



Summer 2008 Tiger Camp

The Gig Line

A Marion Military Institute
E-News Publication

Volume 4 Issue 2

Articles: Honor Ground Construction, Shotgun Drawing, SAP Success, Graduations, Fall Sports, New Online Services and more...

MMI Beefs Up Website

A school's website is often the first place folks go for campus information—and users expect updated content as well as online services. To that end, MMI has recently added several interactive forms to its website so that alumni and friends can update their contact info; make a donation to specific school programs and endowments; or become a member of the Alumni Brigade. The Recent News page will also keep users informed of campus happenings. Be sure to check us out online at www.marionmilitary.edu. We hope to become one of your favorites.

New Digital Sign Makes its Mark on Campus

Drivers traveling down Washington Street can't miss the new addition to the MMI landscape: a 10 x 20 foot sign equipped with an LCD display. Designed by Complete Signs of Dothan, the sign was installed June 18 and will allow the school to better communicate with Marion residents and visitors about campus activities such as athletic events and parades.

The digital sign is part of an image enhancement plan for MMI that also includes a new wrought-iron fence with brick columns along the front entrance as well as updated signage throughout campus.

Commencement & Commissioning Ceremonies

MMI conducted three commencement ceremonies in May, graduating the Service Academy Prep program, junior college and high school classes of 2008, with 85, 76 and 10 members, respectively. Prior to each event, the MMI Alumni Brigade hosted a graduation cookout for graduates and their families at the Excess House. Accomplished soloist Lydia Campbell Howard (class of '78) performed during high school graduation. After each graduation, Colonel and Mrs. Jim Benson hosted a reception and patio luncheon at the President's Quarters.

The ROTC Commissioning Ceremony took place on May 10, when 32 graduates were commissioned into the Army as 2nd Lieutenants. Brigadier General Arnold N. Gordon-Bray, Deputy Commander General of Cadet Command, addressed the new officers during the ceremony. Including the December graduation and commissioning ceremonies, MMI produced 38 lieutenants in 2007-08.

2 Cadets Earn Premier Auburn Navy ROTC Scholarships

LCDR Sam Stevenson, Chemistry Instructor, couldn't be more proud of two of his brightest students. Recent MMI graduates Michael Plummer and John Jarvis (both Alabamians) have received Tweedale Scholarships from Auburn University's Navy ROTC unit, authorized to award just two of these scholarships per year. In preparation to serve as a Nuclear Propulsion Officers, part of the Navy elite, these students will be required to major in the technical fields of Engineering, Mathematics, Computer Science, Chemistry or Physics.

SAP Success

This year's Service Academy Prep (SAP) class was impressive to say the least. One hundred one entered the program in the fall, and by the end of May, 75 graduates had earned appointments to one of four U.S. Service Academies. Some, incredibly, earned multiple appointments. Among them is Paul Maile, a native of Augusta, Ga., who completed the school year with appointments to

four U.S. Service Academies. As a result, Maile was in the unique position to decline offers from the Air Force, West Point and the Coast Guard. At Annapolis, he hopes to major in aeronautical engineering. MMI will have the highest representation in the West Point class of 2012 of any of the five military junior colleges, due to the impressive number of 40 cadets receiving appointments there – a school record.

Training Ground: Tiger Camp

Several of our 2LTs commissioned in 2008 were already back on campus by mid-June. Eleven recent graduates (including a few from the class of 2007) were given the task of running two cycles of Tiger Camp, MMI's week-long course that prepares incoming freshmen for their five-week Army ROTC Leader's Training Course (LTC) at Fort Knox, Ky. Under the leadership and supervision of these young officers, 66 cadets studied battle drills, combat orders, land navigation, water survival, and other necessary tools for optimal LTC performance. Throughout the week, a focus on teambuilding and mutual respect provided a positive learning environment.

