

IRONCLAD

NROTC ROCHESTER



FALL 2025

Table of Contents

<u>Captain's Call</u>	<u>03</u>
<u>BNCO's Corner</u>	<u>04</u>
<u>Advice from the 1/C</u>	<u>05</u>
<u>New Student Orientation</u>	<u>08</u>
<u>Welcome Aboard 4/C</u>	<u>09</u>
<u>Never Forget: 9/11 Vigil & Run</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Cornell MEC</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Fall FEX</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>MIDN in the Community</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Dining In</u>	<u>16</u>

Captain's Call

By Captain Sanchez



This semester again showed what defines the Rochester Battalion: disciplined preparation, teamwork, and a commitment to excellence that is evident in everything we do. From the very first event of the year, welcoming our newest Midshipmen at New Student Orientation, to our culminating Military Excellence Competition at Cornell (where we took 1st in Platoon Drill), each evolution demonstrated growth in both leadership and followership across every class.

Our 4/C stepped confidently into their first opportunities to lead during the Outdoor and Indoor LRCs, while our upper-class Midshipmen sharpened their ability to mentor, train, and execute to standard. The 9/11 Vigil and Cadence Run reminded us of the purpose behind our service, grounding the Battalion in the traditions and responsibilities we strive to uphold. Through every early-morning PT session, drill period, and lab, the Battalion showed consistency and resilience. These traits will serve each Midshipman well when they enter the Fleet.

We also continued strengthening our identity as a cohesive, competitive, and mission-ready team. Our Marine Options led from the front during the joint Fall Field Exercise with the Army ROTC, demonstrating the importance of coordination, adaptability, and trust across branches. Even several Navy Options proved their readiness by performing alongside them. They learned land navigation, small-unit coordination, and the value of composure under stress. Meanwhile, the Battalion maintained its strong physical fitness culture, building on last year's momentum through disciplined running programs and tailored development for every Midshipman.

Across every event, from the Veterans Day Run (which was more of a ceremony in the snow) to Dining In, the unit showed that success is not achieved by individual effort alone, but by a team that holds itself and each other to the highest standard. I could not be prouder of the progress made this semester, and I look forward to what this Battalion will accomplish next.

BNCO's Corner

By MIDN 1/C Clayton



We began the semester strong with NSO, welcoming the new 4/C and setting expectations early. That momentum carried through the months ahead and was reflected in our performance at the Cornell MEC, where we earned second place. Stepping into command gave me a chance to be involved in every aspect of the Battalion, from planning to daily execution. That broad perspective was one of the most rewarding parts of the role. I gained a deeper appreciation for how much coordination and behind-the-scenes work goes into running the unit.

Serving in this billet also pushed me to grow as a leader, sharpening my ability to balance demands and to support the people around me. I was continually impressed by the flexibility and resilience of our Midshipmen, especially as we navigated several unique challenges, most notably the uncertainty surrounding the government shutdown.

There were certainly moments where mistakes were made, but each one became a learning opportunity. One of my priorities this semester was strengthening the Battalion's professional skills, particularly public speaking. We saw steady improvement in confidence and ability, but with additional lab time I would have liked to expand these efforts further. I also wanted Midshipmen to take ownership of their personal goals and deficiencies. We began the semester with a goal-setting activity to help everyone identify where they needed to improve and what they wanted to accomplish. My intent was for each person to be honest about their weaknesses and take consistent steps to address them, since raising individual standards strengthens the Battalion as a whole.

My BNCO and BOPS were instrumental in keeping the Battalion running smoothly, and I could not have asked for better teammates in this role. I am also grateful for the staff's mentorship and for the Battalion's collective effort, which made this semester successful despite the obstacles. I am excited to watch the unit continue to grow under new leadership next semester.

Advice from the 1/C

By MIDN 4/C Sochia & DeJong

Navy Options:

MIDN 1/C Augustine



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: Strive for excellence in all that you do and you are only as good as your reputation.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer?: Always keep your eyes open, you'll learn everything from someone but something from everyone.

Service Selection: Naval Reactors

Favorite memory while in the unit: Battalion Judo

MIDN 1/C Clayton



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: Learned within the unit is the importance of asking for what you want and making your intentions known. Opportunities rarely come to those who stay silent, and by putting what you want out there, you open the door for growth and success.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: learned that communication and initiative are key to leadership. By being clear about my goals and intentions, I can better advocate for myself and my team. This mindset will help me lead with confidence and ensure that my actions align with my objectives and the mission's needs.

Service selection: Submarines

Favorite Memory while in unit: Traveling to Cornell during sophomore year, participating in MEC with the color guard team and winning first place.

MIDN 1/C Griffin



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: Biggest lesson learned within the unit is to never be afraid to ask questions and to always be your own biggest advocate.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: lessons shaped a realization that you're never going to know everything and that's okay. What's important is knowing your resources and using them effectively by asking questions and seeking guidance. Every procedure and protocol exists for a reason, and familiarizing yourself with them through curiosity and communication allows you to grow both personally and professionally.

