LEATHERNECK NEWS

VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 2 SEPTEMBER 30, 2026

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER CONNECTING OUR MMA FAMILIES AND OUR CAMPUS COMMUNITY



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

COL C.S. DOWLING, USMC (RET)



Dear Marine Military Academy families,

It is hard to believe we are already finishing up September, and fall has come. October is a very busy month for the Corps of Cadets and the school. The school halls, classrooms, and barracks are filled with noise, excitement, and the special kind of organized chaos that only happens at MMA and that only one can truly appreciate. The new school year is in full swing, and I hope you have been able to hold onto the restorative spirit of the summer as you settle more deeply into the familiar, steady rhythm of school life and fall knocking on the door.

The end of September marks more than another month down. We are rolling into October with ACT/SAT exams, seniors are engaged in submitting college applications, football games, cross-country meets, midterms, and parents' weekend. It is the moment we reaffirm our commitment to the principles that have defined this institution since 1965: Honor, Courage, and Commitment. These are not slogans.

Congratulations to our plebes who just completed a rigorous four-week training phase. These young men have chosen a demanding path. Four weeks of training tested their discipline, resilience, and willingness to put the team before themselves. Parents keep leaning on your Drill Instructors and staff. We are here to support you! The standards are high because the mission matters—preparing young men of character who are ready for college, leadership, and life.

Academically, we continue to emphasize excellence in the classroom alongside developing the whole man. Our dual-enrollment opportunities, Advanced Placement courses, and college-preparatory curriculum remain central. The habits your son forms this semester—attendance, effort, and accountability will determine the results he achieves later. Recent SAT scores are in...we had a student score a perfect 800 on his math portion!

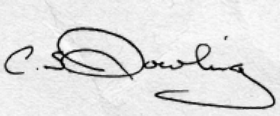
Later in October, we will celebrate our school's 66th anniversary and the United States Marine Corps' 250th birthday. It is a great weekend! Parents, please come and see what your son is doing and meet the staff and other parents. For our seniors, we will recognize your son on Friday Night for his athletics and the parents who have supported him.

This year, as in every year, we measure success not only by grades and rankings, but by the character of the young men in our Corps of Cadets. I ask every member of this community—cadets, parents, faculty, and staff—to support one another in that work. Stay the course, parents, and believe in the process...it works!

Thank you for entrusting us with your sons and for the privilege of serving this Academy. Let us make the 2026-2027 school year one of purpose, achievement, and quiet pride in a job well done.

Semper Fidelis,

Colonel Christopher S. Dowling, USMC (Ret)





UPCOMING RECRUITMENT SESSIONS

OCT 5 7PM SUGAR LAND, TEXAS
HOUSTON MARRIOTT SUGAR LAND

OCT 6 7PM WOODLANDS, TEXAS
THE WOODLANDS WATERWAY MARRIOTT

OCT 6 7PM SOUTHLAKE, TEXAS
HILTON DALLAS/SOUTHLAKE TOWN SQUARE

OCT 7 7PM DALLAS/PLANO, TEXAS
DALLAS/PLANO MARRIOTT AT LEGACY TOWN CENTER

EVENTS

UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

OCT 3
SATURDAY TUTORIALS
SAT TESTING

OCT 14-16
1ST QUARTER EXAMS

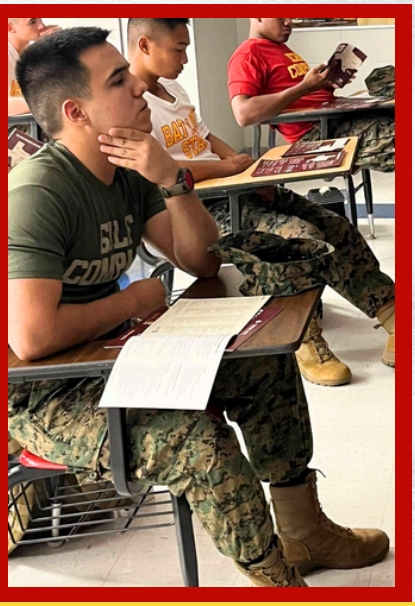
OCT 17
ACT EXAM

OCT 21
10TH & 11TH GRADE
PSAT EXAM

OCT 22-25
PARENTS WEEKEND

OCT 29
TRUNK OR TREAT

ACADEMICS



A MESSAGE FROM THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR'S CORNER

I'm excited and grateful to have you and your son as part of the MMA Family!
Beginning in October, I will be working on graduation plans for our new enrollees, starting with our incoming 12th graders and working down to our incoming 7th graders. These plans are simply a guide to help keep each cadet on track toward high school graduation. Parents will receive an individual email. Each spring, around April, teachers provide advancement recommendations that will be incorporated into each cadet's course progression, as applicable.



