



NMMI ALUMNI RELATIONS | ALUMNIOFFICE@NMMI.EDU




WELCOME TO OUR MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

From the Director's Desk

ATTENTION IN THE AREA, ATTENTION OFF POST

The 36th Annual Alumni Trail Ride is fast approaching. We hope to see many of you there but also, we understand not everyone can make it. I wanted to take this time and reflect with you about all the events we have throughout the year with the hopes that you can not only attend one of them but will also accept my challenge.

Each year the Institutional Advancement Office schedules and hosts a number of events for alumni, patrons and friends of NMMI. We are gearing up for the Trail Ride and have likewise completed a few 135th Anniversary donor events. We are in full planning mode of Generals Cup Golf Tournament and Homecoming. Early preparation on our end hopefully entices early registration and we want to ensure that you are informed and have plenty of lead-time to make accommodations. As I mentioned in this section of the e-newsletter a few months back, early registration is key in order for us to ensure that all the proper accommodations are in place so we can provide the best experience possible. With that being said, I also want to challenge each of you to bring a friend, help us grow these events and make sure that they are well attended and the camaraderie is flowing. With your help and support we can expand the list of current events to include more fun and opportunities, we can also grow the locations that we will be visiting. Thanks, and we appreciate all of the passion and support we receive on a daily basis.

Kris Ward 
Director of Alumni Relations and Institutional Advancement



Kris Ward

Executive Director of
Alumni Relations and
Institutional Advancement



ALUMNI



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Meet the Team



Janice Weed '93 HS

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ALUMNI RELATIONS



Natalie Perez

ANNUAL FUND OFFICER



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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Garry Owen Squadron Returns to the Field: Joint Training and Heritage at Fort Stanton LTC Karl Harness (OO JCG) 41st Professor of Military Science

The New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) Garry Owen Squadron recently demonstrated both tactical excellence and deep respect for tradition during a multi-university Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX) and a culminating awards ceremony held at the historic Fort Stanton.



Task Force Jicarilla

The JFTX brought together cadets from several prominent ROTC programs (known as Task Force Jicarilla), including University of New Mexico (UNM), New Mexico State University (NMSU), Texas Tech University (TTU), and University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). This collaborative environment provided cadets with an opportunity to train alongside peers from across the region, strengthening interoperability, leadership skills, and unit cohesion.

Over the course of the exercise, cadets engaged in land navigation, squad-level tactics, and simulated mission scenarios designed to replicate real-world operational challenges. The integration of multiple programs elevated the complexity of the training, requiring adaptability, communication, and decisive leadership under pressure.



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Building Leaders Through Shared Experience

Beyond tactical proficiency, the JFTX emphasized mentorship and professional development. Senior cadets and cadre from each institution worked together to evaluate performance, provide feedback, and foster a culture of continuous improvement. For many participants, the experience offered a preview of future joint operations they may encounter in their military careers.

The Garry Owen Squadron distinguished itself through discipline, initiative, and teamwork; hallmarks of NMMI's long-standing tradition of producing capable leaders.

Honoring Tradition at Fort Stanton

The decision to host the awards ceremony at Fort Stanton added a powerful historical dimension to the event. Established in 1855, the fort has served multiple roles throughout American history, including as a frontier military post and later as a medical facility. Holding the ceremony at such a site allowed cadets to connect their modern training to the legacy of those who served before them.

Against the backdrop of Fort Stanton's enduring architecture and sweeping New Mexico landscape, cadets were recognized for excellence in leadership, tactical performance, and overall contribution to the exercise. The setting reinforced the values of service, sacrifice, and continuity that define military tradition.

Reconnecting with the Past, Preparing for the Future

By combining rigorous joint training with a ceremony rooted in history, the Garry Owen Squadron created an experience that was both forward-looking and reflective. The JFTX not only sharpened cadet skills but also reminded them of their place within a broader lineage of military service.



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As these future leaders return to their respective institutions, they carry with them not only enhanced capabilities but also a renewed appreciation for the traditions that shape their profession.

