

228th Marine Corps Birthday And 38th MMA Anniversary Celebrated

Nearly a thousand family members and friends joined MMA cadets for the many events that comprised this year's Anniversary Ball Weekend, October 31 - November 2. The occasion honored not only the 38th anniversary of the Academy, but also the 228th birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

First on the schedule Friday morning was a parent reception in Peacher Memorial Cadet Activity Center, followed by morning colors. During morning colors, Cadet of the Month Awards (see page 6) were presented, along with the Battalion Competition Awards. These awards are divided into three parts: Academics, Military and Athletics. The winning companies receive colorful streamers, which are then added to their guidon. The company



GUEST OF HONOR Mr. John McKenna, MMA President MajGen Wayne E. Rollings (left) and Batallion Commander Alberto Pina salute during the playing of the National Anthem

which has the highest points overall is also presented the gold guidon, which replaces their traditional red guidon.

The Academic streamer, which is awarded to the company that had the high-

est number of cadets on the President's and Dean's List, the highest number of cadets passing all subjects, the lowest number of cadets below 2.0 and the lowest number of

continued on page 10

Cadets Visited By Commanding General, 2nd Marine Division

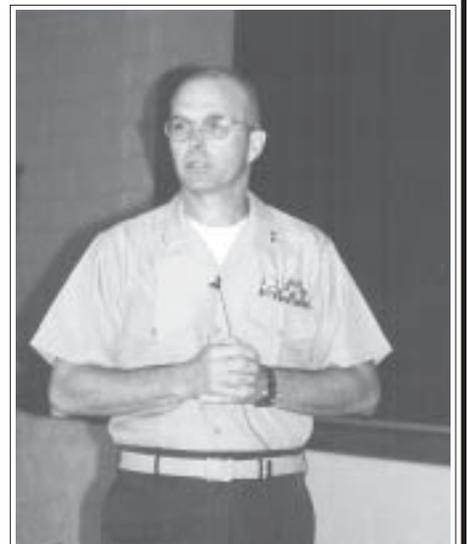
MajGen Johnson and Staff Speak to Cadets

Cadets had a unique opportunity to hear and learn about the 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina from the Commanding General, Major General Steve Johnson and members of his staff.

"He's done it all," stated Major General Wayne E. Rollings, USMC (Ret), President of the Marine Military Academy, about

General Johnson. "He's served all the way from Platoon Commander, Regimental Commander, to Task Force Commander when we had the bombing in Nairobi, Kenya, and now the Division Commander."

General Johnson gave a very informative power point presentation explaining the different tasks and responsibilities of the 2nd Marine Division. He stated that the Division has 16,000 Marines - 15,000 enlisted men and 1,000 officers.



Cadets Honor Veterans during Veterans Day Parade

On November 11, 2003, the cadets of the Marine Military Academy paid special honor and tribute to area veterans during their annual Veterans Day Parade.

Moving performances were made by the MMA Band, playing such patriotic tunes as *Stars and Stripes Forever*, *America the Beautiful* and *God Bless America*. **Cadet Nicholas Lugo** serves as the Drum Major. **Cadet Aubrey Snider** performed a moving solo.

Additionally, the Silent Drill Team performed several maneuvers, showcasing their abilities to perform complicated drill movements. They were led by **Cadet Mathew Darby**, the Drill Team Commander.

Marching in front of the Iwo Jima Monument, close to 400 young men, in their



VETERANS FROM various conflicts (left) stand and salute the colors during pass in review.

dress blues, paid tribute to all veterans - past, present and future.

During the pass in review, the approximate 120 veterans in attendance were

asked to step out onto the parade deck and be recognized.

Several veterans commented that they were very happy to be at the parade, and noted that they thought September 11 had brought about a new feeling of patriotism across the nation.

In 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill proclaiming November 11 as Armistice Day, now known as Veterans Day. However, a law was passed in 1968, changing the day to the fourth Monday in October, but in 1978 Congress returned the observance to its traditional date.

