



NMMI ALUMNI RELATIONS | ALUMNIOFFICE@NMMI.EDU



From the Director's Desk


ATTENTION IN THE AREA, ATTENTION OFF POST

Graduation

Every year cadets finish their NMMI experience and move on to their next adventure. It provides a great opportunity to applaud and appreciate their hard work and determination as well as reflect on your own journeys at NMMI. I hope that each of you hold on to your NMMI experience, appreciate it for what it was, embody what you learned and cheer those cadets as they embark on their own NMMI journey.

Change happens daily and the institute you knew is gone but a new and thriving institute is still in place and producing cadets that are fully equipped with the tools they need to be successful in the world today and excel in the future. As you look at the changes I ask that you appreciate all that these cadets have accomplished, cheer them along on their journey and welcome them into the alumni family with open arms and a warm appreciation. Although their experience was different than yours, it was still an experience that will impact their lives for years to come. This has been the unspoken time honored tradition since 1891.

I hope you join me in applauding this group and congratulating them for all they have accomplished and all that they will accomplish going forward. They have left the institute in a better situation and raised the standard you all have set.

Kris Ward 
Director of Alumni Relations and Institutional Advancement



Kris Ward
Executive Director of
Alumni Relations and
Institutional Advancement





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Meet the Team



Kris Ward
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALUMNI RELATIONS & INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT



Janice Weed '93 HS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS



Natalie Perez
ANNUAL FUND OFFICER



Destini Gonzales
GIFT PROCESSOR/FINANCIAL LIAISON



Leslie Palombi
SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

Greetings from the NMMI Alumni Relations Office! As your bridge to the NMMI community, we're committed to fostering lifelong connections and supporting your post-graduation journey. Join us for networking, mentorship, and opportunities to stay engaged with your alma mater.



Alumni Relations Office
Monday - Friday 0730-1630
Alumnioffice@nmmi.edu
101 West College Blvd,
Daniels Leadership Center,
Roswell, NM 88201



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NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD

ARMY DEMONSTRATION

135
NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE

ZIA RISING

25 APRIL | 1:30 PM
NMMI STAPP FIELD | ROSWELL, NM



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A LEGACY IN FORMATION: 135 YEARS OF NMMI

ROSWELL AND NMMI, A SHARED TRADITION



Since its earliest days, the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) has been more than a school on ‘the Hill,’ it has been a part of the fabric of the Roswell community. For more than a century, cadets, faculty, and citizens of southeastern New Mexico and Chaves County have shared traditions, celebrations, and public events that brought the community onto Post and showcased the Corps of Cadets in action.

In the early years of the Institute, community engagement was both practical and symbolic. According to NMMI: Centennial History, local residents regularly attended cadet parades and ceremonies, which served as an opportunity for the Institute to demonstrate the discipline and training that distinguished it from other schools in the region (Gibbs & Jackman, 1991). These public events allowed Roswell citizens to see firsthand the development of young cadets educated not only in academics but also in leadership and military discipline. The parade field quickly became a focal point for these gatherings. Historical photographs and accounts show spectators lining the edges of the parade ground during drills, reviews, and special ceremonies. Families, local dignitaries, and visitors frequently attended these events, reinforcing the Institute's connection to the broader community (NMMI Pictorial History, 1983).

Community engagement also extended beyond ceremonial events. Athletics, public celebrations, and campus gatherings regularly brought residents and cadets together. These interactions helped shape a relationship in which the Institute became both an educational institution and a cultural landmark within southeastern New Mexico. As historian J. R. Kelly notes in his writings on NMMI's early years, the Institute's presence helped foster civic pride and regional identity, with the Corps of Cadets often serving as a visible symbol of discipline, leadership, and service (Kelly, 1953)

More than a century later, that tradition continues.

On April 25, NMMI will host Zia Rising, a demonstration day on Stapp Parade Field following the final parade. This event will bring together the New Mexico Army National Guard (NMARNG) and NMMI in a public demonstration of leadership, training, and partnership. Visitors will have the opportunity to observe equipment displays, demonstrations, and expedition-style exhibits highlighting the capabilities of both the NMARNG and NMMI's Army Early Commissioning Program (ECP) cadets.

Events like Zia Rising remind us that NMMI has always been part of something larger than itself. From the earliest public parades to today's collaborative demonstrations with the National Guard, the Institute continues to open its gates to the community it serves.

