

# NROTC Rutgers/Princeton 2018-19 Unit Newsletter

## Key Events:

- The unit hosted the inaugural Rutgers Military Excellence Competition in March.
- The class of 2019 saw 12 ensigns and second lieutenants commissioned, including the first special warfare and nurse-option officers produced from NROTC Rutgers/Princeton!

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NROTC Unit Rutgers University

## A Message from the Commanding Officer

Congratulations to all midshipmen and staff on a great 2018-2019 school year! From the first physical training session in the fall through today, the battalion has grown stronger, you all have challenged yourselves, and you have excelled in the classrooms, on the drill fields, and in competitions. It has been a privilege to watch the unit cohesion continue to develop over the course of the year.

I would like to particularly thank and congratulate our graduating battalion leadership – Midshipman Matthew Molinari, John Van Kleeff, Grant Eckhardt, Paul Greenbaum, John Jung, Olivia Rhodes, John Whelan, Kurt Malinoski, and Darlene Nor-



Commanding Officer Captain Andrew Smith assumed command of NROTC Rutgers/Princeton in July 2018.

istz! Your leadership by example, attention to detail, and precision in execution have set the course for the Scarlet Battalion going forward. I know you are all eager to join the fleet, and myself and the staff wish you all the best going forward.

It has been a great year, highlighted by military excellence competitions (twice champions – Cornell and Rutgers; third place at Villanova), field exercises, fund raising

events, Fall Military Ball, Mess Night, and culminating in the spring commencement and commissioning! Be safe over the summer during your travels and training events. I'm looking forward to another great year for Rutgers – Princeton Navy ROTC! BZ to All Hands!

- CAPT Andrew Smith

## NROTC Rutgers/Princeton 2018-19 Unit Newsletter

### USMC Officer Candidates School by John Van Kleeff



**All Marine-option midshipmen must successfully graduate from OCS in order to commission.**

*“Do not take any shortcuts with this ... Earning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor is perhaps one of the greatest feelings you will ever encounter.”*

This past summer, I attended and completed United States Marine Corps Officer Candidates School (OCS) in Quantico, Virginia – a commissioning requirement for all those who desire to pursue a career as an officer in the Marine Corps. Otherwise known as OCS, its mission is to “educate and train officer candidates in Marine Corps knowledge and skills within a controlled and challenging environment in order to evaluate and screen individuals for the leadership, moral, mental, and physical qualities required for commissioning as a Marine Corps officer.”

My training cycle was six weeks long, as there are different candidate companies for different commissioning programs. At OCS, there are multiple graded events which all contribute to your overall evaluation and determine whether or not you will complete the cycle.

For physical events, you are grad-

ed on a six and nine-mile hike, two physical fitness tests, one combat fitness test, and an endurance course. For the leadership portion of your grade, you are evaluated on the Small Unit Leadership Exercise II (known as SULE II, the culminating event of OCS), the Leadership Reaction Course, multiple inspections, billet and peer evaluations, and command evaluations. Leadership makes up a majority of your overall grade at OCS. Finally, you are graded academically, where you will take four written exams and conduct day and night land navigation. Achieving a grade of at least 80 percent in each of the three categories and displaying that you possess the leadership traits of a Marine Corps officer will allow you to pass OCS.

My advice to anyone attending OCS would be to ensure that you properly maintain personal hygiene. Do not take any short cuts with this. Yes, you will be stressed, mentally, and physically

exhausted. Yes, there will be nights where you get little sleep and do not want to shower after lights out. BUT, you must ensure you are properly caring for your body so you do not get dropped from the course for medical reasons. Additionally, always remember to move with a sense of purpose and give everything your all. You are always being evaluated, so do not fall into a state of complacency. Earning the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor is perhaps one of the greatest feelings you will ever encounter. Do not jeopardize this.

### Inaugural NROTC Rutgers/Princeton MEC by Gavin Mayes

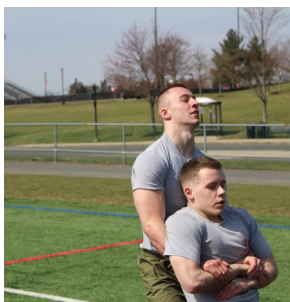
On Saturday, March 30, midshipmen from Rutgers/Princeton NROTC participated in the inaugural Rutgers Military Excellence Competition (MEC) held on Busch Campus at Rutgers University. The event saw Rutgers/Princeton NROTC, the Rutgers Army ROTC, the Rutgers/Princeton Air Force ROTC, and the SUNY Maritime NROTC units compete in various athletic events.

The day opened with the Rutgers midshipmen practicing drill events on the Sonny Werblin fields, fol-

lowed by the opening athletics events of soccer, volleyball, and basketball in the Sonny Werblin Recreation Center. The conclusion of the team events gave rise to the individual and partner challenge events, such as the corpsman challenge. The concluding athletic events of the day took place in the Sonny Werblin Olympic-sized swimming pool with each unit competing against each other in swimming relays and the underwater torpedo challenge. The Rutgers/Princeton NROTC unit

took first place overall, with Air Force coming in second and then SUNY and Army in third and fourth places, respectfully.

