

The Gig Line

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Featured: Vietnam Vets, West Point Class of 2012, Honor Ground Brick Project Groundbreaking, Knight-Fox Challenge, National Champion Wrestler, Yellowhammer Drill Meet and more...

Right: A Swamp Fox demonstrates his rappelling skills during Knight-Fox Challenge



Register for Alumni Weekend, April 10-13, 2008

MMI Alumni Weekend '08 is just around the corner, and we invite you to return to campus. While you're here, you'll have ample opportunities to see what's new at MMI, catch up with former classmates and watch the Corps of Cadets in action. Back-to-back events will have you entertained all weekend, kicking off with the Brigade Fish Fry Thursday night. New for 2008 is a Tour of Historic Marion, scheduled during Friday's Alumni Golf Tournament, and we've also added a chance for one lucky golfer to win \$10,000 for a hole-in-one.

During the weekend festivities, MMI will honor several individuals, including 2008 Alumnus of the Year Mr. Corin Harrison, Jr., class of 1965, as well as teachers Mr. Marshall Knudsen and Ms. Mary Rankin Brooks. Of course, we'd love to count you as one of our honored guests. Alumni Weekend registration is easy. Just [click here](#) to find all of the info you need, including a complete schedule of events and a list of accommodations. You may also call the Alumni Office at 334-683-2349 or email mholmes@marionmilitary.edu to RSVP.

Chancellor Bradley Byrne Visits Campus

On February 27, distinguished guests, cadets and staff of MMI filed into the historic MMI Chapel to hear Chancellor Bradley Byrne of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education speak as part of the Honor and Respect Education Program. Byrne, a graduate of University Military School in Mobile, Ala., spoke to a full house on the importance of honor, drawing parallels between his high school's honor code and MMI's honor code. He also focused on integrity, defining "moral courage" as standing up to do the right thing.

Following his speech, Chancellor Byrne and the guests enjoyed lunch with cadets and staff in the MMI dining hall and took a bus tour of campus. Afterwards, on the crisp winter's day, the Corps of Cadets proceeded with a parade in honor of Chancellor Byrne, District 5 State Board of Education member Mrs. Ella B. Bell and MMI Board of Advisors Chairman Mr. Taylor D. Wilkins, Jr. At the end of the day, the Chancellor was already making plans to return to MMI.

National Geographic Vietnam DVD Has MMI Ties

Inside the Vietnam War, a National Geographic documentary released in February, features riveting first-hand accounts from Vietnam vets, including some of MMI's own. Sharing their Vietnam combat experiences on film are alumnus BG John C. "Doc" Bahnsen, Jr. USA (Ret), class of '52, and MMI staffer COL John Gibler, USA (Ret).

BG Bahnsen, an inductee of the Army Aviation Hall of Fame, commanded an attack helicopter platoon, an air cavalry troop and an armored cavalry squadron during two combat tours in Vietnam. He and his brother, Peter F. Bahnsen III, MMI class of '54, have recently established the "Future American Warrior Award" at MMI. As the author of *American Warrior: A Combat Memoir of Vietnam*, BG Bahnsen will be signing copies of his book during Alumni Weekend 2008, April 10-12.

COL Gibler, a graduate of The Citadel and commander of an infantry battalion in Vietnam, is director of the Alabama Military Hall of Honor Museum and coordinates the Distinguished Speaker Program at MMI. Hearing from both of these soldiers gives the viewer a greater historical perspective of the War. Copies of the DVD (150 minutes) can be ordered by [clicking here](#).

Honor Ground Brick Project Groundbreaking

A project that began in 2007 to celebrate 150 years of the construction of the MMI Chapel will soon change the campus landscape. In support of the Honor Ground Brick Project, friends of the school continue to order personalized bricks in honor and memory of loved ones. Former cadets, current cadets, businesses, and special organizations will now have a permanent legacy on the campus' most prominent space. MMI will break ground on the project during Alumni Weekend 2008, with a ceremony beginning Saturday, April 12 at 10:45 a.m.

