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As the unit completes another semester, I’m happy to report that the Battalion continues to impress. The semester started very well with an orientation program for the incoming freshmen. While only the very beginning of a 4-5 year period of officer development, Orientation is an important introduction to the military and our unit. This year we incorporated nationwide adjustments to the program. Our upper class Midshipmen quickly adapted and executed great introductory training for the Fourth Class. The start of the semester also brought in two new unit staff members: LT Josh Thompson, USN, F/A-18 Pilot, who most recently came from an exchange tour with the Royal Air Force flying the Tornado jet, and Capt Jose Quezada, USMC, an Air Support Control Officer who recently came from Expeditionary Warfare School. The Battalion leadership did a superb job throughout the semester, as described in this newsletter by the Midshipmen involved. Most of what happens here, particularly what is central to our mission, is planned and executed by the Midshipmen. They set high standards for themselves, and their performance is a testament to their quest for excellence. Outstanding academic achievement continues as a trademark of the unit. Physical readiness is another important aspect of the experience. Following many challenging PT sessions, plus additional individual work, we achieved a 100% pass rate of the Navy and Marine Corps fitness tests, with a significant improvement across the board within the Battalion. A tangible result of that hard work was victory in the drill competition at Cornell, including winning the athletic competition for the fourth consecutive year and the overall champion’s trophy for the first time ever. The event is the culmination of significant effort by every member of the Battalion.

At Service Assignment in October, our graduating seniors received their initial assignments for their warfare specialties. Of the fourteen that will commission in May 2014, four will enter the Marine Corps (three Ground, one Aviation); four will enter into Surface Warfare (two into Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program [NNPP]); two into the Submarine Force; three into Naval Aviation (two Naval Flight Officers and one Naval Aviator); and one into the Nurse Corps. All look forward to their service in the Fleet.

Among the many initiatives of the Battalion leadership this past semester, I call your attention to the redesigned website, http://www.nav.rochester.edu/. Additionally, the Battalion launched a new mentoring program to aid in professional development and success throughout the daily challenges of life as a Midshipman. All in all, it has been another productive semester for NROTC Rochester.

We appreciate the continued interest and involvement of all our universities, Unit Staff, Midshipmen, alumni and friends. Meliora, ever better!

-CAPT Jeff Bartkoski, USN
Commanding Officer, NROTC Rochester
Rochester Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps is a Battalion of 70 Midshipmen from University of Rochester, Rochester Institute of Technology, St. John Fisher College, and The College at Brockport. We have an eclectic group of college students with a common goal to become officers in the Navy and Marine Corps. We are known for a vigorous officer development program that includes physical training, military science classes, rifle drill, and leadership development throughout our four to five years at college.

Every semester, Midshipmen are assigned different leadership billets within our Battalion, including Athletics Officer, Logistics Officer, Training Officer, and my position, Battalion Commander. Every position holds different responsibilities, and I can attest throughout my three years here, every position teaches you a new aspect of leadership and management of responsibility.

This semester as Battalion Commander, a major goal I had was to set a precedent of change for the better within our Battalion. As future officers, we need to start here, developing the mentality of always improving yourself and those around you. Some of the major points to reflect our success this semester include our PFA/PFT scores, being an average of Excellent for Navy and Outstanding for Marines. Our fitness tests are scored in a point system that averages a running portion and sit ups for both services, while the Navy does push-ups and the Marines do pull-ups. Our Battalion set the goal of having each person achieve a minimum of 8 hours of volunteering in the Rochester community (averaging about 530 hours for the Battalion). This semester, our volunteering hours hit a record 630 hours. These numbers solidify our mindset that community service isn’t about achieving a particular number, but about continually improving the community around us. Our Battalion also displayed overwhelming success at the Cornell University Invitational Drill Competition. We took our first ever overall first place trophy in both the rifle drill competitions and the physical competitions such as the Iron Man, swimming events, and 10K run.

