Greetings to the Families and Friends of Marine Security Guard School Classes:

To assist students’ families in attending events over the graduation weekend, the following information is provided. Before making any arrangements to attend graduation, including booking flights or making hotel reservations, it is important to remember that this is one of the Marine Corps’ most difficult schools, and students can be dropped at any time. If you wish to make your reservations early, please consider making sure they are refundable and/or you obtain trip insurance, so that you do not lose a significant amount of money if the student does not graduate.

Please note that once graduation weekend is over, the Marines will be departing for their new duty station as quickly as host country visas are available, and it is doubtful that there will be any opportunity for additional visits after graduation weekend.

A packet of information about directions and base entry requirements will be provided to Marines later in the class, after the final board, so that Marines anticipating graduation can email that information to their families. If you do not receive this, please reach out to your Marine. It will include a special event entry pass which families and friends will need to access the base.

**L.I.N.K.S. Class**

On the day prior to graduation, there will be a **"L.I.N.K.S. Foundations Marine Corps Embassy Security Group"** workshop with a focus on the family and friends of the students of Marine Security Guard (MSG). "L.I.N.K.S." stands for **L**ifestyles, **I**nsights, **N**etworking, **K**nowledge and **S**kills, and the curriculum will specifically address the unique aspects of MSG duty, and the impact of the duty both on the Marine and the family. This will be held at the MSG Training Center, and specific directions will be provided in the graduation packet. Registration is required via Eventbrite and the URL will be provided to Marines to send to families.

Included will be information about the duty, how to send a Red Cross Emergency Message to a Marine on Embassy duty, how to send a care package through the Diplomatic Personal Pouch mail, which has special requirements, and things you might want to know, should you decide to visit your Marine at an Embassy. Families are welcome to start gathering at 12:30, but the actual class will run from 1:00pm through 5:00pm. It is recommended that you have lunch prior to the class or bring snacks. There will be an opportunity to purchase some drinks and snacks, cash only, please. Marines will not be available during the day, but it is possible that you’ll get to see them after the class.

**Graduation**

The graduation ceremony will take place at Little Hall aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, located at 2034 Barnett Avenue, Quantico, VA 22134. The theater will not open until 08:30. At 9:00am, instructors will provide a brief overview of the Marine Security Guard (MSG) program, including a video, and an opportunity for questions and answers. This is followed by the Marines arrival shortly before 10:00. You will be alerted that they are about to arrive in order to allow time for you to get outside and take photographs if you wish. This is typically around 0945. The Marines are not permitted to greet their guests at this time. By about 10:00 the graduation ceremony begins. We encourage you to bring your camera to graduation, as photography during the ceremony is welcome. We do not produce videos or photographs, but you are welcome to videotape or photograph any or all of the ceremony. As soon as the graduation ceremony is over, the Marines will be released to greet their guests, and may bring them to the MCESG Compound for a tour of the MSG Training Facility.

**Breakfast**

You are welcome to come onto base early in the day and enjoy the breakfast buffet at The Clubs At Quantico located at 3017 Russell Rd, Quantico, VA 22134. The buffet begins service at 6:00AM and is $8.00 per person. A space is reserved for MCESG families the morning of graduation and the Deployment Readiness Coordinator (DRC) will be there to visit with families and answer questions if needed. Additionally, she will leave in plenty of time for graduation, and will remind families when it is time to go.

**Accommodation** The graduation location does have accessible parking and entrance; however, it is not particularly visible from the street. Should you require directions or accommodation for any disability, please email the DRC, at amy.watson@usmc.mil, as early as possible, so that she can make an effort to assist and accommodate. We’d like for everyone to enjoy the day to the fullest.

**General Information**

Many of our families ask about graduation **"dress code".** The weather is unpredictable, so be prepared for a wide range of temperatures. The Marine will be in his/her best dress uniform (the "dress blues"). Many families choose to dress up, while an equal number do not. Please dress in a way that makes you comfortable! The theater has been known to be quite cool, so layers that can be easily added or removed are practical. Our zip code is 22134, and that information may make it easier for you to check weather predictions for the date of graduation. There may be a significant distance between the graduation venue and parking. When you select your footwear, please consider that you may have to walk a significant distance and stand for a lengthy amount of time. Be comfortable!

If you will be traveling a significant distance to attend graduation, it may be useful to know that the closest airports are Reagan National Airport (DCA) and Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD). If you will be using a rental car to enter Marine Corps Base Quantico, you will need both your driver's license, and the rental agreement to show to the guard at the gate on request, and the pass emailed by the Marine. Regarding taxicab use in our area, it may be helpful to know that average fares from Reagan National Airport (DCA) and Washington-Dulles International Airport (IAD), are typically higher than $75.00 for a one-way trip, and the cost of a taxi from the nearest off base hotel to the graduation location is more than $20.00. **Most Uber/Lyft/Taxi drivers are not authorized on base. It is prudent to make sure that your driver has base access before attempting to use these services to enter the installation.**  If you are driving your own vehicle, you will need your license, registration and proof of insurance. The MSG Training Center will also provide information for graduation, including a limited pass for base access. If you do not have this, and you are not a Department of Defense Identification Card holder, you will need to be enrolled in the Defense Biometric Identification System, which can be a lengthy process. Please make sure you have the pass provided, printed or on your phone.

Please note that use of a cellular phone while driving on base is strictly prohibited unless the driver is using a hands-free device such as a "blue tooth", and certain areas of the base are off limits to photographers. Be mindful of speed limits and pedestrians at all times. The Northern Virginia area often experiences a high volume of traffic, so please allow ample travel time. Many areas of base have 25 miles per hour as the maximum safe speed.

If your visit will include a hotel stay, an internet search for "Hotel Chains near Marine Corps Base Quantico" or "Hotel Chains near zip code 22134" or "Hotel Chains near zip code 22554 or 22556" should generate a significant and varied list to fit almost any budget.

If you have any concerns or would like further information, please reach out to our Deployment Readiness Coordinator. Her contact information is below.

Amy R. Watson

Deployment Readiness Coordinator

Marine Corps Embassy Security Group

Office: 703-784-4742

Amy.watson@usmc.mil