

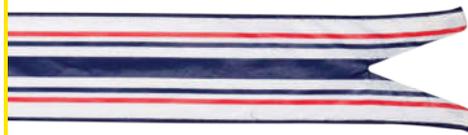


Closer Inspection

This streamer features 12 silver stars, four bronze stars and a silver "W," honoring those who defended **Wake Island** against Japanese forces in 1941, says Annette Amerman, head of the historical reference branch of the Marine Corps history division.



This streamer honors the Navy's African **slave trade patrol**, which sought slave-trading ships along the coasts of Cuba, West Africa and South America between 1820 and 1861, Amerman says. Congress had declared the slave trade as piracy in 1819.



This **World War I victory streamer** honors Marine units on active duty between April 6, 1917, and Nov. 11, 1918, as well as those who served in Siberia and the West Indies during the war, Amerman says.



This expeditionary streamer was awarded by President George W. Bush to recognize the military's **fight against terrorism** around the world.



The **Asiatic-Pacific Campaign** streamer recognizes units that served in the Asiatic-Pacific region between Dec. 7, 1941, and March 2, 1946, Amerman says. That includes the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Battle of Iwo Jima.

Stars signify additional awards achieved during a campaign, according to the U.S. Marine Corps flag manual. A bronze star represents one award, while a silver star signifies five.

Each **streamer** is made of nylon and measures 36 by 2¾ inches. They're stored in the colors room at the barracks.



Kinard estimates that the **flagstaff** bearing the streamers weighs 35 pounds once it's mounted with the commandant's flag. Silver bands represent each streamer.

Strands of valor

Marines' battle colors commemorate the past

BY KRIS CORONADO

Seeing a rainbow of ribbons presented by the color guard at a Marine military ceremony is not uncommon. Knowing what those streamers signify? Not so simple. They mark commendable acts during Marine engagements as well as honors conferred upon a Marine unit by a foreign government.

As the color bearer of the Marine Corps Commandant's Colors from January through September, Cpl. Joseph Kinard was responsible for carrying the 54 thin banners atop a

staff. "I don't think people understand what the battle colors are, what the streamers actually represent," says Kinard, 26, who has since been transferred. (Tryouts for a new bearer are scheduled for December.)

Established in 1801, the D.C. Barracks is the Marines' oldest post and has housed the corps' battle colors since the tradition began in 1939. With them come a lot of history and symbolism. "It's important for people to know where the Marine Corps has been," Kinard says. "How we've triumphed in places. ... A lot of courage and commitment."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BENJAMIN C. TANKERSLEY