

**31st Annual Commanding General's
Off-Duty Voluntary Education Graduation**

2026

June 5, 2026 | Base Theater | Camp Lejeune, NC

Graduation Program

Processional, Pomp and Circumstance

2nd Marine Division Band,
Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

Invocation

Deputy Chaplain William D. Butts,
United States Navy, Marine Corps Installations East

Presentation of Colors

Color Guard, Headquarters and Support Battalion,
Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

National Anthem

Samuel K. Lewis, Primary Prevention Integrator,
Marine and Family Programs, Marine Corps Community Services

Retire the Colors

Color Guard, Headquarters and Support Battalion,
Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

Remarks

Colonel Brian LaPointe,
Commanding Officer,
Headquarters and Support Battalion

Confirmation, Conferring of the Degrees

Timothy Freeman, Executive Director,
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs,
North Carolina State Approving Agency

Presentation of Graduates

Amy Duclos, Personal & Professional Development Advisor Supervisor,
Marine and Family Programs, Marine Corps Community Services

Benediction

Deputy Chaplain William D. Butts,
United States Navy, Marine Corps Installations East

Anchors Aweigh and The Marines' Hymn

2nd Marine Division Band,
Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

Recessional

2nd Marine Division Band,
Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune



5 June 2026

Dear Graduates and Family Members:

On behalf of the many proud Marines, Sailors, civilians, and families aboard Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, welcome to the 31st Annual Off Duty Education Ceremony. It is a pleasure to host this annual event.

We gather to recognize the extraordinary accomplishments of all who have worked so hard to complete programs of study during the 2025-2026 academic year. Today's commencement ceremony signifies the achievement of long-term educational goals reached while serving as active-duty Service Members of our United States Armed Forces, working full-time jobs, or often while raising families.

The primary goals of the Voluntary Education Program are to provide opportunities for personal and professional development, to improve the competencies of military personnel, to enhance career progression, and to prepare for life after military service. The John A. Lejeune Education Center and the New River Education Center are privileged to provide quality and diverse educational programs and testing services to active-duty personnel, reservists, family members, Department of Defense employees, and civilians of our community.

Graduates, I salute your diligence, your talent, and your intellect. Family members, I appreciate your willingness to ensure continuous support for your graduate and hope you enjoy this celebration of their accomplishments.

Congratulations to you all!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G.B. Pace". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "G" and a prominent "P".

G.B. PACE

Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commander
Marine Corps Installations East-
Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune

COLONEL BRIAN LAPOINTE

Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion

Colonel LaPointe is a native of Westborough, Massachusetts. He attended Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, New Hampshire, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing. He completed Officer Candidates School and commissioned a Second Lieutenant on 9 August 2002. After completing The Basic School in March 2003, he reported to 2d Combat Engineer Battalion. He graduated the Combat Engineer Officer Course, Marine Corps Engineer School and was assigned as Platoon Commander, Company B, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion.

During September 2004 to April 2005, Colonel LaPointe and his platoon attached to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines and deployed to Al Fallujah, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II-2b and subsequently participated in Operation Phantom Fury (Al Fajr). Upon return from Iraq, he and his platoon were reassigned to 3rd Platoon, Company B and refitted as a MEU Platoon. In June 2006, Colonel LaPointe and his platoon deployed with Battalion Landing Team 1/8, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (SOC) and subsequently participated in the Noncombatant Evacuation Operation to evacuate American Citizens from Beirut, Lebanon. In January 2007, he was assigned as the Company Commander, Headquarters and Service Company, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion.

During June 2007 to July 2010, Colonel LaPointe was assigned as the Inspector-Instructor, Company C, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion. During this time, he and his staff mobilized and demobilized company and platoon size elements in support of OIF, OEF, and Theater Security Cooperation Exercises. During August 2010 to May 2011, Colonel LaPointe attended Expeditionary Warfare School. During this time, he also graduated as an Operations and Tactics Instructor from the Tactical MAGTF Integration Course at the Marine Corps Tactics and Operations Group.

During June 2011 to March 2012, Colonel LaPointe was assigned as the Company Commander, Company B, 8th Engineer Support Battalion. During March to June 2012, he completed the Advisor Training Cell's Combat Advisor course as the Team Leader of an Engineer Advisor Team. In June 2012, he was assigned as the Engineer Operations Officer, Combat Logistics Regiment 2 and subsequently deployed in support of Operation Enduring Freedom 13.1.

During September 2013 to June 2014, he was assigned as the Company Commander, Engineer Support Company, 8th Engineer Support Battalion. During June 2014 to July 2015, Colonel LaPointe attended the College of Naval Command and Staff, U.S. Naval War College.

During July 2015 to July 2018, Colonel LaPointe was assigned as the Director of Instruction, Marine Corps Engineer School. From July 2018 to July 2019, he was assigned to 2d Combat Engineer Battalion where he served as the Executive Officer. In July 2019, he was transferred to the College of Distance Education and Training, Lejeune Region, where he served as the Head of the Command and Staff Blended Seminar Program. From June 2020 to June 2022, Colonel LaPointe served as the Commanding Officer, 2d Combat Engineer Battalion. During June 2022 to July 2023, Colonel LaPointe attended the US Army War College.

Colonel LaPointe served as the Executive Officer, II Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group from July 2023 to July 2024 and then as the AC/S G-4, 2d Marine Division from July to December 2024. In December 2024, Colonel LaPointe was assigned as the commanding Officer of Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations East-Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune.

Colonel LaPointe's personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with gold stars in lieu of fourth award, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat distinguishing device and gold stars in lieu of third award, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon. He holds a Master of Strategic Studies from the US Army War College, a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College, and a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from Southern New Hampshire University.





