



MARINE EMBASSY GUARD ASSOCIATION

SERVING AMERICA'S "AMBASSADORS IN BLUE"



250 YEARS!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARINES



Tun Tavern Philadelphia, Pennsylvania





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PUBLISHER/EDITOR: Danny L. Baker

Fall Issue 2025

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Message From The Chairman



As always, let me begin by expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to each of you. Your continued hard work and dedication to MEGA are truly commendable. I am very pleased with the direction in which MEGA is moving, and I could not be prouder to serve alongside such a devoted and professional team.

As Marines, we take great pride in our time on the MSG Program, and that same pride is reflected in our work within this Association. Let us continue to lead by example and provide our members with the

highest level of leadership, communication, and support. Overall, MEGA remains strong and continues to improve across all areas.

Not long ago, we were staring down the real possibility of shutting things down and turning off the lights and locking the front doors. But thanks to the collective resolve and efforts of this board and our committees, we've cleared the table, rolled up our sleeves, and put MEGA back on track. I truly believe we are stronger because of it.

Here are just a few of the key accomplishments we have achieved in a relatively short period of time.

Recent Accomplishments:

1. Established a new account with Navy Federal Credit Union.
2. Secured legal representation on an as-needed basis.
3. Brought on a new Newsletter Editor.
4. Filled all Board of Directors vacancies.
5. Launched online General Membership/Guard School meetings.
6. Re-established the MEGA Facebook page.
7. Posted permanent MEGA advertisements at three MCESG locations.
8. Secured a new vendor for the 2027 Reunion.
9. Discontinued use of MailChimp in favor of more suitable tools.
10. Processed and reimbursed all Nashville reunion refunds.
11. Updated and corrected the "Join MEGA" page, offering clearer membership options.



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While this list may not be exhaustive, it clearly reflects the momentum we've built together. The communication and coordination behind the scenes have made my role as Chairman an absolute honor. These accomplishments are the result of your collective efforts and your dedication to keeping this association alive and thriving.

In Closing thank you again for your continued dedication and service to MEGA. I look forward to everything we will accomplish together in the coming year. It's because of people like you that this association continues to stand tall and strong.

Semper Fidelis,
Vince Downes
Chairman, Marine Embassy Guard Association

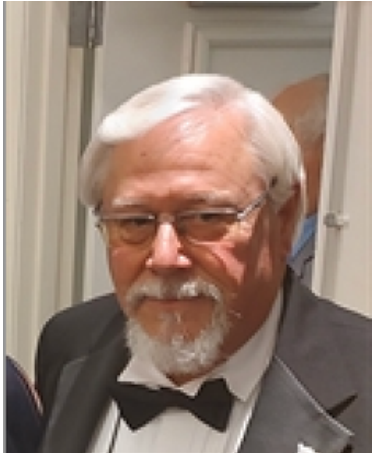


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Message From The Secretary



Hey, this is your MEGA Secretary, Stephen Hardesty. Do you remember back during your time in the Corps when everyone told you "NEVER VOLUNTEER?" Well, you volunteered to become a Marine and then you volunteered to be a Marine Security Guard to be posted somewhere in the World, along with a myriad other times you stepped forward. You also volunteered to join this organization. I'm no different.

During the 2024 MEGA Annual Reunion in San Antonio I asked, how I could help? After a short meeting I found out they needed a Secretary. I've never been one, don't know how, and honestly, my note-taking skills were non-existent. So of course I said, "sure!" What I found were other "volunteers" who were working hard for the MEGA membership. I also learned a new skill.

MEGA is guided by volunteers. We currently have about three or four committees that are leaderless and could use your help. Some of the ideas the Board of Directors has brought forward will require many new volunteers as well. MEGA is a great organization that requires many volunteers to keep up with the programs we provide today. From categorizing historic photos/comments/stories, member location maps, newsletters, the "Ships Store," reunions and our relations with Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG), it's all done by volunteers. Let us know what you would like to do to help your organization.