MAKE TRAVEL PLANS

FOR OUR 2026-27 ACADEMIC CALENDAR, MMA IMPLEMENTED A FRIDAY TRAVEL DAY FOR THE THREE MAJOR HOLIDAY BREAKS: THANKSGIVING, CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR'S, AND SPRING BREAK. THIS INFORMATION WAS REFLECTED IN OUR 2026–27 RIGHT GUIDE. FRIDAY TRAVEL DAYS ARE INTENDED TO MINIMIZE INTERRUPTIONS TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION. FAMILIES MAY MAKE DEPARTURE ARRANGEMENTS AT ANY TIME ON THESE FRIDAYS. FOR RETURN TRAVEL, PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HAVE YOUR SON BACK ON CAMPUS BY THE PUBLISHED SUNDAY RETURN DATE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT AS WE WORK TOGETHER TO HELP OUR CADETS STAY ON TRACK ACADEMICALLY AND SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATE THE SCHOOL YEAR.

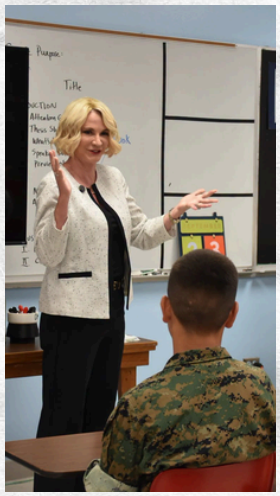
DID YOU KNOW?

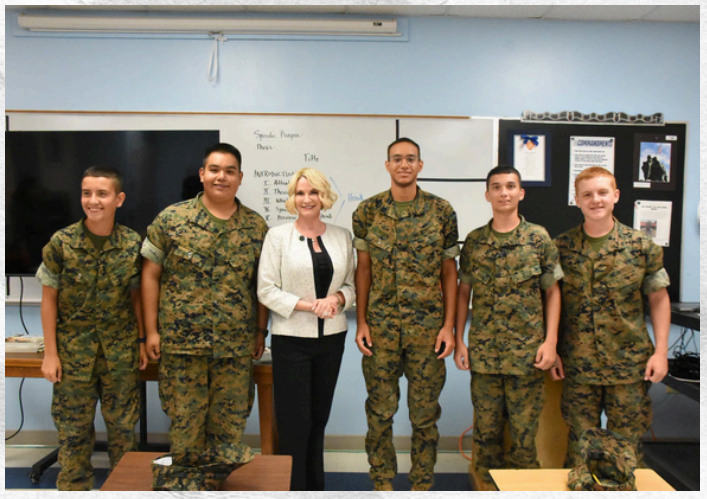
POWER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Wondering about PowerSchool absentee reporting? Under the "Activity" section, when a Cadet has two activities indicated on his schedule, he is unable to be in both places at the same time. So, for accountability purposes, when he is actively participating in one activity, he is marked absent from the other, and vice versa. Cadets are encouraged to have two activities listed on their schedules in the event that a coach is away at a competition or otherwise unavailable. Please know that the attendance notation for activities is strictly for accountability purposes and is not a "ding" or negative mark against a Cadet. When a Cadet is marked absent in all activities for the afternoon this sets off a chain reaction on his whereabouts.

TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE COMMISSIONER, DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D. VISITS THE ACADEMY

Dawn Buckingham, M.D., Texas General Land Office Commissioner, made a visit to MMA while visiting South Texas! She joined Mrs. Toscano's English class, met with our cadets, discussed some popular current topics, and allowed the boys to ask questions. From discussions about the Alamo to why she chose to leave the medical field and pursue politics and government, Commissioner Buckingham was so genuine and spoke from the heart, Thank you, Commissioner, for always including MMA in your stops!





COLLEGE ROOM

A MESSAGE FROM OUR COLLEGE COUNSELOR, MRS. RODRIGUEZ

SENIOR UPDATE: COLLEGE ACCEPTANCES AND FAFSA ACCOUNT SETUP (OCT. 1 & 2)

Dear Parents and Guardians of the Class of 2027,

What an exciting time for our seniors! College applications are being submitted, and acceptance letters and scholarship offers are already starting to roll in. We are so proud of the hard work our students have put in, and we look forward to celebrating each milestone with them. Starting October 1, we will begin showcasing our acceptances on our social media platforms. Make sure to like and share with your family and friends.

