

# NROTC ROCHESTER



## **IRONCLAD Fall 2022**

Issued by NROTC ROCHESTER

COMMRO : MIDN 3/C Kang

**BNCO's Corner**  
by MIDN 1/C Dee

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When I showed up to NROTCU Rochester, I was a quiet; yet, hardworking first-year student with the simple goal of passing the fitness test at the end of the semester. I couldn't yet understand how much I would change over the next few years here. I kept my head down and worked hard to improve my fitness and learn as much as possible about the Navy, but I didn't yet have the confidence or skills required to lead in NROTC.



I joined the Navy to pursue an exciting life outside of an office building, but I also wanted to help others and lead from the front. During my second and third years of college, I held numerous billets which forced me out of my comfort zone and challenged me to become a better midshipman (MIDN). I started to connect with more of the battalion and focus my efforts in mentoring the underclassmen while learning from those older than me. During the summers, I attended New Student Indoctrination, Sea Trials, and summer cruises aboard USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) and USS New Hampshire (SSN 778). These experiences gave me the opportunity to meet MIDN from schools across the country. Learning about how their battalions ran gave me new ideas that I wanted to bring back to Rochester.

The first three years of being a MIDN at NROTCU Rochester enabled me to grow into a confident and determined leader, but I wanted to have a stronger role in the battalion to further my skills and create a better training environment for the underclassmen. I submitted a memorandum and went through a board process before being selected as Battalion Commander (BNCO) for the Fall 2022 semester, and have been thankful for this opportunity since day one. With the help of MIDN Densman, the Battalion Executive Officer, and MIDN Lundy, the Battalion Operations Officer, I have been able to implement new training activities and focus on building morale within the unit. I meet weekly with the active duty staff to update them on our schedule, disciplinary issues within the battalion, and goals for the future. Through these meetings, I have benefited greatly from their mentorship and am constantly reminded of how important the training is for MIDN to become future naval officers.

I have learned so much about myself during my time as BNCO. My personal leadership style has developed greatly and I have become more confident and resilient throughout the semester. I have had the privilege to lead my peers through successes and failures, encourage the underclassmen to get out of their comfort zone, and learn from several inspirational mentors. Despite its challenges, this semester has been the most rewarding of my college career because of everything I learned as Battalion Commander. I am honored to have held this position, and I look forward to passing the baton onto the next Top 3.

## Marine Motivation

by MIDN 3/C Derby

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I first chose to apply for the USMC scholarship because all I wanted to do was serve my country in the Marine Corps. My uncle, Donald, fought in the Marine Corps in the early 1990's in the Persian Gulf War. He is my Godfather and role model as my own father was rarely present in my childhood, through no fault of his own. My father's other brother, Richard, was also in the Marine Corps. He graduated from bootcamp right around my birth and shipped to the Middle East shortly afterwards. Both of my uncles suffered great tragedies causing debilitating PTSD while serving but they somehow still spoke so highly of their time in service. They believe the Marine Corps helped them, made them better people, got them out of the small town birthplaces and constantly taught them. Although both opened up to me about the struggles of PTSD, I enlisted anyway. I wanted the things they got from the Corps and I wanted them to be proud of me. I called my Uncle Don on my way home from the Military Entrance Processing Station and told him I'd just signed my name on the dotted line. He accepted it, but told me I should've tried to be an officer. Flashforward 3 months later and I'd been accepted into the NROTC program on scholarship. 5 months later, I was blindsided when I walked into my first day at New Student Indoctrination (NSI). I was feeling a wild combination of emotions because of culture shock, home sickness, and exhaustion. Regardless, I pulled through with a fellow MIDN going to my unit; MIDN Yorke. We went to NSI together, then Cortramid, and we'll go to OCS and hopefully TBS together as well. I have made so many more friends that will go through these training sessions with me and ultimately, we'll be together our entire Marine Corps Career.

