



# World's Greatest NROTC Battalion (WGNB) Newsletter

Summer 2018

## USMC Officer Candidate School (OCS)

Every summer, prospective Marine Officer Candidates from all over the country arrive at Quantico, Virginia to take part in a six week training evolution designed to train and evaluate midshipmen as future Officers in the Marine Corps. This last summer, MIDN 1/C Karl Gee, Mitchell Cizewski, Jared Worthley, Tyler Opilka, attended and graduated OCS. 2nd Lt Ariana Parra and Grey Schultz also attended and commissioned as Marine Corps Officers shortly after graduating OCS. For six weeks, these midshipmen pushed through hours of physical training, drill, and instruction from active duty personnel in order to prove their abilities as future Marine Corps Officers. A typical day at OCS lasted from 0400-2100, with additional firewatch responsibilities from 2100-0400. During these long hours, the candidates would begin the day with physical training. After physical training and hygiene, the candidates would then have classroom instruction until lunch time. Once the morning classroom session was completed, the afternoon mostly brought extended drilling periods and discipline time from the drill instructors. MIDN 1/C Gee describes his favorite time at OCS during Field Exercise (FEX) 3, which is training for Squad Unit Leadership Evaluation (SULE) 2 in the field. Since his squad finished quickly, they returned to their campsite for dinner and had time to talk comfortably, a luxury usually not given at OCS, before another full day of training. In light of the challenging six week course, our Midshipmen believe that OCS has prepared them to lead Marines in the fleet. They were able to push their minds and bodies to earn the United States Marine patch. These gentlemen proved themselves to their peers and superiors that they are the best the Marine Corps has to offer.



MIDN 1/C Gee represents Illinois after graduating OCS with MIDN 1/C deLutio and MIDN 1/C Duncan.

## Junior Officer Cruise

This summer, Midshipman 1/C Nathan Gayford reported to Lemoore, California to take part in his final NROTC cruise: the 1/C officer cruise. As part of his cruise, MIDN Gayford joined the wardroom of F/A-18C, a squadron attached to the USS John C. Stennis. Being on an aviation cruise, MIDN Gayford was given the opportunity to participate in Search And Rescue flights and fly in an F/A-18E Super Hornet. In addition to his scheduled flights, MIDN Gayford was given the opportunity to speak to multiple officers and enlisted personnel at the Naval Air Station Lemoore. Having the opportunity to fly in an F/A-18E Super Hornet affirmed his desire to fly, especially jets. Through open discussions with active duty personnel and hands on training, MIDN Gayford gained valuable insights concerning the duties and responsibilities of an active duty Junior Officer in the aviation community, further solidifying his decision to pursue Naval aviation.

## New Student Orientation (NSO) and Indoc

On August 20th, 22 new candidates for the Navy ROTC program at the University of Illinois arrived to begin the New Student Orientation. For a week, both scholarship and college program candidates were tested mentally and physically in order to prepare these students for participation in the program. Their preparation included daily physical activity, hours of close order drill, and tests of their naval knowledge. Through this exposure, candidates "got to lead [their] peers and experience different roles and responsibilities", as explained by Navy Option MIDN 4/C Thompson. At the end of a challenging week, 19 candidates took the oath and graduated the program as Fourth Class Midshipmen. For about half of these midshipmen, NSO was not their first week of exposure to NROTC training. A couple weeks before NSO, scholarship candidates spent two weeks at the Great Lakes Naval Base for a pilot indoctrination program. Nearly 70 candidates from colleges around the nation participated in this new training. As an introduction to militarization, candidate training included drill, fire fighting, military inspections and physical activity. Marine Option MIDN 4/C Gerst, the honorary candidate for NSO who showed outstanding performance, stated "Indoc served as a big wake up call for the majority of us. They provided a great mental and physical challenge and made sure that we knew we were only getting the opportunity to start."

