

South Plains Young Marines



Parent Handbook

Introduction & Welcome

Welcome to the South Plains Young Marines! We are pleased you have chosen this program to enhance your child(ren) and your family. Showing an active interest in your child's activities is an exceptional way to foster a strong parent/child relationship for years to come. Your involvement in the South Plains Young Marines (SPYM) is an essential part of your child's success.

The South Plains Young Marine unit was established in 2019 in Lubbock, TX by Dougall & Jill MacDougall. Our Core Staff Members include:

1. Dougall MacDougall (Unit Commander/Commanding Officer)
2. Paul Cuellar (Executive Officer)
3. Dougald MacDougall (Quartermaster)
4. Jill MacDougall (Adjutant)
5. Robert Ritter (Financial Manager)
6. Brandi Cuellar (Event Coordinator, Community Service Officer, Fundraiser Officer, Webmaster, Public Relations Officer, Parent Liaison)
7. Armando Perez (Training Officer)

Please read this handbook, attend all scheduled meetings, and always feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns. The Parent Liaison (PL) is a dedicated volunteer to assist parents in the navigation of the program. This program relies on the active participation of everyone, including you.

Young Marines is not a recruitment tool for militaries of any sort, combat skills are not taught, and it is not a "Scared Straight Program" for wayward youth. At the same time, events the Young Marines may participate in, may involve close connection with public relations aspects of the armed forces.

The Young Marines program is not a daycare, nor do we act as your child's parent. It is important to know this in advance to avoid future conflicts with staff members due to misconceptions. Together we can achieve the extraordinary!

Volunteer & Unit Support

The most important quality of SPYM is that it is composed entirely of volunteers. These individuals give their time and expertise and are the heart and soul of the unit's success. Furthermore, to make this program an even more successful investment to our children's potential, it is imperative that all parent(s)/guardian(s) support the volunteers when the need arises. *No staff member or associate of SPYM receives monetary gifts as compensation for their services performed in the program.*

Young Marines will also be required to complete community service/volunteer hours each year. Opportunities are available year-round through the unit as well as outside opportunities that qualify.

Fundraising

South Plains Young Marines is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Fundraising is an essential activity to maintain the outstanding activities, encampments, transportation, and general unit expenses. The unit cannot do this without your support. One goal of fundraising is to maximize the YM's experiences while minimizing the cost to the families. The South Plains Young Marines take part in several fundraising opportunities a year and each are equally important for Young Marines to participate in. Families are encouraged to motivate their Young Marine during fundraising opportunities but not do the fundraiser for them. It is important that Young Marines practice in public speaking during fundraisers. Our main fundraisers include:

1. **Charity Night at a local restaurant**
2. **Butter Braids**
3. **Car Wash**
4. **Wreaths Across America**

Staff

Staff members are Registered Adult Volunteers (RA) who have completed the application process and passed a National Background check. As much as staff might wish, children are not perfect and neither are we; however, this is where many of our experiences are learned and shared. This program succeeds when all parties work in unison to help instill discipline and personal accomplishments.

If you are interested in joining the SPYM staff team, please email southplainsym@gmail.com.

Meeting Facility

SPYM holds Drills at the American Legion Post 575, which is located at 6628 66th St., Lubbock, Tx 79424. Occasionally Drills and all events take place outside of the Meeting Facility. Information on locations for any Drill and events that take place outside the Meeting Facility will be given to Recruits, Young Marines and parents and will be announced on GroupMe. Under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to wander through the facility. Disciplinary action will be taken with anyone who does not follow this directive.

The American Legion has been gracious enough to let us use the facility for our unit meetings. At the end of each unit meeting all Recruits and Young Marines will be required to participate in a dismissal duties and chores to ensure that we leave the facilities cleaner than when we arrived.

Communication

Four key components of staying connected and up to date with the unit are:

1. **GroupMe:** our main form of communication. We strongly encourage adding your child/children if they have access to a phone to our GroupMe chat.