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Message From The Treasurer



MEGA Treasurer report for the 17 July 2025 Board of Directors meeting. Membership renewal income is up. Revenue from Ships Stores is included in this quarter's credits (see PayPal). The activity for the Scholarship account reflects two \$750 scholarships awarded. Account statements from Incredible Bank, Navy Federal Credit Union, CardPointe, and PayPal have been uploaded to the 7200 DISBURSING subdirectory of the 04_Treasurer directory of the MEGA TEAM DRIVE.



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Committee Reports

Webmaster: Vacant
 Historical Archives: Vacant
 MCESG Liaison: Vincent Downes
 Elections: Virgil Johnson
 Newsletter Editor: Danny Baker
 Communications: Danny Baker
 Legal Advisor: Vacant
 Ships Store: Anton Koszuth

Membership: Dale Clark/Robert Lighty
 Technology: Fred Samarelli
 Fund Raising: Vacant
 Reunion Chair: TBA
 Scholarship: David Hale
 Bylaw Committee: Vacant
 Chaplain: David Hale

MCESG

Graduations continue to be a highlight of my duties, particularly presenting the Honor Graduate plaques on behalf of the Board of Directors and our membership. Since contracting with my local vendor, the plaques are now delivered in a timely and consistent manner. The School Operations section continues to coordinate closely with me on upcoming graduations and honor graduate selections. December 12th will be the last graduation for the year with CL 1-26.

At a recent graduation, I had the opportunity to be introduced to the incoming Sergeant Major, who immediately remarked that "the Commanding Officer speaks highly of you and the Marine Embassy Guard Association." We had a brief but productive discussion, and he expressed great interest in further collaboration with MEGA. Following the ceremony, I presented him with a MEGA challenge coin, and I intend to provide him with a complimentary membership for the duration of his tenure at MCESG. I will also attend his Post and Appointment Ceremony on October 15, 2025, and will provide photos and an article for the next newsletter edition.

MEGA will provide funds for the MCESG 250th Marine Corps Birthday Ball cake. A local vendor is producing a ceremonial presentation check, which will be presented to the Commanding Officer, Command Staff, and Ball Committee. This continued gesture reinforces our long-standing partnership and support of MCESG and leaves a lasting positive impression.



Committee Reports

2027 Reunion

I am still working closely with our reunion vendor and am awaiting the initial hotel contract for review and Board approval prior to signing. The reunion dates have been confirmed with the hotel.

I welcome Board input regarding the inclusion of organized tours and excursions versus allowing attendees to explore independently. As previously stated, I am coordinating efforts to include an MSG School graduation, a visit to the National Museum of the Marine Corps (which recently opened a new exhibit hall), and a Q&A session with MCESG Instructors/Advisors for an overview of the current MSG Program.

The selected location provides convenient proximity to Henderson Hall, Ft. Myer Joint Base, and Crystal City, offering easy access to shopping, dining, and entertainment.

Ship Store

I would like to re-enable the Ship Store feature on the MEGA website with a limited selection of products—such as challenge coins, baseball covers, and similar items—available in small quantities.

The primary issue to address is enabling direct payment into MEGA’s PayPal account rather than through a third party. This approach will allow us to stock and sell items that are in demand by our membership, rather than carrying excess inventory. I will continue to coordinate closely with Jack McGarry and Paul Storm.

Newsletter

The re-launch of the newsletter was a major accomplishment and a significant step in re-engaging our membership. Let’s continue to support Danny by providing relevant articles, updates, and photographs so that we can maintain a high-quality publication. I encourage all Board and committee members to contribute short updates to keep members informed of ongoing projects and activities.



Committee Reports

Social Media & Communication

Our social media presence continues to grow, generating positive engagement, increased visibility, and new memberships. These platforms allow us to share real-time events, highlight MEGA's mission, and foster camaraderie among former MSGs.

The online Guard School sessions have been well-received and regularly reach capacity within their 1½-hour timeframe. These sessions provide valuable opportunities for members to connect, share stories, and exchange ideas.

