



# *Completion Ceremony*

FOR

PLATOON LEADERS CLASS –  
JUNIORS, 2ND INCREMENT 2026  
COMPANY I



# *Officer Candidates School*

TRAINING COMMAND  
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA

6 AUGUST 2026





# *Sequence of Events*

*Invocation\**

*Staff Introductions*

*Staff Awards*

*Sound Off*

*March On*

*Presentation of Awards*

*Remarks by Colonel M. Michelle Melendez*

*Exchange Guidon*

*\*Please Stand*



COLONEL M. MICHELLE MELENDEZ  
COMMANDING OFFICER  
OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL

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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

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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 frocked to the rank of First Sergeant and receive 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 frocked to his present rank and executed 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 bachelors 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 star's, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 1 gold star, and Combat Action Ribbon.

## OFFICIAL PARTY

Commanding Officer  
Sergeant Major  
Chaplain

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 I STAFF

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

Major A. J. Batcher  
Gunnery Sergeant R. S. Boehringer  
Captain D. J. Misch  
Gunnery Sergeant A. Beatty  
Corporal T. A. Bennett  
Private First Class J. B. Destrades

## FIRST PLATOON

Platoon Commander  
Platoon Sergeant  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor

Captain B. A. Gunn  
Staff Sergeant L. J. Mendezgarcia  
Staff Sergeant J. D. Bowman  
Staff Sergeant D. J. Camacho  
Staff Sergeant G. S. Schaeffer

## SECOND PLATOON

Platoon Commander  
Platoon Sergeant  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor

Captain T. A. Upadhyaya  
Gunnery Sergeant J. R. Munden  
Staff Sergeant M. E. Falke  
Staff Sergeant Z. T. Korstange  
Staff Sergeant D. J. McNutt

## THIRD PLATOON

Platoon Commander  
Platoon Sergeant  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor  
Sergeant Instructor

Captain Z. R. Crete  
Gunnery Sergeant M. D. Tergesen  
Gunnery Sergeant E. EstradaQuinones  
Gunnery Sergeant G. L. Shewbridge  
Staff Sergeant J. J. Negron

# *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.

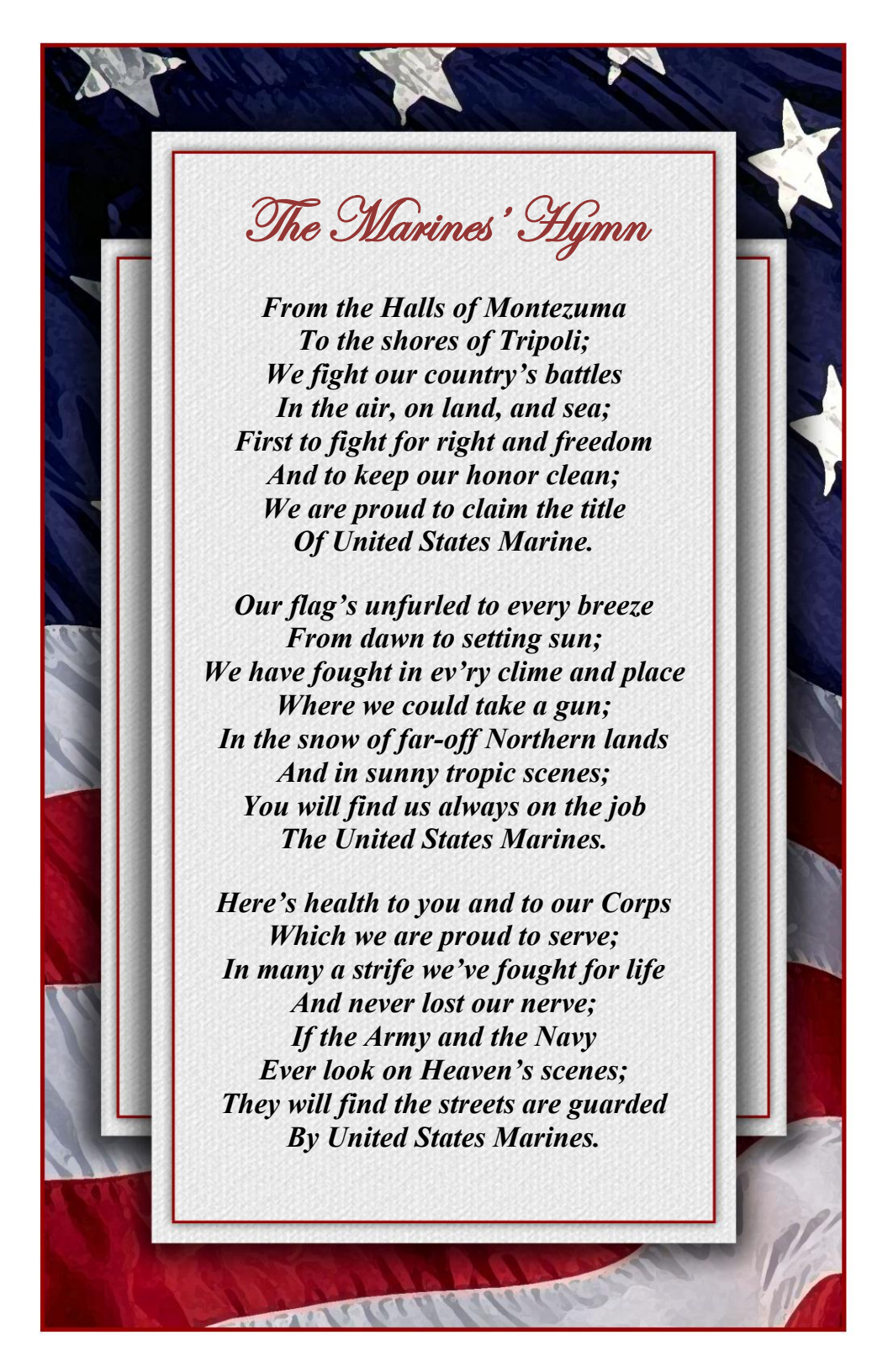
The wartime demands of 1943 prompted the Commandant to establish temporary candidate detachments at Camp Elliot, California and Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. The PLC was reestablished in 1944 and except for a temporary move to Parris Island, South Carolina in 1951, it has remained at Quantico. The addition 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.









## *The Marines' Hymn*

*From the Halls of Montezuma  
To the shores of Tripoli;  
We fight our country's battles  
In the air, on land, and sea;  
First to fight for right and freedom  
And to keep our honor clean;  
We are proud to claim the title  
Of United States Marine.*

*Our flag's unfurled to every breeze  
From dawn to setting sun;  
We have fought in ev'ry clime and place  
Where we could take a gun;  
In the snow of far-off Northern lands  
And in sunny tropic scenes;  
You will find us always on the job  
The United States Marines.*

*Here's health to you and to our Corps  
Which we are proud to serve;  
In many a strife we've fought for life  
And never lost our nerve;  
If the Army and the Navy  
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;  
They will find the streets are guarded  
By United States Marines.*