

OCC-252

# Officer Candidates School Graduation Guidebook



Company A / D

Officer Candidates Course (OCC) 252

Officer Candidates School (OCS)

Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia

United States Marine Corps

31 July - 1 August 2026

# Table of Contents

|                                        |        |
|----------------------------------------|--------|
| Timeline of Events .....               | 3      |
| Event Description .....                | 4      |
| Family Day .....                       | 4      |
| Graduation .....                       | 5      |
| Directions .....                       | 6      |
| Parking and Seating Information .....  | 7      |
| Handicap/Accessible arrangements ..... | 7      |
| Visiting a Working Base.....           | 8 - 11 |
| Base Access Criteria .....             | 8      |
| Dos and Don'ts.....                    | 10     |
| Flag Etiquette.....                    | 11     |
| Rank Structure .....                   | 11     |
| FAQs.....                              | 12     |



# TIMELINE OF EVENTS

## Family Day

31 July 2026

### Commander's Motivational Run Brown Field Parade Deck

5:30 am OCS gates open

6:30 am Merchandise Sales begin

7:30 am - 8:20 am Run

NLT 9:30 am Liberty commences

### Blessing of the Bars

Marine Memorial Chapel (Base Chapel)

3251 Embry Loop, Quantico, VA,  
United States, Virginia

1:00 pm Ceremony begins

### Expiration of Liberty

Brown Field Parade Deck

4:00 pm Candidates **must** be back  
on Brown Field

### Family and Friends Social Dinner

Brown Field

Yeckel Hall and Bobo Chow Hall

4:00 pm Doors open at Yeckel Hall

4:30 pm Opening Remarks

5:30 pm Dinner with A/D  
Company Staff at Bobo Chow Hall

## Graduation

1 August 2026

### Graduation Parade/ Commissioning Ceremony

Brown Field Parade Deck

5:30 am OCS gates open

9:00 am Ceremony begins

10:30 am Ceremony ends

11:30 am Brown Field closed

### Pinning Ceremony

Brown Field Parade Deck

Immediately following the  
graduation ceremony

# EVENT DESCRIPTION

## Family Day

### Commander's Motivational Run

Family Day kicks off with the Commander's Motivational Run, where you'll have the chance to cheer on your candidate during a 2-mile formation run. Spectators can watch from the bleachers on the OCS Parade Deck. Guests typically dress casually and comfortably, keeping the weather in mind. For everyone's safety, please arrive and park no later than 10 minutes before the run starts. OCS merchandise, including T-shirts, sweatshirts, and challenge coins, will be available for purchase. This merchandise is cash only.



### Liberty Period

After the run, your candidate will be granted liberty (authorized absence), giving you your first chance to spend time with your new Marine. This is a wonderful opportunity for your Marine to show you around the local area. **Please ensure that your candidate is returned to Brown Field by 4:00 PM on Family Day;** failure to do so may result in disenrollment from the program. **You must drop your candidate off across the train tracks to utilize the pedestrian bridge for reentry to OCS. Families are not authorized on Brown Field after the conclusion of the Motivational Run.**

### Blessing of the Bars

The OCS Religious Ministry Team invites you to the Blessing of the Bars Ceremony. Drawing on the tradition of the Naval Aviation community's Blessing of the Wings Ceremony, the OCS Chaplain will lead a service of blessing for those graduates who would like to participate. Candidates should provide their own set of collar-sized 2ndLt bars. Uniform is proper civilian attire.

During WWII many Catholic Chaplains began blessing the wings of Catholic aviators. This tradition continued throughout the years and eventually became a 'Blessing of the Wings' Service in Navy Aviator Training Base Chapels. Eventually the service included other Christian traditions and became the 'Aviator's Blessing', accompanied by pinning a set of wings on a tapestry. Other military communities have participated in the pinning. We will gather to bless and send forth soon-to-be Marine Officers and pray for their well-being, safety, and effectiveness throughout their Marine Corps careers and beyond.



