Bearings Fall 2016
George Washington Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps

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Editor: MIDN 3/C Bucholz
PAO: MIDN 3/C Lee
Greetings warriors of George Washington University NROTC unit, and welcome back to your home away from home! While you were away, it has been a productive and adventurous summer. Much has happened since we finished the last semester, which was highlighted by the commissioning of 23 new Ensigns and Second Lieutenants from our unit. These men and women finished the first significant milestone in their naval officer journeys and are off to conquer the next phase.

We salute our graduating naval officers as we return from a busy and exciting summer adventure and prepare for the next phase in the midshipmen road to commission. And, what a summer adventure it was: 40 midshipmen successfully completed summer training in surface warfare, submarines and aviation; eight midshipmen either completed studies abroad or met their Navy ships overseas; and three midshipmen even found employment in the “last frontier” our 49th state - Alaska. The summer also marked a new chapter in our history as we said goodbye to one of the original five schools that formed our unit. Congratulations to the newly established Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps unit, Maryland University (UMD)! We will miss our comrades in arms, and we wish them all the best for success….until we meet again in competition.
No doubt the unit took a hit with the loss of midshipmen from UMD, but we are well on our way to making up the deficit. We welcomed an exceptional group of 27 midshipmen Fourth Class at the end of the summer and the beginning of the academic year during New Student Orientation (NSO). NSO was well planned, applied with the right amount of controls and oversight, and flawlessly executed. It was also “spiced” up a bit by the appearance of two drill instructors – GySgt Hairston and SSgt Barry – who added a hyper sense of focus to the training (emphasis on hyper). Congratulations to the NSO OIC, MIDN 1/C Thornton, his XO, MIDN 2/C Hardgrove, and the rest of the NSO staff. BZ on executing an outstanding evolution from start to finish! Well done to the 27 MIDN 4/C who performed well during NSO and are now integral members of our unit.

I also want to pass along BZs to several other midshipmen who have completed commendable projects, milestones or were recognized for superior performance since the completion of the last academic year. Congratulations to MIDN Eskin who was recognized by her peers in the GW Student Association as “Senator of the Year” for 2015-1016. Well done on advancing our concept of service as naval officer-citizen! Congratulations to MIDN Judd who won the Mid-East region (cash award) Navy Historical Foundation Essay contest this summer. BZ for his mastery of and initiative to use sea power concepts! BZ to MIDNs McDonald, Durkin, and Garrahan (now at UMD), winners of National Defense Industrial Association awards for scholarship and leadership. These three midshipmen will receive cash awards during a luncheon held at the Key Bridge Marriott on 21 October. Well done to all three! Also, congratulations to MIDNs Bermudez, Callan and Rife for completing Marine Corps OCS this summer. This was a critical and significant step towards their commissioning as 2ndLts in the Marine Corps. Well done gentlemen!

Looking ahead for the academic year 2016-1017, our goal is to make this year as productive and as exciting as last year. We will accomplish this in a few simple ways:

- Focus on the basics: Remember academic performance is your number one priority. Your military aptitude, character development and physical readiness are significantly important too. The sole purpose of my staff – including me – is to enable your success in this regard. I promise you that. So, just ASK when you need help.

- We will continue with the great guest speaker series. We were fortunate to have ADM Haney, Commander, U.S. Strategic Command, for our first leadership laboratory of the year on 9 September and VADM Thomas, Director, Navy Staff, visit with us on 31 September. We will continue to invite senior officers and distinguished visitors to engage the battalion on a variety of topics.

- We will more sharply focus on character and ethics. Midshipmen can expect to see character and ethics training introduced earlier in the curriculum than was traditionally done in the past. You can also expect guest speakers to focus on character and ethics in their presentations.
- We will more fully integrate into our crosstown universities. Building on the physical training (PT) conducted at crosstown schools, we will secure spaces for PT inside these schools in the event of inclement weather. We will also secure spaces for midshipmen to use for meetings with NROTC advisors for counseling sessions. Finally, we will hold leadership laboratories at crosstown schools once each semester. VADM Thomas was our guest speaker at Georgetown University and we are scheduled to host MajGen Timberlake, USMC, Director, Manpower Management Division, at Howard University on 28 October.