These facts and figures are great to measure growth but to truly learn how to become an officer in the fleet, it takes more than just meeting Physical Training scores and doing well in competitions. What NROTC allows us to do is practice leadership skills and learn how to impact our own organization. Our Battalion holds a high performing reputation due to a hard-working group of college students and a staff of dedicated officers willing to aid in molding us into the type of leaders whom exhibit change for the better in all we do.

-MIDN 1/C Erika Gratidge, USNR
Battalion Commander, Naval ROTC Rochester
The transition to college is a big step for high school graduates to take, and schools generally attempt to ease this transition by getting the students acclimated to college life through an orientation program a week or so before school begins. The same theory applies to the NROTC new student orientation program, but for us, ice cream socials and movie nights are substituted by PT and drill practice.

Freshmen orientation at NROTCU Rochester is a 48-hour crash course in all things Navy/Marine Corps that the new 4/C should be familiar with in order to be successful in 4 years of ROTC. The bright-eyed, bushy-tailed freshmen show up ready to go on Friday afternoon, and once their swearing-in ceremony has been completed and they’ve shared one last goodbye hug with their parents, they are shipped over to the Navy Reserve Center that is used for sleeping arrangements throughout the weekend.

These activities include PT sessions, drill practice, and many, many briefs. The purpose of all of these various activities is to show the 4/C how NROTC at Rochester is conducted and introduce them to the standards that they will be held to throughout their time at college. The main theme of the weekend is that they have committed themselves to something bigger than most college freshmen dare to think about, and they will be expected to conduct themselves accordingly.

Though many of the freshmen have little or no first-hand experience with the military, the Navy and Marine Corps values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment are emphasized greatly throughout freshmen orientation. After final inspection on Sunday afternoon, the new students may be a little more tired than their civilian peers, but they will have an increased understanding of what the Navy and Marine Corps are about and they will be prepared to begin their NROTC journey.

-Article written by MIDN 3/C Lindsey Curtis
Last year, the University of Rochester NROTC Unit began a tradition to honor those lost in the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. This tradition is known as the September 11th Vigil. It consists of two MIDN standing guard besides one MIDN posting the American flag at the meridian of the Eastman Quadrangle at the University of Rochester. The three MIDN stand at attention for fifteen-minute intervals, for a total of three hours. It has a sobering effect on the campus, as students and faculty alike stop to remember the tragedy. The September 11th Vigil will be continued for years to come, serving as a powerful reminder to reflect and remember these terrible attacks.

In addition to the September 11th Vigil, our Battalion participates in an annual cadence run. The entire Battalion runs behind the American, Marine Corps, and Navy flag around campus, calling cadences early in the morning. This run is a motivating way for the Battalion to recognize September 11th. All areas of the River Campus are covered in this early morning run, including the Residential Quad, Susan B. Anthony, and both Hill Court and Jackson Court. Even Southside (also known as GLC) is covered in this run for remembrance.

-Article written by MIDN 1/C Catherine Vecere
For the third year in a row, Naval ROTC Rochester hosted the Warrior Day competition with Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC. As with the previous years, the focus was taking home the Warrior Day trophy by having each ROTC branch compete against each other in physical events to get as many points as possible. As the returning champions, the Navy showed up to defend their title, and they did. Winning kickball, football, Jell-O eating, and soccer, it was a near shut-out. The only lost event was the tug of war to Army, who finished second overall. Air Force scored the lowest sum of points possible by placing last in all events, but still had fun doing it. The games are interrupted half way through for hotdogs and burgers provided by each unit and cooked by the staff. This late lunch is followed by the cutting and consumption of cake. The lunch break provides people the opportunity to talk and get to know individuals from other branches and build knowledge of what the other units are like. After lunch, the games continue until the closing ceremony when the Battalion Commander for the Navy, Midshipman 1/C Gratidge, announces the winner. MIDN 3/C Withiam, when asked why events like this are important, said, “[these events] help build the friendliness between the units and branches as a whole. It also provides us the opportunity to realize we are all equal and not one branch better than the other. We are all fighting for same thing.” Friendly competition aside, the purpose of the Joint ROTC Warrior day is to build a friendship with the differing branches that rarely intermingle in the college environment. This develops a sense of respect and good faith in the fellow branches, which is vital in today’s military where most missions are joint operations involving the Navy, Marine Corps, Army, and Air force.

