
THE CROW'S NEST

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The IIT/UIC Unit presents its colors as a team at the annual Chicago consortium drill meet.



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Message From The BATCOM

MIDN 1/C Jacquelyn Newberry

As I look back on the fall 2017 semester, I can't help but feel a sense of pride in all the battalion has accomplished, and how far some of our midshipmen have come since the beginning. It was a semester full of change, challenges, and most of all, triumphs.

We welcomed many new active duty staff members in their first full semester at the unit, including Captain Adams, Captain North, Lieutenant Fontana, and Gunnery Sergeant Wahle. With the new leadership came new ideas and visions, which have already helped further strengthen our unit.

The semester started off on a strong note with New Student Orientation week for our 4/C midshipmen held at Naval Station Great Lakes. In October, the battalion competed against the Northwestern unit in our annual consortium drill meet, and earned first place in color guard. It was a day full camaraderie and friendly competition for all. Finally, on November 11th, we had our Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball, where we had the privilege of listening to Guest of Honor Rear Admiral Michael Bernacchi, Commander, Naval Service Training Command, speak.

Mid-semester, our five first-class midshipmen received their service assignments. I am proud to announce that we have three future Surface Warfare Officers (MIDN Arandia, MIDN Maier, and myself), one future submariner (MIDN Cernok), and one future Navy Nuclear Reactors Engineer (MIDNBraun). Congratulations to these midshipmen, and best of luck in your future endeavors.

To the midshipmen: It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as your battalion commander. I am proud of each and every one of you, and have full confidence that you will all continue to progress toward becoming exceptional Navy and Marine Corps Officers. Always remember to seize every opportunity that comes your way, and stay true to yourself.

I hope everyone enjoys their winter break, and I look forward to seeing what next semester brings.

New Staff Biographies

By MIDN 4/C Nava



SWO: LT Vince Fontana

LT Vince Fontana, a native of Chicago, IL, was commissioned upon graduating Officer Candidate School (OCS) in February 2013. He enlisted in the Navy in 2008 and is a graduate from North Central College with a Bachelor of Arts in International Business, Global Politics and a minor in Mandarin Chinese.

At sea, after graduating Engineman "A" school, he served as a plank owner in USS NEW YORK (LPD 21). Upon completing NEW YORK's maiden deployment in 2012, he commissioned and reported aboard USS SAMPSON (DDG 102) in April 2013. He completed his first Division Officer tour as Electrical Officer, Auxiliaries Officer and Assistant Chief Engineer before continuing aboard SAMPSON as Fire Control Officer in December 2014. He has completed two deployments at sea that have included operations in the Arabian Gulf and Western Pacific areas of operation.

LT Fontana's awards include the 2015 Navy and Marine Corps Leadership Award, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and various unit and service awards.

New Student Orientation

By MIDN 4/C Strevey



Chicago Consortium Midshipmen learn how to equip protective masks properly.

The new class of midshipmen recruits gathered in Swift Hall at Northwestern University early in the morning on 15 AUG 2017. Patiently waiting for their NSO week to start. After a brief presentation and some basic paperwork, the new recruits are taken downstairs and get their first look at what this four-day experience is going to be like. The new students were issued their uniforms, older midshipmen yelling at them to get in line. The newly issued uniforms are put on and the recruits are marched outside for a brief lunch before being taken to Naval Station Great Lakes for the remainder of NSO.

First things first, haircuts. The new students are lined up at the barbershop on base and one by one received a recruit style haircut. The haircut represents the very beginning of their career in the Navy and really shows the students what kind of road they are about to travel down. The first day of NSO is always stressful for the new students. Midshipmen yelling you for every mistake you make no matter how small, you desperately trying not to say the words, "I or my", and trying to memorize the general orders of a sentry while waiting in line for dinner chow. The nights at NSO are still stressful for the Midshipmen for one must stand fire watch for an hour before waking another recruit to relieve them. The students tried to get as much sleep as possible because they know that they would need it.