Cadets Compete in Tennessee's Mountain Man March

This spring, the military department was looking for a way to allow cadets to compete in training exercises outside of Marion. So in April, Professor of Military Science, LTC Darrell Martin, and MSG Ralph Haynes took 21 cadets and four Cadre members to Gatlinburg, Tenn., to participate in the first-ever Mountain Man March. Out of 21 MMI cadets who started the 26.2-mile race, 20 finished – an incredible feat considering none had ever marched that far before, and certainly not with 45 lbs. on their backs. LT Anthony Morrow took first place in the individual category, and the cadet teams competed with courage. LTC Martin plans to return with another strong group from MMI in 2009.

Construction Underway on Honor Ground Brick Project

Background: The Honor Ground Brick Project kicked off in 2007 to celebrate 150 years of the MMI chapel. To summarize, individuals can purchase personalized bricks to honor loved ones – offering them a permanent legacy on campus. Businesses can sponsor bricks as well, and logo placement is available on the larger-sized bricks.

Update: This summer, we're proud to report on Honor Ground construction progress. The installation of a new flagpole is complete and will anchor the Honor Ground inner circle. Plans are in place to begin bricklaying in early July, but bricks are still available for purchase. Click www.marionmilitary.edu/donations/honor_ground.da for the brochure.

Weatherby Shotgun Drawing Set for Sept. 25

The MMI Foundation has announced its annual shotgun drawing fundraiser, and this year's grand prize is a Weatherby Athena D'Italia III, a classic field 20-gauge 28" barrel shotgun, plus a hard-sided canvas luggage case (a \$3,000 value). Participants will also have a chance to win a quail-hunting trip at The Cottonwoods Sportsman's Lodge and a two-night beachfront condo stay. The drawing will be held Sept. 25; you need *not* be present to win. Proceeds directly benefit the MMI Foundation and Corps of Cadets. Call 334-683-2394 or click www.marionmilitary.edu/donations/shotgunraffle.da for details.

Currently Serving in the Armed Forces?

The MMI website will soon host an "Alumni Currently Serving" page, which will be updated regularly. Those with an active military status who would like to be listed online should fill out the appropriate fields in the Update Your Info online form at www.marionmilitary.edu/forms/update-your-information.aspx.

Alumni Weekend '08 Recap

MMI Alumni Weekend 2008 entertained a large crowd of alumni and friends who visited campus April 10-12. Classmates enjoyed catching up at all of the planned events, starting with Thursday night's Alumni Brigade Fish Fry at the Excess House, where Brigade members took on the task of cooking a catfish dinner for approximately 100 in attendance.

Friday's golf tournament attracted 44 players, with the team of Noble Barnes, Grover Snyder, Rayman Rodgers and Harold Barner taking 1st place. Meanwhile, a busload of guests enjoyed our first-ever Tour of Historic Marion, which offered them the opportunity to go inside the antebellum home of Richard and Mary Katharine Avery and stroll through the gardens of Myrtle Hill Bed and Breakfast, owned by LTC Gerry Lewis, Director of the SAP Program at MMI. At the conclusion of the tour, John and Judy Martin hosted an elegant tea at their renovated home circa 1826. As always, the President's Reception hosted by Col. Jim Benson and Mrs. Mary Benson was an elegant social affair.

Saturday's pleasant weather allowed for a full schedule of outdoor events, including a White Knights performance, the Alumni Drill Competition, and a Swamp Fox Demonstration, among others. Music throughout the weekend was provided by the MMI chorus and the Brigadier Band, which included guest bagpipers. Participation in the afternoon parade was not limited to the Corps of Cadets; the Alumni Platoon marched behind a special Guidon flag during the Pass in Review. Marking the end of the weekend's sponsored

events was the Alumni Brigade Banquet at Selma Country Club, which was also well-attended.

Individuals honored during the course of the weekend included Alumnus of the Year, Corin Harrison, Jr. (class of '65), and Brigade Honored Teachers Mary Rankin Brooks (class of '76) and the late Marshall Knudsen. A special guest we had the pleasure of hosting this year was BG John C. "Doc" Bahnsen, Jr. (class of '52), author of *American Warrior: A Combat Memoir of Vietnam*. During his visit, BG Bahnsen proudly presented his inaugural Future American Warrior award, in the form of a .45 caliber Ruger pistol, to Cadet Jeremy Trantham. BG Bahnsen's brother, Peter Bahnsen (class of 1954), co-sponsored the popular award.