Article written by MIDN 2/C Robert Wieber
MELIORA WEEKEND

Midshipmen speak with former SECDEF Robert Gates.

MIDN Dudek poses with former SECDEF Gates.

Midshipmen speak with LT Thompson in the unit during the Open House.

Meliora Weekend was an incredibly busy and exciting weekend for NROTC Rochester. On this four-day homecoming weekend, many of the Midshipmen were in the presence of very notable figures within our armed forces. Starting with the open house alumni reception, RADM Duryea ’83 (UR) paid a visit to his alma mater here at the University of Rochester. Through his impressive career, RADM Duryea has held command of the USS FLORIDA (Gold Crew), Submarine Force US Pacific Fleet, and is currently the Commander of Naval Undersea Warfare Center. His breadth of knowledge and leadership expertise became a gold mine for the future Navy officers at our unit. He was accompanied by Tyrone Martin ’52 (UR). Having a successful Naval career, Martin commanded two destroyers during Korea and Vietnam. His most notable command was the USS CONSTITUTION between 1974-1978. During his time as Commanding Officer, he instituted the wearing of 1812 uniforms, proposed the modification of guns, and reinstituted the practice of firing morning and sunset guns, receiving the ship’s first Meritorious Unit Commendation during his tour.

As an amazing character to talk to and having Midshipmen smile at every word he said, Tyrone Martin definitely stood out as a model to the Midshipmen during Meliora Weekend. On Saturday, a dozen midshipmen were able to attend a meet-and-greet breakfast and keynote address with former Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Robert Gates. The former Texas A&M president provided Midshipmen with a sense of security in their choice of college, stating that research universities are important in the future of the United States.

Experience and knowledge were plentiful during this Meliora Weekend. Through these events and special guests, Midshipmen were able to gain valuable insight and advice which they will take with them as future Navy and Marine Corps officers.

-Article written by MIDN 2/C Manuel Navarro
At the University of Rochester, we celebrate both the Navy and Marine Corps birthdays with their own special ceremonies. The Navy birthday ceremony takes place in our regular lab location (Hubbell Auditorium in Hutchison Hall). The celebration starts with several Midshipmen giving briefs about various aspects of naval history. For example, MIDN 4/C Tucker told the story of LT Michael Murphy, a Medal of Honor winner who sacrificed his life for the sake of his fellow sailors. Other Midshipmen reviewed some classic naval battles in the Pacific during World War II. Once the briefs concluded, the cake was cut by the oldest and youngest sailors in the room. In this case, CAPT Bartkoski, the CO of the unit, and MIDN 4/C Oduma, one of our brand new 4th Class, cut the cake together.

We celebrated the Marine Corps birthday a little differently than the Navy birthday. Instead of briefs, a full parade is put in formation. Capt Quezada reads the Commandant’s words about the birthday, and a procession for the cake is wheeled out. Similar to the tradition described above, the oldest and youngest Marines in the room cut the cake together. MSgt Skelton and MIDN 4/C Loder shared the cake cutting responsibilities. Cake was enjoyed by all. These ceremonies show just how proud the Midshipmen should be to join the services they will commission into. They are entering services that are filled with tradition and history, and will carry that into their careers as naval officers.

-Article written by MIDN 2/C Joseph Thibodeau
Every Veteran’s Day, the Rochester Naval ROTC unit gets together with the neighboring Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC units to run to the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Highland Park. This is an event that the entire Battalion looks forward to every year. Not only are Midshipmen and Cadets given the opportunity to get up early and run together, but they are given the opportunity to see the kind of sacrifice they might one day be asked to make.

The morning starts with a muster on the University of Rochester football field, followed by a warmup for all three units. The run route takes the units down Wilson Boulevard and around the cemetery until they hit Highland Park. A police escort follows the units as they run, clearing the way and keeping them safe. Local news stations were also present to report the gathering.