Over the next few days, the new midshipmen would be tested morally, mentally, and physically. They were tested morally by learning teamwork and leadership traits from helping fellow recruits and by making themselves stay positive and work hard throughout the week. The students were tested mentally by trying to memorize basic Navy knowledge and by sitting through many important lectures from officers and from older midshipmen. Finally, they were tested physically by having to learn basic drill skills, standing in a CS gas chamber, and by running their first PRT. The new midshipmen had to dig deep within themselves and really find the true motivation behind them joining NROTC. This week was very stressful on their minds and on their bodies. The Midshipmen will never forget what they went through during this tiring week.

Finally, at the end of the week, the students got into formation on the coast of Lake Michigan and raised their right hands to take a very important oath to the Constitution and to the United States Navy. They are now official MIDN 4/C in the U.S. Navy. The most important thing that the new students took away from this week other than new Naval skills and customs, was the teamwork and leadership skills that were applied throughout this week. The new midshipmen were forced to work together to not only accomplish goals during the week but to get through the week together as a team. The Navy is one big team, this week showed the new students that they are now a part of something larger than themselves.



Chicago Consortium Drill Meet

By MIDN 3/C Nicholson



IIT Midshipmen competing in both the Rifle Drill (left) and the Color Guard (right)

The annual Consortium Drill meet began early on October 14th with a forecast of rain. IIT Midshipmen began the day gathering gear and setting up breakfast for all MIDN and staff. Once accountability was taken, MIDN 3/C Thompson announced the schedule of events. The commanding officer, Captain Adams, then delivered opening remarks.

Drill team marked the first event of the drill meet. Northwestern's drill team commander, MIDN 3/C Miller, lead his drill team to start the competition. IIT's drill team commander, MIDN 3/C Thompson, followed with great motivation to beat Northwestern (NU). After the competition, Drill team Commander MIDN 3/C Thompson jokingly expressed that he was "glad he had not marched his drill team into a wall". He said, "In all seriousness, it has been incredible to learn and lead the Drill Team members throughout this semester." After drill team evaluations, the IIT Color Guard prepared to perform. MIDN 3/C Coria commanded the Color Guard to start off the event. After, MIDN 3/C Hufano commanded NU's Color Guard.

Unfortunately, IIT's and NU's endurance teams were unable to start the endurance race. Chicago's weather forced active duty staff members to make a decision to cancel the endurance race. Although many MIDN were upset about this outcome, quite a few were relieved that they would not have to run in the pouring rain.

Due to the early completion of the competition's events, the results of the competitions were released by the Commanding Officer, Captain Adams. NU's Drill Team and IIT's Color guard took the win in each event. However, the overall points proved NU to be the winner of the Chicago Consortium Drill Meet. In addition, an award was presented to the guest evaluator for his time and effort.

After the winner was announced, GySgt Wahle directed Midshipmen to lunch just outside Keating gym. Midshipmen and unit staff ate and enjoyed each other's company before NU would depart from IIT.

Northwestern University Football Volunteering

By MIDN 3/C Coria



Northwestern University's Clayton Thorson sprints in to gain ground against Iowa.

Every year the IIT/UIC NROTC battalion participates in working for Northwestern University at their home football games in order to secure funds needed for the unit's events, such as the annual Military Ball, Dining-in, and other events we participate in during the year. Commander's Intent: To execute a safe and effective fundraising event, to give battalion members the opportunity to positively represent our battalion, and to develop camaraderie and responsibility among battalion members.

