I have held the honor of serving as VUNROTC’s Battalion Commander during the Spring 2020 semester. During this time, I wanted our Battalion to focus on three things: effective communication, ownership, and intentionality. The Battalion Staff did a fantastic job during the semester of further implementing these focus areas, and the midshipmen in ranks continued to prove they are some of the best in the nation. These focus areas became even more important with the onset of COVID-19 and the necessity to move all of our Battalion functions online. Our midshipmen again proved they are of the highest caliber by seamlessly adjusting into our new normal. Unfortunately, this new normal led to the cancellation of many events our midshipmen and MECEPs had been working tirelessly to execute. They all remained strong and adapted to our new challenges. With the cancellation of most midshipmen summer cruises, our upperclassmen have pooled all of their experiences together to provide a glimpse into what the cruises look like and some lessons learned for the underclassmen. Additionally, the New Student Indocritnation program will not be held this summer, so our new Battalion Staff is looking into how to best prepare our new 4/C midshipmen for NROTC and college life through VUNROTC’s New Student Orientation. Luckily, Marine Corps OCS will still occur this summer and we wish our Marine Options attending the best of luck as they take the next step towards commissioning in the Marine Corps. While there may be many challenges ahead, I have the utmost confidence in the midshipmen and MECEPs of VUNROTC to continue to build upon the successes and improvements we have shared this year. Thank you to all of the Alumni for your continued support which allows us to excel at our mission of developing the next generation of Navy and Marine Corps leaders.

Very Respectfully,

MIDN 1/C Christopher Walding
Spring 2020 Battalion Commander

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You are part of the world’s most feared and trusted force. Engage your brain before you engage your weapon.

- Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis
Honor Company

Every semester the Battalion holds a comprehensive competition between the two companies. This semester, Alpha Company, led by SSgt Ruth, were the victors and claimed the title of Honor Company. Captain May awarded the Honor Company Banner at the virtual Spring Change of Command and Awards Ceremony.

Although numerous events were cancelled due to COVID-19, the Battalion pressed on with many events virtually, including leadership labs, tutoring, and staff meetings. The Battalion displayed adaptability and perseverance in the face of adversity.

THE 3 TENETS FOR SPRING 2020

Each Commander brings with them a new set of guiding principles. VUNROTC focused on three key aspects this semester: effective communication, ownership, and intentionality. These principles guided many of the activities this semester. Midshipmen and MECEPs focused heavily on taking ownership of their duties, maintaining sound lines of communication, and acting with intentionality and purpose. Focus areas give midshipmen the foundations they can lean into and build upon when they hit the fleet and adopt their own leadership style.
Leadership Statements

Alpha Company
An important trait which all members of the armed forces should be competent in is the ability to "adapt and overcome." There are many ways of testing and improving this skill through simulations, but nothing can compare to the rigors of a situation which is completely out of anyone's control. As the Alpha Company Commander, I can assure you that each and every one of the midshipmen and MECEPs of Alpha Company has been given an opportunity to improve upon this trait during the semester. We started the semester off strong in all aspects of training and academics and continued to improve as the semester progressed. As the COVID-19 epidemic began to affect academia, new challenges were presented to all midshipmen and MECEPs. Virtual learning, self-motivated physical fitness, and situational adjustments were required of all. Despite this, the midshipmen and MECEPs in Alpha Company have been tested and are continuing to be tested. It has been a pleasure to serve as the Alpha Company Commander and be part of a truly great learning experience for the future Navy and Marine Corps Officers.