Historical references for this article were drawn from J. R. Kelly's *A History of New Mexico Military Institute, 1891–1941*, Gibbs and Jackman's *NMMI: A Centennial History*, and *The Pictorial History of New Mexico Military Institute, 1891–1983*.



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CLUBS AT NMMI: WHERE CADETS GROW AND LEAD



For generations, the New Mexico Military Institute experience has been shaped not only by the discipline of the Corps, but by the opportunities cadets found outside the classroom. Clubs and activities gave cadets a place to explore new interests, build friendships, and develop confidence that will stay with them long after graduation.

NMMI's clubs reflected the Institute's balance of tradition and innovation. Whether cadets were competing, performing, mentoring younger students, or simply connecting with peers who shared their interests, these programs helped them grow into capable and well-rounded leaders.

Cadet 1LT Jose Lerma, a member of both Centennial Flame Guard and the McBride Air Rifle Team, saw that growth firsthand. While preparing for his first off post competition, he set a personal goal of finishing in the top fifteen. When the results came in, he placed tenth overall.

"My goal was being at least in the top fifteen," Lerma said. "When I saw the results, it felt fulfilling. I realized how much motivation comes from effort and enjoying what you do."

For some cadets, clubs also created a sense of belonging. Cadet Sooah Kim, who participated in International Club, McBride Rifle, and HOSA, said those programs helped her feel connected while being far from home.

"International Club comforts me even when I am away from home, with people going through similar struggles," she said. "McBride Rifle feels like a family. We all help and care about each other."

Cultural clubs also helped cadets build friendships and celebrate traditions. Members of Mexa Club hosted events throughout the year, including a Mexican Independence Day cookout that featured folklorico dancers, as well as gatherings such as loteria night and a senior celebration for graduating cadets. These events created opportunities for cadets to connect, share traditions, and strengthen their sense of community on campus.

Clubs also opened doors to new interests and future careers. Cadet Arthur Cooper became involved in Aviation Club, Crew 30, Jazz Band, and Air Rifle. Through Aviation Club, he discovered a passion for aerospace engineering and appreciated the mentors who encouraged him along the way.

Academic competition offered similar opportunities for growth. Cadet Eloise Gabler traveled with Quiz Bowl to Atlanta to compete at the NAQT National Championship Tournament against more than three hundred teams.

"I learned that I really enjoy learning in an environment that is fun and includes a game like structure," she said.

Other programs strengthened ties beyond campus. Cadet Yanming Wu, who participated in Robotics and Science Bowl, said Science Night allowed cadets to visit local schools and lead hands on STEM activities for younger students, sharing their enthusiasm for science with the community.

Faculty advisors saw the same impact. LTC Stephan Kaftan, advisor for the Cadet Constabulary, said the organization continued a tradition that dates back to the early 1900s. Members collectively volunteered thousands of hours each year while developing discipline and professionalism.

Across campus, advisors from programs such as Quiz Bowl, Band, E Sports, and Spirit Squad shared a common observation: cadets often discovered abilities and confidence they did not know they had.

Clubs remained one of the many ways cadets found their place at NMMI. They built friendships, explored new passions, and developed the leadership skills that define the Institute's graduates.

Support from alumni and friends helped sustain these opportunities by providing resources for travel, equipment, and program development. Because of that support, cadets continue to build the kinds of experiences that have shaped generations of NMMI graduates.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Natalie Perez at perez@nmmi.edu or call 575-624-8158.



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March Momentum & a Little Luck Along the Way

If March has taught us anything, it's that a little luck goes a long way, but a strong alumni network makes its own magic.

This month has been full of movement, music, and meaningful connections as we continue building momentum toward some of our biggest events of the year. From road trips to reconnecting with alumni, to scouting talent for upcoming celebrations, the energy has been nothing short of electric.

One highlight included a recent trip to Carlsbad to scout live entertainment for the upcoming Trail Ride. There's something special about seeing a band perform in their natural element like reading the crowd, feeling the rhythm, and imagining how that same energy could translate to one of our own events. While not every performance is the perfect fit, each one brings us closer to creating unforgettable experiences for our alumni.