This year the unit worked two games on the 21st and 28th of October 2017. Sgt. Clark provided transportation to and from Northwestern's football stadium. The unit was split into two working parties so that everyone had the opportunity to contribute in bringing in money. Uniform for the events were black slacks, black shoes, black tie and white shirt. MIDN 1/C Arandia and MIDN 1/C Newberry were the two leads for their working parties and were tasked with ensuring the safety of the midshipmen working, and the completion of the jobs assigned to the satisfaction of our employers. They were also responsible for the actions of the midshipmen they were in charge of and ensured they represented the unit using the core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

Even though the two groups worked on separate days, the jobs were still the same. Some midshipmen were assigned with providing a safe path for the camera cart used to record the game, some followed reporters walking up and down the field and assisted with any requests, and others stood watch of the news trailer. These midshipmen began their work at 1100 and were given working jackets from the university because of the inclement weather. This was very useful because the midshipmen were outside until the game ended and these two weekends had particularly long games with double overtime victories for the Northwestern football team. The midshipmen would then ensure accountability and promptly leave the university with stronger connections after providing their services.

Officer Community Dinners

By MIDN 4/C Castillo and MIDN 4/C Middleton

SWO Community Dinner

This year, the IIT/UIC NROTCU held a SWO dinner at Lou Malnati's pizza on the 16th of November 2017. The attire was proper civilian attire. The event started around 1700 and continued for much of the evening. Captain Adams as well as Lieutenant Fontana were in attendance in addition to many of the battalion midshipmen. Pizza and soda had been served to the group.

Over the course of the evening Lieutenant Fontana and Captain Adams shared many stories and insight to life in the fleet as a SWO. With Lieutenant Fontana sharing stories about his time aboard the USS Sampson (DDG-102) and even about how different his DIVO tour was from his time enlisted. He particularly talked about the difficulty of becoming a good JO on your DIVO tour. Specifically how it feels to arrive aboard as a new Ensign and what it takes to become good at your job. One such experience of his was how he viewed his DIVO's as a young enlisted sailor and how he viewed the job of the DIVO after commissioning and experiencing the fleet. Captain Adams gave insight into Naval leadership and what one might expect while serving aboard a ship as a SWO.

The evening was filled with fun stories and jokes about life at sea between the insightful stories about leadership. The event was a great experience and was fantastic for giving our Midshipmen insight into the SWO career field.

Submarine Community Dinner

This past September midshipman from IIT and NU had the chance to have dinner with sailors from the USS Springfield (SSN 761). Lieutenant Commander Pittman, Lieutenant Woods, and Master Chief Johnson discussed the advantages of the submarine community, the nuclear pathway, and the qualifying process to be able to operate a nuclear submarine.

Lieutenant Commander Pittman explained that the submarine community is successful because the culture is based off of honesty/integrity, having a tight knit crew, and the responsibilities given to junior officers and enlisted sailors compared to other communities.

Lieutenant Woods explained his experiences as a junior officer and division officer. He said "It is key listen your LCPO and LPO because they have all of the knowledge and experience. Listening and learning from them will help you become an effective officer and be able run the division correctly." On that same note Master Chief Johnson emphasized that "All sailors deserve to have a leader that will take care of them." He expressed that a junior officer must understand they are leading some of the brightest, technical, and motivated sailors the US Navy has to offer and must be open to the challenge. Ultimately, the dinner was a very successful event, bringing some of the best in the Navy to discuss a very rewarding pathway.

Tri-Service Flag Football Tournament

By MIDN 4/C Middleton



IIT Midshipmen post-tournament against Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC.

On 3 Nov 2017, the midshipmen of the IIT/UIC NROTC unit conducted Tri-Service Flag Football Tournament along with Air Force ROTC Detachment 195 and Chicago Army ROTC Fire Battalion. The flag football games were intended to promote healthy competition between branches, encourage good natured needling, and build camaraderie.

The event started at 1745 at Stuart Field on the IIT campus. The game consisted of 7 man teams with players substituting between downs. Each game, the second half, and after touchdowns the ball was placed on the 10-yard line of the team on offense. The playing time was 30 minutes and was divided into two 15 minute halves.