The entire event was the culmination of months of planning and even longer lasting aspirations by the members of the unit to hold a MEC at Rutgers. Thanks to the planning and organizational successes of this MEC, the unit is planning on hosting another MEC in the fall and others in the years to come.



**MEC's are notorious for challenging physical activities, such as the buddy-drill being conducted in the above photo.**

## University of Michigan Women in Naval Service Symposium by Emily Kapr

In late March, I had the privilege of attending the University of Michigan's Second-Annual Women in Naval Service Symposium. This conference has been one of the most influential and beneficial conferences I have attended as a midshipman because of the opportunities to hear from and talk to many inspiring female leaders in the Navy and Marine Corps. The purpose of this symposium was to network and make connections with both officers and other female midshipmen from around the country in order to have support and look for advice while serving in the fleet.

We began the weekend on Friday night, where everyone attended a casual dinner and did an ice breaker to get to know one another. Even the officers were dressed casually, which was a nice twist because we were able to talk to them on a more personal and approachable level. This event was fun for me because it allowed me to reconnect with midshipmen I had met on cruise or at military excellence competitions. It was a nice way to catch up and see how everyone was doing in their ROTC programs!

On Saturday, I heard from a few different speakers. The first were two explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) officers: Commander Leslie Sloomaker (currently working in the Pentagon) and Lieutenant Kim Bellis (who just finished her tour at 5th fleet). These two motivating women talked on four major points: Knowing who you are, being humble, leading with deci-

siveness, and having fun/learning how to laugh at yourself. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing from these two women because, through their experiences, they never gave up, worked hard, and got the job done.

After hearing from them, Lieutenant Colonel Misty Posey, head of 4th Recruit Training Battalion at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island gave us a few words on making decisions. I appreciated her talk because she highlighted the ignorance that most people have when it comes to making decisions and judging other people. One of my favorite quotes from Lt. Col. Posey was, "If you think the stereotype is true, it is". This stood out to me because many times as a woman in a male-dominated industry, we get caught up with the idea of a stereotype. Instead, we should be focusing on ourselves and the job at hand. As Lt. Col. Posey told us, if you do your job and work hard, the genders will not matter.

Before we heard from the last speaker of the day, we were split up into break out groups based off of the communities we intend on joining after commissioning. I chose to go to the aviation group. There, I was able to talk to two pilots and one Naval Flight Officer about their experiences as officers. The breakout sessions were extremely interesting and helpful because we were able to ask the officers about flight school, the general training pipeline, their experiences as junior officers, and their transitions from civilians to

officers in the Navy.

After breakout sessions, we took a three hour break to relax, do homework, and prepare for dinner. I took advantage of this time to catch up on work but also to talk to my roommates and reflect on what we were hearing during the conference. After a restful break we headed back for dinner. The last speaker was the guest of honor – Sarah Rhoads, a retired F/A-18 pilot and now director of Amazon Air. During the evening, Sarah talked to us about the importance of failure. She gave a couple sea stories of why failure was important in her career and how she was able to learn from it. I appreciated hearing from Sarah because she is a great role model for women both in and out of the Navy.

Overall, this symposium was one of the greatest experiences I have had as a midshipman. I encourage both men and women to consider attending this event on an annual basis. The connections made with both officers and midshipmen from other schools are priceless. I am thankful for the opportunity to attend this motivating event and getting to connect with other people around the country. Without the opportunity to form relationships and help each other, the Navy and Marine Corps would not be the team it is today. Therefore, it is critical that we take advantage of events such as these in order to make those connections and form a family.



**The Women in Naval Service Symposium provided the opportunity for midshipmen to listen to compelling speakers from across the wide spectrum of Naval communities.**



## NROTC Rutgers/Princeton 2018-19 Unit Newsletter

### Project Global Officer by Kara Dowling



**Midshipman Dowling visited the American Embassy during her Project GO experience.**

*“Beginning a new language and adapting to a new culture were not easy, but the experience was unforgettable.”*

Last summer I had the opportunity to participate in Project Global Officer's (Project GO) first-year Mandarin Chinese program. Project GO is a Department of Defense-funded scholarship program that sends ROTC cadets and midshipmen to learn strategic languages. My particular program was an intense immersion program at a Chinese university, Beijing University of Chemical Technology (北京化工大学). Along with the many hours of studying Chinese, the group went on cultural trips and took initiative to participate in as many activities as possible. My time in China was an absolutely amazing and unforgettable experience. I learned a lot about myself, Chinese culture, and, of course, the Chinese language.

