

Le·jeune

lə'dʒurn, -'ʒɔːrn

- Spelled

Pronunciation[|uh-

zhɔːrn]

HONOR COURAGE COMMITMENT

= R E S P E C T

The common denominator of all Marine Corps virtues is “respect”. Therefore, it would, indeed, be difficult, if not impossible to find a Marine past or present who has EARNED our respect, more than Major General John Archer Lejeune, pronounced LeJERN. Every year Marines worldwide read, as ordered in November of 1921, General Lejeune’s (pronounced LeJERN) Birthday message which enhanced our much-envied 10 November tradition.

The birthday traditions take a distant place to the fact that the General is credited with single handedly saving the Corps after World War I. The General established the “Eight & Eye” ceremonies, as well as many other traditions, which highlighted our post WW I Leathernecks when others were attempting to

dissolve the Corps or minimize its missions. Respect for the General, post his demise, reached almost religious proportions with a major base, Memorial Halls at the U S Naval Academy, and Quantico as well as a major highway in Florida all honoring the General's awesome military record..

The encyclopedia acknowledges our 13th Commandant:

The "greatest of all Leathernecks" and the "Marine's Marine". He served for over 40 years — his service included leading the U.S. Army 2nd Division during [World War I](#) and he was the first Marine to lead a U S Army division in combat.

Respect is the issue down in Pointe Coupee Parish, Louisiana (pronounced pon kupee) where the citizens, including nearly two hundred descendants of the General's family, have for two centuries pronounced the family name LeJERN (albeit spelled Lejeune). Today's Lejeune family traces its heritage back to the Jean Baptiste Lejeune family. Louisiana is Gyrene territory, with six Marine Generals, who hail from the bayou and two Commandants, Major General John Lejeune the 13th and General Robert Barrow the 27th.

Family members share the story in a kind and gentle fashion, that when Northerners (aka Yankees) read the name, they change it without regard for the correct pronunciation. In our last generation of Leathernecks, many have lost the correct sound for the name Lejeune (Le jern).

The Lejeune name is a legacy in the southern Parish (a county is called a Parish in Louisiana), where the General was born on 10

January 1867. Their French heritage, Cajun & Creole accents and the Napoleonic legal codes all blend to make a chivalrous way of life. General Lejeune's descendants such as Jacques LaCour, whose family owns the Old Hickory Plantation, where John Lejeune was born, as well as the Parish Administrator, Jimmy Bello and the Parish Historian would like to know how their most famous son's name became so widely misspoken..??? In the 1960's and 70's (the old Corps) consensus has it that at least half the Marines used the correct LeJERN articulation.). . Time and inattention in other climes has diminished the proper use of the General's name.

There is absolute *unanimity* on the correct pronunciation at his birthplace. One retired Marine said it was "like Tomato / Tomato" , later he recanted and assured all, that Leathernecks speaking "Lejern" are both on target as well as respectful.

So where did it go awry..... ?

Well, it took several generations and some notable sea stories to have our illustrious Leatherneck's name so misunderstood. One Marine Major's French Lady tried convincing her Marine that the French pronounce the name Luh Joon (true –which means "the young") ... clearly, she had not been to Pointe Coupee, Louisiana and learned of the Lejeune (Lejern) family legacy, who were French settlers from Illinois.

Brian Costello, noted Pointe Coupee historian and the author of over a dozen books on this charming area of the old south stated:

“When we hear Camp Lejeune mispronounced on the television we cringe!”

Jim Bello, the Parish (county) Administrator says, “General Lejeune is the most prominent gentleman this Parish (county) has ever raised. We all wish and hope his name will be respected and said correctly. We are in phase one of creating a Lejeune History Center for visitors to Pointe Coupee.”

Jacques Lacour, a descendant of the Lejeune family who owns the land and the birthplace home of the General said;

“My dad, a decorated Iwo Jima Marine, always insisted our family and others pronounce the General’s name properly. Our recent generation has slacked off on this respect that our General rates”

Case in point The plight of today’s Lejeune’s family members serving in the Marine Corps....

