



The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
 Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps



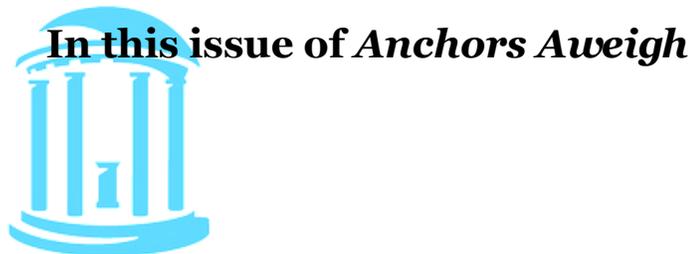
# ANCHORS AWEIGH

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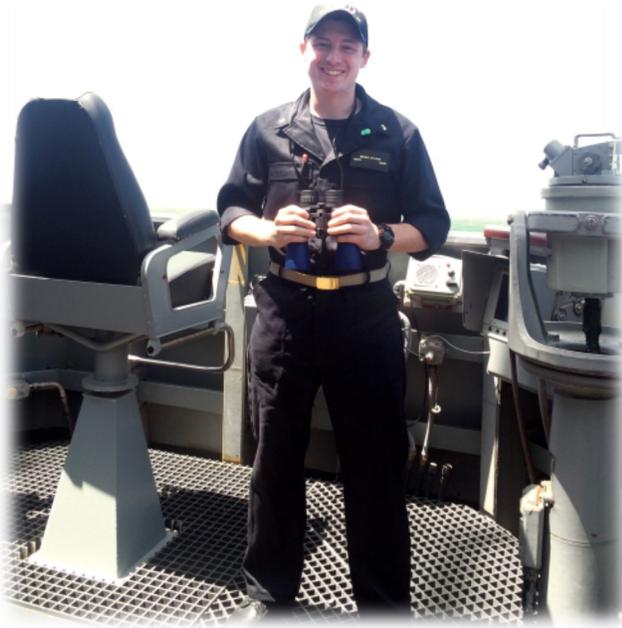


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## 2/C Surface Cruise To The Azore Islands

### MIDN 2/C Schmid



I was lucky enough to get my ideal cruise assignment this summer: a surface cruise on a Guided Missile Destroyer, the quintessential small boy experience. I was assigned to the USS Bainbridge (DDG-96) from May 6 to May 17; so I had to move most of my exams forward to even make it to the ship on time. Normally, having to take exams in any less time than the full two-week designated testing period would be the last thing I would choose to do, but Bainbridge was getting underway for an eight-month deployment, and I wanted to be there.

I arrived in Norfolk in the early afternoon on the sixth of May, and the other four midshipmen and I actually got on board in the evening. We took a quick tour of the ship, which is less than ten years old, and were given our rack assignments. Finally, we were instructed to be in our summer whites on the bridge in the morning to watch the sea and anchor detail and kick off our cruise.

There are few things more impressive than the incredible synergy evident in the bridge and piloting teams during a special evolution such as leaving a port. The pilothouse is a scene of tightly controlled chaos, with every bit of information being fed in to the receptacle that is the Officer of the Deck, the man or woman immediately responsible for the safety of the ship. I was impressed from the moment the evolution began straight through until they secured for the open ocean.

I was attached to the CM division aboard Bainbridge, which is responsible for aiming and launching Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles, or TLAMs. I would stand two sections of three-hour watch every day, usually from 0300-0600 and 1500-1800, with the Fire Controlmen. Additionally, I would stand a four-hour bridge watch from 1800-2200 each evening with a junior officer training to be a Conning Officer. During the day I would visit a different section of the ship such as Engineering, SONAR, or Deck, and learn a little bit about what the enlisted Sailors do in each of those divisions or departments. Our transatlantic crossing passed in short order, as I was kept busy for the duration of the voyage.

The most unique part of my cruise was definitely receiving three days of liberty in the Portuguese Azore islands. The Azores are a subtropical, volcanic archipelago about 300 miles off the coast of Portugal, and possess a rich and unique culture. I was lucky enough to experience the excellent local cuisine, explore the island of São Miguel, and even got a chance to catch a surf lesson and go canyoneering on the final day of our port call.

Overall, my summer cruise was a fast-paced and intense learning experience that only served to heighten my motivation to join the black shoe Navy.

## Marine Mountain Warfare Summer Training

### MIDN 2/C Leiva

This summer, my 2/C cruise was conducted at the Mountain Warfare Training Center in Bridgeport, CA. Though this is the shortest cruise offered through the NROTC program, a mere ten days, each day of training was jam-packed. In order to better prepare midshipmen for Officer Candidate School (OCS), MWTC has an OCS atmosphere, meaning things could be very strict.

The first two days at Bridgeport were reserved for several classes (i.e. hiking tips, how billets were ran, etc.) and getting acclimated to the elevation of 6,700 feet. After the first two days, midshipmen began the hands on training. We traveled everywhere on foot. For the first few hikes, we were only required to carry an assault pack with rock climbing gear, Kevlar, food, and a water source. Two days of training were committed to tying knots, rock climbing, stream and gorge crossing, and repelling. It was incumbent upon each midshipman to learn and remember how to tie the knots we learned, because those same knots were used during the rock-climbing and repelling evolutions.

After these awesome days of training we began our four days surviving in the mountains. We hiked two miles up the mountain the first day and then received classes on water purification, building traps and snares, as well as building survival shelters. Each night we spent in the field we had to connect with three or more others and build survival shelters for the night using the gear we had and what nature had to offer. The second day we hiked just over two more miles up the mountain and received classes on day and night land navigation and were given points to plot and locate. The third day was a training evolution that no other group of midshipmen had done before: a hike up to 11,000 feet. This movement took just over three hours and pushed many of my fellow midshipmen to their limits.