Message from the Education Services Officer:

Welcome to the 31st Annual Commanding General's Graduation Ceremony. It is truly an honor to come together and celebrate the accomplishments of our Marines, Sailors, veterans, military spouses, DoD civilians, and family members who have chosen to pursue their education while balancing the many demands of military life. Your commitment speaks volumes, and today is about recognizing both your achievements and the journey it took to get here.

The Education Assistance Branch is proud to support Colonel Brian D. LaPointe, Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Support Battalion, as this year's host. It is a privilege to stand alongside our leadership in recognizing the hard work and dedication of those we serve. This ceremony represents more than academic milestones. It reflects the strength of a community that continues to grow, adapt, and invest in its future.

Our team remains committed to walking alongside each of you. Whether it is your first class or your final course, we strive to provide the guidance, resources, and support needed to help you succeed. We understand the long days, late nights, and sacrifices that come with earning your degree, and we are proud to be part of that journey.

To our graduates, this moment is well earned. Behind every diploma is a story of perseverance, resilience, and purpose. As you cross the stage today, know that you are not only celebrating a personal achievement, but also setting an example for others who will follow in your footsteps.

Congratulations to each of you! We are incredibly proud of what you have accomplished and excited for what lies ahead.

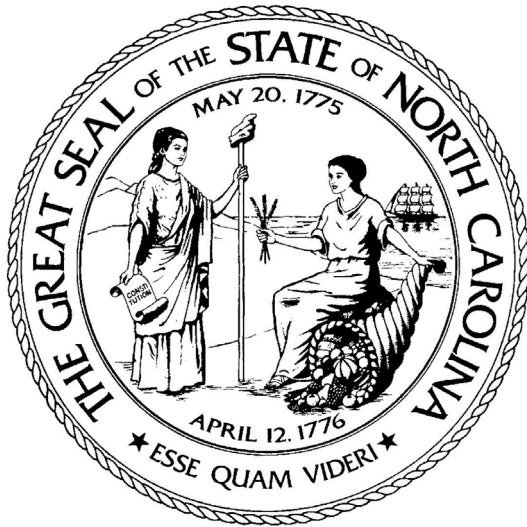
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. A.M. Adamovage". The script is fluid and cursive.

Ashley M. Adamovage, M.P.M., D.M.

Education Services Officer

Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune – Marine Corps Air Station New River



Timothy D. Freeman serves as the Executive Director of the North Carolina State Approving Agency (NCSAA), where he provides leadership and oversight for a statewide program supporting veterans, military members, and eligible individuals in accessing educational benefits. In this role, he manages the agency's contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, oversees fiscal operations and reporting, and leads the development and execution of the Annual Business Plan. He also ensures compliance with federal and state regulations and holds final authority for the approval and re-approval of educational programs across North Carolina.

Mr. Freeman contributes at the national level as a member of the Contract/Cooperative Agreement Committee for the National Association of State Approving Agencies, representing the South Region. His prior experience includes serving as Director of the Veterans & Military Services Center at Elizabeth City State University, where he led recruitment, admissions, and benefit certification efforts for veterans, service members, and their families. He also advised university leadership on policies and programs supporting military-affiliated students and conducted outreach through community engagement, presentations, and workshops.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Freeman served as the Tidewater Regional Manager for the Virginia Department of Veterans Services State Approving Agency, where he was responsible for evaluating and approving educational programs for veterans utilizing GI Bill benefits. He has held several leadership roles within professional organizations, including serving on boards and committees for the National Association of Veterans Program Administrators and multiple student financial aid associations at the state and regional levels.

Mr. Freeman holds a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and a Master of Theology from Saint Leo University.

AMERICAN MILITARY UNIVERSITY

Michael Allen	Master of Business Administration with Concentration in IT Management
Bradley Brown	Bachelors of Science in Environmental Science
Lara DeLeon	Bachelor of Arts in English
Nickolas Falk	Bachelor of Science in Sports & Health Sciences (Concentration Exercise Science), Summa Cum Laude
Ashton Fuerstenberg	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Jonathan Hill	Bachelor of Business Administration, Summa Cum Laude
Bryanna Lehman	Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Cum Laude
Siquan Li	Master of Business Administration
Karen Lintag	Bachelor of Science in Sports and Health Sciences, Magna Cum Laude
Alexander Medina	Associate of Arts in Business Administration
Robert Ostrander	Master of Arts in National Security Studies
Shannon Simms	Master of Arts in Management, and Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management
Cierra Walker	Master of Arts in Human Resource Management
Ebony Washington	Associate of Science in Public Health
Lawrence Wrenn	Master of Art in Human Resource Management

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

Diamond Ivey	Bachelor of Science in Forensic Psychology
---------------------	--

CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY

Steven Upsher	Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and Security
----------------------	--

COASTAL CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bethany Romans	Associate in Science Medical Office Administration
-----------------------	--

COLORADO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Ashley Adamovage Doctor of Management in Executive Leadership,
Patriot Scholarship Recipient

COLUMBIA COLLEGE OF MISSOURI

Stella Rodela Associate in Science in Human Services

EAST COAST POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Sara Lopez Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
with a major in Business Management

EMBRY RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

Jeremmy Raj Bachelor of Science in Logistics and Supply Chain Management

FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY

Jessica White Bachelor of Science in Psychology

LEES-MCRAE COLLEGE

Kayce Straight Master of Science in Human Service

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

Shanna Colman Master of Arts in Human Services Counseling:
Crisis Response and Trauma

Tony Jackson Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction,
Graduate with High Distinction