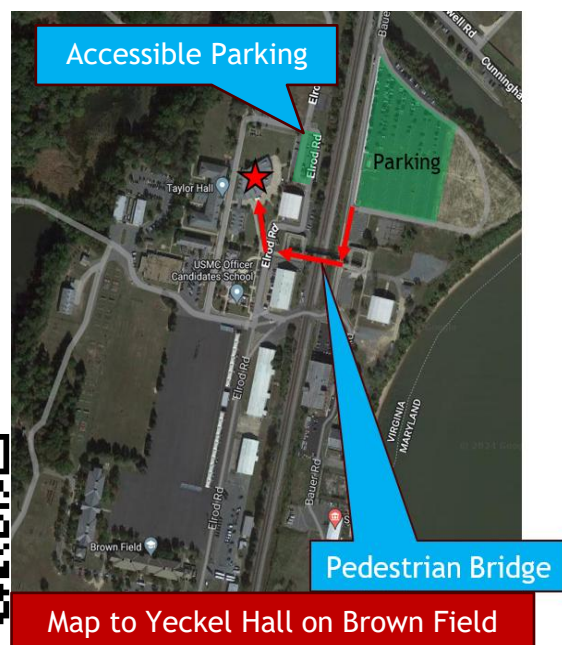
## Friends and Family Social Dinner

The Family and Friends Social Dinner is an optional event designed for you to meet and interact with the OCS Commanding Officer, Sergeant Major, and training company staff. It will begin with a brief and introduction to the Alpha and Delta Company staffs at Yeckel Hall, located on OCS's grounds. After the classroom, you will be bused to Bobo Chow Hall to enjoy dinner with your Candidate's training company staff. Parking when you arrive will be located across the pedestrian bridge in the designated parking lots shown in the graphic titled "Map to Yeckel Hall". Limited tickets are available for purchase. You can find the ticket sale link on our Facebook page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/USMCOCS/events/>

When purchasing your ticket, please select the option that corresponds to your candidate's company name. Please note that your candidate will not attend this event, as they will be participating in graduation practice. The recommended attire is casual.

If you require handicap parking for this event, please reach out to [codi.swenson@usmc.mil](mailto:codi.swenson@usmc.mil) for instructions/directions.



## Graduation



### Graduation Parade & Commissioning Ceremony

The Graduation Parade recognizes candidates who have met the challenge and successfully completed OCS. During the parade, the top performing candidates and OCS staff will receive awards, the Commanding Officer and Reviewing Officer will each address the guests, and the candidates will conduct a pass-in-review. For those who meet commissioning requirements, the commissioning ceremony will take place during the Graduation Ceremony.

General audience seating is in the bleachers. VIP seating is in the reviewing stand. Accessible seats are available under the tents or in front of the bleachers. Seating is first come, first serve. The ceremony is held outdoors, so we encourage guests to dress appropriately for the weather. The uniform for this event is business casual for civilians and Seasonal Woodland MARPAT for Marines (or service equivalent). VIP guests will receive a formal invitation upon submission from their candidates.

### Pinning Ceremony

At the conclusion of the Graduation and Commissioning Ceremony, a newly commissioned Marine may conduct their own personal pinning ceremony on the Parade Deck or other location of choosing. This formal ceremony allows the new Lieutenant to have individuals of their choosing pin the gold bars, signifying the rank of Second Lieutenant, on their uniform. They will also receive their first salute from an enlisted service member of their choice. Many candidates request their first salute from Staff Non-Commissioned Officers from their platoon staff, who play a crucial role in their development from candidate to Marine Corps Officer. Families are welcome to take pictures during this ceremony and may remain on Brown Field until 11:30 am.



# DIRECTIONS

## Gate Entry to OCS

There are only two entry gates easily accessible from Interstate 95 or Richmond Highway to Marine Corps Base Quantico that will grant you access to OCS.\*

### Russell Road Gate

This gate is commonly referred to the “Commissary Gate” or “back gate”. Its open hours are 5:00 am - 9:00 pm daily. This is the recommended gate when visiting OCS. When traveling on Interstate 95, use Exit 148 “Marine Corps Base Quantico”.