The Academy is proud to express its gratitude to all veterans who have sacrificed so much for this country.

SENIOR AUBREY Snider (left) performs a solo during the Veteran's Day Parade.



HIKE

Hiring and retaining the best for cadet education

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The Annual Fund helps bridge the gap between tuition revenue and the actual cost of the operating budget. Sources for this fund are the donations received from friends of the Academy. These gifts provide the extras that are so important in the life of cadets.

MMA LEADER

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Harlingen, Tx. 78550
(956) 423-6006, ext. 235

Web Site <http://www.mma-tx.org>

Email address: farris@mma-tx.org

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Robin Ewbank Farris

PAO SECRETARY

Connie G. Flores

1

Additionally, cadets were able to hear from members of General Johnson's staff.

SgtMaj Ron Himsworth, 1stLt Christian Solomon and Sgt Peter Lindenthal, Jr. each gave a brief overview of their responsibilities in the 2nd Marine Division. They also shared their own personal stories about how they came to make the decision to join the United States Marine Corps.

Cadets then had a chance to ask each one of them questions. Many questions the cadets had concerned the conflict in Iraq and what Major General Johnson felt needed to be done.

"We feel very honored to have Major General Johnson and his staff come and

1
speak to the cadets," stated General Rollings. "We understand they are very busy and are thankful that they took the time to visit the cadets and the Academy."



Battalion Commander Alberto Pina presents MajGen Johnson with gift from the Academy.

Boy Scouts Bid Farewell to Scoutmaster Gerber



SCOUTMASTER STEVE Gerber was presented with a token of appreciation from Troop 22. Making the presentation was (l-r) MMA Chief of Staff, Col Glenn Hill, USMC (Ret), Senior Patrol Leader Andrew Winney, and Academy President MajGen Wayne Rollings, USMC (Ret).

The Boy Scouts of Troop 22 recently paid tribute and honor to Scoutmaster Steve Gerber, who recently announced he would be taking a new position in Miami, Florida. He will be the new Deputy Executive.

Mr. Gerber has been the scoutmaster for over seven years at the Marine Military Academy, building the troop up to over 80 young men.

In addition to serving as MMA's scoutmaster, Mr. Gerber served the entire Rio Grande Valley as the Executive Director.

Mr. Gerber will finish out December and take the cadets to Winter Camp 2003 before leaving the Rio Grande Valley for Miami.

The Marine Military Academy will sorely miss him and wish him all the best in Florida.

Prestigious General Megee Award Given to Cadet Captain Hang Li

One of the most prestigious awards a cadet can receive, the General Vernon E. Megee award, was presented to **Cadet Hang Li** of Houston, Texas

Li, the son of Mr. Yonghu Li, is a senior cadet at the Academy,

The Megee Award is presented each year to a senior cadet officer who participates significantly in sports or extracurricular activities, possesses commendable conduct, and typifies the kind of cadet that best represents the Marine Military Academy.

The award is named for General Vernon E. Megee, the first superintendent and longtime trustee of the Academy, who during his 40-year Marine Corps ca-

reer, rose from private to Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Cadet Li is active in the National Honor Society, Key Club, and received the Women Marines Association Award for Outstanding Cadet in May, 2003.



Information Available for Scholarship Assistance for 2004-2005 School Year

The Marine Military Academy awards financial assistance to returning cadets on an annual basis. The number of applications and amount of financial assistance requested each year is far greater than the scholarship fund. Thus the cadet must compete for scholarships based on his performance and the family's ability to pay.

The largest single factor considered in the cadet's performance is his GPA, which must be at least 2.5 for the spring semester and at least a 3.0 cumulative MMA GPA. Other factors such as conduct, military leadership and participation in extracurricular activities are also considered.