JaKeevious Mack Associate of Arts in Education Studies

Ritchie Rich Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies

Jordyn Ridgeway Master of Science in Criminal Justice, Forensic Psychology

Dustin Sammons Master of Arts in Executive Leadership

Sandrea Williams Bachelor of Science in Public Administration, Magna Cum Laude

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Nathalie Calzada Associate of Arts in General Education, Magna Cum Laude

NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE

Alex Rancloes Master of Business Administration

POST UNIVERSITY

Lallai Rivas Bachelors Of Science in Human Resource Management,
Magna Cum Laude

PURDUE UNIVERSITY GLOBAL

Ricardo Rodriguezvera Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management,
Summa Cum Laude

SOUTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE UNIVERSITY

Emmanuel Bonheur Master of Business Administration

Camila Dominguez Master of Science in Higher Education Administration

Darnell Harper Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Gavin McNulty Bachelor of Science in Business Administration

Alyssa Nieblas Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

John White Associate in Liberal Arts

STRAYER UNIVERSITY

Karey Boatright Bachelor of Business Administration in Acquisitions
and Contracting Management, Dean's List

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Joshua Abundiz Bachelor of Applied Arts and Science

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA GLOBAL CAMPUS

Ruby Halbert	Bachelor of Arts in Operations Management and Analysis
Kyree Hall	Bachelor of Arts in Social and Criminal Justice
Eric Jasper	Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Magna Cum Laude
Dominic Johann	Bachelor of Arts in Finance, Summa Cum Laude

TRIDENT UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL

Cameron Dickey	Master of Science in Leadership, Summa Cum Laude
-----------------------	--

TROY UNIVERSITY

Justin Harrison	Master of Business Administration in General Management
------------------------	---

UNIVERSITY OF CHARLESTON WEST VIRGINIA

Cesar Lopez-Justo	Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership
--------------------------	--

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS

Christian Anderson	Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
Cobrea Charles	Bachelor of Science in General Studies, Cum Laude
David Daley	Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Magna Cum Laude
Gina Tang How	Associate of Arts in General Studies
Carlos NunezRivera	Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice
Estela Pope	Bachelor of Science in General Studies, Alpha Sigma Lambda
Brian Sanchez	Associate of Arts
Jonah Stevens	Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
Allyssa Stewart	Associate of Arts

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GLOBAL CAMPUS (CONTINUED)

Josue DeLeon	Bachelors in Cybersecurity
Erich Eichmiller	Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies
Toyria Mattear	Master of Science in Management: Marketing
Victor Rivas	Master of Science in Cyber Operations
Enrique Rodriguez	Master of Science in Management – Project Management
Cristina Young	Master of Science in Management Human Resources, Phi Kappa Phi Honors

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE - KNOXVILLE

Jaidyn Skidmore	Master of Science in Communication and Information
------------------------	--

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT ARLINGTON

Brandy Wrenn	Master of Social Work
---------------------	-----------------------

VICTOR VALLEY COLLEGE

Erica Roberts-Palmore	Associate in Psychology
------------------------------	-------------------------

WALDEN UNIVERSITY

Bianca Bolis	Master of Science in Developmental Psychology
Rachel Depasquale	Master in Social Work

WEBSTER UNIVERSITY

George Jones	Master of Business Administration, and Master Certificate: Government Contracting, Summa Cum Laude
---------------------	---

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Christian Apollo Anderson
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

Christian Apollo Anderson, 24, marks the completion of his Bachelor of Science in Computer Science after a journey defined by perseverance, discipline, and personal transformation. Driven by a desire to grow, challenge himself, and create new opportunities, Christian saw education as a way to build a stronger future beyond the circumstances of his early life. His path was not without hardship, including the heartbreaking loss of his brother in a drunk driving incident while he was returning to school during military service. Instead of allowing tragedy to halt his progress, he turned that experience into motivation to stay focused and keep moving forward. With the support of trusted relationships, especially his friend Daniel Taylor, Christian remained committed through the demands of academics and service obligations. Along the way, he developed greater confidence, sharpened his discipline, and gained a clearer understanding of his own potential. As he looks ahead, Christian plans to enter the cybersecurity field while also mentoring others, helping them build skills, confidence, and belief in what they can achieve.

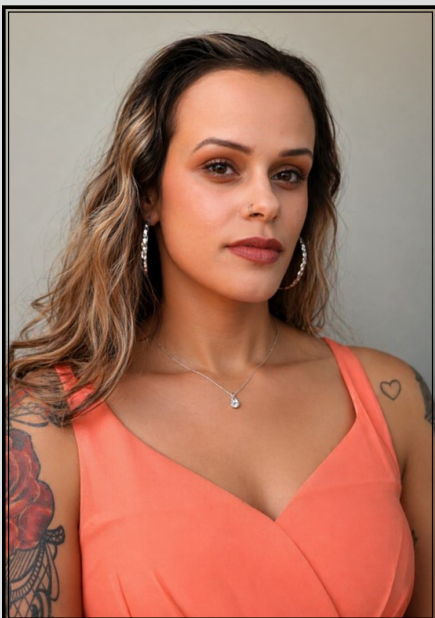


Congratulations GRADUATES!



