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**Corps Values,  
Principles Are  
Key to His Success:**  
Marine and  
Philanthropist  
**TIMOTHY T. DAY**



*Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel  
National Museum of the Marine Corps*

A Publication of the Marine Corps Association & Foundation



COURTESY OF TIMOTHY T. DAY

# A Foundation for Success

## Tim Day's Support of the Corps Stems From His Pivotal Marine Experience

By Sara W. Bock

*Marine veteran Timothy T. Day, whose foundation generously supports not only the Marine Corps Association & Foundation's Commanders' Forum Program, but also a wide variety of other programs and organizations that positively impact the Corps, spoke with Leatherneck's Sara W. Bock for an exclusive interview, during which he shared how his experiences as a Marine officer set him up for success and why it's important to him to give back to Marines.*

When Captain Tim Day separated from active duty in 1962, he may have thought that his service to the Marine Corps had come to an end.

In a way it had, but while that chapter of his life was over and he would no longer don the uniform, his unwavering dedication to supporting his fellow Marines had only just begun.

For Day, whose three years as a Marine officer propelled him toward an MBA from Harvard Business School and an extraordinarily successful career as an entrepreneur, giving back to the Corps is an integral part of his identity. After all, he says, that's where it all began.

"The Marine Corps had an enormous impact on my core values, my personal traits and my character," said Day, the founder and former CEO of Bar-S Foods Co., a Phoenix, Ariz.-based meat processing company, where he today remains involved as chairman of the board. "That influence still guides my actions even to this day."

From that influence stems an exemplary level of loyalty to the Corps, and the Timothy T. Day Foundation, run by Day and his wife, Sandy, is primarily dedicated to Marines and to programs and organizations that directly support Marines—particularly through education. As one of the Corps' most generous benefactors, he has received recognitions

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that include the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation's John A. Lejeune Award for Exemplary Leadership; the Semper Fidelis Award from the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation; and the Marine Corps Association Foundation's Chesty Puller Award.

After only a few minutes of chatting with Day, it's more than evident that he doesn't provide monetary support in a quest for social prestige or recognition, but because he truly believes in the transformative power of the Marine Corps experience.

For as long as he can remember, Day felt drawn to the Marine Corps. Maybe it was the uniforms or the recruiting posters, he said—or perhaps the long history of valor. There was something about Marines that made him aspire to join their ranks. Every Marine he knew during his adolescent years was sharp, squared-away, physically and mentally fit, decisive and action-oriented.

"They stood tall. They were self-confident. They were fiercely proud, and I wanted to possess those qualities," Day said.

Midway through his freshman year at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., Day returned to his family's home in Brooklyn, N.Y., for Christmas. Having reached the age of 18, he was now eligible to attend a Yuletide Ball, which he described as the premier social event in Brooklyn at the time. Decked out in evening clothes and acting as an escort for a young debutante, Day was feeling pretty distinguished and proud of himself until a young Marine lieutenant entered the room



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in his dress blues and a hush fell over the crowd.

"He stood out from all of the other people—hundreds of other men in that room. He was someone with a clear and serious purpose—a leader and a warrior. That made a huge impression on me, and I had a self-deflating moment when I looked at him and I realized that I was still just a kid. ... While I had always wanted to be a Marine, that evening sort of crystallized my determination—now I knew for sure that I wanted to be a Marine officer," Day said.

**Above: From the left, BGen (sel) Frank Donovan; BGen George Smith; BGen Steve Sklenka; Tim Day; Ranjay Gulati, chair of the Advanced Management Business School; BGen Kevin Killea; Col William Bowers; and BGen (sel) Robert Sofge together at the Evening Parade at Marine Barracks Washington, Aug. 22, 2014. All six active-duty officers are past recipients of the Day Foundation's Executive Education Fellowship.**

**Left: Pictured here in 1960, Day wears his dress blues proudly. His experiences as an artillery officer in the Marine Corps taught him valuable lessons that he continues to carry with him today.**



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Timothy T. Day, PLC



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**Above:** In 1975, Day was named president of Cudahy Company, a subsidiary of General Host. He later would lead a buyout of Cudahy and become the founder of Bar-S Foods.

His ambition and determination paid off.

