IRONCLAD

THE

IRONCLAD

SPRING 2016
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In this semester’s edition of Ironclad, we welcome one new staff member and farewell many of our staff members. Turnover is an integral part of our naval service as personnel move on due to promotions, to greater responsibility, or another phase in life.

Firstly, we welcome Lieutenant Alfonso A. Gonzalez-Lopez as the Unit’s new aviation officer instructor. He replaced Joshua Thompson who we bid farewell in the last Ironclad. Alfonso comes to us from the Blue Hawks of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron Seven Eight (HSM-78), a MH-60R Seahawk squadron out of San Diego, CA. Alfonso, welcome aboard to you and your wonderful family!

And, now, sadly, to our farewells. Seemingly a fixture at NROTC Unit Rochester, Ms. Ardys Stricker has retired from the University of Rochester (UofR) after 30 years of service to the naval service as well the UofR. Her unflagging commitment to the Unit’s 700 Midshipmen during her 30 years was,Simply, exceptional. Her corporate knowledge of all things NROTC allowed her to master the seemingly endless list of policies and systems associated with the naval service and university ensuring that Midshipmen were given every opportunity to succeed. Thank you Ardys, for all you did!

Lieutenant Jeffrey Vandenengel also parted this spring after serving as the Unit’s nuclear power officer for two years. He is off to submarine department head school on route to USS Alexandria (SSN-757) as the Weapons Officer. Besides being an exemplary leader, instructor, and class advisor, Jeff served as a great role model with a 4.0 GPA in his master’s program in mechanical engineering. Well done, Jeff!

Captain Jose R. Quezada departed in mid-June after serving three years as the Unit’s Marine Officer Instructor (MOI). Jose is heading to U.S. Marine Corps Forces South in Miami, Florida where he will utilize his foreign area officer specialty, expertise in Spanish and Portuguese, and the three master’s degrees he earned as a warrior/scholar! His expert servant leadership of both Marine and Navy Option Midshipmen is well reflected in the Unit’s unprecedented success at Cornell and Villanova MECs, 100% OCS graduation rate, and overwhelming success at TBS.

Commander Shawn A. Bohrer departed the Unit and the Navy after a four-year tour as the Unit’s Executive Officer (XO) and twenty exemplary years of service to the Navy, respectively. As the Unit’s XO, Shawn rarely received his just accolades, but I can attest to how much he has contributed to the Unit’s success in his multiple roles as a covenant leader/mentor, the ultimate program administrator, a revered leadership & management instructor, and tireless advocate of our Midshipmen and their personal and professional development. He has been a humble servant as he has proudly worn the cloth of our nation and it has been my pleasure and honor to serve with him these past two years.

The common thread of service for each of our departing staff is their unflagging commitment to developing college freshmen into naval officers. In my change of command speech in May 2014, I quoted Anthony Shadid from his memoir, House of Stone. In his memoir, Shadid recounts a profound vignette about life and leadership and writes, “The most beautiful art in life is that of building.” I salute all of the departing staff (as well as those remaining behind with me) on their tireless commitment to “building” the next generation of our naval service, your leadership is indeed a most beautiful art.” Fair winds and following seas to all of our departing staff...they will be missed.

CAPT. Norberto M. Nobrega
Commanding Officer, NROTC Unit Rochester
This semester the battalion organized and participated in several events to promote unit cohesion. Understanding the importance of interpersonal skills is not only essential in everyday life, but especially as officers in the military. Interpersonal skills improve one’s effectiveness as a leader by teaching him or her the humility to combine ideas of others to develop the best strategy for every scenario. Working and interacting with others is also essential to improve the quality of life within college and eventually one of the most stressful professions in the world.

The Rochester Midshipmen focused on teamwork this semester in Leadership Reactionary Courses (LRCs) organized by midshipmen within the unit. MIDN 3/C Schwark and MIDN 3/C Doherty were each tasked with creating various activities to take place during the unit’s weekly Leadership Lab in order to cultivate leadership and cooperation. These LRCs were designed specifically to enforce unit cohesion and trust amongst the battalion—both of which are necessary skills in the fleet. The fun and engaging activities pushed each midshipman to develop both their leadership skills as well as innovative, problem-solving abilities. Each activity was different from the typical tasks that college and the military require, but the lessons learned through these activities are meant to impact the decisions of everyday life.

In one of the activities, midshipmen had to try different ways of communicating to complete the challenge of having a blindfolded midshipman build a pyramid with cans that were scattered throughout the room. This was intended to facilitate trust in fellow midshipmen in order to guide each other in the right direction. In another activity, midshipmen worked together to build a specific structure while having to share supplies with the entire battalion. Team bonding activities such as these are beneficial in leadership development, adding to the skills needed to serve our nation to the fullest of our ability.

