

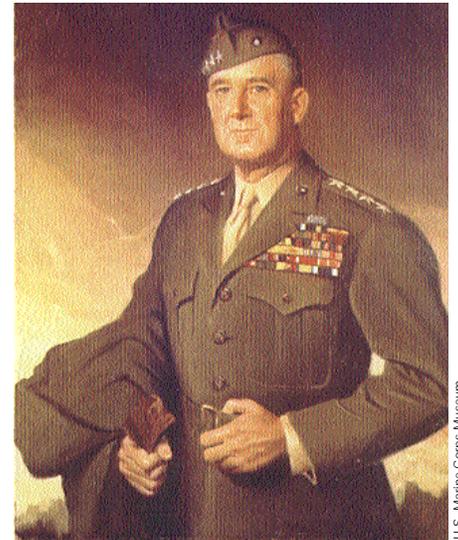
General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC

(1887–1973)

Commandant of the Marine Corps

VITA

Born in Charlottesville, Virginia. Graduated from University of Virginia; commissioned (1909). Attended Marine Officers' School, Port Royal, South Carolina. Assigned to Marine barracks, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Participated in capture of Coyotepe, Nicaragua, and occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico. Assigned to 1st Brigade and participated in action against Cacos bandits at LeTrou and Fort Capois, Haiti (1914). Member of Haitian Constabulary at Port-au-Prince; served with *Gendarmerie d'Haiti* as inspector of constabulary (1916–19). Assistant chief of staff, Marine Corps base, San Diego (1926); operations and training officer, 3^d Brigade, Tientsin, China (1927). Assistant chief coordinator, Bureau of Budget (1928). Assistant chief of staff, G-1 section, Fleet Marine Force, Quantico. Commanding officer, Marine detachment, American Embassy, Peiping, China (1935). Assistant to Major General Commandant, Headquarters Marine Corps (1940). Detached to 1st Marine Division prior to outbreak of World War II (1941). First commanding general to leave U.S. shores to lead 1st Marine Division; reinforced in Solomon Islands (1942). Received Medal of Honor during defense of Solomons (1942). Assumed command of 1st Marine Amphibious Corps; commanded landing at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville (1943). Returned to Washington as Commandant-designate; sworn in as 18th Commandant (1944–46). First Marine Corps officer on active duty to attain four-star rank (1945). Died at Bethesda, Maryland.



Portrait of General Vandegrift by Bjorn Egeli.

U.S. Marine Corps Museum

HEADQUARTERS, FIRST MARINE AMPHIBIOUS CORPS IN THE FIELD

15 October, 1943.

MEMORANDUM TO: All Hands.

1. The forward movement of our enemy in the Pacific has been stopped. More recently he has been forced to give up, at great cost in men and material, positions of great value to his campaign. His ships no longer appear in great force in these waters, his aircraft is becoming more cautious, and many of his soldiers and sailors admit they are no match for us. Nevertheless, he will fight desperately for his last hold in the Solomons.
2. The First Marine Amphibious Corps, composed of fighting men of the United States and of New Zealand, has been chosen to drive him completely out of the Solomons. It will not be an easy task but, as in the past, our squads can give and take punishment better and longer than his squads. This we are prepared to do. Our supporting air and naval forces are prepared to strike him with vastly greater blows than ever before. The first of these blows has already been delivered.
3. It has been my privilege to assume command at this time. The day is set and we are ready. Be alert, and when the enemy appears, shoot calmly, shoot fast, and shoot straight.

A.A. VANDEGRIFT,
Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps,
Commanding.