Once the units have made it to the Memorial, they are given an opportunity to meet some veterans and walk through the Memorial, which is lined with waist-high plaques bearing the name of locals who either gave their lives in battle or whose bodies were never recovered. This is very sobering for the Midshipmen and Cadets. Once they have passed through the Memorial, they run the same route back to the football field, where they are dismissed for the day.

- Article written by MIDN 2/C Joseph Thibodeau
NAVAL ROTC ROCHESTER TAKES 1ST PLACE OVERALL

This semester, Naval ROTC Rochester traveled to Cornell to compete in the Cornell University Invitational Drill Competition, or CUIDC. This competition is an opportunity for several service academies and ROTC units to come and prove themselves on the drill deck and PT field. In attendance, among others, were the United States Naval Academy, the United States Military Academy, Norwich University. Twelve schools competed in total. For the first time ever, the University of Rochester won the overall competition, besting all schools (including the service academies). This is an amazing accomplishment for any unit, especially a unit as small as Rochester, numbering around 60 Midshipmen. This is a precedent for excellence that the Midshipmen plan to keep up in the spring when they visit Villanova for another competition.

-Article written by MIDN 2/C Thibodeau

SQUAD BASIC

University of Rochester’s NROTC Squad Basic participated at the Cornell Drill Competition this November. The team was lead by MIDN 1/C Kelley and was composed of MIDN 1/C Bitz, MIDN 1/C Muller, MIDN 2/C Tanner, MIDN 2/C Dudek, MIDN 3/C Stalzer, and MIDN 3/C Romesser. The team trained for weeks prior to the event and focused especially on mastering columns and rifle movement timing, using M-16s. The team performed outstanding during the competition but was deducted six points for marching off the drill deck. Regardless, the perfection of the squad and MIDN 1/C Kelley’s remarkable cadence placed Squad Basic third overall.

-Article written by MIDN 3/C Stalzer
PLATOON TRICK

The 2013-2014 Rochester platoon trick team has seven returning members from last semester including MIDN 1/C Erwin as trick captain, as well as five new members. The drill team voluntarily puts forth their time to practice together twice a week for roughly two and half hours a week. During the two weeks prior to the competition, the drill team will practice Monday through Friday for nearly 10 hours a week. Every member is there because they want to be there, and the atmosphere around trick drill shows that.

The team placed third, only bested by the United States Military Academy and Norwich University. The team had even beaten the United States Naval Academy. The platoon trick team performed exceptionally well at CUIDC.

- Article written by MIDN 3/C Hubbs

COLOR GUARD

The Naval ROTC Color Guard competed at Cornell, and has a reputation of doing very well at these types of competitions. The team consisted of MIDN 3/C Strom (Marine Corps flag bearer), MIDN 1/C Vecere (rifle), MIDN 2/C Tanner (rifle), MIDN 2/C Wieber (American flag bearer/Color Guard Commander), and MIDN 3/C Cooper (Navy flag bearer). The job of the color guard is to parade the colors, whether it be in competition or at a military/community event.

To prepare for CUIDC, the color guard team mustered every Monday and Wednesday morning at 0545 and practiced for roughly an hour. They practiced our marching and drill movements countless times in strive of perfection. MIDN 1/C Baptiste, Bitz, and Delong were very helpful in their training. Every practice, they would spectate and provide constructive criticism, ultimately making us even better. The team’s hard work paid off, as they placed 3rd at CUIDC against teams from the United States Naval Academy, Norwich University, RPI, and Villanova.

This semester, the five of us worked hard to better ourselves as a team, and built a strong camaraderie in the process. The team looks forward to competing next semester at the Villanova University Drill/MEC Competition.

- Article written by MIDN 3/C Strom

SWIMMING

At Cornell this year, the swimming portion of the competition consisted of a 50 meter freestyle individual sprint, a 4x100 meter medley relay, and a 4x100 freestyle relay. In preparation for this, the Rochester NROTC unit held practice every Sunday the entire semester leading up to Cornell. In the weeks prior, dryland practice was held two mornings a week. These extra practices certainly paid off.

