Public Affairs Unit 4-1 US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve: A History* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 1966).

⁸ Gladys Zehnpfening, *Melvin J. Maas, Gallant Man of Action*. (Minneapolis: T.S. Denison, 1967).

⁹ *Ibid*, Forward.

American defense structure. Zehnpfening also leaves out key events, like the pistol range accident that nearly ended Maas's life, resulting in an incomplete narrative. Furthermore, the author spends a great deal of time discussing Maas's personal life outside of politics and the Marine Corps. While interesting, these details are not relevant to his impact on the American military's reserve systems, nor his involvement with the debate over the reorganization of American defense in postwar era.

In 1944, Maas engaged in the opening debates surrounding the unification of the War Department and the Navy Department into a single department. Within the context of these debates, the future role of the Marine Corps was called into question, and in some instances the service's survival was in jeopardy. These ongoing debates eventually culminated in the National Security Act of 1947, the creation of the Department of Defense, and a future for the Marine Corps.¹⁰ The debate over defense reorganization has been examined from the perspectives of the politics surrounding the controversy, as well as the individual services' experiences between 1944-1947.¹¹ Maas's contributions during this time are sometimes mentioned, but are more often omitted. Even in a book specifically dedicated to the Marine Corps' experiences during the unification debate, Maas's efforts are not fully explored.¹²

¹⁰ Keiser, *USMC and Defense Unification*, 115-135.

¹¹ Jeffrey G. Barlow, *From Hot War to Cold: The U.S. Navy and National Security Affairs, 1945-1955* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). Demetrios Caraley, *Politics of Military Unification* (Columbia University Press, 1966). Paolo Enrico Coletta, *The United States Navy and Defense Unification, 1947-1953* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1981). John C. Ries, *The Management of Defense; Organization and Control of the U.S. Armed Services*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1964). Michael S. Sherry, *Preparing for the Next War: American Plans for Postwar Defense, 1941-45* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

¹² Keiser, *USMC and Defense Unification*.

Maas is directly responsible for the survival and modernization of the Marine Corps Reserve, and his devotion to the organization led to the strengthening of the entire Marine Corps in the critical years preceding the war against Japan. He therefore deserves greater attention in the historiography. The advantages gained by the Marines' employment of a modernized reserve in the lead up to hostilities helped dictate the tempo of the Pacific War. The participation of a vast number of marine reservists between 1940-1945 helped the Marine Corps win the now iconic battles they took part in like Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. These hard fought battles required the ultimate sacrifice of active duty and reservist marines alike and became the foundation of the Marine Corps' bid for a place within postwar defense. This is illustrated most dramatically in Commandant Vandergrift's famous testimony before Congress on May 6, 1946. Vandergrift stated: "The bended knee is not a tradition of our Corps. If the Marine as a fighting man has not made a case for himself after 170 years of service, he must go. But I think you will agree with me that he has earned the right to depart with dignity and honor, not by subjugation to the status of uselessness and servility planned for him by the War Department." The Commandant's words became known as the "Bended Knee Speech," and his delivery of them became the embodiment of the Corps' resolve.¹³

The Marine Corps Reserves initially proved its value during the Second World War and again during the Korean War. Maas and his political allies developed the organization to such a degree that it became the template for the reserve affairs for all branches of the military, thus creating the modern reserve system. Today the reserves of

¹³ A. A. General. Vandegrift, *Once a Marine: The Memoirs of General A. A. Vandegrift Commandant of the U.S. Marines in WWII* (NY: Norton, 1964), 313-24.

the American Armed Forces constitute a sizable portion of American military might and allow for prolonged conflicts to be feasible as they provide for a steady rotation of units in and out of theater. Maas and the reserve system he largely constructed represent a vital aspect of twentieth century American military history—an aspect that deserves to be integrated into the larger narrative.

CHAPTER TWO: AMERICAN MILITIAS AND THE NEED FOR A MODERN RESERVE SYSTEM

An examination of the Marine Corps Reserve and an appreciation of the contributions of Melvin Maas cannot be fully realized without a comprehensive understanding of American militias and their eventual transformation into reserves. This chapter examines the cultural origins of the American militias, the identification of the need for federally controlled military reserves, and the War and Navy Departments' independent establishment of reserve forces.

Prior to the twentieth century, the armed forces of the United States relied heavily on state-run militias. This dispersed force solved key political issues and conflicts that existed during the early years of the Republic. First, the United States did not have to maintain a large professional army. This allowed for less federal expenditures on defense. More importantly, it prevented the possible use of a large standing army to impose the will of the federal government upon the states and their populations. Secondly, the early militia system created a sense of personal investment in the defense of both the nation and local governments. This is in stark contrast to European systems in which the military was a tool of the state, its ranks filled with those often pressed into service, and used for both external and internal expressions of power. Thirdly, the militia system allowed for a continuation of the venerated tradition of a civilian based military—a military force that upon its inception was able to secure victory over one of the most

powerful standing armies in the world—the English. Maintaining the militia system remained crucial in the formation of a uniquely American military identity.¹⁴

However, the American public's mistrust of a standing army during its formative years did not prevent the United States from maintaining one after the Revolutionary War. Yet with little interest in the expansion of military capabilities during peacetime, American defense turned to the militia system to augment this standing army when it found itself entangled in conflicts such as the War of 1812 and the Mexican American War. Throughout each successive conflict, the militia forces of the United States made slight improvements. Nevertheless, key problems persisted. The War Department's lack of control over the various state-run militias created both logistical and tactical problems for the Army. Internal leadership, rank structure, and promotion systems of the militias lacked uniformity often causing a reduction of professionalism and effectiveness. In addition, state militias had difficulty ensuring that they could muster all of those who had volunteered when the units were called into service. The reliability of the state produced forces was less than ideal for the War Department's strategy makers as well as for regular army generals who employed them in the field. As the nineteenth century continued, the regular forces of the United States military continued to improve at a greater rate than their militia counterparts.¹⁵

¹⁴ Brad D. Lookingbill, *American Military History: A Documentary Reader* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 3-4.

¹⁵ William T. Allison, Jeffery Gray, and Janet G. Valentine, *American Military History A Survey from Colonial Times to the Present*, 1st ed. (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2007), 190-193.

The modernization of the American Armed Forces impacted everything from uniforms and equipment to administration and professionalism. Both the War Department and the Navy Department worked to increase their budgets, sizes, and roles as the nation expanded westward. Up until the Spanish American War, the nation's defense planning was mainly based on reactionary strategy development and continued to rely on state-run militias to fill any personnel shortfalls that might present themselves upon the outbreak of an armed conflict. However, as the nation and its military matured, it became increasingly evident that each of the armed services needed to reorient themselves into more streamlined, flexible, and centrally controlled entities. These changes came in a number of different initiatives, but one of the most important was the decline of the reliance on state-run militias and the rise of the reserve systems within both the War and Navy Departments. Although these changes happened independently, they constituted the beginnings of a critical shift in the professionalism of the armed forces and created an expansion of military power.¹⁶

Upon victory over Spain in the Spanish American War, Secretary of War Elihu Root engaged in sweeping reforms that had reverberating effects throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Root, set on increasing the War Department's power, identified key deficiencies in the organization of the department. Between 1903 and 1908, Root altered the structure of the War Department to be more efficient. His efforts are collectively known as the Root Reforms.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid, 180-204.

¹⁷ James L. Yarrison, "The U.S. Army in the Root Reform Era, 1899-1917," Army.mil, section goes here, accessed August 29, 2013, <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/1901/Root-Ovr.htm>.

The Root Reforms were a crucial turning point in the strategic mentality of American defense. Secretary Root sought to increase the power of the War Department by altering the internal management of the organization. Up until 1903, the logistical management of the United States Army, including the Quartermaster's Corps and the Paymaster's Corps, fell under the direction of the Secretary of War. This meant that a portion of the most critical aspects of military administration were under the direction of civilian leadership, essentially splitting the management of the Army in half. While the General-in-chief of the Army maintained control over the Army's operations during both peacetime and war, his lack of control over the administrative aspects functionally hindered his ability to further modernize the force.¹⁸ Furthermore, this split in management generated difficulties in the creation of forward-looking strategy as the upper echelon of Army leadership lacked the control needed to properly prepare for possible large scale deployments.

Under the Root Reforms, these key issues of management were resolved by combining the various administrative corps and medical corps into two distinct entities all under the leadership of the Chief of Staff of the Army. This resolved a number of issues including the ability to properly plan for potential conflicts. However, the Root Act went beyond solving organizational problems that made military planning difficult. It also established an internal board of senior Army leadership responsible for improved methods of strategic development. This board, which became the first inception of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, marked the first instance in which American military leadership

¹⁸ Prior to 1903 the term "General-in-chief," also known as the Commanding General of the United States Army, was used to refer to the senior-most officer in the Army. The position was abolished with the creation of the General Staff.

could be proactive toward potential conflicts beyond the continental United States. For the first time in its history, American strategy makers began officially formulating various hypothetical war plans. These efforts to plan for potential wars spawned the need for the rapid mobilization of well-trained troops under the direct control of the War Department. Before the Root Reforms, neither the War Department or the Navy Department possessed this critical reserve aspect for contingent war planning.¹⁹

While the Root Reforms focused on improving the War Department's ability to internally manage itself and create future strategy, a separate piece of legislation, the Dick Act, ensured that American defense had a centrally controlled reserve force. Sponsored by Congressman Charles Dick of Ohio, the purpose of the act was to solve the issues of irregularity that hindered the aging American militia system.²⁰ Up until the Dick Act of 1903, militias were under the complete control of the states in which they originated—an aspect that was central to American military identity. The Dick Act solved a number of the issues of the militia system by dissolving the individual militia units into a single entity, the National Guard. Although units within the National Guard were still controlled by the governors of the states in which they originated, the War Department could now require these units to maintain the same training, equipment, and rank structure as the regular Army. In addition to reforming the militias, the Dick Act also established an Army Reserve under the sole control of the War Department. This dualistic approach allowed the Army to solve many of the issues that had encumbered the militia system that had been in place throughout the nineteenth century while keeping the

¹⁹ Yarrison, "The U.S. Army in the Root Reform Era 1899-1917," Army.mil.

²⁰ The Dick Act is also know as The Militia Act of 1903.

spirit of the state-run armed forces intact. The new reserve component created by the Dick Act brought forth a section of the Army that provided trained citizen-soldiers directly under the control of the War Department.²¹

The cumulative effect of the Root Reforms and the Dick Act was to modernize the War Department and reorient it to better deal with a more globally minded approach to military affairs. The establishment of the Chiefs of Staff meant that the War Department could take a more pragmatic approach to planning for potential international conflict. However these hypothetical war plans were heavily reliant upon having access to an additional pool of well-trained men who could be mobilized rapidly. With the Army Reserve and National Guard, military planners now had flexibility for reacting to the possibility of war within the changing international political scene of the twentieth century.

The Root Reforms thus mark an important inflection point for three main reasons. First, the War Department's improved internal management increased the department's power by enhancing its efficiency to self-manage. Second, the Root Reforms provided the Army with an established institution for long-range military planning. Third, the reserves constituted a cost effective and flexible approach to the problem of fielding well-trained manpower in the event of large scale conflict. Moreover, these changes constituted a major shift away from the original concept of American defense, one reliant upon a somewhat small army augmented by the state-run militias to a defense establishment that continued to grow in both power and scope throughout the twentieth

²¹ 32 Stat. 775 58th Cong., 34 Congressional Record 486 (1903) (enacted).

century. As America's ability to wage war improved, the reserves forces became a crucial aspect of the nation's ascension to global power.

The Root Reforms and the Dick Act did not directly affect the Navy, and thus the Navy's experiences with militias and reserves differs from the Army's.²² Naval militias existed in the Revolutionary War and in the War of 1812, however these forces were not federally mandated and lacked the Navy's supervision.²³ Nevertheless, senior naval leadership was well aware of the strategic benefits of maintaining a reserve component. In fact, the Navy's proposal for a reserve force pre-dates the Army's by nearly fourteen years. In a letter written in 1889, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Admiral J. G. Walker, wrote Secretary of the Navy Benjamin J. Tracy regarding the need for the creation of a Naval Reserve: "At the present no means exists for providing the fleet with a single trained man, beyond the number prescribed by law for the peace establishment, and it would seem that no argument should be necessary to secure the required legislative authority."²⁴ Admiral Walker also expounded upon how the reserves would be implemented: "The study of the energy of maritime nations is being devoted to placing the reserves of men, as well as materials in such a state of training and readiness as to make them available for effective service on a 24 hour notice."²⁵ In this same letter, Admiral Walker further clarified his position concerning the necessity of forming a pool of semi-professional sailors in order for the U.S. Navy to remain current with other

²² Until 1947 the War Department and Navy Department were separate entities.

²³ U.S. Navy, "America's Navy Reserve," History: About the Reserve: NavyReserve.com, History, accessed September 29, 2013, <http://www.navyreserve.com/about/history.html>.

²⁴ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve: A History*, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 1.

international powers: "Rapid mobilization may be said to be the leading naval question of the day, and the current naval maneuvers abroad have given occasion of the frequent statement of opinion that the readiness of ships and guns must be joined in equal readiness of men to make any system of mobilization complete and effective."²⁶ The Admiral's letter suggests that naval leadership recognized that without an established means for a dynamic approach to manpower, the U.S. Navy could not adequately compete on the global stage.

The letter also illuminates the Admiral's position that it behooved the Secretary of the Navy to take advantage of the favorable political climate to create a reserve force, rather than a federally mandated naval militia: "It would be most unfortunate for the Navy and for coastal defense should Congress fail to take advantage of public opinion on the subject of creating a naval reserve and pass an act to encourage, utilize, and bind together the State and individual effort, which has been made and is being made toward this end."²⁷

Admiral Walker's concept for a ready reserve of men trained for naval service under the control of the Department of the Navy failed to gain enough interest or political traction in either 1889 or 1890. This early failure can be attributed to the states' unwillingness to create militia-like systems that they could not control. However, Secretary of the Navy Tracy, favorable to Admiral Walker's ideas, helped to allocate funds for the initial foundations of what would eventually become the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve of the twentieth century. Within the Naval Appropriations Act of 1892,

²⁶ Ibid, 1.

²⁷ Ibid, 1.

Tracy aided in the drafting of the following section, officially creating state-run naval militias: "For arms and equipment connected therewith for naval militia of various States, under such regulation as the Secretary of the Navy may prescribe, \$25,000."²⁸ These state run militias, as opposed to a reserve force under the control of the Navy Department, were a more feasible political option during the late nineteenth century and the appropriations bill passed with little argument in both the House and the Senate.

The naval militia was a far smaller aspect to naval defense when compared to the land-based militias used by the War Department. The requirement of access to ports precluded inland states from having naval militias. In addition, the technical know-how needed to proficiently man an oceangoing vessel of war limited the pool of potential participants. State-run naval militias required a greater investment of state budgets, causing them to be relatively small in number. These naval forces also suffered from the aforementioned issues of logistical uniformity, irregular promotion systems, and the failure of members to report when called into service.

These issues meant that the Department of the Navy relied less upon state militias than the War Department. It is therefore clear that by the close of the nineteenth century the inherent problems of a citizen-based military became apparent to both the Navy and War Departments. The War Department eventually solved many of these initial problems with the Root Reforms in 1903, but the Navy was not able to do so until shortly before American entry into the First World War.

²⁸ 27 Stat. 243, 52nd Cong., 27 Congressional Record 587 (1892) (enacted).

Admiral Walker's vision of a pool of trained men as a reserve force under the sole control of the Navy, as put forward originally in 1889 and somewhat realized with the creation of seaborne militias in 1892, remained a goal of naval leadership. In a 1900 letter, Lt. Commander William H. Southerland, Officer in Charge of the Naval Militia Office, stated: "I call your attention to these facts to show the absolute necessity for the creation, in addition to the naval militia organizations, of a government or national reserve force, which should be organized entirely under the control of the Navy Department."²⁹

The Navy Department continued to stress the overwhelming need for this reserve force, yet its ability to establish one continued to be hampered politically. Despite the War Department's ability to establish its control over militias shortly after the Spanish American War, high ranking naval officials, eager to modernize and increase their forces through a reserve system, still struggled to do so until the years preceding the outbreak of the First World War. This is demonstrated by the following statement by Secretary of the Navy, George V. L. Meyer in 1906: "In every foreign country possessing a first-class navy, provisions are made for a larger contingent of trained men, to be added to the enlisted personnel of the Navy at the outbreak of war."³⁰ Secretary Meyer expounds upon the shortcomings of the systems put in place in 1892: "Our provisions for this contingency is inadequate. Beyond a few men on the retired list, for the most part too old to render effective service, we have no other reserve than the officers and men of the

²⁹ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, 2.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 2.