The first game started with the IIT/UIC NROTC unit versus Chicago Army ROTC Fire Battalion. Both teams played with extreme intensity but the win ultimately went to Chicago Army ROTC Fire Battalion. The second game started with the IIT/UIC NROTC unit versus Air Force ROTC Detachment 195. We fought hard in the beginning, synchronized well as team, but the win went to Air Force ROTC Detachment 195.

The Tri-Service Flag Football Tournament was a great experience for Midshipmen to test how we worked as a team. Special shout out to MIDN 3/c Nicholson for coordinating with other ROTC units and spearheading the event.

Navy and Marine Corps Ball

By MIDN 4/C Cuartero



Midn 2/C Busalacchi salutes RDML Bernacchi, Naval Service Training Command.

Chicago's Skyline is dominated by the Willis Tower; it stands more than a quarter mile high. Its construction was finished in 1973 and was the tallest building in the world for almost 25 years.

The NROTC Chicago consortium's Navy and Marine Corps Ball took place on the 67th floor of the famous tower. The Navy and Marine Corps Ball is usually held on Veteran's Day. This year was no exception, as the event took place on November 11th, 2017. The ball is in observance and respect to three important dates. The first is Veteran's Day, which honors all personnel who have served in the US military. The second is the observance of the US Navy's birthday, which is October 13th, 1775. The third is the observance of the US Marine Corps' birthday, which is November 10th, 1775. In addition, the ball is for the building of camaraderie between both the Northwestern and IIT units of the Chicago consortium. The personnel get a chance to celebrate the inceptions of the military branches they take part in. The ball was also fortunate to welcome RDML Bernacchi of Naval Service Training Command, as well as the Presidents of both IIT and Northwestern University.

The November air was frigid, but the spirits of the Midshipmen, Officers, and Enlisted personnel were alight. These men and women also escorted invited dates for the celebration, both dressed gallantly and elegant as they approached the Willis Tower. On the 67th floor of the tower, the guests could view the veins of the city of Chicago. Lake Michigan was to the east, and the rest of the yellow glowing city was to the left.

The night began with the guests checking in. Setting up the stage for the ceremonies to come, the Midshipmen practice both the sword detail and the cake detail. The Master of Ceremony was MIDN 3/C Thompson, and the event coordinator was MIDN 2/C Garcia. The first event begins with the Adjutant's Call, which begins the ceremony. The first event is the Sword Escort, in which the graduating seniors escort their dates underneath what is known as the sword arch. The Invocation speech is next, which was delivered by LT Dugger.

Following this, the arrival of the Guest of Honor (RDML Bernacchi) and the Commanding Officer (CAPT Adams)

takes the floor of the ceremony. The two individuals take their seats in the ballroom. The second speech, known as the POW/MIA Honors, was delivered by MIDN 2/C Hunt. It honors military individuals who have been prisoners of war or missing in action; in every galley in the US Navy, a seat is left unoccupied for the member who we wait to come home.

The third speech, the Reading of Service Birthday Messages, was delivered by Capt. North. Following this speech, the Cake Cutting Ceremony includes both the youngest and the oldest members of the consortium, which was MIDN 4/C Brooks and CDR Vosler, respectively. The guests enjoyed their dinner after this ceremony; after dinner had been concluded, the CO gave a speech of his own. Following CAPT Adams, RDML Bernacchi had a message to the Chicago consortium as the guest of honor, which concluded the full ceremony.

After this last speech, the floor opens up for dancing and celebration. The female Midshipmen are allowed to change to civilian dresses and the male Midshipmen are allowed to remove their jackets. Atop the tower, the Midshipmen, Officers, and Enlisted had a great time dancing and enjoying the company of each other. The night of the military ball ends after the festivities, as the guests return home.

Coming down from the Willis Tower and returning home, the night seems colder, but the enthusiasm and honor of the guests burns brighter after the celebration they had together in observance of Veteran's day, the Navy's birthday, and the Marine Corps' birthday, and as every year, the ball would begin again.





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