Don't forget to save the date for **Alumni Weekend 2009: April 9-12**, when we will honor the classes of 1999, 1989, 1979, 1969, 1959 and 1949.

A Call for Brigade Members

Many MMI alumni would like to be more involved with their alma mater. An easy way to do that is to join the Alumni Brigade. At an annual cost of just \$25 a year (or \$500 for a lifetime membership), your dues will help sponsor campus projects and initiatives selected by the Brigade Board of Directors—a group dedicated to the future of MMI. Click www.marionmilitary.edu/alumni/join.da to join online.

Cheerleaders Wanted

Nakia Belser, MMI's new Financial Aid Director has committed to become the official Cheerleading Sponsor for the 2008-2009 sports season. This will be the first time that MMI will offer athletic scholarships to female cadets committed to the program. Dr. Michelle Ivey, Director of Athletics is looking forward to having a committed sponsor for the female cadets: "MMI has always had an interest among the female cadets to have a cheerleading squad and dance team. We now have the commitment from an experienced sponsor who can help bring that program to reality. Several of the other two-year colleges we play have cheerleading squads and I think it will enhance the overall atmosphere at the basketball games this year."

Belser was a noted athlete in her own right, excelling in college volleyball and softball before graduating summa cum laude from Huntingdon College in Montgomery. She also served as head cheerleader for her high school squad.

Baseball Season Summary

MMI's baseball program finished their second season in the Alabama Community College Conference. Although the way the season ended wasn't

what Head Coach Brett Davis would have wanted, improvement was seen both in the overall record and individual statistical categories. The team finished with 14 wins, six more than last year's squad with a couple of players finishing in the top 10 statistical categories. Sophomore Chris Bangi earned All League 2nd Team honors this year while leading the team in batting average and stolen bases. He finished 11th in the ACCC in batting average (.414) and 6th in stolen bases. Sophomore 2nd baseman Adam Vafides finished 8th in conference batting average (.417) this year for the Tigers while freshman outfielder Colby Vowell finished tied for 1st in fielding average in both the North Region and in the overall ACCC standings. "We struggled this year in pitching, which is the key to being successful in baseball. Building a program that can compete in this league will take some time, and we think we are on track to make that happen soon," said Coach Davis.

Athletics Outlook: Recruiting Class of 2008-09

Wrestling - Jim and Dave Hazewinkel are expecting a team of about 40 wrestlers to choose from with 11 letter winners returning, two of which earned NCWA All-American honors last year. Last year MMI finished #2 at the Southeastern Conference behind the University of Central Florida and in the #5 spot at the NCWA National Tournament. They also had **one National Champion**, one National Runner-Up and four All-Americans. The coaches are looking to finish even higher this year based on some of the prospects of the incoming class—which includes **nine state champions**.

Basketball - Head Coach Marcus Thomas will look to improve on last year's 20-win season with four returning starters. He has signed 10 new players, mainly from the state of Mississippi and Alabama. One of the newcomers that will be looked upon right away is Grambling State University transfer Tomas Funchess, a 6'8, 250-lb power forward.

Baseball - Head coach Brett Davis is expecting 10 returning letterman for the 2008-09 baseball team and has signed 13 recruits from across the Southeast. Two of his top recruits coming from Texas are Jordan Langley, a shortstop and right-handed pitcher from Sealey, and Jonathan Carnahan, a catcher from Port Natchez. Another recruit who will add exposure to Marion's program is 2nd baseman Jesse Lariano whose father played for several Major League teams before finishing his career in 1998 with the Colorado Rockies. With a goal of a 40-man squad, Coach Davis is close to that with an additional 14 newcomers who have expressed an interest in walking on for the Tigers.

Softball - MMI's newest program, women's softball, will see 19 new faces as head coach Joe Guthrie looks to compete in the Central Division of the Alabama Community College Conference. The first class of softball signees at Marion

Military Institute continues to gather “the hardware” – nine of these women received postseason honors such as All-Star and Honorable Mention.