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Bianca Bolis
Master's degree in Developmental Psychology
Walden University
Military Affiliation: Army Reserve



Bianca Bolis will receive her Master's degree in Developmental Psychology after a journey marked by courage, perseverance, and an unwavering commitment to her family's future. As a mother and adult learner, Bianca was motivated by the desire to create greater stability for her children while pursuing a path that would allow her to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. During her program, she faced one of life's most serious challenges when she suffered a stroke midway through her studies. Balancing recovery, parenting, work, and academic responsibilities demanded extraordinary strength, yet she remained focused on progress and refused to lose sight of her long-term goals. Supported by the love and encouragement of her family and children, Bianca continued forward with determination and grace. Her educational experience deepened her resilience, strengthened her confidence, and reinforced the power of persistence. Looking ahead, she plans to continue advancing in the clinical research field while using her knowledge to better understand and support individuals and families.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Cameron James Dickey
Master of Science in Leadership
Trident University International
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



Cameron James Dickey, 37, has earned his Master of Science in Leadership, marking a powerful journey shaped by determination, growth, and purpose. As the only member of his family to serve in the military, Cameron pursued higher education not only for himself, but to set an example for his daughter and show that no starting point limits what can be achieved. From barely passing high school to completing his associate, bachelor's, and now master's degree, his path reflects steady persistence and commitment. He balanced the demands of active-duty service, including deployments, overseas assignments, and a cross-country move, while supporting his wife through nursing school and remaining present for his family. Many late nights and personal sacrifices were required, but his discipline and consistency kept him moving forward. Grounded by the support and motivation of his family, Cameron's journey strengthened both his leadership perspective and appreciation for lifelong learning. As he prepares to retire after 20 years of service, he plans to continue leading and mentoring others, carrying forward the values of integrity, accountability, and dedication into his next chapter.

WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Kyree Hall
Bachelor of Arts in Social and Criminal Justice
University of Arizona Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Veteran, United States Marine Corps

Kyree V. Hall, 37, has earned his Bachelor of Arts in Social and Criminal Justice through a journey defined by grit, sacrifice, and a steadfast commitment to family. After more than 12 years of military service, Kyree faced a major turning point when injuries led to surgeries and a medical separation from the Marine Corps. With a wife and three children depending on him, he was forced to quickly rebuild his career while managing medical challenges and returning to school. Rather than giving up, Kyree leaned into determination, veteran resources, and the support of those around him to keep pressing forward. His wife became the foundation of that support, carrying extra responsibilities at home and helping him through countless late nights of studying and early mornings for work. Through every challenge, Kyree developed even greater resilience, adaptability, and perspective. Today, as a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, he plans to use his education to strengthen survivor advocacy, enhance trauma-informed care, and improve prevention efforts for those he serves. His story is a reminder that setbacks do not define the future when purpose and perseverance lead the way.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

George Shadrach Jones Sr.
Master of Business Administration & Master's Certificate in Government Contracting
School: Webster University
Military Affiliation: Veteran, United States Marine Corps



George Shadrach Jones Sr. approaches education with a simple but powerful belief: knowledge is one of the few things no one can ever take from you, yet it remains one of the greatest gifts you can share with others. At 50, that philosophy has carried him to the completion of his Master of Business Administration and Master's Certificate in Government Contracting, an achievement built through persistence, faith, and an unwavering sense of purpose. While pursuing his education, George balanced the competing demands of family life, professional responsibilities, and operating a business, all while staying focused on the future he envisioned for himself and those around him. The journey required intentional sacrifice, but with the steadfast encouragement of his wife, children, close friends, and the support of Webster University, he remained committed even on the most exhausting days. Encouragement from a former supervisor, who challenged him not to allow work to become an excuse, helped reinforce that commitment. George views education not as a personal finish line, but as a tool for service. He hopes to use his experience and knowledge to help businesses grow, strengthen communities, and inspire the next generation to believe that ambitious goals are

always within reach, no matter when the journey begins.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Siquan Li
Master of Business Administration
School: American Military University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

At just 24, Siquan Li has already demonstrated a level of drive and discipline that reflects both ambition and remarkable focus. While serving on active duty in the Marine Corps, supervising teams, and managing demanding operational responsibilities, she simultaneously pursued her Master of Business Administration with a clear vision for the future. For Siquan, higher education was not simply about earning another credential. It was about translating real-world military leadership and logistics experience into a formal business foundation that would prepare her for strategic leadership beyond uniformed service. Balancing the intensity of military operations with graduate-level coursework required structure, consistency, and an unwavering commitment to her goals. By carving out dedicated time for academics and leaning on the encouragement of her spouse and fellow Marines, she maintained steady progress without losing momentum. Her educational experience has strengthened her confidence, sharpened her strategic mindset, and reinforced her belief that professional growth does not require waiting for the "right time." Siquan plans to carry both her military experience and business education forward to improve global supply chains and lead high-performing teams with integrity, adaptability, and purpose.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

JaKeevious Mack
Associate of Science in Educational Studies
School: Liberty University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



For JaKeevious Mack, education has always represented possibility. Raised in a low-income community where advancement required determination and intentional effort, he learned early that education could be a powerful force for changing the trajectory of a life. At 26, while serving on active duty in the Marine Corps and navigating the added demands of deployment, JaKeevious remained committed to earning his Associate of Science in Educational Studies. His journey required resilience, especially as a non-traditional student balancing military service with academic expectations, but he approached each challenge with perspective, recognizing that success is defined less by timing and more by perseverance. Drawing strength from mentors across the Marine Corps, educational resources, and the support of the Education Office at Marine Corps Air Station New River, he steadily moved forward with purpose. Receiving the Central Florida Marine Corps Foundation Scholarship was a meaningful affirmation of that effort. JaKeevious' academic experience reinforced the value of consistency, discipline, and commitment, qualities he now hopes to carry into the field of education. His goal is to invest in the next

generation, offering the same encouragement, mentorship, and inspiration that helped shape his own path.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Toyria Nicole Mattear
Master of Science in Marketing Management
School: University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