OCS is the next, TBS after that; they will train me further to be confident, coherent, and fluent in the tactical language of the Marine Corps. If being a Marine Option through NROTC has taught me anything so far, it's that the learning never stops. The Marine Corps staff at NROTC Rochester, whether they're a SSgt, 2nd LT or a Captain, are constantly reading books on leadership, history, and psychology and doing research on the military and its changes. They show us that what you know is never enough. They help us and treat us with the utmost respect and we reciprocate. As for my peers, I have never met another group of people that I truly trust with my whole heart. Whether I'm trusting them to drive me to PT or on the live fire range, whether on cruise or in class, and whether I'm just a MIDN or an active duty Marine, I genuinely feel that anyone in MARTPATS, desert or woodland, would help me if I needed it. I would do the same for them. It's blind comradery, it's common ground, it's similar struggles and successes, and it's inspiring.

## FEX Planning and Execution

by MIDN 3/C Wagner

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The 2022 Fall FEX included a few key changes from past operations. We worked closely with the RIT Tiger Battalion to coordinate distribution of supplies, address the logistics necessary for conduct at a new training location, and thoroughly map out our safety procedures. We also accounted for points of friction faced on previous field exercises by adapting our course of action to minimize repeating these issues. This included consolidating all NROTC Midshipmen into one squad, reviewing tactical knowledge - including hand and arm signals, formations, and weapons safety - prior to the FEX, and only carrying assault packs, not assault packs and rucks, during day movements.



Transparent communication was maintained between ourselves, leading Cadets, and NROTCU Rochester leadership in the weeks leading up to the FEX. Learning to communicate clearly and effectively was key in keeping everyone in the loop and ensuring no small details were missed. The training exercise was executed as planned and the changes made definitely helped to improve the training experience.

Coordinating this exercise was a great experience and taught me a lot. Our plan held together when put under stress and, when unexpected challenges arose, the ability of our Midshipmen to maintain unified and cohesive allowed us to improvise, adapt, and overcome these difficulties. As expected, this exposure to stress also revealed some weaknesses in our preparation. While the FEX was a success overall, there is always room for improvement, and these considerations will be passed on to ensure we continue to improve our training evolutions.

## The Standard

by MIDN 1/C Densman

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Balancing a military lifestyle alongside college life can be a strange experience. The two often feel like they conflict. Midshipmen want to do well in ROTC and learn how to be better future leaders, but at the same time there is pressure to enjoy college life and all the things that come with it. Waking up at 4 or 5 AM on a regular basis makes it difficult to stay up late at night, something that college students seem to really like to do.

Learning how to balance the two will often help you mentally as well as academically. The military lifestyle is often viewed as something that kills the college lifestyle, but there are benefits to following it. Those who try and fight it often find themselves struggling to excel within the military environment we work in while performing our ROTC duties.

A reality every midshipman should come to accept is that there is nothing wrong with being a good and responsible student. I have often been told by professors that they enjoy having ROTC students in their courses because they are often the ones who participate the most and put in the most effort. Much of our training revolves around learning how to operate under pressure, manage your time, and take care of yourself while still performing your duties. While the level we operate in the fleet is often more intense than what is seen on a college campus, all of these skills are still very applicable to a student's academic life. It is very possible to live within the ROTC world and still have a somewhat normal college life, it just takes a bit more work on your part to balance the two.



## Female Leadership/Being a Woman in NROTC

by MIDN 3/C Yorke

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During the second World War, women began to take up important roles in society, at home, and in the workplace. In many cases, they turned in their pinafore apron dresses and high heeled shoes for rivet guns and coveralls. With the men away fighting, the women stepped into the civilian and military jobs they left behind, adopting the influential title of “Rosie the Riveter”. Despite the dangerous roles they took with low pay, high levels of harassment, and miserable working conditions, they gracefully embraced these positions and paved the way for the women of the future.

