The Capital Battalion
Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps
United States Navy Memorial
on Friday, the Twenty-First of May
in the year Two Thousand Twenty-One

Commissioning Ceremony
Spring 2021

Fair Winds and Following Seas!
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Introduction of the Spring 2021 Commissioning Class

Arrival of the Official Party

Presentation of the Colors

Invocation

Welcome
Captain Kevin Meyers
Commanding Officer
The Capital Battalion NROTC

Introduction of Honor Guest
Captain Kevin Meyers

Honor Guest
Admiral James Caldwell

Administration of the Oath of Office

Receipt of Commission and Pinning

Departure of Official Party

1st Salutes

Congratulations Class of 2021!
The US Navy Memorial

The Class of 2021’s Commissioning Ceremony is taking place at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, DC. Admiral Arleigh Burke, Admiral Tom Moore, and Admiral Elmo “Bud” Zumwalt came together to form a nonprofit called the “United States Navy Memorial Foundation” in 1977. Rear Admiral William Thompson assisted in introducing a bill to the Senate and House to erect a Navy Memorial in Washington, DC in 1978, and the Bill was signed by President Carter in 1980. Numerous active duty and veteran sailors contributed funds to support the construction of the memorial, and it was dedicated on October 13th, 1987.

The Navy Memorial has now been open for more than 30 years, and offers services such as historical exhibits, educational programming, and military community outreach. This is a living memorial that honors the service of all men and women who have served, are serving, or will serve in the future.

Ensign Karly Elizabeth Ward
Navy Nurse Corps Officer
Gig Harbor, Washington
Georgetown University
Bachelor of Science in Nursing

Will be reporting to Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan.

Personal Message:
Thank you to all who have helped me get to this point. It was most definitely a team effort and I would not be here without the support of family, friends, mentors, and teachers. Can’t wait to see the amazing things this commissioning class accomplishes out in the fleet!

Second Lieutenant Patrick Joseph Woodsome
Marine Corps Officer
Pasadena, California
Georgetown University
Bachelor of Arts in History
Minor in Spanish

Will be reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, VA.

Personal Message:
Thank you to my mom and dad for allowing me to pursue this dream. I could not have done it without you and I owe my success to them, the rest of my family, and friends.
The Capital Battalion

The Capital Battalion first began in 1984 out of The George Washington University National Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC). The Battalion exists in a consortium of schools which also includes Georgetown University, Howard University, and The Catholic University of America. Students from these schools participate as Marine, Navy, and Nurse option midshipmen.

The Battalion’s home in Washington, DC, allows for unique exposures to national history, such as early-morning physical training at the Lincoln Memorial, tours of the Pentagon, and visits to Arlington National Cemetery.

Our midshipmen train to become well-rounded, motivated leaders all while earning a college education. Upon graduating, midshipmen will commission as Ensigns in the United States Navy or as Second Lieutenants in the United States Marine Corps.

This year, our commissioning class consists of nineteen Ensigns and five Second Lieutenants from two out of the four consortium universities.

Class of 2021

Ensign William Everett Stricklett
Surface Warfare Officer
Bethesda, Maryland
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering
Minor in Naval Science

*Will be reporting to the USS Antietam (CG-54) homeported in Yokosuka, Japan.*

**Personal Message:**
I am grateful for the love and support I have received from my friends and family. Let the journey commence!

Ensign Nicholas James Tomczyk
Student Naval Aviator
Reading, Pennsylvania
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, concentration in Aerospace
Minor in Naval Science

*Will be reporting to Aviation Preflight Indoctrination in Pensacola, FL.*

**Personal Message:**
Thank you to my friends, family, and teammates for the support they’ve given me in this journey. Most importantly, thank you to my parents. Without your love and guidance I would have never gotten this far.
Message from the Class of 2021

From the Commissioning Class of 2021:

Friends, families, and shipmates, thank you for choosing to celebrate with us on what we consider to be one of the most important days of our lives. For some of us, this is the beginning of our family’s military journey, while for others, today we become another link in a long legacy. Without each of your individual support and guidance, we would not be able to stand as a class today, and for that, we are deeply humbled and grateful.

To our families: Thank you for trusting us on this journey. You are our first example of leadership, and your love and support have made it possible for us to achieve this goal. It is with this example that we will be able to lead, mentor, and embrace the challenges our future will bring.

To the staff: Thank you for being a continual guide over the past four years. You’ve set the standard of resilient leadership, expertise, and professionalism in all circumstances that we should all aspire to. As we dealt with the new challenges of the past year, you continued to provide guidance, advice, and direction throughout. Your knowledge and experience have been essential in our training, and we will remember the lessons you taught us throughout our time as junior officers.

