



The Black Dragon Dispatch - Spring 2021



A Message from the Commanding Officer:

Hello Midshipmen, Family and Friends,

Congratulations on completing a challenging year by any standards! It seems quite some time ago, but in the fall semester we began in an on-line mode and conducted all of our events via Zoom. Despite the hurdles, you all persevered and I could not be more proud of how well you weathered the storm. The experiences will build your resiliency and will make you all better Navy and Marine Corps Officers in the long run. Together we found ways to overcome obstacles, technology issues, and separation. We did have the ability to have on line sessions with RDML Waters from Submarine Group TWO and CAPT Patrick from the Office of Legislative Affairs.



Moving into the spring semester, some midshipmen came back to campus and we were able to conduct in person physical training, Naval Science classes and labs. Despite the additional challenges of hybrid learning, contact tracing and the winter weather in New Jersey, the team pulled through together and I could not be more proud of how you all conducted yourself. Moving forward, you should be excited about summer cruises and training opportunities and be prepared to take every advantage that is offered. Being ready is an important aspect of our profession, and as future military officers, it is up to you to ensure you are ready when the opportunity presents itself. I encourage you all to continue to challenge yourselves in all aspects!





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I also want to congratulate our graduating seniors! Well done to Ray Bellaran, Matthew Boettge, Jake Chiasson, Ryan Dicriscio, Carl Olsen, Brady Williams, and to our Battalion Commanding Officers from this past year, John Peterson and Evan Craige. Your leadership by example and determination have set the Black Dragon Battalion on the path to success. I appreciate your tenacity and efforts throughout your time at the Navy ROTC Unit and wish you all the best as you head out to the Fleet!

Finally, I will be turning over my duties as Commanding Officer in late August to CAPT Paul DeMarcellus. CAPT DeMarcellus is a SH-60 Helicopter pilot and is coming to Rutgers from his previous post as the Naval Attache to Portugal. I know the Unit is in great hands going forward. It has been the honor of a lifetime to be a part of this great Unit, the BEST in the country in my opinion. Your tenacity, determination are evident in the new levels the Unit continues to reach. I encourage you all to continue to lead with discipline and humility....attention to detail in preparation and precision in execution when on-station! I look forward to your success going forward! Bravo Zulu and Fair Winds and Following Seas!

With utmost respect,
CAPT Andy Smith





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Naval Leadership Week Recap by MIDN 4/C Freeman, Mia

The 2021 Notre Dame Naval Leadership Conference, a week-long program hosted by the University of Notre Dame's NROTC, took place from February 22nd to February 26th. Midshipmen from various universities throughout the United States were invited to attend any and all days of this Naval Leadership Week (NLW) and hear incredible speeches from notable military personnel such as ADM Christopher W. Grady, FLTCM Richard P. O'Rawe, General David H. Berger, USMC, and RADM Yvette M. Davids.

In order to adapt to this year's social distancing guidelines, combined with many Midshipmen across the country living off-campus, the program was hosted entirely



online through services such as Zoom and Google Meet. At the end of each speaker's address, Midshipmen were able to engage with them during a

Q&A portion, taking full advantage of their military expertise and life experiences. Friday, February 26th, was the final day of NLW and unique from the rest of the program. Rather than the speech-and-Q&A format, Friday featured a Junior Officer Panel. These junior officers represented each of the Navy's Warfare Communities and exemplified what every participating Midshipman aimed to be in the very near future. Their fresh perspectives and newfound experiences as





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active-duty Naval Officers were priceless pieces of information to every Midshipman in attendance.

Despite lasting only five short days, NLW successfully encouraged and inspired a plethora of Midshipmen. Although the speeches and panel could only be viewed through a screen, the University of Notre Dame meticulously organized and hosted this program to be as engaging and accessible as possible. Midshipmen were able to absorb stories and messages from some of the Navy's finest individuals, and their passions for service and adventure will go a long way in motivating this new generation of future Naval Officers.