2. **Check your email:** We have started a newsletter that will contain information for the next three months, shout outs and much more. We request that you keep your email contact information up to date and check it regularly to ensure you have the information your child/children need to be successful in the program.
3. **Parent Meetings:** Parent meetings are held twice a year (once at the first half of the year and another at the second half of the year). We encourage you to attend each and every parent meeting. These meetings will provide you with the opportunity to meet staff members, connect with other parents, ask questions and stay informed.
4. **The unit website:** www.southplainsym.org. The website contains a wealth of relevant information, including the unit calendar.

Attendance

Regular and consistent attendance is very important because much of what is learned is hands-on and only so much can be caught up if missed. Drills are mandatory for all Recruits during the Recruit Training phase of the program. Please reference the "Rules & Policies for the South Plains Young Marines 2023" for full details on attendance.

Only three Unauthorized Absences (UA) per year are allowed, regardless of a mandatory event or regular Drill, to remain in good standing.

- a. YMs must be in good standing with the program in order to attend special events, overnights, and trips
- b. YMs must meet Drug Demand Reduction (DDR) training hour requirements
- c. YMs must meet all Physical Fitness Training (PFT) requirements
- d. If a YM is on Leave or Absence, all DDR and PFT, must be completed to be able to participate in special events, overnights, and trips
- e. YMs not in good standings will not be qualified to promote
- f. YMs not in good standings may be subject to removal from the unit
- g. CO reserves the right to make exceptions to these policies on an individual basis as needed.

Recruits - must attend ALL drills during their recruit training phase, this fulfills the requirement for 26 hours minimum of instructional recruit training. Most if not all events outside of Drills (parades, ceremonies, etc.) will not count towards the instructional hours required.

Young Marines - should always attend drills unless excused by CO or XO for an acceptable reason (illness, school/athletic functions, family emergencies/travel). It is important to attend drills as we cover important material at drill as well as DDR and PFTs. Missing drills will impact ability to promote and travel to SPACES/Leadership Schools.

*The Unit will have one hour (minimum) a month of DDR lessons and one PFT every three months. Each Recruit and Young Marine needs three hours of DDR and 1 passing PFT a quarter, as required by National. If any DDR hours or PFT is missed, it is the responsibility of the

individual to make-up missing hours. Though Staff may assign make-up work for DDR or a make-up date for a PFT, it is not the Staff's responsibility to continue to remind a Young Marine of such make-ups.

There are mandatory events throughout the year:

- Recruit graduation
- Memorial Day flag laying
- Veterans Day Parade or other events
- DDR Dash (if hosting)
- Wreaths Across America

Only the CO can excuse absences from these events.

All events, with the expectation of most Drills, will require parents, Recruits and Young Marines to complete a sign up form via Google Forms. Forms are made available on the GroupMe main chat, in the event description of the event and in the newsletter. Most will require that all Recruits and Young Marines complete the form no matter if they will be attending. It is important that parents help ensure that Recruits and Young Marines understand the Acknowledgments provided at the conclusion of each sign up form.

Tardiness/Leaving Early Policy

Recruits- no Recruit shall be late or leave early from Drills (unless approved by CO or XO and only for an extreme circumstance such as illness or a family emergency).

Young Marines- being late or having to leave early must be approved by CO or XO for an acceptable reason (see Attendance Policy for details). However, being late when not approved will result in consequences being given (such as extra PT, report writing, public speaking assignments). Simply "running late" is not an acceptable excuse and a Recruit or Young Marine will not be considered approved by CO or XO.

Young Marines and Recruits will arrive 10-15 minutes before 10:00 AM for Drill. Morning Formation starts at exactly 10:00 AM sharp.

Drills

Every other Saturday from 1000-1500.

Drills are a required portion of the Young Marine program. Not every Drill is considered a "mandatory drill" (***reminder: Drills are mandatory for all Recruits***), but participating in the bi-weekly drills is necessary to stay in good standing with the program. The Core Staff work hard to provide a wide range of enriching activities for your Recruits & Young Marines.

We encourage parents to attend final formation. Final formations are a time we recognize various Young Marines for promotions and award ribbons for achievements. Even if your Young

Marines are not promoting or receiving a ribbon we strive to recognize every Young Marine and your support does not go unnoticed. OoRah!

Lunch is an essential part of every Drill and your child(ren) must eat in order to maintain their energy throughout the day. Lunch or Chow must be healthy with no or low sugar items available. Your child(ren) are expected to make, pack and bring their own chow. Your child(ren) must also bring a usable water bottle to every Drill.

