**MIDN 1/C Todd: Officer Cruise**

This summer, Midshipman 1/C Brian Todd reported to Coronado, California to take part in his final NROTC cruise: the 1/C officer cruise. As part of his cruise, MIDN Todd joined the wardroom of HSM-41, a fleet replacement squadron of MH-60 Romeo Helicopters out of Naval Air Station North Island. Being an aviation cruise, MIDN Todd was given the opportunity to take control of the MH-60 and practice taking off and holding the aircraft in a hovering position. MIDN Todd had initially been uncertain if he wanted to pursue the option to select helicopters, however after the cruise MIDN Todd was certain that piloting helicopters was the right choice for him. In addition to his scheduled flights, MIDN Todd was given the opportunity to speak to multiple officers and enlisted personnel from multiple commands at the Naval Air Station. Through open discussions with active duty personnel and hands on training, MIDN Todd 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.

**MIDN 2/C Gregson and MIDN 3/C Gayford: CORTRAMID West and East**

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, 3/C and 2/C Midshipmen of the WGB attended both CORTRAMID West in San Diego, California and CORTRAMID East in Norfolk, Virginia. The structure of CORTRAMID offers a week of training in each warfare community: Surface Warfare, Submarine, Aviation, and the Marine Corps. MIDN 2/C Austin Gregson attended CORTRAMID West along with MIDN 2/C Sam Beasley. As a Marine Option Midshipman, MIDN Gregson noted that Marine Week was his favorite training he experienced at CORTRAMID West. During Marine week, MIDN Gregson was given the opportunity to trial several of the many weapon systems utilized by the Marine Corps, including the M240 machine gun, the MK 19 belt-fed grenade launcher, and the SASR sniper rifle. Other highlights of CORTRAMID West included the Damage Control simulator during Submarine Week, a flight on board the V-22 Osprey, and the Infantry Immersion Trainer (IIT) combat simulator. At CORTRAMID East, MIDN 3/C Nathan Gayford also enjoyed Marine Week the most. MIDN Gayford enjoyed the structure of Marine Week and felt it gave him a strong grasp on the Marine Corps as a community. MIDN Gayford mentioned that, “CORTRAMID was great because it gave [him] a unique opportunity to experience many different military communities that most military personnel never get to experience.” Regardless if a Midshipman went East or West, CORTRAMID proved to be a fantastic exposure to all the warfare communities in the Navy and aided many Midshipmen in determining which community is right for their Naval careers.

**MIDN 2/C Paulson: Enlisted Cruise**

Understanding the perspective of Enlisted personnel is an essential part of being an Officer. The aim of the NROTC Enlisted Cruise is to expand on that perspective. MIDN 2/C Nick Paulson was aboard the USS Princeton, CG-59, where he was underway for three weeks off the coast of Hawaii. He was fortunate enough to take part in The Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) 2016. With 45 surface ships, 5 submarines, 25,000 personnel, and over 20 different countries participating, RIMPAC is the world’s largest maritime warfare exercise. MIDN Paulson recalled some of the major highlights of the exercise, including, launching a harpoon, firing the five inch guns, and a Vessel Board Search and Seizure Exercise (VBSR) where US Navy personnel practiced boarding a Chinese surface vessel. MIDN Paulson realized during his cruise that, “you get out what you put into [your time in the Navy]...there are cool things about everything you can do in the Navy...there’s something to enjoy about any role you play.”