To request an application, please contact: Institutional Advancement Department (Attention Scholarship Committee). Marine Military Academy, 320 Iwo Jima Blvd., Harlingen, TX 78550. If you have any questions, you may call Ester B. Reyes at (956) 423-6006 ext. 231. An application will be forwarded immediately and must be completed and returned no later than **14 May 2004**. Recipients of financial assistance will be notified by **11 June 2004**. **As part of the application process you must provide a copy of your 2003 federal income tax return (including copies of W-2 forms) or your application will not be considered. Your cadet must be re-enrolled for the Academic year 2004-2005 before the Scholarship Committee meets in May 2004. Applications received after 14 May 2004 will not be considered.**

(Left) HANG LI receives the General Vernon E. Megee Award from Birthday Ball Special Guest John McKenna and MajGen Wayne E. Rollings, USMC (Ret) President of MMA.

Parents Weekend/ Birthday Ball 2003

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Clockwise: 1. Classroom visitation gave parents, family and friends a chance to see what their cadet was learning about and also a chance to visit with the teachers. 2. Hunter Alexander, brother of cadet Jeffrey (J.L.) Alexander enjoyed going through the mess hall line just like all the "big boys!" 3. Nathaniel Keegan, his parents and friends take time out on Friday to enjoy second mess. 4. Taking a break during the homecoming game are (l-r) Brian Simpson, Sean Smith, Winston Elliott, Alberto Pina and Peter Jager. 5. Winning the "King of the Day" prize during the pep rally were cadets from Alpha Co., Zack Eskue, Justin Murphy and Alex Moser. 6. General Rollings cuts the birthday cake during the Birthday Ball celebration. 7. William Nelms is all smiles now that his girlfriend and family are in town. 8. Who says cadets don't have any fun? 9. Cadets at MMA never miss an opportunity to grab a bite to eat! 10. One of the traditions during Birthday Ball is the Mother/Son dance. Dancing with his mother is Cadet Joseph Barnett of Coppell, Texas

4

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Cadets of the Month for October

Each month a cadet is selected from each company, from the band and from the drill team, to be recognized for their outstanding attitude, conduct and performance. Below are the selections for October with a comment from their Drill Instructor or activity coordinator.

"Those selected are to be commended for their outstanding performance" - SgtMaj Ford Kinsley, USMC (Ret)
Academy Sergeant Major

Alpha Company
ALEXANDER DONALD
MOSER

Junior - Bellaire, TX

"He started as a Plebe showing leadership abilities and has not slowed down. He is an outstanding leader academically and militarily." - 1stSgt Bruce McPeters, USMC (Ret)



Charlie Company
MATTHEW ANTHONY
PARKER

Junior - Princeton, TX

"Parker demonstrates outstanding leadership traits and is dedicated to excellence and is very focused. He has a stellar future at MMA." - SgtMaj Al Szczepek, USMC (Ret)



Delta Company
JASON ROBERT
HAWKINS

Junior - McAllen, Tx

"Cadet Hawkins has demonstrated outstanding potential and has performed his duties as a cadet in an excellent manner. He has a can do attitude and unselfish work ethic." - SgtMaj Larry Carson, USMC (Ret)



Echo Company
BRENT ROBERT PATERSON
Junior - Indian Harbour Beach, FL

"Cadet Paterson has set a high standard for himself and is doing very well academically. He has an outstanding military appearance and works well with the other cadets.." - GySgt Frank Martinez, USMC (Ret)

Fox Company
JASON ISRAEL CANO
Sophomore - Covina, CA

"In the short period of time I've had to observe Cano, he has always strived to be the BEST at everything he does. He is a top notch young man and his growth potential is unlimited." - MSgt William Lunday, USMC (Ret)



Golf Company
ALEXANDER JUSTIN WU
Junior - Los Gatos, CA

"Cadet Wu demonstrates outstanding leadership traits and is a valued leader in the company. He is very focused and has an outstanding future at the Academy." - SgtMaj Albert Wilson, USMC (Ret)