Naval Militia of the several States."³¹ The Secretary then elaborated on such issues as the lack of central control over militias and the need to emulate the legislation of the Dick Act of 1903: "We have about 6,000 naval militia organized by the different States bordering on the sea and on the Great Lakes. These small groups, while enthusiastic and generally efficient, are not under central control and training. The formation of a national naval militia, on the lines of the land militia, is a necessity and legislation is required to accomplish this."³²

The Department of the Navy continued to make recommendations for the formation of the Naval Reserve, but without tangible results until 1911, when Meyer finally had enough political traction to submit a bill forming a similar reserve system to that created by the Dick Act of 1903. The department submitted to the 61st Congress a draft bill embodying its ideas for the legal establishment of a naval reserve of officers and men (introduced as S.7644 and H.R.24942 and entitled "A bill to provide for a reserve of personnel for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps for its enrollment").³³ This bill also provided for a Marine Corps Reserve under the larger Naval Reserve umbrella. However, there were various marine militias within the states that had elected to muster naval militias in 1892.³⁴ Like their naval counterparts, these marine militias were not regulated,

³¹ Ibid, 2.

³² Ibid, 2.

³³ Ibid, 2.

³⁴ The marine detachments within the naval reserve units continued in a state of ambiguity between 1892-1917. Their status as official Marine Corps units was obscure until their role was clearly defined by General Order No. 153, on 10 July 1915. Once defined, some of these units became the foundation for the official Marine Corps Reserve in 1916, while the remainder of them continued to operate somewhat independently until General Order No. 400 was issued in 1917. This general order placed all marine militia units under the command of the USMC. US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, 6.

equipped, or trained by or affiliated with the Marine Corps. The most notable of these units were formed in New York, Massachusetts, and Louisiana.³⁵

The bills put forward by Secretary Meyer in 1911 established the foundations for a Naval Reserve, yet the issues surrounding the split between the Naval Reserve and the naval militia continued to hamper the true realization of a modern Navy and Marine Corps Reserve. Furthermore, within the Navy, key leadership began to identify not only the need for a robust reserve system, but also an enthusiasm for citizen enrollment. In a report dated October 1913 to the new Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, Admiral Victor Blue, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, explained, "The importance of having a regularly enrolled and organized Naval Reserve for service in time of war cannot be too forcibly impressed upon the country."³⁶ Admiral Blue explains to the Secretary of Navy the preparations for the creation of a reserve force to help speed the process along: "Within the last year there have been established under the Bureau of Navigation an office of Naval Reserve." In addition, Blue calls attention to the popularity of the potential program, and the need to act quickly to ensure the Navy benefits from the popular interest, "To date it has a list of upwards of 2,600 men who have volunteered for enrollment. No doubt if Congress should authorize the formation of a national reserve in

³⁵ Marine militias are also known as Volunteer Marine Units. Between 1917 and 1938 the Volunteer Marines were American citizens who indicated their willingness to join the Marine Corps if called. Volunteers were organized upon official rolls, and individuals could be removed from the rolls by the Marine Corps. Furthermore, Marine Reservists could be dropped back to the Volunteer Marine Units if they were unable to train with their units for a period of time. Pierce, *Compact History of the USMC*, 179.

³⁶ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, 4.

a manner that would make the proposition attractive, there would be no difficulty in recruiting the full quota in a very short time."³⁷

Secretary Daniels was new to his office, and knew very little of either naval or international affairs. He was, however, an influential newspaperman from North Carolina. He considered himself a self-made man and held little respect for the aristocratic behaviors exhibited by many naval officers. Daniels threw his full support to create a federally managed reserve system, in part to allow the officer culture in the Navy to be altered with the admittance of reserve officers into its ranks. The Secretary also agreed with Admiral Blue's assertion that, were the United States to maintain a navy on par with other world powers, it must form a well regulated reserve system. Less than a year after Admiral Blue's report, Secretary Daniels began working in tandem with the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major General George Barnett, to push for two separate bills that would establish a formalized Navy and Marine Corps Reserve.³⁸

Throughout 1914, Secretary Daniels concentrated his efforts toward expanding the American naval forces and establishing an operational Naval Reserve. It was his intention to both increase naval appropriations and create a reserve act for the Navy to be passed in 1915. Major General Barnett aided Daniels in 1914 and then, in 1915, turned his attentions toward enlarging the Marine Corps and bringing about a fully realized Marine Corps Reserve with hopes to have a bill passed in 1916. These dual efforts were partially motivated by the political events in Europe in 1914 and the outbreak of war in August that year. Both endeavors proved successful.

³⁷ Ibid., 4.

³⁸ Robert William Love, *History of the U.S. Navy*, vol. 1 (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 458.

The first steps the Navy Department needed to take in order to realize Secretary Daniels's ultimate goal of a Naval Reserve was to consolidate the department's control over the naval militias. On February 16, 1914, Congress passed the Naval Militia Act, which handed over virtually all avenues of control of the state militias to the Department of the Navy.³⁹ However, this act did not include the marine militias. The following April the Navy issued Navy Department General Order No. 93, which established a Division of Naval Militia Affairs in order to solidify a clear chain of command over the unorganized and unregulated naval militias.⁴⁰

In November, the first unofficial Marine Corps Reserve Unit was formed from an existing marine militia contingent. The Massachusetts 1st Marine Company was created without legislative authority, but can be considered the first foundations of the Marine Corps Reserve. Other marine militia units established by the states between 1892 and 1914 remained in a state of limbo until 1938. Due to a lack of official records, it remains unclear how many marine militia units were formed in this time period, but the existence of these units did call for a clarification in order for the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps to retain some amount of control. On July 10, 1915, the Department of the Navy issued General Order No. 153, which stated that the goal of a marine militia unit was to "to organize, arm, uniform, and equip the naval militia that it may be eligible to be rolled forth by the President of the United States to serve the United States in the event of

³⁹ US Navy, "America's Navy Reserve," NavyReserve.com

⁴⁰ US Marine Corps, *US Marine Reserve: A History*, 4.

war."⁴¹ The order further refined the organization of these units. This General Order was in part an attempt to regulate the existing marine militia units prior to the creation of the Marine Corps Reserve, which did not happen until 1916, and to help manage them until their eventual absorption into the Marine Corps.

While General Order 153 helped define the mission and organization of the initial marine militias, it also clarified one of the primary goals of any modernized reserve force: the retention of veteran troops. The Order stated, "Any former enlisted man of the Navy or Marine Corps who is in good standing in the community and who was honorably discharged will be allowed to enter the Naval Militia without professional examination in any unit or organization or headquarters of a brigade or of a battalion, with such rate or rank as last held in the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps."⁴² The order authorized the formation of Marine Corps units into battalion and regiment sizes where the necessary units were available, and set forward basic Marine Corps Branch qualifications. These final provisions commanded by the Department of the Navy formulated the first meaningful organization of the Marine Corps Reserve within Naval Service, and did so before there was a legislative provision for its official creation.

Although much of the needed legal structure was in place for a centralized Marine Corps Reserve, the service lacked official government sanctions for the component to be fully realized. Following the plans originally set forward by Secretary of the Navy Daniels, Major General Commandant Barnett pushed for the formation of an official Marine Corps Reserve after the successful establishment of the Naval Reserve. In his

⁴¹ Ibid, 4.

⁴² Ibid, 4.

Annual Report for Fiscal Year 1915, Barnett stated: "The Marine Corps has no reserve. During the last session of Congress a naval reserve, consisting of men who have seen service in the Navy, was created. The adoption of a similar provision for the Marine Corps is recommended."⁴³

Under constant pressure by the Department of the Navy, and with the ongoing conflict in Europe, Congress passed the Marine Corps Reserve Act on 29 August 1916. Once signed into law, the Marine Corps Reserve Act authorized the official creation of the USMCR and raised the total strength of the Marine Corps from 344 officers and 9,921 enlisted, to 597 officers and 14,981 enlisted. The act also established the Marine Corps Reserve Flying Corps, which fell under the command of First Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham, the father of Marine Corps Aviation. Two days after Congress passed the Marine Corps Reserve Act, the Department of the Navy issued General Order No. 231, which stated: "A U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, to be a constituent part of the Marine Corps and in addition to the authorized strength thereof, is hereby established under the same provisions in all respects (except as may be necessary to adapt the said provisions to the Marine Corps) as those providing for the Naval Reserve Force."⁴⁴

With the Marine Corps Reserve Act and General Order No. 231, the Marine Corps Reserve officially came into existence, allowing for an expanded Naval Department equipped with a ready force of trained men under the complete control of the Navy. The idea of a naval reserve force, first suggested in 1898, had finally been realized. With the war in Europe raging, the Navy Department had been able to secure additional

⁴³ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve: A History*, 5.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

funding and push for a more modernized approach to peacetime war preparations. This new well of relatively inexpensive personnel formed a more flexible means for naval mobilization when needed. The reserves were designed to circumvent the inherent problems associated with militia systems and also worked to incentivize active duty veterans to remain within the defense structure. In addition, the reserves attracted individuals who were interested in military service, but were engaged in the civilian world as technically trained or experienced members of the workforce, or those who were seeking higher education. It is clear that the Department of the Navy believed that being able to draw on those who would otherwise forego military service benefited the naval service as a whole.

The Root Reforms of 1903 transformed the War Department into a more proactive entity able to plan for a wide range of potential conflicts. As American foreign policy shifted towards an outwardly focused approach, it became obvious that the nation needed a well-trained and regulated reserve force rather than having to rely on either militias or selective service to fill the need for military personnel. With the major shortfalls of the militia evident after the Spanish American War, Congress passed the Dick Act in an attempt to shift control of semi-professional personnel away from the individual states and to the War Department. This act, along with the War Department's administrative restructuring under the Root Reforms, helped to bring the ground forces of the United States into the twentieth century as a more structurally efficient and modernized entity. While the Naval Department did not undergo the same administrative alteration, it was able to create the reserve forces that had been originally called for in

1889 prior to American entry into the First World War. These forces included the Marine Corps Reserve.

CHAPTER THREE: MARINE CORPS RESERVE: 1916-1925

The Marine Corps Reserve was reality by 1916 and the Marines continued to improve them up to American entry into World War I. The USMCR, along with the other reserve forces of the United States, proved to be of great benefit to the American war effort between 1917 and 1918. The years following the end of hostilities in Europe presented both challenges and opportunities for the Marine Corps. Concurrently, their burgeoning reserve force underwent a self-generated reform in order to deal with the legal shortfalls of the 1916 act that had brought it into existence.

The budget and size of the Department of the Navy increased during each fiscal year after war broke out in Europe in 1914.⁴⁵ As war raged on in Europe, and the Department of the Navy grew, the Marine Corps attempted to capitalize on the existence of the marine militia and their new reserve force. On 1 April 1917, just days before Congress declared war against Germany, the Marine Corps began efforts to channel those interested in the state-run marine militias directly into the Marine Corps Reserve. This was followed in July of 1918 with Navy Department General Order No. 400 that integrated all marine corps militias into the Marine Corps Reserve. This attempt to combine all militia marines into a single reserve entity under the control of the Department of the Navy helped to simplify the force for better control, ease the

⁴⁵ Jari Eloranta, "Military Spending Patterns in History," Economic History Association, May 2, 2010, accessed April 4, 2013, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/eloranta.military>.

management of its administration, and ensure a consistent level of training. On the same day that General Order No. 400 was given, July 1, 1918, Congress authorized a temporary expansion of the Marine Corps to 3,017 commissioned officers, 342 warrant officers, and 75,000 enlisted. This increase encompassed all three types of enlistments: standard 4 year enlistment contracts, duration of the war contracts, and reserve enlistments.

The mobilization of U.S. forces in 1917 demonstrated much of the perceived benefits of having a modern reserve system. When the reserve forces of the American military were called into service, they bolstered the amount of manpower employed against the Central Powers. The members of the National Guard, the Army Reserve, and the Marine Corps Reserve joined active duty personnel within the American Expeditionary Force, while members of the Naval Reserve augmented the U.S. Navy. Due to the evolution of reserve policies up to this point, these semiprofessional troops were adequately trained and equipped prior to their amalgamation into their respective services, thus enhancing America's ability to wage modern war.⁴⁶

The Marine Corps exited the First World War in a positive position. American propaganda had elevated the reputation of this previously lesser known force into elite shock troops capable of driving fear into enemy forces.⁴⁷ The mythos surrounding the Marine Corps during and after the war gave the force a strengthened identity and its

⁴⁶ James H. Hallas, *Doughboy War: The American Expeditionary Force in World War I* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 24-30.

⁴⁷ Much of the events surrounding the Marine Corps participation in World War I became the foundation for the modern Corp's identity. The battles of the Argonne Forest, and Belleau Wood have become a critical part of Marine history. The nickname "Devil Dog" originates from this time period. XXX *Underdogs*, X.

deployment as a large ground force created a desire within its leadership for a more formalized role within American defense. Once hostilities ended however, the war posed a number of problems for not only the Marine Corps, but all the armed services.

After the 1918 armistice, the Department of the Navy and the War Department had to contend with a loss of funding due to the public's disillusionment with war. The scale and destruction wrought by the Great War decreased the nation's tolerance for military spending. Furthermore, the military innovations spawned during the conflict complicated traditional military views toward strategy. Advancements like the use of military aircraft, first employed as a reconnaissance tool and then later as an offensive weapon, led airpower advocates like Col. William "Billy" Mitchell to promote a vision of an American military focused primarily on an independent air force.⁴⁸ Others, like British military historian and strategist J. F. C. Fuller, viewed the mechanization of war, as embodied by the early armored vehicles, as a key to the mobility and effectiveness of future military engagements.⁴⁹ The dual problem of a lack of popular interest in military funding and a fractured approach to future military theory led to a stagnant state of military affairs within the United States during the Interwar Period.

Nevertheless, this complex and hampered state of military affairs did not prevent the Marine Corps from moving forward in establishing a position within American defense. After being fielded for the first time in large numbers under the American Expeditionary Force, the Marine Corps leadership looked for its unique place within the

⁴⁸ William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power - Economic and Military* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1925).

⁴⁹ J. F. C. Fuller, *Armored Warfare*, (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Company, 1943)

changing world of modernized warfare. They chose to solve a perplexing problem that faced strategists of the post-World War I era: conducting amphibious operations against a fortified shore. During a joint British and French campaign against the Ottoman Empire between April 25, 1915, and January 9, 1916, the Allied forces attempted a seaborne invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula in what is now Turkey. The Allied efforts resulted in complete failure and the repulsion of their forces became one of the greatest World War I victories of the Ottoman Empire.

The Gallipoli Campaign had a multitude of missteps. The failure of the initial naval operations to force a passage through the Dardanelles was due to heavy resistance from coastal fortifications, naval mines, and poor weather conditions. To secure the straits, the Allies attempted to conduct amphibious operations. While these attempts to land upon the coastline of the Gallipoli peninsula were successful in capturing a small foothold, the Allied forces failed to achieve any notable progress by the summer of 1915 and the operation ground to a halt. Unable to achieve the inland progress that was originally planned, and hindered by the Ottomans' ability to successfully reinforce their frontline units, the Allies chose to abandon the campaign and evacuate their forces in January 1916. Although this military failure did not affect the outcome of the war, it had an important impact on postwar military thought. More importantly, it eventually proved to be the catalyst that solidified the Marine Corps as a permanent aspect of the American Armed Forces.⁵⁰

The difficulties of Gallipoli generated an opportunity for the Marine Corps to

⁵⁰ Harvey Broadbent, *Gallipoli: The Fatal Shore* (Camberwell, Vic.: Viking, 2005), 34-68.

establish their own military innovation in the years that followed. The multitude of military advancements that the First World War helped to realize or develop inspired new modes of military thinking. The quick evolution of aircraft for military purposes generated airpower enthusiasts; armor helped develop new schools of thought for the use of mechanized ground forces for rapid field movements; and from the dire position the Germans faced in the latter part of the war came the birth of modern squad tactics. These new advancements were only a few of many that had the potential to alter the conduct of war. Military journals from around the world shared their visions of the future of war. Yet failures, especially like those learned during the Gallipoli Campaign, created widespread beliefs that military endeavors like amphibious operations against fortified positions had become tactical impossibilities.⁵¹

Despite the predominant postwar mentality that modern amphibious assaults were too costly to be investigated, the Marine Corps saw it as an opportunity to legitimize its contribution to American defense. As early as 1921, Marine Corps leadership identified the Japanese Empire as America's next most likely adversary.⁵² Foreseeing that a Pacific conflict would more than likely center around the islands of Oceania, the Marines put a tremendous effort toward solving the inherent problems presented by the failure of Gallipoli. As the Corps focused on the development of a modern amphibious doctrine, the state of the Marine Corps Reserve, established only two years before the armistice, began to diminish in importance within the Department of the Navy.