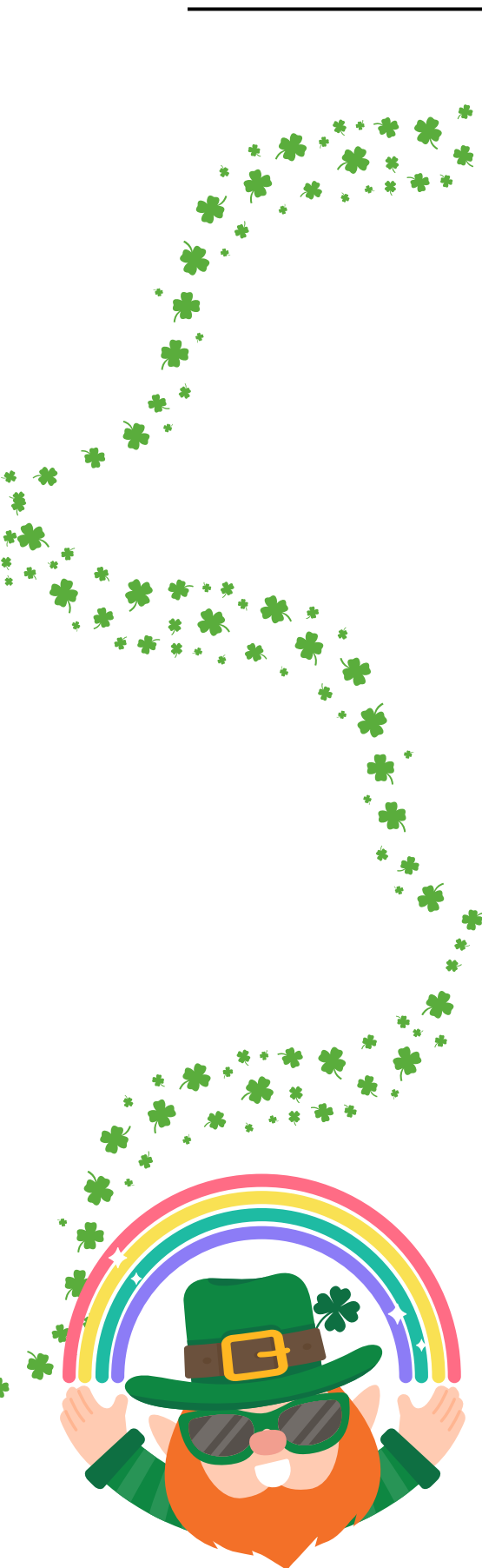
That's really what this season is about finding the right pieces, the right people, and the right moments to bring everything together. Like a four-leaf clover, sometimes it takes a little searching, but when you find it, you know it. Behind the scenes, planning continues to move full steam ahead for upcoming gatherings across the region. Each event is an opportunity to strengthen connections, welcome familiar faces, and create new memories that reflect the pride and tradition we all share.

As we move further into the spring season, we're excited for what's ahead. Whether it's a local meet-and-greet, a signature event, or a chance encounter that turns into something more, we're reminded that the best moments often come when preparation meets opportunity.

So, here's to March, a month of momentum, a touch of luck, and a whole lot of Bronco spirit.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Leslie Palombi Special Events Coordinator





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NMMI Cadets March in Remembrance, Honoring NMMI Alumni at the 2026 Bataan Memorial Death March

By: LTC Karl M. Harness (00 JCG)
41st PMS of the New Mexico Military Institute



NMMI JROTC Cadets cross the finish line taking 1st Place in their division

New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) cadets demonstrated resilience, honor, and historical remembrance as they participated in the Bataan Memorial Death March held at White Sands Missile Range on March 21, 2026. The annual event, which commemorates the harrowing 1942 march endured by American and Filipino prisoners of war in the Philippines during World War II, challenges participants with a grueling desert course meant to reflect the hardship and sacrifice of those who suffered.

For the NMMI cadets, this year’s march carried an added layer of meaning. In a powerful act of tribute, they carried with them the names of 20 NMMI alumni who themselves endured the original Bataan Death March. Each step taken across the demanding terrain symbolized not only physical endurance, but also a deep connection to the institute’s history and the legacy of its graduates.

In a standout achievement, the NMMI JROTC cadets earned first place in their division, underscoring not only their physical preparation but also their discipline and teamwork. Their performance reflected months of training and a strong commitment to excellence.