Drill information can be found under "Calendar" on the GroupMe chat. Uniform Of the Day (UOD), activity planned and whether or not it is a mandatory Drill will be available in the description. A full calendar is also available under the "Pinned" messages in GroupMe, though there is limited information available in the full calendar. The newsletter will also have an "Upcoming Events" section available.

Unit Ground Rules

1. Appropriate communication with peers and Adult Staff (addressing by rank and last name, no first name shall be used)
2. Respect towards all persons in and outside of Unit
3. No horse playing (all hands and objects should be kept to oneself)
4. No fraternization (no one shall date anyone within the Unit)
5. Be respectful of personal boundaries (verbally and physically)
6. No put-downs (this is part of being respectful towards others, but it also means when someone is struggling with a concept, no one shall put-down that person)
7. No Recruit or Young Marine, regardless of rank has the authorization or authority to discipline anyone within the Unit
8. Be respectful of rank (everyone should respect all within the Unit, but most certainly between ranks. You shall respect all ranks above you)

Drop Off & Pick Up Policy

Ensuring the safety and well-being of our Young Marines is our top priority and we appreciate your cooperation in adhering to our pick off and drop off policies to maintain a secure and organized environment for everyone involved.

1. **Authorized Individuals Only:** Only individuals listed on the sign-up form, including emergency contacts, are permitted to pick up a recruit or Young Marine. This is a critical safety measure, and we appreciate your understanding.
2. **Sign In and Sign Out Procedures:** Parents must sign in their child and sign them out when dropping off or picking up. This process is to be completed with a staff member or, in some situations, with a senior Young Marine.
3. **Communication of Changes:** If there are changes to the designated pick-up person from what is listed, please notify our staff in advance. Provide the name and contact number of the individual picking up your child.

4. **Drop Off and Pick Up Locations:** Locations for drop-off and pick-up will be communicated through our unit's GroupMe chat. Please ensure you are part of this communication channel to stay informed.
5. **Permission to Leave:** Each Recruit and Young Marine must ask CO or XO for permission to leave after their parent/guardian has signed them out.

ID Requirement:

1. **Unfamiliar Faces:** If our staff is not familiar with the person picking up your Young Marine, an ID will be required.
2. **Match to Sign-Up Form:** The ID must match the name of the designated pick-up contact or emergency contact listed on the sign-up form.
3. **Name Changes:** In the event of a change in the pick-up person, the name provided by a parent or guardian must match the name on their ID.

These policies are designed to create a secure and efficient environment for our Young Marines. Your cooperation is essential in maintaining a safe and well-organized program.

Young Marine Guidebooks

There are four Guidebooks that your child(ren) will receive as they progress through their career in the Young Marines:

1. **The Recruit Guidebook**
2. **The Basic Young Marine Guidebook**
3. **The Junior Young Marine Guidebook**
4. **The Senior Young Marine Guidebook**
5. **The Advanced Young Marine Guidebook**

Each Guidebook contains additional knowledge as well as other degrees of performing, leading, and instructing that will aid your child(ren) in becoming a leader in the unit as well as in the community.

The Guidebook must be with your Recruit or YM for each Drill. This is where sign-offs will be recorded for Physical Objectives (POs) and Enabling Objectives (EOs). Completing these objectives is essential to progressing rank advancement.

Uniform

All Recruits & YMs are expected to always arrive at any Young Marine event in the proper Uniform Of the Day (UOD). The only exception would be if you have a medical reason that prevents you from wearing the designated uniform and you have a doctor's note (i.e. a cast on your foot that prevents you from wearing boots).

Recruits & YMs always start with the basics of a clean body, clean clothes and good personal hygiene. Failure to comply with uniform and appearance standards may result with additional training or after repeat offenses, a Recruit or YM will be sent home to change clothes.

SPYM utilizes a Uniform Of the Day (UOD) for all Young Marine events. Proper notification for UOD will be provided through GroupMe.

