

U. S. Merchant Marine Academy “USMMA 142 Star” Flag Symbolism

“USMMA 142 Star” Flag



Our U.S. service academy was founded during World War II. Courageous midshipmen cadets served during that war, as they have in every American conflict since, on ships bearing the United States flag, bringing vital supplies and personnel into numerous war zones. During WWII, 142 midshipmen gave their lives in service to their country during their sea year duties. Each is represented by a gold star on this flag.

The Seal represents The United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) at Kings Point, NY – the country’s federal maritime academy. The motto, *ACTA NON VERBA*, means **Actions Not Words**.

The flag’s two stripes of vivid azure remind us of the sea. USMMA midshipmen earn their U. S. Coast Guard license as either a topside “**deck**” officer, or an “**engineer**,” serving below deck, like the flag’s top and bottom stripes. Blue symbolizes vigilance, perseverance, justice, truth, and loyalty. All of these are important qualities of successful midshipmen, who sail the world (18 countries is the average) while completing their **Sea Project** (during 2nd and 3rd years) during **Sea Year** (300+ days at sea). They train with seasoned Merchant Marine officers while working aboard U. S. ships of all sizes and types—including tankers, cargo carriers, military vessels, tug boats, and cruise ships—sailing around the globe.

The number and placement of the stars also remind us of the career choices of current midshipmen. Upon graduation, midshipmen earn a Bachelors of Science **degree**, a U. S. Coast Guard **license** as a Merchant Marine officer, and a **commission** in the U. S. Naval Reserve (or other uniformed service of their choice). About 1/3 of the stars are around the seal, representing the 1/3 of graduates who choose to enter active duty uniformed services as commissioned officers. The 7 outer stars remind us of their choice between the 7 branches of uniformed service: United States Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Coast Guard, NOAA, and Other federal service. The other 2/3 of the stars on the 2 ribbons of blue are split between the topside “deck” related careers and engineering related careers of the maritime industry.

USMMA is consistently ranked as one of America’s Best colleges, according to *US News and World Reports* and the *Princeton Review*. A Congressional Nomination is required for an Appointment to USMMA, just as it is for the Air Force Academy, West Point, and Annapolis.

A Sea Year Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6Ol_3udMKg

**Midshipman Life in “Getting a Start through the U S Merchant Marine Academy”
an article in U S Coast Guard, *Proceedings* magazine:** <http://www.uscg.mil/proceedings/Fall2008/>

FAQs about the Merchant Marine: <http://www.usmm.org/faq.html>

USMMA mission: www.usmma.edu/about/default.shtml

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