- We will have FUN! And, nothing pegs the fun meter like teambuilding events, especially winning in competition. On 4 October we participated in a fun run around the national mall. I am happy to report, none of our midshipmen dropped out due to physical injury, exhaustion or any other issue. Let’s say the other team was not quite as fortunate. We have two big ROTC unit vs. ROTC unit competitions coming up this year and trophies are involved. As I stated earlier, nothing pegs the fun meter more than winning in competition. So, let’s get ready to win. The first competition is actually a tri-ROTC unit competition in mid-November. We will compete against Howard AROTC and Howard AFROTC in physical and knowledge based events for the “Best All Around ROTC Unit” in the DC area, this side of Georgetown. We will then turn around in December and compete directly with Georgetown AROTC, also in physical and knowledge based events on the national mall. I am so confident in you that I have asked our wardroom officer, MIDN Antonucci, to start looking for a couple of good spots to put our trophies in the wardroom now. Hopefully, we can add UMD NROTC to our ROTC competitor series in the not too distant future. As I stated earlier, we wish them well until we see them again in competition….

Finally, it has been my distinct privilege to serve with this great team of warriors. I am proud of each and every last one of you. I ask that you always remember: you are warriors of character – brilliant in your weapon systems & of the highest ethical standard. Your actions in the classroom, in the unit, in your social environment, and even at home reflect on every member of this unit, our naval service and this nation. Take care of each other, enjoy the journey and let’s have a great semester!

Very Respectfully,
CAPT James R. Wyatt
Commanding Officer/Professor of Naval Science
The George Washington University, Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit
A class advisor once told us that we would never be the best at everything. You may be academically motivated, physically elite, or maybe you bring a positive attitude that benefits the overall morale of the unit. These natural inclinations can result in reliance upon success in one area to validate overall success in ROTC. It is common to cling to what is easy for us and ignore what we find challenging. Firstly, I want to encourage you to hone in on your strengths and develop them further, because passionate work yields the best results. Secondly, I ask that you step outside of the environment that makes you feel most comfortable. Demonstrating the courage to address our weaknesses and seek improvement upon them requires internal honesty, a trait that is critical to moral development.

I want to emphasize that there is no single model for what makes a good officer. Do not follow a career path that does not inspire you because you have seen it work for someone else in the past. Develop your skillsets and your moral compass now so that you are prepared to facilitate that development in your sailors and marines. Servant leadership will be expected of you; the time to focus primarily on yourself will end, so make use of your college career to become the leader you will be in the fleet.

To conclude, I encourage midshipmen to follow their passions and study what interests them, as this will produce confident, well-informed, and talented leaders. That said; do not be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone and seek advice from others in the battalion who possess skills that you do not. HQ staff aspires to create a command climate diverse in thoughts and interests to produce the most capable leaders possible for the Navy and Marine Corps. Developing morally is more than just following the rules, and I encourage you all to enact the lifestyle you expect of an officer, because this development will not spawn overnight.
New Student Orientation
By: MIDN 3/C Ohm

New Student Orientation, or NSO, is the process that the Capital Battalion undergoes each year to introduce the new 4/C to the NROTC Unit, and begin the transition from a civilian lifestyle to a military one. This year, I got to be a part of the NSO staff, starting out as a Midshipman Instructor and moving up to be the Female Platoon Sergeant.

The 4/C spent four mornings during their first week of classes around campus with the staff. During this time, they participated in their first PT (Physical Training) sessions, filled out paperwork, and were debriefed on unit and military policies. Friday evening, a bus pulled away from the unit building, leaving D.C. with 29 4/C and 19 upperclassmen staff members. All of us headed for Camp Upshur in Quantico, VA, to train there from Friday night until Monday morning.

While in Camp Upshur, the 4/C learned some drill, basic land navigation, got an introduction to the O-Course, and used the Indoor Simulated Marksmanship Trainer (ISMT). Running through the O-Course, the 4/C were given time to practice each obstacle before a few were able to race through in its entirety. During land navigation, the 4/C were split into small groups with midshipmen staff members supervising them. From there, they marched to the ISMT where they were shown how to operate different types of firearms and learned how to shoot them at simulation screens showing several scenarios. This weekend was a valuable experience for all. The staff got to lead this transition, and the 4/C learned about life in the Capital Battalion and how to learn to be officers in the United States Navy and Marine Corps.

