



World's Greatest Naval Battalion (WGNB) Newsletter

November 2017

Navy & Marine Corps Birthday Ball

This month the WGNB held its annual Navy and Marine Corps Ball to celebrate the birthday of each service. The event was held in the Illini Union ballroom on Friday 10 November 2017. Staff, Midshipmen, distinguished guests, and their dates enjoyed a cocktail hour where they socialized prior to the beginning of the program. This year's theme was "Sea Power to Protect and Promote." The main event opened with a sword arch for the entrance of the Commanding Officer, CAPT Anthony Corapi, USN and Guest of Honor, WGNB alumnus CDR Joe Rank, USN (Ret.). CDR Rank then took part in the cake cutting ceremony. This age-old tradition involves the cutting of the birthday cake by the oldest and youngest service members present. Following a dinner provided by the Illini Union, those in attendance had the honor of watching the birthday messages from both the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. These videos celebrated the birthday of both the Navy and Marine Corps while reflecting on the dedication and commitment of 242 years of service. CDR Rank, a University of Illinois Alumni Association Vice President, then provided a brief presentation on the University of Illinois' military history. The speech reflected on our great university's strong impact on the U.S. military as a whole since 1867. The event concluded with music, dancing, and celebration. The following night, Marine Option Charlie Company attended another Birthday Ball hosted by the local Champaign-Urbana Marine Corps League. At the event, our Midshipmen represented the future of the Marine Corps and had the opportunity to learn from the vast experiences of the veterans. Happy 242nd birthday, United States Navy and Marine Corps!



Our guest speaker, Commander Joe Rank (ret.), during his speech describing the heritage of the military at the University (above). The MECEPs of the WGNB pose together during the Marine Corps League Ball (below).



Veteran's Day Luncheon

On 9 November 2017, veterans, active service members, and civilians alike gathered at the Illini Union to celebrate Veterans Day. Those in attendance had the opportunity to socialize with those they share the never-ending bond of patriotism, and be recognized for their service to the United States. When asked what he wants the younger generations to learn from this holiday, former Boatswain's Mate Third Class Aaron Ketchum, responded, "This isn't just a day off work, or a day to get a good sale, but a tribute to those who signed on the dotted line to potentially give their life." With similar sentiments, former Specialist Josh Hale added his desire for young adults to "understand, and respect what [the holiday] is." It was mutually agreed that this year's ceremony was a vast improvement over previous ceremonies which took place on the Armory Deck. The newly assigned Commanding Officer of the WGNB, CAPT Anthony Corapi, USN wanted to place more focus on veteran attendance, saying, "I'm all about a good formation on the Armory Deck, but it was just us. There are a lot of veterans that don't come to the Armory." Therefore, the Veteran's Day ceremony was relocated to the Illini Union much to the pleasure of Dr. Gina Lee-Olukoya, U of I Associate Dean of Students, and guest speaker of the event. As the daughter of a US Army Veteran, Dr. Olukoya made clear her hopes that Veteran's day will continue to be celebrated in this manner for years to come.



Throughout the week of Veteran's Day, the Color Guard, led by MIDN 3/C David Mesa, performed at the Veteran's Day Luncheon and Ceremony, Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball, and Marine Corps League Ball. Additionally, they were featured in a motivational video for the Fighting Illini football team (above).

The Fourth Class Midshipmen were exposed to the illustrious history of the Navy and Marine Corps at their first ever Birthday Ball (below).



Marine Corps Birthday 10k

On Friday, 10 November 2017, Marine Option Charlie Company participated in "The Run for Marines." Sponsored by the Marine Corps Association and Foundation, this virtual 10k was held in celebration of the Marine Corps' 242nd birthday. Participants registered online in order to receive their race packet and race medal and proceeds from this event go to support active duty Marines. Being a virtual 10k, this event allowed individuals to run the distance of a 10k in, "any clime and place." Members of our NROTC Unit ran the 10k together around campus in boots and utes, wearing weighted vests and carrying drill rifles. We would like to extend a special thank you to MIDN 2/C Mitchell Ciszewski who organized the event for the WGNB.



Following the event, those who participated in the Marine Corps Birthday 10k posed for a picture that will be sent to the event's sponsor.

Medal of Honor Alumnus Event

During Homecoming week, the University Library honored the only University of Illinois alumnus to receive the Medal of Honor. USMC Major Kenneth D. Bailey, a 1935 Illini graduate from Danville, IL, earned the Medal of Honor for leading his company in defending an airfield during the Guadalcanal Campaign in September 1942. The WGNB provided a Color Guard for the event and all of Marine Option Charlie Company attended the event to honor a fellow Marine. Also, our Commanding Officer, CAPT Anthony Corapi, USN was the keynote speaker and described how Maj. Bailey was an ordinary man that did extraordinary things because of his willingness to sacrifice anything for his country. The University and the WGNB are proud to have him as an alumnus! Please read the following news article about Major Bailey: <https://news.illinois.edu/blog/view/6367/570919>.



Like us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/illinoisNROTC>

Follow us on Instagram at: @wgnb_uiuc

Donate at:

<http://rotc.navy.illinois.edu/alumni-donation.html>

Shop for Unit Apparel:

<https://wgnb.logosoftwear.com>