“Individuals play the game, but teams beat the odds”

-MIDN 4/C Anthony
Aboard naval vessels, sea and anchor detail exercises are a routine and significant event designed to prepare the ship’s Sailors to conduct real-world evolutions safely and efficiently as they make ready for operations. All stations must be manned and every Sailor must remain vigilant in order to ensure safe passage until the ship has either moored or has entered the open ocean.

As a club, Sea and Anchor Detail is a medium for Rochester midshipmen to collectively volunteer in our school and community. Our volunteer work generally focuses on raising awareness for service members both retired and active. Metaphorically, this club enables midshipmen to “man a station” that is often missed in our daily lives: volunteering. By hosting different events, Sea and Anchor Detail allows not only our battalion, but also the college and surrounding communities to support those in the service. Recently, Sea and Anchor Detail hosted events such as writing letters to deployed soldiers and creating an obstacle course in which teams raced against each other in order to raise money for the USO to accomplish our club’s mission.

These types of events are both fun and simple, yet can provide such a large benefit to the naval community that we are all joining in the very near future. However, perhaps even more importantly, it allows our midshipmen to gain valuable insights and appreciation for the men and women that we will serve with and lead. We as midshipmen sometimes forget that we have so much to learn. We must understand the Navy not just simply in terms of what our vessels are capable of doing, but rather what our personnel are capable of achieving. Sea and Anchor Detail, at its foundation, may be a charitable organization designed to help those serving, and still, undoubtedly the battalion as a whole gains so much more from these experiences than it gives.

-MIDN 3/C Busick

In general, I’ve always enjoyed volunteering because I am genuinely happy when I am helping others. In color guard, participating in veteran’s events and performing at sporting events helped the battalion receive recognition in the Rochester community. Shaking veterans’ hands and listening to their stories about their time in the service has been our group’s favorite part of participating in color guard this year. For this reason, most of us in the group will be continuing with color guard next year. I’ve always enjoyed volunteering, especially with children. Molding them to better themselves has always given me a sense of fulfillment.

Personally, with the organizations I am a part of at our university, I have done events inside the University of Rochester and in the local area, ranging from tutoring young children, to empowering inner city students to seek a college degree regardless of the situation they come from. Engaging with the community is both important and valuable—volunteering not only helps build teamwork inside the battalion but it also helps midshipmen grow as individuals. In the future, I look forward to seeing more midshipmen volunteering in the community and finding the same joy that I have found in doing so.

-MIDN 3/C Martinez
There were plenty of ups and downs, but the 4/C midshipmen of NROTC Rochester have successfully completed their first year. A few of them take the time to reflect on the past few months in their transition to becoming Navy and Marine Corps officers. Bravo Zulu to the class of 2019 on a great first year!

**WHAT WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF YOUR YEAR IN NROTC?**

- Getting Midshipmen of the month back in October.
- "Sleeping on the ground at Villanova and waking up every 20 minutes thinking I was supposed to be up."
- "Getting to see the hard work throughout the year culminate at Villanova with the great teamwork in the drill and MEC events."

**WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACED THIS YEAR?**

- "The biggest challenge for me was trying to improve my physical prowess."
- "Dealing with the adjustment of entering a military lifestyle."
- "The biggest challenge was trying not to get overwhelmed by everything that was going on."

**WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE LESSON THAT YOU LEARNED?**

- "Officers are crafted, not born."
- "I learned that knowing who you are is not enough—the most important thing is to be confident in who you are."
- "Knowing how to communicate more effectively with my peers."

**WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER ASPIRATIONS?**

- "I want to become a submarine officer and then either continue to serve or transition into the civilian workforce to become an industrial engineer with the goal of starting my own company."
- "I first want to be a SWO for 5 years. After that, I hope to be either a journalist or possibly enter the Chaplain Corps."
- "I hope to become a submarine officer and then eventually use my degree in optical engineering."

**WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR INCOMING 4/C WHO MIGHT BE READING THIS?**

- "You do you."
- "Be you, be humble, be respectful and always work hard."
- "The way to get the most out of your experience is to put forth the most effort."

**WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO MOST IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS?**

- "I am really excited to go on Co-op to gain real work experience while getting that sourdough."
- "I am really looking forward to getting to know everyone in the unit a little better, including the incoming 4/C. Also, developing my leadership qualities to earn the privilege of being a Naval Officer."
- "I am looking forward to gaining more leadership experience so that I can help the people I will be leading in the future."

