



Graduation and Commissioning

CEREMONY FOR

PLATOON LEADERS CLASS –
SENIORS, 2ND INCREMENT 2026
COMPANY L



Officer Candidates School

TRAINING COMMAND
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA
8 AUGUST 2026



Sequence of Events

*Invocation**

Staff Introductions

Staff Awards

Sound Off

March On

Receive the Report

Publish the Order

Officers Center

Honors to Major General Julie L. Nethercot

*National Anthem**

Presentation of Awards

Remarks by Colonel M. Michelle Melendez

Oath of Office

Remarks by Major General Julie L. Nethercot

*Benediction**

Pass in Review

*Anchors Aweigh**

*Marine's Hymn**

**Please Stand*



MAJOR GENERAL JULIE L. NETHERCOT CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND



Major General Nethercot was commissioned in May of 1993 following her graduation from Midland University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology and Natural Science. From 1994-1997, she served with Marine Wing Communications Squadron-28, Cherry Point, North Carolina as a Platoon Commander, Company Executive Officer/Operations Officer and then as the Bravo Company Commander.

From 1997-2000, she served at The Basic School, Quantico, Virginia. While at TBS, she was a Staff Platoon Commander for three companies and then became the Mike Company Commander. In May 2001, she served as a Platoon Commander at Officer Candidates School for Charlie Company, 1st Platoon.

In August of 2001, she became the Company Commander for Alpha Company, 8th Communication Battalion. She then became the Battalion Operations Officer and deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) I. Upon return from OIF I, she deployed to Marine Corps Central Command-Djibouti Africa in support of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF).

From June 2004-June 2007, she served as the Commanding Officer of Recruiting Station Frederick, Maryland recruiting personnel from Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland.

From August 2008- May 2009, she served as the Regional Plans Officer for Navy Central Command (Bahrain) and went onto become the Chief of Plans, G-5 for I Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, CA. From May 2009-June 2011, she served as Commanding Officer for 9th Communication Battalion in Camp Pendleton, California. The battalion deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan from January 2010 through February 2011 in support of OEF.

From June of 2012-June 2014, she served as the Current Operations Chief, and then the Cyberspace Division Chief for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, J-6. She went onto serve as the Executive Officer for the Ground Combat Element Integrated Task Force, 2d Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina from June 2014-June 2015.

She served as the Commanding Officer of Officer Candidates School from July 2015 to June 2017. And then reported to the Office of the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps where she served as the Military Assistant to the 34th and 35th Assistant Commandants. After serving as the Director of the Commander's Action Group for NORAD and USNORTHCOM, she was selected to the General Officer ranks and served as the Commanding General of Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island and Eastern Recruiting Region from 2020-2022.

Major General Nethercot is a graduate of the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course, the Maritime Advanced Warfighting School, Command and Control Systems School, the Navy Command and Staff College and the National War College. She holds a Master of Science degree in National Security Strategy and a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies.

Her personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal (Second award), the Bronze Star, the Legion of Merit (Second award), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (Third award), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (Fourth award) and the Navy Achievement Medal. She was the 2010 recipient of the Major Meghan McClung award for Visionary Leadership for her performance as a Battalion Commander in Helmand Province.





COLONEL M. MICHELLE MELENDEZ
COMMANDING OFFICER
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL

Michelle hails from Grapevine, Texas and was commissioned in May of 2000.

A Logistics Officer by trade, she served in a variety of operational assignments and executed multiple deployments throughout the South Pacific while assigned in III Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, Japan from 2001-2004. Subsequently she served in Marine Wing Aviation Support Group 37 and Marine Wing Support Squadron 373, under 3d Marine Aircraft Wing from 2004-2007,

and deployed as a Company Commander in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Michelle then served within 1st Marine Logistics Group as a Regimental Operations Officer and Battalion Operations Officer, deploying as part of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit supporting operations in INDOPACOM and CENTCOM. From 2020-2022, she served as the Commanding Officer of I Marine Expeditionary Force Support Battalion, I Marine Information Group.

Her staff assignments include Tactical Logistics Instructor, Tactical Training and Exercise Support Group; Plans Officer, Special Projects Directorate under Director Marine Corps Staff; Inspector General, 1st Marine Logistics Group; and G4 Operations Officer, I Marine Expeditionary Force.

Michelle graduated from the Naval Academy with a BS in English. She is a graduate of Logistics Officer Course, Tactical Logistics Officer Course, Maritime Prepositioning Forces Course, Marine Aviation Tactics and Weapons Aviation Ground Support Course, Expeditionary Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and holds a Masters degree in Military Studies and served as the senior Marine fellow at the Atlantic Council's Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security in Washington DC.