Bandsman
NICHOLAS DANTE LUGO
Senior - Punta Gorda, FL

"Lugo has been a long serving member of the Band and as the Drum Major he has contributed immensely to the growth and success of the Band. He had a very critical and pivotal role in the Bands success in their first venture into Marching Band competitions. He is an absolute pleasure to work with." - CWO3 Ed Harris, USMC (Ret)



Drill Team/Color Guard
JOHN FOSTER HURLEY
Senior - Aliso Viejo, CA

"This cadet has shown fine leadership skills this period. He displays a positive attitude, sets the example, assists his fellow cadets during drill practice and is truly a role model for all cadets. ." - MSgt Clifton Jones, USMC (Ret)

Cadets of the Month for November

Each month a cadet is selected from each company, from the band and from the drill team, to be recognized for their outstanding attitude, conduct and performance. Below are the selections for November with a comment from their Drill Instructor or activity coordinator.

"Those selected are to be commended for their outstanding performance" - SgtMaj Ford Kinsley, USMC (Ret)
Academy Sergeant Major

Alpha Company
ALBERTO YAMIN
Senior - Toluca, Mexico

"Cadet Yamin is a perfect example that consistent hard work pays off.

As a squad leader, he sets the example for other cadets to follow.

He is a good, solid leader and his study habits and leadership abilities are noteworthy." - 1stSgt

Bruce McPeters, USMC (Ret)



Charlie Company
EMUNDO GUAJARDO
Senior - Tequisquiapan, Mexico

"This cadet has been a dynamic leader and role model in Charlie Company. He always strives to achieve the best results for the cadets of his platoon and is always willing to help." - SgtMaj Al Szczepek, USMC (Ret)



Delta Company
DANIEL MIDDLETON
Sophomore - Houston, TX

"This cadet has demonstrated excellent leadership skills and has always been on top of his duties in an excellent manner. He works unselfishly and thinks about the entire company." - SgtMaj

Larry Carson, USMC (Ret)



Echo Company
MAXWELL OLIVER CYPHERS
Sophomore - Lake Oswego, OR

"This cadet sets the an excellent example both academically and in leadership. His dedication to his platoon shows every single day." - GySgt Frank Martinez, USMC (Ret)

Fox Company
NEEMA R. NAZIFF
Sophomore - Dubai, UAE

"This cadet has strived to be the BEST at everything he does. He has the ability to adapt to the situation. His can do attitude is superior and his growth potential will only be limited by himself and no other." - MSgt William Lunday,

USMC (Ret)



Golf Company
TROY WESLEY YERIAN
Senior- Ash Fork, AZ

"Troy demonstrates outstanding leadership traits and is dedicated to excellence. He has limitless potential and is a valued leader in the company. He takes action in the absence of orders." - SgtMaj Albert Wilson, USMC (Ret)



Bandsman
WILLIAM JACOB THOMPSON
Junior - Kingsland, TX

"He has risen to the role of leader in the Band. He works constantly to continue to improve the Trumpet section. He has a great can-do and cooperative spirit. I see Thompson taking a much more significant leadership role in the future. He is a concerned young man and definitely a shaker and mover!" - CW03 Ed Harris, USMC (Ret)



Drill Team/Color Guard
JIMMY GLEN ENOS, JR.
Freshman - Ft. Worth, TX

"Cadet Enos has displayed good initiative, hard work and dedication towards becoming an outstanding drill team member. He is motivated and very serious about what he's doing. He is truly a role model to all cadets." - MSgt Clifton Jones, USMC (Ret)

MMA 21 - Antonian College Prep 32

Mma opened district play on Friday, October 24, 2003 in San Antonio against Antonian College Prep.

The Apaches came out throwing the ball and drove down to MMA's 7-yard line. With 7:40 to go in the first quarter, Antonian scored on a 7-yard run and a good extra point made the score 7-0.