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"You do you."
MIDN 2/C TUCKER
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
I had the incredible fortune of living with a host family and becoming fully immersed in Danish lifestyle, witnessing the Syrian-European migration crisis firsthand and traveling to 12 different countries. It was definitely the highlight of my college career and an unparalleled learning opportunity.

MIDN 1/C STROM
FLORENCE, ITALY
“It was a great opportunity to travel the world and experience so many different cultures.”

MIDN 2/C MURPHY
ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA
I chose to study abroad in Russia so that I could improve my language skills and also become more informed on the country. The military as a whole could definitely afford to gain more of an understanding of Russia.

MIDN 2/C LODER
SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
Studying in Sydney was the greatest learning experience of my life. Being able to start fresh in a new city on the other side of the world forced me to learn and adjust on the fly. It was especially rewarding to experience a new culture and meet new people.
Each year, NROTC Rochester organizes a Naval Ball at the end of the spring semester to celebrate the conclusion of the academic term and the hard work dedicated by the midshipmen to the success of their studies; especially the seniors who will shortly be graduating and commissioning. By the time of commissioning, the graduates have spent four or five years at the unit working to prepare themselves to exceed the challenges of leading in the fleet and they represent the best of the future in the fleet. A tradition at the ball is to introduce each of the seniors through the Sword Arch, where they enter the ballroom through a guard detail that salutes them with raised swords. As one of the last formal events as part of NROTC Rochester, it is a welcome opportunity for the battalion to see off the graduating class and enjoy each other’s company for an evening of fine food and later (maybe not so fine) dance.

The battalion extends its gratitude to the guest of honor, Mr. John White, for taking the time to join us for the ball. An infantry officer in the Marine Corps during the Vietnam War, Mr. White shared his experiences in leading others from throughout his career as a Marine and as an entrepreneur. His advice will certainly help everyone as we continue our own work towards the fleet and beyond.

-MIDN 3/C Bova
This past semester, drill played a less important role as we placed more of an emphasis on academics. A significant change came for the fourth class. Platoon Basic drill was no longer mandatory for them. This allowed them to join other drill teams that interested them, such as Color Guard or Trick. There were multiple midshipmen who stepped up and committed to various teams. They spent multiple hours each week practicing early in the morning before their Naval Science class. There were a few last minute illnesses that required people to sign up for events that they had not prepared for. Despite the lack of time they had to prepare they still put forth all of their effort.

Villanova University hosted the Fifty-sixth Annual Villanova University Invitational Drill Meet (VUIDM) on April 23, 2016. It consisted of drill events, athletic competitions, and combat challenges. VUIDM is extremely competitive and the number of schools that participate is growing each year. This year was our most challenging going up against Division 1 schools with battalions much larger than our own. Although, we did not place in as many events as we would have liked to, we are extremely proud of everyone who participated since they were able to compete and challenge schools such as the United States Naval Academy, Pennsylvania State University, Villanova University, the United States Military Academy, and Rutgers to name a few. Participating in competitions like these allows us to develop a sense of pride in our battalion and within each other, and helps us to continue progress and strengthen our teamwork and discipline.

-MIDN 3/C Bova
Villanova Drill/MEC OIC

Over the course of the semester, NROTC Rochester has put in the hard work and dedication required during many arduous PT sessions. This training culminated in their skills being tested physically at the athletic events at Villanova. Rochester was proud to bring home first, third and fourth in the 5K run and second in the “Mogadishu Mile.” Although Rochester is a small unit, we had midshipmen competing in every athletic event provided and then some, as a few staff members and midshipmen also got the chance to sumo wrestle at the Villanova carnival. While not doing as well as previous years, the competition was more rigorous and all midshipmen put forth a strong effort. All in all, NROTC Rochester did their best and had a great experience.

-MIDN 2/C Boullienne
On 14 May 2016, NROTCU Rochester commissioned eight new officers to serve in the United States Navy and Marine Corps. The annual commissioning ceremony was held at the George Eastman House for the 16th year in a row. It was a special day where friends and family gathered to attend and watch the midshipmen become the newest and freshest faces of the armed forces. The event acknowledged the hard work and dedication that the new officers have committed to their academic careers and leadership training at NROTC Rochester for the past four and five years.