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Perspectives of NROTC Rutgers' Return to Campus

MIDN 2/C Marrero, Zachary

Since the start of the Covid-19 in March of 2020, we have been on a long journey toward normalcy. We saw fall semester completely virtual which was a disappointment to say the least. With the unit full of midshipmen who strive to push themselves mentally and physically, it is hard to do so when there is a lack of in-person training and communication. We have come a long way since shifting to completely virtual instruction. With weekly testing and social distancing, we were able to return to some of the activities that make NROTC what it is. We have adapted to the

circumstances and allowed them to help us grow. Physical Training (PT) is now being conducted again on Mondays and Wednesdays with precautions in place to keep everyone safe and limit the potential spread of the



Coronavirus. Everyone wears masks and workouts are based on individual movements so we can maintain physical distancing. It is nice to see how an organization can still thrive given the setbacks we all have experienced. Additionally, we conduct NROTC drill and lab with proper sanitation precautions and distanced seats in the auditorium. Understanding that not everyone had access to housing this year, many midshipmen are still virtual during our lab periods. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to attend NROTC events in person while others are still able to attend and contribute to discussions virtually. It truly shows how much the world is evolving in the age of technology. I encourage everyone to





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take the time to discover how the world has changed and how they can change in order to help them adapt to unforeseen setbacks like this in the future.

MIDN 3/C Leon, Sebastian

I was glad when I received the news that we would be returning to campus this semester. As much as I love my hometown, I wanted to get back to a sense of normalcy. During the months of quarantine I would keep in touch with many of my fellow peers and we would recall life at Rutgers. Especially, the moments of shared exhaustion and the good moments in life. It was the little things that I really missed, such as going to Brower Commons after Naval Science classes, where almost the whole battalion went for chow after class. Those laughs and good times were something I missed and to this day, I still do. It's great to be on campus again,



but it is vastly different than pre-COVID times. There are significantly less students on campus today than there were before the pandemic and it is easy to tell. Many fruits of civilization that were once open are still closed, such as our beloved Brower Commons Dining Hall and College Ave Gym. Still, many in-person MIDN have easily adapted to the current situation and have overcome those obstacles. It is also a little strange not to see all MIDN in the battalion with our fellow brothers and sisters at Princeton or online. I currently live at the Yard with my good friend and peer MIDN





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Rebolledo and we absolutely love it. During the winter months there was no one hanging around the Yard studying due to the cold weather. Now that the weather is picking up there are a lot of people out and about which reminds me of when everything was normal. To summarize, even though many establishments are still closed and there are many protocols in place, I am still fortunate and thrilled to be back on campus. Never take anything for granted. Stay in the fight. Keep attacking.

MIDN 4/C Collins, Zachary

The 4/C experience on campus has been very new and different from anything I have experienced before. We are totally self-reliant; we must make sure we stay on top of ourselves to get things done. Another thing is that we must be disciplined and hold ourselves accountable because there is still a sense of self-reliance, especially living off campus on my own. The campus is still very new to me, even though we have a big space it can be tough to find the place you need to be at. NROTC is something that I had to adapt to by waking up early for a 6am PT session Monday, Wednesday, and sometimes Fridays for drill. Despite all the challenges of the coronavirus, we persevere to train for our military careers with PT and drill and learn above anything else to band together and push each other to get better. As a whole, the 4/C experience this year has been a very unique and beneficial experience, helping build a sense of self-reliance and discipline that I wouldn't find anywhere else.





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Maj. Schueman Guest Speaker by MIDN 2/C Walker, Trinitee