By any Rosie’s standards, modern women are given opportunities they never would’ve thought possible just 80 years ago. In the military specifically, women are now given opportunities to serve aboard submarines, in combat roles, and there are even incentives in place for them to do so while still supporting families. The growth of women in leadership positions in recent years is unarguable, yet there’s still room for growth.

Some obstacles that hinder women from taking on positions of leadership include harassment, unequal treatment, and biologically impossible standards that still exist in the workplace, both in the civilian and military sectors. Women are often treated differently by those they work with simply because of sexist beliefs that they aren’t capable of the same achievements as their male counterparts which translates to unjust comments. To combat these degrading beliefs, we must change the stigma that women aren’t as capable as men. By adopting a collective mindset that encourages equity between women and men, we can honor our differences while simultaneously benefitting in a just manner.

As society continues to realize the capabilities of women, we are allotted more responsibility and leadership roles to prove that “We Can Do It!” as our ancestors sought to prove 80 years ago.



**From Left to Right : MIDN 3/C Derby, 2 nd Lt Morrow, Mae Krier (one of few living, original  
“Rosie the Riveters”), MIDN 3/C Yorke, MIDN 3/C Wagner**

**Honoring 9/11**

by MIDN 4/C VanAuken

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We still honor 9/11 because it was a devastating terrorist attack on American soil; the deadliest since Pearl Harbor. It is important to remember them because thousands of innocent Americans lost their lives that day, some of which were mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters. Not only do we honor those who perished, we also honor those who were first responders. First responders did not hesitate and went right to the towers and saved lives, some of them losing theirs in the process. After the devastating attack, our troops deployed to the middle east and fought courageously to defend our country, and to make sure an attack on American soil would not happen again. Some of those heroes lost their lives in the process, to ensure that our nation’s security will not be breached again. Remembering those who perished fighting the terrorists responsible for the 9/11 attacks is important because they showed fearlessness and knew that they could lose their lives, but they fought anyways.

When somebody says patriotic, I think about love for one’s country, and I am showing that by committing to serving my country. You don’t have to serve to show patriotism, it can be little things like standing for the national anthem, or saying the pledge of allegiance. Annual tradition and memorial can both increase and decrease your morale. It is tradition to memorialize the attacks on 9/11, and it causes my morale to go down because it is incredibly sad, but afterwards my morale increases because I remember why I committed to serving my country. Tradition and memorial also allow us to never forget our nation’s history. Every year we pay tribute to those who perished on 9/11 and because we do that, we will never forget what happened, who perished, and the heroes who helped save lives and deployed to fight.



**OSU MEC**  
by MIDN 3/C Ellrich

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In late March, the battalion was fortunate enough to be able to compete in the Ohio State Military Excellence Competition. This competition featured several avenues for our midshipmen to compete. With 9 units from all over the country in attendance, having spent weeks in preparation for tests of the mind, body, and skill, the competition was fierce. However, thanks to the talent and perseverance of our NROTCU Rochester unit members, we were able to secure the 3rd spot overall for performance.

The Military Excellence Competition, or MEC, kicked off at 0500 on Saturday the 25th. The first event was a daunting 13.2 mile endurance race. This race had our midshipmen completing various stops for obstacles along the way, such as fireman carries or ammo can lifts. Our talented team featuring Midshipmen Yorke, Midshipman Williams, Midshipman Lawson, and Midshipman Shanks, was able to secure 4th place. Next up, Midshipman Wingood, Augustine, and Cacace fiercely competed in the powerlifting competition, securing 3rd place, while also securing several personal records for themselves. Sharply after that, NROTCU Rochester placed 1st for ship handling, being the only team to make it past the first challenge.

Immediately after, close order drill began. Drill has been a huge focus this semester. It is with great pride that NROTCU Rochester was able to take home 3rd place for Platoon, 4th place for squad, 4th place for colorguard, and 1st place for Unit leader. Nearing the end of the MEC, our unit's Tug O' War



team fought valiantly, clawing their way to 5th place. Meanwhile our rifle and pistol team competed, introducing several midshipmen to their first taste of competition shooting.

