

VUNROTC ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021 ISSUE



VANDERBILT NAVAL ROTC

Anchor Down and LEAD.

BATTALION COMMANDER'S REMARKS

MIDN 1/C JACOB HARDY

This spring the Battalion demonstrated impressive perseverance in overcoming the challenges presented by a rapidly changing COVID-19 environment. It was an honor to hold the role of Battalion Commander and lead the countless driven and problem solving individuals who made this semester possible. One of my three areas of focus this spring was an emphasis on adaptability, and every single midshipman embraced this and worked together to execute quality in-person training. I would like to thank my entire midshipmen staff for leading from the front, and every billet holder for always exceeding the expectations of the positions they held. I was taken aback by the impressive teamwork and initiative the Battalion demonstrated in getting nearly the whole team vaccinated in a short amount of time mid-semester. Because of this, we will continue to be able to train safely and effectively. Looking ahead, it excites me that summer training will be conducted in a largely normal fashion this year, and NSI 2021 is currently on track to prepare what looks to be another very large and accomplished set of new 4/C midshipmen. I have full confidence that the fall Battalion staff will Anchor Down and Lead, and further elevate the high standards of VUNROTC. Thank you to all the Alumni for your support in these evolving and challenging times, because of you we continue to be able to execute our vital mission of creating high performing Naval and Marine Corps Officers.

BN OPERATIONS OFFICER

MIDN 2/C PANTLIN

The Operations Department made the most of this COVID-limited semester, finding new ways to contribute to the battalion's moral, mental, and physical development. Our labs included notable speakers such as Captain Chris Cassidy, NASA Astronaut and former Navy SEAL, professors from the Naval War College, Georgetown, and Vanderbilt, and Commander Joel Holwitt of the USS Toledo. In addition, we had the opportunity to discuss leadership with Vanderbilt alumna VADM Nora Tyson, gaining insight on her vast career that culminated in commanding the Navy's Third Fleet. The battalion successfully conducted PT for the duration of the semester, incorporating battalion competitions and a mock PRT/PFT. Finally, while we were unable to do our usual community service lab, we found a way to serve others by writing uplifting letters to nursing home residents. This semester was unlike any other that had come before, but the resourceful and enthusiastic members of the Ops team ensured that we would still be able to develop as future Sailors and Marines. We look forward to resuming some of our most notable events next year, such as the National Security Symposium, Navy Ball, and Army-Navy Football Game. I am thankful to have had this opportunity and cannot wait to see how the future Operations team continues our mission to build future leaders. Go Navy and Marine Corps!



COMMUNITY SERVICE

While in-person volunteering opportunities were limited due to COVID-19, Vanderbilt Midshipmen still engaged with the community with remote events such as letter-writing campaigns.



MORALE, WELLNESS, AND RECREATION

A key aspect of developing midshipmen mentally, morally, and physically is keeping the morale high. The Battalion built esprit de corps with MWR events like field game tournaments and virtual Netflix watch parties.

ALPHA COMPANY CDR

MIDN 2/C BAKER

As Alpha Company Commander, I have witnessed the MIDN and MECEPs of Alpha Company achieve countless accomplishments. Their outstanding achievements include awards for Academic Excellence, Commendations, and Leadership. Those of Alpha company helped each other reach academic success through peer tutoring, upheld their physical fitness to exceed PRT/PFT scores, completed service events to give back to the community, and attended Naval leadership panels throughout the semester to better prepare themselves for the fleet. These many accomplishments exhibit dedication to becoming officers in the United States Navy and Marine Corps. Despite the many challenges of this semester due to COVID, I am proud to say that the many MIDN and MECEPs of Alpha Company adapted well to the changes. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as Alpha Company Commander this Spring.



BRAVO COMPANY CDR

MIDN 2/C STEVENS

The Midshipmen and MECEPs of Bravo Company embraced the many challenges of this semester with tenacity and grit, thriving in academics, physical fitness, and leadership development. Leaning into the motto “A rising tide lifts all boats,” individuals sought ways to motivate each other toward success. Bravo Company demonstrated its commitment to physical fitness, running over 1,300 miles in the winter months alone and claiming victory in the end of the semester Field Day Competition. Despite the challenge of a condensed academic schedule, community service remained on the minds of Bravo Company, contributing over 60 hours of service. Members were involved in a variety of fronts: tutoring children in an after-school program, stocking and sorting at a food bank, administering COVID-19 vaccines at Nashville’s mass clinic, and hosting an ROTC informational event at a local high school. Events like the Notre Dame Leadership Conference and the Women in Naval Service Symposium (both held virtually this year) as well as our weekly Naval Science Lab afforded members of Bravo Company the opportunity to glean valuable leadership lessons from Naval and Marine Corps professionals in all warfare areas. Monthly platoon mentorship meetings further fostered discussion and application of leadership concepts and traits. The challenges of this semester have pushed members of Bravo Company in many ways. Driven by the mission mindset to develop as future Naval and Marine Corps officers, they have responded by leaning in, holding each other up, and continually pursuing opportunities for growth.