Throughout the event, cadets supported one another, embodying the institute’s core values of Duty, Honor, and Achievement. Many described the experience as both physically taxing and emotionally humbling, especially knowing the stories behind the names they bore. By linking past and present, the cadets honored the courage and sacrifice of those who came before them. Their participation ensured that the legacy of the NMMI alumni who survived one of history’s most brutal wartime ordeals continues to be remembered and respected by a new generation.





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UPCOMING Events



FREE EVENT

2026 RAGIN' CAJUN

Saturday April 11th at 2PM

Proudly Hosted by Greg Peebles '77 JC & Denise Kawas
10901 Oakland Ave NE - North of Paseo del Norte / Just East of Eubank

Join us for this Fun & Festive Event offering Mardi Gras Style Cajun Cuisine and Zydeco Music...
...and yes, it's all FREE!

RSVP TODAY
Emails Only Please
Denise Kawas
denise_kawas@yahoo.com
Greg Peebles
kgp1066@yahoo.com

* Include Full Names of Attendees *

An Annual NMMI Alumni ABQ Chapter Mardi Gras Bash!




36TH NMMI TRAIL RIDE

Registration

NOW OPEN



JUNE 2ND - 6TH
CAMP OF THE TALL PINES

SPOTS WILL FILL UP FAST! INCLUDING CABINS -SO BOOK NOW!



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NMMI SPRING INTERMEDIATE PARADE



The Intermediate Parade marks a significant milestone in the transformation of our RAT class as they move from Phase II to Phase III of training. During this transition, cadets demonstrate the values of duty, honor, and achievement while recognizing those who have shown the leadership, discipline, and commitment to take on greater responsibility within the Corps. This ceremony symbolizes their progress from learning and adaptation toward greater accountability, leadership, and collective performance as members of the Institute.





SUPPORTING THE MISSION



Beyond Scholarships: The Impact of Operational Endowments at NMMI

When most people think about endowments, they immediately think of scholarships, and for good reason. Scholarship endowments provide life-changing opportunities for cadets by ensuring that talented young men and women can attend New Mexico Military Institute regardless of financial circumstances. These gifts directly support the Corps of Cadets and help sustain the Institute’s mission of developing leaders of character through academics, leadership, and athletics.

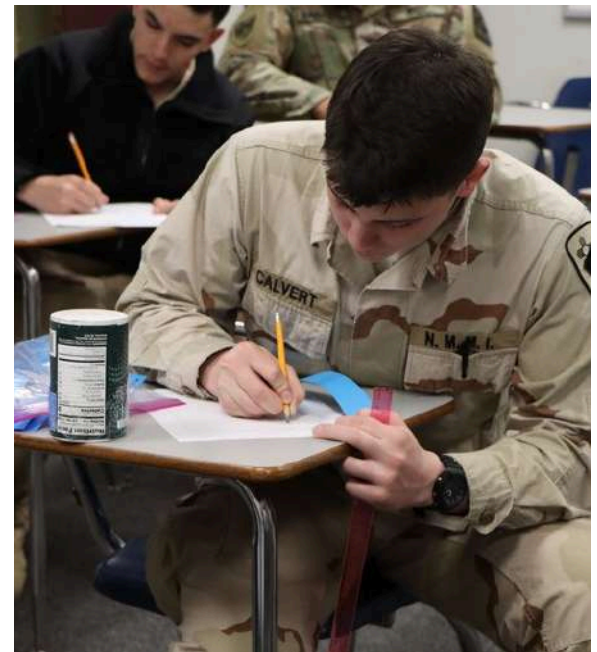
However, scholarships are only one part of the endowment story.

Operational endowments are another powerful way alumni and friends can support NMMI’s long-term success. While scholarship endowments support cadets directly, operational endowments sustain the facilities, programs, and traditions that make the NMMI experience possible. These funds allow donors to invest in the long-term care and sustainability of the Institute by supporting needs such as facility maintenance, program enhancements, equipment replacement, and other operational priorities that might otherwise place strain on annual budgets. Because the principal of an endowment is preserved and invested, the annual earnings help maintain and enhance specific areas of NMMI year after year, creating a lasting legacy that benefits generations of cadets.

One example of this type of support is the endowment for the Chapel. The NMMI Chapel has long been an important part of a cadet’s life, serving as a place for reflection, ceremonies, and gatherings. The Chapel Endowment helps ensure that this historic space continues to serve cadets and alumni well into the future. Earning from the endowment can be used for operational needs such as replacing worn equipment, maintaining furnishings, and preserving the chapel’s interior, including items like pews and other essential fixtures.