To the Battalion: Thank you for the honor of letting us lead you, for trusting us to mentor you, and most importantly, for becoming our friends. The memories made in all the small moments of our friendships have made the world of difference, no one is more capable to fill our shoes when we move on. This unit and our fleet are in good hands because of strong, passionate midshipmen like you.

This senior year could not be one that we predicted when we started our journey as midshipmen four years ago. Our experience as college students has been defined by our unity as a battalion, and this past year, our class has been tested. This year, we reimagined what it means to train “mentally, morally, physically” by adapting to the new normal of our environment, and emerged stronger on the other side.

The lessons we have learned over the past few years have taught us how to be resilient, deal with adversity, and emerge stronger together. The time we were able to have together allowed us to write the playbook on how to succeed even in challenging circumstances. The time we had apart reaffirmed that everything in our careers won’t go to plan. As the whole of society has learned, even the mightiest of nations can be held hostage to the smallest of foes, it is our innovation, our perseverance and ultimately our care for one another that guides us through the storm.

The oath which we utter today is not a responsibility we take lightly, but it is one we take willingly. We couldn’t be prouder to enter the service today. With the values, lessons, and examples imparted by all of you guiding us, we know it will be fair seas ahead.

Anchors Aweigh and Semper Fi,

The Commissioning Class of 2021

Class of 2021

Ensign Ian Alexander Saville
Submarine Warfare Officer
River Forest, Illinois
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in History
Minor in Naval Science, Economics

Will be reporting to Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC.

Personal Message:
Congratulations to all of you and thank you. I could not have made it here without all your kindness, advice, and support. I could not be more proud to commission alongside each of you today and I cannot wait to see where you go from here.

Ensign Nathan Christopher Smith
Surface Warfare Officer
Cincinnati, Ohio
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs
Minor in Naval Science

Will be reporting to the USS James E. Williams (DDG-95), homeported in Hampton Roads, VA.

Personal Message:
Thank you to my family, friends, and everyone who has supported me over the past 4 years. I am excited for the future and thankful for the memories that I made in the Capital Battalion.
Ensign Veronica Claire Murdoch  
Student Naval Aviator  
Keller, Texas  
The George Washington University  
Bachelor of Arts in Asian Studies  
Minor in Naval Science  
Will be reporting to Aviation Pre-flight Indoctrination in Pensacola, FL.

Personal Message:  
Thank you to my family for their love, guidance, and example leading up to today - you taught me the meaning of selfless service. My friends in the Capital Battalion have become my brothers and sisters, and I cannot wait to see the wonderful things you accomplish. All my love.

Ensign Thomas Devlin Natkin  
Student Naval Aviator  
Irvington, New York  
The George Washington University  
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs  
Minor in Russian Language and Literature  
Will be reporting to Aviation Pre-flight Indoctrination in Pensacola, FL.

Personal Message:  
“And now for something completely different”. - John Cleese

Messages from the Battalion

2/C: To the leaders of the battalion -- our mentors and our friends: thank you. The battalion began this year faced with uncertainty and many unanswered questions. Despite this, you took charge and created the foundation of a great year. The unit was strengthened more than ever before under your leadership. Over the past three years, it has been our privilege to work and grow with you as midshipmen. As your friends who will soon be in your places, we could not be more excited for your futures. Congratulations, shipmates.

3/C: Over the last two years, you have shown us how to be the leaders our Navy and Marine Corps need through your commitment to our growth and perseverance through adversity. Last year, you set an unparalleled standard as our orientation instructors. This year, you assumed the role as our mentors and have helped light a path for us to follow. Most importantly, you’ve become friends we can look to for guidance and inspiration. Your Sailors and Marines are beyond lucky to inherit such compassionate, inspiring, and dedicated officers to lead them in service to our country. We could not imagine anyone more worthy to call our leaders, mentors, and friends, and we look forward to the day when we can serve alongside you in the fleet. Until then, Semper Fidelis and Semper Fortis.

4/C: As the late Chadwick Boseman said, “Sometimes you need to get knocked down to understand what your fight is.” Four years and one pandemic later, you now understand what your fight is. Although we only knew each other as faces on a screen, your impact on the 4/C is immeasurable. You led from the front, exemplifying what it means to overcome hardship. Your presence, albeit virtual, provided the rest of the Battalion with a sense of stability and consistency in such an unstable and inconsistent time. Both the perseverance and resilience you demonstrated reflect your preparedness to overcome the next set of challenges that lie ahead. Finally, please remember, if you ever need anything, we can meet on Zoom! Godspeed shipmates!
The Naval Officer

“It is by no means enough that an Officer of the Navy should be a capable mariner. He must be that, of course, but also a great deal more. He should be as well a gentleman of liberal education, refined manners, punctilious courtesy, and the nicest sense of personal honor.

