Anchors Aweigh
Fall Semester Issue

UNC Naval ROTC
About the Anchors Aweigh Editor:

MIDN 4/C Acton is a First Year student from Austin, Texas. This is her second semester being a part of the Tarheel Battalion. During the 2023 Spring Semester she also has the role of PQS MIC. MIDN Acton enjoys running, lifting weights, and reading in her spare time. She is also involved in the on-campus triathlon club.
Summer Cruise

Before each year of college, all UNC NROTC Midshipmen partake in Summer Training, also known as Summer Cruises. On these cruises MIDN deepen their knowledge of naval culture and learn more about the skills utilized in specific areas of the Navy and Marine Corps.
Summer Cruise, CORTRAMID 2023, Expectation versus Reality
by MIDN 3/C Hruby

1. Expectation: The officers will be too busy to engage with Midshipmen.
   Reality: I could not have been more wrong about this assumption. The majority of
   officers that I met on CORTRAMID were passionate about answering our questions.
   They were eager to learn about all of us and our career aspirations in the Navy or
   Marine Corps. I particularly enjoyed the intense Spades tournament we held during
   our underway on the USS Maryland, where we convinced several chiefs and officers
to participate.

2. Expectation: Surface warfare will be my least favorite week.
   Reality: I enjoyed surface warfare week because I got to see first-hand how different
   communities interact with each other out in the fleet. During my time underway on
   the USS Bataan (LHD 3), I was privileged to witness touch-and-go maneuvers by
   multiple Ospreys and Sea Stallions, and even returned to Norfolk in one of the Sea
   Stallions. I also enjoyed engaging with some of the enlisted crew members as they
   told us about their jobs, and even sprayed us with a fire hose.

3. Expectation: Marine week will not be as applicable to my future career as the other
   weeks.
   Reality: I was surprised to find that I learned a lot from Marine week that I will be able
   to apply to my future career in the Navy. Just as it was important for the Marine
   options to experience each of the Navy’s communities, I was glad to have more
   exposure to the careers and functions of the Marine Corps.

4. Expectation: The fleet is daunting and unfamiliar.
   Reality: Though large in numbers, the fleet is a very small world, full of mutual friends
   and familiarity. I am even more excited to enter the fleet now that I will be able to
   reunite with the friends that I made this past summer.
PQS Qualification

In order to become knowledgeable members of the UNC NROTC Battalion, 4/C Midshipmen must complete Personnel Qualification Standards or PQS. This consists of learning information that will prove vital to their careers in the Navy or Marine Corps, such as aircraft identification, the missions of the Navy, and the 10 General Orders of the Sentry. This past semester MIDN 4/C Acton and Groome successfully completed this course.
The 4/C Experience

After completing New Student Indoctrination at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Illinois, I was curious as to what the battalion would look like at the University of North Carolina. Make no mistake, I was still 100% committed to achieving my goal of serving as a United States Naval Officer. However, I was curious as to how Naval ROTC would operate.

The answer was even better than I had hoped for.

All the upperclassmen were incredibly helpful in assisting me and the other 4/C to assimilate into college culture. Completing PQS certainly had its challenges. However, it allowed me to create a stronger bond with my fellow and only other 4/C: MIDN Acton. We leaned on one another for support and, as a result, passed our final PQS boards with flying colors.

Some criticize the battalion at UNC for being too small, yet I find this to be an advantage that most programs do not have. I have the benefit of creating and maintaining a professional relationship with the 2/C and 1/C, that I have always found helpful. Whenever I had a question or needed help with a task, they were always there to lend a helping hand and provide guidance when needed.

I feel grateful that I can spend my time in college as a Midshipman at the University of North Carolina. With an excellent active-duty staff and helpful upperclassmen, it is a place where I am pushed to new limits. I would not want to call any other place my second home.

- MIDN 4/C Groome
Batallion Leadership Lab

Throughout the semester all of the members of the UNC ROTC Batallion participated in a Leadership Lab. It was held every Thursday and organized by the Fall Semester Operations Officer: MIDN 2/C Vangelopoulos. Some of the labs this past semester included paint ball, water-survival, a high ropes course, firefighting, and outdoor survival training.
Service Selection:

During fall semester the 1/C Midshipmen underwent the service selection process!

MIDN 1/C Spencer was selected to become a Submarine Officer. She will be attending Nuclear Power School post-commissioning.

MIDN 1/C Sylvia was selected to become a Naval Pilot and will be attending flight school post-commissioning.

MIDN 1/C Storch was selected to become a Naval Flight Officer and will be attending flight school post-commissioning.
Entering the NROTC program here at UNC I was torn as to which naval service I wished to be selected into. The services that I most preferred were Aviator, NFO, EOD, or SWO; but all had their perks. Having lived on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the birthplace of aviation, I was raised with a major appreciation for flight. As a part of my elementary schooling, I was taught all about aviation history and was granted the opportunity to go up in an aircraft when I turned 10 years old. There are not many things more exciting to a child than flying for the first time. I believe that this childhood experience was a significant factor in my service selection decision.

