



**A&E® Television Presents:
Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company
An original documentary**

The War in Iraq is perhaps the most controversial American debate of the early 21st century. Coalition men and women are fighting proudly and giving their lives for the greater good of American and freedom. The Marine company that suffered from the highest casualty rate in the Iraq War was Lima Company from Columbus, Ohio. Of 189 total Lima Marines deployed to Iraq, 59 received purple hearts, 23 of which were awarded posthumously. Regardless of one's opinion on the War in Iraq, President Bush's administration, or American politics, it is clear that the men and women who defend the right for Americans and Iraqis to express their opinions freely are true heroes.

Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company carefully traverses the dangerous and often heartbreaking road of modern warfare through the eyes of extremely brave and devoted United States Marines. With extraordinary access to photographs and footage – shot by the soldiers themselves – as well as with the participation of families of the marines, this documentary shows the real colors of war. The heroic men and women of Lima Company witnessed the deaths of friends and loved ones, but together carried on to prevail in some of the most important logistical missions in the War in Iraq. Back home, parents, wives and children of these Marines have had their lives changed forever. Through it all, an Ohio community and countless others have been brought together in pride and grief. This documentary offers a powerful testament to the strength and courage of ordinary people living and fighting under the extraordinary circumstances of war.

Curriculum Links

Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company would be useful for high school and mature middle school classes in American History, Current Events, and Military History. **Note – some scenes within the documentary depict real-life combat and may be too

graphic for some students. Educators should screen the documentary before showing it to their class to ensure that it is appropriate for students in their particular classroom.

Vocabulary

Using the dictionary at www.merriamwebster.com, an internet resource such as www.google.com, or an encyclopedia, students should define or explain the significance of the following terms. **Note that the abbreviated terms are military terms and should be searched for on the internet accordingly.

Al-Anbar Province	I.E.D	Rules of Engagement
Chain of Command	Incendiary	Shi'ite
Donald Rumsfeld	Insurgent	Sunni
Humvee	Kevlar	Track

Comprehension Questions

1. What is a purple heart? Why is it significant that the marines of Lima Company received 59 purple hearts in one tour in Iraq?
2. What was Hadithah Dam? Why was it important to the American military to control it? What purpose did it serve for the Iraqi people?
3. Lima saw a lot of death in its tour in Iraq. How do its soldiers deal with stress of combat and death? Does it appear to interfere with their job?
4. Operations like New Market came and went, but the loss of life still remains. Who was "Superman" and what did this nickname tell you about the soldiers who reported to him? How does this nickname reflect the way "families" develop among soldiers in combat?
5. Why did PFC Dixon's mother leave his room untouched after he was killed in action in Iraq? What do you think mothers face when sending their child to war?
6. What did you notice throughout all the interviews with the soldiers during the program? Be sure to discuss their demeanor, mannerisms, emotions, respectfulness etc.
7. What do you think was the scariest part of the war for Lima soldiers? What would be the scariest part of the war for you?
8. Write down 10 adjectives describing the Marines of Lima Company and explain why these words describe the soldiers of this brave company.
9. What did you think of the soldiers' comments about their homecoming parade? Do you think it would have been the same if Lima Company had not suffered so many casualties? Explain why Lima deserved such an astounding welcome home.
10. After watching the documentary, do you notice any lingering resentment about the War in Iraq from the soldiers? Should there be lingering resentment? What can be done to help the soldiers if they feel this way?

Quick Facts about the Marines Corps

DID YOU KNOW that women make up 6% of the total force in the United States Marine Corps?

WERE YOU AWARE that *Semper Fidelis*, the Marine Corps motto commonly referred to as *Semper Fi*, means “always faithful?” It is part of the saying, “faithful to our nation, to each other, to the cause we serve.”

IT IS TRUE that the eagle, globe, and anchor insignia is the official Marine Corps symbol that adorns every Marine Corps flag and uniform. It was established in 1868 and has been unaltered since that year.