“If I say your name is Lil Bo Peep ... your name is Lil Bo Peep”

When Jim Lehrer, the prominent network journalist tells of his arrival at Quantico for basic officer training at the Quantico train station, the D I started calling off the names on his clipboard.

“The D I told us to answer up, "Here, sir!" when our name was called. And he got to mine, and he said, "Le-here-er-er." And, like some kind of idiot, I blurted out, "It's pronounced Lehrer, sir!"

He then heard the terrifying click click click of the leather heels on the wooden deck of the station and the D I marched down and

placed his face an inch from the new Candidate, as he loudly and clearly said: **"Candidate, if I say your name is Little Bo Peep, your name is Little Bo Peep!"** ... now paraphrased and cleaned up a bit. The future Lieutenant Lehrer had a new name.

A few months ago another descendent, who is now Lieutenant Learlin III (pronounced Lur lin Lejern) Lejeune USMC 0302 arrived at Quantico, he too decided wisely to flow with the misuse of his legendary name, rather than correct the NCO in charge.

As was the case at Parris Island when now Corporal Jean Lejeune arrived and Staff Sergeant Evers, his JDI, showed little interest in bonding with the new recruit and the correct sound of LeJERN. Later when his brother Shane Lejeune enlisted, now in Fallujah, experienced the same communication challenge. Perhaps educating your senior NCO's upon arrival in the Marine Corps is not the wisest way to strike up a close and intimate rapport. All these Leathernecks are from Louisiana and their names were intact until they departed for colder climes.

ETYMOLOGY, the study of the word origins and their usage offers some interesting comparisons. We have invisible "R's". i.e. when General Lejeune was Colonel Lejeune, there was an "R" sound in both names. (Kernel Lejern) Dr. Thomas Klingler, of Tulane University and the head of the language department studied for his PhD at Pointe Coupee where he worked on a Creole French dictionary. Professor Klingler believe one hypothesis may be that many non Gaelic speaking people had trouble with the Luh Zhun

sound and over time inserted in common usage the “R” sound. I.e.. Je has been used as JER. The Pointe Coupee accents are a mélange of French vocabulary and African grammar. It was also noted just how many Americans pronounce our U S Capital with and “R” sound i.e. WaRshington.

Marines treasure and respect their history and traditions; the Lejeune family believes in time the General’s name should be put back on track.

On Ten November on Guadalcanal in 1942, the First Marine Division paused to recognize the General’s treasured tradition. A few days later at the age of 75 John Archer Lejeune died and was buried with honors at Arlington.

John Archer Lejeune (LeJERN) raised the bar in our Corps from the time he entered the US Naval Academy (class of 1888) to his leadership in World War I and his fight to keep our Corps of Marines prominent in the War Department’s long term planning. The rock hard fact is that we Marines owe our 13th Commandant our Honor, Courage, Commitment and above all RESPECT.

shadow box a brief recap of Lejeune’s feats....smaller font ??

World’s Greatest Marine

The General would have taken immediate umbrage with that appellation, however many Corps historians would have backed that title. A review of Corps history and the hallmarks, which made the 20th century General Lejeune would be most prominent. From the time he had to fight to get a commission in the Corps. The navy refused to let a midshipman who finished sixth in his class go. He was a combat officer, creative educator, and planner,

who led the Corps in expeditionary preparations. Today his leadership has given us our Fleet Marine Force. It was in the passageways of congress where he made sure the Corps had tenure and status. The Marine Corps Association was founded at Guantanamo Bay in 1913 by the General. His World War One record and decorations speak for themselves. Surely, there is room in USMC lexicon for the correct use of the General's name.

____ P. T. Brent UPI military correspondent / embedded in Afghanistan, Iraq & Africa

Infantry Marine served with 2/24 ...

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References:

Jim Lehrer Speech at NMMC 10 November 2006 Lil Bo Peep

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<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BBaX6Skdjo>

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Billboard request

Marine Emblem

Welcome Home to the most sharply disciplined

and

aggressive fighting force the world has ever known .

From the Family of General John Archer Lejeune pronounced Le
JERN

(picture of Lejern)