⁵¹ "Assault from the Sea: The Development of Amphibious Warfare Between the Wars," ed. Allan R. Millett, in *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson Murray and Allan Reed. Millett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 50-95.

⁵² Heintz, *Soldiers of the Sea*, 256.

Enthusiasm after the armistice to participate in the defense establishment of the United States lasted only a few months before a sense of postwar disillusionment set in. Americans, and young men of military age specifically, lost interest in the military. The Marine Corps suffered from a sharp reduction in size. The greater part of the non-commissioned officers who had contributed to wartime cohesion and esprit de corps left when their enlistments were over. The young men who had abandoned their educational pursuits or civilian careers to sign up for the duration of the conflict returned home to pick up where they had left off. This was articulated by Major General John A. Lejeune, 13th Commandant of the Marine Corps, when he stated, “Nearly all of the splendid men who had enlisted for the period of the emergency have resumed their civil occupations; many wartime officers had separated themselves from the service; the number of enlisted men being only about 15,000, which was altogether insufficient to perform the important duties assigned to the Corps, there was much unrest among the officers owing to their uncertain status; and the lavish expenditures incident to the war were to a great extent still prevalent.”⁵³

Both Commandant George Barnett and his successor Commandant John Lejeune viewed the Marine Corps Reserve as a vital part of the modernizing of the Marine Corps. Barnett, Commandant from 1914 to 1920, had overseen the official creation of the Marine Reserve as well as an unprecedented expansion of Marine manpower during the First World War. As the Marine Corps demobilized, along with the rest of the American forces after the defeat of Germany, Barnett also witnessed the dramatic contraction of the service. In his final month as Commandant, Major General Barnett petitioned to activate

⁵³ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 21.

1,000 reserves, but the Secretary of the Navy denied the request. When Lejeune took over for Barnett in July 1920, he openly stated that he considered that one of his major goals as Commandant was to "recreate the Reserve as a constituent part of the wartime strength of the Marine Corps."⁵⁴ However, in his first annual report to the Secretary of the Navy on October 14, 1920, Lejeune only mentioned the reserve relative to the selection board when considering wartime reserve officers for regular commissions.

While concern for the reserves was not shown in Lejeune's first report to the Secretary of the Navy, he did address his concern about the future status of the Marine Corps Reserve on March 6, 1920 in a staff memorandum to then Commandant Barnett. This memorandum from Lejeune indicates that the commander of the elements of the Marine Corps in the American Expeditionary Force understood the inherent value of a well regulated and modern reserve force during a prolonged conflict. Lejeune's reasons included that reserves: supplied recruitment of personnel in addition to the authorized strength of the regular establishment; presented the opportunity to recruit officers after the allotment for active duty officer quotas had been filled; and provided the ability to continue down a path of gaining quality recruits (primarily officers) instead of a mass quantity with no filtering process. With a varying size of 2,000 to 5,000 men within the reserves, Headquarters Marine Corps sought to ensure that it recruited potential officers who wanted to have a direct affiliation with the Marine Corps and who desired to participate in annual training duty at posts within the continental limits and were willing

⁵⁴ Ibid., 23.

to participate in field training on a regular basis.⁵⁵

The Marine Corps leadership did in fact identify their reserves as an important aspect of their force. Yet, the 1920s posed the critical question of whether the reserves could prove to be a useful aspect of the Marines during peacetime to a degree that would warrant the allocation of public funds. If the reserves failed to prove themselves in this regard, it was possible that they would dissolve during this period of disinterest in defense. This problem was only one of a number of issues facing the Corps. Congress slashed the Marine Corps' authorized personnel from 27,000 to 20,000 during the fiscal year of 1921 as recruitment for the service hit an all-time low. The reserves also dwindled in 1921. By September 21, 1921, the Marine Corps Reserve only had 555 officers and 4,068 enlisted and was facing a major crisis the following year, as this memorandum from Marine Corps Headquarters demonstrates, "One-half of the enlisted personnel of the Marine Corps Reserve will be discharged upon expiration of enrollments by April 1, 1922, unless new enrollment or re-enrollments offset the losses, which is not expected unless a drive for new recruits is made. There have been 88 enrollments during the present calendar year."⁵⁶ In addition to diminishing manpower, the Marine Corps Reserve faced a number of problems that were hurting efforts to solidify the organization's permanence. Communication between the reserve units and Headquarters was not well organized, and Headquarters focused much of its recruiting efforts on maintaining its active duty forces. Furthermore, Marine Reserve officers were often convinced to switch

⁵⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 25.

over to the National Guard and the Army Reserves of their home states.⁵⁷

Between 1921 and 1925, the Marine Corps Reserve continued to slide closer to uselessness. As the Marine Corps fought for appropriations while engaged in conflicts in China and Nicaragua, Congress placed the importance for allocating funds for the reserves further down the line of priorities. In June 1923, only 136 officers and 433 enlisted comprised the reserves. Of those, only six officers and twenty-one enlisted reported for annual active duty training. The next year saw only a marginal increase of one new officer and fifty-nine enlistees, bringing the total strength of the Marine Corps Reserve to 137 officers and 502 enlisted. However, the tide began to turn for the Marine Corps Reserve the following year.⁵⁸

A core group of Marine Corps Reserve officers who recognized the downward trend in the reserves began working outside the official channels to prop up the organization. Contacting members of Congress and the Secretary of the Navy in person, or over the telephone, these officers were able to influence the creation of official legislation that produced a much needed jolt to the heartbeat of the Marine Corps Reserve. Passed on February 28, 1925, "The Act of Congress to provide for the creation, organization, administration, and maintenance of the Naval Reserve and a Marine Corps Reserve" helped better ensure the future of the Marine Corps Reserve by replacing the Marine Corps Reserve Act of 1916.⁵⁹

The Reserve Act of 1925, sponsored by Senator William Rockford, became

⁵⁷ Ibid., 25.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁹ H.R. 5487, 69th Cong., 31 Congressional Record 946 (1925) (enacted).

effective 1 July 1925 and contained the following provision regarding the Marine Corps Reserve: “Section 2. That the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, established under the Act of August 29, 1916, is hereby abolished and in lieu thereof there is created and established, as a component part of the U.S. Marine Corps a Marine Corps Reserve, under the same provisions in all respects (except as may be necessary to adapt the said provisions to the Marine Corps) as those contained in this Act or which may hereafter be enacted providing for the Naval Reserve.”⁶⁰ This legislation helped to correct specific aspects lacking in the 1916 Act, among which were the authority to commission officers up to the rank of brigadier general, the appointment of twenty-five men to the Naval Academy, and the extension of the benefits of the Federal Employees' Compensation Act to members of the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve injured in the line of duty.⁶¹

These provisions for the Marine Reserve made participation more enticing for potential recruits, opened up much needed positions within the ranks of commissioned officers, stabilized pay, created less out of pocket expenditures, and provided financial protection from the inherent dangers associated with military service.⁶² These additions to the legal treatment of the reserves and their participants succeeded in making service within the reserves more tolerable and aided in the recruitment of new personnel. The Reserve Act of 1925 served as a tremendous upgrade to the newly-founded Marine Reserves, but its provisions were tested during the lean years that followed and by no means did the Reserve Act guarantee a permanent future for the Marine Corps Reserve.

⁶⁰ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 21.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² It is important to note that the extension of benefits under this act only covered service personnel while they were in active service, not while engaged in training.

From the formal foundation of the Marine Corps Reserve, provided for in the Marine Corps Reserve Act of 1916, to the Reserve Act of 1925, the USMCR established that it was both a wartime asset and also capable of surviving and evolving during peacetime. While the Regular Marine Corps continued to tout its support for a Marine Corps Reserve, most of its attentions were focused on finding the service's niche in the modern era: amphibious operations. As the Reserve Act of 1925 indicates, it was up to the members of the Marine Corps Reserve themselves to secure the organization's future. A year after the bill was passed, a young World War I veteran and devout Marine Corps loyalist joined the USMCR. Melvin J. Maas, a 27 year old Minnesotan and former noncommissioned officer during the First World War, was the ideal candidate for the Marine Corps Reserve. His participation within the reserves was crucial to the evolution of the Marine Corps Reserve in the remainder of the Interwar Period and the Marine Corps' posture at the outbreak of the Pacific War.

CHAPTER FOUR: MELVIN J. MAAS: MARINE AND LEGISLATOR

The Reserve Act of 1925, driven in part by officers of the USMCR, established a new starting point for the organization. Shortly after the act was passed, Melvin Maas joined the ranks of the Marine Corps Reserve. The ambitious World War I veteran continued the progress made by his fellow officers in 1925 but in a more aggressive fashion. Using a loophole spawned by the creation of the reserve system, Maas formed a special interest group representing the Marine Reserve and concurrently became a member of the House of Representatives. These actions allowed Maas to directly improve the conditions of the USMCR through the legislative process. Although his passionate views on American defense often put him at odds with many of his peers, and placed both his careers as an officer and a state representative in jeopardy, Maas continued to fight for the expansion of the American defense establishment.

Melvin J. Maas was born May 14, 1898, in Duluth, Minnesota. Two years later, the Maas family relocated to the Minneapolis area where Maas's father founded a bakery supply firm. Maas had a relatively uneventful childhood and upon graduation from Central High School in 1916 enrolled in St. Thomas College. As war loomed on the horizon, Maas dropped out of St. Thomas, turned down an appointment to West Point, and on April 23, 1917, enlisted in the Marine Corps.⁶³

Maas's desire to participate in the First World War and his eagerness to join the

⁶³ Gladys Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas, Gallant Man of Action*. (Minneapolis: T.S. Denison, 1967), 3-5.

fight as quickly as possible were not unique. The motivation of young Americans to prove themselves in combat in the second decade of the twentieth century helped to swell the ranks of the armed forces. The enthusiasm for the war was not just present in the American youth of 1917, but also in the public at large. This support translated into large military budgets for both the Department of the Navy and the Department of War and increased size allocations for each military service.

Maas wanted to join the action on the Western Front as quickly as possible and believed that enlistment into the Marines increased his chances of participating in the conflict. Upon signing an enlistment for the duration of the war, Maas was shipped to Mare Island, California, for basic training, where he expressed interest in the newly organized Marine Aero Company No. One being formed at Cape May, New Jersey. On July 14, 1917, Maas was assigned to the 79th Company at Quantico, Virginia, before being reassigned to Marine Aero Company No. One. During this period of training and unit transfers, he was promoted to the rank of corporal and in the first week of January his unit boarded the USS *Hancock* bound for the Azores Islands, west of Portugal.⁶⁴

Once Marine Aero Company No. One arrived in the Azores, they were assigned to Base Number 13 at Ponta Delgada on St. Miguel Island. Soon thereafter, they were given their primary assignment: scouting by air for German submarines and other enemy craft off the coast of Portugal. This assignment employed the use of the Curtis Jenny Biplane (JN-4A), which was armed with a pair of belt-fed machine guns mounted in front of the pilot. Maas conducted a number of aerial observation missions during the course of

⁶⁴ Melvin J. Maas, Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963. P1530 Box 9, MSS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

the war. He also spent time on sea duty as the acting sergeant with responsibilities for his men.⁶⁵ While at sea, Cpl. Maas wrote a guide entitled "For Officers to Remember," which demonstrated his caliber as a leader of marines. This guide covered several aspects of Marine Corps leadership, including advice on how to interact with subordinates in an official yet respectful manner. Some of the more notable observations are: "Talk to the enlisted men in an official way only about necessary things not things that are of no concern to officers; do not nag men and tell them to do things that they are about to do anyway or are doing; IN OTHER WORDS, DON'T INSULT THEIR INTELLIGENCE. . . . Don't begrudge A WORD OF APPRECIATION. IT IS ENCOURAGEMENT. . . . Give the men as much liberty and leeway as possible and beyond that BE STRICT."⁶⁶ That as a noncommissioned officer Maas would make these bold suggestions denotes the dedication, pride, and motivation he possessed in his time as a young enlisted. It is no small feat to put forth such suggestions to one's superior officers; that he did so demonstrates the seriousness that Maas had toward approaching his duty as a Corporal of Marines. Maas's outstanding performance during the course of the war earned him a number of commendations and, when he rotated back to the United States after the armistice, he was selected to receive an officer commission.

Maas did not, however, go on to Officer Candidate School directly after the war. The Spanish Influenza pandemic raced across the globe and it struck him in late 1918. During his recovery in a military hospital, Maas decided that he had accomplished his

⁶⁵ An acting rank is a military designation allowing a commissioned or noncommissioned officer to assume a rank usually higher and usually temporary.

⁶⁶ "For Officers to Remember," Melvin J. Maas to Officers of Marine Aero Company No. One, 1918, Azores Islands. P1530 Box 3, MS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

original goal of participating in the First World War. By mid-1919, with his duration of the war contract fulfilled, he declined his opportunity to become an officer and returned home to Minnesota.⁶⁷

Upon his release from active duty, Maas put the Marine Corps behind him and moved forward with civilian life. He married in 1920, finished his education, and by 1924 was the head of a successful insurance agency, Dwyers-Maas Co., based out of St. Paul. However, the following year saw a resurgence in Maas's connection to the Marine Corps. Missing the camaraderie and esprit de corps that military service gave him, Maas helped to organize former marines from his area into a social club: The Marine Clubs of Minnesota. It was through Maas's reconnection with these former marines that he first learned of the existence of the Marine Corps Reserve.⁶⁸

Maas was the ideal candidate for the Marine Corps Reserve and was an example of why the armed forces created modern reserve forces in the years leading up to the First World War. Maas was a veteran of active duty service, a productive member of the civilian work force, and possessed a college education. Furthermore, Maas exemplified the qualities that the rigorous officer selection process was searching for—all the aforementioned aspects for a reservist, but also one who demonstrated a high level of motivation, responsibility, and charisma.

Maas's longing to rejoin the ranks of the Marine Corps had grown quite strong in the six years since he left active duty. Realizing that the reserves were a perfect balance

⁶⁷ Melvin J. Maas, *Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963*. P1530 Box 3, MS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

between fulfilling his civilian responsibilities and continuing his involvement in the armed forces, he departed for Officer Candidate School. As a former enlisted, Maas excelled during his training, and in late 1925 earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant. Maas returned to Minnesota to pursue a new career path in politics. In this new calling, Maas eventually helped shape the Marine Corps Reserve and ensure a future for the entire Marine Corps, but initially, however, he had other political motivations.

Maas's dislike for the 18th Amendment and its transgression of American freedom motivated him to run for political office in his home state of Minnesota in 1926.⁶⁹ As a young man, Maas was outraged at the passing of the Volstead Act, which became law in October 1919. While Maas was not partial to heavy drinking, he did oppose the government's attempt to prohibit the rights of American citizens to consume alcohol. Maas's sentiments were in part due to the link between alcohol consumption and the founding of the Marine Corps. On November 10, 1775, the first Commandant of the Marine Corps, Major Samuel Nicholas, established the first recruiting station at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, and thus the consumption of alcohol has been an unofficial, yet in many ways essential, aspect of Marine Corps service.

Maas's core issues were not very popular. Although a good portion of Minnesotans opposed the 18th Amendment, prohibition had been written into the Constitution and many saw it as either a positive step or a non-issue. His stance on a strong national defense also failed to connect with his constituents. This was in part due to the rhetoric of the time touting that after the previous conflict there ostensibly would

⁶⁹ Ibid.

never be another major war. While his platform may have been weak in the eyes of voters, Maas's campaigning efforts succeeded and he joined the House of Representatives at the age of 27, at that time one of the youngest citizens ever elected to Congress.⁷⁰

Between his commission and his election to office, Maas identified a critical way he could help the Marine Corps Reserve. The Reserve Act of 1925 served as a stabilizing piece of legislation for the organization, but several key issues continued to endanger both its future and the quality of marines it produced. Maas, along with a group of officers whom he had met at Officer Candidate School, wanted to rectify the lack of an official training program for reserve units. Identifying this as a precarious shortcoming and, despite having virtually no influence as a newly commissioned second lieutenant, Maas, and with his fellow officers established a professional guild of Marine Reserve officers. The Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Association (MCROA) was founded on the 151st Marine Corps Birthday with Maas serving as president. The organization stated that its prime objective was to "induce the Marine Corps to prepare a program of Reserve training, and obtain from Congress, by their own direct contact, small appropriations for such training."⁷¹

Under Maas's presidency, the MCROA also identified other issues plaguing the Marine Corps Reserve in the 1920s. The major problems facing the Marine Reserve in 1926 centered primarily around funding. Fledgling reserve units had no official training areas and consequently relied on either site rentals or the use of rent-free areas

⁷⁰ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 40.

⁷¹ Randy Baumgardener, ed., *United States Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Association*. (Paducah, Ky.: Turner Pub., 2000), pg. 1.