**MIDN 2/C Leigh: Mountain Warfare**

Rugged terrain, survival training, and classroom sessions with Gunnery Sergeants all came together during MIDN 2/C Chris Leigh’s summer cruise at Mountain Warfare School near Bridgeport, California. Over the course of ten days, MIDN Leigh worked together with fellow Marine Option NROTC and USNA midshipmen from across the country to enhance their survival prowess and become proficient in woodland land navigation as well as complete challenging hikes at elevation. MIDN Leigh enjoyed the opportunity to meet his fellow peers and work together in survival situations.
Every summer, prospective Marines from all around the country descend on Quantico, Virginia to take part in a six-week training evolution designed to push them to their limits and mold them into future Officers in the Marine Corps. This last summer, MIDN 1/C Charles Gallagher attended and graduated OCS. For six weeks, MIDN Gallagher grinded through hours of physical training, drill, and instruction from active duty personnel in order to reach the high standards the Marine Corps maintains for its officers. MIDN Gallagher noted that a typical day at OCS lasted from 0400-2100, with additional fire-watch 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. Through the duration of OCS, MIDN Gallagher held different billets depending on the week. As a Platoon Sergeant, MIDN Gallagher was to ensure that his squad leaders were always focused and working toward the task at hand. As a Squad Leader, MIDN Gallagher was mainly responsible for the accountability of all his men. During his time as a Squad Leader, MIDN Gallagher led his squad through what he considers to be his favorite day from OCS: Small Unit Leadership Evaluation Day (SULE). SULE day began with a ten mile hike from 0300-0600. Over the course of the day the candidates traveled over 30 miles while humping 45 lbs of gear. This day was a highlight for MIDN Gallagher because he said it gave him the opportunity to test his abilities as a leader, to stay positive and effective even through the most challenging adversity. Reflecting on OCS, MIDN Gallagher recalled the words of his Platoon Commander, Captain Roubal: “If you look broken, you might as well be.” In light of the challenging six-week course MIDN Gallagher completed, he believes that these words accurately depict the mental fortitude needed to succeed at OCS and by extension, the United States Marine Corps.

New Student Orientation 2016

The final week of summer before classes begin at The University of Illinois marks a week of high-intensity training for prospective WGNB Midshipmen. The New Student Orientation (NSO), known locally as Midshipman Orientation Program (MOP) is a completely Midshipmen organized event designed to challenge and prepare recent high school graduates for life in the Naval ROTC Battalion. The week includes briefs about warfare communities and life as a Midshipman from unit staff members and current battalion members, time on the drill deck for close-order drill instruction, and other events including swim qualifications and a campus tour. Both the Company Staff and Training Staff began preparations for this week in January of 2016, finally culminating in the execution of the event over six months later. Unique to this MOP, Chief Petty Officer Cragin from Great Lakes Naval Base joined the Midshipmen training staff for the week, assisting with drill instruction and the enforcement of standard Naval regulations. With the help of Chief Petty Officer Cragin, the week was a success, graduating over twenty new Midshipmen into The WGNB. Special recognition should be directed to MIDN 4/C Wolf as Honor Candidate of MOP 2016 and MIDN 3/C Audrey Duncan as Honor Midshipman Instructor of MOP 2016. Both of these individuals gave a maximum effort throughout the week, being prepared and motivated everyday, and staying focused on their individual roles during MOP. Recognition should also be directed toward MIDN 1/C Grey Schultz as MOP Midshipman In Charge and MIDN 1/C Charles Gallagher as Company 1st Sergeant. MIDN Schultz and Gallagher led the Company Staff and Training Staff respectively. Their leadership and guidance both made this year’s MOP a huge success.
Spring Commissioning

In the Spring of 2016, The WGNB commissioned its latest group of officers into the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps. With an impressive variety of service selections, the Spring Commissioning Class of 2016 included:

ENS Sheryl Acuna-Surface Warfare  
ENS Scott Van Hoy-Aviation  
ENS Josh Lanzona-Submarine Warfare  
2nd LT Luke Stockman-Marine Corps  
2nd LT David Mielnik-Marine Corps  
2nd LT Josh Ng-Marine Corps

The undying perseverance and dedication of the previously mentioned individuals will continue to serve them well through their time of service in the United States Fleet. The WGNB wishes them well and looks forward to their future accomplishments and success as Naval and Marine Corps Officers.

[Images of officers in uniform]

2nd LT Stockman (above).  
ENS Acuna (above).  
ENS Van Hoy (above).  
2nd LT Ng (above).  
2nd LT Mielnik (above).  
ENS Lanzona (above).

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