Reaching the top of the mountain was an experience unlike any other. After we came back down the mountain to where we started that day, we set up survival shelters for the night. The next morning we hiked back down to base camp and took much-needed showers. The last day, we were offered the opportunity to talk to the AMOIs on a personal level (which was a crazy experience after getting constructively yelled at for several days). MWTC was an incredible experience that taught me many life lessons and was a great opportunity to bond with my peers who I will be going to OCS with this coming summer. I look forward to sharing that experience with you all next year!



## **2/C SWO Nuke Cruise**

### **MIDN 2/C Smith**

After traveling for 25 hours, I reached my destination in Perth, Australia to embark on the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) for my 2/C SWO Nuke cruise. I chose this cruise due to there not being an option for a 2/C Aviation cruise and rationalized that being aboard an aircraft carrier would be the next best thing. The Carl Vinson was returning home to San Diego from its station in the Persian Gulf taking part in Operation Inherent Resolve. I jumped at the chance to fly to Australia and board the Carl Vinson and disembark in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii after 27 days onboard.

This cruise was incredible because I was able to do so many different things while underway. The saying that an aircraft carrier is basically a floating city is completely true. There was always something different for me to experience, all I had to do was go out and look for it. The crew was fine with helping any of us Midshipman when we asked for it.

I was attached to the Nuclear Division and followed around a Machinist Mate who turned out to be a great running mate. He gave me my initial tour of the ship, but an aircraft carrier is huge and I would be hopelessly lost until I learned my way around. Being down in the reactor spaces was a unique experience for me. I was able to observe everyone in the reactor spaces getting ready for Operational Reactor Safety Evaluations. Having the chance to observe the reactor team drill after drill and to see how everyone reacted by accomplishing their specific tasks was a great opportunity that few Midshipman have. The Nuclear Division was very inviting and I enjoyed speaking to everyone from the salty Chiefs to the brand new Sailors that were just learning what their jobs had in store for them.

We ate lunch with CAPT Thomas several times to discuss how we were enjoying our time onboard and if there was anything that he could do to improve our cruises. After talking with CAPT Thomas on the bridge and finding out that I wanted to be a Naval Aviator, he personally took me to the Stingers' (VFA-133) ready room so that I would have additional opportunities to hang out with the pilots. The Stingers adopted me and I spent the second half of my cruise with them. From this point on, I was doing everything that I had hoped I would get to do when I decided I wanted to go on an aircraft carrier. I was given a flight suit to borrow and wear around the ship much to the enjoyment of the other squadrons and myself. Being able to interact with pilots, observe landings from the LSO deck, and shadow Plane Captains on the flight deck was amazing. I even got to watch Foc'sle Follies which gave me a great insight into the culture of Naval Aviation to say the least.

There were several events that the Midshipmen also took part in. We were able to get pistol qualified—I earned sharpshooter—and we also got to shoot a M2 .50cal, M240B, and a M16A2. While on the way to Pearl Harbor we crossed the Equator meaning around 300 people, including us four Midshipmen, got to go through the Crossing-the-Line Ceremony. We started the day as Pollywogs and ended it as Trusty Shellbacks. The ceremony is sailing tradition and I am glad that we had the chance to do it.

This cruise was an amazing opportunity for the other Midshipmen and myself. The multitude of things we got to experience and learn were great for our development as future Officers. Nowhere else can a 20-year-old stand 10 yards away from an F/A-18C as it goes into afterburner and gets launched off the deck of an aircraft carrier than in the US Navy.

**2/C SWO Nuke Cruise (Cont.)**  
**MIDN 2/C Smith**



MIDN 2/C Smith onboard the USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) during his 2/C SWO Nuke Cruise

## 4/C Experience At NSO

### MIDN 4/C Barringer

Coming from Army JROTC in a small town high school, NROTC New Student Orientation (NSO) was a huge adjustment for me. Although, it was not as difficult for me as it was for those with no sort of military background. I found that although there were minor -and even a few major- differences, the organizations were largely similar.

While at NSO, I found that drill was similar with the only differences being in the style and precision of execution. Physical Training (PT) is more intense in the Navy, but I believe that is partly due to the difference from high school to college. Military bearing and ceremony also have a much higher focus in the Navy.



At NSO, I met several people who have already or will become close friends of mine as we work toward becoming officers in the Navy or Marine Corps. We have learned to work together and help each other, and did so very quickly. This is, I believe, a direct result of being thrown directly into NSO with no warning or advanced preparation.

In addition to building relationships, we worked on team building to overcome obstacles in a Leadership Reaction Course (LRC). At each obstacle, a new leader was selected to be briefed by an Active Duty Officer; then he or she would brief the team and accomplish a goal related to an obstacle. Following successful or failed completion of the objective, our teams were provided valuable insight by the officers and by our peers. I learned here that preplanning is essential to a successful mission.

NSO was, aside from the strict military environment, a very enjoyable experience. It was very similar to the camping I did as a Boy Scout, with the added elements of: waking early, eating MRE's (Meal-Ready-to-Eat), an intense drill competition, a rugged PT competition, an invaluable LRC, and a packed and sweaty van ride home. These are the essential elements to building a great orientation program.

All in all, I believe that NSO is a highly valuable experience, one that I will never forget and one that I will work to ensure the next three classes of Midshipmen get to experience as well. It taught me basic military values and principles, helped me to build new relationships, and most importantly, disciplined me just in time for school at the Chapel Hill.

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