(condemned buildings, armories, old barracks, etc.). Furthermore, these units had little access to equipment, forcing them to use either old military surplus or makeshift stand-ins. To make matters worse, funding was so limited that only a portion of reserve outfits were issued regulation clothing and those unlucky enough to not have them provided were forced to procure them with private funds in order to meet uniform regulations. In addition, the reserves lacked provisions for promotions, retirement, and medical benefits. The members of the MCROA spent the next 15 years tirelessly trying to solve these issues through articles in professional journals, political action, and public relations.⁷²

When Maas joined the 70th Congress, he was uniquely positioned to promote the interests of the Marine Corps in a way that circumvented a specific aspect of the civil-military relationship: military officers' non-participation in elected office. The American military had never been fully divorced from politics, but active participation in governmental politics was considered against the ideals of American government.⁷³ Traditionally, professional officers maintained a politically neutral stance in public while they were active members of their given services, and the notion of holding an elective office, or being a member of a special interest group, far exceeded that belief. Members of militias were not bound by this, but that was because militias were state controlled. The reserves created a loophole in which officers who were involved with the reserves could hold political office, even if they were technically under the command of either the Department of the Navy or the Department of War. Thus, Maas was able to

⁷² Ibid., 3-6.

⁷³ Philip S. Meilinger, "Soldiers and Politics: Exposing Some Myths," *Parameters*, Summer 2010, accessed March 4, 2013, <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/2010summer/Meilinger.pdf>.

simultaneously be a marine officer, the President of the MCROA, and a member of Congress.

During the first years of Maas's joint political and reserve careers, the Marine Corps Reserve maintained a relatively stable size of approximately 6,100 (Fleet Marine Reserve: 219 officer, 3,215 enlisted; Volunteer Marine Reserve: 196 officers 2,370 enlisted). Advocates for the Marine Reserve, including Maas, attempted to increase the level of training for reservists by providing correspondence courses from Marine Corps schools. Both officers and enlisted personnel began participating in large numbers, and their interest opened up opportunities for Fleet Marine Reservists to attend courses at the Marine Corps Institute. Although training became more available for the reserves, centralized leadership of the organization remained a stumbling block. General Lejeune, recognizing a clear opportunity to improve his reserve forces, appointed Brigadier General Ben H. Fuller, Assistant to the Major General Commandant, as Officer in Charge, Marine Corps Reserve. With representation now at the highest levels of the command structure, the Marine Corps Reserve had a clear line of communication that facilitated its development during the following decade.

As training opportunities increased for marine reservists and the conditions of their units improved, interest in the MCROA mounted and membership rose, thus elevating the organization's importance. Members of the MCROA, including Maas, began writing articles for professional service journals regarding the critical role of the reserves within modern militaries. Furthermore, the MCROA began publishing its own journal, *Word*, to help solidify key ideas about the future of the reserve system within the

armed forces.⁷⁴

Despite steady improvements made by both proponents of the Marine Reserve and the MCROA, the units that made up the force faced a number of hardships early on, as Lt. General Richard C. Mangrum later recounted, “The Reserve officer on active duty understandably was something of an enigma and outlander, vaguely mistrusted, and undoubtably not here to stay! In a way, this was not a bad crucible for shaping good Reserve officers. . . . They had to prove their worth. And did. It was uphill, however, for the first several years.”⁷⁵ In 1928, in order to improve upon the reserve component of the Marine Corps, General Fuller utilized the Marine Corps Reserve Policy Board. At first, the board consisted of active duty officers, but as time went on reserve officers served on the board as voting members, rotating membership every two years. However, before reserve officers were allowed to sit on the board, 1st Lt. Maas, due his presidency of the growing MCROA, was allowed to sit in on policy meetings. The Marine Corps Reserve Policy Board and the MCROA formed a close relationship. This relationship allowed a “trickle up” of recommendations from reserve officers to the attention of local MCROA chapters, then to the national headquarters, and eventually to the policy board, where they could be discussed and either passed on or turned into policy recommendations.⁷⁶

In February 1929, Maas, now a Captain then attached to an infantry company, requested reassignment to the aviation section of the USMCR, stating the following qualifications: "I hold a pilot's license from the Department of Commerce; served in the

⁷⁴ Baumgardener, ed., *United States Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Association*. 5.

⁷⁵ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 53. Mangrum's remarks were made in 1966.

⁷⁶ Baumgardener, ed., *United States Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Association*. 11-12.

Marine Corps Aviation Branch in 1917 and 1918; and have considerable instruction in military aviation at the U.S. Army schools at Brooks and Jelly Fields, San Antonio, Texas."⁷⁷ The command granted Maas's request, and he graduated from aviation school later that year. His opportunity to attend this school was made possible, in part, by funds that Congress had specifically set aside for reservists to train on a limited number of aircraft. Prior to Congress's allocation of funds, there was a considerable amount of tension between regular and reserve pilots regarding access to aviation schools and training aircraft. After attending flight training, Maas helped establish the first Marine Reserve Aviation Squadron, a feat only accomplished on the stipulation that pilots conduct training within the unit and without pay. Maas's experience and interest in aviation continued to shape his political stance on American defense and his transfer to a Marine Aviation Wing within the reserves altered the course of his military career.

Maas continually fought for increased funding for the Navy Department. However, he was also a proponent of the development of airpower in all of the American Armed Forces, partially due to his experiences with Marine Corps aviation during and after the First World War. Maas was strongly influenced by the airpower philosophies of the 1920s, like those of Billy Mitchell, and was convinced of the value of the development of a strong air force. After voters from the Fourth District in Minnesota reelected Maas in 1929, he gave a radio address on September 13 that outlined his views on airpower. Maas began his radio address by outlining a brief history of the development of the airplane and its use during the First World War. In the address, he

⁷⁷ "Admittance into USMC Aviation Section," Melvin J. Maas to his commanding officer, 1929, St. Paul, MN. P1530 Box 5, MS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

applauded the fact that human flight was first realized in the United States and pointed out the various benefits, besides warfare, that aviation provided. Maas explained the differing approaches of the United States and European nations took toward commercial aviation. He contended that American unwillingness to subsidize commercial aviation pushed privately-owned companies toward a greater degree of innovation when compared to European nations that allocated subsidies. He pointed out that as the US became more adept at using new forms of aeronautics within its infrastructure, it rapidly increased the nation's potential position for future airpower and defense. Maas concluded his speech with a push for the creation of a military academy specifically for aviation that would be on par with West Point and Annapolis. He also recommended an increase in funding for all forms of military aviation.⁷⁸ Although his constituents were in favor of his suggestions to improve American airpower, Congress ignored his assertions.

In the months that followed, Maas continued to express his concerns for the lack of financial attention that airpower received as well as for the atrophying defensive capabilities of the armed forces. He argued fervently for an increase in budget, but encountered only indifference from Congress. Overcome with anxiety, Maas made a drastic and in many ways reckless example of the potential destructive power of an attack from the air.

In the days leading up to President Hoover's 1929 address to the joint session of Congress, Maas pointed out to his colleagues that the Chief Executive, the Cabinet, the two Houses of Congress, and the members of the Supreme Court would all be assembled

⁷⁸ Melvin J. Maas, "America in the Air." Radio Address, 1929. P1530 Box 5, MS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

in the Capitol at one time. He warned them, "If anyone dropped just one bomb from a plane, it would be the end of our national government. This country needs better protection [from the threat of an air offensive]."⁷⁹ Maas's arguments were met with heavy skepticism by his fellow legislators, as they believed the natural boundaries provided by vast oceans rendered Washington immune from such a threat. Maas concluded that the only way to make his fellow congressmen understand the genuine threat airpower posed was to conduct a very dangerous demonstration.

Instead of attending the joint session, Maas rushed to Bolling Field (located outside of Washington, D.C.) and commandeered a small World War I pursuit plane. Once airborne Maas began circling the D.C. area. At exactly 12:00 pm, when the statesmen and dignitaries of the nation had settled down to listen to the President's message, Maas made a faux dive-bombing run centered on the House skylight. He narrowly missed crashing into the building and the joint session attendees were thrown into a short-lived panic as the chamber room was rocked by the flyby. As soon as the commotion subsided, Maas's office received a phone call from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Wendell C. Neville, asking to speak with Maas immediately upon his return.⁸⁰

Commandant Neville served Maas with a severe dressing down, followed by the

⁷⁹ Melvin J. Maas, *Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963*.

⁸⁰ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 56-60. ; Maas' views on the potential of airpower and the dangers airpower posed to the United States are similar to Col. William "Billy" Mitchell's. Mitchell's book *Winged Defense* articulates a number of points about the future role of aircraft that seem to parallel Maas' arguments to Congress. Furthermore, Maas' faux bombing run against the Capitol in 1929 is in the same spirit as Mitchell's aerial bombardment demonstrations against naval vessels that illustrated the dangers posed to the Navy. Maas' records and diaries make no mention of Mitchell. However, due to Maas' interest in airpower it can be assumed that he was familiar with Mitchell's writings.

decision that he would need to report for urgent duty outside of the District of Columbia in order to help avoid further media attention. Maas's office denied any pertinent information to reporters, hoping to avoid a negative reaction from his constituents. When Maas did resurface, he was not reluctant to discuss the joint session demonstration, telling reporters, "People said that no plane could get within ten miles of the Capitol. I wanted to show that one bomb could wipe out the entire Government."⁸¹ His rogue actions may have endangered his military career, but Maas believed that by doing so he was able to change the minds of a number of his colleagues in regard to the very serious matter of national defense.⁸²

The reprimand by Neville, and Maas's immediate transfer, were more than likely punctuated by other stern conversations regarding his aerial demonstration. However, no formal punitive measures were ever carried out. This may be in part due to Maas's position within civilian government, and his increasing value to the Marine Corps. In addition, the direct phone call from the Commandant illustrates that, while Maas may have only been a captain within the Marine Corps Reserve, his connections to the highest tier of Marine Corps leadership was abundantly clear.

As Maas and the MCROA became more influential within the Marine Corps, his political weight increased within Congress. In 1927, Maas was appointed to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. While on the committee, Maas argued for American isolationism, but also pushed for a more expansive defense to guard against possible foreign aggression. In 1930, Maas was appointed to the House Committee on Military

⁸¹ Melvin J. Maas, *Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963*.

⁸² Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 62.

Affairs where he continued to fight for greater allocation for defense appropriations. Later that year, Maas gave a speech outlining his convictions entitled "Peace not Pacifism." During this oration, he explained his contention that pacifism was a growing trend that put America in danger because it labeled those who believed in defensive spending as "radicals." Maas believed that in order to retain America's place in the twentieth century, it must bolster its armed forces, and doing so was the only road to keeping it out of possible conflict.⁸³

Melvin Maas had been a product of the early twentieth century Marine Corps. Driven at a young age to enlist during the build up to the First World War, Maas underwent an intense indoctrination that forever tied him to the Corps. His experiences within Marine Aviation during the conflict exposed him to the potential of airpower, endearing him to new ideas about warfare and national defense. As a young veteran returned to civilian life, he was the ideal candidate for the early reserve system, and upon seeing the opportunity to continue his involvement with the Marine Corps, he gladly accepted his commission as an officer. Yet, Maas became more than the ideal candidate for the newly formed Marine Corps Reserve. His politically oriented aspirations allowed for the fledgling Marine Corps Reserve to have a voice within Congress—a voice that was increasingly influential throughout the 1930s. Maas's approach to changing the opinions of his fellow congressmen may have teetered on the verge of recklessness, as his faux bombing attack illustrates, but his efforts to argue for his vision of American defense continued. As the Great Depression set in, new challenges arose that Maas met

⁸³ Melvin J. Maas, "Peace not Pacifism." Address, 1930. P1530 Box 6, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

with further dedication to both the Marine Corps and American defense.

CHAPTER FIVE: MAAS'S RELEVANCE GROWS

The American public's approach to defense altered significantly in the wake of the First World War. Defense advocates, like Maas, fought diligently to maintain the armed forces but were beset by a public apathetic to military affairs. The difficulties faced by pro-defense members of Congress only increased as the nation fell under the grips of financial crisis. The Great Depression deeply affected American military budgets, and only exacerbated the issues facing Maas and others fighting to keep America prepared for potential international conflict. Throughout the decade, Maas found new and innovative ways to strengthen the Marine Corps Reserve and, in one specific case, stop an attempt to abolish the Corps entirely. His defensive foresight, understanding of the importance of the reserve forces, and dogged loyalty to the Marine Corps helped change the course of the Second World War, and lay some of the most vital cornerstones of what would become the Department of Defense.

The stock market crash of 1929 greatly influenced the political landscape in which Maas participated. Much of the early headway made by pro-defense factions within Congress was eroded as attentions turned to more inwardly oriented economic issues. Although defense budgets continued to allow for the maintenance and advancement of the armed services, a cost saving proposal was put forward in 1933 that set out to abolish the Marine Corps and redistribute the savings toward the larger services.

Advocating the demise of the Marine Corps was not a new political tactic for cost savings. At numerous times during the nation's history, the Corps had become the target of civilian and military leaders who attempted to reduce defense spending, streamline the armed services, and avoid what those outside of naval service saw as a duplication of the Army.⁸⁴ Although the Marine Corps survived these previous attempts to disband the service, the financial crisis of the Great Depression made the 1933 proposal a true threat to the Corps' future.

Up until 1933, Maas's main political objectives centered around a strong national defense that included the development and expansion of American airpower and the modernization of the reserve system established earlier in the century. Maas contended that each branch of the armed forces should be adequately funded. However, his personal connection to the Marine Corps dramatically influenced his vision of what constituted a robust national defense program. When Maas learned of the efforts of Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley to significantly reduce the authorized strength of the Marine Corps, he sprung into action.

Secretary Hurley proposed a cost saving measure directly to President Hoover that would have functionally reduced the Marine Corps to merely a naval police force. Hurley argued that eliminating wasteful spending on what he viewed as a duplication of the Army was an ideal way to strengthen the War Department and at the same time reduce the national budget during the economic crisis. Hoover was favorable to Hurley's suggestions until Maas intervened on behalf of the Marine Corps.

⁸⁴ Jack Shulimson, *The Marine Corps' Search for a Mission, 1880-1898* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 15-16, 130-132.

By 1933, Maas was in a unique and powerful position. He remained president of the MCROA, an organization that had steadily grown since its inception. In addition, he was a member of the House Committee on Military Affairs. Once news spread of Secretary Hurley's efforts, these positions, combined with his direct linkage to the highest level of Marine Corps leadership, made Maas an ideal defender of the service. Utilizing funds from the MCROA, Maas took to the national airwaves on February 11 at Goldstine Studios, located in Washington D.C., with access to broadcast to eighty-seven other stations throughout the United States.⁸⁵

Today there are fewer American Marines than there are policeman in Greater New York City and yet the President's budget estimates submitted to Congress calls for the reduction of 1,748 of them. If the reduction is made the Marines will have lost a quarter of their strength within less than three years, their morale and esprit de corps will be seriously injured and there will not be a sufficient number of Marines to perform the duties required of them. So if Congress does not use common sense and reject this executive recommendation the Marines practically will be rendered useless as an instrument of national defense.⁸⁶

While Maas began his plea to the American people as a concerned Congressman worried about the fate of one of the military services, it is in the following statements that he revealed a deep understanding of the Marine Corps and Marine culture:

This morale and esprit de corps that I have just mentioned is more than a mere phrase. It represents a vital part of the the growing soul of America. It is part of that element of our country that stirs the emotional and patriotic centers of all Americans. It is something that cannot be built up except through loyalty, courage, and a long period of time. It cannot be bought because it is priceless. It has taken the American Marines 157 years to build it up, and yet right now in the

⁸⁵ Maas's 1933 efforts to save the Marine Corps are mentioned in seminal Marine histories such as Hinel's *Soldiers of the Sea*. However, these texts fail to directly quote Maas. I contend that presenting the most powerful of Maas's words, as they were originally presented to the American people, is vital to any historical treatment of his contributions to Marine Corps history.

⁸⁶ Melvin J. Maas, "Defense of the Marine Corps." Radio Address. P1530 Box 4, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

year 1933 it is proposed to place it aside as if it were an old glove. No one would think of melting up the Liberty Bell to get a few paltry dollars, would they?⁸⁷

In this address, Maas demonstrated that not only was he loyal to the Marine Corps, but that he believed the Marine Corps was, in ways, the soul of the American people. Even his analogy to the Liberty Bell demonstrated that Maas likened the service to an historical treasure that was vital to the very identity of the United States, thus illustrating the foolishness of weakening the Corps' role in national defense. Later in the address Maas compared the total cost of the Marines to the soda and tobacco consumption of the American people.⁸⁸ He went on to call into question Congressional financial decisions to fund numerous projects that had cost millions of taxpayer dollars but had little hope of benefiting the American people.