On 26 March, the battalion had the pleasure of speaking with Major Schueman during our weekly Naval Science lab. We had the opportunity to hear words of advice and gain knowledge that will help us better prepare for our next steps in becoming Naval Officers. We also had the privilege of hearing about Major Schueman's time as a Marine Corps Infantry officer and English Instructor at the United States Naval Academy. Major Schueman focused the discussion on leadership and began with one of his favorite quotes about leadership, stating "An individual has not begun to live until he can rise above the narrow horizons." He expressed how it is important to be willing to sacrifice your own comfort and rise to the occasion for the greater good. Although Major Schueman shared many fascinating thoughts on leadership in general, the discussion gravitated towards combat leadership in particular. Using an analogy of a spear and a shield, Major Schueman emphasized the importance of each community. Whether you are planning on going submarines, pilots, or Marines, we all play a crucial role in combat and protecting this nation. To further explain the importance of combat leadership, he recounted his time as an Infantry officer and tied in the term Semper Fidelis, expressing how combat leadership is, in part, about always being faithful, even when faced with fear or adversity. It is about choosing to be courageous, aggressive, and loyal despite all the chaos surrounding you, or inside you. Major Schueman ended the discussion with a Q&A, in which he gave advice and discussed topics varying from education to brotherly love to leadership development opportunities for midshipmen. One piece of advice that I found very valuable was that in order to be a good leader, you must be competent, a person of character, and be compassionate. Those are all great traits we could all benefit from and should inspire to have.





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2ndLt Lynch Graduates OCS by MIDN 4/C Gilchrist, Ryan

The saying “nobody cares” was repeatedly hurled towards Jackson Township-native Amy Lynch back at New Student Orientation in the summer of 2017, but the meaning finally clicked near the end of Officer Candidate School; adversity is not an excuse to explain. As Midshipman Lynch navigated through her 4/C year at Rutgers University, her time in the battalion consisted of her working hard and pushing herself to get better, while erasing self pity. From swimming practices with the Assistant Marine Officer Instructor, to completing extra workouts and running programs (and cutting her 3-mile time by nearly 5 minutes!), Lynch put in the work and emerged as a leading member of the battalion at Rutgers.



In the Fall semester of her 2/C year, Midshipman Lynch assumed the role of Public Affairs Officer. With this unexpected billet, Lynch used the opportunity to develop and implement a new social media plan for the battalion. Her “Midshipmen Minute” videos became a monthly occurrence and the social media page was rejuvenated into the platform it is today. Additionally, Midshipman Lynch became a role model for younger midshipmen, including helping Midshipman Kim learn how to become a proficient swimmer, an experience which stayed with Lynch as one of her greatest memories. This was a chance for her to give back not only through academics to the battalion, but through physical fitness as well.

Midshipman Lynch completed her Political Science degree and graduated from Rutgers University a semester early in January. Later that same month, she





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reported to Officer Candidates school located in Quantico, Virginia for OCC-236. On Saturday, 27 March 2021, Midshipman Lynch successfully completed Marine Officer Candidate School and was commissioned into the Marine Corps as a 2nd Lieutenant. 2ndLt Lynch reported to The Basic School in May aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico. Although her MOS hasn't been determined, besides her ground contract, 2ndLt Lynch's main interests lie in the intelligence, combat engineering, and artillery communities. With her focus, confidence, and determination, it is assured that 2ndLt Lynch will reach new heights of success as she begins her journey as a United States Marine.



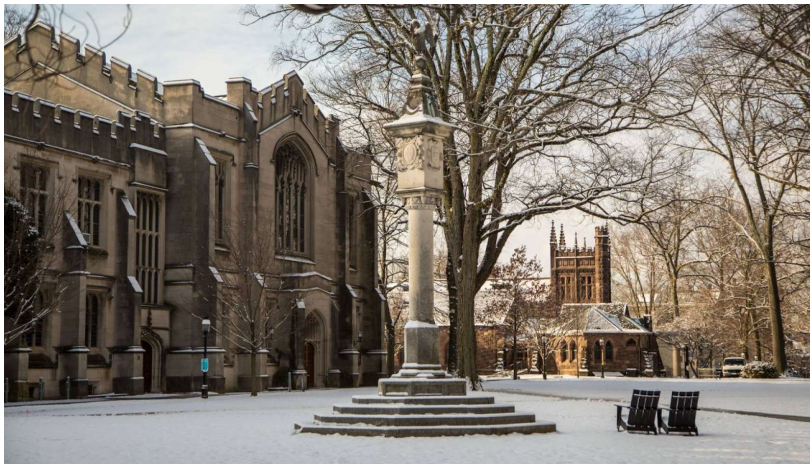


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Perspectives of NROTC Princeton's Return to Campus

