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# LT. GEN. LOUIS H. WILSON, JR.

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## HEARING

BEFORE THE

## COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

## UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-FOURTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

NOMINATION OF

LT. GEN. LOUIS H. WILSON, JR., TO BE COMMANDANT OF  
THE U.S. MARINE CORPS

MAY 6, 1975

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HEARING  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

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## NOMINATION OF LT. GEN. LOUIS H. WILSON, JR.

TUESDAY, MAY 6, 1975

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,  
*Washington, D.C.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room 212, Richard B. Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. John C. Stennis (chairman) presiding.

Present: Senators Stennis, Leahy, Thurmond, Goldwater, and Taft.

Also present: T. Edward Braswell, Jr., chief counsel and staff director; W. Clark McFadden II, counsel; Charles Cromwell, George H. Foster, Jr., Edward B. Kenney, Don L. Lynch, Francis J. Sullivan, professional staff members; and John T. Ticer, chief clerk.

The CHAIRMAN. All right, gentlemen, let us start our proceedings at this time. General, please have a seat.

General WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. This is an open hearing, members of the committee and visitors, and everyone, of course, is welcome to attend the open hearing on the nomination of Lt. Gen. Louis Wilson. Of course, we will then proceed into our markup of the fiscal year 1976 military procurement authorization bill and all the circumstances in closed session. We are getting into missiles and everything else this morning. Senator McIntyre's R. & D. matter was presented, as you will remember, but not discussed too much, so I proposed last week, if it is agreeable with the committee, that we go into discussion of his subcommittee matters. Senator McIntyre is making an early morning flight back from his home State in order to be here.

Members of the committee, we have before us, and I placed the matter before the committee, the nomination of Lt. Gen. Louis H. Wilson, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, to be Commandant of the Marine Corps with the rank of general for a period of 4 years pursuant to title 10, United States Code, section 5201, and we have the customary letter here from General Cushman, the Commandant now, with reference to the officer personnel numbers and everything.

We have a résumé before us of General Wilson's career with the Marine Corps and I am not going to say anything further by way of introduction, but, I do want to read something that is of interest to me and I think to all of us. I am not being personal with him, but General Wilson is a Congressional Medal of Honor winner.

This goes back to July 25 and 26, 1944. One reason I am reading part of this is that he survived and is here with us and taking this top place. We pay tribute at the same time to those who didn't survive in this particular battle that he was in.

This citation reads, and I will just read about three or four of the sentences, "Shortly thereafter"—that is, after this part of this mission was over and he had been wounded three times—"Shortly thereafter when the enemy launched the first of a series of savage counterattacks lasting all night, he volunteered to rejoin his besieged units," and so forth. "He dashed 50 yards into the open on one occasion to rescue a wounded marine lying helpless beyond the front lines. Fighting fiercely in hand-to-hand encounters, he led his men in furiously waged battle for approximately 10 hours, tenaciously holding his line and repelling the fanatically renewed counterthrusts until he succeeded in crushing the last efforts of the hard-pressed Japanese in the early morning following. Then, organizing a 17-man patrol—and here is the tribute to those who are not here—"he immediately advanced upon a strategic slope essential to the security of his position and, defying intense mortar, machinegun, and rifle fire which struck down 13 of his men"—that is, 13 of 17—"drove relentlessly forward with the remnants of his patrol to seize vital ground."

So, for the committee and for all of us, I want to pay tribute not only to him, the survivor, who has come to this position, but to those who didn't make it through this battle. Their memory is sacred to all of us, I am sure, certainly written high in the annals and heritage of our great country. It has always been—unfortunate, but it is true—necessary for some men to die in just this way. It has been so more recently and will be in the future, which is an admonition for us here at this table certainly to carry on our part to see that they are prepared.

Without objection, I will include in the record at this point, members of the committee, General Wilson's service record, this citation, and other relevant matters.

[The material follows:]

#### NOMINATION REFERENCE AND REPORT

IN EXECUTIVE SESSION,  
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,  
April 30, 1975.

*Ordered*, That the following nomination be referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Lt. Gen. Louis H. Wilson, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps, to be Commandant of the Marine Corps with the rank of general for a period of 4 years pursuant to title 10, United States Code, section 5201.

May 6, 1975.

Reported by Mr. Stennis with the recommendation that the nomination be *confirmed*.