Maas reminded listeners of the Navy's assessment of the irreplaceable role the Marines performed within naval service. He argued that the Army could not be tasked with the specific roles that the Marines play within a successful naval operation. He also explained both the origin of the service and its various successful fights against previous attempts to disband it. He emphasized the Marines' contributions in America's previous conflicts and then concluded: "Strange as it may be for my listeners to hear it, the Marines should receive the support of all pacifists, particularly the most fanatical, for they either prevent wars or shorten them."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Maas contends that Americans spend six times the total cost of the Marine Corps to carbonated beverages and four times as much on tobacco.

⁸⁹ Maas, "Defense of the Marine Corps."

In his conclusion, Maas justified the fiscal viability of the Marine Corps, stating, “In the interest of economy the Marine Corps should remain unimpaired. The Marines provide the most efficient and most economical form of our National Defense. It is the cheapest force, dollar for dollar man for man.”⁹⁰ Maas employed his adept political skill emphasizing the necessity for cost effective defense to a public beleaguered by the financial crisis of the 1930s. In his closing statements,, he subtly alludes to the specter of the Marine Corps’ next adversary and the service’s effectiveness at carrying out American foreign policy:

Surely we will not cover our egos with a penny and lose our most valuable, useful, active, and most economical asset of National Defense as are the Marines. A group of Americans that are fired with as intense a spirit of devotion to flag as ever sent a samurai of Japan to death for his government.⁹¹ A fighting man who serves as infantry, blue jacket, artilleryman, cavalryman, policeman in guarding U.S. calls, servant of the State Department in carrying out the President's foreign policies, and all as a United States Marine. The History of the Marines is the History of our country.⁹²

Maas’s blending of an economical approach to defense, praise of the Marine Corps’ versatility and usefulness, and faint warning of a potential war against the Empire of Japan exhibits his firm grasp of domestic politics, and both international and military affairs.

Through his efforts, Maas halted any further attempts by Secretary Hurley to defund the service. After the radio address, thousands of letters and over 10,000 telegrams flooded President Hoover's office supporting Maas’s views and in favor of the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ An indication of the Marines’ wariness of Japan as a potential enemy.

⁹² Maas, "Defense of the Marine Corps."

continual funding of the Marine Corps. Hoover ceased his original pursuit, but he stipulated that the Marine Corps could not breach a total strength of 10,000 men, a limit that both Maas and the Commandant were content with in 1933. With yet another attempt to weaken the Marine Corps blocked, Maas turned his attention toward his primary goal of strengthening the Marine Corps Reserve.⁹³

During the early 1930s, while Maas performed his governmental duties as a Congressman, he continued to train with his reserve unit, achieving the rank of major in 1935. Under his presidency, the MCROA continued to grow in both members and influence within the political landscape. The Marine Corps Reserve also retained its size and remained a viable asset to the larger Marine Corps despite the lack of funding it had struggled with since its inception.

No major changes to the force took place until an unfortunate turn of events motivated Maas to improve specific beneficiary coverage to those who chose to join the Marine Reserves. In early 1936, Maas took part in the yearly pistol qualification course set forward by the Marine Corps training curriculum. At that time, the Colt 1911 .45 caliber pistol was the standard sidearm for all branches of the American military. On the training course, Maas's .45 pistol suffered a hang-fire and, while trying to clear the malfunction, the pistol discharged in his face. The bullet penetrated Maas's lower jaw, knocking out the lower row of his front teeth and ripping his upper lip. Although Maas narrowly avoid a fatal wound, he was seriously injured. He was rushed to Bethesda Naval Hospital where his wounds were treated. Maas underwent major emergency dental

⁹³ Melvin J. Maas, *Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963*.

treatment and required seventeen stitches. While recovering from his wounds, Maas was informed that he was not eligible for medical coverage due to his reserve status. The total bill for treatment was in excess of \$600.00.⁹⁴

Thanks to his successful partnership with the insurance firm that he founded before he entered politics, Maas was able to pay his medical bills in full. However, he realized that had the accident befallen another marine, that marine may have found himself in a grave financial situation, all while volunteering in the defense of the nation. Maas had already worked to improve the funding allocated for the reserves and, through the parallel efforts of the Congressman and the MCROA, the force garnered increasing amounts of attention from Headquarters Marine Corps. Yet, Maas's accident motivated him to ensure that reservists qualified for medical and death benefits while conducting training exercises. Prior to 1936, these marines were only covered if they were called into active service and, as Maas's accident proved, troops were susceptible to injury and death during military training, not just when engaged in combat operations.

As soon as Maas recovered enough from his wounds, he drafted a bill that guaranteed medical and death coverage to Marine and Navy Reservists during their training. Still wrapped in gauze, Maas testified in front of his fellow Congressmen regarding his near fatal experience while conducting standard training. His bill passed both the House and the Senate, and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it into law. This bill constituted a specific goal for Maas and the Marine Corps Reserve. Appropriate funding was paramount to the force's survival, but a close second was the proper

⁹⁴ Ibid.; Over \$10,000.00 in 2013 "CPI Inflation Calculator," CPI Inflation Calculator, accessed March 10, 2013, <http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.

treatment of those who chose to join. The extension of benefits was just one of a number of efforts that were made to improve the treatment of Marine Reservists and these efforts both helped entice new recruits as well as retain those already in uniform. Although the extension of benefits was an improvement, Maas soon went to work to overhaul the entire reserve system.

With tensions mounting in Europe, Maas began designing a legislative act that bridged the Naval Reserve forces from their 1930's structure into a modernized force capable of rapid mobilization. In early 1937, Maas and other pro-reserve legislators began drafting the Naval Reserve Act of 1938. Their efforts resulted in an act that provided for further training allocations for all Naval Reserve, including the Marine Corps Reserve, and laid out the development of training schedules and programs for individual reserve battalions. These individualized schedules allowed for battalion commanders to generate specialized funding requests, training standards, and yearly calendars for qualifications based on a unit's purpose. As a result, the quality and effectiveness of reserve battalions increased dramatically.⁹⁵

The Naval Reserve Act of 1938 did more than improve upon the training of the Marine Corps Reserve; it reorganized the USMCR into three groups: the Fleet Marine Reserve, the Organized Marine Reserve, and the Volunteer Marine Reserve. Each of these divisions within the new reserve system allowed the Marines to cast a wider net for potential recruitment. The reorganization clarified unresolved issues not addressed in 1925 and streamlined the reserves into a more manageable entity. The act also increased

⁹⁵ H.R. 10594, 75th Cong., 86 Congressional Record 775 (1938) (enacted).

pay and created an honorary retired list. The reorganization of the various arms of the Marine Corps Reserve up to this point brought the entire force under the control of the Marine Corps for the first time since its creation, rather than elements being technically under the control of the Navy.⁹⁶

The Naval Reserve Act of 1938, strongly supported by the MCROA, became the bedrock for future reserve legislation for all military branches after the Second World War. With the Naval Reserve Act of 1938 in place, Maas completed his initial goal of creating a modernized Marine Corps Reserve. The reserve forces of the United States Marine Corps survived years of underfunding by relying on the loyalty of its members in order to remain a viable aspect of the overall service. Through Maas's efforts and those of his political allies, the Marine Corps Reserve modernized and offered new opportunities to its servicemen, increasing the attractiveness of the organization to American citizens interested in participating. By providing pay and training opportunities, and extending medical, death, and retirement benefits, Maas shaped the Marine Corps Reserve into a force in readiness during the Interwar Period. His constant efforts to cultivate the reserves and his defense of the Marine Corps in 1933 made him an asset to the pre-World War II Marine Corps. However, it was not until the outbreak of the conflict that Maas's impact on the effectiveness on the Marine Corps was realized; more importantly, his tireless crafting of the Marine Corps Reserve helped change the course of the Pacific War.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX: MAAS, JAPAN, AND THE MOBILIZATION OF THE MARINE CORPS RESERVE

The efforts of Congressman Melvin Maas during the 1930's to forge a modern reserve system within the Department of the Navy, with an emphasis upon the Marine Corps Reserve, were realized with the passing of the Naval Reserve Act of 1938. Through his own experiences as both an enlisted marine and as an officer in the reserves, Maas was able to guide legislation that prepared the Marine Corps for rapid mobilization—a mobilization that was only a few short years away. Yet, during the years leading up to American entry into the war, Maas continued to promote American isolationism in the face of growing tensions in Europe, believing instead that the true threat to America lay to the East.

The closing years of the 1930's yielded a series of international conflicts that tested the United States' resolve to remain neutral. Japan's aggression toward China and Nazi Germany's pugnacious foreign policies produced a contentious atmosphere on the world stage. Cautious from the experiences of the Great War, a portion of the American public opposed engaging in diplomatic actions that might drag the nation into affairs that were widely regarded as either European or Asian problems. Veterans groups, specifically the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), lobbied continuously to retain America's stance on neutrality and contended that the only way to do so was through

adequate military spending.⁹⁷ Maas had allied himself with the VFW throughout his political career, calling upon their Minnesota members for support during campaign years. The VFW's view on a strong national defense as a means for continued peace and their overarching stance on neutrality aligned with Maas's continual political messages while serving in Congress.

Maas spoke on several occasions, both on Capitol Hill and directly to his constituents, about the importance of neutrality in the face of growing international conflict. However, he ensured that his message was disassociated with pacifism. During one particular address before Congress, Maas explained the inherent dangers of militaristic nations and their potential threat to world stability. Yet, Maas asserted, instead of a pacifistic approach to international affairs, one based purely on distancing the nation from international involvement, the US must focus on a reenergized patriotism and support of military strength. "Pacifism has become the vogue. A patriot who advocates Americanism is looked upon as a radical. The time has come when red blooded men and women of the United States must stand up and proclaim it again decent to be patriotic. Let us make being patriotic respectable and move forward under the notion of peace, not pacifism."⁹⁸ Representative Maas continually called for an increase in military spending and a strengthening of American defense. However, during the closing years of the 1930's, his opinions on neutrality began to shift.

When war in Europe erupted in 1939, the question of America's role in the

⁹⁷ "Thank You for Your Support," James E. Van Zandt, Chairman of the VFW to Melvin Maas, 26 April 1939, St. Paul, MN. P1530 Box 5, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

⁹⁸ Melvin J. Maas, "The Dangers of a Weak Defense." Address, 1938. P1530 Box 6, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

conflict began to surface. Maas steadfastly opposed any involvement in European affairs after Hitler invaded Poland, believing the conflict to be a European problem and arguing that American interests were not directly threatened. These views led Maas to become a vocal challenger of the Lend Lease Act of 1941. His disagreement with Lend Lease was not because he wanted to prevent American troops from being drawn into a second Great War. Rather, Maas, like others in Marine Corps leadership, believed the true threat to America lay across the Pacific Ocean.

In numerous letters and speeches, Maas pointed out the inherent dangers of the embargo placed upon the Empire of Japan and the threat of its military might to American installations across the Pacific. He believed that American diplomatic reactions to Japan's aggression toward China might lead to armed conflict. Maas's opposition to the Lend Lease Act was in part a desire to keep America out of European affairs, but it was also to avoid the dilution of military assets. His contention centered around a belief that providing military arms to nations that opposed Nazi Germany might result in the loss of American neutrality and the inevitable deployment of troops. Should this occur, the Japanese Empire would stand nearly unopposed in the Pacific and an outright attack against American assets in the area could leave the nation in a compromising situation that would be difficult to successfully navigate.

Maas argued aggressively to allocate funds for projects that would fortify American military bases across the Pacific, most notably Guam, in order to counteract the inherent dangers posed by Japan. Maas believed that with proper defensive upgrades and increased garrisons, the United States could either discourage a possible attack on these installations or at least give these assets the means for a proper defense. Despite making

numerous requests for these projects through speeches, letters, and as a member of both the Military and Naval Affairs Committees, Maas was unable to garner the support needed to make any meaningful improvements, partially due to the lack of support by the Roosevelt Administration.⁹⁹

At the same time, Maas emphasized the direct threat that Japan posed to the United States, the Marine Corps Reserve force that he had helped modernize began down the path of mobilization. After the Naval Reserve Act of 1938, the Marine Corps Reserve experienced a slight reduction in total force. However, once President Roosevelt declared a Limited National Emergency on 8 September 1939, the organization quickly grew in size. Roosevelt, as Assistant Secretary of the Navy from 1914 until 1920, had a close connection to the Department of the Navy. But in 1939, as war loomed, he developed a personal connection to the Marine Corps and its reserves; his son James Roosevelt joined the Marine Corps Reserves as an officer. In a letter to the MCROA President Major Bertrand T. Fay, who had temporarily taken over for Maas, Roosevelt identified the organization's contributions to the armed forces during the 1930s and expressed his admiration for its dedication and loyalty to the nation.¹⁰⁰ As Roosevelt's letter indicates, the MCROA had grown from a small group of concerned officers in 1926 to one that had significantly improved the might of naval service prior to American entry into the Second World War. Moreover, the association that Maas founded now counted the President of the United States among one of its many supporters.

⁹⁹ Melvin J. Maas, *Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963*.

¹⁰⁰ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 49.

The Marine Corps Reserve implemented the changes put forward by the Naval Reserve Act between 1938 and late 1940, with the majority of units quickly conducting the required training programs put forward by the new regulations. Using newly allocated funds, the reserve battalions attained the various aspects of training, materials, and benefits that had been lacking throughout the 1920s and 30s. With these improvements, the Marine Corps Reserve began preparing for the possibility of war. During the summer of 1940, Congress stepped up its procurement of aircraft, launched a two-ocean naval ship building program, and passed the Selective Service Act. On October 5, 1940, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox issued a dispatch stating: "Put all organized reserve division and aviation squadrons on short notice for call to active duty, call fleet reserves as necessary, call retired enlisted men who may be usefully employed and who volunteer."¹⁰¹ Ten days later, this warning of activation was followed by full mobilization through Presidential Order 8245 and Circular Letter 396. These orders placed all twenty-three reserve organized battalions and thirteen reserve aviation squadrons on active duty no later than 9 November 1940. Of the approximately 8,000 total reservists, over 85% joined their active duty counterparts by the end of the year. Seven officers and 1,183 enlisted were disqualified physically or because going to war created a financial hardship on the family.¹⁰²

With the majority of their members activated in 1940, the MCROA chose to temporarily suspend all activities. Soon after, the head of the Marine Corps Reserve Policy Board, Colonel Joseph C. Fegan, retired. In his farewell address, delivered on 10

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 53.

¹⁰² Ibid., 59.

November, Fegan expressed admiration for the newly activated reservists: “[Your] service may take you beyond the seas; however, this call should be no news to you, as you have been trained for and are equal to such occasions. I will follow you with pride in your service! . . . When our national entity is being challenged, then is the time when real Americans volunteer to serve in defense of homeland and families. You constitute this class of Americans!”¹⁰³

Once the reservists were activated, they were integrated primarily into existing active duty units, rather than kept as individualized units as first intended. This caused a difficult transitional period for reservists as they attempted to adjust into units that felt superior due to their active duty service. However, as result a of the progressive measures made by Maas, his political allies, and the MCROA during the Interwar Period for the improved treatment and training of marine reservists, these men proved themselves almost immediately within the units to which they were assigned.

In 1960, Brigadier General Ronald R. Van Stockum, reflecting back on his initial skepticism about Marine Corps Reservists upon their integration into active duty, wrote: “I believe it was early 1940, while I was with the 6th Marines in San Diego, when the first group of reserve officers came to active duty. I must admit that, along with a number of my contemporaries, I considered these officers to be a somewhat inferior breed. However, these illusions were rather quickly shattered. . . . The reservists of all the military services distinguished themselves, and the line between the reserve and regular

¹⁰³ Ibid., 61.

disappeared.”¹⁰⁴ In 1965, General Charles Cogswell, a Lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserves in 1940, explained the difficulties faced by units who were unexpectedly distributed into active duty units upon activation: “Confusion was rampant with Company Commanders separated from First Sergeants and First Sergeants separated from company clerks, and company clerks separated from muster rolls, payrolls, service record books, et cetera.” However, Cogswell further explained that after a short adjustment period, the Marine Reservists from his battalion who had been absorbed into various companies quickly integrated and the “wisdom of the Marine Corps in this move [became] evident.”¹⁰⁵ In an interview, Marine Reserve officer, James Partridge, who went on to become a general in the 1960s, described a similar experience as his contemporaries. He also discussed an additional benefit of dispersing the reserves into the Fleet Marine Force: “ Upon mobilization, [the Western Battalions] augmented every unit of the 2nd Brigade, enabling it to acquire Division status.”¹⁰⁶

Because he continued to fight for the modernization of the Marine Corps Reserve, Maas was instrumental in ensuring that the force remained a viable aspect of the service throughout the economically tight years of the Great Depression. His efforts to improve training, increase funding, ensure payment, and extend retirement and benefits transformed the reserves from a group held together by loyalty to the Marines, into a viable, professional asset of the Corps. These improvements created twenty-three well trained battalions and thirteen aviation squadrons, their professionalism explains their

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 62.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 65.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 67.

ease of integration into the Fleet Marine Force. With over a year for the reserves to adjust to the Fleet Marine Force, the service began to grow as the limit of the force's size was increased to allow for new recruits to be brought in before the events of 7 December 1941.