As your student plans for life after high school, one of the most important next steps is applying for financial aid. On October 1 and 2, seniors will work with me during [class period/advisory] to create their FAFSA Student ID (StudentAid.gov account). This account is required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which schools use to determine eligibility for aid that can help cover the cost of college, trade school, or other post-secondary programs.

Financial aid can come in several forms:

- Scholarships: money awarded for academics, talents, service, or other criteria that does not need to be repaid
- Pell Grants: federal grants based on financial need that do not need to be repaid
- Work-Study: part-time jobs that help students earn money for school expenses
- Loans: borrowed money that must be repaid, often with interest

How you can help: Please make sure your student has access to a personal email address they check regularly (not a school email) and their Social Security number on October 1 and 2. Parents and guardians will also need their own StudentAid.gov account to contribute information and sign the FAFSA, so we encourage you to create yours at studentaid.gov as well.

If you have questions about the FAFSA, scholarships, or your student's post-secondary plans, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm here to support your family every step of the way.

SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS PSAT COMING UP

SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

Take the PSAT

Your preview of the SAT — and for juniors, the qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

TEST DAY	TIME	WHERE
Wed., Oct. 21	8:00AM	Coleman Hall

Why it matters for juniors

Only 11th-grade scores count toward National Merit. This is your one shot.

About 55,000 of 1.3 million test-takers earn National Merit recognition each year.

Honors for your college applications — Commended or Semifinalist status stands out to admissions.

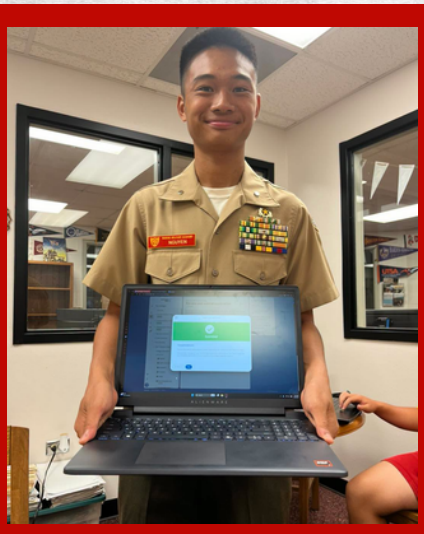
Scholarship doors open: National Merit, corporate-sponsored and college-sponsored awards, plus some colleges offer extra aid to Finalists.

Sophomores: this is low-stakes practice. Scores don't count toward National Merit, but they show your strengths and what to work on before junior year.

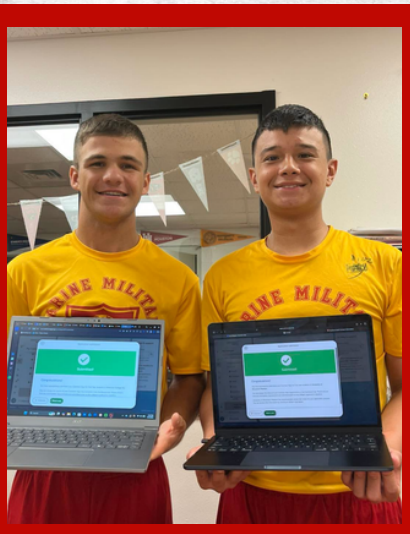
The road to National Merit

1. **Commended Student** — About 34,000 students. Selection Index at or above the national cutoff (208 for the Class of 2027; set each year). Earns a Letter of Commendation; some qualify for corporate Special Scholarships.
2. **Semifinalist** — About 16,000–17,000 students — the top ~1% of juniors in each state. Cutoffs are set state by state (recently about 210–224).
3. **Finalist** — Semifinalists who apply with a strong academic record, a principal's endorsement, an SAT/ACT score that confirms the PSAT, and an essay. About 95% advance.
4. **National Merit Scholar** — About half of Finalists win a $2,500 National Merit Scholarship or a corporate- or college-sponsored award.

SELECTION INDEX **(2 × Reading & Writing + Math) ÷ 10** Highest possible: 228







ATTENTION SENIORS!

START YOUR COMMON APP NOW! BEGIN APPLYING TO YOUR COLLEGES OF CHOICE. STOP BY THE COLLEGE ROOM TO GET STARTED TODAY!

PARENTS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO EMAIL OR CALL TO HELP ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU HAVE ABOUT THE PROCESS.

Mrs. Carmina Rodriguez **crodriguez@mma-tx.org** **(956)421-9216**

MILITARY

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF CADETS

September has been a month of growth across the Corps of Cadets. Our Plebes graduated, later arrivals joined their companies, classes are underway, athletic teams are competing, and cadets are settling into the daily rhythm of barracks life, drill, physical fitness, and academics.

