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NMMC Opens Exhibit for the 80th Anniversary of the Marine Corps Combat Art Program

(Triangle, Va.) – A new exhibit in the National Museum of the Marine Corps’ Combat Art Gallery celebrates the 80th anniversary of Marine Corps combat art. The exhibition titled *“Go to War...Do Art” 80 Years of the Marine Corps Combat Art Program* features 80 works on paper by 29 combat artists.

Brigadier General Robert Denig, Director of the Division of Public Relations, coined the phrase “go to war, do art” in 1942. Ever since, it has served as the guiding principle of the U.S. Marine Corps Combat Art Program (MCCAP). At the MCCAP’s inception, Denig assembled a cadre of writers, photographers, and artists whose mission was to inform the public through art, capturing the Marine Corps’ and individual Marine’s experiences during World War II. This was an ambitious undertaking for its time, and even Denig never imagined that the art created under the auspices of his program would evolve and continue for 80 years.

Denig recognized a key difference between photographers and artists, stating “...a combat photographer must snap his picture of an action as it happens, if he is busy taking part in the action, as he often is; if it happens so fast he is unable to adjust his camera in time; if conditions are not good, the action is never recorded.” On the other hand, Denig noted that the artist “...can take part in the action and then paint any moment of it from memory.... [He] can provide his own lighting; he can give a picture any degree of intensity he desires. He can construct a scene from whatever angle he considers most dramatic, centering attention wherever he wishes.” This is the very essence of combat art.

Combat artists are traditionally active-duty and Reserve Marines who are given opportunities to create art while participating in combat and also observing Marines in training, conducting humanitarian operations, and during daily life. Civilian combat artists may do all that active-duty and Reserve Marines do, but may only observe combat, not participate.

This exhibit introduces the combat artists who answered the call, taking their brushes and pens into harm’s way. They went to war. They did art.

The exhibit is open through August 9, 2024.

About the National Museum of the Marine Corps

The Museum is a public-private partnership between the U.S. Marine Corps and the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. The National Museum of the Marine Corps, under the command of Marine Corps University, preserves and exhibits the material history of the U.S. Marine Corps; honors the

commitment, accomplishments, and sacrifices of Marines; supports recruitment, training, education, and retention of Marines; and provides the public with a readily accessible platform for the exploration of Marine Corps history. It is located at 1775 Semper Fidelis Way in Triangle, VA. Admission and parking are free. For more information, call 703-784-6107 or visit on the web www.usmcmuseum.com.

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