MIDN 3/C Ogawa, Megan

After a little less than a year since any Rutgers/Princeton MIDN had any in-person activities, we were all excited and motivated to adapt to a new way of doing things



as a unit on the Princeton campus. At first, the restrictions were a bit tedious: quarantining for 7 days in our dorm rooms, testing 2-3 times a week for COVID, not being allowed to gather in large groups, and of course continuing to learn and complete coursework via

Zoom. Thankfully, with generous support from the university for allowing us to use varsity athletic facilities for PT and classrooms as well as an indoor space for drill, we were able to fully continue regularly scheduled ROTC activities.

With being able to do ROTC activities on the Princeton campus, I personally have never felt more unity with the other MIDN at Princeton. Especially as rising upperclassmen, this semester really allowed us to step into leadership roles in the form of billets and mentorship as we were able to integrate more targeted training and more access to resources from our university to further our physical and academic growth. Now, as it becomes more evident towards the end of this semester, the hard work and motivation produced by each MIDN from Princeton has reached an inspiring high level of morale which excites me to look





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optimistically towards a more unified and exemplary unit for future classes of Princeton MIDN.

MIDN 4/C Gilhuley, Catherine

In a semester where pretty much everything is online, having NROTC in person has definitely been a highlight. It has been so great to have something to get me out of my room many days of the week, and it has really helped make these past few months feel somewhat normal. All other classes and activities have such tight restrictions, with testing, single rooming, entirely virtual classes, and limits on group gatherings. Because of this, I really appreciate the hard work that went into making this in-person component of ROTC happen.

As a 4/C, this semester has been my first real introduction to the unit. Last semester was tough because I felt pretty disconnected from the other MIDN, but I feel so much more part of the unit now. I have gotten to know the Princeton MIDN a lot better than before, and I have felt super welcomed and supported the whole time. It has been super motivating to have a group to PT and go to class with, and the mentality has been even better and more inspiring than I expected. I am really looking forward to next semester and seeing what the unit is like without so many covid restrictions!





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Homemade ASTB-E Simulator by MIDN 2/C Hammack, Zachary

This past semester, I took the ASTB-E (Aviation Selection Test Battery) twice. This test, comprised of many different sections, testing a wide variety of skills, aims to measure the aptitude of candidates for Naval Flight School. When I took the test the first time, I found a great deal of helpful study tools for most of the test. I bought practice books, watched YouTube videos, and memorized quizlets I found online. I found these resources to be very helpful as I prepared to take the test for the first time. What I could not find was any way to prepare for the Performance Based Measures (PBM) section of the test. This section asks the user to simultaneously track multiple enemy targets using a joystick and throttle while also completing tasks such as a dichotic listening task and different emergency situation tasks. The goal here is to measure how well the user can respond to multiple stimuli at once and maintain composure during a (mildly) stressful situation. All the advice I found was that flight time and simulation time were enough to get a good score. As someone who has had experience in both, I was unpleasantly surprised when I took the ASTB-E for the first time. I knew that a study aide could be very helpful here. Originally, I wasn't sure exactly how I would make it, but I eventually decided on using a combination of HTML, JavaScript, and CSS to create a simulation resembling the ASTB-E.



The goal of my simulation is to provide the maximum possible benefit to those preparing to take the ASTB-E. This dictated my implementation process in a way I didn't originally foresee. I had expected to spend a great deal of time on making the display mirror exactly what I remembered from the ASTB-E and making the simulation give detailed feedback on how users can improve to maximize their score. Upon further contemplation, however, I realized that this would be counterproductive. Because NSTC does not publicly release the algorithms they





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use for scoring, I can at best guess what their algorithms are, and it is very unlikely I would come anywhere near what they have. Therefore, once I constructed a basic display and successfully connected various scripts to run simultaneously, I spent the majority of my time creating an interesting simulation that will attract users' attention and increase the likelihood that they will spend more time practicing for the ASTB-E.