After MMA was forced to punt, Antonian drove down to MMA's 13-yard line, only to fumble and be recovered by **Markus Werner** at the 23-yard line.

With 11:34 to go in the second quarter, Antonian's Ricky Graham caught a Rush Hannigan pass at the 48-yard line and sprinted 52 yards to make the score 14-0.

Antonian kicked off and pinned the Leathernecks at their own 9-yard line. On a second down and 7 yards to go, **Mike Sanchez's** pass was picked off at the 22-yard line. On the Apaches first play from scrimmage, they completed a 22-yard touchdown pass - 21-0 with 6:51 to go in the half.

The Apaches kicked off and the Leathernecks took over at their own 19-yard line. MMA marched 81-yards with a couple of nice runs by **Jason Quinn** (11 yards), **Emmanuel Hawkins** (15 yards), a few good catches by **Omeed Ghaffarian** (16 yards). **Ryan Soqui** caught a 9-yard touchdown pass from **Mike Sanchez**.

Joel Birden kicked the first of his three extra points to make the score 21-7, Antonian. The Apaches were able to move the ball within field goal range and kick a 29-yard field goal with no time on the clock to make the score 24-7.

The Leathernecks came out "fired up" the second half, scoring two, third quarter touchdowns and cutting the score to 24-21. Highlights of the third quarter were a 21-yard reverse run by **Matt Radzavich** and a 12-yard reception by **Radzavich**, which led to an 8-yard touchdown catch by **Emmanuel Hawkins**. MMA stopped Antonian at mid-field when **Scott Miller** scooped up a fumbled option play at the 40 and returned it to the 50-yard line. On the next play, **Emmanuel Hawkins** took a "shuttle pass" off tackle and raced 35 yards to the 15. From there, **Sanchez** hit **Ghaffarian** at the 3-yard line and **Hawkins'** 3-yard touchdown run made the score 24-21.

With 6:15 to go in the game, MMA was faced with a fourth down and four to go at

mid-field. Coach Morton decided to punt and rely on the defense. It appeared as though his decision was right, but on third down and 12, the Apache quarterback connected on a 39-yard pass to MMA's 19-yard line. The Apaches were able to score from 2-yards out and converted a botched snap into a 2-point conversion - 32-21.

The Leathernecks did not give up as they drove the ball down to the 12-yard line. Facing a fourth down and 6-yards to go, MMA elected to go to the end zone, but **Sanchez's** pass to **Radzavich** was tipped incomplete. Final score - MMA 21 Antonian 32.

MMA 2 - St. Joe Brownsville -6

Halloween night turned out to be "super scary" for the Leathernecks as they lost their second district game on Birthday Ball weekend.

Playing before a large contingent of parents, friends and relatives, the "Necks" were never able to surmount enough momentum to reach pay dirt. Nothing seemed to go right for MMA as they drove the ball to the 12-yard line in the first quarter, only to fumble.

The Leathernecks had another excellent drive late in the fourth quarter, but could not connect on a fourth-and-three at the St. Joe 10-yard line. Brownsville St. Joe scored their only touchdown of the night on a 6-yard touchdown run with 2:53 left in the first quarter.

MMA's only score was a safety with 1:56 left in the game. The Leathernecks piled up 250 yards total offense to the Bloodhounds 165 yards.

MMA 20 - St. Joe Victoria 34

The Leathernecks ended their 2003 football season against district leader St. Joseph of Victoria, Texas on Friday, November 7. The "never die" attitude of the MMA team was never more apparent as they fought to the final end!

MMA took the opening kick-off and drove to mid-field. On a second down and 4 yards to go, **Michael Sanchez** tossed a pass to **Omeed Ghaffarian**, only to be intercepted at St. Joe's 41 and returned 59 yards for a touchdown with 10:07 in the first quarter.