I quickly found that Chinese culture was in many ways different from American culture. Eventually, I started making a list about all the little things that are different in China. A few of the differences I noticed are: In China, people do not give tips in restaurants (or anywhere) so the incentives for good service are different; people in China use umbrellas for both rain and sun protection; phone plans (including internet) are much cheaper, but the internet is very limited due to government control. My list has over 60 differences between China and America. However, through my travel in China this summer and Cambodia last summer, I have deduced that although there are many small differences, the basic desires and needs in life are the same. People

all over need to learn and work to be able to provide for themselves (and their family) and want to be loved and valued.

In my program, each person had their own language partner (most were graduate students) who worked with us every day for at least an hour practicing Chinese. I learned so much more than the Chinese language from my language partner. The opportunity to have a language partner was my favorite experience in China. We had fascinating conversations about the differences and similarities between China and home and became great friends over the two months.

During the course of our time in China, our Project GO group (including all of the language partners) visited the Great Wall, Shanghai, and a close-by water town. We went to the Olympic park, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City, the National Museum, the Summer Palace, walked around many parts of Beijing, and watched a traditional Chinese orchestra concert at the National Center for the Performing Arts. I also took one weekend and visited a friend in Handan (a “small” Chinese city of about 7 million people) that I met through an exchange program with my high school. His father is second-in-command of the Handan Police Department, and they took me

to a historic military compound, Command No. 129 of Eighth Route Army (1940s), in their province. Outside of traveling, we made dumplings by hand, played badminton (which is very popular in China), ate lots of Chinese food, took Didi (Chinese version of Uber), joined and frequented a gym, participated in a cross-cultural talent show at the university, and much more! We even got to set foot on American soil on July 4th by going to the American Embassy in Beijing!

Beginning a new language and adapting to a new culture were not easy, but the experience was unforgettable. In a time when our international relations with China are not always pleasant, I think the value of learning about the other culture is irreplaceable. I know that I will be able to take my experience holistically and apply it directly to my role as an officer in the fleet.

**Project GO provides extraordinary experiences to midshipmen, exposing them to new cultures and languages to help them become more well-rounded officers in the future.**



## Nurse Option in the NROTC by Darlene Noristz



After getting the news of having received my Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Scholarship as a Nurse Option back in the spring of 2015, I had a choice between over 150 nursing programs across the country but only one that had never commissioned a Navy Nurse before – Rutgers University. Motivated to take on the challenge of being the only Nurse Option at this new program – established only in 2012 – I soon realized it would be one of the greatest choices I had ever made.

From the very start, there were differences between my NROTC pipeline and those of my peers. The summer after freshman year, while all other third-class midshipmen embarked on Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID), I boarded the USS Whidbey Island and joined their crew for a month on their first day of deployment. While onboard, along with one other Nurse Option midshipman from Duquesne University, we experienced routine ship opera-

tions, helped the corpsmen onboard in the sick bay each morning, practiced starting IVs and blood draws, helped vaccinate the crew, and had a Fourth of July barbecue on the ship's flight deck in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean – all before making a port visit in Sicily, Italy for three beautiful days. This experience alone provided more opportunities to learn and travel than I would have ever had without the NROTC program.

Fast forward to the summer prior to senior year; Nurse Options get to experience yet another summer training evolution far different than those of our peers. This past summer I spent a month in San Diego, California working 40 hours per week at Naval Medical Center San Diego. While in the medical center, I rotated from the psych unit to medical-surgical floors, pediatrics, the operating room, the emergency department, ICU and PICU. I shadowed other Nurse Corps officers, worked alongside corpsmen, and provided care to the patients on each floor

to the best of my abilities and to the extent of my skill set as a fourth-year nursing student. Every day was filled with new experiences, new knowledge, and new opportunities to grow and develop as a future Nurse Corps officer. It was this past summer that I truly fell in love with the community I was about to enter. By the end of this past February, I had received my orders to report to the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in Virginia come this July and I couldn't be more excited. Navy Nurses play such a critical role in the care of our active duty service members, veterans, and their dependents - I couldn't have imagined a more rewarding career path than the one I am on now.

Being the first Nurse Option in an NROTC unit where everything was already relatively new to the staff and the other midshipmen, each semester came with many questions – some that were answered through the help of other more experienced units across the country and some that weren't answered until years later. Nonetheless, I could always rely on our staff to help me out to the best of their abilities. Along the way, I had many experiences that likely wouldn't have happened with any other unit. Now, just weeks away from commissioning, I hope to hear about future Nurse Options joining our unit and continuing the budding lineage of Rutgers/ Princeton University NROTC-commissioned Navy Nurse Corps officers.