Additionally, I have enlisted a MEGA member and former classmate—who is active in the Young Marines organization—to produce a short promotional video highlighting MEGA and the importance of membership. Once completed, this video will be distributed across our social media channels to attract further interest and participation.

Your Membership (YM)

Our contract with Your Membership (YM) is due for renewal in November. The only notable issue has been an excess of main administrative users. Per YM policy, we are limited to three primary administrators; all others will be assigned to designated “groups,” a process that Steve Garrison has been diligently managing. This adjustment will not impact on access or the ability of committee members to perform their duties.

The renewal requires no new signatures and will continue as a recurring invoiced billing. Accordingly, I authorize Treasurer Paul Storm to proceed with renewing the Your Membership contract.

Thank you again for your continued service and commitment to MEGA. Together, we are strengthening our organization, preserving our proud legacy, and ensuring that the traditions of the Marine Embassy Guard community endure for generations to come.

Semper Fidelis,
Vince Downes
Chairman, Marine Embassy Guard Association



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250th Marine Corps Birthday Message

Click on link below

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VwOjTk4rqQ&t=209s>





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A Message From The Commandant Of The Marine Corps



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6VwOjTk4rqQ&t=209s>

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

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

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

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

Happy Birthday Marines!



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Post And Relief Ceremony

Farewell and Welcome – A Moment of Transition at MCESG
Submitted by Vince Downes

On 15 October 2025, MCESG bid farewell to SgtMajor Cruz as he concluded his distinguished tour of duty, marking the end of twenty-seven years of dedicated service. The Board of Directors and the entire membership of MEGA extend their deepest gratitude for his unwavering commitment and leadership. We wish him Godspeed in his retirement and continued success in all future endeavors. At the recent Class 5-25 graduation ceremony, I had the honor of being introduced to SgtMajor Bansah and had a brief discussion about the MSG program and MEGA. It was a privilege to present him with the MEGA "School Legacy" challenge coin and to attend his Post & Relief ceremony. MEGA looks forward to building a strong and collaborative relationship with SgtMajor Bansah during his tenure at MCESG. Welcome Aboard!





Tun Tavern the Birthplace of the Marine Corps

Celebrating the 250th anniversary of the birth of our Corps, the cover photo shown is an image of the birthplace of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps was established on November 10, 1775, by the Second Continental Congress. Samuel Nicholas was commissioned a Captain of Marines 28 November 1775.

I'm sure there is a lot of undocumented history that took place in this prestigious establishment. The history of Tun Tavern predates the Marine Corps. In 1865 Samuel Carpenter built the tavern and named it Tun Tavern, Tun meaning a large beer or wine cask.

The Continental Congress met in Tun Tavern to prepare the Declaration of Independence. I can imagine the town drunk downing another beer all-the-while looking over at several gentleman, such as George Washinton, Thomas Jefferson and other members of the Continental Congress, and saying with a slight slur, "what you gents up to today?"

In 1781 Tun Tavern burned down and just a commorative plaque is placed where the tavern once stood.