Toyria Nicole Mattear approached higher education with curiosity, determination, and a clear belief that learning should evolve alongside the world around us. At 38, she is earning her Master of Science in Marketing Management while balancing the competing demands of military service, family life, and the very real need for personal time to recharge. Her journey was not without difficult seasons, particularly during intense work inspection periods when academic responsibilities felt distant from the immediate demands of the mission. Rather than allowing those moments to derail her progress, Toyria adapted by learning one of the most important lessons adult learners often face: asking for help is a strength, not a weakness. Whether seeking guidance from tutors, communicating openly with her command, or intentionally creating a home environment that fostered focus and discipline, she built the structure needed to keep moving forward. Her educational experience has expanded the way she thinks about opportunity, challenging her to consider how newly developed skills can be applied in meaningful and impactful ways. With aspirations to grow into large-scale operational leadership roles that promote positive environments and organizational growth, Toyria is already looking toward what comes next. Her message to others is both honest and encouraging: speak up, use the support around you, and never underestimate the example your perseverance sets for those watching.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Janieliz M. Jimenez Mirach
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
School: University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



Legacy can be a powerful motivator, and for Janieliz M. Jimenez Mirach, that legacy began with her grandparents. At 25, Janieliz is earning her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, following a path inspired in part by her grandfather, a Vietnam veteran whose own pursuit of higher education left a lasting impression on her long before she ever wore the uniform herself. Raised in Puerto Rico and beginning college at just 17, Janieliz carried that early foundation with her into the Marine Corps, even as distance from family, unfamiliar surroundings, and the demands of military life tested her resolve. In moments when isolation and self-doubt crept in, she found strength through supportive leadership, dedicated university advisors, fellow Marines, the encouragement of the USO community, and ultimately the unwavering support of her husband. Her education has become more than academic preparation. It has become the framework for building her own business and creating a future shaped by independence, opportunity, and service to others. With dreams of one day returning to Puerto Rico to create employment opportunities for young adults

entering the workforce, Janieliz is transforming personal ambition into a vision that reaches far beyond herself.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Robert Herold Ostrander
Master of Arts in National Security, Concentration in Regional Affairs
School: American Military University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

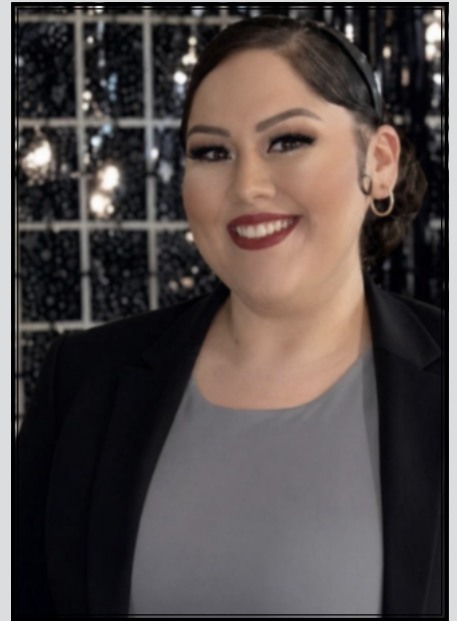
For Robert Herold Ostrander, education has never been a box to check. It has been a pathway that has fundamentally shaped the course of his life and career. At 35, Robert is completing his Master of Arts in National Security after a years-long effort marked by deployments, field exercises, professional military education, and the constant balancing act of military service and family life. Originally intending to complete this degree in just two years after beginning in 2019, life and operational demands had other plans. Still, Robert remained committed, steadily returning to the goal whenever time allowed. His passion for history, political science, and national security kept the purpose behind the degree alive, while the unwavering support of his wife provided the foundation that made completion possible. Education has already transformed his professional journey, opening doors that allowed him to commission and experience the Marine Corps from an entirely new perspective. Looking ahead, Robert plans to carry both his military experience and academic expertise into future service within government or defense-related work. His message to others is simple: the sacrifices are temporary, but the opportunities created through education can change your life forever.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Estela Pope
Bachelor of Science in General Studies
School: University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Military Spouse, United States Marine Corps

For Estela Pope, earning a college degree represents far more than academic achievement. As a first-generation college student, military spouse, and adult learner, her path was built through persistence, adaptability, and a deep desire to create lasting stability for her family. Life in the military community often comes with uncertainty, frequent moves, and constant change, yet Estela chose to transform those challenges into motivation rather than barriers. Balancing work, family responsibilities, and coursework required discipline and a steady focus on the bigger picture, particularly without the benefit of a clear roadmap through higher education. Through careful planning, resilience, and the support of her family and university resources, she continued moving forward with purpose. Her educational journey strengthened not only her confidence and independence, but also her commitment to serving others navigating similar transitions. Looking ahead, Estela plans to continue her education in Educational Leadership and dedicate her career to supporting military families and building stronger community support systems that empower others to succeed.

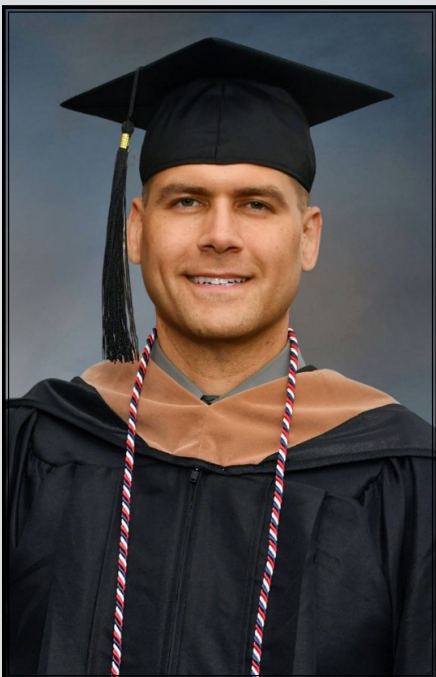


WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Alex Owen Rancloes
Master of Business Administration
School: New England College
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