*“Motivated to take on the challenge of being the only Nurse Option at this new program – established only in 2012 – I soon realized it would be one of the greatest choices I had ever made.”*

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### NROTC Mentorship Program by Gabrielle D'Arcangelo



**The camaraderie between midshipmen provides an invaluable professional resource in officer development.**

*"I have felt that being a mentor was the first leadership position that has helped me realize my own leadership style."*

NROTC Rutgers/Princeton has many great programs, but one of the more underrated is the mentor-mentee system. As a new fourth-class midshipman, life is very different than it was in high school. Not only do you have to adapt to college classes, living away from home, and making friends, but it is likely your first experience in a military environment. Without guidance, all this can become extremely overwhelming. That's why each incoming midshipman is paired with a sophomore or junior who they can form a professional relationship with and turn to for advice. From how to wear a uniform to how to pick university courses, each small lesson from a mentor brings the new midshipman closer into the battalion community while increasing their competence as a college student and a future officer. As a fourth-class last year, my mentor was my backup uniform supplier, workout buddy at the pool, and one of the first

friends I made in college.

This year, as a third-class midshipman, I learned just how much the mentor can benefit from the relationship also. Though most fourth-class midshipmen get a chance to be a fireteam leader or take on other small responsibilities their first year, I have felt that being a mentor was the first leadership position that has helped me realize my own leadership style. I've gotten to practice getting to know and staying updated on the life of my mentee, which is a necessary skill in the fleet, where it seems that "knowing your people" is the best advice given to young officers. Figuring out the strengths and weaknesses of another person has helped me to better evaluate and think more about my own role in the battalion. After the new student indoctrination program at Naval Station Great Lakes, my mentee came into the unit knowing how to wear her uniform and keep military bearing, so I did not

have to worry too much about discipline, but I now appreciate the effort that my mentor had put in to looking after me. Having learned from the example of my own mentor, I now enjoy physical training with my own mentee during free time on campus (which keeps me accountable to work out as well) and reminiscing on lessons learned from my own fourth-class year.

Mentorship at Rutgers/Princeton NROTC goes beyond being assigned to a new fourth-class midshipman. My mentor from freshman year has gone on to adapt a list of tips she shared with me over the summer before I joined the unit into an official handbook for all incoming midshipmen. This year, I have noticed senior midshipmen succeed in their leadership positions by expanding on mentorship skills, particularly the drive to learn people's goals and interests, to positively impact the whole battalion.

### Scarlet Day of Service by Alexis Stewart



**The Scarlet Day of Service provided an outlet for midshipmen to give back to the community.**

It was a cool fall day as Rutgers/Princeton midshipmen geared up for a full day of volunteering at the Scarlet Day of Service. The midshipmen had signed up to clean a high school baseball field in Piscataway, N.J. run by volunteer baseball coaches. When first arriving, midshipmen enjoyed upbeat music and snacks. We quickly became the group with most energy due to our excitement to help. Our enthusiasm eventually led us all to taking a picture with the mayor of New Brunswick.

Once we got our bus number (number two), we all began to board. Taking

pride and ownership in everything we do, including our bus number, we constantly chanted "bus two" while boarding. Once we arrived at the baseball field, midshipmen went to different areas cleaning out bathrooms, sheds, picking up rocks, painting, and the two most fun jobs - riding the tractor and destroying large, old signs with a sledgehammer so they fit into the garbage. Naturally, something like a sledgehammer intrigued all the midshipmen and it soon became a friendly competition of seeing who could make the biggest hole with a sledgehammer.

Each midshipman took turns hammering away at the signs with all of us giving tips and tricks to land harder hits while cheering each other on. No one left the baseball field that day without hammering a sign's face in. At one point, Midshipman Maxwell Buchanan had hammered the same spot so many times he broke through the poster and it became a face cut out it was of course a great workout as well.

Once the sledge hammering was done, the midshipmen ate lunch while the coaches gave their thanks. Overall, it was an amazing experience to help the community and build camaraderie within our NROTC unit.



## Are People Aware of What is Happening at the NROTC Unit “On the Banks”? by Matthew Molinari

Four years ago, I was a senior at a high school that was just 15 minutes away from the Rutgers University campus. At that time, I had a dream to go to college and serve in the Navy, but believed that the only path to achieve my goal was through the Naval Academy. Misinformed, I was made aware late in my high school career of the opportunity available to attend Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and participate in a newly established Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) program. Fortunate enough to receive an NROTC scholarship, I pursued this avenue to fulfill my goal, and it was the greatest decision I have ever made.

The ability to attend my state school and participate in the NROTC program has been a transformative experience that has developed me mentally, morally, and physically. As I approached commissioning this year, I reflected on the path that got me to today. Recognizing that even though I had a passion to serve and a desire to attend Rutgers, I may never have known about the opportunities available to me only 15 minutes away. This realization prompted me to think of how we, as a unit, could begin to spread the message of what opportunities are available here “On the Banks” to interested students. It was our responsibility as a unit to ensure that we were spreading the message of the opportunities available at Rutgers/Princeton Naval ROTC in addition to the accomplish-

ments of this unit. There was a need for students with similar goals and especially residents of NJ to be educated on the opportunities that their state university could offer them in their pursuit of naval service.