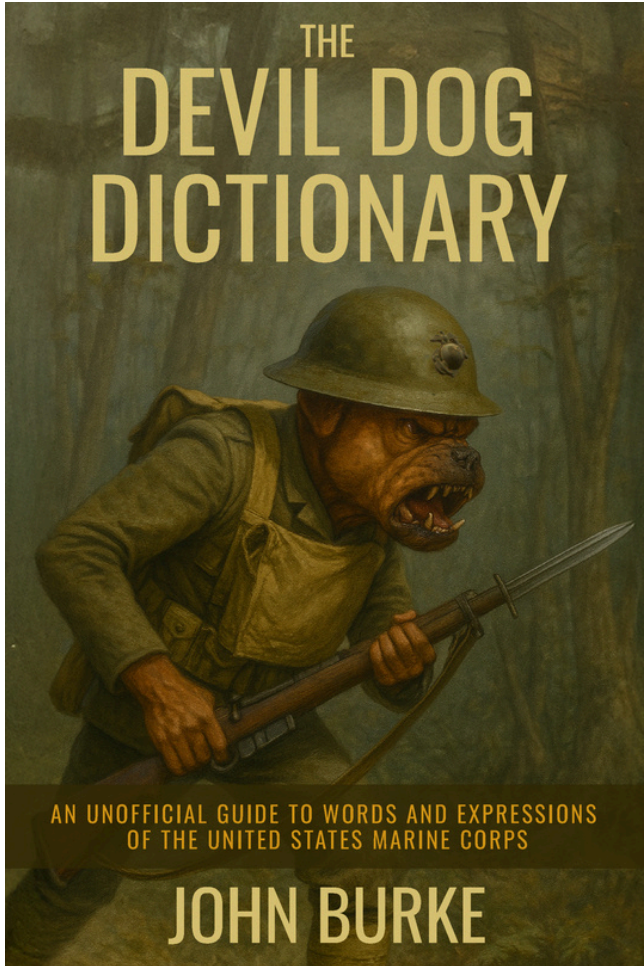


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Authors and Artists



Greetings and Semper Fidelis.

My name is John Burke, MEGA Charter Member (0013) and author of The Devil Dog Dictionary, a newly released work dedicated to preserving the language, humor and heritage of the United States Marine Corps.

This book is far more than a glossary — it's a tribute to the words and expressions that carry the spirit of the Corps across generations. From Belleau Wood to Baghdad, the Marine lexicon has reflected our courage, camaraderie and resilience. My goal was to capture that voice, preserving it as a vital part of Marine and American military history.

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The Devil Dog Dictionary

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<https://www.devildogdictionary.com/>

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Authors and Artists

Born in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1931, and orphaned at an early age, Evelyn Lee Dyer joined the US Foreign Service in the mid-1950s and soon found herself in the heart of the Cold War, among bustling diplomatic communities in Istanbul, Bonn, Prague, Leningrad, Moscow, and Geneva, as well as in Washington, DC, and often in crisis conditions. She tells her story in an unpretentious style, filled with vivid anecdotes and character descriptions, with a feeling for the grand sweep of history as lived through by ordinary people.

There are plenty of Cold War memoirs by public figures, most of them men. This memoir by a working-class Southern woman brings to life an entire generation of postwar Americans, whose destinies followed an upward arc from the regional into the global.

MARRIED TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

Evelyn Lee Dyer Rueckert

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MARRIED TO THE FOREIGN SERVICE

An American Life in the Era of Cold War Diplomacy



Evelyn Lee Dyer Rueckert

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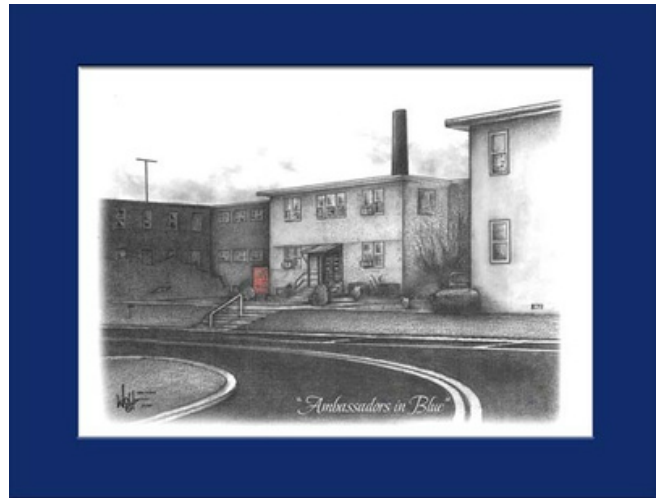