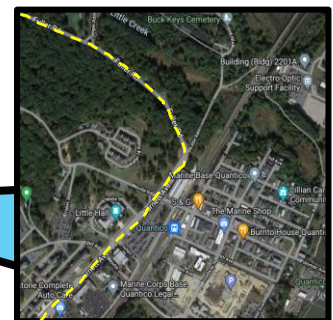
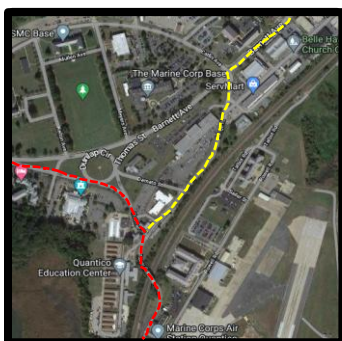
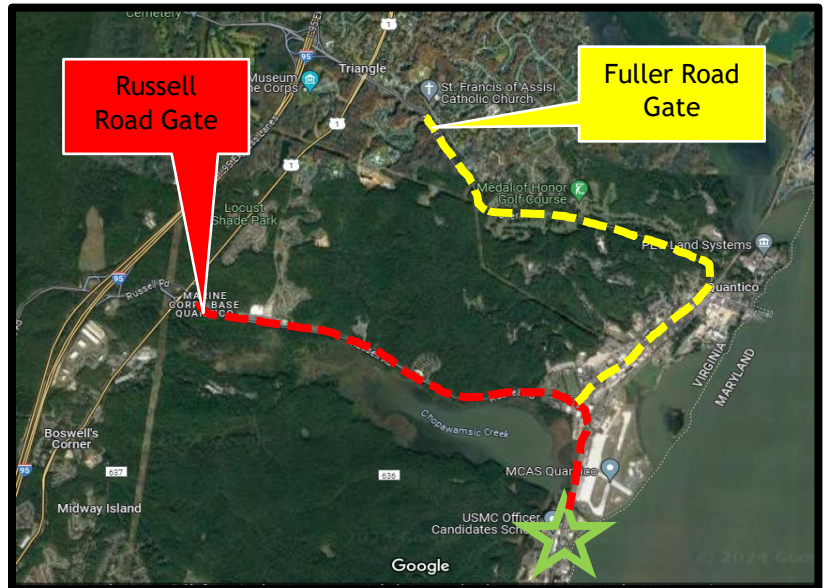
Once through the gate, continue straight on Russell Road. Keep right at the traffic circle while passing Crossroads Inn on Dunlap Road. Turn right at the stop sign onto Range Road. You have arrived at OCS.

### Fuller Road Gate

This gate is commonly referred to as the “Main Gate”. This gate is open 24/7. This gate is most used when traveling from Interstate 95 South by taking Exit 150A “Triangle/Quantico”.

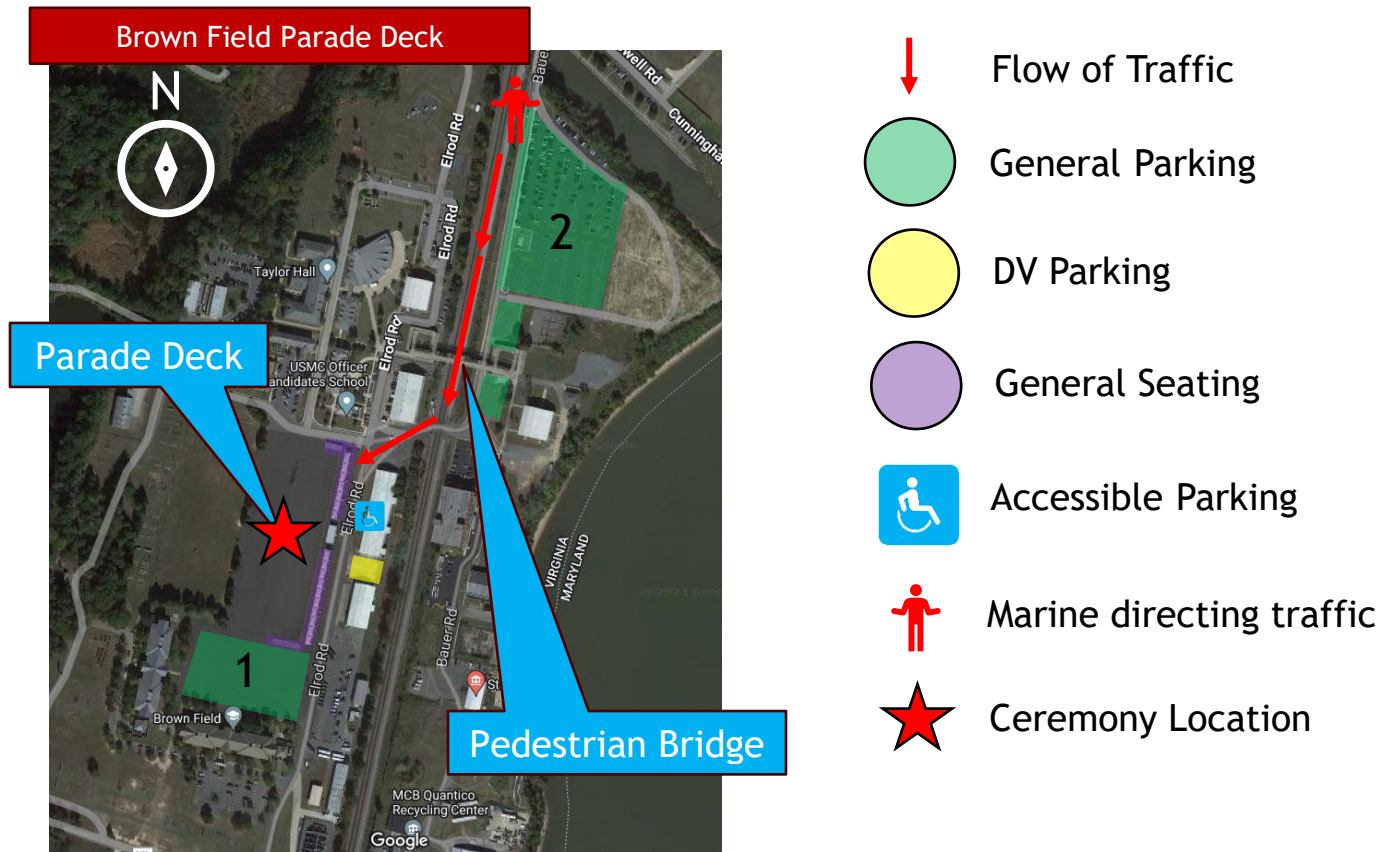
Once through the gate, continue straight on Fuller Road for over two miles. Follow the sharp right turn to a traffic light and continue straight through the light. You are now on Barnett Avenue. At the Y intersection, continue left. Keep left again towards a bridge. Continue straight and you have arrived at OCS.

