Major Benjamin Held

Major Benjamin Held, the Marine Officer Instructor (MOI) of the WGNB, was promoted to the rank of Major on 05 October, 2018. The ceremony took place outside the Armory at the flagpole, where unit staff members, friends, family, and members of the WGNB came together to see Major Held be honored and pinned. As Master Sergeant Taylor read the citation, Major Held’s wife and two sons pinned on his new rank insignia. Major Held was honored by Captain Corapi at the conclusion of the ceremony, describing Major Held’s commitment to the WGNB and outstanding performance as the MOI on staff. The WGNB will be sad to see him leave the unit after this year, but congratulates Major Held on his promotion and looks forward to sending him back to the fleet after this year!

Major Held is pinned by his children and wife.

Staff Sergeant Johnathan Sutton

On 05 October 2018, MECEP Johnathan Sutton was promoted to the rank of Staff Sergeant at the Armory flagpole. To show our support, members of the unit along with unit staff came out to witness the citation reading and pinning, and to congratulate him after the ceremony. Master Sergeant Taylor read his citation as his wife and mother pinned on his rank. The ceremony concluded with a few congratulatory remarks from MAJ Held. The WGNB is proud to congratulate Staff Sergeant Sutton on his promotion and looks forward to commissioning him in the spring!

Service Selection

Every year, First Class Navy Options receive their service selection for the community they will enter after graduating and commissioning as officers in the United States Navy. This year, our service selection event was postponed several times, but eventually the event took place on 22 October at Joe’s Brewery in Champaign. Wearing their favorite Hawaiian shirts, it was a day in history for the WGNB, as both MIDN 1/C Audrey Duncan and MIDN 1/C Paul DeLutio received their selection as Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) Officers! Though MIDN Duncan could not physically attend the event, she received her choice via FaceTime and a cardboard cut-out of her head. Following the EOD selectees, MIDN 1/C Nathan Gayford and MIDN 1/C Paul McClanahan received their selections to be pilots! To end the selection announcements, current Battalion Commander MIDN 1/C Matthew Mah received his selection to be a Naval Flight Officer! These midshipmen have worked hard to earn their selections. Their hard work and leadership has prepared them to enter the fleet in the spring and the WGNB is very proud of them. Congratulations to our First Class Midshipmen!

1st Lt. William Sommerhof

23 October marked the anniversary of the death of WGNB alum 1st Lt. William Sommerhof, who was killed in the Beirut bombing 35 years ago. 1st Lt. Sommerhof graduated from the University of Illinois in 1980 and became an Infantry Officer that year. 1st Lt. Sommerhof deployed to Beirut in May of 1983, and made the ultimate sacrifice five months later. The WGNB honors his memory as an alum of our unit and as a Marine Corps Officer.

Boeing Visit

Organized by Flight-Option Lab MIC, MIDN 1/C Paul McClanahan, all midshipmen interested in flying had the opportunity to visit Boeing in St. Louis to learn more about their aircraft production and company. This trip included a tour of the history of Boeing as well as a tour of the F/A-18 production line. Marine-Option Midshipman 3/C DeTulleo explained, “It was interesting to see them before they’re finished and flying...I’d recommend the trip for potential aviators or engineers”. Not only did midshipmen get to see the work of Boeing, but also meet the people behind the company. This included Rear Admiral Jeffrey Jones who was able to speak about his experience in the Navy as well as Boeing, and a tour guide who served as a E-7 in the Marine Corps.

Midshipmen pose with Mike Ryan, a former Marine and currently in Global Sales and Marketing.

This fall, on Saturday, 03 November, the WGNB will host a Dads’ Weekend Tailgate for the game against Minnesota. Come enjoy some good food before going to the game! Our tailgates are located on the north side of Grange Grove (above) and begin at 0800. We look forward to seeing you there!

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