This sense of responsibility among the Rutgers/Princeton NROTC team inspired a JROTC and Sea Cadet information session for units across the state. As our unit has continued to grow and welcomed midshipmen from various JROTC and Sea Cadet units across the state, we wanted to continue to grow our relationships with these units and prospective midshipmen by telling our story and the accomplishments we have achieved. To jump-start this initiative, the first NROTC information session was hosted on Saturday 13 October 2018. The information session began at our NROTC unit on the Rutgers College Avenue Campus and concluded in Voorhees Hall. In the auditorium, we provided a presentation on the NROTC scholarship process, our unit, and the activities we participate in such as: military excellence competitions, commu-

nity service, physical fitness, etc. We also discussed the opportunities available in the Navy and Marine Corps that students are able to pursue through NROTC.

For the first time running this information session, we were extremely pleased with the turnout and interest in NROTC and our unit specifically. Over 100 JROTC students and Sea Cadets attended. Many at the conclusion of the event told midshipmen and active duty staff in attendance how impressed they were with the unit and their interest in visiting the unit for a physical training or close-order drill session. This positive response and success demonstrated the need for an NROTC information session in New Jersey. We look forward to continuing this event for years to come and working with the Sea Cadet and JROTC units in the area. Hopefully in the future, Rutgers/Princeton Naval ROTC will be able to host an information session for high school students across the state of New Jersey and surrounding states that may be interested in serving their country.

This effort to promote the unit’s ability to develop capable officers as well as the energy, passion, and hard work that is possessed by those on the Rutgers/Princeton NROTC team began with this NROTC information session. Today, this effort has continued to expand through efforts like the first ever Rutgers Military Excellence Competition. Rutgers/Princeton NROTC is just getting started, and the message of what this unit has and continues to accomplish is finally being noticed.

**Question & answer forums help advise prospective students about the NROTC program and the unit outside of the various online resources; they also give midshipmen an opportunity to work on their public speaking skills!**



## NROTC Rutgers/Princeton 2018-19 Unit Newsletter

### New Student Indoctrination by Joseph Traywick



**NSI concludes with the induction of civilians into the NROTC program as fourth-class midshipmen.**

*“Now that there was a drill team at Princeton, it was time to up the ante.”*

Entering fourth-class midshipmen from Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Unit Rutgers/Princeton received basic militarization and indoctrination training at Naval Station Great Lakes in July 2018. The indoctrination cruise was successful, and from now on, all entering midshipman candidates must complete the program.

Rear Admiral Michael Bernacchi, commander of the Naval Service Training Command, envisioned indoctrination as, “the launch point for ... the development of their character and professional competence.” Upon completion of the program, Rear Adm. Bernacchi told the new midshipmen, “Nobody in the history of the ROTC program has earned the title of Midshipman Fourth-Class more than you. You’re about to join the tribe of warriors - the profession of arms.”

The program was incredibly challenging. Candidates were forced

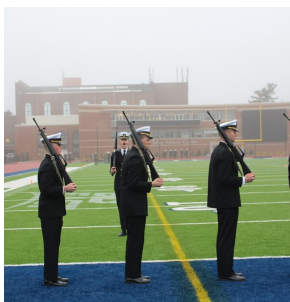
to maintain military bearing and accomplish tasks with perfect speed and effort. Between close-order drill, physical training, and “playing games,” candidates trained in basic maritime skills such as weapons handling, watchstanding, firefighting, and damage control. Midshipman Fourth-Class Zachary Hammack’s advice to future candidates reflected his understanding of the cruise’s intent. “You have to think about not just yourself but everyone in your platoon. You have to help everyone around you,” he said.

At indoctrination, midshipman and staff worked together to train candidates. Midshipman instructors followed former drill instructors working as “Platoon Enlisted Advisors” and ruled every waking moment of the candidates’ lives. Both Midshipman First-Class Eckhardt and Rhodes commanded a training platoon and worked closely with active duty staff. They had a softer role and provided

advice and support to their platoon throughout their training. However, they had a greater responsibility. “It was a training environment for us just as much as the candidates. We were put in stressful situations and had to hone our leadership skills and decision making while also being responsible for over thirty candidates’ training” Eckhardt said.

As the shock of the first days settled in, candidates gradually learned to wear the uniform with pride and live and train as a midshipman. The training successfully prepared the new midshipmen to undertake more difficult and more intense training in the future.

### The Princeton Squad Drill Team by Justin Calimlim



**Princeton midshipmen have set a precedent in close-order drill performance with their effort at this year’s MEC’s.**

Princeton. Squad. Drill. Three words that, when put together, were the laughing-stock of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Rutgers/Princeton unit. The 2018-19 school year changed that. Since the revamping of NROTC at Princeton in 2014, there seemed to be little hope for a Princeton squad drill team to compete at a Military Excellence Competition (MEC). Seniors were going to graduate without ever setting foot on the Villanova University drill deck. With many hours spent cracking rifles and nothing to show for, the future was bleak. However, as the east coast drill style faded with Gunnery Sergeant Sullivan’s departure, the new west coast drill swagger found its way to

the unit through Gunnery Sgt. Tellez’s arrival.