Between 1941 to the conclusion of the war, the Marine Corps swelled to six divisions and five air wings, totaling over 485,000 men. Sixty-eight percent of enlisted and over eighty percent of the officers in the Marine Corps who participated in the Pacific War were classified as reservists.¹⁰⁷ The initial boost of the Reserve battalions gave the Fleet Marine Force the ability to expand the service's infrastructure prior to the influx of new recruits, allowing for new marine divisions to be formed. The improved training allotments for marine reservists in the years leading up to their mobilization led to an easy transition into active duty. The size of the service expanded to unprecedented levels. As it grew with new recruits, the officers and non-commissioned officers of the Marine Corps Reserve became a vital aspect to maintaining the standards, good order, and discipline of the force.¹⁰⁸

The reserves proved to be an effective medium for the recruitment and training of Marine Corps officers who would eventually go on to become professional active duty officers. Lt. General 'Chesty' Puller, possibly one of the most famous Marines in history and the recipient of five Navy Crosses, began his career as a reserve officer. He

¹⁰⁷ The Marine Corps Reserve provided for the service of retirees, wartime volunteers and draftees, college students, volunteers below draft age, specialists, limited service personnel, and women. This accounts for why so many marines in the Pacific Theater were listed as reservists.

¹⁰⁸ "Marine Corps Reserve Association - History of the Marine Corps Reserve," Marine Corps Reserve Association - History of the Marine Corps Reserve, USMCR History, accessed April 16, 2013, <http://www.usmcra.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1525243>.

expressed his conviction of the necessity of the Marine Corps Reserve by pointing out, "When war comes, there will never be enough professionals to do the job."¹⁰⁹ Puller was by no means the only marine with a connection to the reserves to receive awards for bravery under fire. Of the seventy-nine Marines who were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, forty-four were classified as reservists. Eleven of the seventy-nine were marines who served within the various air combat squadrons, six of whom were reservists.¹¹⁰

Maas, his political allies, the Marine Corps Policy Board, and the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association were successful in not only ensuring that the Marine Corps Reserve survived the Interwar Period, but also that the loyalty, esprit de corps, and training standards were maintained. Their collective actions effectively modernized the Marine Corps Reserve to the point that, when mobilization occurred, the force became critical to the service. The reserve's ability to be a cost effective augmentation to the total men under arms, to retain veterans of active duty who may have otherwise been lost, and to recruit those who were not ready to fully commit to four years away from professional civilian life proved to be a vital asset to the Marine Corps.

In the summer and fall of 1941, as the Marine Corps Reserve mobilized and amalgamated into its active duty counterparts, Maas found it nearly impossible not to join them. That year President Roosevelt granted Maas, now a colonel, a three month leave of absence to serve at sea as a senior staff officer for Admiral William B. Halsey aboard the USS *Enterprise* in the Pacific. Upon returning to Washington in the fall, Roosevelt

¹⁰⁹ Davis Burke, *Marine! The Life of Chesty Puller*. (Bantam, 1991), 215.

¹¹⁰ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 54.

dispatched Maas to England as part of a Congressional committee assigned to study the organization of the Royal Air Force. Because he had extensive aviation experience, Maas was able to conduct an in-depth examination of the state of British airpower and help generate a program for appropriate Lend Lease and Arms aid for England.¹¹¹

Upon his return from England in November, the President sent Maas on an information gathering tour of the war effort in North Africa. On December 7, while inspecting military units fighting against the Axis Powers, he received word of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Maas immediately returned to Washington and proceeded to make a number of personal requests to President Roosevelt to be allowed to leave his Congressional position and join his fellow marines in the fight against the Japanese Empire in the Pacific. After several months, President Roosevelt approved his request for a leave of absence and Maas was sent to the Pacific to serve upon the USS *Saratoga*.

By the time Maas joined the Pacific War as an active participant, his efforts to create an improved Marine Reserve were realized. The men of the Marine Corps Reserve were successfully mobilized and effectively bolstered the strength of their active duty counterparts. Unfortunately, Maas's call for adequate preparations for a possible war against Japan had not been realized by the time the United States was dragged into the conflict. His stance of peace through a strengthened military failed to prevent American entry into the Second World War. Once war was declared, Maas was quick to join his fellow marines in the Pacific Theater. Through his persistence in creating a modern

¹¹¹ Melvin J. Maas, Journals of Melvin Maas 1917-1963.

Marine Corps Reserve in the 1930s, the Marine Corps, and the nation, were more prepared than they would have been if the Marine Reserve had been left to die on the vine during its tenuous early years. As Maas left to join his fellow battle brothers in the Pacific, he would participate in his second global conflict as a marine and his experiences hardened his resolve for his final battle as a Congressman—a battle on Capitol Hill for the very existence of the Marine Corps.

CHAPTER SEVEN: MAAS, THE SECOND WORLD WAR,
AND THE FIGHT FOR THE MARINE CORPS

As Melvin Maas embarked on his second global war as a United States Marine, he continued his life as part-politician, part-military officer. His experiences in the Second World War placed him in much greater danger than his duty on submarine patrols as a corporal. However, Maas's time in the Pacific provided him with valuable first-hand knowledge of the conflict. Maas participated in the invasion of Guadalcanal, served as a liaison with General Douglas MacArthur in Australia, and conducted a number of reconnaissance flights throughout the Pacific before being called back to his Congressional duties. He received numerous awards for his military service during the Pacific War. Upon his return to Washington, he was responsible for changing the course of a reorganization of the American military that threatened to place the Marine Corps in danger of being absorbed by the War Department.

After being granted a leave of absence from Congress by President Roosevelt, Col. Maas reported for active duty at Camp Pendleton, California, in June 1942. Once there, Maas was assigned to a small marine detachment aboard the USS *Saratoga*, then far out in the Pacific. He served under Admiral Frank J. Fletcher in the Solomon Islands throughout the first island-hopping engagements of the Pacific War. During these aggressive actions toward the Japanese assets in the Pacific, the 1st Marine Division conducted seaborne landings on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and several smaller islands. The

Japanese launched fierce counteroffensives against all the Allied forces, pouring reinforcements into Guadalcanal, bombing and strafing from the air, and sinking Allied cruisers. It was a bloody, costly operation for both sides. The Japanese were defeated in a two-day naval battle in November but final Allied victory did not come until mid-February 1943 when the final pockets of resistance were eliminated.¹¹²

Although the congressman's orders dictated that he stay out of the various combat zones whenever possible, it was not enough for Maas to be a protected observer. He wanted to take a direct role in combat operations. President Roosevelt, concerned that Col. Maas might be killed in the line of duty, ordered the congressman to return to Washington. However, Maas used the confusion of military bureaucracy to his advantage. He was able to evade receiving the Presidential order for months, thus enabling him to continue taking part in the fight against Japan. In the early fall of 1942, Col. Maas was participating in the New Guinea campaign when Roosevelt's orders finally caught up with him. Before he was sent back to Washington, he received an Army Silver Star by the command of General Douglas MacArthur. This citation for the nation's third highest honor identified Maas's "gallantry in action over New Guinea on September 3, 1942."¹¹³ The award goes on to recognize Maas's "voluntary and aggressive effort . . . to assist in any capacity in the combat reconnaissance of an important area occupied by the enemy [and] is worthy of the finest tradition of our fighting forces."¹¹⁴ Maas later recalled a verbal rebuke attached to his Silver Star award. MacArthur reprimanded him

¹¹² George McMillan, *The Old Breed; a History of the First Marine Division in World War II*. (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1949), 83-142.

¹¹³ Melvin J. Maas, "Silver Star Citation." P1530 Box 10, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

for engaging in aerial combat when he was merely supposed to be acting as an observer and for risking government property by using a medium bomber as a dive bomber to strafe the enemy airfield.¹¹⁵ The Silver Star added to the personal collection of awards and decorations Maas acquired during his service.¹¹⁶

In late September 1942, Colonel Maas returned to Washington to resume his Congressional duties. During the next year, as a member of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, he fought for further naval appropriations and introduced legislation that allowed female units within the Marine Corps. Over 300 female Marines had served in the Corps during World War I, yet the service continued to retain a generally male-only stance.¹¹⁷ In addition, Maas sponsored legislation to give officer ratings to all nurses on active duty in the American Armed Forces. Maas's initial thrust for sexual equality put him at odds with Commandant Thomas Holcomb. General Holcomb believed that Maas had done a great disservice to the Marine Corps, telling Maas personally that his actions would be the ruin of the service. Holcomb considered female integration erosive to the male dominated service's identity. Subsequently Holcomb, who had been a longtime friend of Maas, cut off all personal ties.¹¹⁸

As Maas fought for the introduction of women into the Marine Corps, and for

¹¹⁵ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 132.

¹¹⁶ These awards are as follows: World War I Victory Medal with Aviation Clasp; Organized Marine Corps Medal, awarded in 1934; a Reserve Special Commendation Ribbon and Letter of Commendation given to him by the Secretary of the Navy in 1940; a Marine Corps Reserve Ribbon honoring his ten years of service within the Reserves; and the American Defense Service Medal with Fleet Clasp for his service aboard the USS *Enterprise*. Melvin J. Maas, "List of Awards." P1530 Box 10, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹¹⁷ It was not until 1948 that the Women's Armed Integration Act gave women Marines full regular status.

¹¹⁸ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 138.

greater naval appropriations, a new threat to the Marine Corps began to emerge. In late 1942, the Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) created an ad hoc committee, the Joint Strategic Survey Command (JSSC), for the purpose of studying how to conduct the Second World War in a more effective manner. The committee set out to solve questions regarding the roles and missions of the various military branches in order to improve aspects that were viewed as lacking by a portion of defense and civilian leadership. On November 2, 1943, General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, submitted a memorandum to the JCS that called for a single defense department, effectively eliminating the separation between the individual services. From Marshall's perspective, the new organizational structure constituted a massive cost reduction for taxpayers and provided a unified command. Marshall contended that under a single department, the military would benefit from a greater execution of policies and be assured greater access to the President.¹¹⁹

A combined military department was not a new concept to Marshall or the War Department. Within the Army, the idea of a unified defense had been circulating since the early decades of the twentieth century. The Root Reforms of 1903 greatly improved the Army's internal operations, and many within its leadership felt that the War Department's particular take on organization should be applied to all aspects of the military. All plans submitted by the War Department for military reorganization between 1944 and 1947 reflected the War Department's internal organization. Furthermore, Marshall himself had been tasked by President Roosevelt with forming preliminary plans

¹¹⁹ Demetrios Caraley, *Politics of Military Unification* (Columbia University Press, 1966), 4-12.

for combined defense as early as 1940.¹²⁰ The War Department believed that by aggressively seizing the initiative during the unification debates, they could overpower the Department of the Navy, which had put far less thought into postwar defense planning. If Marshall and the War Department were successful, they could shape postwar defense in a manner that would be highly beneficial to the Army's eventual role at the detriment of the Department of the Navy.¹²¹

Marshall sent his proposal to the JSSC and the JCS formed a special committee to debate his suggestions. Admiral Ernest King, the Chief of Staff of Naval Operations, disapproved of Marshall's ideas, viewing them as a direct threat to the Department of the Navy. Foreseeing a potential political fight against military unification on the horizon, Admiral King insisted that the new committee investigate not only Marshall's plan for a single department, but also the pros and cons of one department, two departments (Army and Navy), and three departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force). Marshall reluctantly agreed to King's demands, and the committee set out to study the possible effects of different organizational systems.¹²²

On March 8, 1944, the JSSC submitted its findings, "Reorganization and National Defense," to the JCS. The report stated that every effort should be made toward the attainment of the idea of a single military service, but that the goal was more than likely impractical except during early training of new service members and at the highest level

¹²⁰ Marshall's plans between 1940 and 1944 included the creation of a universal military training program for all able-bodied men upon their 18th birthday. The idea was eventually abandoned prior to the unification debates of 1944.

¹²¹ Caraley, *Politics of Military Unification*, 3-20.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 23-24.

of command. When examining the role of the Marines, the JSSC did not believe that the Corps was a duplication of effort, but rather that its role in national defense would more than likely remain relevant in post-war defense. The JSSC proposed the creation of another committee to be formed to investigate the matter in greater depth.

Later that month, spurred by the request of further investigation by the JSSC, Representative James W. Wadsworth Jr. of New York introduced a resolution calling for the establishment of a select committee on postwar military policy. The resolution passed on 28 March 1944. Representative Clifton Woodrum chaired the new committee now named the Woodrum Committee. This committee included twenty-three representatives: seven from the House Military and Naval Committees and nine members from the Senate Military Affairs Committee. Maas, as the most senior member of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, was included.¹²³

The Woodrum Committee Hearings served as the first detailed expression of the War Department's desire for military unification. Every Congressman associated with the War Department, whether he sat on either the House or the Senate's Committee on Military Affairs, favored full unification of the armed services. Woodrum himself also favored the War Department's aim for the reorganization of American defense. Those opposed, led by former Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels, were Representatives Walter Andrews from New York, Carl Vinson from Georgia, and Melvin Maas. With the supporters of the Navy Department outnumbered, the War Department began its attempt to steamroll its agenda through the committee hearings, and perceivably into law, within

¹²³ Gordon W. Keiser, *The US Marine Corps and Defense Unification, 1944-47* (Baltimore, MD: Nautical & Aviation Publ. of America, 1996), 8.

a very short time frame.¹²⁴

The Woodrum Committee Hearings began on April 24, 1944. The Director of the War Department's Special Planning Division explained that the department had been working on efforts to unify the military services since early 1942. Citing a number of studies, the Director argued that a single defense department would help create a more economical approach to military affairs in the postwar era and the unity of command that it could provide would eliminate a number of operational difficulties then facing combat troops in Europe and the Pacific. Following the Director of Special Planning, Secretary of War Stimson testified that good will and the quality of the military leaders at the time were responsible for the successful coordination of the war up to that point, not the organizational framework in which they operated. He claimed that while this might be working in the current war, it should not be relied upon to function successfully in the future. Furthermore, Secretary Stimson stressed, the reorganization must follow the fundamentals put forward by the War Department's studies and address the details after the plan was put into place.¹²⁵

The following day, April 25, Lt. Gen. Joseph McNarney unveiled the War Department's full reorganization plan. Under this plan, the Army and the Navy would be joined by an independent Air Force under the control of a new Secretary of the Armed Forces. In addition, each of the branches would lose its cabinet level secretaries in favor of under secretaries beneath the newly established Armed Forces Secretary. The Joint

¹²⁴ Ibid., 11-12.

¹²⁵ The idea of passing the reorganization first and figuring out the details of its various complications later would remain a tenant of the War Department's argument throughout the Unification Debates.

Chiefs of Staff would be retained as an advisory element to the President, but the Marine Corps, which had no representation, remained excluded. Questions quickly arose regarding points of contention that became the hallmark of the debate surrounding unification: allocation of air assets amongst the services, the post-war role of the Marine Corps, and the War Department's intention to quickly put the plan in place and work out the details in future legislation.¹²⁶

Upon his unveiling of the War Department's plan for reorganization, Rep. Maas questioned Lt. Gen. McNarney. Convinced that the plan lacked a specific place for the Marine Corps, Maas expressed doubt concerning the General's arguments. When Maas pressed the issue of the distribution of air assets among the armed services, McNarney declined to comment and chose to defer further air related inquiries to Assistant Secretary of War for Air, Robert Lovett.¹²⁷

When Assistant Secretary Lovett testified, he pleaded for a separate air force. He believed that the proposed branch should include all land-based aerial assets, including naval aviation that was based on land. Lovett believed that combining all land-based aircraft under a single branch would save the taxpayers a tremendous amount and the force would benefit from a coordinated command structure. He contended that the Marine Corps and its amphibious operations were a duplication of the Army and that the branch should be either dissolved or relegated to guarding naval posts. After Assistant Secretary Lovett concluded his arguments for the adoption of the McNarney Plan, the

¹²⁶ Keiser, *The US Marine Corps and Defense Unification, 1944-47*, 8-20.