For alumni who want to make a lasting impact, operational endowments offer a meaningful way to strengthen the foundation of NMMI. They help ensure that the places where cadets learn, train, and grow remain strong for the future. Just as scholarship endowments invest in the people of NMMI, operational endowments invest in the enduring strength of the institution itself.

Through thoughtful philanthropy and long-term stewardship, alumni and friends help ensure that the traditions, facilities, and programs that define the NMMI experience continue to thrive for generations to come.





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MAJOR NICHOLAS DOCKERY 2006 JC

New Mexico Military Institute is proud to recognize Major Nicholas Dockery 2006 JC, whose extraordinary courage and leadership reflect the very highest ideals of our institution and our nation.

A former cadet and graduate of United States Military Academy, Major Dockery has recently been approved by Congress for consideration of the nation’s highest award for combat valor. His heroic actions in Afghanistan—risking his life to protect fellow soldiers and ensure their safe withdrawal—previously earned him two Silver Stars.

His continued recognition is a testament not only to a single act of bravery, but to a career defined by integrity, selfless service, and leadership.

We are honored to call him one of our own



Join us on Tuesday, April 7 at 7:00 PM at Pearson Auditorium for a high-energy performance by New Mexico’s own 44th Army Band. This dynamic concert promises bold sound, powerful rhythms, and an electrifying experience you won’t want to miss.

Breaking Brass Concert Pearson Auditorium

Tuesday, April 7

7:00–8:00 PM

FREE Admission

Be sure to scan the QR code below for a sneak peek of the music!

Event Schedule

April 7 (Tuesday)

• 8:00–9:00 AM: Jazz Cadet Workshop at Pearson

• 7:00–8:00 PM: Concert (FREE!)

April 8 (Wednesday)

• 8:00–9:00 AM: Regimental Band Cadet Workshop at Pearson



Tues, April 7: Pearson Auditorium, 7:00pm



Come hear the sounds of New Mexico’s Own 44th Army Band. Scan the QR code below for a preview of our music.



BREAKING BRASS





TAPS

	JEROME	C.	KAPLAN	1947		HS	6/10/2024
	HOWARD	C.	PETERSEN	1948		HS	2/11/20226
	WILLIAM	L.	CHAILLOT	1949	JR	HS	4/18/2020
	EMILE	M.	CUENOD	1949		JC	2/26/2026
	ROBERT	C.	JUDY	1950		HS	5/13/2024
	CARLOS	J.	SPENCER	1953		HS	2/20/2026
COL	DAVID	L.	ROWLANDS	1954		JC	2/27/2026
	REED	S.	GLOVER	1955		JC	12/3/2025
	EDWIN	J.	GILBERT	1957		HS	11/9/2018
	C.	B.	PENROD	1958		JC	2/8/2026
	FRED	Q.	MILLER	1959		JC	1/12/2024
	TRAVIS	B.	WATKINS	1961	JR.	HS	7/2/2024
	MICHAEL	E.	COSTELLO	1961		JC	2/21/2026
LTC.	ROBERT	E.	DREHER	1963	USAFR (RET)	HS	11/9/2025
	PATRICK	R.	HYER	1965		JC	8/24/2024
	GEORGE	B.	DAVIS	1968		JC	3/11/2026
	TIMOTHY	D.	ELKINS	1971		HS	2/9/2015
LTC.	JOHN	C.	LISTER	1976	USAR (RET)	JC	5/7/2022
	DOUGLAS	C.	ABBOTT	1982		HS	5/2/2025
	JOHN	P.	McAFEE	1983		JC	3/19/2026
LTC.	NIKOLAUS	F.	GURAN	1993	USA (RET)	JC	3/19/2026



Alumni Reported Deceased
March 30, 2026



A quote from the 1933
Bronco about cadet,
George O. Speer 1933
JC, who was killed in a
Polo Game-

**“BUT IF THEY ARE
GONE FROM OUR
RANKS, WE KEEP THEM
ON OUR ROSTER AS
VALUES ONCE
INTIMATELY KNOWN
AND AVAILABLE IN
OUR RECOLLECTIONS,
AND IN OUR HEARTS.
THEY WILL REMAIN
FOREVER YOUNG.”**