The battalion, and attendees, had the pleasure of hearing from retired naval officer, Rear Admiral Gretchen Herbert. She shared the wisdom and advice that she gained over 29 years in the service for the new officers and current midshipmen alike to apply to their future careers. She also acknowledged the family of the commissioning officers for their encouragement and support throughout their children’s endeavors. Following her empowering speech, the First Class walked across the stage to recite the Officer’s Oath and receive their commissioning certificate. Family members and friends were then given the honor of revealing the new rank of 2nd Lieutenant and Ensign for each of the new officers. After being congratulated, the attendees gathered in the courtyard to witness the officers’ first salutes.

It was a momentous occasion that was a privilege for all who were able to attend. The fleet is lucky to have such bright and talented new service members who will surely make NROTC Rochester proud. Congratulations to the new officers and best of luck to you all!
SARAH BODWELL
Major: Brain and Cognitive Science (UR)
Service Selection: Student Naval Flight Officer
What would you be doing after you graduate had you not done NROTC?
“I honestly have no idea what I would have done. While other seniors were stressed trying to find jobs, I have been guaranteed an exciting career after graduation.”
What are you looking to most about your next duty station?
“To all the challenges and great experiences that flight school will bring.”

TIMOTHY COOPER
Major: Applied Mathematics (RIT)
Service Selection: Student Naval Aviator
Who is one person who made a profound impact on you?
“My most memorable conversations, and the ones that left me thinking the most, were ones I had with Capt Quezada. His openness, honesty, and breadth of experience has molded a lot of my views on how to be a great officer.”
What was the coolest opportunity you have had through NROTC?
“Flying in a MH-60S Helicopter over the Blue Ridge Mountains with my feet hanging out the door.”

LINDSEY CURTIS
Major: Computer Science (UR)
Service Selection: Submarine Officer
What will you miss most after you graduate?
“I’m going to miss taking midnight trips to Jay’s Diner with fellow sufferers as a break from all nighters in the library.”
Why did you pick the community you are going into?
“I was overwhelmed by the caliber of people I encountered through my exposure to the Submarine community. Also, the ability to help pioneer the Submarine fleet in the early stages of integrating females into the community is an incredibly motivating opportunity.”
DANIEL PALMITER
Major: Mechanical Engineering (RIT)
Service Selection: Student Naval Flight Officer
What is one of your favorite memories from being in NROTC?
"I really enjoy the camaraderie at our dining-in each year. The fines are always hilarious"
Why is Rochester a great unit?
"We hold ourselves to higher levels of professionalism and wear far more cohesive than other units that I have seen."

SEVASTIAN ROMESSER
Major: Business Management & Finance (SJF)
Service Selection: Marine Corps (Aviation)
What will you miss most about Rochester?
"I'm going to miss the people here and the great food, especially garbage plates."
If you could go back to freshman year and tell yourself anything,
"Be true, confident and don't worry about the little things. In the grand scheme of things, what truly matters are the people around you and the experiences you share together."

BRITTNAY STALZER
Major: Brain and Cognitive Science (UR)
Service Selection: Surface Warfare Officer
Why did you pick to come to the University of Rochester?
"I liked the caliber of the academics, I wanted to go to a different part of the country and I was scoping out varsity lacrosse programs."
What did you gain most about being a part of this unit?
"Discipline and camaraderie."

ALIA CLARK
Major: Brain and Cognitive Science (UR)
Service Selection: Surface Warfare Officer
What did you gain most from being a part of this unit?
"Personal relations are one of the skills that I gained most from being a part of NROTC Rochester"
Looking back, what is one thing you would have done differently?
"Despite my approaching career in the Navy, I wish I would have taken advantage of Rochester’s world renowned research facilities. I should have gathered lab experience while in my undergraduate years."

ROBERT WIEBER
Major: Mechanical Engineering (RIT)
Service Selection: Student Naval Aviator
What are you most excited for after you graduate?
"I am looking forward to leaving Rochester and going to flight school to learn how to fly jets."
What was the coolest thing you have done through NROTC?
"I got to fly an F-18 Super Hornet on summer cruise last year."
FAIR WINDS and FOLLOWING SEAS

CAPT Quezada (Marine Officer Instructor)

Captain Jose Quezada has been a devoted staff member to NROTC Rochester for the past three years as our unit’s Marine Officer Instructor. Captain Quezada enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1996. After numerous deployments, he attended the University of South Florida and graduated with honors. Upon graduating, Captain Quezada completed The Basic School and went on to serve as an Air Support Control Officer for Marine Air Support Squadron 3, Camp Pendleton, California. He supported Regimental Combat Team 1 throughout Operation Enduring Freedom.