Authors and Artists

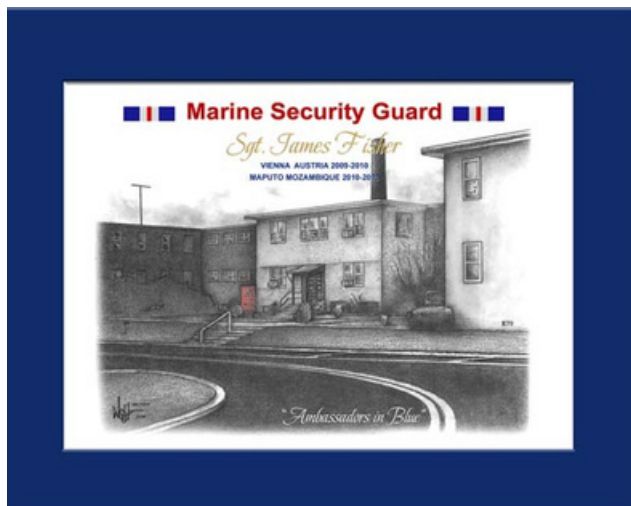
Gunnery Sergeant (Ret.) Charles Wolf the creator/founder of SemperToons. The images are renderings of GySgt Charles Wolf's creation. If you would like one of these images see <https://www.sempertoons.com/marine-security-guard> for more information.



Created by Charles Wolf



Created by Charles Wolf



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Member's Corner

RUNNING WITH POTUS CARTER 1983

Author: Lance Brown (MSG Detachment Damascus, Syria 1983 / Tokyo, Japan 1984)



When President Carter passed away in December, everyone had an opinion of him, both good (humanitarian) and bad (“he gave the Panama Canal away”). I was no different, but mine was based on a personal experience-the man could run!

In March of 1983, I was a young, (20 years old), corporal assigned to the American Embassy in Damascus, Syria. At that time, former President Carter had decided that the inaugural project of The Carter Center was to analyze and pursue peace in the Middle East. As part of that effort, he traveled to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon, and Morocco. It is important to remember that at that time, we had Marines as part of the multi-national peacekeeping force in Beirut.

We first learned of President Carter’s impending visit when the Secret Service advance team met with the detachment at the Marine House. All I remember of that visit is that the agent stated that President Carter wanted to go on a run while in Damascus, and the Secret Service would like us to help. It seems that his Secret Service details weren’t big on running. After we discussed the desired length (our selected course was approximately 2.5 miles) and various security concerns (couldn’t be in a heavy traffic area, the President should remain in the middle of our “formation”), the agent specifically stated that the President didn’t want us to “take it easy on him”, ...Challenge accepted!



(Note: At the time, President Carter was 58 years old.)

On the run day, we waited for President Carter in the lobby of the Sheraton hotel. When he stepped off the elevator, the first thing I heard him say was, “Where are my Marines?”. After introducing ourselves by stating our names and where we hailed from, he shook each of our hands. All I remember of the run was that it was mostly downhill, but President Carter kept up with us! The attached picture was taken immediately afterwards, after he had caught his breath (his request).

Fast forward to May 1984; I was a Sergeant assigned to American Embassy Tokyo, Japan. President Carter was in Japan for a private visit. It seems that he had a long relationship with Japan, dating back to his days of Governor of Georgia. Governor Carter was instrumental in convincing the Japanese company YKK (the zipper company) in establishing a factory in the United States. Since it was a private visit, no official functions were performed. However, the US Ambassador to Japan, Mike Mansfield, had a small reception for President Carter at his residence. While the Marines weren’t invited, some of the embassy staff were, to include a Political Officer that liked us. I had an enlargement made of our Damascus picture and asked her if she could get him to sign it for me. As you can see, she succeeded! I am the one kneeling in sunglasses and sweatband.

As a 62-year-old man that recently completed a half marathon at a blistering 10-minute mile pace, I can really appreciate President Carter’s running ability, “back in the day”. I don’t think I would be able to hang with a bunch of 20-something year old Marines on a run now!



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News You Can Use

From: Vince Downes, MEGA Chairman
To: MEGA Membership
Subj: 2027 Reunion Update



Marines,

I wanted to keep the current membership and to those whose membership has expired updated as we move forward in planning the 2027 Marine Embassy Guard Association Reunion. Although we are still some time away from the event, I believe that keeping everyone informed early will help members make potential hotel reservations, travel arrangements, and stay aware of general developments.