PHYSICAL TRAINING

MIDN 2/C MCCONNELL

As expected, hosting Battalion wide PT events proved challenging amid the COVID pandemic; all in-person PT events were suspended for most of the year until March. Though official events had been cancelled, VUNROTC members still found ways to push each other. Midshipmen competed in holiday workouts and monthly running challenges on the MapMyRun app, among other things. While in-person PT looked different, midshipmen were still able to have buddy pair workouts, as well as company and platoon competitions. Because of diligent planning among active duty staff, midshipmen, and the University alike, the semester was able to culminate in an end-of-semester PRT/PFT. Due to much effort and collaboration, PT was able to bring some sense of normalcy back to VUNROTC.



"PATCHED UP"

Navy option midshipmen were excited and grateful to receive American Flag and Navy Jack patches for their NWU uniforms this semester. These patches signify a commitment to the Navy and to our Nation, and midshipmen will wear them with honor.

THE NEXT GENERATION

The Battalion has grown considerably each year thanks to the efforts of VUNROTC Recruiting. This year we were able to host a traditional recruiting event at Gallatin High School. MIDN gave out information and answered questions about the NROTC program. One motivated midshipman, MIDN 3/C Salvador, even personally hosted a virtual conference with JROTC students at his former high school to encourage them towards Naval Service. We are likely to see some familiar faces among the 4/C midshipmen next year!



CHANGE OF COMMAND

On 22 April 2021, VUNROTC held its annual Change of Command Ceremony. While the full Pass in Review Parade could not be conducted this year due to COVID-19, VUNROTC still honored the traditions of Change of Command as Midshipman 1/C Jacob Hardy passed leadership of the Battalion on to Midshipman 2/C Brian Duncan. MIDN Duncan and his Staff have big shoes to fill, but we are confident the Battalion will reach even greater heights in the Fall semester!

Battalion Commander: MIDN 1/C Duncan
Battalion Executive Officer MIDN 1/C Williams
Battalion Sergeant Major: MIDN 1/C Free
Battalion Operations Officer: MIDN 1/C Hinkley
Battalion Adjutant: MIDN 1/C Stuart
Battalion Supply Officer: MIDN 2/C Christiansen
Alpha Company Commander: MIDN 1/C Bouck
Alpha Gunnery Sergeant: MIDN 2/C Salvador
Bravo Company Commander: MIDN 1/C Diamond
Bravo Company Chief: MIDN 2/C Fish



AWARDS CEREMONY

At the end of each school year, outstanding VUNROTC Midshipmen and MECEP Marines are rewarded for their leadership, scholarship, and mentorship throughout the year. Their outstanding achievements are commemorated by award from service organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution as well as from VUNROTC alumni, family, and friends. Patriotism, service, scholarship, and perseverance are just a few of the traits these MIDN and MECEP Marines were recognized for.



ANCHOR DOWN AND LEAD

Each VUNROTC Midshipman and MECEP Marine received a leadership notebook this semester to help foster professional growth and record the countless leadership lessons and pearls of wisdom we will learn during our time in the Battalion. The cover is emblazoned with the unit motto "Anchor Down and LEAD," symbolizing VUNROTC's commitment to developing exceptional Navy and Marine Corps leaders in the dynamic academic environments of Vanderbilt, Belmont, and Tennessee State Universities. We thank the VUNROTC Alumni for making this amazing gift possible, and each notebook will surely be filled with wisdom from leaders past, present, and future.



COMMISSIONING

Seven Midshipmen of the Class of 2021 and two MECEP Marines look forward to commissioning on 15 May 2021. During their time at VUNROTC, these Midshipmen and Marines have learned countless leadership lessons from their experiences, our staff, and from each other, and have returned these lessons in kind to younger members of the Battalion. Their names and service assignments are as follows:

MIDSHIPMEN:

- 2nd Lt Timothy Degan, Topsfield, MA - USMC Ground - The Basic School
- ENS Sterling Gilliam III, Wake Forest, NC - Submarine Officer - Nuclear Power School
- ENS Jacob Hardy, Lake Bluff, IL - Submarine Officer - Nuclear Power School
- ENS Bryant Johnson, Austin, TX - Pilot - Naval Flight School
- ENS Ryan Lareau, Brewster, MA - Pilot - Naval Flight School
- 2nd Lt Dylan Misch, Chicago, IL - USMC Ground - The Basic School
- 2nd Lt Arturo Herrera, Reading, PA - USMC Aviation - The Basic School

MECEP MARINES:

- 2nd Lt Colin Ruth, Nashville, TN - The Basic School
- 2nd Lt Brandon Proctor, Fort Washington, MD - The Basic School

One MECEP Marine looks forward to commissioning on 9 August 2021:

- 2nd Lt Heather Moore, Peru, IN - The Basic School