Several months later, in 1956, Day signed up to attend the Platoon Leaders Class (PLC) at Marine Corps Officer Candidates School. By 1959, he had completed two summers at OCS; graduated from Wesleyan, where he had majored in mathematics; was commissioned as a second lieutenant; and found himself at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., to attend The Basic School. There, he was strongly encouraged to become an artillery officer, because in those days, all calculations were done by hand, making a mathematician like him perfect for the job. Besides, he liked the idea of having lots of opportunities to fire live rounds. After completing artillery school, he was assigned to MCB Twentynine Palms, Calif., where he became the commander of 1st Gun Platoon, “Charlie” Battery, a 155 mm howitzer battery.

He recalled spending nearly 24 hours a day with his Marines, and that type of “close-quarters leadership” had a significant impact on him. After about a year, he was assigned as the executive officer of the battery, a billet above his rank, based on his platoon’s high performance. The battery’s commander, Major Charles A. Webster, proved to be an important mentor in then-First Lieutenant Day’s life, and the opportunity to help the major run the battery gave Day a glimpse of his future.

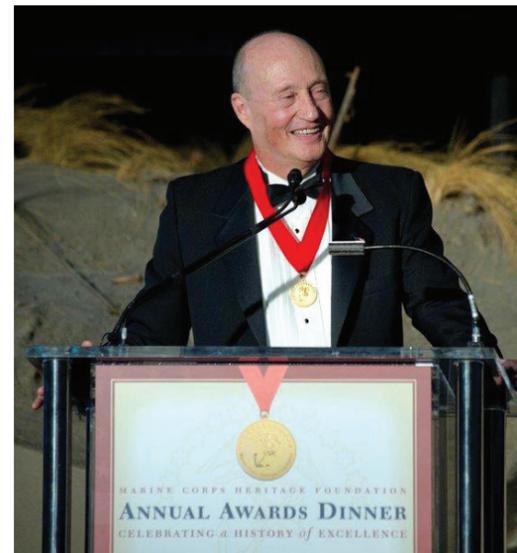
“That was a great experience in building up my self-confidence and belief that I had a bright future, not only in the Marine Corps, but whatever path I chose to pursue,” Day said of his tour at Twentynine Palms.

The path he eventually took led him away from the Corps and into the civilian sector in 1962. He was ready to face his next challenge: Harvard Business School, where he earned his MBA in 1964.

“My Marine Corps training really helped prepare me to take on Harvard Business School,” said Day. He entered the highly esteemed MBA program with confidence and a commitment to excellence, and relied on the hard work and perseverance the Corps had inculcated in him. Those traits were the cornerstone of his eventual success.

Day began his professional career in New York, working in finance for Trans World Airlines, and in 1968, he joined General Host, where he eventually was named executive vice president, as well as president of the corporation’s largest subsidiary, Cudahy Co., in Phoenix.

In 1981, Day led a “management-leveraged buy-out” of General Host’s processed meat operations and founded Bar-S Foods Co., a new company in which he was able to establish his own style of leadership and organizational culture. The endeavor of building a new entity from the “ground up” was arduous, but again, Day credits the Marine Corps



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with setting him up for success and giving him a level of leadership training that he considers to be unparalleled in the civilian world.

“I think the training that Marines have, the mental and physical toughness, the willingness to persevere in the face of great adversity ... and the commitment to excel are vital to the entrepreneurial process,” Day said.

Not only did his Marine Corps training prepare him for the difficulties he initially faced in leading a “start-up” like Bar-S, but it also gave Day an understanding of the importance of esprit de corps. He worked hard, he said, to build a strong culture within the company that would endure even the most challenging of times.

In 2010, after nearly three decades of successful leadership during which time Bar-S developed into a premier company and value leader in the meat processing industry, Day sold his company to a major international food corporation, but agreed to stay on for two years as CEO. He wanted to protect his legacy and those who had worked for him and, at the same time, help the newly formed enterprise continue down a path of prosperity. As a result, he was able to effectively integrate the two organizations and ensure that the merger wouldn’t destroy the great business he had built. Today, he continues to serve as chairman of the board of what now is known as Bar-S Foods—a Sigma company.

The sale of Bar-S allowed Day and Sandy to devote their time and energy to growing the Timothy T. Day Foundation, which they had established as a conduit to share their success. They quickly decided that they wanted their foundation to have a very narrow focus and support the two groups that are most meaningful to them. First, the Marine Corps, and secondly, the animal rescue community.

