



250th
United States Marine Corps
BIRTHDAY BALL
Officer Candidates School

National Museum of the Marine Corps
24 November 2025



SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

*Invocation**

Birthday Video

POW/MIA Message

Sound Attention

Adjutant's Call

Ceremonial March On

*Present the Colors**

*National Anthem**

*Presentation of Birthday Cake**

General John A. Lejeune's Message

Cake Cutting Ceremony

*Retire the Colors**

*Ceremonial March Off**

*Anchors Aweigh and The Marines' Hymn**

Commanding Officer's Remarks

Guest of Honor's Remarks

Dinner

Entertainment

**Please Stand*



GUEST OF HONOR

Lieutenant General Eric E. Austin
Deputy Commandant for Combat Development
and Integration



Lieutenant General Eric Austin assumed the duties as the Deputy Commandant for Combat Development and Integration, Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, and Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command in August 2024. He last served as the Commanding General, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing.

Lieutenant General Austin was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1991, earned his wings as a naval aviator in 1994, and selected to fly

the AV-8B Harrier. Lieutenant General Austin has extensive operational and tactical experience in the AV-8B, to include deployment aboard amphibious shipping as part of a Marine Expeditionary Unit and combat experience from multiple deployments to Kuwait and Iraq. He commanded Marine Attack Squadron 211 from May 2007 to November of 2008 and more recently commanded Marine Aircraft Group 14 from June 2014 to May 2016. He also served as the Deputy Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Command.

His staff assignments include Director, Capabilities Development Directorate, Combat Development and Integration; Deputy Director, Joint Training, Joint Staff J7; Military Secretary to the Commandant of the Marine Corps; Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing; Pacific Command Action Officer, Operations Directorate for the Joint Staff J-39; Executive Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 13; Executive Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 513; Weapons and Tactics Instructor, Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1; and various squadron billets in operations, aviation maintenance, aviation safety and pilot training.

Lieutenant General Austin graduated from the Naval Academy with a BS in Aeronautical Engineering in 1991, was a distinguished graduate of The Basic School in 1992, and completed flight school in 1994. He was awarded a Masters of National Security Strategy from the National War College in 2010, graduated from the Marine Corps University Senior Planner's course in 2012, and completed the Harvard Business School Advanced Management Program in 2013.



CEREMONY PARTICIPANTS

Guest of Honor	Lieutenant General Eric E. Austin
Commanding Officer	Colonel M. Michelle Melendez
Executing Officer	Lieutenant Colonel Phillip A. Skillman
Sergeant Major	Sergeant Major Carl J. Jacobsen
Oldest Marine	Colonel M. Michelle Melendez
Youngest Marine	Private First-Class Jonathon J. Morales
Adjutant	Captain Bailey M. Timby
Narrator	Corporal Valentina Spirgatis

Cake Escorts

Captain Dylan J. Misch	Sergeant Domonik J. Lamour
Corporal Brandon L. Johnson	Lance Corporal Giancarlo A. Almeida

Color Guard

Sergeant Gage W. Karsten	Corporal Destiny A. Pontones
Corporal Korey R. Roseland	Lance Corporal Kamal V. Johnson

Sword Detail

Major Jerome J. Lademan	Captain Paul S. Nergararian
First Sergeant Froylan Ceja	Master Sergeant Dachel Avalo
Gunnery Sergeant Willie Crowder-Matlocklosano	Staff Sergeant Argenis D. Del Castillo
Sergeant Albert R. Satterfield	Corporal Hunter F. Story