¹²⁷ US, Congress; House, Select Committee on Post-War Military Policy, *Hearing pursuant to H.R. 465*, 78th Cong., 2nd sess., 1944, 286-93

questioning began and was immediately taken over by Rep. Maas.¹²⁸

Relying on his extensive knowledge of airpower, naval affairs, and the Marine Corps, Maas adeptly dismantled Lovett's views of post war reorganization. Maas agreed that an independent air force should be created, but argued that the Navy must retain their control over both sea and land based aircraft responsible for successful naval operations. Maas then vehemently defended his service, the Marine Corps, and its inherent and unique value to American defense both prior to and during the Second World War. Maas's actions blunted the initial aspirations of the War Department to create a single defense department in their image.¹²⁹

After listening to more War Department advocates for unification throughout the 25th, the committee convened and met three days later, on April 28. Caught off guard and under siege by the War Department's years of planning, the Department of the Navy began its rebuttal. Undersecretary of the Navy James Forrestal argued the Navy's point of view toward the proposal, pointing out that it was dangerous to move forward with the massive reorganization under the conviction that the problems that would inevitably arise could be solved after the process began. Forrestal argued that in order to determine the best possible structural changes, detailed studies must first be conducted by the Department of the Navy and further examination of potential problems must be accounted for by the War Department, thus necessitating further research on its part.

The debate over the McNarney Plan continued throughout most of May 1944.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 94.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 295-304.

First, the Department of the Navy defended its role in the current defense system in great detail. Next, Marine Corps Commandant Alexander Vandergrift explained the importance of his service. His testimony was followed by those of other naval representatives who stressed the importance of naval aviation and the need to retain all aspects of it to remain a viable component to sea power. All of these testimonies pushed for further investigations into the potential effects, both positive and negative, of military unification. The hearings concluded on May 19 with the testimonies of Budget Director Harold Smith, Representatives James W. Wadsworth Jr., and Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, all of whom pressed for immediate unification of the armed services to increase effectiveness, lower the defense budget by cutting unnecessary duplication, and resolving internal frictions among the branches.

The same day that the Woodrum Committee Hearings concluded, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox unexpectedly died from a heart attack. James Forrestal succeeded Knox in the position. As Secretary of the Navy, Forrestal believed that due to lack of preparation, the Navy had been unable to effectively promote its views regarding reorganization. With a relatively lackluster performance by naval advocates during the hearings, Forrestal was positive that, had the issue been brought to a Congressional or public poll, the War Department would win. Were the plan to be enacted, it was possible that the War Department would push for an overall Secretary of the Armed Forces that would strip the Navy of essential assets, including a portion of its airpower and possibly the Marine Corps. In addition, Forrestal feared that the War Department's approach to the situation of unify now, work out the potential issues later, could lead to a series of organizational changes that would greatly diminish the Navy's budget and importance in

postwar defense.¹³⁰

The fight over military unification raged on for another three years, with common ground found within the National Security Act of 1947. The 1947 Act finally combined the War Department, Navy Department, and the new Air Force Department within a single Defense Department.¹³¹ The Marine Corps was included within the new organizational structure, but not guaranteed an adequate size until 1952. While the postwar Marine Corps would not have to worry about further attacks upon its existence, as it had throughout its history, such security would not have been possible without the efforts of pro-naval and Marine Corps advocates, including Rep. Melvin Maas. Using his political position as the senior member of the House Committee of Naval Affairs, years of service to the Corps, and his vast knowledge of airpower, he helped alter the course of the early unification debates during the Woodrum Committee Hearings. The path he laid down ensured that the Department of the Navy and its Marine Corps would have ample time to mount a political offensive against the War Department's vision of military reorganization. However, Maas did not participate in any further committees or debates surrounding reorganization. In fact, the Woodrum Committee was one of the last times he represented the people of Minnesota as a member of Congress.

¹³⁰ Keiser, *The US Marine Corps and Defense Unification, 1944-47*, 13.

¹³¹ Originally named the National Military Establishment.

CHAPTER EIGHT: MAAS, OKINAWA, AND THE POSTWAR RESERVES

Maas's passion for the improvement of naval affairs created friction with the Roosevelt Administration. Although Roosevelt had been a longtime supporter of the Navy, Maas was convinced that the President's treatment of the Pacific War lacked focus. Maas's disapproval of the Administration's approach to the Pacific Theater became apparent to his constituents in 1944. This stance was unpopular with the majority of voters from his district and ultimately cost the Congressman his seat in the House of Representatives. No longer attached to his legislative duties, Maas chose to rejoin his fellow marines in the final push toward victory against Japan. Despite the loss of his Congressional seat, Maas's role within the MCROA allowed him to continue to aggressively promote the Marine Corps Reserve in the postwar years. His efforts helped create the needed legislation to lay the foundations for the modern Marine Corps Reserve, finally completing his lifelong work.

Representative Maas had been a harsh critic of the Roosevelt Administration. As a member of the Naval Affairs Committee during the Interwar Period, he fought to increase funding for the Navy, specifically the Pacific Fleet. He remained a strong advocate for airpower and warned of the potential dangers that enemy air forces posed to American land bases and naval ports. In addition, he repeatedly identified the Japanese Empire as a clear and present threat to American assets in the Pacific. Maas blamed the

Administration directly for the disaster at Pearl Harbor contending that he, along with other like-minded Congressmen, had adequately warned of an impending crisis with Japan only to be ignored by the Roosevelt Administration. To compound his frustrations, Maas felt that the Pacific War was receiving far less attention from members of the Administration who concentrated their efforts in Europe, thus endangering the potential success in the Pacific Theater. Maas took advantage of his untraditional role of being both a military officer and an elected official to step beyond the chain of command of a uniformed member of the Armed Services. Even though, as a marine officer, Roosevelt was his Commander-in-chief, Maas publicly denounced the President and his handling of the war. In one instance for example, Maas stated to a reporter: “[America is] losing the Pacific [War].” He went on to add his contention that the Roosevelt Administration was intentionally deceiving the public regarding the state of the war against Japan. Maas believed that this deception was intended to retain public support for the Administration and its policies.¹³²

Maas’s public criticism of Roosevelt was met with angry letters from many of his constituents who were outraged with his claims. This is evident in a letter from the President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen in response to a October 28, 1944, speech by Maas in which he accused Roosevelt of willfully leading the US into war against Japan by intentionally leaving Pearl Harbor vulnerable to attack. In the letter, the union’s leader states: “Your statement is vicious, wholly unwarranted, is not supported by facts, and in my opinion no patriotic American citizen would stoop to such a low level as

¹³² "Losing in the Pacific, M.J. Maas Declares; Representative, a Colonel in the Marines, Charges Deception," *New York Times* (New York City), November 11, 1942.

to make a statement of that kind about the President of the United States or any other patriotic American Citizen. Let me say to you sir, that the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen resent your unholy statement and your vicious and malicious insinuations, and we have this date officially endorsed your opponent.”¹³³ Later that month, Maas told a crowd, "If you are going to vote for Roosevelt, don't vote for me."¹³⁴ The majority of his constituents heeded his ultimatum, voting him out of office on November 7, 1944. Maas was not the only politician who criticized Roosevelt during the war, but some of his more outlandish statements inferred that Roosevelt was involved in a conspiracy regarding the events of December 7, 1941. Moreover, most of the media coverage of his statements acknowledged that he was a colonel in the Marine Corps. One could conclude that this type of public criticism coming from a high ranking military officer compromised the good order and discipline of the Armed Services during the latter half of World War II. However, as bombastic as Maas's statements were, there is no evidence that Maas was ever officially reprimanded by his chain of command.

Following his political defeat, Maas applied for active duty and by the middle of May 1945 he was bound for the Pacific. Col. Maas arrived by plane at Okinawa Shima in the Ryukyus for special aviation duty with the Commander of the Naval Air Base. He later assumed command of the Kadena Airfield, the operational airbase for the 2nd Marine Air Wing, on May 25, replacing the previous commander who was suffering from combat related stress. Once in command, Maas coordinated close air support missions

¹³³ "Withdrawal of Support," Railroad Men of Minnesota to Melvin J. Maas, 1944, St. Paul, MN. P1530 Box 10, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹³⁴ Melvin J. Maas, "1944 Campaign Speech." Address, 1944. P1530 Box 11, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

against organized Japanese resistance on the island before the fighting was finally quelled on June 21. According to one report that Maas submitted, “Though actual casualties from enemy air attacks were comparatively light due to the splendid work of our fighters and the heroic part played by ships assigned near picket stations, enemy aircraft succeeded in strafing and bombing both Yontan and Kadena strips frequently.”¹³⁵ If his command of Kadena Field had been rather uneventful, his appointment to Awase Airfield on July 11 was not. There, the forty-seven year old sustained facial and leg wounds during an air assault by Japanese aircraft, thereby earning him a Purple Heart. Unfortunately, what seemed to be superficial wounds eventually had far-reaching consequences.

Maas ended his term of service at Awase on August 16, two days after the end of hostilities. For his outstanding record on Okinawa, Maas received a Legion of Merit with a Combat “V.”¹³⁶ In addition to the Legion of Merit, Maas also earned the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with four bronze stars, a World War II Victory Medal, and a Presidential Unit Citation for his service with the 2nd Marine Air Wing.¹³⁷

Commandant Vandergrift recalled Maas from Okinawa back to the United States to supervise the demobilization of over 38,000 Marine Corps officers. Once relieved of active duty, he rejoined the Marine Corps Reserve and reestablished the MCROA, which

¹³⁵ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 123.

¹³⁶ “Colonel Maas was unusually successful in solving the many varied and complex problems encountered in the organization and operation of Marine air bases. Through the medium of his sound judgement and initiative, he paved the way for the effective utilization of Marine air groups during the assault phase of the Okinawa operation. His exceptional skill and loyal devotion to duty served as an inspiration to all who contributed to the successful operation of Marine air groups against the enemy. He served with distinction throughout and his conduct was at all times in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.” “Legion of Merit Citation” P1530 Box 5, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹³⁷ “List of Awards for Melvin J. Maas.” P1530 Box 10, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

had remained in trusteeship during the war. Maas used his position as an overseer of the demobilization to try to bolster recruitment for both the Marine Corps Reserve and the MCROA.

General Vandergrift, a longtime friend of Maas, saluted the efforts of Marine Reservists during the Pacific War with a postwar commendation that stated: “During World War II, Marine Reserves constituting the bulk of the Marine Corps, had a major share in its wartime achievements. Unfailingly they demonstrated the esprit de corps which is the heritage of all Marines.”¹³⁸ Vandergrift believed that the future of the Marine Corps in the postwar era depended upon a strong partnership in which the regulars and reserves cooperated to achieve “a continuous program of military efficiency.”¹³⁹

In his role in demobilization, and as the head of the MCROA, Maas continued to use every means available to ensure that the Marine Corps Reserve maintained a high standard in the months following the end of the war. As his fellow officer and reserve activist Colonel Clark W. Thompson observed: “[Maas] pushed papers, banged desks and fought the memo battles of Marine Corps Headquarters in providing the necessary transition from a wartime to a peacetime Corps in which reservists, finally, would be trained, equipped, and provided the necessary opportunities to serve their country.”¹⁴⁰ Maas’s efforts resulted in a number of benefits for the Marine Corps Reserve and the service as a whole. New recruits and veterans alike began joining the Marine Reserve. The reserves established a well-balanced system of modern engineer, signal, artillery,

¹³⁸ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*. 82.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 83.

¹⁴⁰ Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 127.

tank, and amtrac units. Proper funding allowed these units to drill accordingly, fire on rifle ranges, and handle military vehicles as they strived to keep their skills at the peak level of alert readiness.

During the time Maas was working to ensure proper training for the reserves, he received word from his political contacts that after the National Defense Act of 1947 there were still a number of influential politicians questioning the viability of the Marine Corps in the nuclear age. With improved nuclear technologies and the growing support for the newly-founded Air Force, a strong component within both the military and Congress doubted the need for a branch of service dedicated to amphibious operations. Airpower advocates, believing in the outright devastation that could be wrought by nuclear weapons delivered from the air, concluded that a seaborne invasion of a nation that was nuclear capable would not only be impossible, but utterly disastrous if attempted. While the Marine Corps was applauded for their service against the Japanese Empire in the Pacific, a growing number of policymakers were beginning to subscribe to the idea that amphibious operations could never be conducted again.

Colonel Maas took to the pages of the MCROA's *Word* to defend the Marine Corps against its detractors and to remind those who worried for the Corps' future that the Marines were well represented on Capitol Hill: "The MCROA never wavered in its battle to ensure the integrity of the Marine Corps and to preserve its vital functions by law. Even while others in high places yielded to the pressure from the Administration and Army supporters, the MCROA stood fast and held the line."¹⁴¹ Maas continued his

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 134.

statement by pointing out how the Department of the Army used a “weasel-worded provision to the effect that the Marine Corps was not to be distributed in its relative position—whatever that meant.”¹⁴² He reminded his readers that there were twelve MCROA members in the House and Senate and that the service’s supporters could “go forward now with confidence that the Marine Corps is not going to be abolished nor whittled down by insidious campaigns from inside nor outside the other military branches.”¹⁴³

During the same period that Maas worked to improve the postwar reserves and defend the Marine Corps, he also served on a committee to help recommend new legislation relating to the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve. Acting as a Congressional advisor, he aided in the crafting of Public Law 810, the first legislative measure that provided longevity retirement pay for reserve officers who had completed duty worthy of recompense. The first marine to receive the benefits of the law was Harvey L. Miller, who had served in the regular and reserve services of both the Navy and Marine Corps for more than forty years.

Maas and the MCROA viewed the reserves as not only a vital component to having an effective Marine Corps, but also essential to its survival for nearly two decades. Their continued advocacy for the reserves had been hard fought, despite lackluster and sporadic attention for the organization from Headquarters prior to 1940. However, in 1948, as the House Appropriations Committee and members of Congress began contemplating slashing the service’s budget as a cost saving measure,

¹⁴² Ibid., 135.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 135.

Commandant Vandergrift employed the reserves for political ends. He turned to the reserves as a way to bolster the branch's numbers to both demonstrate the devotion of former marines to the Corps, and to help ensure that if a national emergency were to happen the reserves could help support an adequate response. In an appeal to marine veterans, Vandergrift stated: "We are calling upon the men whose courage helped smash the enemy at Guadalcanal, at Tarawa, at Iwo Jima, and at Okinawa, to provide an attack force to seize one more beachhead."¹⁴⁴ He pointed out the value of the reserves in the postwar era stating, "If war should come, the men of the Organized Reserve, trained in the latest tactics and techniques, and armed with the latest weapons, will be ready to join with their comrades of the Fleet Marine Force in manning the nation's first line of defense."¹⁴⁵ Between the Commandant's plea and the repeated efforts by Maas, his fellow marine reservists, and the MCROA, the Secretary of the Navy's report for 1948 fiscal year indicated that the Marine Reserve units were fully trained in basic military subjects, were supplied with adequate amounts of organizational equipment, and therefore capable of integrating into regular forces within one month.

1949 served as a decisive year for the Marine Corps and the Defense Department. After two years, the newly unified military adapted to reorganization and the advent of advances in military technology. These adjustments resulted in increasing levels of inter-service tension as budgets and strategies were reformed to confront the realities of the postwar era. As the military departments fought for larger allocations from the defense budget, the future of the Marine Corps was again called into question. Many of these

¹⁴⁴ Vandegrift, *Once a Marine*, 117.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 117.

questions were addressed at the yearly military conference held by the MCROA on January 29 in Chicago. Maas, as one of the cofounders of the MCORA, was invited to speak. When Maas reached the podium to address the gathering, which had both the Commandant and the Director of Reserve in attendance, he stated, "Never in history was there a greater need for unity, loyalty, and selfless leadership, yet we meet today faced with dissension, backbiting and, frequently, a leadership of selfishness and greed even in our own military forces. Our enemies couldn't, by design, set the stage for their purpose better than we ourselves are doing."¹⁴⁶ Maas then challenged his audience: "What do they see? Still all too much of a mad scramble to either hold blindly to outmoded traditions and weapons, or to greedily reach out and grab control of the weapons, personnel, and funds of sister military services, as if the battle were among themselves, instead of a common enemy."¹⁴⁷ He reminded the attendees that "bickering, backbiting, and sly undercutting, exaggerated claims, slurs, and ill-concealed hostility among too many professional military leaders of all ranks are causing disgust among Americans and the gleeful jubilation among our enemies."¹⁴⁸

During his discourse, Maas pointed out other hindrances to a proper American defense when he explained that this type of behavior extended into elements of the Marine Corps itself. He argued that it was counterproductive for regulars to view reservists as outsiders, and that some officers' view that the reserve battalions were full of rank seekers, and that the existence of the battalions constituted a parasite on active

¹⁴⁶ Melvin J. Maas, "MCROA Annual Conference." Address, 1949. P1530 Box 11, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

duty appropriations, weakened the service in its time of need. Reservists were not immune to Maas's criticisms either. During the address, he pointed out that too many reservists possessed a negative view of all regulars as brass hats, only interested in holding down the Marine Corps Reserves. Maas contended that much of this intra-service tension was due to "imperfections in the unification law itself" as well as to the unyielding attitudes of too many members of the service.¹⁴⁹

These imperfections with the unification law, and the dangers they posed to the future of the Corps, are famously summarized in the article "The Marine Corps Fights For Its Life," which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* on February 5, 1949. Richard Tregaskis, who had been a military correspondent embedded with the First Marine Division during World War II, describes the perilous partisanship the Corps found itself in: "Of the never-ending problems which face the Corps, the most grievous is being the Marines' struggle to survive as a fighting unit. The Marines have been the proudest, sharpest American fighting unit for the longest time, the Marine training schools seem capable of inculcating the fiercest esprit de corps—but if the Commandant and his advisers were not alert, they might awake some morning to find that the whole glorious structure had been pulverized by some legislative or administrative blitz."¹⁵⁰ Tregaskis explains that the opponents of the Marine Corps were "mostly Army and Air Force enthusiasts who have long hankered to chop the Marine Corps into nothingness—or

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Richard Tregaskis, "The Marine Corps Fights For Its Life," *Saturday Evening Post*, February 5, 1949, 11.

worst to a marine—to change it into just another army unit.”¹⁵¹ The threat to the Marine Corps was obvious throughout the first months of 1949. Army Secretary Kenneth Royal stated publicly that the Secretary of Defense should be able to transfer the Marine Corps to the Army if he saw fit, and Senator Tydings of Maryland helped by sponsoring Senate Bill 1269. The bill made Royal’s opinion on the Defense Secretary’s power a reality, and in turn placed the Marine Corps in a constant state of perpetual danger of being dissolved.