Service selection: Surface Warfare

Favorite Memory while in unit: Dining in freshman year

MIDN 1/C Higgins



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: The best way to succeed in the unit or out in life in general is to admit your failings and ask for help before you are in serious trouble

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: Will be much more likely and willing to ask for help when commissioned and much more ready to admit when you don't know something.

Service selection: Surface Warfare

Favorite Memory while in unit: Went on a FEX 4/C year as OPFOR and had a ton of fun playing the bad guys and helping with the training of the marines

MIDN 1/C VanAuken



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: Time management, NROTC is a big task to balance with everything personal and extracurricular.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: Exposure to difficult people and leadership billets forces you to lead in a real and unique way.

Service Selection: Naval Special Warfare

Favorite memory while in the unit: First MEC and having no idea what was happening, bonding as a class, and winning.

Marine Options:

MIDN 1/C Gregory



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: The importance of setting clear goals, working consistently toward them, and, most importantly, maintaining a solid schedule. Being intentional with time helping to stay organized and stay ahead of responsibilities.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: By staying disciplined and organized, can better support both self own development and the success of the Marines. Strong planning ensures mission readiness and builds trust within a unit.

Desired MOS: Infantry

Favorite Memory while in unit: Celebrating the Marine Corps Birthday with Balls. Always meaningful and memorable to spend time with the Marine options in a formal setting and honor the traditions of the Corps.

MIDN 1/C Hogan



Biggest lesson learned within the unit: Time management, you are always more capable than you think you are.

How your lessons learned has shaped you as a future officer: Well prepared, more capable than others at OCS, the unit provided him with the confidence to perform well.

Desired MOS: Infantry

Favorite memory while in the unit: Ohio State MEC freshman year, going to Buffalo Wild Wings and bonding with the other fourth class.

New Student Orientation

By MIDN 3/C Laity



New Student Orientation (NSO) is designed to introduce incoming MIDN 4/C to military customs, fitness standards, customs and courtesies, close order drill, and any other necessary military knowledge. NSO also provides MIDN 4/C with the Commanding Officer's (CO) expectations and prepares them for the rigors of the NROTC program. Over the course of 48 hours new MIDN are introduced to the active-duty staff; including the Commanding Officer and Executive Officer, upperclassmen instructors and volunteers, and their fellow classmates whom they will spend the next four years with.



During this time MIDN 4/C are tested physically through the inventory Physical Fitness Test (PFT), mentally through navigating difficult Leadership Reaction Courses (LRCs), and morally through taking the swearing in ceremony and oath of office. Additionally, MIDN 4/C are given briefs on basic military knowledge such as uniforms, customs and courtesies, rank structure, chain of command, and how to properly write Navy/Marine Corps documents. MIDN 4/C are also given briefs on how to be successful as a college student such as time management and navigating life in college and NROTC.

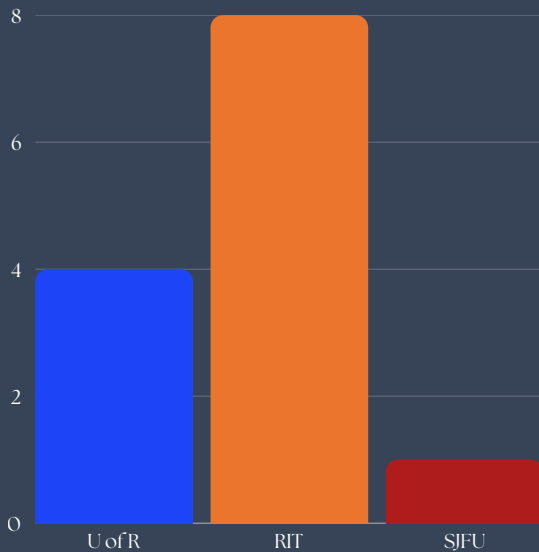
Furthermore, MIDN 4/C are exposed to basic close order drill movements to prepare them for a rigorous semester preparing for the Military Excellence Competition (MEC). While a challenging 48 hours, dominated by a high stress and high expectation environment NROTCU Rochester embodies, NSO is designed to promote teamwork and class cohesion as no MIDN goes through the NROTC program alone they must rely on one another as a lifeline of support; acting as an introductory glimpse into NROTCU Rochester.



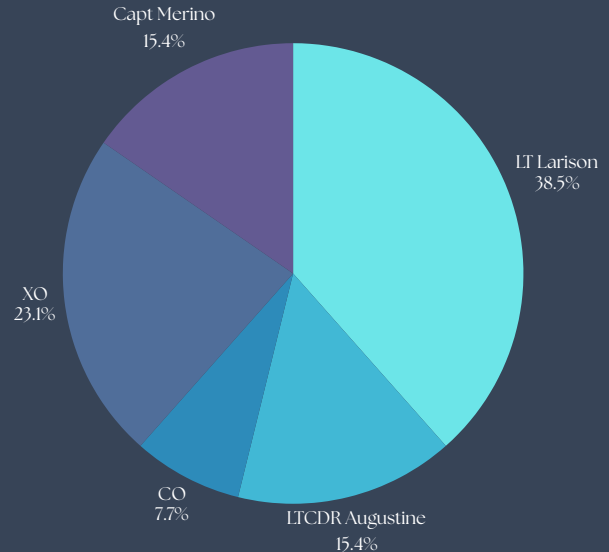
Welcome Aboard 4/C

Data Collected By MIDN 3/C Viator

Schools the 4/C Attend



Favorite Staff Member



Why Did You Join ROTC?



