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My focus for the 2018 Fall Semester was to maximize the training value of our program. We achieved this by refocusing our efforts on practical training application for both Navy and Marine Options. Since training time here is limited, we concentrated on developing our leadership skills with Fleet-centric applications.

The Marine Option training saw a significant shift for incoming 4/C midshipmen. Their PQS (personal qualifications standards) were overhauled from previous semesters to focus more on practicum that will be seen at Officer Candidate School during the 1/C summer. These topics included 5 Paragraph orders, SULE, and Marine Corps history.

On the Navy side, we emphasized leadership skills that translate directly to junior officer development, specifically as a division officer. We have been fortunate to hear from our senior active duty on what it takes to make a strong division officer.

As an entire battalion, we have taken on the challenge of operating with more independence from the active duty. This process has been painful but rewarding. We have made many mistakes, however, we are better prepared for the fleet because of them. Underclassmen have taken on more responsibility as more tasks are pushed down our chain of command, allowing for earlier growth in the ROTC pipeline.

Overall, I think the battalion is moving in a positive direction, and we are better prepared for the fleet as we go through the program.
INTRODUCING LT MORENO

This semester the UNC NROTC Battalion gained Lieutenant Christopher Moreno as the new Submarine Officer.

From the small farming town of Rush Springs, Oklahoma, to Chapel Hill, I’ve shared multiple awesome experiences with some wonderful people. I’m honored that the Navy ultimately led me to Chapel Hill to become a Tar Heel!

My journey began back in 2006, enlisting as an Electrician’s Mate. After much consideration, my decision to enlist stemmed from a wanting to serve; close family and friends served before me, and I saw the positive impact that it made on their lives. I ultimately completed Navy Nuclear A’ School and Power School in 2007. During ‘A’ school I applied and was selected to attend the United States Naval Academy, later graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Naval Architecture.

After completion of Navy Nuclear Training (as an Ensign), I reported aboard USS WYOMING (SSBN 742) in Kings Bay, GA. During my tour, I completed four strategic deterrent patrols, serving as the Electrical Assistant, Damage Control Assistant, Tactical Systems Officer, and Ship’s Diving Officer.

Following my JO tour on the WYOMING, I reported to Amphibious Squadron THREE (CPR-3) located in San Diego, CA. With CPR-3 I embarked the USS AMERICA (LHA-6) and served as the Submarine Operations Officer and Future Operations Assistant. This tour involved a deployment to Fifth Fleet and Seventh Fleet areas of responsibility.

Overall, I’ve been fortunate to experience both surface and submarine life. If I were to give you one piece of advice after all of my travels, I would tell you to devote time to building friendships. Lasting friendships not only help you with your career, but more importantly ensure an enjoyable life! I’m looking forward to this opportunity and becoming a part of the UNC family.
BREACHING THE SUMMIT

On October 27th, the former Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) and Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps (SMMC) honored the Battalion with a talk on leadership in the military. Master Chief Petty Officer West and Sergeant Major Barrett shared various lessons from their collective 65 years of military experience to help us improve our leadership abilities. This panel was an incredible chance for us as midshipmen to learn from a different perspective about what true leadership entails. While we often have opportunities such as the annual Alumni Panel to talk with high-ranking officers about what makes a good leader, we rarely get an opportunity to hear about leadership from a senior enlisted perspective. I personally also appreciated the candor from both the MCPON and the SMMC. They did not sugarcoat their experiences and were especially brutal when tearing apart the ineffective leadership styles they observed in their careers. They spoke openly and honestly about their experiences, both good and bad, and gave practical advice on how to improve our own styles for ourselves and those we command. It was an incredibly inspirational talk and we are very grateful that Master Chief Petty Officer West and Sergeant Major Barrett took time to visit the Battalion.