He should be the soul of tact, patience, justice, firmness, and charity. No meritorious act of a subordinate should escape his attention or be left to pass without its reward, even if the reward is only a word of approval.

Conversely, he should not be blind to a single fault of any subordinate, though, at the same time, he should be quick and unfailing to distinguish error from malice, thoughtfulness from incompetency, and well-meant shortcoming from heedless or stupid blunder.

In one word, every Commander should keep constantly before him the great truth, that to be well obeyed, he must be perfectly esteemed.”

John Paul Jones

Class of 2021

Ensign Patrick Denis Mahoney
Student Naval Aviator
Groton, Connecticut
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, concentration in Aerospace Minor in Naval Science

Will be reporting to Aviation Pre-flight Indoctrination in Pensacola, FL.

Personal Message:
Thank you to my family, friends, mentors, and professors for guiding me along this journey, I am excited to see where it takes us.

Ensign Matthew Peter Motola
Nuclear Surface Warfare Officer
Colts Neck, New Jersey
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science Minor in Business Administration

Will be reporting to USS James E. Williams (DDG 95), homeported in Hampton Roads, VA.

Personal Message:
“Remember the little moments like this, that were good.” - James Gandolfini
Class of 2021

Ensign Julian Aaron Jacobs
Surface Warfare Officer
Rockville, Maryland
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Minor in History and Naval Science

Will be reporting to the USS Stockdale (DDG-106), homeported in San Diego, CA.

Personal Message:
I took a class freshman year, and it changed my life forever. I can't thank my family, friends, and mentors enough for being the community I needed to become the man I am today. "The sea, once it casts its spell, holds one in its net of wonder forever." - Jacques Cousteau. Anchors Aweigh.

Ensign Peter Collins Lorio
Submarine Warfare Officer
Loveland, Ohio
Georgetown University
Bachelor of Science in Human Science

Will be reporting to Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC.

Personal Message:
Thank you to my family, my friends, and my mentors. I am only here today because of the amazing people surrounding me along the way. Don't Give Up The Ship!

The Marine Officer

“In every battle and skirmish since the birth of our Corps, Marines have acquitted themselves with the greatest distinction, winning new honors on each occasion until the term “Marine” has come to signify all that is highest in military efficiency.

Leadership is the sum of those qualities of intellect, human understanding, and moral character that enables a person to inspire and control a group of people successfully.

From the Battle of Trenton to the Argonne, Marines have won foremost honors in war, and in the long eras of tranquility at home, generation after generation of Marine have grown gray in war in both hemispheres and in every corner of the seven seas, that our country and its citizens might enjoy peace and security.”

John Archer Lejeune
Commanding Officer

Captain Kevin P. Meyers
The Capital Battalion
Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps

A native of Dundalk, Maryland, Captain Meyers enlisted in the Navy in April of 1987. He served six years as an Interior Communications Electrician aboard the submarines USS PHILADELPHIA (SSN 690) and USS MARYLAND (SSBN 738). He received his commission through the Enlisted Commissioning Program and graduated from the University of South Carolina in 1994. Upon commissioning, he began his career as a Surface Warfare Officer.

His Division Officer tours included First Lieutenant in USS STETHEM (DDG 63) and Auxiliaries Officer in USS PELELIU (LHA 5). Captain Meyers completed two department head tours as Weapons Control Officer and Combat Systems Officer aboard USS HIGGINS (DDG 76) and USS BENFOLD (DDG 65), where he participated in the first DDG Sea Swap. During Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, HIGGINS launched 31 Tomahawk missiles and participated in the clearance of the Kahr Abd Allah waterway. In February 2006, he reported to USS HARPERS FERRY (LSD 49) as Executive Officer.

Captain Meyers’ tours ashore included Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific, the Naval War College where he completed his Joint Professional Military Education Phases I and II, the Joint Chiefs of Staff J-5 (Iraq Division), the Force Readiness Officer for Commander Naval Surface Forces Pacific, and as the Executive Officer for Surface Warfare Officers School.

Captain Meyers has had three sea tours as Commanding Officer, serving in that role aboard USS GREEN BAY (LPD 20), as the commissioning CO of USS SAN DIEGO (LPD 22), and most recently, as commissioning CO of USS TRIPOLI (LHA 7).