UOD Descriptions

Recruit Training: SPYM Recruit

- White t-shirt with Recruit last name and first name initial on front
- Black athletic shorts (preferably no pockets)
- Athletic shoes
- Socks
- Cover
- Other items will be added at appropriate times, please reference “Master Gear List” for full description

Young Marine:

- Camouflage Utility Blouse
- Camouflage Utility Trousers
- Ribbons
- Chevrons (if applicable)
- Black boots
- Black long socks
- Boot bands
- Khaki web belt
- Unit t-shirt
- Cover
- Other items will be added at appropriate times, please reference “Master Gear List” for full description

Cold Weather Gear for Recruits & Young Marines:

- Heather Gray Crewneck Sweatshirt
- Heather Gray Sweatpants (no pockets)
- Black beanie (watch cap)
- Black gloves
- Tactical jacket (optional)

Camouflage Blouse: Worn with Young Marine olive drab service tape centered above the left breast pocket, flush to the pocket seam and flush to the edge of the pocket. The Young Marine shoulder patch is worn on the wearer’s left sleeve with the unit designation arc centered above

the patch on the shoulder seam. The blouse will be machine or hand laundered in warm water. It must be starched but may not be bleached.

Nametape: An olive drab name tape is worn centered over the right pocket, flush to the pocket seam and flush to the edges of the pocket.

Ribbons: Ribbons are worn so that the lowest row of ribbons is 1/8-inch above the left breast pocket patch and centered. Ribbons are worn in the order of precedence as established in the Young Marines Awards Manual. They are preferably worn in rows of three. Ribbons that become soiled or faded should be replaced. Your YM's ribbon rack configuration can be found in the YM's Record Book.

Camouflage Trousers: Worn with straight or pouch pockets. Nametapes will be sewn over the right rear pocket of the trousers, centered and flush over the top seam. The trouser will be machine or hand laundered in warm water. It must be starched but may not be bleached.

Khaki Web Belt: Worn with the Marine Corps style brass or anodized buckle.

Boots: Standard black leather must be polished with a high shine on the toes and heels. Black long socks will be worn with the boots.

All Recruits & YMs are expected to keep themselves clean and well groomed whether in uniform or not.

Grooming

Male Recruits & YMs:

1. Hair will be neat and closely trimmed. Hair will be short enough so that it does not touch the ears or hang on the nape of the neck. The hair may be clipped at the edges of the side and back and will not be over 3 inches in length fully extended on the upper portion of the head. Head hair will be styled so as not to interfere with the proper wear of uniform headgear. Hair, which protrudes from beneath properly worn headgear in an unsightly manner, is considered excessive, regardless of the length. Male Recruits & YMs are not authorized to wear braids of any sort nor have eccentric designs cut in their hair.
2. Beards, sideburns and mustaches are unauthorized by the Unit Commander. Except for a mustache, sideburns, eyebrows, and eyelashes, hair must be grown on the face only when a medical officer has determined that shaving is temporarily harmful to the individual Recruit or YM's health.
3. The only jewelry permitted is watches, medical items, religious medallions, class or Young Marine rings. All jewelry will be removed for physical training.

Female Recruits & Young Marines

1. Hair may touch the collar, but will not fall below the collar's lower edge. Hair that would fall naturally below the collar's lower edge will be neatly and inconspicuously fastened or pinned. During physical training periods in which physical training clothing is worn, hair will be allowed to fall naturally, without being fastened or pinned. This does not apply when conducting physical training in the utility uniform.
2. Hair will be styled so as not to interfere with the proper wear of the uniform headgear. All headgear will fit snugly and comfortably around the largest part of the head without distortion or excessive gaps. Hairstyles, which do not allow the headgear to be worn in this manner, are prohibited.
3. Faddish or exaggerated styles to include shaved portions of the scalp other than the neckline, designs in the hair, unsecured ponytails and styles that are distinctly unbalanced or lopsided are prohibited. Multiple braiding and buns are authorized. If hair extensions are used in the braiding of the hair, the extensions must have the same general appearance as the individual's natural hair. Braided hairstyles will be conservative, and conform to other guidelines listed herein. Barrettes, combs, rubber bands, etc are authorized, if concealed by the hair. Inconspicuous hairpins and bobby pins, if required, are authorized. Hairnets will not be worn unless authorized for a specific type of duty.
4. Cosmetics are authorized for wear in uniform if permitted by the parent or legal guardian. It shall be applied conservatively and must complement the individual's complexion and skin tone. Exaggerated or faddish cosmetic styles are considered inappropriate and shall not be tolerated. Non-eccentric lipstick and nail polish colors, to include colorless nail polish, are authorized for wear with the uniform. Fingernails with multiple colors and decorative ornamentation are considered eccentric and may not be worn. Nail length, to include false nails, will be no longer than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top of the finger.
5. Jewelry. The only jewelry permitted is watches, medical items, religious medallions, class or Young Marine rings. All jewelry will be removed for physical training activities. Small, polished ball, or round stud earrings (post, screw-on, or clip), not to exceed six millimeters (about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch) in diameter, may be worn with any uniform. When worn, earrings will fit lightly against, and will not extend below, the earlobe. Only one earring will be worn on or in each earlobe in the lowest hole.

