

May 6, 1944

[Talk to Guards at Hobcaw]

FDR Speech File

CONFIDENTIAL

Informal Remarks Of The President
To The Marine Guard Detachment
At Bernard Baruch's Plantation "Hobcaw Barony"
May 6, 1944, at 7.35 p.m., e.w.t.

I just want to say a word of thanks to you all.

Thank you for having made it very safe and comfortable for us here for the past four weeks. I didn't know there were many of you here. Some of you kept out of sight very successfully. Around the house down there, I had absolute silence, no games or other things going on. You were apparently told to maintain absolute silence while on duty; and you did.

I do want to say one thing, a thing that perhaps you don't know. It's a dreadful thing to say in the presence of these high-ranking officers of the Army and the Navy. That is, the Marines are my very special outfit, and for a very good reason too.

In the last war, I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. At that time, in the Navy Department, the Secretary of the Navy didn't have charge of the Marines. The Assistant Secretary did. And so, from 1913 to 1920 I was in complete control of the Marine Corps. The Corps grew in those days from the enormous size of about fifteen thousand, as I remember, to up to a hundred thousand.

And now look at it! I was very proud of them then. I am still proud of them. I am still proud that I had charge of the Marine Corps for eight years. I went abroad on a destroyer in 1918, and saw a good deal of the fine work the

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This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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Marines were doing in France. That gave me a very excellent reason to be proud of the Marines. I saw them on the whole length of our line in Northern France. I saw them at Chateau Thierry. I saw the Marines up on the Rhine. After the war, I went back again. And so, as you can well imagine, I know something about the Marines.

It is good to have seen you down here. I understand some of you have been overseas. It's a great experience any time you go overseas -- east or west. One thing we didn't have in France was ticks or chiggers. That is the only thing I have against South Carolina.

I wish I could have stayed longer. I hope everything goes all right from now on. Can't promise you when the war will end, but we all hope it will be soon.

Good luck to you all.

(reported by W. M. Rigdon, Lieut(jg) USN)

PRESIDENT'S TALK TO MARINE GUARD DETACHMENT AT "HOBSCAN",
SATURDAY, MAY 6th, 1944, 7:35 p.m.

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I do want to say one thing. A thing that perhaps you don't know. It's a dreadful thing to say in the presence of these high ranking officers of the Army and the Navy. That is, the Marines are my very special outfit. And for a very good reason too. In the last war I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. At that time in the Navy Department the Secretary of the Navy didn't have charge of the Marines. The Assistant Secretary did. And so, from 1913 to 1920 I was in complete control of the Marine Corps. The Corps grew in those days from the enormous size of about 15,000, as I remember, to up to 100,000. And now look at it! I was very proud of them then. I am still proud of them. I am still proud that I had charge of the Marine Corps for eight years. I went abroad on a destroyer in 1918. Saw a good deal of the fine work the Marines were doing in France. That gave me a very excellent reason to be proud of the Marines. I saw them on the whole length of our line in Northern France. I saw them at Chateau Thierry. I saw the Marines up on the Rhine. After the war I went back again. And so, as you can well imagine, I know something about the Marines.

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Reported by

William M. Rigdon,
Lieut(jg), U.S.N.