CAPITOL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

This past October, six members of the UNC Battalion attended the Capitol Leadership Conference at George Washington University in Washington, DC. Attending not only allowed these six to pursue becoming better future Naval Officers, but also provided an excellent opportunity to network with other Battalions. Midshipmen came from all over the country to discuss the theme of the conference: military ethics of the past, present, and future. Over the span of two days, the midshipmen learned from several great leaders including the former Vice CNO, Ret. Admiral Michelle Howard, and the former Supreme Allied Commander, Ret. General Wesley Clark. In addition to discussing military academics, they presented major challenges in their careers and the lessons learned from them. At the conclusion of the conference, the 150 midshipmen in attendance participated in a war simulation. The simulation centered around a scenario in the South China Sea and required midshipmen to use the principles and experiences learned from the conference to work together and achieve their given objectives. Outside of the conference, midshipmen were able to explore the nation’s capital and see sights such as the White House, Capitol Building, and Lincoln Memorial. The last day wrapped up the trip with a tour of Arlington National Cemetery and a somber reminder of the sacrifices of past and present Americans. Experiencing events like these provide midshipmen with great lessons as future Naval Officers, and are truly invaluable.
THE IMPORTANCE OF WAR LITERATURE IN OFFICER DEVELOPMENT

MIDN 3/C Perez

This semester I had the opportunity to enroll in PWAD/English 161: Literature of War from World War I to the 21st Century. This class introduces students to war literature and film in an effort to explore what these works can teach us about war and how service members experienced war environments. The course focused primarily on the role of storytelling in understanding human experiences, the impact of trauma on an individual’s perception of the world, the concept of moral injury, and literature’s role in connecting civilians with combat veterans.

In an effort to understand these concepts, we read books and watched films that covered World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War and the more recent conflicts in the Middle-East. These included The Soldiers’ Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War by Samuel Hynes, The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien, All Quiet on the Western Front by Erich Maria Remarque, director Stanley Kubrick’s Paths of Glory, short stories by Marine Corps veterans Phil Klay and Karl Marlantes, and much more.

Within this class, students are challenged to engage in a critical analysis of the assigned readings. Class material focuses on the experiences of individual service members and highlights the emotional toll that war has on both enlisted and officers alike. Readings ranged from political commentaries on Vietnam to surrealist poetry written about experiences in Afghanistan. Discussions explored topics such as coping mechanisms, the concept of courage, and the importance of comradery among service members. My time in this course has enriched my basic understanding of major world conflicts from a distant historical approach to a highly personal one.

I strongly encourage my fellow midshipmen to enroll in this class as a way to further their development as future Marine Corps or Naval Officers. As you progress through the course you will gain a greater appreciation of the sacrifice the men and women of our armed services have made, as well as a deeper understanding of war. You will also begin to understand why a true war story is beyond telling. For example, in the novel The Things They Carried, author Tim O’Brien says that “A thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth...A true war story is never about war. It’s about sunlight, love, and memory, sorrow”. If this quote confuses you, take it as a sign that this class is necessary for your development as a leader of Sailors and Marines. After taking this class, try reading a book from the CNO or CMC’s recommended reading list. You will be able to better understand the book’s content and absorb its wisdom.
OFFICERSHIP IS INHERENTLY ETHICAL

MIDN 3/C Hornback

It is difficult to overestimate the place that ethics has in the profession we have chosen. As future officers, we will be handling the greatest weapon systems ever known to man. We will be leading Sailors and Marines who will rely on us, look up to us, and base their own actions off of ours. We will be making decisions that will affect other people’s lives. I cannot think of better reasons to critically examine our own moral development.

Ethical philosophy is the study of right and wrong, good and bad as it pertains to the human character and our actions. It is an ancient subject that has been discussed and debated for thousands of years by great minds such as Aristotle, Plato, and Kant. Ethics has had a place in society and civilization since the beginning of known history. This is because ethical concepts are primarily applied to human interactions: ethics guides the way that we treat others.

As officers, we work with people. How we treat others is important, whether the person is one of our Sailors or Marines or a foreign combatant. We have a responsibility to our people to lead them in their daily tasks, inspire them to represent the United States military well, and to treat them justly.