All four of Day’s adult children, Eric Gleason, Leslie Pellillo, Timothy T. Day Jr. and Bryan Day,



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serve on the foundation’s board of directors.

Day became a founder of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation in 2002. He was drawn to the conceptualization of the Marine Corps Heritage Center, which would be made up of the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Semper Fidelis Memorial Park. At the time, it was just a vision. He knew it was an important endeavor, he said, but it turned out to be far more significant than even he could have imagined. As he watched the vision unfold, he said, his foundation increased its contributions.

Today, the Timothy T. Day Foundation is the largest financial backer of the museum, having funded the Tarawa exhibit in the main gallery and the construction of the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel. He committed \$12 million to create the Timothy T. Day Overlook at the Heritage Center, as well as help fund the museum’s current expansion project. It’s something Day is intensely proud to have aligned himself with, for more reasons than one.

“It’s a great museum, and it clearly has an enormous impact on Marines—and celebrates our long history and heritage in a very professional and world-class manner. Perhaps equally important, I think it also presents to the young people who may be considering service, an impressive visualization of the contributions the Marine Corps has made to this nation,” Day said.

But his charitable disposition toward the Corps has not been limited to the museum. In 2005, Day devised a way to support Marines and to help his alma mater, Harvard Business School, at the same time. He set up the Timothy T. Day Marine Corps Entrepreneur Fellowship, which provides financial support to highly qualified Marine officers, particularly those who have served in combat zones, who have left active-duty service to pursue an MBA at Harvard.

“Entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of the U.S.

**Above left:** Tim Day addresses the crowd at the 2012 Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Awards ceremony after being presented with the John A. Lejeune Award for Exemplary Leadership. The opportunity to speak to Marines is something that he particularly enjoys.

**Above right:** During the Dec. 6, 2014, private dedication ceremony for the Timothy T. Day Overlook, Day shared some inspirational words with the attendees inside the Semper Fidelis Memorial Chapel at the Marine Corps Heritage Center.



**The Timothy T. Day Overlook, located in the Semper Fidelis Memorial Park on the grounds of the Marine Corps Heritage Center in Triangle, Va., was formally dedicated on March 27, 2015. The overlook allows visitors to view the beauty of the museum and chapel from an elevated location.**

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**Tim Day, center, reunites with some of the Harvard Business School Entrepreneur Fellowship recipients at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball in Phoenix, Ariz., in November 2011.**

economy,” Day said, adding that he believes that Marines have a propensity for the qualities that are crucial for success in business.

During the first year of his fellowship program, Captain Sarah Ford was selected as the recipient followed the next year by Capt Nathaniel Fick, author of “One Bullet Away: The Making of a Marine Officer.” Day decided early on that he didn’t want to merely provide the funds for their education. He also wanted to offer his guidance and mentorship to each of them individually.

And it was during a brainstorming session with Marine entrepreneur fellows that a new idea was developed: to create another fellowship at Harvard Business School, one that would send active-duty Marine officers to attend the Advanced Management Program, an intensive eight-week course designed for senior executives.

He convinced Harvard Business School to hold one seat per class, which is made up of about 180 students, for a senior Marine officer—a colonel or brigadier general—who could meet the level of intellect and experience of the other executives in attendance.

Next, Day went to see General James F. Amos, then-Commandant of the Marine Corps, and asked him if he would be interested in sending officers to take part in the program.

“He came back very quickly and said, ‘We’re in,’” recalled Day of Gen Amos’ enthusiastic response.

The Timothy T. Day Executive Education Fellowship was born in 2011, and Lieutenant Colonel

Robert Sofge was selected as its first recipient.

“Initially I was worried, the Marine Corps was worried, and Harvard was worried—how were these Marine officers going to perform at this school? They obviously would not be experienced in reading P&Ls [profit and loss reports] and balance sheets, or preparing marketing plans,” Day said. “How are they going to function in this environment, which was really designed to build global leaders?” he recalled thinking to himself.

“Our concerns were unwarranted,” Day said, because the Marines who have received the fellowship and graduated from the Advanced Management Program have done exceptionally well. Several of them have been selected as the honor student and have given the graduation speech at the end of the program.

