

Cast in Stone, Built by Brotherhood

The PMMA Bicentennial Marker: A Lasting Legacy to the Academy

*How two marble boulders from the mountains of Bulacan became the enduring symbol of **Kababaang-loob, Kawastuhan, and Kagitingan***

On the sprawling Parade Grounds of the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy in San Narciso, Zambales, two marble boulders from the mountains of Bulacan stand as silent sentinels of the institution's most sacred ideals. They are not mere stones. They are the **PMMA Bicentennial Marker** — aptly known as the **PMMA Values Boulder** — a monumental work of art that enshrines the three core values of the Academy: **Kababaang-Loob** (Humility), **Kawastuhan** (Righteousness), and **Kagitingan** (Valiance). These values are not simply inscribed — they are *literally cast in stone*.

Marking the 200th founding anniversary of the nation's oldest maritime institution in year 2020, the Bicentennial Marker is both a tribute to PMMA's storied past and a charge to future generations of merchant marine officers. It stands as a fitting monument that every graduate returning to their alma mater — and every visiting dignitary and guest — cannot fail to notice as it rises proudly from the Academy's most hallowed ground.

A Vision Born of Brotherhood

The seed of the PMMA Values Boulder was planted during the travels of **Capt. Renel Ramos** to Rome, where he witnessed firsthand how marble monuments have stood for hundreds of years — silent witnesses to the rise and fall of empires, yet enduring through the centuries as testaments to the values of the civilizations that built them. Inspired by the permanence of stone and its power to preserve ideals across generations, Capt. Ramos conceived the idea of a similar monument for PMMA.

The concept took formal shape in 2014, during the tenure of Capt. Ramos and **CE Engel de Guzman** as President and Vice President, respectively, of PMMA Class 2000 — known fondly as *Dosmil*. A Master Mariner and Managing Director/Designated Person Ashore (DPA) of a ship management company, Capt. Ramos envisioned a monument that would transcend class affiliations and unite all PMMA alumni under the banner of their shared values.

With CE Engel de Guzman as his dependable partner, the PMMA Boulder Project began to take shape. The vision was clear and uncompromising: to select the finest natural marble across the country and transform them into a permanent artistic monument bearing the Academy's three pillars of character.

“It is not a project of a single class like Class 2000 or Dosmil. It is a project of all PMMA graduates, and therefore, it is built to stand on the grounds and unite all PMMAers. It is a project of PMMA and PMMA Alumni Association Inc. (PMMAAAI), with Engel and me as their servants.”

— Capt. Renel Ramos, PMMA Class 2000

A Journey of Perseverance

Considering its immense scale — both literally and figuratively — the PMMA Boulder Project was a monumental undertaking that tested the resolve of everyone involved at practically every step.

The challenges were formidable: searching for and selecting the right boulders from the marble-rich mountains of Cagayan to Bulacan, securing the stones and arranging the heavy equipment needed to move them, sourcing skilled engravers capable of rendering the Academy's values with artistic precision, navigating the labyrinth of legal requirements and permits, clearing checkpoints, and finally transporting the massive stones across the long distance to the PMMA Complex in San Narciso, Zambales. There were logistical hurdles with the availability of the stones themselves, the storage yards required to house them, and the sheer physical and financial demands of the operation.

And then came COVID-19.

The unprecedented global pandemic could have easily derailed the project. Lockdowns froze movement across the country, supply chains broke down, and gathering even a small team became a logistical impossibility. Yet true to the spirit of **Kagitingan** — the very valor inscribed on the boulders — the project team pressed on. Not even an event of historic proportions could stop what had already been set in motion by a deeper conviction.

Built by Many Hands

While Capt. Ramos served as the project's core visionary and CE de Guzman as his steadfast partner in execution, the success of the PMMA Values Boulder was the result of a collective effort that drew strength from across the alumni community.

Members of Dosmil rallied behind the initiative from the start, contributing resources and unwavering moral support. The project likewise drew strength from the broader **PMMA Gen2K** — a special group within the PMMA Alumni Association Inc. (PMMAAAI) that encompasses not only Class 2000 but all PMMA classes from the year

2000 to 2025 and beyond. The project quickly grew past all boundaries. PMMA graduates from different generations threw their full support behind the effort, embodying the unity the marker was designed to symbolize.