Earlier this year, I asked our cadets a simple question: "Who are you becoming?"

Every choice they make helps answer that question.

My guidance to our Drill Instructors centers on three things: character, discipline, and initiative. Character is choosing what is right. Discipline is doing what must be done even when it is difficult. Initiative comes when a young man has earned the trust to take greater responsibility.

Those qualities take time to develop. There is no two-minute Rocky training montage where everything suddenly gets better. Growth comes through repetition, correction, setbacks, and persistence.

That is where I ask for your partnership. Parents naturally want to help when their sons are frustrated, homesick, or facing adversity. Genuine safety and welfare concerns should always be communicated, but not every difficult day is a crisis. Sometimes the most valuable question a parent can ask is: "I understand. What are you going to do about it?"

Let him talk to his Drill Instructor. Let him ask a teacher for help. Let him recover from a poor grade, a failed inspection, or a lost game.

If we removed every obstacle, we would also remove many of the opportunities that build resilience.

Ultimately, we do not want cadets who do the right thing only because someone is watching.

We want young men who do the right thing when no one is watching.

So, stay engaged, communicate with us, and trust the process. Growth takes time.

The young man who arrived at Marine Military Academy should not be exactly the same young man who leaves.

Semper Fidelis,

Major Devin Mullen, USMC (Ret.)

WHAT'S happening

DELTA COMPANY



Delta Company is up and running! The boys have been hitting the books hard, giving 100% effort in activities and athletics, and we have even found some time to have a little fun with cadet socials and company birthdays! The boys have found their rhythm and are demonstrating leadership qualities in their own company and the battalion. Delta is ready to take on October!

ECHO COMPANY



Mighty Echo is wrapping up a successful September! The boys are looking sharp in workouts, pushing to new limits each day. They keep working hard in the classroom and even college planning! We are proud of our athletes as they have been competing in football, flag football and cross country! We look forward to October and Parents Weekend and can't wait to celebrate with all of you!

CLUBS & ACTIVITIES



Our cadets are busy actively participating in their clubs and activities! National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society participated in the annual South Padre Island Beach Clean-up this past month living the “service above self” motto. Our amazing young men commit themselves to service and lead the way in community service hours! Proud of these young men!







WHAT'S happening

FOX COMPANY



Proud of our Fox cadets! September was a great month and our cadets are rising to new challenges, conquering and finding new ones. They look tough on the football field and even better in the classroom! Each of our boys has found their place, their routine, and life is now looking clearer. We are encouraging Fox Company to be better each day!

GOLF COMPANY



Golf Company is in high spirits, and morale is strong! Team spirit is in full display on the football field with our star athletes! Semper Fidelis to Cadet Luke Mullen for being named the MMA Mascot! October will be busy with a Golf Company trip to Six Flags San Antonio for Fright Fest, Parents Weekend, and Trunk or Treat; these young men will have a blast! We want to thank all the families for making MMA a home away from home and supporting our Gladiators. We've made barracks improvements, including a new game room and newly designed room name cards, helping cadets appreciate the big and small improvements in Golf Company. Our Company Commander, Cadet Borgioli received some exciting news about his acceptance to the Citadel! We hope you have an outstanding October and that you will be a GLADIATOR in your arena!





ATHLETICS

Athletics is up and running this school year. Football season is in full swing. The Leathernecks have a young team and are rebuilding from a successful season last year. They have played 3- tough teams and are showing signs of improvement every week. Some players to watch as the season progresses are: Najon Burke – QB, Brendan Himes – RB, Calvin Quinn – WR and Aaron Davis – OL are your offensive leaders. Leading the defense are Parker Ford – lB, Drake White – LB, Landon Orsak- DE . Coming off a short week, your Leathernecks will face off vs. La Villa on Thursday, Sept. 23.

Cross Country is also in Full Swing. Your runners have competed at the La Sara invitational and the Brownsville Idea invitational bringing home some medals. This Week Sept. 26, they will be traveling to Edinburg Vela to compete in their invitational. Running for your Cross Country team are: Sky Bayless, Napoleon Campos, Jackson Ciceri, John Cunningham, Jackson Luevano, Mathew McCleneghan, and Wyatt Wolfe.

The MS Flag Football season is also in full Swing. Your Leathernecks have a record of 3 Wins and 4 Losses and will play Sept. 25 vs. Jubilee Harlingen.