We also have a responsibility to carry out the mission. We must make ethical decisions concerning the just use of force. We should evaluate the ethics of decisions and orders we receive from our superiors. These evaluations are not easy, but we are obligated to use our education and experience to lead our shipmates to the right course of action.

In virtually every aspect of life as a leader in the military, ethics is at the forefront. Ethical action is something we must study, a habit we must cultivate, and a muscle we need to develop. Making the right decision isn’t as simple as relying on intuition. If it was, people would never make bad decisions. Reading philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Bentham, and Mill challenges us to think about what is truly the source of ethical reasoning. Studying the actions of great military leaders teaches us what others have done in the past to succeed, while examining the failures of others – and ourselves – helps us consider what our actions should have been, and how we should proceed in the future. Ethical development is a lifelong process that requires self-reflection and constant cultivation. Just as we must be dedicated to improving our minds and bodies, we must be dedicated to fine-tuning our moral compasses.

To operate as a successful and just military, we need ethics. We need individuals who are strong-willed, think critically, and question decisions. Only with these kinds of people can we truly lead this country’s military to be an actor of good.
The human body is a phenomenal piece of equipment. It is superbly strong and resilient. Our minds can be trained to ignore discomfort and push the body to perform at higher levels. However, a majority of people shy away from discomfort and perform at low levels.

Here in the UNC NROTC unit, we don’t stay comfortable. We know that our nation will call upon us with duties that are physically intensive. We recognize that self-discipline is imperative to operating as a successful military officer in the contemporary global arena. This is why we take our physical fitness program so seriously. The Chief of Naval Personnel and the Commandant of the Marine Corps have spoken about the need for a culture of fitness in the fleet; we have taken it to heart.

A brief glimpse into our program reveals a healthy gradient of fitness. The 4/C MIDN are at or below the standard and the 1/C MIDN well exceed the highest standard. This is important because it shows that our unit is creating an environment that yields improvement regardless of the physical capabilities of each individual midshipmen. Our Battalion PT and Bull Dog PT plans are rigorous. Our remedial PT is efficient and effective. We set a solid foundation for high performance fitness.

Last semester, the unit started midshipmen-run specialized PT sessions. We now offer extra group swim workouts as well as hand to hand grappling workouts. Specialized workouts are a great way to develop skills that exert the body in ways other than pushups, situps, pull-ups, and running. They are also a phenomenal way to increase unit comradery.

Before college, I had never run an official marathon. Since coming into this unit, I have competed in a marathon race every semester, for seven marathons total. This semester I was able to land a spot in the Marine Corps Marathon. Earlier this year, a group of fellow midshipmen and I grinded through the 24-hour fitness evolution known as the Churchill Challenge. I was also part of the original team our unit sent to the Bataan Death March. This past year, UNC Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC sent a total of seven teams to participate in the Bataan Memorial Death March. Our midshipmen have placed in top races like the Spartan Race, the Green Beret Challenge, the Tar Heel 10 Miler, the Carrie Shumaker Race and many more. We foster a culture of high performance fitness.

The habit of excelling beyond the limits of comfort is part of what makes our unit so successful. We thrive in the physical grind but the lessons learned extend into our personal and professional lives as well. We do more in the classroom. We do more in our unit. We do more. Period.
PQS was a trial the 4/C had to pass in order to truly become a part of the battalion. We first heard of the process at NSO. PQS consists of nine chapters of basic information about the Navy and Marine Corps that all midshipmen need to know, ranging from knowing rank insignia to exactly how many Tomahawks an Ohio-class guided missile submarine is capable of carrying. Each week, MIDN must collect signatures verifying they have learned the assigned information and then pass an “End-of-Card” that summarizes the information for that week’s chapter. At the end of the nine chapters, 4/C must pass an oral board that tests them on everything they have learned. A rite of passage for all UNC midshipmen, PQS can be a daunting task. It teaches the importance of teamwork and time management; both are required to meet deadlines. At that time, PQS seemed like an endless challenge that would shake each midshipman to their very core.

