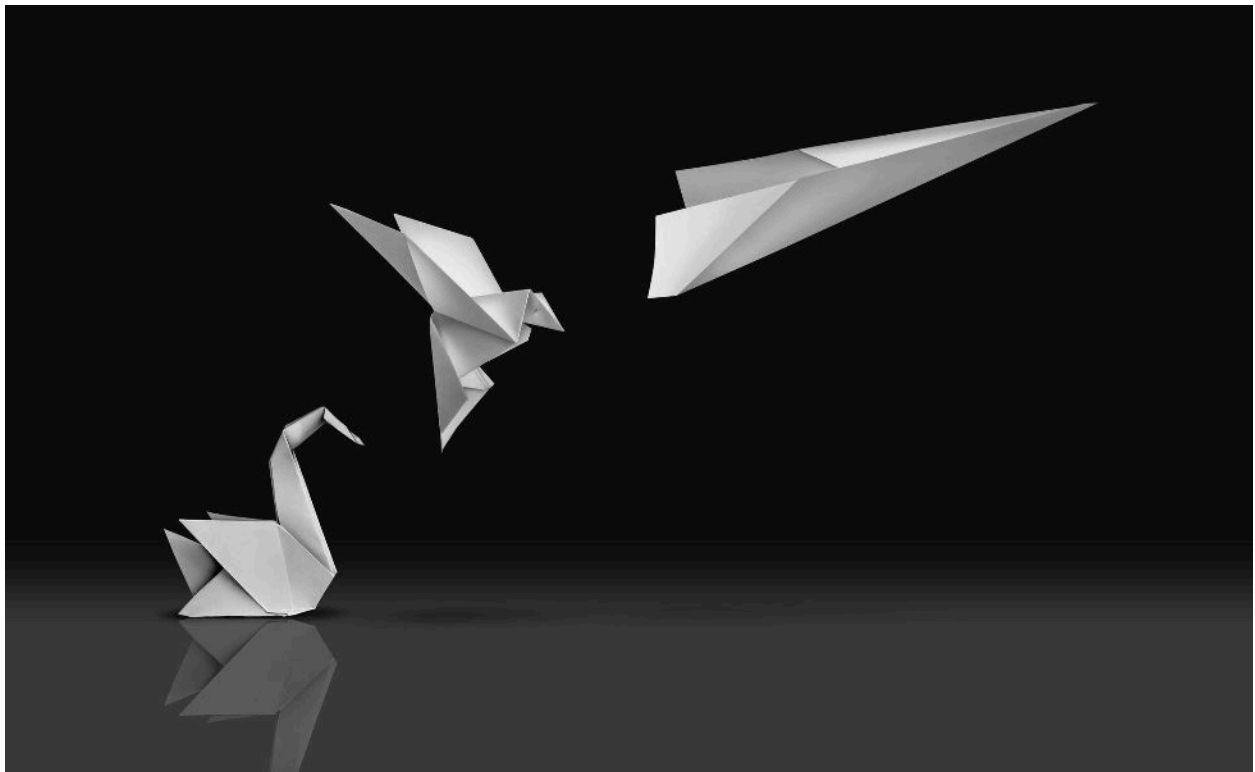


CAROLINA MUSEUM OF THE MARINE

Meet the Marine. Be Inspired.

Now it Begins...

Jim Danielson, PhD



Credit: iStock wildpixel

The Day has finally arrived. Carolina Museum of the Marine opens to the public this month, Monday 8 June. Of course, there is much that can be said about this celebratory day, and much that has been said, but this month, June 2026, we begin in earnest both to commemorate and remember the achievements and sacrifices of Carolina Marines and Sailors, and to attend to the mission of learning from their

examples how better to think independently, to appreciate the importance of being a good “citizen” in the home and in our communities, and to love our country and seek to improve it. The first part of this description is clearly the worthy mission of the museum, and the second part is the mission of the Al Gray Marine Leadership Forum as General Gray himself discussed it. The idea is to take the examples of Carolina Marines and Sailors as the starting places from which to teach Americans more generally about our history and our American traditions for the benefit of all regardless of military service.

We are human, and so we have flaws, and because of this, our communities have flaws. Yet, we are human, and so we have minds and we have wills that are free, and thus we may attend with reason and commitment to the improvement of ourselves and our communities. We’ve had more than one occasion at “Front and Center” to recall the advice of Albert Jay Nock in his remarkable *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man* on how to improve society, arguing that we improve as a society one person at a time through personal desire and initiative, or in Nock’s pungent language, in the matter of improving society, we can do no better than to present it with one improved unit. This is perfectly consistent with the first principle of Marine Corps leadership: Know yourself, and seek self-improvement. This goes far to explain the mission of Carolina Museum of the Marine and the Al Gray Marine Leadership Forum.

Our motto at Carolina Museum of the Marine is “Meet the Marine, be Inspired.” We should remember the achievements and sacrifices of Carolina Marines and Sailors, but we may also learn from their examples and become inspired to embrace the healthy and bracing project of self-improvement, which in turns improves everything that is human. For those people who are attached to this mission, we come now, at last, to the beginning of the worthy work of remembering, honoring, and learning in ways that not only preserve a legacy, but improve a people and a country.