#### MEDAL OF HONOR

"... as Commanding Officer of Company F, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces at Fonte Hill, Guam, Mariana Islands, July 25 and 26, 1944. Ordered to take that portion of the hill within his zone of action Captain Wilson initiated his attack in mid-afternoon, pushed up the rugged, open terrain against terrific machine-gun and rifle fire for 300 yards and successfully captured the objective. Promptly assuming command of other disorganized units and motorized equipment in addition to his own company and one reinforcing platoon, he organized his night defenses in the face of continuous hostile fire and, although wounded three times during the five-hour period, completed his disposition of men and guns before retiring to the company command post for medical attention. [Shortly thereafter when the enemy launched the first of a series of savage counterattacks lasting all night, he voluntarily rejoined his besieged units and so forth repeatedly exposed himself to the merciless hail of shrapnel and bullets, dashing fifty yards into the

open on one occasion to rescue a wounded Marine lying helpless beyond the front lines. Fighting fiercely in hand-to-hand encounters, he led his men in furiously waged battle for approximately ten hours, tenaciously holding his line and repelling the fanatically renewed counterthrusts until he succeeded in crushing the last efforts of the hard-pressed Japanese early in the following morning. Then, organizing a seventeen-man patrol, he immediately advanced upon a strategic slope essential to the security of his position and, boldly defying intense mortar, machinegun, and rifle fire, which struck down thirteen of his men, drove relentlessly forward with the remnants of his patrol to seize the vital ground.] By his indomitable leadership, daring combat tactics and dauntless valor in the face of overwhelming odds, Captain Wilson succeeded in capturing and holding the strategic high ground in his regimental sector, thereby contributing essentially to the success of his regimental mission and to the annihilation of 350 Japanese troops. His inspiring conduct throughout the critical periods of this decisive action enhanced and sustained the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

LT. GEN. LOUIS H. WILSON, USMC

Lieutenant General Louis H. Wilson, holder of the Nation's highest honor for heroism in combat, the Medal of Honor, assumed his current assignment as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, Sept. 1, 1972.

Louis Hugh Wilson was born Feb. 11, 1920, in Brandon, Miss., the son of the late Louis H. and Bertha B. Wilson. After graduating from Brandon elementary and secondary schools, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1941 from Millsaps College at Jackson, Miss., where he participated in football and track.

He enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserve in May 1941, was assigned to active duty that June, and was commissioned a second lieutenant in November 1941. His first assignment after completing officers' basic training was at San Diego, Calif., where he joined the 9th Marine Regiment.

He went overseas with the 9th Marines in February 1943, stopping at Guadalcanal; Efate; New Hebrides, Bougainville; British Solomon Islands; and returning to Guadalcanal. In action on Guam July 25 and 26, 1944, he earned the Medal of Honor for repelling and later destroying a massive Japanese force while commanding Company F of the Second Battalion, 9th Marines.

Because of wounds (three) he received in that battle, he was evacuated to the U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego. On Oct. 15, 1944, he returned to duty as Commanding Officer of Company D, Marine Barracks, Camp Pendleton, Calif. In December 1944, he was transferred to Washington, D.C., where he served as Detachment Commander of the Marine Barracks. While serving in Washington, he was formally presented the Medal of Honor by President Truman. He was promoted to captain in June 1943 and to major in March 1945.

In June 1946, Maj. Wilson was assigned to the Marine Corps Institute in Washington, D.C., where he served successively as Dean and Assistant Director. His next assignment was to Pearl Harbor where he served as Aide-de-Camp to Lieutenant General A. H. Turnage, Commanding General of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. Returning to the United States in January 1949, he assumed duties as Officer in Charge, District Headquarters Recruiting Station, New York City, remaining there until August 1951.

He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in November 1951 while stationed at Quantico, Va., where he served consecutively as Commanding Officer of the Basic School's 1st Training Battalion, Commanding Officer of Camp Barrett, and Executive Officer of The Basic School all prior to completing the officers' Senior Course in August 1954. After a brief tour as a Senior School Instructor, he departed for Korea to serve as Assistant G-3, 1st Marine Division. Returning to the United States with the division, he filled the post of Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, until August 1955, when he was named Commanding Officer of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines.