Core Values & Code of Conduct

Discipline: Discipline is the instant willingness and obedience to orders and respect for authority.

Leadership: (By example) Leadership is an act or instance of leading, guidance, or direction.

Teamwork: Teamwork is a cooperative effort on the part of a group of persons acting together as a team or in the interests of a common cause.

A guiding principle of the Young Marines program is that “We will uphold the core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment”, the same core values adopted by the US Marine Corps.

Young Marines Code of Conduct

Article 1: I am an American youth, proud of my country and our way of life. I am prepared to dedicate myself to educating others and myself in the history, traditions, and institutions thereof. I will do my best to live by the Marine Corps’ core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment, as well as the Young Marines’ core values of Discipline, Leadership and Teamwork.

Article II: I will never let another Young Marine down of my own accord. If in-charge, I will do my best to ensure the safety and well-being of those of whom I am responsible. I will immediately report any suspicious activity or behavior to a registered adult.

Article III: If I am offered drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products, I will politely resist and refuse. I will make every effort to stay clear of situations involving gangs, bullying, drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. I will not get involved in the same. I will also aid my friends and schoolmates to stay clear of similar situations.

Article IV: I will always be loyal to my fellow Young Marines. I will make no statements nor take part in any action that may bring discredit to my God, country, family and Young Marines. If I am the senior Young Marine present, I will take charge. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those senior to me and support them in every way.

Article V: When asked about the Young Marine program, I will answer questions politely, respectfully and to the best of my ability. If I am asked a question that I do not know the answer to, I will refer the person asking the question to a registered adult. I will never give information that I know I am not certain of nor mislead those who are seeking information about the Young Marine program.

Article VI: I will never forget that I am an American youth and therefore the future of America, privileged with the freedom won and kept by the blood of those who fought to ensure our freedom. I am responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles that make my country free.

Common Military Terms/Jargon

- Chow: food
- Cover: the uniform article that covers your head
- Gear: Personal belongings, issued equipment
- Gear Adrift: Lost & Found belongings
- Head: Bathroom, washroom or restroom
- Semper Fidelis: Always Faithful (The Marine Corps Motto)
- Skivvies: Underwear

Acronyms

ALS- Advanced Leadership School
APL- Adult Platoon Leader
COD- Close Order Drill
DDR- Drug Demand Reduction
FSA- Female Staff Advisor
HQ- Headquarters
JLS- Junior Leadership School
PAO- Public Affairs Officer
PFT- Physical Fitness Test
PL- Parent Liaison
PT- Physical Training
RA- Registered Adult
SLS- Senior Leadership School
S.P.A.C.E.S - Summer Program of Adventures, Challenges and Encampments
SPYM - South Plains Young Marines
SUG - SignUp Genius
UC/CO- Unit Commander/Commanding Officer
UOD- Uniform Of the Day
XO- Executive Officer
YM- Young Marine

What if I still have questions?

There are always questions and the Parent Liaison is your first stop. They can be reached at parentliaison.spym@gmail.com. Other resources include fellow parents/guardians, Guidebooks, www.youngmarines.com, www.southplainsym.org and YouTube has many instructional videos available.

In closing, we hope you have found this handbook helpful and use it as a resource as your child(ren) journey through and with the South Plains Young Marines. Together we can achieve the overall goal to live by the motto of the Young Marine program:

Strengthening the Lives of America's Youth

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