Due to the hard work, varied interests, and skills of the battalion, as well as the organization of the MEC AOIC and OIC, Midshipman Smith and Midshipman Gregory, the Ohio State Military Excellence Competition was a smashing success.

**Life as a college student in ROTC**  
by MIDN 3/C Hickey

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Life as a college student in ROTC is a unique experience. It comes with its own hardship and satisfaction. I am a Physics and Astronomy major, as well as an active member of the NROTC unit. Both require a lot of time management skills to balance. With ROTC the days start early, and with class and homework, they can also go late. Because of this time management skills are important. Being able to stay on task and get work done in the down time between class or after a ROTC event can be hard, but definitely worth it in the long run. Probably the toughest part is sleep. Getting to bed at a good time can be just as challenging as waking up before the sun, but good sleep is the key to success. The best way to handle this, is again, getting done with your responsibilities earlier in the day. ROTC is a pretty big time commitment, we meet 5+ times a week and have extra work on the side. Despite this, it is totally manageable even with an academically intense schedule. Being in a club or on a varsity sports team is completely doable. If you are on top of your work and prioritize getting what needs to be done first, you can still have the complete college experience.

**BNXO Talk**

by MIDN 1/C Cacace

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I wanted to be a part of the top 3 for several reasons. By the time most NROTC

Midshipmen get to their senior year many of us are burnt out, and just trying to graduate and commission. The thought of an extra semester's worth of work and a billet on top of that might turn some away so that they can merely coast through to the end of the year. Although I shared some of these feelings of wanting to have a relaxing senior year I felt as if I owed to my unit and our motivating midshipmen to go up for top 3. I wanted to really help continue the development of our underclassmen and serve as a mentor and role model just as the upperclassmen before me did.



During my time at the University of Rochester I did a lot. I was a four-year varsity athlete on the soccer team as well as one year on the football team. I was a part of several religious organizations which helped support the Rochester Boys & Girls Club as well as a sister school in South Sudan. I've held several billets within the battalion and earned a scholarship after joining the NROTC unit as a college-programmer. All the while, and after several major changes I was able to earn a degree in political science. All of these things taught me how to effectively manage my time, leadership strengths and weaknesses, how to work in a team environment, and the importance of giving back. If I had to give any advice to my successor it would be to slow down and enjoy the little things in life. The high stress environment we work in may be overwhelming at times, but you will get through it.

Appreciate the friends you make along the way and the opportunities you are given each day. Be grateful for the opportunity to live in this country, attend this university, and be in this unit. We are truly one of the best. Be the person that people can count on in times of crisis and always take care of your midshipmen. They are the future.

## **Dining In and Navy Ball**

by MIDN 3/C Hendricks

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Upon the culmination of each semester NROTC Rochester Midshipmen and staff have the opportunity to

unwind and take part in the annual Navy Ball and Dining in.

In December, we put aside the Fall semester's final examinations for one night to sit down as a Battalion at the Hilton Garden Inn for a formal dinner. As dinner is served, Midshipmen stand in front of the Battalion to perform skits (namely the Fourth Class freshmen doing impressions of the First Class Midshipmen), roasts, and "fines", in which they expose wrongdoings of Midshipmen throughout the year, and upon the approval of the Staff and MIDN leadership, sentence them to drinking from a nauseating concoction called the "grog". Seniors MIDN Brodnik and MIDN Williams did a "roast" of every Midshipmen and the mess roared in laughter. MIDN Derby presented beloved parody videos and MIDN White called in MIDN Wyns via zoom and forced him to drink from the "grog" after fining him for numerous embarrassing photos.