My simulation consists of two distinct parts. In the first part, the user is able to practice taking the ASTB-E similarly to how they would during the actual test. The user controls their joystick to track one randomly moving enemy on the right while using keyboard inputs to track the enemy on the left. When the user becomes



comfortable with this task, they can practice for the dichotic listening task portion. In order to create this task, I used Logic Pro to create custom audio files that play blended audio in each ear. The user is asked to pay attention to one particular ear and then enter inputs as instructed. For this

task, the user is tested on accuracy and speed just as they will be on the actual test. Once the user becomes proficient in this task, they can practice the emergency situation tasks. For these, the user must respond to various emergency situations by entering commands as instructed before the simulation begins.

The second part of my simulation consists of three minigames. I added these minigames because I found the simulation itself to be uninteresting after more than 10-15 minutes of gameplay. Because it may take several hours to develop the proficiency needed to really do well on the ASTB-E, I added these minigames to keep the user's interest so that they can remain engaged and spend more time training for the ASTB-E.

The first minigame relies only on the joystick. In this game, the user moves their player to collide with the stagnant enemy. Upon collision, the user's score





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improves and the enemy changes places. Once the user earns a certain score, obstacles are introduced. As the user progresses, more and more obstacles are introduced that impede the player from colliding with the enemy. In the second minigame, the rules remain the same, except it now uses two players and two enemies instead of one each. This minigame adds the additional challenge of being able to manipulate two players at once and maintains the additional obstacles that impede the players. In the final minigame, the layout is identical to the original simulation. Now, the user is rewarded when they click the mouse as they collide with a randomly moving enemy. This minigame rewards accuracy and confidence as the user will score the most points when they click often and remain on target.

This project has been exciting to work on over the course of the semester. I've enjoyed the self-guided nature of the project as well as the ability to self-teach languages like JavaScript and HTML. I think that some of the habits necessary for success in the project, and computer science, are relevant to success later as a naval officer. For example, very often during the semester, I found myself stuck on various problems. I had to think critically, and reason about which problems I would likely be able to solve on my own, and which problems I would need the help of my peers and mentors to solve. Understanding my weaknesses and strengths has been critical for my success in this project, just as it will be critical for my success as a junior officer making my way through Naval Flight School. While working on this project this summer, I plan to continue pursuing my newfound interest in flight simulation by interning at the Applied Physics Lab at Johns Hopkins University. I plan to work on artificial intelligence algorithms to help fighter pilots make informed decisions to most effectively combat the enemy in a dogfight.

To try the simulator for practice or just to see what it's like, the code will be continually updated at my GitHub repository linked below:

<https://github.com/mcHammack/Simulator>





Perspectives of NROTC Rutgers Sports Volunteering

MIDN 3/C Seo, Joshua

NROTCU Rutgers continued to support its university community through volunteering for different sports events: volleyball, gymnastics, and field hockey.

Actively engaged throughout the Spring 2021 semester, our Midshipmen helped these activities flow fluently as we cheered proudly with our university spirit.



For the Womens' Volleyball volunteering, the NROTC Midshipmen retrieved volleyballs that were hit out of the field of play. Additionally, we kept the game hygienic by cleaning the volleyballs with sprays and wipes. All Midshipmen wore masks and gloves while participating.

The Gymnastics volunteering took place in the RAC Livingston Center, where heavy equipment needed to be carried and placed for the gymnastics competition held in Rutgers. Representing our unit by wearing unified khakis and unit polos, Midshipmen were able to help arrange the equipment with the gymnastics staff. The Midshipmen also helped load the equipment back into the truck after the event.

Field Hockey took place on the Livingston Track, where Midshipmen wore their PT shirts and camo pants to show unification. By recovering balls that were out of bounds, and helping set up the field, we were able to actively engage and allow the game to occur with minimal delays. In all, we were happy to get back to helping with things we had done in the past, seeing the first returns to normalcy in a long time.





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MIDN 2/C Peluso, Jack

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton could not engage with the rest of the Scarlet Knight community to the extent we had in previous years. However, this past semester the Black Dragon Battalion took strides to reach out to other organizations and continue to develop our relationship with the university and its many organizations. NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton is a relatively new entity on the banks of the Raritan, having only been established in 2012. Because of this, it is imperative that we continue to foster communication and collaboration between Midshipmen and the student body.