Everybody laughed at Gunnery Sgt. Tellez when he constantly reminded midshipmen that Princeton will compete in the Cornell University MEC. Under the command of Midshipman Second-Class Liam Kelly, Princeton squad drill placed right around where everyone expected: the middle of the pack. With all the preparation that had gone into this competition, Midshipman Kelly ensured last place was not an option.

Now that there was a drill team at Princeton, it was time to up the ante. The Villanova University MEC ap-

proached, the largest and most important MEC of the year, and Princeton was coming off an abysmal performance at the Rutgers University MEC. With around ten hours of practice leading up to the MEC, the day finally came. It was time for Princeton to finally legitimize themselves, and they did just that. Princeton came in second (ahead of the United States Naval Academy) behind the Rutgers squad and their immaculate performance. This means big things for the future of the Princeton drill team. Universities across the eastern United States will come into a competition thinking, “Guess we’ll shoot for 3rd,” as Rutgers and Princeton battle it out for the title.



## Commissioning Paths for Prospective Students by Lisa D'Souza

The military operates under very strictly organized hierarchy, one that distinguishes it from all other organizations. Specifically, the United States' military is split between enlisted personnel and officers with a range of ranks in each category. The main difference between the two is that officers have a bachelor's degree in any subject of choosing, whether it be English, mechanical engineering, or food science. In addition to having a degree, an officer must complete a training program, the three options being attending a service academy, participating in Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program while attending civilian college, or completing Officer Candidates School (OCS). Each path is very unique and has its own strengths that play an important role in developing its participants into officers with integrity and a strong dedication to their branch of service.

The United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md. provides aspiring naval officers a very unique opportunity for all midshipmen that attend. It is a small school with a little over 4,000 midshipmen on a beautiful, waterfront campus that takes 10 minutes to walk end to end. With all expenses covered, midshipmen at the academy have little to worry about except developing themselves as much possible during their four years there. Induction to the Naval Academy consists of a 6-week boot camp which follows a disciplined schedule: physical training for an hour at 0600 every morning followed by classes and training in ethics, sailing, navigation, officer etiquette, and other naval subjects. During the school year, the schedule resembles that of high school - six

periods a day, a lunch break in the middle, sports period after school, and time for homework in the evening. Though the academics are not as intense as civilian schools, midshipmen are challenged by their military obligations, ranging from parade practices, daily formations, forestall lectures, and briefs. In addition, midshipmen must wear uniforms every day to class, complete core classes that focus on officer development (navigation, leadership and ethics, and naval history among others), and have the opportunity to interact with officers on a daily basis. The Naval Academy is literally a military base, meaning that the midshipmen are thoroughly immersed in a military environment and have unlimited access to an extensive information bank of sea stories, leadership styles, and advice provided by the multitude of officers found both in the classroom and on every corner of the campus. While every midshipman is obligated to participate in a sport, the culture on campus is what drives fitness and encourages everyone to do their part in maintaining the Navy's physical standard. Everyone on campus is connected by this culture and their common goal of maintaining the tradition and legacy of the Naval Academy.

ROTC provides another path to becoming an officer in the military; however, it varies greatly from attending a service academy. It starts with a one-week crash course indoctrination right before the freshman school year starts. Then, midshipmen are thrown into the academic semester and face great challenges when balancing the transition to college in addition to their ROTC obligations. Though programs vary

greatly between colleges, these obligations include mandatory physical workouts two to three times per week, drill once a week, and a naval science class each semester. Many units choose to focus on drill as it is a method of instilling a sense of discipline in midshipmen. All units try to bring in distinguished military speakers and also encourage their midshipmen to attend leadership conferences to gain as much exposure to the military as possible. Time management skills are essential to success as midshipmen must balance a rigorous course load, late night classes or club meetings, social lives outside the unit, and early morning workouts. This often leaves midshipmen feeling like they lead two separate lives, one as a college student and one as a midshipman.

A key factor that plays a role into a midshipman's ability to develop is the size of the unit. Here at Rutgers, the NROTC unit consists of about 50 midshipmen, allowing each student to have plenty of interaction with officers at the unit and a sense of accountability among the tight knit program. The upperclassmen set a standard which is difficult for anyone to slip under, forcing everyone to rise to the expectations. This is a big contrast in culture to many other larger units in the country which have over 300 midshipmen. While there is a larger pool of midshipman to gain knowledge from, midshipmen get much less direct communication with officers. Additionally, though the unit is larger, on average the female to male ratio does not reflect the increased size, which can be a disadvantage to the women in the program. Regardless of unit size, the midshipmen in the ROTC program must complete the

same requirements and learn the same time management skills, preparing them for life as a junior officer in an effective, but different way than a service academy.