-SSgt Ruth, Alpha Company Commander

OPS Department
This semester, the Operations Department completed numerous events that furthered the personal and professional development of our midshipmen. Our semester started normally. We conducted our weekly labs with outstanding briefs from our midshipman as well as special guest speakers. Guests like Captain Oliver from VUPD, Commander Seitz from the USS Tennessee, and Sergeant Major McKenna from NORAD and NORTHCOM were gracious enough to impart their wisdom on our midshipmen on a variety of topics. Outside of lab we continued the tradition of static display visits from various squadrons across the fleet, as well as started new traditions with the advent of the Bass Military Scholars Breakfast, where some midshipmen got to interact with the Bass Scholars in small groups over breakfast at the unit. Despite all of this, the semester was not without its challenges. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 and subsequent cancellation of on-campus events at Vanderbilt, Tennessee State, and Belmont Universities, we were unable to complete all of the in-person events we had planned. Labs like our community service outreach at the Andrew Jackson Boys and Girls Club in Nashville and our live fire lab at the Nashville Armory, as well as our annual JROTC Drill Meet, had to be pushed into future semesters. Despite our inability to complete in-person events during March and April, we were still able to continue the professional development of our midshipmen via online labs. Even though the semester didn’t turn out exactly how we planned it at the beginning, we still completed the mission of developing midshipmen mentally, morally and physically. Semper Gumby and Go Navy!

-MIDN Valerius, Operations Officer

Opportunities Abound
The midshipmen had the opportunity to meet and learn from a P-8 Naval Aviator who flew into Nashville. Even on a Friday afternoon, the midshipmen are motivated!
### This Semester’s Events

#### Morale, Wellness and Recreation

It’s not all field exercises and classes. Keeping morale high is a key part of our mission! This semester we had a large turnout at Mario Kart, bowling, ice skating, and a virtual Netflix watch party. These events always provide a welcome relief from school and offer us the opportunity to have some fun with our fellow midshipmen.

#### Community Service

While VUNROTC midshipmen faced their own academic and physical challenges throughout the 2019-2020 school year, Nashville did as well. While the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow our midshipmen to serve as a group, altogether VUNROTC midshipmen and MECEPs individually served over 200 hours to their local communities and Nashville. From helping develop JROTC cadets to rebuilding Nashville after the March 2020 Tornadoes, midshipmen and MECEPs are always eager to find a way to give back to their community.

### Spotlight: Midshipman 2/C Sterling Gilliam

MIDN Gilliam, Class of 2021, is a chemistry major and a Navy Option in VUNROTC. He is following his passion for history by pursuing a history minor. Recently, he passed his submarine interview, and is destined for Nuclear Power School upon graduation. MIDN Gilliam studied abroad in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for the Spring 2020 semester, but still tuned in for our virtual leadership labs!
Looking Forward

MIDSHIPMEN TO BE COMMISSIONED

On May 8th, six members of the Class of 2020 will be commissioned into the United States Navy and Marine Corps. Each has undergone four years of training, taking them from submarines and surface ships all over the world, to language training in Latvia, to Officer Candidate School in Quantico. They are as follows:

- ENS Logan Dorrough, Hemet, CA, Pilot – Naval Flight School
- 2nd Lt Harrison Wilson, Spring Hill, TN, USMC Ground – The Basic School
- 2nd Lt Adonis Dotson, Bellevue, NE, USMC Ground – The Basic School
- ENS Caroline Finn, Richmond, VA, NFO – Naval Flight School
- ENS Christopher Walding, Daphne, AL, Surface Warfare – USS Curtis Wilbur
- ENS Peter Valerius, Hamel, MN, NFO – Naval Flight School

On August 3rd, one member of the Class of 2019 will be commissioned after delaying commissioning to earn her Masters as a Nurse Practitioner:

- ENS Brooke Riordan, Anacortes, WA, Nurse – Naval Medical Center San Diego

VUNROTC wishes them the best of luck as they embark on careers as US Navy and Marine Corps Officers.

New Battalion Staff Receive Command

At the Battalion’s annual Change of Command ceremony held virtually on April 16th, Midshipman 1/C Christopher Walding handed over command to Midshipman 2/C Timothy DeGan, a Marine option. With him came a fresh new Battalion staff, ready to take on the challenges of next year. Every semester brings a new set of faces for battalion leadership and with it a new perspective.

Battalion Commander: MIDN 1/C DeGan
Executive Officer: MIDN 1/C Gilliam
Master Chief Petty Officer: MIDN 1/C Lareau
Operations Officer: SSgt Moore
Adjutant: MIDN 2/C Wright
Supply Officer: MIDN 2/C Diamond
Alpha Company Commander: MIDN 2/C Bryce
Alpha Chief: MIDN 2/C McConnell
Bravo Company Commander: MIDN 2/C Williams
Bravo Chief: MIDN 2/C Free