**"Duty, Honor, &
Achievement."
-NMMI's core values.**



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2026 NMMI STEAM CAMP



Located on the beautiful NMMI campus, the 2026 NMMI Summer STEAM Camp promises to be one of the best things your kids do all summer.

June 1 - 5, 2026

9am - 3pm

Willson Hall, NMMI Campus

Junior Camp k - 4th Grade Senior

Camp 5th - 12th Grade Tuition

\$275

Snacks and lunch are provided

\$25 discount for each sibling

\$25 discount for NMMI faculty/staff

Apply Now!



For more info:

Dr. Yang

Call 575-624-8481 (office)

Or Text 575-317-4799 (cell)

**\$500 SCHOLARSHIP TOWARDS FUTURE IPA
ENROLLMENT UPON CAMP COMPLETION**

Visit our website: <https://sites.google.com/view/2026-nmmi-summer-steam-camp/home>



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Host: John Harvard '79 HS & '81 JC

NMMI Meet & Greet

THE HARBOR RESTAURANT

10000 Spur 294,
Corsicana, TX
Saturday
16 May 2026
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

RSVP NOW



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Registration is officially open for the 36th Annual NMMI Alumni Trail Ride at Camp of the Tall Pines, Mayhill, NM, from June 2–6, 2026. Don't miss your chance to join this unforgettable tradition!

Dates & Options:

- Full Ride (June 2–6): \$475
- Wed–Sat (June 3–6): \$395
- Thu–Sat (June 4–6): \$285
- One Full Day Only: \$130
- Dinner Only: \$80

RV Reservations Update: All

RV spots are now coordinated through the NMMI Alumni Relations Office. Contact:

Kris Ward, Director of Alumni Relations (575) 624-8614 | wardk@nmmi.edu



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NEW MEXICO NATIONAL GUARD

ARMY DEMONSTRATION

ZIA RISING

135
NEW MEXICO MILITARY

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



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A Legacy in Formation: 135 of Years of NMMI The Golden Age of Polo at New Mexico Military Institute

As New Mexico Military Institute celebrates 135 years of excellence, few programs capture the spirit of tradition, discipline, and distinction quite like NMMI's Polo Team. During the Institute's "Golden Years," polo stood as a symbol of NMMI's elite cavalry heritage and national military reputation, uniting athletic skill with horsemanship, leadership, and teamwork.

The first polo game at NMMI is reported to have occurred in 1902, played by the members of the NMMI faculty, "only two of whom had flat or polo saddles," according to Eugene Taylor Jackman's book: *THE NEW MEXICO MILITARY INSTITUTE 1891-1966: A CRITICAL HISTORY*.

But the true roots of polo at NMMI trace back to January 1921, when the Corps of Cadets was reorganized as a cavalry squadron, and mounted training officially began at The Old Post. With horses came opportunity, and later that same year, a polo club was formed, comprising cadets and staff who embraced the demanding sport as both a form of competition and an extension of military training. Instruction and coaching were provided by the Military Science department, whose officers were devoted cavalymen and passionate supporters of the sport of polo.

By 1924, polo had earned recognition as a collegiate sport at NMMI, placing the Institute among a select group of schools fielding competitive teams. Early matches were often played against Regular Army cavalry units, further reinforcing NMMI's standing within the broader military community. Polo matches, horse shows, and gymkhanas quickly became highlights of campus life, drawing cadets, faculty, and local residents of Roswell alike to the parade and polo grounds east of the Old Post.

That old polo ground east of the Old Post was 124 acres on the other side of Main Street, now known as J.P. White Field. The NMMI administration began renting the land for \$50 per month from the City of Roswell, using it for drill and polo. NMMI later purchased the land outright, two months prior to the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which triggered the Great Depression (Jackman, p. 187)

Now, with a dedicated practice area and partial subsidization of equipment (such as horses and saddles) from the United States government, the NMMI polo program didn't just compete; they excelled.