She most recently served as Director, Marine House Legislative Liaison, Office of Legislative Affairs.



SERGEANT MAJOR SEAN R. BLUE

SERGEANT MAJOR OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL

Sergeant Major Sean R. Blue was born in Council Bluffs, Iowa. He enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in May 2006 and completed recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California. Upon completion of recruit training, he reported to Marine Combat Training (MCT), Camp Pendleton, California. Following completion of MCT he attended MOS school at Courthouse Bay, North Carolina for Basic Electrician School (1141). In September 2006, he was meritoriously promoted to Private First Class.

In December 2006, he reported to MWSS-172, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing aboard Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan. In April 2007, he was meritoriously promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal. In March 2008, he was deployed to Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, in

support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In May 2008, he was combat meritoriously promoted to the rank of Corporal.

In December 2008, he received orders to 2d Combat Engineer Battalion, 2d Marine division, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. In May 2009, he was meritoriously promoted to Sergeant. In December 2009, he was deployed to Marjah, Afghanistan with 1st Battalion, 6th Marines in support of Operation Moshtarak.

In January 2011, he received orders to Drill Instructor School MCRD, San Diego, California, Class 2-11. Upon graduation from Drill Instructor School, Sergeant Major Blue was attached to Hotel Company, 2d Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, where he served as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, Chief Drill Instructor, and 2d Battalion Drill Master. In January 2013, he was meritoriously promoted to Staff Sergeant.

In June 2014, he received orders to Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, Twentynine Palms, California, where he served as the Engineer Company Senior Enlisted Advisor, Utilities Platoon Staff Noncommissioned Officer In Charge, and Utilities Platoon Operations Chief.

In January 2016, he received orders to Combat Logistics Battalion 7, Twentynine Palms, California, where he served as the Engineer Service Support Company Maintenance Chief.

In April 2016, he was meritoriously promoted to Gunnery Sergeant. He received orders to Combat Logistics Company 13, Twentynine Palms, California, where he served as the Company Gunnery Sergeant.

In May 2017, he received orders to Officer Candidates School, Quantico, Virginia, where he served as a Sergeant Instructor, Platoon Sergeant, Company Gunnery Sergeant, and Drill Master.

In May 2020, he was promoted to the rank of First Sergeant and received orders to 1st Battalion, 3d Marines where he served as the Unit Senior Enlisted Leader for Weapons Company, Bravo Company, and Headquarters and Service Company. Sergeant Major Blue deployed twice to Okinawa, Japan, in support of Unit Deployment Program with Weapons Company and Headquarters and Service Company.

In July 2022, he received orders to 3d Marine Littoral Regiment where he served as the Headquarters and Service Company Unit Senior Enlisted Leader.

In February 2024, he was promoted to his present rank and received orders to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 162 to serve as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader. Sergeant Major Blue deployed to Djibouti in support of Crisis Response Africa 26.1 as the Aviation Combat Element Command Senior Enlisted Leader.

Sergeant Major Blue has a bachelor's degree from American Military University. Sergeant Major Blue's personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal with 1 gold star, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with 3 gold stars, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 1 gold star, and Combat Action Ribbon.

OFFICIAL PARTY

Reviewing Officer
Commanding Officer
Sergeant Major
Chaplain

Major General Julie L. Nethercot
Colonel M. Michelle Melendez
Sergeant Major Sean R. Blue
Lieutenant Joseph Del Valle Jr.

COMMAND STAFF

Executive Officer
Coordinator of Student Activities
S-1 Officer
S-3 Officer
S-3 Chief
Physical Training Advisor
Drill Master
S-4 Officer
Academics Officer
Academics Chief
Senior Medical Officer
OCS Medical Platoon Chief

Major Kendall J. Ignatz
Captain Brandon T. Arnold
Captain Bailey M. Timby
Major Jerome J. Lademan
Master Sergeant Dachel Avalo
Colour Sergeant David Groom
Gunnery Sergeant Shane R. Carter
Captain Alyssa J. Locksmith
Major Jolyon M. Gidari
Master Sergeant Mario M. Wilson
Commander Cesar R. Mojicavazquez
Chief Petty Officer Daniel J. Holmberg

HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANY

Company Commander
Company First Sergeant
Company Gunnery Sergeant

Captain Michael L. Smith Jr.
First Sergeant Michael E. Wilson
Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey A. Belko



COMPANY L STAFF

Company Commander
Company First Sergeant
Company Executive Officer
Company Gunnery Sergeant
Police Sergeant
Company Clerk