Proceeds from the project will help build the MMI endowment. Bricks are still available for inclusion in the Honor Ground Inner Circle. For more information on purchasing a brick, call Merrily Thompson at 334-683-2394 or email mthompson@marionmilitary.edu.

Knight-Fox Challenge Serves as Valuable Recruiting Tool

More than 150 prospective students descended on campus during MMI's 2nd Annual Knight-Fox Challenge, held March 13-16. Designed as a recruiting tool, Knight-Fox is a specific opportunity for high school juniors and seniors interested in a military career to experience cadet life first-hand. Over the course of the weekend, competing companies participated in activities such as paintball, Army Physical Fitness tests, and weapons relays. Friday night's Scholarship Banquet was a powerful recruiting tool in itself, as 68 students were awarded conditional Army ROTC scholarships and Corps of Cadets scholarships, including benefits, valued at \$5.7 million.

A barrage of positive feedback solidified the event's success. Based on exit surveys, 46 percent of Knight-Fox Challenge participants indicated that they are "definitely planning to return to MMI." SGM Dennis Hastings, TXSG, Director for Enrollment, believes that the event puts us on track to start the fall semester with the largest college enrollment in MMI's history. Currently, the Office of Institutional Research at MMI estimates the largest college enrollment to be 421 college cadets in 1965-1966.

Capital Campaign Wraps Up

"On the Road to Greatness," the MMI capital campaign initiated by past president LTG Bob Foley, has raised more than \$1.7 million dollars in donations. This year marks the fifth and final year of the campaign, with \$169,530 remaining pledges to reach our goal of \$2 million. Campaign pledges help to build our endowment, which is key to future expansion, scholarships, and funding for capital projects. To learn more about giving opportunities, please [click here](#).

\$65,580 Grant Awarded to Re-Wire Lovelace Hall

Lovelace Hall, or "Old South Barracks," will soon be rewired thanks to a \$65,580 grant awarded to MMI by the Alabama Public School and College Authority Education Incentive Fund Council. As the oldest building on campus (constructed in 1854), Lovelace had not undergone electrical renovations since the 1920s. The project is set to begin in May. Of note: a similar situation existed in our antebellum Chapel, and electrical upgrades were completed there in February 2008.

West Point Founder's Day Dinner

On March 7, a group of 29 cadets from MMI traveled to Birmingham to attend the West Point Founder's Day Dinner at Birmingham Country Club. They were accompanied by LTC David Bauer, West Point Advisor and History/Social Science Department Chair, and his wife Edith. During the evening's festivities, the MMI cadets, all of whom had earned appointments to the West Point class of

2012, mingled with Birmingham-area alumni and heard from guest speaker LTC Joe Felter '87, Director of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. To date, 34 cadets participating in MMI's 2007-08 Service Academy Prep program have earned appointments to the United States Military Academy at West Point. MMI counts the largest class of West Point-sponsored scholars in the country.

Phi Theta Kappa Inducts 22

Phi Theta Kappa held its spring induction ceremony on Monday, March 17 in the MMI Chapel, where 22 students were inducted into the MMI chapter of the official honor society for two-year colleges. To be eligible for membership, students must have completed a minimum of 12 hours of college-level courses, including English and Mathematics, and have a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

Inductees and their hometown of record include: Cody Wade Ables, *Ontario, Ore.*; Aristotle Aguilar Alviso, *Stamford, Conn.*; Christopher James Burns, *The Woodlands, Tex.*; Judson Wesley Hembree, *Trinity, Ala.*; Travis Scott Hughes, *Randolph, N.J.*; Aaron Floyd Jones, *Mt. Vernon, Ind.*; Daniel Chuson Lee, *Salinas, Calif.*; Brendan Patrick Mahoney, *Malvern, Pa.*; Paul Gregory Maile, *Martinez, Ga.*; Harrison William Mann, *Avondale, Pa.*; Kyle John Morgan, *Lake Havasu City, Ariz.*; Kyle Loren Palmer, *Broken Arrow, Okla.*; Devon Zechariah Phillips, *Las Vegas, Nev.*; Michael Thomas Plummer, *Madison, Ala.*; Jeremy Lee Prater, *Georgetown, Tex.*; Alexander William Purdy, *Midland, Tex.*; Anthony Nico Signorello, *Pflugerville, Tex.*; Lee Ira Summerlin, *Germantown, Tenn.*; Brian George Webb, *New Fairfield, Conn.*; Travis Paul Wilson, *Madison, Ala.*; Ian Leroy Wrenn, *Truckee, Calif.*; Jay Robert Zeigler, *Frackville, Pa.*