The memories I have of my own NSO last year are memories that will stay with me forever, bringing me so much closer to all of my new classmates, now my shipmates. Being a staff member this year gave me a while new perspective of the time and effort that goes into planning NSO, and it’s an experience I look forward to reliving in the future.
Why Marine Option?
By: MIDN 4/C Rios


This is a saying that my fellow Midshipman and I have heard throughout our lives. In just six words it perfectly demonstrates the unique character of the Marine Corps. But why did I decide to apply as a Marine Option?

I spent the first few years of my life on Camp Pendleton while my father was finishing up his tour, so I grew up in a military environment and witnessed firsthand everything the Marines could offer someone. However, I was never pressured by my father or anyone in my family to join the military.

When the scholarship response came back, my parents sat down with me and said that I did not need to take it. If I had second thoughts, they assured me that we could figure out another way to pay for college. However, I knew I could not pass up the opportunity of a lifetime. Only 0.8% of the living population has been a member of the Marine Corps. Even fewer men and women have been deemed fit to lead the world’s best fighting force. I believe that to lead is an unmatched honor as well as responsibility. I can think of no better way to give back to a country that has done so much for my family and I.

CORTRAMID East
By: MIDN 3/C Bergethon

In the middle of June, while our hometown friends were planning beach days and barbeques, six of us were en-route for a month long excursion through the many facets of the Navy. We boarded planes sprinkled with fellow polo clad MIDN and descended onto Norfolk Naval Station, in Norfolk, VA. The next four weeks were packed to the brim with work, play, and mid-day naps.

Our first week was Submarine week. Designed to give us a glimpse into the world of a submariner, the week culminated in spending 48 hours underway on a nuclear submarine. By far one of the most memorable experiences of CORTRAMID, we did our best not to sleep, instead we ran around the sub like a kid in a candy store, asking questions, filling out our “qual sheet” and exploring the advanced technology that makes our submarine force the best on the planet.

After Submarine week, we donned our green flight suits and took on the world of Naval Aviation. Much like Sub week, Aviation week revolved around the opportunity to get some flight time in a T-34. We had briefs on g-force, parachuting and emergency ejection, we had medical examinations, swim tests, and a written exam; but in the end it was worth it when we got to take the stick of a T-34 and maneuver her along the Virginia coast.
After trading our flight suits in for our NWUs we took on one of the most intense weeks of CORTRAMID: Marine Week. During Marine week we were bombarded with thrilling activities, both mentally and physically challenging. We ran the Obstacle Course and the Challenge Course, fought each other with pugel sticks, got gassed, shot live ammunition, rappelled down a wall, spent a night in the field and did a simulation round in MOUNT Town, the facilities used to train for military operations in urban terrain. At the end of the week, as the adrenaline wore off, we were all exhausted, but left with more than just bruises; we left with a better appreciation for our Marine Corps brethren.

Once recovered from Marine week, we started our final week of CORTRAMID: Surface Week. This week was filled with simulators, exhibitions and Q&As, but the most exciting part for many of us was when we had the opportunity to go underway on the USS Vella Gulf. After a soaking wet ride out to the ship, we spent the day watching ammunition demonstrations, learning how to use much of the damage control equipment, and even catching a few minutes of shut eye on her flight deck. Returning back to base that night, it was hard not to feel SWOtivated.

Overall the four weeks we spent at CORTRAMID East this summer left us with a wealth of knowledge and experiences that will help to guide our decisions both now and in the future. A month of beach days and barbecues would never come close to the wonderful experience that was CORTRAMID East.
Project Go: A Summer in Beijing

By: MIDN 3/C Ho

This summer, I had the most incredible experience studying abroad as a participant of Project GO, a DoD-funded program that provides scholarships to ROTC students for study of critical languages both abroad and domestically. I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of thirteen ROTC students, including MIDN Kasturas and MIDN Heaps, to study Mandarin Chinese at the Beijing University of Chemical Technology located in China’s political center.

Studying Chinese required hard work and dedication. Every class lecture began at 0830 with a daily dictation quiz and ended around 1050. Lecture was followed by twenty minutes of break, after which my class of thirteen students was split off into three smaller drill sessions, each taught by a different, native Chinese professor. In these hour-long drill sessions, we would relearn the same material that we had learned in class lecture to reinforce our understanding of the material. After a break for lunch at 1150, we were required to again return to our classrooms to attend one-to-one sessions with one of our professors to practice oral speaking and pronunciation skills. At night, we were also mandated to attend tutoring sessions with university students who volunteered to be our yubans (language partners). Generously dividing their time between studying engineering and tutoring a group of ROTC students, our yubans served as a great source for practicing Mandarin Chinese, as well as learning about the local culture, customs, and foods.