One of the best ways we accomplish this is by volunteering with our Division I sports program. Throughout the semester, Midshipmen assisted the Gymnastics, Volleyball, and Field Hockey teams during their home games. These volunteer



opportunities serve the dual purpose of raising funds for unit events, such as Mess Night and Military Excellence Competitions, as well as increasing our face time with the university at large. Even with their busy schedules, made even more hectic by remote classes, the MIDN of the Black Dragon Battalion put time aside to give back to the Rutgers community.

Additionally, these volunteer events help connect freshmen Midshipmen to their peers in other parts of the university, facilitating their transition from high school to college life. Our Midshipmen and Rutgers athletes have a lot in common in terms of work ethic, physical fitness, and academic standards, and that often leads to good collaboration between our two groups. Our volunteer efforts are still expanding, and we hope to continue growing our impact here at Rutgers University as we prepare to return to fully in-person learning for the Fall 2021 semester. The Midshipmen of NROTC Rutgers/Princeton are both future military leaders and full-time students. It is important that we engage with our fellow students whenever possible in order to maintain the balance of school and military service.



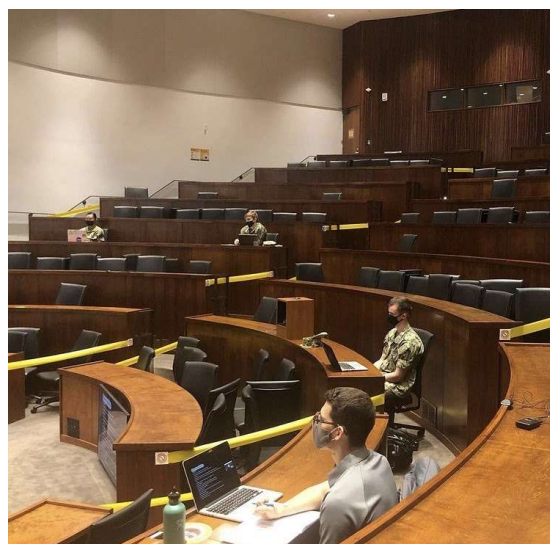


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LCDR Knips Guest Speaker by MIDN 2/C Zito, Nate

On 16 April 2021, LCDR Billy Knips led the Black Dragon's Naval Science Lab. Select Princeton MIDN residing on campus were able to physically listen to LCDR Knips at Robertson Hall, while the remainder of the Black Dragon Battalion tuned in via Zoom. LCDR Knips spoke not only of his career thus far in Naval Special Warfare, which includes ten deployments and a plethora of duty stations worldwide, but also offered a deeper insight into the men and women of the various teams he was a part of. Teamwork was undoubtedly one of the overarching themes of the brief, and regardless of warfare specialty, LCDR Knips noted that teamwork is of the utmost importance. From Afghanistan to Africa, LCDR Knips elaborated on experiences that helped shape the man, SEAL, teammate, and leader that he is today. MIDN 2/C Zito had the following to say about the brief, "LCDR Knips made the Teams human in the best way possible, as he offered personal anecdotes about the men behind the Trident, men that he went to war and back with. To say that stuck with me is an understatement." A special thanks to LCDR Knips for taking the time out of his busy schedule to speak with the Black Dragon Battalion.





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Spring Commissioning Ceremony Recap by MIDN 3/C

Kowalewski, Simon

This May, NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton commissioned the class of 2021. The ceremony took place on May 17, and although it was done virtually, the significance and importance of the ceremony was by no means lost. This year, the battalion was lucky to have Major General Christopher E. Craige, father of now Ensign Evan Craige, speak on the importance of joint readiness and operability, of giving your all in all you do, and of remembering your roots wherever you go in life. After the oath of office was delivered by Captain Andrew Smith, commanding officer of NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton, commissionees individually had their



family members and loved ones attach their shoulderboards and pin their bars, marking the very first moments of their respective Navy and Marine Corps careers. As the ceremony came to its conclusion, several departing active-duty staff members were also recognized for their distinguished service here at NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton. Lieutenant Mark Hammerquist, Captain Joel Del Rosario, and Gunnery Sergeant Tyler Tellez were each awarded the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for their outstanding contributions to the unit during their tenure here. As the academic year draws to a close, and our newly commissioned





