

# **Senior Military College End of Year Ceremony Corps Graduation & Joint Commissioning Ceremony**

## **Introduction**

With pandemic restrictions in our rearview mirror, the Senior Military College Program (Corps of Cadets and ROTCs) are delighted to be able to return to our traditional end of year ceremonies.

Since it has been a while, and obviously new for those seniors and graduates this year, we wanted to provide a brief overview, so everyone knows what to expect.

## **Schedule of Events – Friday, May 13<sup>th</sup>**

The university commencement ceremony will take place in Lane Stadium in the morning. Those receiving their degrees and graduating from the university, will normally attend this event. Friends and family are invited. (Individual colleges will offer separate graduations. Check the university website for details.)

After the university ceremony in Lane Stadium, and during the afternoon, the ROTC programs schedule locations and provide flag backdrops for those receiving their commission (including those who previously graduated from the Corps but completing their degrees as ‘fifth-years’) where they will individually be administered their commissioning oath, by a person of their choice. It is there that they will also sign the official DoD documents as part of their commissioning. The ROTC programs will provide information to those commissioning with details on times and locations.

At 7pm that evening, in Burruss Hall auditorium, we hold the Senior Military College Ceremony...called the Corps Graduation & Joint Commissioning Ceremony. Very similar to other Senior Military Colleges, this ceremony celebrates those who are graduating from the Corps of Cadets, as well as celebrating those commissioning, to include those who previously graduated from the Corps but needed additional time (5<sup>th</sup> year) to complete their degree and commission.

Because of the nature of this program, senior-ranking, distinguished leaders are invited to address the entire audience, but especially those graduating / commissioning.

This year’s invited speaker, and ceremonial joint commissioning officer is scheduled to be Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark A. Milley. Also, present and participating in greeting each member as they cross the stage, will be University President, Tim Sands.

## **Ceremony Events and Details**

Family and guests will be seated in the back half of the Burruss Auditorium prior to the event start at 7pm. A reminder, the university has a clear bag policy for entering the building and bottles with liquids are not permitted. (Empty bottles can be brought in and filled at water fountains.)

The ceremony begins with the Highty-Tighties playing music with the graduates and commissionees entering the auditorium and filling in the front half of the room.

After some formalities the guest speaker will address the audience.

Then, by unit organizations, (VPI [Citizen-Leader Track], Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air and Space Force) graduates and/or commissionees will individually cross the stage to receive certificates, pose for a picture, and receive congratulations from the stage party including the President and Joint Commissioning Officer.

At the end, all graduates and commissionees will be recognized and a ceremonial swearing in led by the Joint Commissioning Officer.

Following the Service Songs and “Tech Triumph”, the ceremony will conclude at approximately 9pm.

### **Special Subjects**

**Uniforms:** For those cadets graduating *and* commissioning, or commissioning having completed their 5<sup>th</sup> year studies, the uniform will be their Service uniform, with their pinned/revealed rank from earlier in the day.

For those cadets graduating from the Corps, and in the Citizen-Leader track, the uniform will be the white Paletot. Similarly, for those who are graduating from the Corps, but are remaining in school (5<sup>th</sup> years) to complete their degrees before commissioning, the uniform is also the white Paletot.

**Photos:** The Corps staff will take pictures of each cadet receiving their certificate with the stage party and these will be made available, for free, on the Commandant’s Facebook page shortly after the ceremony. Other pictures we take of the procession, joint commissioning, etc. will also be available. Family members wishing to also take pictures, will be permitted to come to a designated area, part way down the aisle (but not in front) so that people views will not be blocked. Cadet ushers will be available to assist at the designated area where pictures can be taken from.

**Tickets and Party Size:**

Currently, there are no tickets required and no restrictions to number of guests as the room size has been able to accommodate the audience, in the past.

If the university determines that changes to COVID-19 protocols become necessary, we will advise what changes this may mean for the ceremony.

### **Final Notes**

This mandatory ceremony is remembered fondly by our alumni as one of their life's greatest milestone moments and something that is certainly unique from all other university graduation events.

Specific questions related to commissioning, should be referred to the appropriate ROTC staff.

Those who are graduating / commissioning are required to attend a practice that will take place the day before, 12 May, at 2pm in Burruss Hall auditorium.

We wish all friends and family safe travels as we look forward to the return to our traditional, ceremonies celebrating the significant accomplishments and dedication to Ut Prosim, that those crossing the stage represent.