The week always ended with written and oral tests, but completing these meant that a relaxing weekend was in store. On weekends, we were escorted by our yubans to Beijing’s coolest historical and cultural sites. We went on weekend trips to amazing places like the Great Wall of China, the Terracotta Soldiers, and the Wangfujing Snack Street, where we got to try weird eats like scorpion and tarantulas. We were even able to go on long distance trips to cities like Xi’an and Harbin! My favorite part about visiting Xi’an, one of the oldest cities in China, was being able to bike along the 8.7 mile city wall, which divides the inner and outer parts of the city. On the last weekend, I chose to visit Harbin with MIDN Kasturas. As the capital of Heilongjiang, China’s most northeastern province, Harbin was definitely an interesting sight to visit as it boasts a mixture of Russian and Chinese influences in culture, food, history, and architecture.
If I could participate in another Project GO program, I definitely would. Being able to study Mandarin Chinese and immerse myself in the local culture at the same time was an amazing and worthwhile experience. I have returned to the United States with more friendships, and useful skills (like bargaining goods for a cheap price). In addition, through my daily interactions with my Chinese professors, yubans, and locals I have developed a greater understanding and appreciation for the Chinese culture.

If you ever have the chance to participate in Project GO, I would advise you to take it; you will be transformed.

**Nuke FEX**

By: MIDN 3/C Waskin

23 SEP 2016. Clad in our unit polos and khakis, the “GW Casual” uniform, 10 midshipmen and one submarine officer boarded a government van Friday morning for this semester’s Nuke FEX. Every semester, the unit holds different FEXs (Familiarization Exercises) for each of the different communities, and this weekend we had the privilege of traveling to the Naval Submarine Base in Groton, Connecticut to learn more about the submarine community. Groton was about a seven-hour car ride away, including the rest stop, where the more motivated midshipmen among us had Subway for lunch.

We arrived at the submarine base at around 1345, in time to tour some of the high risk trainers at the sub school. The first one was a kind of virtual reality simulator, used for becoming familiarized with and maneuvering a submarine, given different situations. Another neat trainer was the Submarine Escape trainer, where sailors actually practice how to get out of a sinking submarine, given special suits for the high water pressure. A major part of submarine training involves damage and fire control, and we got to see the fire control trainer. At the push of a button, a whole wall in the trainer could suddenly “erupt” into flames. We finished the simulators, handed the SUBSCOL XO, CDR Grogan, one of our unit Capital Battalion Washington DC challenge coins, and left for the next event: a relaxed JO panel. Over billiards and water, we talked about the many facets of a submarine officer’s life.
Special Operations Prep: the Long and Short Game

By: MIDN 3/C Sloan

Taking its name from Naval Special Warfare, the command that includes the Navy SEAL Teams, the GWU NROTC Special Warfare Club exists to advise midshipmen preparing for selection to a special operations unit. In addition to the SEAL Teams, opportunities available to NROTC midshipmen are Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal, and, for Marine options significantly later in their careers, the Marine Raider Regiment.

Preparation for success in the selection process of each unit is in large part physical training. A significant portion of the role of the club president is to provide opportunities to learn about the selection events and offer the best information available to train for success in those events. In the case of all of these units, selection is dependent first on success in a short physical fitness test, the Navy Physical Screening Test for Navy units, consisting of a 500-yard swim, a max set of each of push-ups, sit-ups, and pull-ups, and a 1.5-mile run, and the Marine Corps Physical Fitness Test for the Raider Regiment.

Both tests serve to screen candidates to attend the selection phase, but while those scores are considered again when midshipmen are selected, the other side of being selected is success in the summer cruises for Navy options, and Assessment & Selection for future Marine officers.
To enable success at this phase, I’ve focused on guiding midshipmen to training opportunities that promote not only success on the short screening tests, but also longer term endurance that will keep them going day in and day out while they are being evaluated for success in special operations.

Editor’s Note

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you have enjoyed reading Bearings as much as I have enjoyed creating it. If you would like to support the GWU NROTC Battalion and all the adventures you have read about, please consider supporting us by making a tax-deductible donation. We appreciate any and all support tremendously.

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