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Ensigns and Second Lieutenants begin to hit the fleet, there is no greater feeling than seeing the entirety of the hard work that each of the young men and women that have gone through this program have given manifest itself in ceremonies like this. To all commissionees and departing active-duty staff, all of us at NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton wish you fair winds and following seas!





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Alumni Updates

2ndLt Jeffin James

I had the privilege to earn my commission from Rutgers NROTC in May of 2020 and began The Basic School in June of 2020. The Basic School is a 28-week school (The long suck) where you learn the basics of how to be a provisional rifle platoon commander. The Basic School is a great school where newly commissioned Lieutenants will learn exponentially more than they have tactically and professionally during their four years at Navy ROTC and OCS. At TBS, Marines will learn a lot about themselves through extensive time in the classroom and field. Regardless of your MOS, you will learn the basics of how to be an officer at The Basic School. Take it seriously. There will be plenty of times for you to refer back to what you learned at The Basic School in order to be successful. The good thing about TBS is that you get the weekends to yourself. Some of the people you meet at TBS will be lifelong friends. I treasured many of my moments and nights out with peers because this is truly the last time you will be in a setting with that many Lieutenants/peers your age (for the most part). TBS is truly an incredible school. Every week you are learning more and more about what you are capable of, what the Marine Corps is capable of and how fine this organization truly is. Treasure every moment, the suck and the fun, because I certainly had plenty of both.





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Upon graduating The Basic School. I had the privilege to attend the Marine Corps Infantry Officer Course, 2-21. The Infantry Officer Course is truly one of the toughest and best conventional military courses offered in the world by the



Department of Defense. If OCS is a crawl, and TBS is a walk, the Infantry Officer's Course is a full out sprint for three months. Every single day was a very unforgiving learning moment to teach aspiring 0302's how to operate through stress, hunger, thirst, sleep deprivation under the chaotic unknown. This course breeds the leaders to the world's finest infantry units. I had believed I learned a lot about myself during The Basic School, but it was not until the Infantry Officer's Course I truly learned about myself.

The Infantry Officers Course is a very rigorous course; however, I am extremely honored to be a part of a legacy that very few will ever know or understand.

For those Midshipmen who are about to commission (or still have some time), here is some of my advice. First and foremost, please understand this one sentence - "It's not about me". Once you put those gold bars on, you have lost your right to make it about you. Everything you do must be for your Marines and Sailors. They are the backbone of these organizations. Without them, the Marine Corps is nothing. As an officer, you must be the biggest supporting asset to your Marines and Sailors. You are responsible for your Marines and Sailors for the rest of their lives, not just while they serve. Never ask them to do something you would not have the courage to do yourself. Be firm, be fair, be respectful and more importantly, be compassionate and you must love your Marines and Sailors. The day may come where they may lay their life down carrying out YOUR orders. There is no greater love than that, and you must love them just as much. Your Marines will not care how much you know until they know how much you care.





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For those TBS bound, the unit will prepare you to be exactly where you need to be. Don't worry about MOS school. You will be prepared for TBS and then understand you are there to serve your Marines and Sailors, your MOS does not matter. I urge you to respect your NCO's. Regardless of how far you get, or how much you think you know. They have incredible experience and knowledge that you do not have. Lean on them for advice and vice versa. I still reach out to Gunnery Sergeant Tellez and First Sergeant Sullivan when I need help, and they have never steered me wrong.

Whatever it is you may desire to do in the Navy or Marine Corps, be a master of your profession. Read all you can about everything you can. You will never stop learning and you must always be a student. Becoming an Officer is a privilege. To be able to work alongside the Marines and Sailors you will work with is an absolute honor. You have to earn the nametape you wear on your left breast pocket every single day.