## CORTRAMID West

Being the most expository cruise that NROTC offers, Career Orientation Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID), is widely regarded among Midshipmen to be one of the most exciting summer cruises available. This past summer, eight Third Class and Second Class Midshipmen of the WGNB attended CORTRAMID West in San Diego, California. The structure of CORTRAMID offers a week of training in each warfare community: Surface Warfare, Submarine, Aviation, and the Marine Corps; with the goal of helping Midshipmen understand where they see their career going as future Naval Officers. During these four short weeks, Midshipmen are given their first real exposure to the active duty fleet and gain valuable insight into the everyday operations of the Navy. While attending CORTRAMID, the Midshipmen of the WGNB were given many once in a lifetime opportunities. During Marine Week, Midshipmen were allowed to trial several of the many weapon systems utilized by the Marine Corps, including the M4 rifle and M9 pistol, the M240, M249, and M2 machine guns. Other highlights of CORTRAMID West included being underway for 24 hours on an active duty Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN), a flight on board an MH-60S Seahawk and T-34 trainer aircraft, and the Infantry Immersion Trainer (IIT) combat simulator. Every midshipmen who attends CORTRAMID confirms that these experiences proved to be a fantastic exposure to the all of the warfare communities in the Navy and assisted them in deciding which community they'd like to enter.



MIDN 3/C Clemens and her squad pose with an F/A-18 at VMFAT-101 at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar (above) 19 candidates become WGNB Midshipmen at graduation (below)



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### Enlisted 3/C Cruise

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MIDN 2/C Fink had the opportunity this summer to participate on an enlisted cruise on the SSN 768 Hartford. This was a boat that participated in the 2018 ICEX and received the Battenberg Cup that year, an annual award given to the best operationally excellent boat or ship in the Atlantic Fleet. During his time on the submarine, MIDN Fink said he felt “in the way of people trying to get work done. Halls are very tight to save room so you have to squeeze past everybody and you just feel like there is nowhere you can stand that isn’t in somebody’s way”. Despite this, things improved later on: “After things had calmed down some from the initial dive and preparations, I found my running mate and a friendly LT who was willing to show me everything that was going on in the control room. I learned so much about everything over the next 8 hours that it was hard to fully comprehend it all. I started to understand how each person and section worked and communicated to move the information all to the Conning Officer. The next day I came back ready to help and learn more and ended up befriending many of the other personnel. One of my biggest takeaways from this cruise was that I learned a lot about the people. I learned about my running mate’s personal life and even about everyone in that Fire Control section. I learned about their families, hobbies, interests, reasons for being in the Navy, thoughts about Officers, etc. I learned that even though many enlisted can get a bad reputation and come from troubled backgrounds it really didn’t matter. They came to the Navy to get away from those situations and work towards a better life and that’s something I could never relate to, but definitely could appreciate”. To many midshipmen, time on a submarine passes very strangely, since there’s no sun to tell time, and someone is always up on watch and someone is always asleep. This turns many midshipmen away from the submarine community, but for those who enter it, there are many positive aspects, many of which MIDN Fink discovered: “Overall my cruise was rather pleasant despite the lack of communication with the outside world along with the sun. I learned a lot about the jobs on board as well as the people. I talked with the other midshipmen a lot through the cruise and the ones that said they hated the cruise were also those that weren’t as involved in learning. For me, after the first day I decided that trying to stay out of the way and learning nothing would make for a real long and unpleasant cruise, but by taking the opportunities to watch drills, learn different jobs, and meet active duty personnel, my attitude changed and I was able to actually enjoy my time on board. One of the highlights of my cruise was bumping into the captain while he had a rare hour of down time and getting to play, and beat, him in cribbage and talk about his experiences. Another really cool experience was getting to go above deck while we were surfaced and heading back up the coast. The fresh air was nice and at night the view was rather breathtaking. This experience has reassured me that being in the submarine force will be long hours and hard work, but with some of the best and brightest people in the fleet making it much more bearable”.

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### New Unit Staff

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This year, the WGNB is proud to welcome four new active duty staff members: Commander Jeff Martin, our new Executive Officer; LT Dan Meaney, the new Submarine Officer; LT Carolee DeArmon, the new Surface Warfare Officer; and LT Andrew Frey, the new Aviation Officer. The battalion has already gotten to know them through battalion events, but the WGNB would like to introduce them to the rest of our community through their biographies below.