In March 1956, LtCol. Wilson was again assigned to Headquarters Marine Corps where he served for two years as Operations Officer, G-3 Division. Upon completion of that tour, he returned to Quantico and served first as Commanding Officer of the Training and Test Regiment, Basic School, until June 1960, when he was designated Commanding Officer of The Basic School. He was promoted to colonel in July 1960.

From August 1961 until June 1962, Col. Wilson attended the National War College in Washington, D.C. Upon graduation, he was assigned in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff (Plans and Programs), at Headquarters Marine Corps

until he was transferred to the 1st MarDiv. again. He went overseas with the division in August 1965, stopping at Okinawa before going on to Vietnam. In recognition of his service in Vietnam as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, the Republic of Vietnam awarded him the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with one Gold Star.

Upon his return to the United States, Wilson reported to Atlanta, Ga., and assumed command of the 6th Marine Corps District in August 1966. The Legion of Merit, awarded by the United States for his Vietnam service, awaited his arrival in Atlanta for formal presentation during the change of command ceremony.

Promoted to brigadier general in December 1966 with rank from Nov. 3, 1966, he reported to Headquarters Marine Corps in January 1967, for duty as Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, serving in this capacity until July 1968.

BrigGen. Wilson next served as Chief of Staff, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and earned a Gold Star in lieu of a second Legion of Merit. Prior to his detachment from Fleet Marine Force, he was advanced to the rank of major general, March 16, 1970. He earned his third Legion of Merit during a one year tour of duty as Commanding General, I Marine Amphibious Force/3d Marine Division.

In April 1971, Wilson returned to Quantico for duty as Deputy for Education/Director, Education Center, Marine Corps Development and Education Command. He was promoted to his present rank, Aug. 9, 1972 and, on Sept. 1, 1972, assumed his current assignment.

His medals and decorations include: the Medal of Honor; the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and two Gold Stars in lieu of second and third awards; the Navy Commendation Medal; the Purple Heart with two Gold Stars; the Presidential Unit Citation with one bronze star; the American Defense Service Medal; the American Campaign Medal; the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three bronze stars; the World War II Victory Medal; the National Defense Service Medal with one bronze star; the Vietnam Service Medal; the National Order of Vietnam, 4th Class; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star; the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm; and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

LtGen. Wilson is married to the former Jane Clark of Pearson, Miss. They have a daughter Janet Louise, who was born Jan. 9, 1956.

A copy of the citation which accompanied LtGen. Wilson's Medal of Honor is attached.

(Revised Sept. 1972 HQMC)

Résumé of service career of Louis H. Wilson, Jr., Lieutenant General, U.S. Marine Corps.

*Date and place of birth:* 11 February 1920, Brandon, Miss.; *years of active service:* 33; *military schools attended:* Reserve Officers' Course, Quantico, Va.; National War College, Washington, D.C. U. S. Army Special Warfare School, Fort Bragg, N. C.

#### MAJOR PERMANENT DUTY ASSIGNMENTS

	From—	To
Headquarters, Marine Corps (Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Programs).....	July 1962.....	June 1964.
1st Marine Division, FMF (Asstn C/S, G-3).....	July 1964.....	June 1966.
6th Marine Corps District, Atlanta, Ga. (District Director).....	June 1966.....	January 1967.
Headquarters, Marine Corps (legislative assistant to CMC).....	March 1967.....	August 1968.
Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (Chief of Staff).....	August 1968.....	March 1970.
3d Marine Division, FMF (commanding general).....	March 1970.....	March 1971.
Marine Corps Education and Development Command, Quantico, Virginia (Deputy for Education/Director for Education Center).....	April 1971.....	August 1972.
Commanding general, FMF Pacific.....	September 1972....	Present.

#### PROMOTIONS

November 1941—Second Lieutenant.	July 1960—Colonel.
October 1942—First Lieutenant.	November 1966—Brigadier General.
April 1943—Captain.	July 1970—Major General.
March 1945—Major.	September 1972—Lieutenant General.
July 1951—Lieutenant Colonel.	

## MEDALS AND AWARDS

Medal of Honor.  
 Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and Gold stars in lieu of 2d and 3d awards.  
 Navy Commendation Medal.  
 Purple Heart.  
 Presidential Unit Citation with 2 Bronze Stars.  
 American Defense Service Medal.  
 American Campaign Medal.  
 Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Stars.  
 Victory Medal, World War II.  
 National Defense Service Medal with 1 Bronze Star.  
 Vietnam Service Medal with 3 Bronze Stars.  
 Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Gold Star.  
 Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

## CIVILIAN EDUCATION

Millsaps College.