The Rochester Midshipmen placed first in both relay events and placed second, third, and fourth in the 50 meter free sprint. Led by team captain MIDN 3/C White, Rochester dominated in the pool. This is keeping in tradition with the swim team results of the past few years, and it is a trend the team intends to keep up.

- Article written by MIDN 2/C Thibodeau

4X400 RELAY

NROTC Rochester saw victory yet again in the 4x400 event at Cornell, taking both 1st and 4th place. Captaining the 4x400 teams was MIDN 1/C Paschke, Battalion Executive Officer. The first heat, taking first was run by Paschke, Salk, Loder, and Kelley running anchor. The second heat, taking fourth was run by Boullianne, Erwin, Romesser, and Pagan running anchor. Overall, it was a good showing against schools with much larger battalions, such as Villanova and Penn. NROTC Rochester maintained their stellar MEC reputation.

- Article written by MIDN 1/C Andrew Myers

10-KM TEAM

The 10km team for this year’s Cornell Drill competition consisted of MIDN 2/C Tucker, MIDN 3/C Salk and MIDN 3/C Kline. The event was scored based on which team scored the most points. Points were determined by finishing position among the top 5 with: 21 points for first, 15 for second, 13 for third, 11 for fourth and 9 points for fifth.

The course was a circuit of 6.5 laps around a small pond and consisted of about 25 racers. In the end Rochester finished first and third with team captain Grant Salk winning gold in 35:42 and Andrew Kline winning bronze in 38:20. MIDN Tucker, who had sprained his ankle within the first mile of the race powered through and finished off the Rochester trio with a tenth place finish. With the first and third finish, NROTC Rochester won the event with 34 points over second place RPI and third place Villanova.

- Article written by MIDN 3/C Andrew Kline
TWO-MAN TRICK

The Two Man trick drill team is a small drill unit comprised of two Midshipmen. This year those Midshipmen were MIDN 1/C Glen Rugaber and MIDN 1/C Erwin. They created a drill routine that involves synchronized movements while marching together and remaining aligned to one another. In addition, these movements must be completed with no signals or commands given, and the routine has to be between 5 and 10 minutes long. A couple of times a week, they come into the unit and create their routine from scratch, starting with an opening sequence followed by a report-in to the drill sergeant, then moving on to a complex body routine, and ending with a report-out. Two-man trick placed 3rd while competing against teams from the Naval Academy, the US Military Academy (West Point), and Norwich University.

-Article written by MIDN 1/C Erwin

PLATOON BASIC

Every year, Rochester fields a platoon of freshmen for the Cornell University Invitational Drill Competition (CUIDC). This year, the platoon trained every Monday and Wednesday from 0545 until 0700. This time focused on how to perform the fundamental movements of close order drill, as well as the knowledge and discipline necessary to be successful naval officers. At the start of the semester the majority of these college students had no idea how to do drill or what drill even was. However, after hours of hard work, they competed against other units (which typically use upperclassmen) and performed well, taking fourth place. While just missing the top three, these freshmen showed their worth by putting on an exceptional performance and are sure to come back even stronger at the competition in the spring semester at Villanova.

-Article written by MIDN 2/C Josh Nysenbaum

IRONMAN COMPETITION

The Ironman Competition at CUIDC consisted of a 500 meter swim followed by push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, and a 3 mile run outside on the track. The ironman team was lead by the team captain MIDN 1/C Rugaber. In order to prepare for this competition, all Midshipman on the team met every Sunday to conduct a workout involving all of the 5 elements of the competition that MIDN Rugaber had planned for them. During the competition every person on the Rochester Team maxed at least 2 of the 5 events while MIDN Baptiste, MIDN Stalzer, and MIDN Nysenbaum all maxed 4 of the 5 events which made them eligible for Superman points to boost the team’s score. MIDN Baptiste came in first place for the run at 17:04 and MIDN Rugaber came in first for the pull-ups, completing 40 of them. MIDN Stalzer came in 2nd place for the overall competition individually, completing a 19:11 run, 8 pull-ups, 120 sit-ups, 60 push-ups, and a 7:37 swim which made her 7 seconds away from maxing out the entire event. Overall the team took 2nd place in the competition.