His awards include the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, and various unit and service awards.

In October 2020 Captain Meyers assumed command of the Naval ROTC Unit at George Washington University.

Class of 2021

Ensign Jonathan Andrew Guerrette
Surface Warfare Officer
Durham, New Hampshire
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs
Minor in Geography and Naval Science

Will be reporting to the USS Kidd (DDG-100), homeported in Everett, WA.

Personal Message:
“Nothing of me is original. I am the combined effort of everyone I’ve ever known.” -Chuck Palahniuk. Thank you to my family, you are the most important people in my life. I love all of you.

Second Lieutenant Zachary James Haupt
Marine Corps Officer
Auburn, California
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in History

Will be reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, VA.

Personal Message:
“Those who want respect, give respect.”
- James Gandolfini
Class of 2021

Ensign Benjamin Cristian Giangrasso
Surface Warfare Officer
Ridgefield, Connecticut
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

Will be reporting to the USS Russell (DDG-59) homeported in San Diego, CA.

Personal Message:
Thank you to my family and friends for supporting me through college. Thank you to the GWU NROTC staff and midshipmen for guiding me down the right path.

Ensign Hunter Judd Greenhill
Surface Warfare Officer
New York, New York
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in History
Minors in Anthropology, Naval Science

Will be reporting to the USS Russell (DDG-59), homeported in San Diego, CA.

Personal Message:
It’s been quite an experience, and I am so grateful to have made it here on my surprise NROTC adventure. Thank you to my family, friends, and mentors who supported me and believed I would succeed - especially when the going got tough. Time to weigh anchor. Invictus.

Executive Officer

Commander Jacob Williams
The Capital Battalion
Naval Reserves Officer Training Corps

CDR Williams is a native of Basking Ridge, New Jersey. He graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering. He holds a Master of Science degree in Aeronautical Engineering and a Certificate in Systems Engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology. He is a graduate of the Navy School of Aviation Safety and completed the Navy Joint Professional Military Education non-resident course.

CDR Williams was designated a Naval aviator in April 2003 and qualified as an SH-60B pilot at the Fleet Replacement Squadron in Mayport, Florida.

He has served in a variety of sea and shore assignments. At HSL-48 he deployed on the USS THOMAS S. GATES (CG 51), USS MCINERNEY (FFG 8), and USS SAMUEL B. ROBERTS (FFG 58) supporting Joint Maritime Course Neptune Warrior, UNITAS, PANAMAX, and Counter Narco-Terrorism operations. He served as the V-4 division officer and earned his Assistant Air Officer designation while deployed as a Shooter on the maiden cruise of the USS GEORGE H. W. BUSH (CVN 77). In 2012 he reported to HSL-37 as the Safety Department head and Aviation Safety officer, during which time the squadron was awarded the Commander, Naval Air Forces, Pacific Safety Award. He then deployed to SEVENTH Fleet onboard USS HOWARD (DDG 83) as the officer in charge of the Detachment TWO “Nightmarchers” supporting exercises Ssang Yong, Foal Eagle, and theater ASW. Upon his return he took over as the HSM-37 Operations officer. Most recently CDR Williams deployed as officer in charge of TACRON-22 detachment TWO, leading his detachment through exercise Trident Juncture as well as a deployment to FIFTH Fleet.

Ashore he attended the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio and served as the Navy’s Targets and Training Ranges Requirements Officer in the office of the Director, Air Warfare (N98) where he was responsible for the requirements and resourcing of the Navy’s portfolio of aerial, surface, and underwater targets and training ranges.

His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and various service and unit awards. He is married to the former Kathleen Denk of Summit, New Jersey and has two sons Sean and Evan.
Commissioning Speaker

Admiral James Caldwell
Director
Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program

Admiral James Caldwell received his commission graduating with distinction from the United States Naval Academy in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Engineering. He also holds a Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School.


His Operational assignments include duty as a division officer on USS Boston (SSN 703), engineering officer on USS Alabama (SSBN 731) (GOLD), and executive officer on USS Buffalo (SSN 715).

Ashore, Caldwell served on the Pacific Fleet Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board and later as Undersea Warfare (USW) Requirements officer on the staff of Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet. He also served as senior member of the Naval Submarine Force’s Tactical Readiness Evaluation Team; on the Joint Staff as deputy director for Político-Military Affairs for Europe, NATO, Russia and Africa; and deputy commander for U.S. Strategic Command’s Joint Functional Component Command for Global Strike in Omaha, Nebraska and as Naval Inspector General, Washington Navy Yard, D.C. His most recent tour was on the OPNAV Staff as the Director, Navy Staff. He assumed his duties as the Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program in August 2015.