Capt. Ramos expressed his utmost appreciation for the extraordinary contributions of key individuals whose extra efforts proved instrumental to the project’s success: then PMMA Alumni President **CE Chito Felix Majabague, Capt. Jumar Manuel, CE Bong Lunizo,** and **CE Edmund Salmon Jr.** The project likewise received unqualified support from the PMMA Superintendent **Commo. Joel Abutal,** affirming the institution’s recognition of the marker’s enduring significance.

From Vision to Legacy

2014	The concept of the PMMA Values Boulder is conceived by Capt. Renel Ramos, PMMA Class 2000.
2014–2019	The project evolves through the search, selection, and procurement of two marble boulders from the mountains of Bulacan; sourcing of engravers; securing of permits and logistical arrangements.
2020	Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the boulders are transported and placed at the PMMA Parade Grounds in San Narciso, Zambales.
2023	The PMMA Bicentennial Marker is officially accepted by the Academy during the Grand Alumni Homecoming — a moment of pride for all PMMAers.

A Piece of Art, A Permanent Record

Capt. Ramos is unequivocal about one thing: the PMMA Values Boulder is a *piece of artwork*.

Two carefully selected marble boulders, drawn from the mineral-rich quarries of Bulacan — a province whose marble heritage has been recognized since the Spanish colonial era — were chosen for their natural beauty, size, and permanence. Into these stones, the three PMMA values of ***Kababaang-Loob, Kawastuhan,*** and ***Kagitingan*** were carved with deliberate artistry — not merely engraved, but rendered as a lasting artistic expression of what it means to be a PMMAer.

“As a monument, it should not be tampered or altered after the hand-over to PMMA since it’s a piece of ARTWORK. It is a representation of the artist.”

— Capt. Renel Ramos

This condition — that the monument remain untouched and unaltered in its handed-over form — underscores a deeper truth. The PMMA Values Boulder is not merely a physical structure; it is a representation of the artist’s vision, the alumni’s devotion, and the Academy’s enduring identity. To alter it would be to diminish the very integrity it was built to celebrate.

A Symbol of Unity

The PMMA Gen2K — the special group within the PMMAAAI that brings together all PMMA classes from the year 2000 to 2025 and beyond — stands firmly with the PMMA Values Boulder. As Capt. Ramos has always emphasized, the marker belongs to no single class. It is the collective legacy of every man and woman who has ever worn the PMMA uniform, from the institution’s founding over two centuries ago to the midshipmen who will graduate in the decades to come.

The PMMA Bicentennial Marker now stands as a unifying symbol — a permanent reminder that regardless of class year, rank, or station in life, all PMMAers are bound by the same sacred values. It is a call to every graduate: to carry ***Kababaang-Loob*** in their dealings, to practice ***Kawastuhan*** in their profession, and to embody ***Kagitingan*** in the face of every storm — at sea and in life.

Standing the Test of Time

Marble endures. From the ancient monuments of Rome that first inspired this vision to the grand edifices of civilizations across the ages, stone has always been the chosen medium for preserving what matters most. The choice of Bulacan marble for the PMMA Values Boulder was no accident. It is Philippine marble, from Philippine mountains, bearing Philippine values, standing on Philippine soil — a wholly Filipino monument to a wholly Filipino institution.

As the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy enters its third century, the Bicentennial Marker will remain where it was placed: on the Parade Grounds, under the Zambales sun, facing the sea from which the Academy draws its purpose. It will be there when future classes of midshipmen form up at dawn. It will be there when alumni return home. It will be there when the world changes around it.

Because some things are meant to last forever.

And the values of PMMA are cast in stone.



The PMMA Bicentennial Marker Project

Core: Capt. Renel Ramos | Partner: CE Engel de Guzman

A project of PMMA and PMMA Alumni Association Inc. (PMMAAAI)

PMMA Gen2K (All classes from Year 2000 to 2025 and beyond) stands firmly with the PMMA Values Boulder

Conceived 2014 | Placed 2020 | Officially Accepted 2023