-Article written by MIDN 3/C Scott 4/C Midshipmen compete in the Platoon Basic competition.
Midshipmen at NROTC Rochester are very active in their community through activities announced by the unit or their own personal ventures to assist those in need and be active. On Sept 7th and 8th, a great amount of Midshipmen arrived at the Equicenter in Honeoye Falls, NY to give a hand in making their Military Day a success.

Equicenter’s purpose is to foster the personal growth and individual achievement of people with disabilities, at-risk youth, veterans, and their families using a wide range of therapeutic equestrian activities. On Saturday, a total of 17 Midshipmen arrived ready to work on any and all tasks. It was a great new experience for some people; many have never been so close to horses. The Midshipmen were scattered throughout the Equicenter doing jobs varying from gardening, set-up, fence painting, and field clean up.

The next day, NROTC Rochester teamed up with the Midshipmen from Army ROTC at RIT in order to get all the work done. Activities ranged from cupcake decorating and pony rides to wagon rides and horse grooming. The Midshipmen helped out with all events and made the event go as smoothly as possible. Ultimately, the Equicenter’s Military Day was a great success and everyone who came had a great time, including the volunteers. Some Midshipmen even stayed longer than they signed up for in order to help the Equicenter members set up for their next event. However, the volunteer hour isn’t the most important part of the experience. It’s not about getting your 8 hours per semester, but about the memories created and the bonds formed and strengthened. So far, the incoming 4/C have only had the chance to see their leaders from a strictly professional standpoint through drill, inspection, orientation, and other activities. At the Equicenter, many of the 4/C were able to become more familiar with the upperclassmen, finding out where they’re from, their experiences, and their memories created so far in the unit. This is one of the most important benefits of volunteering within the Rochester NROTC Battalion.

-Article written by MIDN 4/C Pagan

FULL CIRCLE HOME FUNDRAISER

On 10 November 2013, the Sea & Anchor Detail club joined with the Delta Gamma sorority and Theta Chi fraternity to assist with wrapping present for Full Circle Home. This organization states that they ‘support the women who support the troops who support us here at home.’ They are a non-profit organization that creates gift boxes for Christmas and Mother’s Day that deployed service members can order and send to their loved ones. The boxes contain items such as jewelry, fragrances, lotions, and other pampering items. The biggest addition to each box (and what makes them unique to each service member) is a hand-written note, provided by the service member, for their mother, wife, fiancé, or girlfriend back home.

Vickie Durfee and Lisa Miller are the two women who started this organization, and what started as supporting their families has turned into a huge organization that has shipped out 9000 boxes so far over more than 5 years.

The day started with a presentation by both Vickie Durfee and Lisa Miller, showing how they started and what they do. All participants transitioned to Hirst Lounge in Wilson Commons to begin the wrapping process. This included folding the boxes, putting items inside, closing them, and wrapping them with ribbon. The event allowed for great collaboration between all groups involved, and helped them to make a marked difference in the lives of military families across the country. If you are interested in donating to this organization or helping them in some way, please visit their website at fullcirclehome.org or find them on Facebook.

-Article written by MIDN 2/C Thibodeau
SEPTEMBER:
MIDN 3/C CURTIS
DELTA COMPANY
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
COMPUTER SCIENCE
SAN DIEGO, CA

OCTOBER:
MIDN 4/C LODER
ALPHA COMPANY
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING
EAST SYRACUSE, NY

NOVEMBER:
MIDN 4/C BOULLIANNE
BRAVO COMPANY
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER
COMPUTER SCIENCE
LORTON, VA
FAREWELL!

The Midshipmen of Naval ROTC Rochester have had a fantastic semester. We hope you enjoyed experiencing it through this newsletter. We have several events next semester, including our Navy Ball at the Radisson in downtown Rochester, as well as Commissioning and our annual Awards Ceremony. If you would like information concerning these events (including date and time), please contact the number or email below. Thank you!

-MIDN 2/C Joseph Thibodeau, USNR
Communications Officer, Naval ROTC Rochester