Major J. L. Kerstetter
Gunnery Sergeant Z. J. Smith
Captain J. M. Bennett
Gunnery Sergeant F. J. Johnson
Corporal G. Zayasfernandez
Lance Corporal L. K. McCall

FIRST PLATOON

Platoon Commander
Platoon Sergeant
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor

Captain H. E. Pratt
Gunnery Sergeant R. C. Calvar
Gunnery Sergeant B. A. Mosley
Gunnery Sergeant B. J. Parkhill
Staff Sergeant Y. R. Castellon

SECOND PLATOON

Platoon Commander
Platoon Sergeant
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor

Captain B. C. Krulak
Gunnery Sergeant J. C. Tullock
Gunnery Sergeant K. S. Ray
Gunnery Sergeant L. R. Watson Jr.
Staff Sergeant M. S. Terry Jr.

THIRD PLATOON

Platoon Commander
Platoon Sergeant
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor

Captain J. E. Merino
Gunnery Sergeant H. A. Ashong
Gunnery Sergeant E. M. Cisse
Gunnery Sergeant J. B. Veggian

FOURTH PLATOON

Platoon Commander
Platoon Sergeant
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor

Captain J. D. Acosta
Gunnery Sergeant G. O. Edwards
Gunnery Sergeant C. B. Fike
Staff Sergeant G. W. Schwend

FIFTH PLATOON

Platoon Commander
Platoon Sergeant
Sergeant Instructor
Sergeant Instructor

Captain S. E. Hart
Gunnery Sergeant H. Polito
Gunnery Sergeant C. J. Peterson
Staff Sergeant J. A. Del Haro

The History of Officer Candidates School

The origins of the first officer's training school began in 1891 when Marine Corps General Order No. 1 established the first formal resident school for Marine officers, the School of Application at Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C. To meet the need for officers to serve with the American Expeditionary Forces in World War I, a decision was made to move the instructional effort to Quantico where individual replacements and new units were being formed for the war. Quantico was where all new officers went and the Officers Camp of Instruction, organized at Quantico in July 1917, was the place they received their training. Its original location was near Barnett Avenue, approximately one-half mile south of what is now the town of Quantico. In April of 1918, the school was formalized and titled the Officers Training Camp.

In 1919, the Commanding General of Marine Base Quantico, Major General John A. Lejeune, established the Marine Corps Officers Training School and the Marine Officers Infantry School. These two schools were subsequently combined in 1920 to become the Marine Officers Training School. By 1922, this school had further evolved into the Field Officers Course (modeled after the Army's Command and General Staff School) and the Company Officers Course, both designed to teach tactics, topography, law, administration, and engineering, among other subjects. A third course, called The Basic School (TBS) was designed to indoctrinate new Marine Lieutenants in the duties of infantry leaders.

Having proved itself on the battlefields of France, a still growing Marine Corps began recruiting potential officers from colleges and universities through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) program. Second Lieutenants commissioned from the U.S. Naval Academy, NROTC units, and qualified enlisted Marines who had been commissioned reported to TBS for instruction. Officer training continued to expand and, in 1924, TBS moved to Philadelphia due to a shortage of suitable classrooms and officers billeting in Quantico.

In 1934, the Marine Corps introduced the Platoon Leaders Class (PLC), selecting students from certain colleges that did not have a ROTC. In the spring of 1935, PLC was organized at Quantico and San Diego. Under this new program, college graduates were appointed Second Lieutenants in the Marine Corps Reserve after two six-week training periods. Lieutenant Colonel Clifton B. Cates, commanded the first 200 candidates at Quantico in July 1935. In July of 1940, Colonel Lemuel Shepard Jr. headed a special unit tasked with training additional officer candidates. On 1 November 1940, Officer Candidates Class-1 became the first class to graduate in Quantico.

The wartime demands of 1943 prompted the Commandant to establish temporary candidate detachments at Camp Elliot, California and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The PLC was reestablished in 1944 and except for a temporary move to Parris Island, South Carolina in 1951, it has remained at Quantico. The addition of the PLC program to officer candidate training led to another reorganization, and in 1944, the Officer Candidates Class was renamed Officer Candidates School. TBS reopened in September 1945, and by 1947, through various reorganizations, had assumed responsibility for training all officer candidates, including those of the PLC and NROTC. Coincident with these reorganizations, TBS moved from its first home on Barnett Avenue to Brown Field at the site of the old Airfield No. 1.

TBS headquarters left Brown Field in early 1955 and relocated to Camp Upshur where it could be closer to its training activities. A newly formed unit, the Training and Test Regiment, took over the training activities remaining at Brown Field, and became the unit responsible for training officer candidates of the various officer procurement programs. On 1 June 1963, the regiment was re-designated the Officer Candidates School.