**\* Please be aware that some GPS applications may direct vehicles to alternative gates. The gates mentioned above are the only gates that grant access to OCS. If you attempt to enter through another gate, you will be required to turn back.**



**\*Photography and video recording of airfield is strictly prohibited**

# PARKING AND SEATING INFORMATION



As you enter OCS, there will be Marines to guide you to a parking spot. There is limited parking on the Parade Deck and it is on a first come, first serve basis. This is identified as Parking Lot 1 above. Overflow parking will be just past the airfield on your left as you drive in. If you park in overflow parking, you must cross the pedestrian bridge over the train tracks to enter Brown Field. See Parking Lot 2 on map. Accessible parking is available. Tell the Marine ushering vehicles that you need an accessible spot, and he/she will guide you. Do not park on the road. All vehicles must park in a designated parking lot.

Accessible seating is limited. We recommend arriving early to secure a seat in the first row of bleachers.

For the best viewing experience, we recommend sitting near where your candidate will be staged in formation on the Parade Deck. The platoons will be arranged consecutively by company and platoon number from left to right as you face the Parade Deck. Look for signs or ask an usher for seating guidance. If you're unsure of your candidate's platoon, don't worry! They will be staged in the same location on graduation day as they were for their liberty formation on Family Day.

Any E-9, O-6, GS-15 or civilian/government equivalent, and above guest with a candidate graduating/commissioning at OCS who would like VIP seating for the Graduation Parade should pass their information to their candidate prior to graduation. Names that have been submitted will receive a formal invitation via email with an RSVP link and coordinating instructions.

All obstacle courses, squad bays, barracks buildings, and equipment at OCS are off limits to both candidates and visitors.

# VISITING A WORKING BASE

For many families, this is your first visit to an active military base. We recognize that the unfamiliar rules and regulations can be a bit intimidating. To help you navigate this new experience, we've put together a list of guidelines for base access as well as dos and don'ts while on the base.