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#### CMDR Jeff Martin

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Commander Martin enlisted in the United States Navy in May 1991 and was selected for the Navy’s Enlisted Commissioning Program in June 1997 to participate in the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Commander Martin graduated from Old Dominion University in May 1999 and was commissioned as a Surface Warfare Officer. Operational tours for Commander Martin include: Head of Department of Training in USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN-76), Home Made Explosives Expert with the 18th Airborne Corps – Multi – National Corps – Iraq (MNC-I), Strike Officer in Commander Amphibious Squadron TWO, Weapons Officer Department Head in USS BATAAN (LHD-5), Fire Control Officer in USS IWO JIMA (LHD-7), First Lieutenant in USS ANZIO (CG-68). He has deployed to waters of the Western Pacific, Africa, Mediterranean Sea, Arabian Gulf, Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Commander Martin’s shore tours includes serving as Commanding Officer, Naval Technical Training Center Lackland at Joint Base San Antonio, Executive Assistant at 21st Century Sailor Officer OPNAV N17, Department Head Curriculum Lead at the Center of Personal and Professional Development (CPPD), Force Management Branch Head at Commander Navy Reserve Forces Command, and Flag Aide at Navy Personnel Command. Commander Martin holds a Master’s of Science in Operations Management from the University of Arkansas and a certification as a Senior Professional in Human Resources from the Human Resource Certification Institute. His military awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (6 awards), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (3 awards), and various unit campaign and service awards. Commander Martin is married to the former Melanie R. Lindgren and have two very energetic children, Lillian (4 years of age) and Kaelyn (2 years of age).

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#### LT Dan Meaney

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LT Dan Meaney was born in Delaware and raised in the suburbs of Chicago. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with distinction in 2014 with Bachelors of Science in Mechanical Engineering. In 2015, ENS Meaney reported to the USS WEST VIRGINIA (SSBN 736) in Kings Bay, Georgia. He completed his Engineering qualifications and earned his dolphins in 2016. During his time on board he completed more than a dozen nationally directed strategic exercises, shot multiple exercise torpedos, and successfully launched three Trident D5 test missiles.

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### LT Dan Meaney (Cont.)

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Starting this Fall, LT Meaney will be teaching Introduction to Naval Engineering and will begin pursuing a Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering with a concentration in improving warhead design. He will teach Naval Weapons Systems in the Spring. LT Meaney is married to Ellie Meaney, who is a teacher at Urbana High School. They met in high school at Neuqua Valley. LT Meaney has one dog, Archie, a 135 pound Bull Mastiff. Hobbies: long distance shooting, football, and philosophy.

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#### LT Andrew Frey

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LT Andrew Frey graduated high school in Denver, IA and then went on to college at Culver-Stockton College for his first two years before transferring to Minnesota State University at Mankato. There he graduated with a B.S. Aviation with a concentration in Professional Flight. After college, he was selected for OCS in Newport, RI with his designation as Student Naval Aviator. After OCS, he attended API in Pensacola, FL before heading to VT-28 for Primary flight school Corpus Christi, TX to fly the T-34. Selected Maritime Patrol, and headed to VT-35 for Advanced training in the C-12. Earned my wings on October 13, 2014 from Corpus Christi, TX. LT Frey went on to the FRS in Jacksonville, FL to fly the P-8A at VP-30. Once he flected up with VP-10 "Red Lancers", he completed two deployments to both SEVENTH and SIXTH Fleet while making Patrol Plane Commander.


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#### LT Carolee DeArmon

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LT Carolee DeArmon was born and raised in Harrisburg, IL. A WGNB alumni, she earned a Bachelor of Science in Integrative Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and commissioned as a Surface Warfare Officer in 2013. Upon commissioning, she reported to the USS Rodney M Davis (FFG 60) in Everett, WA as the Communications Officer. LT DeArmon also served as the Main Propulsion Assistant for the Iron Warriors (Littoral Combat Ship Crew 111) on USS Freedom (LCS 1) in San Diego, CA; on USS Fort Worth (LCS 3) in Singapore; and on USS Detroit (LCS 7) in Mayport, FL. She is excited to be serving as the Surface Warfare and Alpha Company Adviser at her Alma mater and looks forward to contributing to the success of the NROTC program.

This fall, on Saturday, 13 October, the WGNB will hold an Alumni Tailgate for the Homecoming game against Purdue. Relive your WGNB days with old classmates and enjoy some good food!

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