The rise to national prominence began with a "barnstorming" tour of the West Coast under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel E. A. Keyes, professor of military science and tactics, from 1926 to 1932. Under Keyes, the Institute won its first major tournament in 1929 at Fort Bliss. (Jackman, p. 315) In 1936, NMMI again won the Southwestern Open Polo Tournament at Fort Bliss, Texas, earning silver honors and regional recognition. The championship team: Huling "Jupe" Means, Roy Thompson, Jack Shirley, John Bannister, and Robert C. Rogers embodied the discipline, grit, and teamwork that defined NMMI athletics during this era.



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But perhaps the two most storied wins by the NMMI polo team came at the very tail-end of the program. On March 8, 1952, the Broncos won the United States Polo Association's National Intercollegiate title and the Townsend Cup by defeating Princeton University by the score of 10 to 8. Institute players were W. R. Crawford, R. W. Evans, J. J. Dean, and R. E. Easterling, with William E. Babers as the head coach. That game was on national television, played at The Armory in New York, NY. (Jackson, p.319)

Babers' team won another national championship two years. This time the win was against Yale University. The Broncos beat the Bulldogs by the lopsided score of 14 to 3. Players were Fred Rice (voted the tournament MVP), "Buzz" Easterling, Jack Dean, and Louis Maida. (Jackson, p. 319)

Competing against and defeating such a storied opponent affirmed NMMI's place on the national stage and reflected the exceptional caliber of its cadet-athletes.

While the era of mounted cavalry eventually gave way to modern military training, the legacy of the polo team at New Mexico Military Institute endures. Rooted in discipline, partnership, and leadership, polo reflected the values that defined cadet life during one of the Institute's most formative periods. "Every Boy Rides" was more than a slogan; it was a shared experience that shaped character, built confidence, and left an indelible mark on generations of cadets. To hear more about this NMMI's Polo Era, we invite you to watch the video featuring alumnus Buzz Easterling '52HS/'54JC, who shares his perspective on polo and its lasting impact at NMMI. <https://youtu.be/NSGfNkcFay4>

As NMMI celebrates 135 years, the story of the NMMI Polo team remains a lasting symbol of tradition, excellence, and the enduring spirit on The Hill.

Source material drawn from J.R. Kelly's A History of New Mexico Military Institute, 1891-1941, The Pictorial History of New Mexico Military Institute, 1891-1983, as well as The New Mexico Military Institute 1891-1966: A Critical History.

By: Janice Weed '93HS, Deputy Alumni Director and Major Geoff Gunn, Athletic Information Director



(Left)
Peter Hurd presents the tournament trophy to the 1954 championship polo team. The team was composed of Fred Rice, B.T. "Buzz" Easterling, Jack Dean, and Louie Naida. Coach Bill Babers stands behind Hurd.



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This Earth Day, a group of exceptional cadets traded their usual routines for work gloves and a shared mission: giving back to the land that gives so much to our community. Our destination was Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, a place known for its unique ecosystem and quiet beauty.

From the moment we arrived cadets jumped into action, working together to clear debris, remove litter, and help restore areas of the refuge that had been impacted by natural wear and human activity. There's something powerful about seeing immediate results in spaces once scattered with trash transformed into clean, open stretches of land.

Beyond cleanup efforts, cadets also took part in planting native vegetation. These plants play an important role in supporting local wildlife and maintaining the ecological balance of the refuge. Each plant placed in the ground was a small but meaningful investment in the future of this environment.

We are incredibly proud of these cadets and grateful for the opportunity to contribute to such an important space. It was a day well spent—one that left the land better than we found it and reminded us all of the difference a dedicated group can make.

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April in Bloom: Events, Energy & Alumni Connections

Spring has officially arrived, and with it comes a fresh wave of momentum across our alumni community. April has been a month of growth, renewed connections, and exciting progress as we continue preparing for the months ahead.