## Base Access Criteria

1. All individuals 18 years and older must possess a valid state Real ID or government issued photo ID. (If you do not have a Real ID, your passport is fine. If you do not have a Real ID or passport, bring BOTH your birth certificate and Social Security Card with you for base access.)
2. You must print and display the Family Day and Graduation Base Access Pass in your vehicle's windshield when you drive onto Marine Corps Base Quantico.
3. In order to receive the Family Day and Graduation Base Access Pass, your name must be added to the OCS Graduation Weekend Attendee Roster. Your Candidate will reach out to you during their first liberty period (at the conclusion of week 4) with a list of information they need from you in order for them to add your name to the roster. Please ensure you contact your Candidate during their weekend liberty periods to verify what information they need from you, as they are the only ones authorized to submit guest names to the roster. After the conclusion of week 7, your Candidate will give you a digital copy of the Base Access Pass. ***Reminder: the pass must be printed off and visible in your windshield for entry. Showing the gate guards a digital copy from your phone will NOT allow you base access.*** For security purposes, the Base Access Pass will not be stored on the OCS website and cannot be given to you by anyone other than your Candidate. Failure to obtain the Family Day and Graduation Base Access Pass or those who do not possess a valid Common Access Card (CAC) will result in being denied entry to Marine Corps Base Quantico.
  - a. All Non- U.S. Citizens must coordinate the visit through the Services Section of the Provost Marshal Office at [MCBQ\\_VCC@usmc.mil](mailto:MCBQ_VCC@usmc.mil). When the request is sent up, include [haley.pratt@usmc.mil](mailto:haley.pratt@usmc.mil) on the CC line. A minimum of 10 days notification in advance of the visit is required to allow for adequate screening time. Be prepared to provide the following:
    1. First name, last name, middle name
    2. Date of birth and place of birth
    3. Passport number and citizenship
    4. Dates of stay (the dates they plan to be on the base, not how long they'll be in the country. Family Day is 7 August and Graduation is 8 August.)
    5. Purpose of visit
- \*Note: Permanent Residents/Green Card Holders do NOT need to submit a Foreign Visitor Request.**
4. Upon arriving at the gate with the necessary documents, let the gate sentry know the reason for your visit—either Family Day or Graduation. Once you receive permission, proceed to OCS.
5. Do not deviate from the approved route to OCS.

## Access Denial Criteria

Persons requesting access to Marine Corps Base Quantico will be denied access and/or debarred from the site if:

- Person(s) attempting to enter are unable to verify their identity (must present a valid government ID)
- The individual has a felony conviction within the last 10 years, regardless of the offense or violation
- The individual has a conviction for espionage, sabotage, sedition, treason, terrorism, armed robbery, or murder

- The individual has a felony conviction for a firearms or explosives violation, regardless of the date of conviction
- The individual has been convicted of crimes encompassing sexual assault or rape
- The individual has been convicted of crime encompassing child molestation, or the possession or production of child pornography
- The individual has been convicted of trafficking in persons
- The individual is a registered sex offender
- The individual has been convicted of drug possession with intent to sell or distribute
- The individual has an active arrest warrant from federal, state, local, or other civil law enforcement authorities, regardless of offense or violation
- The individual's name appears on any federal or state agency watch list for criminal behavior or terrorist activity
- The individual is debarred entry or access to a Marine Corps site, other DoD installations or facilities, or other federal site or facility
- The individual engaged in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force
- The individual is known to be or reasonably suspected of being a terrorist or belongs to an organization with known terrorism links/support
- The individual is known to be, or suspected of being, a terrorist or belonging to an organization with known links to terrorism or support of terrorist activity
- The individual has criminal arrest information that the site commander determines the person presents a threat to the good order of the installation

## Prohibited Items

When coming aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico you are not permitted to bring the following items (on your person or in your vehicle):

- Firearms of any kind (**REGARDLESS** of concealed carry permits; they are not valid on Military installations)
- Non-folding sheath knives or any publicly displayed knives
- Explosives / explosive components / pyrotechnics
- Tasers (that fire projectiles)
- Drones / Unmanned aircraft of any type or size
- Drugs / Narcotics of any kind that have not been prescribed to you by a licensed medical provider (this includes medicinal marijuana that may be legal in your state of residence, but is prohibited aboard Federal Installations)
- Do not bring pets of any kind aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico. Certified Medical Service animals are allowed.

## Restricted Areas

You may not utilize or access the following Marine Corps facilities or services:

- All Marine Office/Unit Buildings
- Obstacles and Confidence Course
- Marine Corps Education Center
- On base housing areas and permanent personnel quarters
- The Basic School (TBS)
- Any training areas or past any signs notifying you of hazard or restricted access



## Permitted Areas

If accompanied by your candidate, you may access:

- The Marine Corps Exchange
- The Commissary
- The Clubs at Quantico
- Marine Corps Exchange Store/Gas Station
- Leatherneck Lanes
- Little Hall Theater
- The Town of Quantico

## Dos and Don'ts

Visiting a military base can feel like stepping into a different world, and the rules might not be immediately clear. To help you navigate, we've put together some handy dos and don'ts that will ensure you fit right in.