John Hunt Morgan Leadership Award Winners

On March 14, the 2008 John Hunt Morgan Leadership Award winners—college cadet MAJ John Miller of Lake Oswego, Ore. and high school cadet SSG Ben Lee of Marion, Ala.—were honored with a parade and decorated with the traditional Morgan's Raider Ribbon and a medal. This award was established in the name of General John Hunt Morgan to honor more than 58 years of service to MMI by the Morgan's Raiders, both as student leaders and alumni. Officers for the 2008 year are President John A. Griffin of Jackson, Miss., Paul A. Stabler Jr. of Mobile, Ala., and John N. Patronis III of Santa Rosa Beach, Fla.

MMI to Host First-Ever Yellowhammer Drill Meet

On April 5, Junior ROTC drill teams from around the state will travel to Marion to compete in the inaugural Yellowhammer Drill Meet. Heading up the event is Admissions Counselor 1stSgt Christopher Borghese, USMC (Ret), whose six years of experience as head judge at the National High School Drill Team Championships spawned the idea for MMI to host its own drill meet. "We're

using it as a recruiting vehicle to get kids out to experience Marion and interact with the cadets, who will assist in judging and scoring and overall support,” said Borghese.

Jackson, Mississippi Alumni Mixer

MMI staff traveled to Jackson, Miss. on February 7 for an Alumni Mixer hosted by John and Kelly Griffin at their home. The event marked the first Jackson area alumni mixer in many years, and the Alumni Office hopes to make it a regular addition to the events schedule. Guests enjoyed a fabulous spread of food prepared by the hostess and heard from MMI President Col. Jim Benson, Development Director Suzanne McKee, and Alumni Director Carrie Williams regarding current happenings on campus. Alumni in attendance were eager to ask about which traditions still lingered at MMI.

Spring Sports Schedules

Click on the appropriate link below for MMI collegiate athletic schedules.

[Baseball](#)

[Women's Tennis](#)

Wrestling Program Includes 2-Time National Champ

Two years ago Marion's wrestling program was struggling with numbers, only sending a handful to both the conference and national tournaments, finishing #30 in the National Collegiate Wrestling Association (NCWA) with 0 national champions. One year ago Jim and Dave Hazewinkel decided to come to Marion and help the program grow to national prominence, much of what they accomplished at Pensacola Christian College. Their first year at the helm set the stage for the future at MMI. Last year, Marion finished 5th in the NCWA, with two National Champions and four All-Americans. The goal for this year, according to Jim, was “to better that mark.”

Step one of the improvement process this year was at the Southeastern Conference Tournament in which MMI took 2nd place behind the much favored, and much larger, University of Central Florida. Three Tigers took 1st place in their respective weight classes: Cee-Jay Hamilton (125 lb), MMI's 2007 National Champion, Ben Canning (133 lb) and Jay Brenowitz (235 lb).

Step two was evident at the NCWA National Tournament held in Lakeland, Fla. March 13-15. The Tigers finished in 5th place (out of 75 schools) for the second year in a row after qualifying a school record of 13 wrestlers. The highlight for Marion was Hamilton winning his second National Championship in two years. Hamilton finished his sophomore year with a 38-1 record and was named to the NCWA All-American team. Canning, an MMI freshman with a 31-3 record, also advanced to the finals but was defeated by Aaron Kalil from the United States Naval Academy Prep School. Canning, (133 lb) National Runner-

Up, and Derrick Lucas, (157 lb) 7th place, were also named All-Americans. **The Tigers ended the wrestling season ranked 3rd in the NCWA.**

Basketball Finishes with Impressive Run in the ACCC

In only its second year of ACCC competition and the first year for head coach Marcus Thomas, the men's basketball team completed the 2007-2008 season with a 21-12 record after making it to the second round of the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC) Tournament. The Tigers finished 5th in the conference among 18 two-year college teams.