The Leathernecks were unable to move the ball affectively during the first quarter and allowed the Flyers to score from 7-yards out with 36 seconds to go in the first quarter. After the kick off, **Jason Quinn** ripped off a powerful run from the 24 to the 41-yard line. Two plays later, **Sanchez** hit **Ghaffarian** with an apparent 44-yard touchdown pass, but MMA was called for clipping at the 24-yard line. After several good runs by **Quinn** and **Nick Keating**, **Sanchez** found **Ghaffarian** in the flats for a 16-yard touchdown pass. **Joel Birden's** extra point was good and with 6:23 to go in the half, the score was 14-7, St. Joe.

On the ensuing kick off, **Jason Quinn** recovered a St. Joe fumble at the 30. On a second down and 3 to go, **Nick Keating** ran a quick trap 23-yards to the 10-yard line. Two plays later, **Sanchez** found **Quinn** all alone in the end zone on an 8-yard pass. **Birden's** kick was good and the score was tied 14-14 with 4:46 to go in the half.

St. Joseph managed to score just before halftime when the MMA defense chased the quarterback out of the pocket and he launched a "Hail Mary" pass 34 yards to the 5-yard line. **Ryan Soqui** tipped the ball, only to bounce into the hands of a St. Joe receiver who was lying on his back for the reception. St. Joe scored from 5-yards out - 21-14.

In the third quarter, the Flyers scored on a quarterback sneak with 6:02 on the clock and moved the score to 28-14, St. Joe. MMA was forced to punt in the fourth quarter and St. Joe took over on the 36-yard line. Two plays later, **Ryan Soqui** intercepted a pass at their own 23, with 5:30 on the clock and MMA 77 yards from pay dirt!

Once again, **Nick Keating** took a handoff up the middle for a 17-yard gain and two plays later, **Sanchez** connected on a 24-yard pass to **Matt Radzavich** and MMA had the ball on St. Joe's 7-yard line. Three plays later, **Sanchez** sneaks in from 1 yard out. The kick was no good and the score was 28-20 with 1:39 to go in the game.

The Leathernecks tried an on-side kick, but failed and St. Joe took over on MMA's 48-yard line. A couple of penalties stopped the clock and allowed the Flyers to score with no time on the clock, 34-20.

The Leathernecks played a tough 8-2 team with a lot of heart and finished the season with four wins and four losses.

FALL SEASON ROUND-UP

2003 Rio Grande Valley Swimming Invitational



BRENT PATERSON shoves off the side of the pool during a recent meet. He was participating in the 200-backstroke medley relay.

The MMA swim team competed in the RGVSVA Invitational recently at the Harlingen Pool in Pendleton Park.

Brent Paterson earned a 4th place ribbon in the 200 freestyle and a first place medal in the 500 freestyle.

The team continues to work hard trying to improve their times before the qualifying meet in January.

Their next competition will be in the Christmas Classics at Harlingen the first weekend in Dec.

2003 VISA VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT



THE VISA Volleyball team gets some advice from Coach Michael Krauss during a break in the action. The VISA league is made up of private middle school teams from across the Valley.

The 2003 volleyball season came to an end with the VISA Volleyball Tournament held here at the Marine Military Academy. A total of 20 teams, both varsity and junior varsity, participated.

MMA eighth graders played their very best during this tough tournament. The first match was against Calvary Christian, Harlingen. The match went to three games. MMA lost the final game 15-11. They then moved in to the consolation bracket. MMA beat St. Paul, Harlingen, in two games to win the match.

In the next game, MMA beat St. Paul, McAllen, in two games. Finally, MMA beat Livingway, Brownsville, in two games to take fourth in the Tournament.

“The cadets played a total of 11 games in four hours, showing the other schools a never quit attitude,” stated Coach Michael Krauss. “I also want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Michael Gasaway for making this season fun and enjoyable for the cadets.”

Coach Krauss also added that Mr. and Mrs. Rob Bowen were “our own personal cheering section.” Mrs. Bowen was the assistant coach and taught the cadets how to play the game and was always proud of their accomplishments.