Caldwell’s awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Naval Submarine League’s Charles A. Lockwood Award for Submarine Professional Excellence.

Class of 2021

Ensign Thomas Alexander DeMallie
Student Naval Aviator
Ocean City, Maryland
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
Minor in Naval Science

Will be reporting to Aviation Pre-flight Indoctrination, Pensacola, FL.

Personal Message:
I want to thank my family and friends that have supported me through everything. Without them I would not be the person I am today. I would also like to thank the unit, staff, past and present midshipmen for the valuable impact they have had during my time at GWU.

Ensign John David “Jack” Fonseca
Student EOD/Dive Officer
Rockville, Maryland
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
Minor in Naval Science

Will be reporting to the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center in Panama City, FL.

Personal Message:
I am forever thankful for the wonderful people and unique experiences I have enjoyed on my journey through life thus far. I can’t wait to see what comes next.
Class of 2021

Ensign Emily Caroline Collins
Surface Warfare Officer
Springfield, Virginia
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs
Minor in Naval Science

*Will be reporting to the USS Mobile Bay (CG-53), homeported in San Diego, CA.*

**Personal Message:**
Thank you to my supportive family! I couldn’t have done these past four years without you all! Looking forward to seeing all of you down the road.

Second Lieutenant Grady Lewis Cruze
Marine Corps Officer
Jacksonville, Oregon
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs
Minor in Emergency Health Services

*Will be reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, VA.*

**Personal Message:**
I would like to express how grateful I am for the incredible individuals who have supported me on this journey. I would not be the man I am today without all of you. See you downrange. Semper Fi.

The Commissioning Oath: United States Military

“I, [state your name], do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservations or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am about to enter. So help me God.”

**Significance**

“The first law of the United States of America, entered in the first session of Congress on 1 June 1789, was statute 1, chapter 1: an act to regulate the time and manner of administering certain oaths, which established the oath required by civil and military officials to support the Constitution. The founding fathers agreed upon the importance of ensuring that officials promised their allegiance; indeed, very little debate occurred before the first Congress passed this statute. Although the wording of the military officer’s oath has changed several times in the past two centuries, the basic foundation has withstood the test of time. The current oath is more than a mere formality that adds to the pageantry of a commissioning or promotion ceremony- it provides a foundation for leadership decisions.

Military oaths date back to ancient Rome, where soldiers pledged loyalty to a specific general for a specific campaign. After the campaign ended, the oath no longer applied. By 100 b.c., Rome had established a professional military, and the oath became effective for the soldier’s full 20-year service. Since then, this custom has continued and expanded.

The first official oath of office for US military officers under the Constitution was established on 1 June 1789. The law implemented the requirement in Article 6 of the Constitution that “Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the members of the several state legislatures, and all executive and judicial officers, both of the United States and of the several states, shall be bound by oath or affirmation, to support this Constitution.” The first oath was short and to the point: “I, A.B., do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States.”

Second Lieutenant Laura Elizabeth Bishop
Marine Corps Officer
West Linn, Oregon
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Business Administration in International Business
Minor in Korean Language and Literature

*Will be reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, VA.*

**Personal Message:**
Thank you to everyone who has helped me grow these past four years! The Capital Battalion and its members will always hold a special place in my heart.

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Ensign Helena Carol Blaisdell-Black
Surface Warfare Officer
Norfolk, Virginia
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Science in Geological Science
Minor in Naval Science

*Will be reporting to USS Truxtun (DDG-103), homeported in Hampton Roads, VA.*

**Personal Message:**
“*I don’t know half of you as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.*” — J. R. R. Tolkien

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Second Lieutenant Jack Truman Cavanaugh
Marine Corps Officer
Fairfield, Connecticut
Georgetown University
Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics
Minor in Spanish

*Will be reporting to The Basic School in Quantico, VA.*

**Personal Message:**
Thank you to my family and friends for getting me to this point. I am unbelievably blessed and excited for my next chapter in the Marine Corps.

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Ensign David Zfania Cohen
Surface Warfare Officer
New York, New York
The George Washington University
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
Minor in Naval Science

*Will be reporting to the USS Ramage (DDG 61), homeported in Hampton Roads, VA.*

**Personal Message:**
Thank you to my family and friends who have made my journey and this accomplishment possible. I will never forget the memories I have made in ROTC and eagerly await my future and implementing the lessons that I have learned in college.