In terms of statistics, the team finished strong as well. The MMI scoring record was broken on February 23 when the Tigers scored 126 points in regulation against Northwest Shoals CC at home in the Ireland Athletic Center. The team also earned two top 10 ACCC rankings: 3rd in team scoring offense (85.46 pts per game) and 5th in total rebounds-offense (38.09).

Individual players also produced some impressive numbers and were ranked with the elite within the two-year college conference. Sophomore Eric Allen led the conference in scoring with a 22.2 per game average. 6'10" freshman swingman Maurice Bolden finished 2nd in blocked shots with more than 2.1 per game. Both earned All-Region awards for their efforts this year with Allen taking 1st team honors and Bolden taking 2nd team honors.

Baseball Field Named for Scott Davis

At the college baseball's annual First-Pitch Dinner, MMI President Col. Jim Benson announced that the Alabama State Board of Education approved the naming of the new collegiate baseball field. Because of his contributions to the construction of the new field and his dedication to the baseball program as a whole, the field has been named the "Scott G. Davis Field."

Probably no one is more proud than Scott's son and head coach Brett: "Without the help from my Dad the new baseball field would not be possible," he said. "I am truly blessed to have a father like him in my life. Even though our family does not like being in the spotlight, we are greatly appreciative of this honor. Again, thanks go out to all the people who helped with the building and planning of the field. The dream could not have been realized without their support."

Compliments on the new facility have been received from players, parents, fans, and supporters of Marion, and it will certainly be one of the finest facilities within the two-year college system.

The Neophyte Netters

This year's inaugural version of the women's tennis team has been described variously by first-year coach Chuck Wright as "neophyte netters," "rookie racketeers," and "tennis tenderfoots." These appellations only underscore the fact that the vast majority of the players on this first-ever women's tennis team have never played a lick of tennis or have played very little tennis in their lives – that is, before this year, of course.

They have learned the sport quickly, however. In their first nine games of the season, they have won an impressive three, defeating Belhaven College, Stillman College, and archrival Judson College. The MMI-Judson College match revealed the girls' grittiness and determination, as they defeated their intra-city rival in a close and hard-fought contest, 5-4.

What makes their accomplishments even more impressive, according to Wright, is another key fact: All of the young ladies except one are Service Academy Prep (SAP) students. As SAP candidates, these cadets have an extraordinary number of responsibilities and obligations to which they must attend. They must keep up their grade-point averages in an exceedingly difficult curriculum. They must participate in Physical Training (PT). They must take SAT Prep and other classes pertinent and germane to their military training. They must march and do the 1,001 other things a cadet must do in order to be successful at MMI.

No. 1 singles player Sarah Rowe has become one of the top three players in the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC). Her only losses this season have come at the hands of the ACCC's top two players: Central Alabama's Alex Mangum and Snead State's Cevannah Cox. "If Sarah keeps to the game plan," Wright said, "she has a chance to finish either as the champion or the runner-up in the conference tournament. That's a bold prediction, but Sarah can definitely make her presence felt if she plays smart and guts out each and every point and game."

Softball Coaches Anxious to Start

MMI's new softball coaches are anxious to start the 2008-2009 softball season and believe they will have the ingredients to compete immediately in the Alabama Community College Conference (ACCC). Head Coach Joe Guthrie and his assistant Michelle Ayling have already signed 16 prospects to NJCAA Letters of Intent which commits them to play for Marion next year. "I am extremely proud to be the coach of the first group of female athletes ever to form a college softball team at MMI," Guthrie said. "Our goal is to compete for championships immediately. With this group we feel like we can."

Marion has also received a verbal commitment from Caitlin Houk who will look to transfer from South Florida Community College. Houk, interested in the military as a possible career, is a back-up pitcher this spring.