When Alex Owen Rancloes enlisted in the Marine Corps in 2007, college was never part of the plan. His goal was simple: become a Marine. What he did not anticipate was discovering a genuine passion for learning that would continue to evolve alongside his military career and family life. Over time, a few college courses turned into an associate degree, then a bachelor's degree, and now a Master of Business Administration. At 37, Alex's educational path reflects not just academic ambition, but a personal philosophy that growth should never have an expiration date. Pursuing graduate education while serving on active duty and raising a family required deliberate sacrifice, careful planning, and more than a few predawn study sessions before the rest of the house stirred awake. Through it all, his wife remained his anchor, carrying extra responsibilities and offering the kind of steadfast support that made the journey possible. Beyond the degree itself, Alex gained stronger communication skills, sharper decision-making abilities, and an even deeper appreciation for disciplined problem-solving. Yet for him, this accomplishment is not about titles or credentials. It is about continuing to become better, setting the right example for his daughters, and using every lesson learned to lead with greater purpose.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Jordyn Kelcee Ridgeway
Master of Science in Criminal Justice, Forensic Psychology
School: Liberty University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

Jordyn Kelcee Ridgeway's academic journey is proof that sometimes the paths we once ruled out become the ones that shape us most. At 31, Jordyn is receiving her Master of Science in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Forensic Psychology, a remarkable accomplishment for someone who once firmly believed college simply was not for her. Her perspective shifted while serving as a Combat Instructor, where she discovered not only a passion for teaching Marines, but also a genuine love for learning. From that point forward, she accelerated with purpose, earning three degrees in just a few short years while continuing to serve on active duty. This latest chapter came while learning a new position at work, completing the demanding Marine Corps Master Instructor Program, and balancing life as a wife and mother. Coursework was often squeezed into chow breaks and the quiet hours after her children were asleep. Through the steadfast support of her husband and best friend Sam, Jordyn remained determined and discovered a level of confidence she did not know she possessed. Her education has strengthened her ability to lead with empathy, understand others more deeply, and serve more effectively in the profession she has chosen. Her message to others is simple: do not count yourself out. Sometimes the person who doubts themselves the most is the one capable of the most extraordinary growth.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Victor Rivas
Master of Science in Cyber Operations
University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Veteran, United States Marine Corps

Victor Rivas has earned his Master of Science in Cyber Operations, a milestone that reflects ambition, discipline, and a drive to excel in one of today's fastest-changing industries. At 32, and already established in the cybersecurity field, Victor recognized that continued learning is essential to staying ahead and chose to maximize the educational benefits he earned through military service. Balancing a full-time career, family life, and graduate studies required careful planning, honest communication, and steady determination. One of the greatest sources of strength throughout his journey was his wife, Lallai, whose encouragement and shared commitment to education made the accomplishment even more meaningful as she also celebrates graduating this year. Victor's hard work has already opened doors professionally through promotions and career growth. Looking ahead, he plans to apply his knowledge to help organizations defend against evolving cyber threats and secure their digital environments. His advice to others is clear: trust your discipline, use the benefits available to you, and remember that consistent effort can turn long-term goals into reality.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Erica Danielle Roberts-Palmore
Associate of Psychology
School: Victor Valley College
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



Some people discover their direction over time. For Erica Danielle Roberts-Palmore, the vision has been clear for years. At just 22, Erica is earning her Associate of Psychology as an important step toward a much larger ambition: becoming a forensic psychologist and ultimately pursuing a career with the FBI. After taking a gap year to join the Marine Corps, she quickly realized that military service did not have to replace her academic aspirations, only reshape the path to reaching them. With support from her chain of command, the Education Center, and her significant other, Erica learned how to navigate higher education while serving on active duty and refused to lose momentum. Her passion for understanding criminal behavior and the human mind has remained the driving force behind every assignment, challenge, and adjustment to online learning. This journey has strengthened her confidence, sharpened her adaptability, and reinforced her belief that growth often happens outside of comfort zones. Erica's story reflects the determination of someone who knows exactly where she is headed and is willing to do the hard work required to get there.

Congratulations GRADUATES!



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Ricardo Adan Rodriguezvera
Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management
Purdue University Global
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

At 41, Ricardo Adan Rodriguezvera celebrates the achievement of earning his Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management after years of balancing military service, family responsibilities, and the steady pursuit of personal advancement. Though the demands of active-duty life often placed mission requirements first, Ricardo never lost sight of his educational goals or the example he hoped to set for his daughters. With the support of his spouse, family, coworkers, and dedicated mentors, he turned limited time and competing priorities into motivation to keep moving forward. His academic experience broadened his perspective beyond leadership, introducing new knowledge in business law, accounting, statistics, and information systems. Ricardo views this accomplishment as far more than a diploma. It represents sacrifice, teamwork, and the power of persistence. As he moves forward, he plans to use what he has learned to mentor others, strengthen workplace culture, and help teams create healthier, more balanced paths to success.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Brian Peter Sanchez
Associate of Arts
School: University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

Brian Peter Sanchez describes himself as “45 years young,” and that same energy, grit, and unmistakable passion are woven throughout his educational journey. What began with a chance conversation in 2013 while standing watch with the Marine Corps Security Embassy Group in São Paulo, Brazil, became the spark that changed his trajectory. When a casually dressed man approached his post and Brian asked, “What do you do and how do I do that?” the answer, “DEA, and you only need a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice,” lit a fire that never truly went out. The path forward was anything but easy. Over the course of a 27-year journey, Brian balanced military assignments, long operational days, overseas duty in Okinawa, the shift to online learning during COVID, and coursework completed in some truly unconventional places, including weekends in his office and even the back of a 7-ton troop carrier. His story is also one of profound personal resilience. Having experienced unemployment, homelessness, hardship, and rebuilding from the ground up, Brian transformed those moments into fuel, adopting a mindset he lives by: “ALWAYS KEEP IT PUSHING.” As the first in his family to complete higher education and now a new father, this accomplishment carries even greater meaning. Beyond the classroom, Brian continues to serve others as a mentor through organizations such as the Travis Manion Foundation, PGA HOPE, and Wounded Warrior Project. His journey is a testament to hope, perseverance, and the belief that no matter where life begins, determination can rewrite the ending.