By 2013, Gen Amos and his wife, Bonnie, had been invited to go speak at the program—not once, but twice. The 35th Commandant developed such a positive relationship with Harvard Business School that they approached him about sending two Marines rather than one per eight-week class, which are held twice annually.

Without hesitation, Day stepped in and offered to provide the funds to make it happen. And his MBA fellowship program also has expanded to two recipients per year. To date there have been 15 Entrepreneur Fellowship recipients and 16 Executive Education Fellowship recipients, and they regularly reunite and spend time with Tim and Sandy at their homes in Arizona, California and Wyoming.

“We’re very, very humbled and proud to be associated with these Marines,” Day said of the fellowship program and of its recipients, who over the years have become like family to him and to each other. In fact, as the fellowship group has expanded, both current and former recipients have affectionately nicknamed themselves “the Tribe.”

In 2012, the Day Foundation established the Day Scholars Program in partnership with the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation. The program not only provides its recipients—high-potential high school students who are children of Marines and have a military interest—with financial aid, but also with mentorship, which is a practice that Day clearly values.

He also has supported the Marine Corps University Foundation for a number of years and, most recently, worked with one of his Executive Education Fellowship recipients, Colonel Frank Donovan, the director of Expeditionary Warfare School, to implement the case method of instruction, pioneered by Harvard Business School, into the curriculum of the 40-week resident course for company-grade Marine Air-Ground Task Force officers. The concept is to present students with a case study of actual events and allow them to make decisions, exchange ideas and devise a course of action as a sound method to teach leadership. The case method has been so successful at EWS, Day said, that it now is being considered for other Marine Corps educational programs as well.

With a passion for helping provide education for active-duty Marines, Day began supporting the Marine Corps Association Foundation’s Commanders’ Forum Program in 2015. Based on the belief that studying the Corps’ heritage and history helps Marines grow as tactical decision makers and leaders, the program funds battlefield studies and guest speakers for Marine units.

Another Marine Corps-related organization that Day’s foundation is involved in is the Semper Fi Fund.

“Marines were just starting to come back from Iraq and it was heartbreaking,” Day said, recalling the early 2000s when he first partnered with the fund. “We felt we had to find a way to help.”

He and Sandy came up with the perfect idea—one that would combine their passion for both Marines and animals. The Tim and Sandy Day Canine Companion Program was born, and it provides service dogs for those servicemembers whose lives have been forever changed due to combat wounds.

“We believe having a loving dog, a dog that will give you unconditional love and will be with you at all times, is part of the healing process,” Day said.

Whether he’s supporting wounded warriors or funding vital educational opportunities, one thing is clear: he genuinely cares about the well-being of the individual Marine. And for those who serve for a few years and then move on to other things, just as he did, he has a few words of advice.

The first is to take advantage of benefits like the GI Bill that will help them further their education



RON LUNN

**MajGen Edward G. Usher III, USMC (Ret), left, the president and CEO of MCA&F, presents Tim Day with the Chesty Puller Award in recognition of his foundation’s support of initiatives like the Commanders’ Forum Program. The presentation took place during MCA&F’s Marine Week Phoenix Luncheon at the Arizona Country Club, Sept. 11, 2015.**

and meet their career goals. He advises them to have a written plan with clear objectives and a list of “action steps” that will help them meet those objectives. Then, they should look for Marines who have some sort of experience in the field that they’re interested in and take advantage of the power of networking.

“Marines are always willing to support each other,” he said, adding that with that support, one should move forward with commitment and determination which he believes is built into the Marine personality.

It was during his time in the Marine Corps that Tim Day learned the importance of what he calls “visible leadership.” Leading from the front, leading by example, he says, and gaining people’s confidence, trust, respect and commitment can have an enormous impact on any organization’s performance.

From platoon commander to CEO to philanthropist, Tim Day is living proof that you don’t have to be a “career Marine” to leave a lasting legacy. Once a Marine, always a Marine.



**From the left, Gen James F. Amos, the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, Bonnie Amos, Sandy Day and Tim Day visit with each other during the 2012 Marine Corps Heritage Foundation Awards Ceremony at the National Museum of the Marine Corps where Day was presented with the John A. Lejeune Award for Exemplary Leadership.**



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