GAME DAYS

FLAG FOOTBALL

OCTOBER 5
VS. JUBILEE LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
5:30PM @ HOME

OCTOBER 7
VS. IDEA SAN BENITO
5:30PM @ HOME

VARSITY FOOTBALL

OCTOBER 2
VS. AGUA DULCE
7:00PM @ HOME

OCTOBER 9
VS. INCARNATE WORD
6:00PM @ HOME

OCTOBER 23
VS. SOM COLLEGIATE
6:30PM @ HOME

OCTOBER 30
VS. ST. MARY'S
7:30PM AWAY

LETS GO!

CADETS STAY ENGAGED WITH CADET EVENTS





Cadets are enjoying their social time with friends here at the Academy! From karaoke nights to game nights and even some new events like Senior Sunrise. Social Coordinator, Mrs. Barrios has been actively planning some great events for the boys. Be sure to check out our advertisements for the upcoming events!

SPINAL SCREENINGS

Texas Public and Private schools must follow state Mandates under the Texas department of State Health Services (DSHS) Spinal Screening Program Undergoing non-invasive spinal screenings

Some of the objectives for spinal screening Program

1. Identification of possible problem such as abnormal spinal curvatures like Scoliosis.
2. Notify Parents for referral to their primary care for diagnostic evaluation.
3. Early detection and treatment for the possible best outcome.

Boys are screened once at age 13 or 14 or the fall semester of the grade 8th. MMA Medical will be doing Spinal visional screenings on student in 8th grade, plan for in the 2nd week of October 2026. If your cadet is slotted to be screened, you will receive 2 letters by email . Letters will explain the requirements, exceptions, and exemptions on how a student may be exempt from screening. If you have questions, please contact MMA Medical Department.





MMAPO KING GYM PROJECT COMPLETE

The MMAPO is excited about the SPARKLING results of the King Gym floor refinishing that was just completed! Cadets are thrilled to have the gym open again! We are so thankful for all of the donations that helped fund this! Continue supporting your comapnies in Battle of the Barracks! Next up...working up some SPARKLE for the baseball field!







IMPORTANT

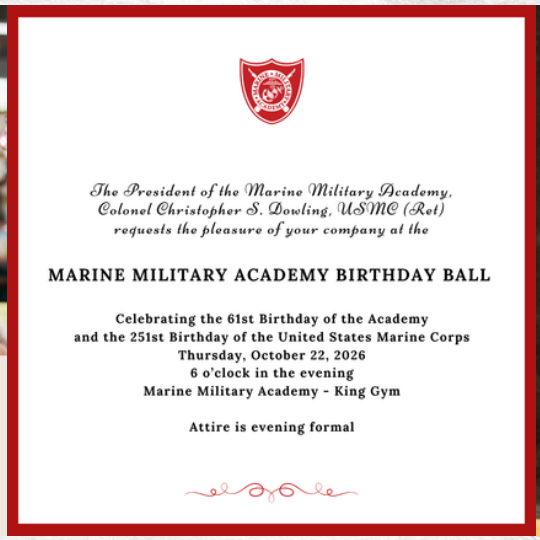
ANNOUNCEMENTS



AUCTION ITEMS WANTED

SUPPORT MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY BY DONATING A PRIZE FOR OUR LIVE AND SILENT AUCTIONS!
YOUR DONATION WILL HELP RAISE MONEY FOR THE BASEBALL FIELD SCOREBOARD PROJECT HEADED BY OUR MMAPO!

CONTACT: CONNIE FLORES (956)421-9232 FLORES@MMA-TX.ORG



The President of the Marine Military Academy, Colonel Christopher S. Dowling, USMC (Ret) requests the pleasure of your company at the

MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY BIRTHDAY BALL

Celebrating the 61st Birthday of the Academy
and the 251st Birthday of the United States Marine Corps
Thursday, October 22, 2026
6 o'clock in the evening
Marine Military Academy - King Gym

Attire is evening formal



CADET GAME NIGHT

IN THE CAC

GOOD FOOD, GREAT GAMES, BEST MEMORIES

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 10, 2026
5:30PM-7:30PM

FREE FOR ALL!

BRING YOUR FRIENDS!!

MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY

LOTERIA NIGHT

Join us for an evening of fun!
Lots of prizes to give away!

SATURDAY 17 5:30 P.M.
OCTOBER

Cadet Activities Center



Homecoming

PARENTS NIGHT

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026
6:30PM AT BOWMAN STADIUM

Marine Military Academy Presents

TRUNK OR TREAT

JOIN US FOR A SPOOKY HALLOWEEN CELEBRATION!

DATE: THURSDAY OCTOBER 29,2026

TIME: 5:00 PM

PLACE: OLEANDER STREET

Bring your costumes and fun!
Can´t wait to see you!