Some of those already signed to play at MMI include: Allie Roach, Catcher and Utility Player from Patrician Academy (*Butler, Ala.*); Gabby Arcuri, 1B/3B, Woodstock High School (*Woodstock, Ga.*); Meagan Ladner, OF, Faith Academy (*Mobile, Ala.*); Sallie Kimbro, OF, Rockmart High School (*Rockmart, Ga.*); Lauren Lewis, SS, Faith Academy (*Saraland, Ala.*); Shannon Halverson, C/UT, Western High School (*Anaheim, Calif.*); Ashley Clontz, 2B/SS, Starr's Mill High School (*Fayetteville, Ga.*); Aundrea Parks, OF, Evangel Christian Academy (*Montgomery, Ala.*); Angel Smitherman, 2B, Maplesville High School (*Stanton, Ala.*); Raina Stiffler, SS, Nathan B. Forrest High School (*Jacksonville, Fla.*); Leslie Encarnacion, 1B, Poinciana High School (*Kissimmee, Fla.*); Nicole O'Grady, P/OF, Coral Reef High School (*Miami, Fla.*); Dianna Montero, OF, Coral Reef High School (*Homestead, Fla.*); Nicole Bailey, C, Satsuma High School (*Satsuma, Ala.*); Natalie Gonzalez, C/3B/OF, Hialeah High School (*Hialeah, Fla.*); and Noel Byers, UT, North Branch High School (*North Branch, Mich.*).

MMI in the News

MMI Cadet Jared Ray of Dallas, Tex. was featured in the February issue of the *News Leader*, an Army ROTC online newsletter. View "Where There's a Will, There's a Weigh" at <http://www.usaac.army.mil/acce/publicaffairs/newsleader/Feb08/Weigh.html>

The MMI Brigadier Band was featured in the *Selma Times-Journal's Horizons* 2008 special publication with the theme of "Putting Together the Good Life." Click on http://www.selmatimesjournal.com/special_edition/?haspdf=1 and flip to pages 28-29 to view the article.

Campus Calendar of Events

- **Sat., April 5** Yellowhammer Drill Meet
- **Wed., April 9, 2:00PM** College Women's Tennis vs. Stillman College @MMI
- **Tues., April 8, 1:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Wallace State - Selma @MMI
- **Thurs., April 10, 6:30PM** Alumni Brigade Fish Fry
- **Fri., April 11** Alumni Weekend Events [click here for full schedule](#)
- **Fri., April 11, 1:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Northwest Shoals CC @MMI
- **Fri., April 11, 2:00PM** College Women's Tennis vs. Northwest Shoals CC @MMI
- **Sat., April 12**, ACT Test Date
- **Sat., April 12** Alumni Weekend Events [click here for full schedule](#)
- **Sun., April 13, 12:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Northwest Shoals CC @MMI
- **Tues., April 15, 2:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Central Alabama CC @MMI
- **Wed. April 16** Military Award Ceremony

- **Wed., April 16, 11:00AM** Distinguished Speaker, Jack Lucas, USMC, Medal of Honor, Iwo Jima
- **Tues., April 22, 2:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Shelton State CC @MMI
- **Wed. April 23** Academic Award Ceremony
- **Fri., April 25, 1:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Lawson State CC @MMI
- **Sat., April 26, 12:00 PM** College Baseball vs. Lawson State CC (2) @MMI
- **Thurs. May 1** Last Day of Class, College
- **Fri. May 2** Reading Day
- **Sat.-Wed. May 3-7** College Final Exams
- **Mon. May 5** SAP Recognition Ceremony
- **Fri. May 9** College Honors Convocation
- **Sat. May 10** Commencement/Commissioning
- **Sat. May 17** Armed Forces Day
- **Tues. May 20** Last Day of Class, Prep School
- **Wed.-Fri. May 21-23** Prep Final Exams
- **Fri. May 23** Graduation Picnic
- **Sat. May 24** Prep Commencement
- **Mon. May 26** Memorial Day Observed

Quick Links

Marion Military Institute: www.marionmilitary.edu

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

John Hunt Morgan Leadership Award and Endowment:

<http://www.jhmla.com/>

White Knights: www.whiteknights-mmi.freewebsitehosting.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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