While being a part of the UNC NROTC program I was granted two extremely rewarding aviation experiences during my summer cruises.

by MIDN 1/C Sylvia, projected commissioning May 2023

The first was during CORTRAMID when VFA-103, the Jolly Rogers, took my MIDN class up in T-34s and let us fly the aircraft for a significant portion of the flight. Since this cruise took place in Norfolk, my pilot took me down to the Outer Banks where I was able to see my hometown and be seen by my high school friends who I had informed that I would be flying down the coast that afternoon.

My second, and likely most influential NROTC aviation experience, was being provided with the opportunity to travel to El Centro, California with VFA-106, the Gladiators. During this cruise I not only was able to ride in the back seat of an F-18 Super Hornet during simulated bombing escapades and low pass practice, but I also had the opportunity to work with a Dutch special forces unit who was working on getting their JTAC qualifications. This cruise was action-packed and provided me with the opportunity to live alongside the students and instructors in the VFA community. I never thought that one three-week encounter with a group of people would have such a large influence on my life and my career choice. After being taken in by the VFA-106 community and realizing how much I enjoyed this platform, I knew that being a Naval Aviator was going to be my top choice. I decided to place Student Naval Aviator as my top choice for service assignment and I am proud to say that the Navy did select me as a Student Naval Aviator. Although I knew that I would enjoy the service I was assigned to regardless, I am very grateful that the Navy decided to place me into a service that I have dreamed of being a part of for a long time. I am thrilled to begin my Aviation career upon commissioning and hope to share my experiences with the midshipmen below me in order to help guide their decision to Fly Navy!
Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball

Held on November 11, 2022
During Fall Semester, GySgt Hanson was promoted from Staff Sergeant to Gunnery Sergeant. He has been a fantastic addition to the Tarheel Battalion!

2nd Lieutenant Vaughan commissioned as a US Marine Corps officer on December 10th, 2022. He plans to continue his career in Psychological Warfare.
One thing I’ve learned throughout my experience in college and NROTC, is that it’s important to have outlets for rest, relaxation, and rejuvenation. While on the surface, ice hockey doesn’t seem inherently restful or relaxing, it has been an important escape and haven for me growing up and at UNC. Playing for the club ice hockey team at UNC has provided me with tons of opportunities I wouldn’t have had otherwise. It has allowed me to see parts of the country that I would have never visited – I probably could’ve gone without ever having stepped foot in Charleston, West Virginia. It also helps to keep me physically fit outside of Battalion PT and provides me with opportunities to grow as a leader. This past season, I served as the club president off the ice, and an alternate captain on the ice. These roles gave me the opportunity to put into practice a lot of the leadership principles that I learn in class and at leadership lab. Being a hockey player has particularly challenged my peer leadership skills, an area in which I’ve seen large personal growth since beginning college and the NROTC program. It also gives me a chance to exert energy and helps me maintain a competitiveness and desire to win that I plan to carry over into my Naval career. Ultimately, playing hockey at Carolina has been my favorite collegiate extracurricular because of the connections I’ve formed with teammates and the UNC community, its impact on my personal and professional development, and the memories I’ve made on and off the ice.
I was angry that other kids had it easier. I would complain to my dad about these perceived injustices during our drive to therapy. He had battled death for years. He survived his first brain tumor to face another, before a bout of meningitis and encephalitis left the right side of his brain guarded by skin alone, where the infected skull had been removed, and the left side of his body completely paralyzed. Upon hearing my woes, he would smile and tell me he knew something of what I felt but wondered why it mattered that other kids didn’t have crappy hips if they weren’t me. I couldn’t say why it mattered, just that it did and that my resentment was justified. Dad suggested we start running together; he said that it would do more good than moping. Even if it didn’t, it was pain that we could choose; it was pain that made us stronger. For two people who were always in pain, that felt empowering. We ran in every flavor of weather Ohio offers. Didn’t matter the conditions, Dad was wearing at least 3 layers of clothing, including a trash bag, and sweating like a mad man. He had a severe limp since he could only drag his left foot behind the right. He would limp-run his way up and down the nasty hills of the cross-country course. He didn’t care that the terrain was uneven and that if his good foot made a mistake, a fall could result in death at best and mental retardation at worst; he still ran. Moreover, he ran with a smile and grateful heart because he believed that to sweat was to live. Few things brought him that kind of joy. Watching him, I felt instant shame. I had focused on those who I believed had it better, forgetting what I had. I had armed myself with excuses and amplified my pain to avoid taking ownership of my fitness.

Today, I’m three years out from the bilateral fasciotomy that ended the nerve death which had been occurring in my legs for years, and I’m five years out from my dad’s passing. I still run, but I do more than that. I move in as many ways as I can and sweat at least once every day, because Dad was right and because movement is a blessing. Physical fitness, to me, is about capitalizing on this blessing, remembering what it means to be alive, and doing what I can to get stronger.
Special Thanks to:

- The UNC NROTC Batallion for providing photos, articles, and support.