The last program someone can complete to become an officer is OCS. This is an intense 10-week program completed after already earning a degree. A typical day at OCS consists of waking up at 0330 (before lights on at 0500) to prep for the day, followed by various vigorous physical training, drilling, cleaning, and classroom exercises. While this format is similar to the indoctrinations for a service academy or ROTC program, the extended length of it shapes the officers differently. Participants have less of an opportunity to develop relationships with already existing officers because of the training environment and they are constantly under extreme pressure to perform one task right after another. Though this training format is different and does not have all the extra obligations midshipmen fulfill over four years, it can be advantageous for some because its intensity and thoroughness enable participants to feel like they have earned their position as an officer upon completion.

Though all three commissioning programs may seem different, they all lead to the same path as an active duty officer in the Navy or Marine Corps. Each program has its strengths and the capability to develop officers in their own unique way. Though the length of the program and the program's environment may vary, participants learn about what it means to be an officer in the military, train to meet the physical standards, and practice essential skills to be successful in the operating forces.

## NROTC Rutgers/Princeton 2018-19 Unit Newsletter

### Notre Dame Leadership Conference by Zachary Hammack



Leadership conferences provide an outlet for midshipman to network as they come together from various NROTC units.

*“The overarching theme of this weekend was “One Team, One Fight.””*

This February, I was given the opportunity to attend the 24th-Annual Notre Dame Naval Leadership Conference along with Midshipman Second-Class Kara Dowling, Midshipman Third-Class Gabrielle D’Arcangelo, and other midshipman from units all across the country. Over the course of the weekend, we spoke with junior officers about the challenges they face in the fleet, engaged in complex ethical decision-making exercises, and heard from various military leaders and strategic thinkers on topics such as leadership, career advice, modern geopolitical conflicts, and great power conflicts in history.

The overarching theme of this weekend was “One Team, One Fight.” While this was addressed by most speakers, I felt this was best expressed by Rear Admiral Jeffrey Jablon. He explained that there are several key factors that characterize a strong leader. First, the leader knows their sailors/marines. However, in doing so, the leader remains professional in order to avoid being seen as just a friend instead of a superior. Leaders hold themselves to the highest ethical standards, being honest to

their seniors and subordinates about their mistakes. The leader takes complete ownership. Rather than push the blame to their senior officer or enlisted subordinates, the leader understands that any failure on their team is the leader’s failure, and they must make plans to avoid future mishaps. These characteristics of a good leader, as presented by Rear Adm. Jablon, all come together to make officers who are truly committed to creating an environment where sailors and marines can maximize their effectiveness working together to fight for our country.

The final speaker of the weekend was Lieutenant General John Sattler. Continuing within the theme of “One Team, One Fight,” he spoke about the importance of always keeping a notebook, maintaining complete accountability, and knowing and looking out for one’s sailors and Marines. However, Lt. Gen. Sattler also introduced me to something I had never seen before: The 2nd Marine Division Daily Self-Assessment. This assessment, handed out to every Marine under the charge of Lt. Gen. Sattler during his command, reads as

following: Who did I teach today, and what did I teach them? What did I learn today, and from whom did I learn it? Who did I make smile? As demonstrated by this assessment, Lt. Gen. Sattler believes that daily growth is a necessity for the success of any force, military or otherwise. As long as Navy and Marine Corps officers continue to remain humble, strive to grow every day, and remain dedicated to the fight, the United States military continue to push the limits of physical and technological capabilities in order to make the world a better place.

### Winter 2019 Commissioning by John Jung



The Winter Commissioning saw three new officers enter the Navy and Marine Corps.

This winter, Rutgers/Princeton NROTC commissioned three of its members into the Navy and Marine Corps - one Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) participant, Staff Sergeant Kevin Stapleton, and two midshipmen, Connor McGowan and Jaden Fields.

The ceremony took place on January 26th in Kirkpatrick Chapel at Rutgers University on a cold and sunny day. At 10am, the ceremony was ready to begin. Inside the historical Kirkpatrick chapel, pews were labeled for family members. Flags representing the United States, the Navy and Marine Corps, the missing-in-action and prisoners of war, Rutgers University, and New Jersey surrounded the stage. The red carpet and ceremonial bullets were in place at the entrance of chapel, while

the bell and speaker were manned and at the ready. On the stage was an enormous American flag that emphasized the importance and officiality of the day. The chapel was filled with excited family, friends, administrators, military guests, and alumni/former staff from Rutgers/Princeton NROTC.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the guest of honor, Commander Todd Massow, and the Commanding Officer, Captain Andrew Smith, entered to the sound of bells and whistles – a Navy tradition. In the ceremony, the commissionees had their commissioning warrants read aloud. They also recited the oath of office, which reaffirmed their commitment to service in the United States Navy and Marine Corps as officers. Finally, each commissionee was recognized individually. Their

family joined them on stage to pin on the new rank insignia or reveal the stripes. Then, each commissionee received their commissioning certificate and a unit coin to commemorate their time at Rutgers/Princeton NROTC. The ceremony concluded with remarks from the commanding officer and chaplain. Cymbal crashes of “Stars and Stripes Forever” brought people up from their seat, eager to congratulate the newly commissioned officers.