The CHAIRMAN. General Wilson, you have been nominated to this position and you do not have to make any statement, but anything relevant that you wish to say will be appreciated, and then you will be subject to questions. So I call on you now for any comment, observation, or anything you might want to say.

**STATEMENT OF LOUIS H. WILSON, JR., LIEUTENANT GENERAL,  
U.S. MARINE CORPS**

General WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I would like to say how gratified I am that you paid tribute to the personnel of a company which I commanded in 1944. I must say that they did the work and I got the credit.

Obviously I am pleased and honored to be nominated by the President to be the Commandant of the Marine Corps and I understand and accept this with a deep sense of responsibility if I am confirmed.

I want you to know that I intend to maintain and enhance the combat readiness of the Marine Corps which is our stock in trade and to seek high-quality individuals to whom we will provide leadership, to provide a Marine Corps which this committee, the Congress and the American people expect and would be proud of.

I am ready for questions.

The CHAIRMAN. We thank you very much for that statement.

When did you first go into the Marine Corps, General?

General WILSON. In May of 1941.

The CHAIRMAN. And through what course did you go?

General WILSON. I finished college and entered the officer candidate program, the third officer candidate program of the Marine Corps in the summer of 1941.

The CHAIRMAN. Officer Candidate School we called it then. Corps you said.

General WILSON. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. And you have been in the Marine Corps ever since?

General WILSON. Yes, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. What is your present duty assignment and title?

General WILSON. I am the Commanding General of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, which constitutes two-thirds of the combat elements of the Marine Corps, two marine divisions and two marine aircraft

wings and a brigade, and also the Commanding General of the Marine Corps bases, Pacific, which comprises all the bases west of California.

The CHAIRMAN. You have occupied that role for how long?

General WILSON. About 2 years and 8 months.

The CHAIRMAN. I see. And you still hold that position. You are located in—

General WILSON. In Hawaii.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Thurmond, I turn to you for any questions you may have.

Senator THURMOND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I know General Wilson. I think he is exceptionally well qualified. He is a man of great courage and a very outstanding leader, and I don't think I have any questions. I am very pleased to support his confirmation.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Leahy, that brings us to you, sir.

Senator LEAHY. Mr. Chairman, I am very pleased to support the general's nomination. I heard about it yesterday when we chatted here briefly in the committee room and I think he will make a fine commandant.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Goldwater, that brings us to you, sir.

Senator GOLDWATER. Not only do I have the highest respect for the general because of his Medal of Honor, but he came up the hard way, and it is a real pleasure to see a man going to become a four-star general who started with nothing. I think this is one of the reasons why we find such superior officers in the Marine Corps. There are a lot of them that started out walking the road, and it is a real pleasure for me to vote for the general.

General WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Taft.

Senator TAFT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no questions. I had a chance to talk with General Wilson. I find him extremely well qualified.

General WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I believe Senator Culver is a former member of the Marine Corps and Senator Bartlett too. I know they had some urgent matters or they would have been here.

Gentlemen, without making any comparisons or anything like that, comparisons always are odious, but I just comment that it seems to me like we have an unusually highly qualified, outstanding group of military men as our Chiefs of Staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it is a very wholesome thing. I think too, that these service Secretaries—as I say, without making any comparisons, I think the Chiefs now are about the strongest team I have known since I have been on the committee, and also the Secretaries. They are competent people and able and it makes you feel mighty good.

These are not easy days that we are living in in which we have an outstanding man as Secretary of Defense and Assistant Secretaries, so a lot depends on the man meeting these problems. You certainly have the confidence of the membership of this committee, General.

General WILSON. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Anything further that you would want to say?

General WILSON. No, sir, I assure you I will do my best.

The CHAIRMAN. You have shown that over the years, too. We thank you very much for coming in.

General WILSON. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. We wish you well in every way.

General WILSON. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. The vote may be close but I believe you are going to be approved here.

[Whereupon at 10:17 a.m., the committee went into executive session.]

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The Committee will be glad to hear from you if you would wish to be  
considered for one of the positions on the Board.  
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