From Arizona to Texas, our recent alumni meet and greets have brought together Broncos old and new for evenings filled with conversation, laughter, and shared memories. These gatherings are a reminder that no matter where life takes us, the bond we share remains strong. Seeing alumni reconnect, exchange stories, and build new relationships continues to be one of the most rewarding parts of this work.

Behind the scenes, preparations for upcoming events are well underway. Each detail—big and small—is thoughtfully considered to ensure every experience reflects the pride, tradition, and camaraderie that define our community. From coordinating venues and logistics to evaluating entertainment options, our focus remains on creating events that are both meaningful and memorable.

As we move further into spring, the excitement continues to build. With more events on the horizon, we look forward to bringing alumni together in ways that celebrate connection, tradition, and the spirit that unites us all.

Thank you for being part of this incredible community. We can't wait to see you at an upcoming event.

Leslie Palombi
Events Coordinator
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SUPPORTING THE MISSION

What Your Gift Makes Possible

From scholarships to everyday cadet life, your support of the Annual Fund shows up in ways that matter.

Life on Post is often remembered in the moments between the routine. The conversations after class, the time spent with friends, and the experiences outside the classroom tend to stay with cadets long after they leave NMMI. As the Institute continues celebrating 135 years, the 1350 Initiative reflects a focused effort to strengthen those experiences and support the future of New Mexico Military Institute.

Across the Old Post, the impact of the Annual Fund can be seen in the day-to-day experiences that shape cadet life. From scholarship support to academic resources and cadet activities, these gifts help ensure that cadets have what they need to succeed and stay focused on their goals.

Clubs remain an important part of that experience. This year, cadets were involved in programs such as the Cadet Constabulary, McBride Rifle Team, Aviation Club, Quiz Bowl, International Club, Robotics, Band, Spirit Squad, and others. Each offered a different way for cadets to connect, contribute, and build friendships outside the classroom.

Members of the Cadet Constabulary, one of NMMI's longest-standing organizations, carried forward a legacy that dates back more than a century. Through their work supporting campus operations, cadets developed a strong sense of responsibility while taking pride in being part of something with lasting history on Post.

Other programs provided opportunities to explore academic interests and engage with the broader community, whether through competitions, performances, or outreach activities. Together, these experiences contribute to a well-rounded cadet life and often become some of the most memorable parts of a cadet's time at NMMI.

Support of the Annual Fund helps sustain these opportunities. Participation can start small and still make a meaningful difference. A monthly gift of \$25, for example, provides \$300 in support each year, directly contributing to cadet activities, academic opportunities, and immediate needs across campus. It also supports academic resources, technology, and the upkeep of facilities that cadets rely on each day.

As part of the 1350 Initiative, each gift contributes to that ongoing effort. Whether supporting scholarships, enhancing programs, or maintaining the environment cadets call home, the impact is both immediate and lasting.

Natalie Perez
Development and Advancement Officer
575-624-8158
perez@nmmi.edu



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We invite you to join fellow alumni, families, and friends in making a gift today. Together, we can continue the legacy of excellence that defines NMMI.

Give today. Make a difference that lasts



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TAPS

Anne	E.	Reeder	4/2/2026	1962	JC
John	D.	Byram	3/18/2026	1973	JC
Leonard	L.	Delue	3/11/2026	1973	JC
Roger	P.	Wanita	3/27/2026	1981	JC
Don	M.	Pearson	3/21/2026	1985	HS

Alumni Reported Deceased
April 23 , 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.”**



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As we move through April 2026, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for being such an important part of the NMMI family. Your continued support, involvement, and loyalty strengthen our mission and inspire the Corps of Cadets each and every day.

This month has brought renewed energy across New Mexico Military Institute, with continued dedication, achievement, and moments that reflect the character and commitment of our cadets and community. We are grateful for the pride you take in our Institute and for the many ways you contribute to advancing our mission.

As we look ahead to the remainder of the spring season and the opportunities it brings, we remain thankful for your ongoing partnership and encouragement.

Thank you for standing with us and for being part of what makes NMMI exceptional.

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