COMMAND STAFF

Coordinator of Student Activities	Captain Ethan A. Osborn
Coordinator of Student Activities Chief	Staff Sergeant Quinton L.Owens
S-3 Officer	Major Ryan H. Hughes
S-3 Chief	Master Sergeant Dachel Avalo
Physical Training Advisor	Colour Sergeant David Groom
Drill Master	Gunnery Sergeant Shane R. Carter
S-4 Officer	Captain Mikayla R. Schmidt
Academics Officer	Major Jolyon M. Gidari
Academics Chief	Master Sergeant Mario M. Wilson
Senior Medical Officer	Commander Cesar R. MojicaVazquez
OCS Medical Platoon Chief	Chief Petty Officer Daniel J. Holmberg
Command Chaplain	Lieutenant Joseph Del Valle

Headquarters and Service Company

Company Commander	Captain Jessica L. Parham
Company First Sergeant	First Sergeant Brett E. Thompson
Company Gunnery Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant Jeffrey A. Belko

Company A

Company Commander	Captain P. S. Nergararian
Company First Sergeant	First Sergeant Froylan Ceja
Company Gunnery Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant Willie Matlock
Company Executive Officer	Captain Brnadon T. Arnold

Company D

Company Commander	Major Jerome J. Lademan
Company First Sergeant	First Sergeant Anthony D. Bauder
Company Gunnery Sergeant	Gunnery Sergeant Ryan S. Boehringer
Company Executive Officer	Captain Cole B. Patton

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN A. LEJEUNE'S BIRTHDAY MESSAGE



On November 10, 1775, a Corps of Marines was created by a resolution of Continental Congress. Since that date many thousand men have borne the name "Marine". In memory of them it is fitting that we who are Marines should commemorate the birthday of our corps by calling to mind the glories of its long and illustrious history.

The record of our corps is one which will bear comparison with that of the most famous military organizations in the world's history. During 90 of the 146 years of its existence the Marine Corps has been in action against the Nation's foes. From the Battle of Trenton to the Argonne, Marines have won foremost honors in war, and in the long eras of tranquility at home, generation after

generation of Marines have grown gray in war in both hemispheres and in every corner of the seven seas, that our country and its citizens might enjoy peace and security.

In every battle and skirmish since the birth of our corps, Marines have acquitted themselves with the greatest distinction, winning new honors on each occasion until the term "Marine" has come to signify all that is highest in military efficiency and soldierly virtue.

This high name of distinction and soldierly repute we who are Marines today have received from those who preceded us in the corps. With it we have also received from them the eternal spirit which has animated our corps from generation to generation and has been the distinguishing mark of the Marines in every age. So long as that spirit continues to flourish Marines will be found equal to every emergency in the future as they have been in the past, and the men of our Nation will regard us as worthy successors to the long line of illustrious men who have served as "Soldiers of the Sea" since the founding of the Corps.





10 NOVEMBER 2025

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Two hundred and fifty years ago, before our Nation declared its independence, a small group of men gathered in Philadelphia and formed a Corps of Marines. From that moment, our story has been bound to the story of America itself. A quarter of a millennium later, Marines remain at the center of our Nation's defense. Ready to fight, ready to win, and ready to uphold the trust placed in us since 1775.

Across centuries, Marines have fought on distant shores and in desperate battles, earning a reputation for discipline, toughness, and valor. From the Revolution to the World Wars, from Chapultepec to today's operations across the globe, every generation has proven worthy of the title Marine. They secured liberty, defended allies, and carried forward the promise of a free Nation, and a free world. We are the heirs of that legacy, and we are its stewards.

This anniversary reminds us that our standards are the foundation of our Corps. Honor, Courage, and Commitment are not abstractions, but the code that binds us to one another and to all who went before. Every Marine, in every clime and place, must hold true to these values. The conflicts ahead will demand nothing less.

I could not be prouder of the Marines I see serving today. At home, at sea, and across the globe, you carry forward our proud traditions with skill and ferocity. It is your discipline, initiative, and fighting spirit that anchor our Corps. The battles of the next 250 years will challenge us in new ways, but I have no doubt we will prevail. Happy Birthday Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric M. Smith".

General, U.S. Marine Corps
Commandant of the Marine Corps

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.*



Happy Birthday
Marines