With the strong presence of Navy supporters, and the influence of MCROA members within Congress, Bill 1269 failed to make meaningful headway. Yet, as 1949 continued to unfold, the fight for the future of the Marine Corps persisted, this time directly from the top echelon of the Army, General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur had employed the Marines within his military campaigns in the South Pacific, but according to Maas, who received his Silver Star directly from the iconic general, MacArthur had spoken to him openly about wanting to absorb the service. MacArthur told Maas that he believed that bringing the Corps into the Army would introduce an injection of inimitable Marine spirit into its ranks. Maas did not share his enthusiasm, considering it as an open threat to his chosen military service.¹⁵²

Following his conversation with MacArthur, Maas, in his role as the president of the MCROA, once again took to the stage of various military conferences to defend the Corps. In October 1949, he warned a military gathering in Philadelphia:

Our history indicates, that if the Marine Corps is destroyed as a combat organization, we are likely to enter World War III largely with weapons, tactics,

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 15.

¹⁵² Zehnpfennig, *Melvin J. Maas*, 127.

and techniques developed to fight World War II. They will not be enough to win any future war. The current movement to preserve the Marine Corps as an integrated, well-equipped striking force is basically neither service rivalry nor pride in the Corps, but the deep convictions of people with knowledge that we must have what the Corps can give the nation in order to survive as a democratic nation.¹⁵³

Maas also pressed for increased Marine representation on the JCS: “The law must provide that the Commandant of the Marine Corps sit with the Joint Chiefs during consideration of amphibious matters and on all other matters affecting the Marine Corps.”¹⁵⁴

As debate over the Marine Corps’ place within the Defense Department continued to grind into 1950, Soviet-equipped Communist troops from North Korea invaded their southern neighbor. Once the United States entered the conflict, the value of the Marine Corps and its reserves were again clarified in the face of their detractors. The state of readiness of both the Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Reserve at the outbreak of war again demonstrated the importance of the exhaustive efforts of Maas and the MCROA.

When the call for mobilization came, the Marine Corps, both regular and reserves, sprung into action. Over 90% of the officers and enlisted personnel in the Marine Reserve reported for active duty within the 43-day activation period that followed the official orders issued on July 21, 1950. By the Inchon-Seoul Operations in the fall of that year, there were more marines in the Far East than there had been in the entire Fleet Marine Force two months earlier. At the end of 1951, the Marine Corps was three times its prewar size, with more than forty-five per cent of the total strength coming from the

¹⁵³ Melvin J. Maas, "National Military Conference." Address, 1949. P1530 Box 11, TS, Minnesota Historical Archives, St. Paul, MN.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. The Commandant would be placed on the JSC by the passing of Public Law 421 in late 1951.

reserve.¹⁵⁵

The strategic role of the Marine Corps, clarified by the Korean Conflict and the landings at Inchon, proved that amphibious operations were still possible in the post-World War II era, thus aiding the Marine Corps in obtaining permanent status within the Department of Defense. This was carried forward by a group of former marines, marine reservists, and members of the MCROA including Senator Paul Douglas (Illinois) and Senator Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (Montana). These pro-Marine legislators were able to secure a permanent place for the Marine Corps on June 28, 1952, as the Marine Corps Bill, Report Number 666, was signed into law by President Truman.¹⁵⁶ Colonel Tom Wert described the passing of the Marine Corps Bill as the “Magna Carta” of the service. He explained, “The Marine Corps could have been dissolved by any President by executive order. This Act, however, gave to the Marine Corps a legal standing and recognition, established a minimum strength of three divisions and three air wings and gave the Commandant membership on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The part it played in the development and enactment of this legislation has been one of the MCROA’s outstanding achievements to date for both Corps and country.”¹⁵⁷

By the end of 1952, the Marine Corps had finally secured its permanent position within American defense. Its reserve had once again proven its value as an asset to the regular force in times of service-wide mobilization. The active duty component was able to expand its ranks with well trained marine reservists, some of whom had extensive

¹⁵⁵ US Marine Corps, *The Marine Corps Reserve*, 164-180.

¹⁵⁶ Public Law 416.

¹⁵⁷ Baumgardener, ed., *United States Marine Corps Reserve Officers' Association*. 42.

combat experience, in order to meet the challenges presented to the service. While the Marine Corps Reserve continually improved throughout the following decades, Maas played a diminishing role. He had been promoted to Brigadier General on June 1, 1950, and awarded the Armed Forces Reserve Medal and the National Defense Service Medal. Upon his retirement in 1952, Maas was promoted to the rank of Major General. By the mid-1950s, complications from the facial injuries Maas sustained on Okinawa resulted in the steady loss of his sight. Before going completely blind, Maj. Gen. Maas stepped down from his position as the President of the MCROA, a post he had served in since the inception of the organization, and retired from the reserves.

Maas's blindness and retirement did not prohibit him from aiding in the development of two more pieces of legislation that finalized his lifelong endeavor to modernize the reserve forces of the United States. Acting as a legislative advisor, Maas helped draw up the provisions for the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952 and the Reserve Officer Personnel Act of 1954 in collaboration with the Armed Forces Reserve Policy Board of the Defense Department, the officers of the Reserve Officers Association, and the Executive Council of the MCROA. With the two bills passed, all reserve forces within the Department of Defense were able to practice the policies and regulations put upon them with uniformity, thus creating the beginning of the modern reserve system.

Although blind, Maas continued to serve on various advisory committees and promotion boards for the Marine Corps, and remained an active member of the MCROA for the rest of his life. With the future of the Marine Corps and the modernization of the future reserve secured, Maas turned his attentions to another equally important issue: the

treatment of the disabled. He became the spokesman for veterans and non-veterans alike who suffered from physical and mental handicaps. Maas dedicated the remainder of his life to ensure equal treatment and employment for the disabled, helping to pass the first legislative efforts for equal access and employment rights. Maas died of heart failure on April 13, 1964, and was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery three days later.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

By the 19th century, leadership within the American Armed Forces had identified the need for a modern reserve. The Department of the Navy and the War Department independently established their reserve systems before American entry into the First World War. However, these systems lacked a number of essential provisions and, in the case of the Navy and Marine Corps Reserve, resulted in a steady decline of their potential effectiveness. By the late 1920s, the Department of the Navy's alterations to its reserve programs rectified a number of the problems not addressed in the initial legislation that had created them. However, the modifications made to the Naval Reserve did not completely solve the initial shortfalls. While there is little doubt that the entire reserve system would have survived the Interwar Period, evidence suggests that it would not have been able to modernize as quickly, or as effectively, without the efforts of Melvin Maas, his unique position as marine officer and legislator, and the Marine Corps Reserve Officers Association he cofounded.

Maas's impact on the Navy and Marine Corps Reserves is undeniable. His total devotion to the Corps, developed as an enlisted during the First World War, continued during his service in the reserves. When he accepted his commission as a reserve officer, the Marine Reserve was a fledgling organization lacking proper funding and training, and unable to attract proper attention from the upper echelons of leadership. Maas identified the need for improved political representation for the reserves and subsequently

organized a special interest group, the MCROA. He used his presidency of this group in conjunction with his position as a member of Congress to advocate for the advancement of the reserves. Maas went on to garner further influence within Congress during the Interwar Period. Because the Congressman had experienced the difficulties faced by reservists first hand, he was able to utilize this personal knowledge and translate it into highly effective legislation. The legislation that Maas was able to pass throughout the course of the 1930s produced a flexible and useful Marine and Naval Reserve. Maas was a valuable political asset to the Marine Corps during the 1930s, even fending off an attack against the service's existence. He also fought to secure increased funding for the Department of the Navy, and by default the Marine Corps, and continually crusaded for the interests of national defense prior to the Second World War.

Once the war with Japan broke out, Maas chose to take a leave of absence from his Congressional duties and join his fellow marines. During his tour of duty, he conducted a number of combat missions before he was recalled to his seat in the House of Representatives by President Roosevelt. Back in Washington, Maas joined the bureaucratic fight over military reorganization—a battle that eventually granted the Marine Corps a permanent place in American defense.

Maas played a role in the initial debates surrounding the unification of the armed forces, his extensive first hand knowledge of naval operations, the Marine Corps, and American airpower, made him one of, if not the most influential member of the military committee created to examine the War Department's 1944 proposal. By quickly dispatching a number of pro-War Department advocates' testimonies early in the debates, Maas was able to weaken the initial aims of those who wished to railroad the McNarney

Plan into law before the end of World War II. As a result, he and other legislators who supported the Department of the Navy succeeded in allowing further examinations into defense unification. The debates that followed provided the Navy and the Marine Corps the needed time to counter the efforts of the War Department, eventually leading to legislation that offered a more balanced approach between all of the services.

Even after losing his seat in the House of Representatives in 1944, he fought on for an improved reserve system and the survival of the Marine Corps. By the time Maas retired from the Marine Corps in 1952, he had risen to the rank of major general and had crafted a reserve system that was adopted by all the branches of the military. The forward momentum that he created for the improvement of the reserves throughout his time in Congress continued well past the end of his political career, resulting in the modern system. Moreover, by 1952, the MCROA, an organization he helped create, had numerous members in both the House and the Senate, thus granting the Marine Corps more political sway than ever before in its history. This increased influence within the legislative branch helped the Marine Corps, once on constant guard for its continued existence, to obtain permanence through law.

Maas and his lifelong political agenda are products of the First World War. He, along with thousands of other young American men, abruptly left their civilian life to serve their country and prove themselves in the face of combat. His choice of service forged him into a dedicated marine and an advocate for the Department of the Navy. During his service, Maas witnessed the emergence of the aircraft as a weapon of war and his experiences within one of the first marine aviation squadrons altered his vision of the future of warfare and American military might. Furthermore, Maas's commissioning into

the Marine Corps Reserve in the decade following World War I illuminated the seriousness of the issues facing the early reserve system and helped him recognize the potential importance of a well-trained, regulated, and administered reserve system to American defense.

Maas was elected to the House of Representatives a few short months after becoming a Marine Reserve officer. Utilizing his first-hand knowledge of the Marine Corps, military aviation, and the reserve program, he proceeded to campaign for the strengthening of all three during the Interwar Period—a period marked by military innovation of thought and technology, but also a period burdened with a severe economic downturn. Undaunted by the political and economic atmosphere of his times, Maas used his growing political clout and the MCROA to help provide for a well-financed Navy Department, improved airpower within the services, and the development of a flexible and effective naval reserve component that could be called into service should the need arise.

World War II demonstrated the need and effectiveness of all three aspects of Maas's political agenda. The Marine Corps and an empowered Department of the Navy defeated Japan in the Pacific War, airpower became an indispensable aspect of combat operations, and the reserve components of all the services proved themselves to be a vital asset to the war effort. Therefore, Maas's support of the issues he viewed as important, based off his experiences in and directly following the First World War, were realized in the following global conflict. His fight for political advancement of them aided in America's successful participation in World War II.

In the years following the Second World War, membership and the political clout of the MCROA rose dramatically. This burgeoning membership included members of Congress who, like Maas, were active within both the Marine Corps Reserve and civilian government. During the Cold War, the MCROA and other pro-military special interest groups advocated for increased military funding and for the allocation of funds to specific services. It is important to note that while the MCROA, and other groups like it, are an effective method for the armed services to generate political momentum, it does beg the question of the dangers of allowing the armed services to infiltrate civilian government with their own pro-military agenda. However, regardless of the dangers this infiltration may potentially pose to a properly functioning democracy, it is undeniable that Maas's support for the modernization of the reserve forces of the United States military was of great benefit to American defense and the American people during the time period in which he was politically active. The Marine Corps Reserve and the foundations of the modern American reserve system stand as a testament to Maas's unwavering support of not only their modernization, but to his vision of American Defense.

The Marine Corps Reserve has played and continues to play a vital role within the Marine Corps, and the efforts of Melvin Maas needs to be better represented in the larger narrative of American military history. The reserves afford the Marine Corps the ability to maintain a potential force size that would be fiscally impractical otherwise, thus granting greater strategic flexibility. This flexibility was first demonstrated in 1940 and then again in 1950. While the conflict in Vietnam did not require the activation of a large number of reserve units, the maintenance of reserve forces across all branches of military service remained a key aspect to Cold War planning. It was not until the end of the Cold

War and the outbreak of the First Gulf War that a large call up of reserve forces occurred. The 4th Marine Division, the reserve division of the Marine Corps organized in the 1960s, was almost entirely called into service. Other reserve components of Army, Air Force, and Navy, and the National Guard were also employed during Operation Desert Shield/Storm. These units, which so greatly benefited from the efforts of Maas and other pro-reserve advocates, performed their duties in a highly professional manner and in full conjunction with their active duty counterparts. This was again the case in the Second Gulf War in 2003. Both instances demonstrate the usefulness of properly managed reserve forces to rapidly increase the size and projective strength of the American military.

The 2003 conflict with Iraq proved that modernized reserve forces are also essential to prolonged military engagements and occupations. The Marine Corps, along with the other branches of the military, relied on reserve and guard forces to relieve their active duty counterparts. The option presented by the modern reserve system allowed for more rest and recuperation of active duty units and prolonged the time between deployments for units that saw multiple rotations into country. The same can be said about the war in Afghanistan, although not to quite the scale of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Should the nation again decide to employ its military en masse during the ongoing War on Terror, or in another international conflict, it will more than likely call on some, if not a large majority, of its reserve forces to project American military might. Thus, the reserve forces of the American military are an essential aspect to future military planning and the execution of those plans. Considering this, the development of the American military's reserve system is crucial to understanding the current state of military affairs.

Furthermore, an understanding of the rise of the modern reserve system cannot be achieved without the recognition of the contributions of Melvin J. Maas to the Marine Corps Reserve.

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APPENDIX

Timeline of Key Marine Corps Reserve Legislation up to 1940

- 23 August 1892- Naval Appropriations Act (approved 19 July 1892): This act allows for the formal creation of federally recognized Naval Militias. Seven states elect to create a Naval Militia. A portion of those states also elect to create Marine Militias.
- 12 April 1914- Navy Department General Order No. 93: Establishes a Division of Naval Militias Affairs within the Department of the Navy.
- 16 February 1914- Naval Militia Act of 1914 Passed: This act hands over control of the Naval Militias, including Marine Militias, from the individual states to the Department of the Navy.
- November 1914- First Marine Corps Reserve Unit unofficially founded: The Marine Corps creates its first reserve unit out of the the Massachusetts Marine 1st Company, originally a Marine Militia Unit. They do so without legislative authority
- 10 July 1915- General Orders 93 and 153: Define the organization of Marine Militia Units.
- 29 August 1916- Marine Corps Reserve Act Passed: Officially creates the Marine Corps Reserve and places all of the Marine Militia Units under the control of the Corps. This Act also creates the Marine Corps Reserve Flying Corps.
- 31 August 1916- General Order 231: Establishes the Marine Corps Reserve within the Marine Corps.
- 6 April 1917- US Declaration of War against the Germany. USMC and USMCR called into service with the AEF.
- 28 February 1925- Reserve Act of 1925: Replaces the Marine Corps Reserve Act of 1916.
- 10 November 1926- Marine Corps Reserve Officer's Association created.
- 25 June 1938- Naval Reserve Act of 1938: Replaces the Reserve Act of 1925.

8 September 1938- Limited National Emergency declared.

5 October 1940- Dispatch from the Secretary of the Navy issued. Alert for potential call up of the Marine Reserve.

15 October 1940- Circular Letter 369 issued. All 23 reserve battalions called into active service.