Extended Activities

Supporting Heroes

American soldiers make sacrifices so that civilians can enjoy their liberties. Oftentimes, this forces soldiers to be away from home and their loved ones for an extended period of time. As a class or in smaller groups, contact the closest military base to your area and start actively supporting a company or platoon of soldiers who are serving overseas. You can design artwork, send cards, donate small items reminding the soldiers of home and most importantly of all, make a worthy effort that shows the soldiers you appreciate their efforts and thank them for service to America.

Getting Involved

Whether someone helps a nation, a community or just another person, making a difference in the world is important. Giving back to a country, community, place or person shows generosity, respect and appreciation for those around you. Whether it is volunteering at a local soup kitchen, participating in Habitat for Humanity®, supporting your local veteran’s chapter, cleaning up your local park or fundraising for an admirable cause, every person should attempt to make a difference in the lives of others. Whether you participate in this endeavor as a whole class, a small group or just on your own, write a 2-3 page essay describing the experiences you had while contributing to the greater good of society.

Understanding Internal Strife

The War in Iraq has been a controversial issue since its inception in 2003. Over three years later, the war has grown out of control, as internal sectarian violence has become widespread. American forces face impending violence as roadside bombs and ambushes on soldiers and civilians alike are commonplace in Iraq. On your own, research the relationship between Sunnis and Shi’ites and in a 3-5 page paper, discuss the relevance of it in the War in Iraq. Why do you think sectarian violence has spiraled out of control under the American occupation?

Understanding the Principles of the Marine Corps through Music

The United States Marine Corps is the best fighting force in the world – it has the best soldiers, the best attitude and the greatest devotion to country. The Marine Corps holds closely a few phrases – lead by *Semper Fidelis* meaning “always faithful” – as well as its official hymn. Go to the following website and listen to the hymn as you read along with its lyrics below: <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/lyrics/marine.htm>. After listening and reading, answer the questions underneath the lyrics.

*From the Halls of Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
of United States Marine.*

*Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in ev'ry clime and place
Where we could take a gun;*

*In the snow of far-off Northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job--
The United States Marines.*

*Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines.*

1. What do you think these lyrics mean to the Marines? Is there lots of symbolism within the stanzas?
2. Can you better understand *Semper Fi* after reading and hearing the hymn? If so, choose a specific phrase that helps you understand it better and explain why it helps.
3. Describe the lyrics in this hymn. Pick out a certain stanza or line and write a paragraph describing its significance.
4. What do you think of the United States Marine Corps? How are your thoughts perpetuated by the lyrics in this hymn?
5. Research the places mentioned in the lyrics. What happened there? Why would these places in particular be mentioned in this meaningful hymn?

Additional Resources

Websites

Army Times article on *Combat Diary: The Marines of Lima Company*:
<http://www.armytimes.com/story.php?f=1-213098-1823257.php>

History of the United States Marine Corps: www.history.usmc.mil/

The Marine Corps Official Website for recruiting: www.marines.com

The Marine Corps website for news and updates from current marines:
<http://www.usmc.mil>

The website for Quantico, Virginia's famous Marine Corps "playground:"
<http://www.quantico.usmc.mil/>

Books

Carrison, Dan and Rod Walsh. *Semper Fi: Business Leadership the Marine Corps Way*. American Management Association, 1998.

Crawford, John. *The Last True Story I'll Ever Tell: An Accidental Soldier's Account of the War in Iraq*. Riverhead Hardcover, 2005.

Murray, Williamson and Robert H. Scales Jr. *The Iraq War: A Military History*. Belknap Press, 2005.

Pritchard, Tim. *Ambush Alley: The Most Extraordinary Battle of the Iraq War*. Presidio Press, 2005.

Tomajczyk, S.F. *To Be a U.S. Marine*. Zenith Press, 2004.



Nighttime operations in Iraq. The Marines and the U.S. Armed Forces are aided by technologies such as night vision.