This historic reunion will mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of MEGA, a milestone that will honor our founder Robert "Big BoB" Kienietz and recognize our distinguished Charter Members.

The current status of the reunion is as follows:

Dates: May 13-16, 2027

Location: Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, 900 South Orme Street, Arlington, Virginia – the same site that hosted MEGA's first reunion.

I remain in close contact with Mr. Charley Dey, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., based in Norfolk, VA, who is working diligently to secure the best possible arrangements and contract on behalf of MEGA. I have also reconnected with Mr. Darren McGee, Sales Manager at the Sheraton Pentagon City Hotel, who worked with us during our 2018 reunion. His familiarity with our association and the hotel's outstanding service makes this an ideal location once again.

With this information, I hope members can begin making tentative plans to attend what promises to be a memorable 30th Anniversary MEGA Reunion.

If you have any questions and or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.



MSG Reflection: Corporal Steven J. Crowley

Submitted by Vince Downes

The Day Everything Changed

It was November 23, 1979. I was a 19-year-old Lance Corporal when I picked up the newspaper and read about the death of Corporal Steven J. Crowley, killed by sniper fire on the rooftop of the American Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. In that moment, my life changed.

Having been in the Corps for just over a year, I had no idea Marines guarded embassies and consulates around the globe, let alone what their duties entailed. Just weeks earlier, the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, Iran, had been attacked and taken over, and Marines from the Security Guard Detachment were being held hostage. Those events sparked my interest in Marine Security Guard duty – but it was the death of Cpl. Crowley that ignited the fire within me. The

Path Toward MSG

Fueled by determination, I marched into the career planner's office and requested all information on attending MSG School. I met every requirement, and, serving as a staff driver for generals, I was confident my Commanding Officer would sign off on my package. The only obstacle was the short window for submission. While waiting for news, I was assigned to drive for the Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert H. Barrow. His wife often joined us, and she would strike up conversations during our drives. On one particular day, General Barrow's head never lifted from his folder – a briefing on the status of the Marine hostages in Iran. Mrs. Barrow asked me what my next duty station would be. I told her I had applied for MSG duty and was awaiting word. She asked why I would choose MSG duty in light of what was happening in Iran. I replied that a Marine named Corporal Steven J. Crowley had been killed on the rooftop of the American Embassy in Pakistan. At that moment, the Commandant's head snapped up. Our eyes met in the rear-view mirror, and the look he gave me pierced straight into my soul. The moment lasted only seconds, but it felt like an eternity. As I completed that drive, General Barrow's aide requested my personal information. That would be the last time I drove for the Commandant.



Hopes Dashed – and Revived

Soon after, I tried to check on the status of my MSG package. The career planner was nowhere to be found – he had gone on 30 days’ leave. When I was given the key to his office, I found my package sitting untouched on his desk. It had never even reached the Commanding Officer. My hopes of attending the next MSG class were gutted. Weeks later, however, I received an autographed, framed photo of the Commandant thanking me for my support. I was then summoned by my Colonel, who first presented me with orders to 2nd Marine Division, Camp Lejeune. Then, he picked up another set of orders – this time to MSG Battalion, Quantico, Virginia. These, he told me, were compliments of the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

Carrying Crowley With Me

I reported to Class 2-81 at Marshall Hall. When I walked through those doors, I felt that Cpl. Crowley walked in with me. On graduation morning, as we formed up to march to Little Hall, I knew he was marching beside me. And when I crossed the stage to receive my certificate, I felt that Cpl. Crowley crossed with me.

My first posting was the American Embassy in Budapest, Hungary. The Detachment had just activated a new post – on the rooftop of the Embassy. Instantly, I thought of Cpl. Crowley and his rooftop post in Islamabad that fatal day.