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Cierra Walker
Master of Arts in Human Resource Management
School: American Military University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps



Cierra Walker understands that progress does not always follow a straight line, and her academic journey is a reflection of that perspective. At 30, she is completing her Master of Arts in Human Resource Management after navigating the realities of military life, operational demands, deployment cycles, and the challenge of stepping back into student life after a lengthy pause. As the first in her family to pursue higher education, Cierra carried both personal ambition and a deeper sense of responsibility, inspired by her mother’s encouragement and a desire to set the standard for her younger brother. Rather than viewing her temporary break from school as lost time, she recognized it as necessary space to reset, adapt, and return stronger. That mindset proved invaluable as she balanced instructing entry-level Marines, managing daily responsibilities, and completing graduate-level coursework. Her education has done more than prepare her for a future civilian career in human resources. It has expanded how she mentors

Marines today, helping them recognize the transferable value of their military skills and better prepare for life beyond service. Cierra is already turning that vision into action, developing tools and resources to help fellow Marines market themselves more effectively for future opportunities. Her message is one of perspective and patience: the time will pass regardless, so you might as well spend it building the future you want.

GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Sandraa Kemar Williams
Bachelor of Science in Public Administration
School: Liberty University
Military Affiliation: Active Duty, United States Marine Corps

For Sandraa Kemar Williams, education was never simply about earning a degree. It was about rewriting a family narrative, creating opportunities that did not previously exist, and demonstrating to both his daughter and the Marines he leads that growth requires intentional effort. At 33, while serving on active duty in the Marine Corps, Sandraa pursued his Bachelor of Science in Public Administration with a level of discipline that mirrored the very leadership principles he lives by each day. His path was far from convenient. Between unit field exercises, military obligations, and academic deadlines, success often meant studying when others rested. In one particularly demanding moment, he completed college coursework from his phone while enduring freezing field conditions in a tent, unwilling to let discomfort become an excuse. Backed by the encouragement of his wife, family, and close friends, Sandraa remained locked in on the bigger picture. His academic journey strengthened his judgment, broadened his perspective, and sharpened his ability to lead thoughtfully.

Looking ahead, he hopes to transition his passion for service into civic leadership, where he can help shape stronger communities through public policy and meaningful change.

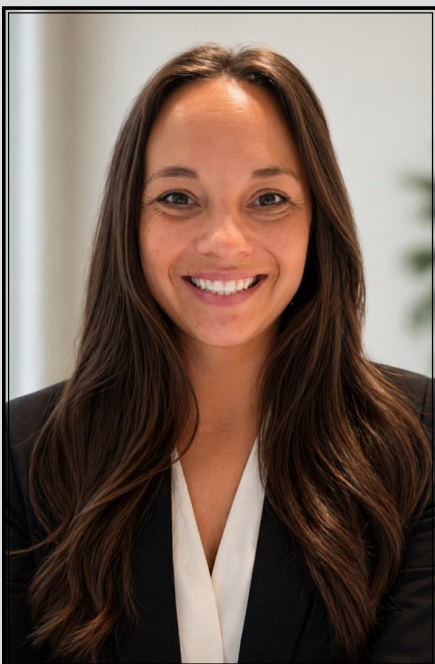


WE ARE PROUD OF YOU!



GRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Cristina Larisa Young
Master of Science in Management, Human Resource Management
School: University of Maryland Global Campus
Military Affiliation: Veteran, United States Marine Corps



Cristina Larisa Young's return to education began with uncertainty, but what followed became a deeply personal story of perseverance, self-discovery, and determination. As a first-generation college student and veteran whose first language is not English, Cristina stepped back into the classroom carrying more than academic expectations. She was balancing the realities of military family life as a stay-at-home mother, managing a household while her husband continued active-duty service, and challenging herself in an environment that often required extra time, questions, and persistence to fully grasp complex material. Yet what may have once felt intimidating became a source of empowerment. Encouraged by professors and mentors who believed in her potential, Cristina developed not only academic knowledge, but a stronger voice, greater confidence, and a renewed belief in her own capabilities. Her Master of Science in Human Resource Management reflects more than educational achievement. It represents the courage to begin when the path is unclear and the determination to keep going anyway. Looking ahead, Cristina hopes to help create workplaces where people feel valued, supported, and given meaningful opportunities to grow.

The Marine Corps' Voluntary Education Program Empowering Marines to achieve holistic wellness and success through transformative education and proactive support.

As a cornerstone of the Marine Corps' commitment to developing the total Marine, the base Education Centers provide personalized guidance, mentorship, and innovative tools to help Marines forge clear pathways to prosperity, personal growth, and meaningful service. Our highly trained academic advisors and career counselors offer tailored, one-on-one support, serving as advocates and facilitators for Marines seeking to enhance their overall well-being and military effectiveness. The Voluntary Education Program supports the primary mission of the Marine Corps by maintaining an effective force in readiness, encouraging Marines to use our programs to enhance their military effectiveness and prepare for positions of greater responsibility.