ENS Toth by MIDN 3/C Ginsburg, Lila

On 17 April 2021, the Surface Warfare Club met with Ensign Toth. To begin the meeting, Ensign Toth talked about his initial journey to his ship. Ensign Toth graduated from Rutgers University in May 2020, with a major in Electrical Engineering. After completing BDOC and JOOD training, he flew to Yokosuka, Japan to join his ship, the USS *John S. McCain* (DDG-56). During four and a half months of deployment, Ensign Toth has been a part of numerous Freedom of Navigation exercises and major joint exercises with other ships in DESRON 6. In addition to the damage control drills and carrier strike group exercises that he has been a part of, Ensign Toth has been managing and leading as a Division Officer in the Weapons Department, where he





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oversees personnel, training, equipment, and manning. He explained to our group that as a division officer, you will be juggling divisional responsibilities, deployment evolutions, qualifications, watch standing, fitness, and sleep. Ensign Toth made it clear that you must use your time wisely and learn how to manage



your time because the schedule is ever-changing on deployment; you must be ready to pivot. He walked us through a “day in his life,” explaining the typical schedule, which is full of meetings, briefs, watch standing, and drills. On the topic of managing your schedule, time, and responsibilities, he

emphasized that it is easy to

sacrifice your qualifications in pursuit of your job, so the need for balance and prioritization is critical. In order to get the SWO pin, one must make time every day to study and get the qualifications done. Ensign Toth went on to discuss one of the biggest challenges he faced when getting to his first ship was the learning curve. He explained that facing the learning curve is all about knowing your resources and knowing who to talk to, because as a new junior officer, you will not know the proper way to do things on the ship. He also stressed the importance of reaching out to those around you, asking questions like “what does the SWO (Surface Warfare Officer) PQS (Personnel Qualification Standards) entail?” For the rest of the meeting, Midshipmen asked questions about a number of topics, ranging from daily ship life to officer-enlisted relationships and leadership. Throughout the discussion, Ensign Toth gave out valuable advice, no matter the warfare community one was to enter. He closed out the meeting with a few words on your role as a leader and the weight of your position, “In all things, take pride in what you’re doing. Commit to it, your guys deserve the best out of you.”





Departing Staff Member Interviews

What has been your favorite memory from your time at NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton?

LT Hammerquist: “My favorite memory is not one specific moment, but every time I see the MIDN on the stage being promoted to ENS/2Lt and knowing they are ready for the fleet.”

Capt Del Rosario: “Proving young men and women that something which seemed impossible can be attainable with hard work, and then seeing them become our future leaders of this country.”

GySgt Tellez: “Winning the Cornell Invitational MEC.”

Where are you headed next?

LT Hammerquist: “Department Head School in Newport, RI.”

Capt Del Rosario: “I’ll be the Communications Officer at 4th Marine Division in New Orleans.”

GySgt Tellez: “2nd CEB, 2nd MARDIV, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.”

What parting words would you give to the midshipmen of NROTCU Rutgers/Princeton?

LT Hammerquist: “Enjoy this time and learn as much as possible.”

Capt Del Rosario: “Aim to be the hardest working person in the room. If you do that, you’ll be successful.”

GySgt Tellez: “Conduct business right and you’ll succeed. And remember it’s not about you, you work for your Marines and Sailors.”





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The Last Word

Thank you to everyone from the midshipmen, active-duty staff, and alumni who helped make this semester's newsletter a success.

One may recognize that the newsletter has had a bit of rebranding for this semester. Throughout the Fall semester, multiple polls were sent out to midshipmen and staff alike in order to first obtain suggestions for a new, unique battalion nickname. After many great suggestions, The Black Dragon Battalion was settled upon after receiving the most votes. The Black Dragon was the nickname for the *Iowa*-class battleship, USS *New Jersey* (BB-62), ensuring a unique and fitting nickname for the country's only New Jersey-based NROTC battalion. The new battalion logo was also decided upon by midshipmen and pays homage to the USS *New Jersey*'s patch. Thank you to everyone for helping to create a unique identity for the nation's best NROTC battalion.



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