Years later, thanks to Mr. Frank Baker, Executive Director of Operations for MCESG, I was invited to speak at the building dedication in honor of Cpl. Crowley. Meeting his family was one of the greatest honors of my life. I was able to share with them how their son’s sacrifice inspired me, changed me, and set me on the path that defined my Marine Corps career.



A Lasting Legacy

Cpl. Steven J. Crowley's heroic actions on that November day in 1979 changed my life forever. Without his sacrifice, there would have been no Lance Corporal Downes in Class 2-81, no Sergeant Downes in Class 1-86, no Vince Downes as MEGA-MCESG Liaison, and no Vince Downes as Chairman of the Marine Embassy Guard Association.

Cpl. Crowley made the ultimate sacrifice — protecting not only the Embassy staff, but also the freedoms we all hold dear.

Let us always remember him, as he continues to stand the watch on Post One Eternal, on Heaven's rooftop. God bless Cpl. Steven J. Crowley and the Crowley family.





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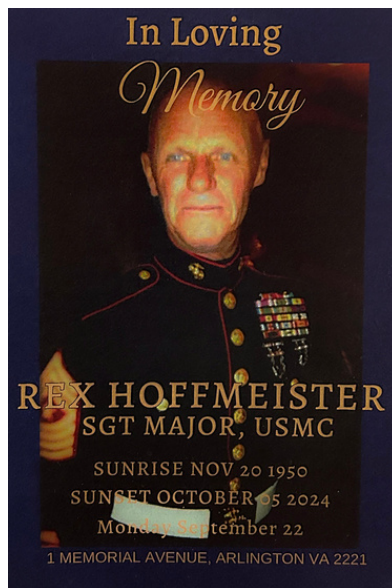


Taps

In Memoriam

Submitted by Vince Downes

On September 22, 2025, I had the distinct honor of attending the burial service for Sergeant Major Rex Hoffmeister at Arlington National Cemetery.



While attending Marine Security Guard School, Class 2-81, Gunnery Sergeant Hoffmeister was my Instructor/Advisor (I/A). For those who met and knew him, he was larger than life — always mentoring, motivating, and inspiring his students. During his time at MSG Battalion, he became, in my humble opinion, one of the most beloved instructors to ever serve there.

After my graduation in 1981, I would not reconnect with him until the late 2000s through Facebook. We shared many great late-night conversations, reflecting on memories, sharing stories of our time at MSG Battalion, and discussing the program we both cherished deeply. It was an honor to meet his wife and family and to share with them the lasting impact he had on my life.



Taps



Sergeant Major Hoffmeister attended Marine Security Guard School from January to March 1978 and served as Detachment Commander at the American Embassy in Lagos, Nigeria (1978–1980).

He returned to MSG Battalion as an Instructor/Advisor (January 1980 – April 1982), and upon completion of that tour, was reassigned to the American Embassy in Madrid, Spain (April 1982 – July 1984).

As Chairman, and on behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire membership, we extend our heartfelt and sincere condolences to the Hoffmeister family. Let us remember him as he now stands watch on Post One --- Eternal



Newsletter Editor Note



As I continue to tweak and revise our newsletter, I am only building from the foundation that was set by previous newsletter editors. Just like we were taught, when building a fighting hole we constantly are improving.

I try to be inclusive of all our members and give you a space so your voice can be heard. I've added a couple of sections such as, Authors and Artists, and Member's Corner.

Highlighting significant events can be tasking but I will make every effort to make sure I do. If I missed something please send me an email: danny.baker@embassymarine.org and let me know.

Currently we are publishing the newsletter on a quarterly basis using the Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall format. This means the newsletter can be somewhat lengthy, and seems more like a magazine, but I try to publish as much information as possible.

A final note MEGA is on the web, Facebook and X (Twitter) see the links below and visit often for frequent news and updates.

I want to wish everyone a Happy Birthday. Semper Fidelis.

A Call to Action: If you have an artistic (draw/sketch) humorous side, and would like to contribute to the newsletter, I would like to dedicate a page titled: On the Lighter Side. Email me for more information.

**[Marine Embassy Guard Association](#)
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