ABOUT EDUCATION ASSISTANCE BRANCH

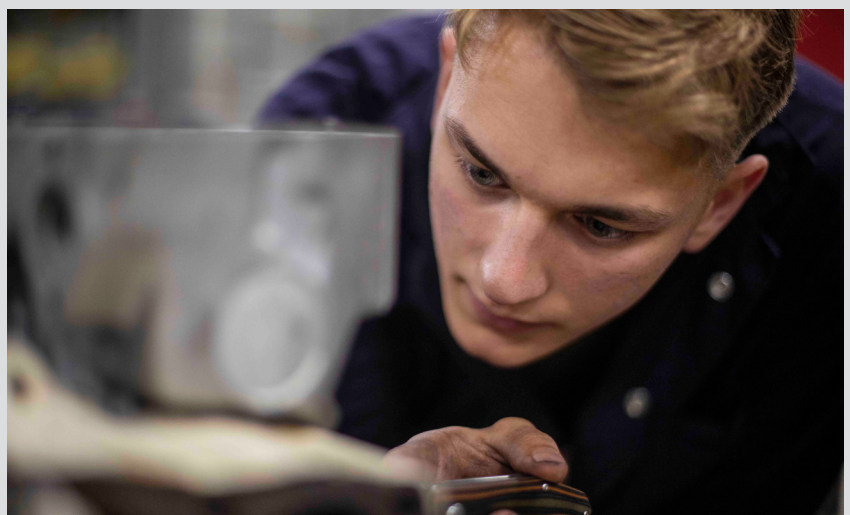
The Education Assistance Branch (EAB) is charged with carrying out the Department of War Voluntary Education Program, providing various educational opportunities to Marines and their family members stationed at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, Marine Corps Air Station New River (Lejeune-New River), as well as active duty Marines located East of the Mississippi. The VolEd provides post-secondary education opportunities to the Marine Corps supporting recruitment, retention, and readiness of all Marines in all duty stations.

We provide multiple learning and professional development opportunities in consolidated education centers and use of technology for independent duty and deployed Marines. Command units may reserve classroom or meeting space at no cost, within the Camp Lejeune and/or New River Education Centers. For more information, visit the VolEd website at lejeunenewriver.usmc-mccs.org/edu

John A. Lejeune Education Center
Building 825, Stone Street
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28547
(910) 451-3091

Camp Lejeune Testing Center
Building 825, Stone Street, Suite 120
Camp Lejeune, North Carolina 28547
(910) 451-3092 or (910) 451-9289

New River Education Center
Building AS-212, Bancroft Street
New River, North Carolina 28540
(910) 449-5421



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Education Centers offers a wide range of services and access to seated and online education and training programs. The team provides one-on-one advising, group information sessions, and unit briefs on the following:

- Academic and Technical Advising, and Career Counseling
- Resources and Referral
- College and Career Planning
- Financial Aid and Information
- Tuition Assistance (TA)
- Academic Skills Program (ASP)
- United States Military Apprenticeship Program (USMAP)
- Veteran Education Benefits
- On-Base College and Universities
- School and Joint Services Transcript (JST) Assessment
- United States Marine Corps Credentialing (MC COOL)
- Testing Center; military and civilian (limited) testing
- Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES)
- Proctoring Services
- Veterans In Piping (VIP) SkillBridge Program
- Various professional development opportunities
- Trainings, workshops, and academic courses
- Base Libraries and academic research assistance



ANNUAL EVENTS

COMMANDING GENERAL'S OFF-DUTY EDUCATION GRADUATION CEREMONY

Offered either the end of May or beginning of June at the Camp Lejeune Base Theater. Local Marines, Sailors, and their families are given the opportunity to “walk the stage” as traditional college graduates. This unique opportunity allows guests and family members to watch their graduate shake the Commander’s hand and receive their diploma on stage. Participants are even given a coin upon graduation to memorialize the day!



COLLEGE AND TRADES EDUCATION SUMMITS (Also known as education fairs)

The program hosts two summits, one in the Fall (usually September) and one in the Spring (usually March or April), at the John A. Lejeune Education Center. The College and Trades Education Summit includes access to over 60 colleges, universities, and trade schools, and has something to offer any level of learner. Various information sessions and workshops are scheduled throughout the day, and on-site advisors will give students an opportunity to learn which college, university, trade school, or career path is right for them.

Become a Unit Education Officer (UEO)

Empower Marines. Champion Education.

Strengthen Readiness.

Are you passionate about leadership, mentorship, and the power of education? Consider becoming a **Unit Education Officer (UEO)** – a vital role that directly supports Marine Corps readiness and professional development.

As a UEO, you will:

Serve as the **liaison** between your unit and the Education Services Office.

Help Marines access education, credentials, and career planning resources.

Promote programs like Tuition Assistance, the Academic Skills Program, USMAP, and more.

Support Commanders in developing informed, empowered, and resilient Service Members.

Why become a UEO?

Gain meaningful **leadership experience** beyond your MOS.

Develop valuable **skills in advising, planning, and coordination**.

Make a lasting impact on the lives and careers of your fellow Marines and Sailors.

Strengthen your unit's overall readiness and morale.

Who can serve as a UEO?

Officers and enlisted Marines who meet educational qualifications and are appointed by their Commanding Officer.

Ready to lead? Want to learn more?

Contact the Lejeune-New River Education Services Officer at:

MCCS.Lejeune-NewRiverEducation@usmc-mccs.org

(910) 451-3091

lejeunenewriver.usmc-mccs.org/edu