Golf Company once again provided outstanding assistance to the Tournament by providing score keepers, runners and parking detail.

Soccer



During the Leatherneck Soccer Tournament, Chase Cooper dribbles the ball around a St. Michael's player on the way to a 5-1 winning game while teammates Jose Hugo Villarreal and John Guillen watch the action.

The Marine Military Academy hosted the Inaugural Leatherneck Soccer Tournament on 14 and 15 November.

St. Anthony High School, San Antonio, brought two teams to participate, St. Michael's, Austin, brought one team and MMA provided the final team for a round robin competition.

St. Anthony High School Team #1 captured the overall championship with two wins and one tie, while St. Michael's finished runner-up with two wins and one loss.

The Leathernecks finished in third place with one win, one tie and one loss.

Outstanding MMA players during the tournament were cadets **Navid McGee**, the team high scorer with five goals during the tournament and **William Loveless**, the standout defensive player.

Calendar of Events

January

3	Mid-Term Registration (New)
4	Mid-Term Check-in (Returning)
7	Third Quarter Classes Begin
30	Academic Awards
31	Plebe Graduation

February

20	HM Smith Foundation Dinner
21	HM Smith Parade

1

cadets with any failures, was awarded to Alpha Company.

The Military streamer, awarded to the company that best performed in the pass in review, weekly uniform and barracks inspection and drill competition was presented to Delta Company.

Golf Company was presented with the Athletic streamer. This award is given to the company that had the highest overall youth physical fitness score.

The winner of the Battalion Competition and the gold guidon award went to Golf Company.

Afterwards, parents spent the morning meeting with teachers and drill instructors, before departing the campus with their sons that afternoon. After a short visit, they returned to MMA for a homecoming pep rally and football game at Bowman Stadium.

The Leathernecks hosted St. Joseph's Academy of Brownsville, Texas. They played a tough game, only to come up short 7-2.

Saturday opened with a Cadet parade, which included performances by the MMA

Band and Silent Drill Team. During the ceremony, Cadet Major Hang Li, of Houston, Texas, was presented with the prestigious General Vernon E. Megee Award, given to the outstanding Cadet of the senior class.

That evening, a reception was held in the Neuhaus Mess Hall, followed by the Ball in King Gym. MMA President MajGen Wayne E. Rollings, USMC (Ret), performed the ceremonial cake-cutting, presenting pieces of cake to the guest of honor, Mr. John McKenna, to the oldest alumnus present, which was Randy Bridgeman, MMA class of '70, and to the youngest cadet present, 13-year-old **Shayne McRae**. Shayne is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Sean McRae of Alexandria, Virginia.

Selected as Guest of Honor this year was John McKenna, Class of '83 and a graduate of the United States Naval Academy. Attending also was his wife, Peggy, his high school sweetheart.

McKenna's speech was very motivating and encouraging to all present.

John McKenna, was very motivating and encouraging to all present. When asked about

Memorials

Maj John H. Austin, USMC (Ret)
GySgt Sid Lorentzen
Col John G. Metz, USMC (Ret)
Jack Miller
CWO Oscar Douglas Sayre, USMC (Ret)

In Honor Of:
Edgar D. Aronson

In Honor Of
J. Rob Walker's Marine Service

his feelings about MMA, McKenna stated, "When I arrived in Harlingen, I began to reminisce about the year I spent at MMA. I began to think about the many people I hadn't seen or thought about in years. I was extremely impressed with the improvements in the facilities and the technology enhancements provided to the cadets."

McKenna added, "What impacted me most, though, was the proud feeling I felt when I saw the Iwo Jima Monument, along with the parade, and got chills seeing the cadets standing in the Marine Military Academy uniforms, because then I realized how much MMA had done for me personally. The foundation MMA provided is what has allowed me to exceed in life. It gave me a tremendous sense of accomplishment which I was able to share with my wife."