



Campaign Launched to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

Alumni to honor the legacy and communicate the Academy's vital role in today's defense readiness

Kings Point, New York – June 26, 2018 – Alumni of the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) today launched a campaign to mark the federal academy's 75th year of service and the foundational role it plays in our nation's security and economic well-being.

"This isn't just about looking back over the last 75 years," said Capt. James Tobin, President of the USMMA Alumni Association and Foundation (AAF). "It's to remind the nation how vital this institution is to both our national security and global commerce, and of the importance of maritime security in turbulent times."

The campaign will feature print, digital, radio and Metro station advertisements, a new [website](http://www.weartheusmma.com) (<http://www.weartheusmma.com>) and national media outreach.

The campaign comes at a time when policymakers are increasingly concerned about China's massive spending on its merchant marine and the U.S.'s disconcerting shortfall of qualified, committed mariners who can serve the nation in times of crisis. Along with graduates of the other four federal service academies, USMMA alumni are obligated to serve in the military. Over 80% of the US Navy Reserve Strategic Sealift Officers force attended USMMA, and thus play an increasingly crucial role in defense readiness.

On June 16, Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis delivered the commencement address at the Academy's Kings Point, NY campus to reaffirm the vital role the graduates will have in our national defense.

"And I think whether you're going to be at shore or at sea, you're going to bind the muscles of American commerce and that's a simple reality because as small as our Merchant Marine may be today, it is absolutely essential," Secretary Mattis said to the graduates. "It's in every war plan I review, I guarantee you, because you're going to be the fourth arm of defense."

"Secretary Mattis has a keen understanding of the role of the Academy," Tobin said. "With our Washington-focused campaign, we will build upon his words to make sure every policymaker understands how we fit into defense readiness."

A Legacy of Greatness

Although the U.S. government has supported maritime training since 1874, Congress ultimately realized there was a critical need to ensure high quality, standardized maritime training and passed the Merchant Marine Act in 1936. It wasn't until 1943, however, that the United States Merchant Marine Academy, located in Kings Point, NY, was formally established, as President Roosevelt said when he spoke at its opening, "to serve the Merchant Marine as West Point serves the Army and Annapolis the Navy."



Today, the USMMA provides the nation with a reliable supply of highly-trained merchant marine officers dedicated to serving the Nation's national defense objectives. Like the other four federal academies (West Point, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, Coast Guard Academy), USMMA was created by statute. These five academies are the only undergraduate institutions of higher education that are part of the federal government.

Midshipmen Today

Today's graduates incur a five-year federal service obligation and an eight-year armed forces reserve obligation. Graduates meet their five-year obligation by serving as officers in the merchant marine or, upon approval, entering active military duty.

The U.S. flag merchant marine – manned by U.S. merchant mariners – is essential for securing the country's commerce in peacetime and delivering our warfighters, weapons, and military supplies to the fight in times of conflict. A number of these vessels participate in the Maritime Security Program.

USMMA is the only school in which 100% of graduates earn a merchant marine license and incur an obligation to the U.S. government. USMMA graduates play a vital role in maintaining the maritime strength and security of the nation, making up more than 80% of the Strategic Sealift Officer Program force.

Without a force of fully trained merchant mariners with a mandated obligation to the U.S. government to serve where and when needed, the United States would be forced to outsource carrying troops and materials to foreign mariners, whose national or personal interests may be at odds with U.S. policy.

Students of the USMMA hail from diverse backgrounds and almost every state in the nation. In addition to the rigorous academic and physical requirements for admission, applicants must be nominated by a U.S. Representative or Senator. All midshipmen must pass the U.S. government's requirements for a security clearance.

The USMMA educates a regiment of approximately 950 midshipmen each year. While the Academy still trains for the deck and engineering departments of U.S. flag merchant ships, course offerings have evolved to adapt to changes in the industry and advancing technology. Midshipmen now select from among five different courses of study: marine transportation; logistics and intermodal transportation; marine engineering; marine engineering systems; and marine engineering and shipyard management.

All midshipmen complete additional course requirements in the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and Naval Science for a Bachelor of Science degree.

"The World is Our Campus"



This motto is emblematic of Sea Year, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy's signature training program. Sea Year is fundamental to the world-class maritime education provided by USMMA and is mandated by Congress. It is an immersive program in which midshipmen are assigned to commercial vessels as officers in training to learn maritime skills in a real-world environment. Sea Year is unique to USMMA – nothing comparable is offered at any other college or university, including the four other federal service academies.

USMMA midshipmen complete a rigorous four-year program that includes accumulating 164 credit hours during their three years at the Academy and their 12 months of hands-on training at sea. During Sea Year, midshipmen must earn at least 21 academic credits while training on a diverse portfolio of vessels such as container ships, roll-on-roll-off ships, bulk grain and ore ships, and oil tankers.

In place since the Academy's founding in 1943, this partnership between the Academy and commercial shipping companies that take midshipmen aboard their ships for training has been one of the most successful and enduring public-private partnerships in U.S. history.

About the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation

The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Alumni Association and Foundation serves, assists and perpetuates the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY, its Regiment of Midshipmen, Faculty, Staff and Alumni. It supports the Academy's mission: educating and graduating Merchant Marine officers who will become leaders in the commercial and defense transportation services of the United States. The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy is a world leader in maritime education and one of the five federal academies.

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