As Week One kicked off, we began gathering signatures. Each week was an inner battle of striving to get ahead in the PQS material while balancing my workload of STEM classes and gen-eds. At first, balancing the two seemed fairly simple. I would memorize some general orders, maybe learn the chain of command, then work up the courage to ask an upperclassman for a signature. I would do that a few more times, and eventually I’d feel confident enough to go for an End-of-Card. There was nothing quite like the rush of pride and satisfaction that surged through me when I passed the End-of-Card and someone scrawled their signature across the bottom of the PQS card. However, that bliss did not last.

My PQS studies went from smooth sailing to choppier waters around Chapters 3 and 4. One night, after completing my other academic obligations, I was up until 0300 trying to drill all the new and unfamiliar rank structures into my brain. Chapter 5 – Marine Week – hit hard. We began identifying platforms. You don’t know mental pain until you train yourself to recite all the differences between an M-4 Carbine and an M16A4 but are unable to visually distinguish between the two based on photos off the internet. Aviation Week and Surface Week has a special place in the hearts of the 4/C as well. That week, MIDN 4/C Schmidt drew ships in the Armory for hours, and MIDN 4/C Slaight and Tripp spent some quality time studying in the hallway. All nine weeks seemed to drag and fly by at the same time. Before we knew it, oral boards were a week away.

With Carolina blue Battalion PT shirts and challenge coins – physical representations of our earned membership in the Battalion – as the grand trophies, we were ready to finish PQS. In the few days leading up to Oral Boards, you could probably find any 4/C in the Armory in a practice board with upperclass midshipmen or sitting in the wardroom looking extremely stressed.

The day arrived. We paced on the drill deck, nervously running through all the information we had learned and nitpicking each other’s uniforms while waiting for our names to be called to conduct the board. Finally, my name was called. It was time to drill into the board, try not to slam the door into the wall, and begin. The board was a whirlwind of reciting mission capabilities, designators, career pipelines, visually identifying aircraft, and answering bearing questions while keeping a straight face. The board felt like it lasted an eternity, but soon it was over and I drilled out of the room. After waiting for the board to count up my score for an excruciating five minutes, I was called back in. I had passed. The Battalion challenge coin and relief was mine. My shipmates had similar experiences. Seven oral boards later, and the University of North Carolina NROTC Battalion gained seven more midshipmen.
ON THE ELEVENTH OF OCTOBER, the three service branches of Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC at UNC came together to take part in a series of friendly competitions to determine who would be the Interservice Meet Champions for the 2018-2019 school year. As the defending champions, it was up to us to hold on to the title and maintain the NROTC battalion’s glory and bragging rights. The events consisted of fire team push-ups and sit-ups, max pull-ups, various relay races, dodgeball, and Ultimate Frisbee.

In the past, our lackluster performance in Ultimate Frisbee has been compensated by our outstanding physical fitness and, yet again, this held true. As a battalion, we obliterated the competition in fire team push-ups and sit-ups in both the male and female categories, the pull-ups competition, and all of the sprint relays. We took second place in dodgeball and last place in Ultimate Frisbee. Even with these minor setbacks, we still coasted into an easy first place.

Overall it was a very enjoyable experience for everyone. We always appreciate the way events such as the interservice meet allow us to build amicable relationships with our future brothers-and-sisters-in-arms.
GO HEELS GO!!

This year’s Alumni Cookout was a success! Thank you to all the UNC Alumni that came out to connect with current midshipmen and former colleagues.
Thank you to all the UNC-CH midshipmen and officers who contributed to this issue of Anchors Aweigh, including:

LT Moreno
MIDN 1/C Smith
MIDN 1/C Reagan
MIDN 2/C Antolini
MIDN 2/C Gumbel
MIDN 3/C Cataldo
MIDN 3/C Hornback
MIDN 3/C Perez
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