Men’s Tennis - One program that will be in its first season for the upcoming 2008-09 year is men’s tennis. Head coach Chuck Wright, who will also coach the women’s program, will have one returning student who will look to play for Marion with five newly-signed recruits. One of the top recruits is Austin Lafaele, a 2007 graduate of Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School in Fort Oglethorpe, Ga. He will be transferring from Dalton College and is known as a big server who plays serve-and-volley tennis. In high school he played No. 1 singles in his junior and senior years, compiling a 15-6 record during that time. Coach Wright’s other signees include Andrew Cobb (Georgia), a hard-hitting backcourt player, Joseph Jeong (California) whose serve has been clocked close to 120 mph, and Alabama native Andrew Bryson, who will add to the depth of the squad.

Women’s Tennis - On the women’s side Coach Wright will welcome back two players from the inaugural 07-08 team which saw Marion win five matches. One of the two key signees for the 08-09 season is Rachel Rossi from Venice, Fla., who according to Coach Wright is the “tennis find of the year so far.” Rossi played No. 1 singles and doubles all four years in high school, compiling an impressive 34-14 record. The other key signee is Taylor Miller of Sebastian, Fla. Miller has been a stalwart singles and doubles player for her varsity squad, having played #1 singles for two years and #1 doubles for three years.

Volunteers Help Renovate Ala. Military Hall of Honor

Volunteers from First Baptist Church, Huntsville recently lent their carpentry skills to Marion Military Institute. The work crew – part of a larger group that traveled to Marion June 14-18 to perform various community projects – took on the task of laying carpet and tile, leveling a concrete floor and constructing an 8 x 12 foot display wall for the Alabama Military Hall of Honor. Their efforts in both the museum facility and the Quonset Hut annex will add space for commemorative inductee plaques as well as larger-scale military memorabilia.

MMI Hosts First Perry Co. Relay for Life Fundraiser

After Dr. Ann Jones, MMI college math instructor, learned that Perry County had never had its own American Cancer Society Relay for Life (RFL) event, she decided to get the ball rolling. In 2007, she became the local RFL event chairperson, and her committee set a fundraising goal of \$30,000. MMI offered use of its track and Excess House for the April 18 fundraiser, and numerous cadets, faculty and staffers participated in RFL activities such as the Jail & Bail and Womanless Beauty Pageant. Although rain cut the events short, proceeds totaled \$41,543.

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that we report on the loss of one of MMI's beloved teachers. Mr. Marshall S. Knudsen of Marion passed away on Wednesday, June 18, at the age of 64. In his 24 years as a part of the MMI faculty, Mr. Knudsen touched the lives of countless alumni who took his English and history classes. Others knew him as their cross country coach, and many remember his marvelous gift of storytelling. The Selma Times-Journal honored Mr. Knudsen posthumously with a front-page story. Read it online by searching the archives at the link below:

www.selmatimesjournal.com/

MMI in the News

In March, the *Tuscaloosa News* highlighted the return of Men's Tennis to the MMI athletic program. Read the full story by clicking www.marionmilitary.edu/athletics/athletics-menstennis.da.

Campus Calendar of Events

- **Aug. 12** Prep Classes Begin
- **Aug. 14-15** Cadet Move-In Days Volunteers needed!
- **Aug. 20** College Classes Begin
- **Aug. 23** Judson Step-Sing
- **Sept. 7** Cadets March to Local Churches
- **Sept. 13** Cresting Ceremony and Parade
- **Oct. 17** PAC Meeting
- **Oct. 17-18** Parents' Weekend and Parade
- **Oct. 21** Alabama Military Hall of Honor Induction Ceremony and Parade

Quick Links

Marion Military Institute: www.marionmilitary.edu

MMI Archivist's Blog: <http://mmi.archivist.blogspot.com/>

John Hunt Morgan Leadership Award and Endowment: <http://www.jhmla.com/>

Judson College: www.judson.edu

Perry County Chamber of Commerce: www.perrycountyalabamachamber.com

Alabama Community College System: www.acs.cc.al.us

This newsletter is a product of the Marion Military Institute Alumni Office. If you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter, please have that individual email mholmes@marionmilitary.edu. All comments and suggestions are welcome.



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