Captain Quezada always brought intensity to our battalion Physical Training sessions, motivating each and every one of us to be our best. He was particularly impactful to the Marine options as he gave them valuable lessons and insight on how they will be viewed and how they want to be perceived once they hit the fleet. MIDN 2/C Loder said, “From day one, Captain Quezada demanded that we hold ourselves to the highest standards. The example he set on a daily basis and the principles he instilled in me during counseling sessions and other NROTC events will leave a lasting impact on me throughout my career.” Captain Quezada is headed to Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia, and will then serve as a Marine Officer Instructor at the Naval Academy.

Lt. Vandenengel (Nuclear Power Officer)

Lieutenant Jeffrey Vandenengel has served for eight years in the United States Navy. After graduating from the United States Naval Academy, LT Vandenengel entered the submarine force. He reported to the USS CHEYENNE (SSN 773) out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where he was a Division Officer. Aboard CHEYENNE among other high acknowledgments, he was recognized as the 2013 Junior Officer of the Year for Submarine Squadron Seven. As an advisor, LT Vandenengel motivated the midshipmen to be inquisitive and take pride in learning. He said that it’s imperative that we are “war fighting experts” in our chosen community so that we can use our knowledge “to improve [our] division, ship, and community.” He wants to leave each midshipman with the point that “it’s one thing to be smart enough to know something could be improved, it’s a whole other thing to actually do something about it.”

LT Vandenengel was presented an award by the CO at the annual awards ceremony for his exemplary leadership and dedication to his service, as well as the growth of NROTC midshipmen. LT Vandenengel will be continuing his service at the Submarine Officer Advanced Course (SOAC) in Groton, Connecticut. He will then serve as a department head on a fast attack submarine out of San Diego, California. In the future, he plans to continue his education at the Naval War College and eventually take command of a submarine. Thank you LT Vandenengel for your wisdom and guidance these past two years.

CDR Bohrer (Executive Officer)

Commander Shawn Bohrer is retiring from the Navy after twenty years of service. A 1996 graduate of the Naval Academy, he served on a variety of surface ships to include destroyers, amphibious ships, and minesweepers. In his most recent role as the Executive Officer of NROTC Rochester, he helped to provide the framework and structure that enabled the Battalion to reach its highest level of performance in many years, specifically achieving its highest, average GPA in over five years, an increase in average PFA scores of five points, instituting a rigorous professional training program, and vastly improving midshipmen readiness to enter the fleet.

Upon transitioning from the Navy in July, he will be fulfilling a long-time prophecy of his of working at Lowe’s, where he will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA. He departs from the Navy with much gratitude stating that, “having the opportunity to serve with the outstanding young men and women of NROTC Rochester was undoubtedly the best assignment of my career.” He wishes to thank all of the midshipmen, officers and staff of NROTC Rochester who always embodied the spirit of Mellora and especially, his wife, Jeni, and two children, Carter and Jenna, for their dedicated support of his Navy career.

Mrs. Stricker (Admin)

Mrs. Ardys Stricker leaves NROTC Rochester after thirty years of service. Since 1986, she has worked with over fifty officers and has assisted close to 700 midshipmen. She has devoted an enormous amount of time to NROTC Rochester. Mrs. Stricker was one of the first women of NROTC Rochester and among her work at Lowe’s, where she will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA. Mrs. Stricker was one of the first women of NROTC Rochester and among her work at Lowe’s, where she will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA. Mrs. Stricker was one of the first women of NROTC Rochester and among her work at Lowe’s, where she will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA. Mrs. Stricker was one of the first women of NROTC Rochester and among her work at Lowe’s, where she will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA. Mrs. Stricker was one of the first women of NROTC Rochester and among her work at Lowe’s, where she will be the Assistant General Manager of the Lowe’s Regional Distribution Center in Pittston, PA.
GySgt Sesay Reenlists

For the past two years, NROTC Rochester has been privileged to have an excellent AMOI. Gunnery Sergeant Sesay has served as both mentor and motivator to the midshipmen at our unit. He helped prepare the 4/C for their multiple drill competitions. He also never fails to provide the necessary energy during battalion physical training sessions. This past spring then Staff Sergeant held his reenlistment ceremony on the University of Rochester campus.

Reenlisting is a special ceremony in which an enlisted service member agrees to continue to serve. It was an honor for midshipmen and Staff Sergeant alike to be a part of this ceremony.

-MIDN 3/C Rutledge
On behalf of NROTC Rochester, we would like to thank you for your interest in our semi-annual newsletter. Please contact the Unit with any questions regarding the upcoming events or if you are interested in our program.

MIDN 3/C Nicolette Kober, USNR
MIDN 2/C Matthew Tucker, USNR
Ironclad Editors
Naval ROTC Rochester