In mid-April last Spring, just before the flowers began to bloom, MIDN and their dates gathered at Ridgmont Country Club to celebrate Naval Tradition, celebrate our commissioning First Class, and enjoy one of the final events of the semester. The seniors and their dates entered through a sword arch conducted by underclass Midshipmen, we honored our fallen Brothers and Sisters with the POW/MIA table, sang the Marine Corps' Hymn and "Anchors Aweigh", and began the dinner. After meals were served, Midshipmen, dates and staff gathered on the dance floor and enjoyed the night.

I believe these events are an integral part of the experience of being a Midshipman at NROTC Rochester. We are able to step away from the fast-paced lifestyle for one night and get to know one another better. Midshipmen and Staff get to build respect and camaraderie for one another, and then resume their jobs the very next morning. I look forward to being a part of Dining in and Navy Ball in the future.



**ROTC Instructor**  
by Lt. Dudek



This duty station was truly a dream come true for me. For my shore tour I was looking to do some form of teaching, and hopefully make a positive impact along the way. I also wanted to try to live closer to my family to catch up on missed time over the last few years. This station gave me the opportunity to do both. I can teach a subject I am passionate about at my alma mater, and live in my hometown close to family and friends. How much sweeter can it get!?

That being said, if you can believe it, the Naval Weapons Systems class wasn't the only reason I was so excited to come back here and teach. The NROTC program provides a forum for us have discussions about leadership, time management, prioritization, and other life skills. These conversations are extremely important to producing not only successful Naval and Marine Corps Officers but also in forging exemplar citizens and future leaders for our great nation. Therefore, I was most excited to come back to act as a guide and sounding board for

students on their path to figuring out who they want to be. With this position, I can help remove roadblocks to student's success and I enjoy assisting in short and long-term goal setting on the journey to becoming the best version of themselves they can be.

The most rewarding aspect of my job is working with the highly capable and motivated Midshipmen and fellow Naval and Marine Corps Officers at NROTCU Rochester. You all motivate me daily!

One major challenge I face are these early wakeups! I'm not sure anyone enjoys waking up earlier than 0600 on a daily basis.

In my opinion this is one of the best shore tours out there. I have already recommended this job to my peers at my old Squadron, including one who is now the Aviation Officer at NROTC Unit, University of Florida. But to anyone else out there considering this job, I highly recommend this tour.

### **Subs!**

by MIDN 3/C Wingood

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Diving into the depths of the ocean; treading territory no other boat can navigate. 132 people working towards the same mission, the mission of the submarine force. These boats have motivators maintaining the intimidating nuclear reactor, the Sailors are experts on every aspect. This inconspicuous boat executes some of the United States Navy's most classified missions. They are crucial to the fleet, and work with various forces to ensure freedom and democracy.

The submarine has been crucial throughout history since its first appearance in the American Revolutionary War in 1775. Over time the boat evolved and so did the leadership on board; leaders like LCDR Dudley Morton inspired people to committing themselves to trust one another. Submariners are a warfighting cadre that gathers intelligence with various platforms of submarines. Each platform is as important as the latter. This discrete boat can transport Special Operation Forces – SEALs – just as an Amphibious Assault Ship transports Marines.

There are a variety of reasons Midshipman would select submarines over any other community, reasons aside from the bonuses and promotions. Be aware; to be underwater and stealthy for about six months is not for everyone. When you are underway on a submarine you are on the apex predator of the fleet. Submarines are equipped with lethal weapons and reassuring sensors. Since, these boats runs on nuclear power there are difficulties unlike any other community, which can be satisfying. This highly technical job is very rewarding considering submariners experience pressure like no other; pressure from the depths of the ocean and pressure of the job description.

This is a relatively small boat, and you grow together with other Sailors and people sharing a mindset and mission. From the first day on the boat to your last; camaraderie is developed. Submarine Warfare is one of the smallest communities and the Navy, and it allows for a lot of development. There are opportunities that this boat presents that no other community can, but at the end of the day you have the opportunity to serve and do something for your country. When you are on a sub you truly have the privilege to say “Pride runs deep.”