### Dos

- Address military personnel by their rank and last name displayed on their uniform. When in doubt, "Sir" or "Ma'am" is always appropriate.
- Refer to Marines as "Marines" not "soldiers". A Soldier is an individual serving in the U.S. Army.
- Show courtesy and respect to other families and military personnel who consider Marine Corps Base Quantico their home or regularly commute and work here.
- Abide by the posted speed limits.

### Don'ts

- Do not approach candidates or Marines while in formation.
- Do not walk across the Parade Deck.
- Civilians do not salute service members.
- Do not use your phone while operating a vehicle.
- Do not take photos of candidates or instructors still undergoing training.

## Flag Etiquette

The United States Marine Corps has long established a tradition of rendering proper honors and courtesies to the American Flag with ceremony and decorum. If this is your first visit to a military installation, we would like to acquaint you with “Flag Etiquette” and welcome you to join us in showing courtesy to our Flag as defined by U.S. Code Title 4 and 36, and as observed aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico.

In observance of U.S. Code Title 4 and 36, individuals in uniform, members of the armed forces not in uniform, and military veterans may render a military salute to the American Flag while it is being hoisted, being lowered, and passing by. The same courtesies should be rendered while the National Anthem is played.

Gentlemen wearing hats who do not render a salute to the flag should remove their head gear and on the first note of the National Anthem, and place their right hand over their heart until the last note of the National Anthem. Ladies are not required to remove their headdress. On the first note of the National Anthem, ladies should stand, face the flag, and place their right hand over their heart until the last note of the National Anthem. All present should remain standing until the last note of the National Anthem is played.

If the Flag is not visible during the National Anthem, please stand and face the sound of the music. If driving during Morning or Evening Colors, persons in vehicles within sight or hearing of the ceremony should halt the vehicle at the side of the road and remain inside the vehicle until the final bugle call “Carry On” is sounded.

When Honors are being rendered to the Flag, or while it is passing in a parade of review, it is considered disrespectful to smoke, talk, to take pictures, or to be involved in boisterous or noisy activity. If you are in doubt, ask the military personnel about appropriate courtesies at any time, or look around. The immediate vicinity will guide your actions.



## Rank Structure



# FAQS

- **What is the closest airport?**

The nearest major airport to OCS is the Ronald Reagan National Airport (DCA). The next closest airport is the Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD). Transportation from these airports is not provided; however, both airports have multiple rental car agencies.

- **Can I bring food or drink to the ceremony?**

Yes, outside food or drink is allowed; however, coolers are prohibited. There will be light refreshments for sale (cash only).

- **Is there a gift shop?**

OCS does not have a gift shop; however, there will be tee shirts, sweatshirts, and challenge coins for sale (cash only) during the Family Day and Graduation ceremonies.

- **When will I know if my candidate is going to graduate?**

Your candidate is being evaluated up until the day they march across the Parade Deck for graduation. If at any point your candidate's GPA drops below the standard, or they fail to meet the challenging curriculum, they could be disenrolled. We strongly recommend staying in touch with your candidate during the liberty periods to monitor their status.

- **Are ride-sharing services (Uber, Lyft, and taxis, ect.) allowed on base?**

No, drivers who do not possess a valid military ID are not authorized base access. The passenger(s) will be dropped off at the gate. The exception to this is Yellow Cab Taxi and Global Taxi.

- **Can you transport to OCS via train?**

Yes, both the Amtrak and VRE provide stops at Quantico Station. Once on base, however, you must provide the printed Family Day and Graduation Base Access Pass and be prepared to find a ride to the Visitor Control Center (VCC) to obtain a visitors pass. The VCC is open 6:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday and 7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. on Saturday.

- **Can I wear my dress uniform to attend the ceremony?**

You may wear whatever uniform you choose; however, the recommended uniform for the ceremony is Woodland MARPAT for Marines or service equivalent. The candidates will be dressed in Woodland MARPAT.

- **Is there a limit to the number of quests who can attend?**

No, there is no limit on the number of guests each candidate can have. However, please note that seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. We recommend arriving early to secure space for your entire group.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES, TO VIEW IMAGES OF CANDIDATE TRAINING,  
OR TO STAY INFORMED, MONITOR OUR UNIT FACEBOOK PAGE.

<https://www.facebook.com/USMCOCS>



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OCS VISIT

<https://www.ocs.marines.mil/>