The midshipmen who attended the ceremony looked up to the newly commissioned officers inspiring, knowing that their time would come when they commission. To everyone present, it was most certainly a wonderful Navy and Marine Corps day!

## NROTC Rutgers/Princeton New Student Orientation by Esha Rao

As you lay in the cold, sweaty barracks of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst for one last night, you start to reflect upon the last week of your life - which felt more like a month - and how much you were able to overcome and learn. From the countless hours of drill movements to the early morning training sessions to the intellectual leadership discussions to the continuous feeling of sweat dripping down your forehead; it all seemed inane at the time, but now you understand.

Becoming a Rutgers/Princeton midshipman takes more than just a scholarship; it takes honor, courage, and commitment. I, myself, came in without a scholarship and had no idea what I was signing up for until I attended the Rutgers/Princeton NROTC New Student Orientation (NSO) which taught me about the morals, values, and standards of the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and Rutgers/Princeton NROTC unit. Even though the week definitely pushes all the candidates to their limits, physically and mentally, it also shows just how much a midshipman grows in their time at Rutgers/Princeton NROTC.

The week is not just run by officers and staff members. Select first-class and second-class midshipmen (juniors and seniors in college), who attended the event themselves just a couple years prior, put in a lot of time and energy into organizing the orientation. This past year, I got the unique opportunity to go back as second-class midshipman and was assigned

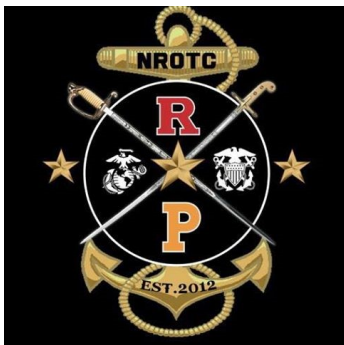
the position of midshipman drill instructor. I had dreamed about being able to go back so I could be on the flip side of the week, but it definitely was not any easier. When I was a candidate two years back, I thought waking up at 0500 was hard. As a second-class midshipman, I had to get up at 0415 to make sure my hair was in a proper bun, my uniform looked tight, and meet up with the rest of the midshipman and NROTC staff. Even after a long day of activities, when the candidates would go to sleep at 2130, the upperclassmen, staff, and officers stayed up even later to go over the plan for the next day. Logistics and planning were all we did in the weeks leading up to NSO, but in a blink of an eye it was over. It gave me a sense of gratitude for the staff and officers as well as the other midshipmen that were by my side.

When I came back from NSO this year, I started to realize not only how much I had grown because of the staff and other midshipmen throughout the course of the past few years but also how excited I was to continue to grow and see how I would be able to help these new fourth-class midshipmen someday take charge of New Student Orientation alongside the staff and officers. The Rutgers/Princeton NROTC NSO is a tradition that helps carry on the values and standards for our nation's future U.S. naval officers.



**The midshipmen candidates spend an entire week at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst executing physical training, close-order drill, and leadership classes before they are able to officially join the NROTC program and earn the title of fourth-class midshipman.**





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## About NROTC Rutgers/Princeton

The NROTC program was established to educate and train young men and women for service as commissioned officers in the United States Navy or Marine Corps. As the largest single source of Navy and Marine Corps officers, the NROTC Scholarship Program plays an important role in preparing young men and women for leadership positions in an increasingly technical Navy and Marine Corps.

Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Unit Rutgers/Princeton is proud to represent midshipmen from the campuses of Rutgers and Princeton. The unit was established in March 2012 at Rutgers University and in April 2014, Princeton University joined the program as a cross-town affiliate.

### Mission Statement

To develop midshipmen mentally, morally, and physically to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, and loyalty, and with the core values of honor, courage, and commitment in order to commission as naval officers who possess a basic professional background, are motivated toward careers in the naval service, and have a potential for future development in mind and character so as to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government.



## Special Friends Day by Kurt Malinoski

On March 3, NROTC Unit Rutgers University midshipmen volunteered at the Rutgers Special Friends Day. The event starts in the morning with the pairing of special needs children with midshipmen and other members of the Rutgers community. They are introduced by the child's parents where they talk about the exciting events ahead. The pairs are provided the opportunity to engage in arts and crafts, basketball, swimming, dancing, and more throughout the morning and into the afternoon. Pizza was provided for lunch for all of the participants and volunteers. At the conclusion of the day, the children are

then picked up by their parents where the pairs and children get to talk about how they spent their day.

The event takes place at the Cook/Douglass Recreation Center and is made possible by the Douglass Developmental Disabilities Center. The NROTC program has participated in this for the second consecutive year and midshipmen have taken advantage of the opportunity to give back to the local community while also honing their leadership aptitudes.



**Our midshipmen love to give back to the community in many different ways!**

*"... midshipmen have taken advantage of the opportunity to give back to the local community while also honing their leadership aptitudes."*