"I desire to be part of something greater than myself, and I feel it is my duty as a patriot to serve the nation that's steadfast in protecting both myself and others' freedoms across the globe. No other commitment is as rigorous nor rewarding as the United States armed forces, and I wish to be a part of the community that best respects and represents the people and values that I believe in." - **MIDN 4/C Shaver (RIT, Mechanical Engineering)**

"ROTC allows for me to mix being a college student and the life that I would live at a service Academy, which in my opinion is the best of both worlds." - **MIDN 4/C De Jong (RIT, Engineering Technology Exploration)**



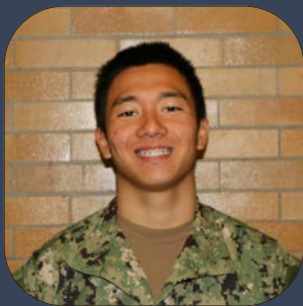
"I couldn't obtain a congressional nomination for the Naval Academy. For the longest while afterwards, I felt hopeless; my opportunity to find a path outside my circumstances had vanished. However, after speaking with Commander D'Ambrosio, ROTC stood out as a golden opportunity to get my life back on track." - **MIDN 4/C Anderson (RIT, Biology)**

What are you looking forward to in ROTC/College?



"I'm most looking forward to the summer cruises if I can secure a scholarship. From what I've seen they look to be a really fun and impactful experience. College wise I'm looking forward to going on a co-op/internship. I've already done some basic ones in high school and I know I will learn a lot and have a good time if I can get one at a company that I want." - **MIDN 4/C Witmeyer (RIT, Mechanical Engineering)**

"I look forward to developing leadership and teamwork through ROTC. I'm excited to challenge myself both academically and physically while learning to serve with purpose." - **MIDN 4/C Sochia (UofR, Biology)**



"Making memories." - **MIDN 4/C Song (UofR, Mechanical Engineering)**

"Making friends and tight bonds with people. Secondly, actually learning things that will be important for living life whether that is like taxes or life lessons." - **MIDN 4/C Broome (RIT, Industrial Engineering)**



"In ROTC/College I am looking most forward to growing as an individual. Through the next four years I am looking forward to setting goals and accomplishing them. Whether it be related to lifting, academics, reading, joining clubs, etc. I am looking forward to putting myself in positions to become comfortable in the uncomfortable and bolster my character." - **MIDN 4/C Wright (RIT, Mechanical Engineering)**

Name one thing you have learned so far in ROTC/College?



"There is so much to learn." - **MIDN 4/C Sarn (UofR, Economics)**

"I have learned about how much the little things matter in developing myself as a future leader. Just coasting isn't viable and isn't something I intend to do." - **MIDN 4/C Grace (RIT, Electrical Engineering)**



"Leadership is an evolving process." - **MIDN 4/C Genson (UofR, Biology)**

"Be aware of what you have to do and how much time you have to do it." - **MIDN 4/C Graham (RIT, Computer Science)**



"Manage your time as if your life depended on it." - **MIDN 4/C Pola (RIT, Biochemistry)**

Never Forget

9/11 Vigil - By MIDN 2/C VanGelder

Each year on September 11, the midshipmen of the University of Rochester NROTC unit stand vigil in Eastman Quad in remembrance of the tragic attack on America that shook the nation in 2001. Nearly a quarter century later, the scars of this violent act of terror are not forgotten. The peace that we have grown up in is owed to those who, when they saw that their nation was under attack, took up arms and sought justice in the Middle East. We stand this vigil to honor those lost and those who fought in their name. Since that day, nothing on the scale of the 9/11 terror attacks has taken place in America. It is thanks to the sacrifice of brave men and women that we have enjoyed the safety and comfort which we have grown up in. As the seasons change, this vigil is taken as a grim reminder that, once, something more than leaves fell in Autumn, and to cherish the peace that exists today while honoring those who were lost.



9/11 Run - By MIDN 2/C Niggel

Every year during the anniversary week of September 11 2001, NROTCU Rochester conducts a cadence run to commemorate those who lost their lives during the attacks on the country that day. While the Navy Battalion organizes it, the local Air Force and Army ROTC are also invited to participate. Together, the three units run about 3 miles with a cadence. That means that at all points in the run, someone is calling cadence by leading the battalion in song, step, or cheer. The run has become an annual tradition and honors the sacrifices of every man and woman who lost their life 24 years ago and clearly demonstrates the spirit of the people of the United States of America.



Cornell MEC

By MIDN 1/C Gregory

The Military Excellence Competition (MEC) is a showcase of discipline, teamwork, and professional skill across multiple military domains, including drill, knowledge, and athletic events. This fall, on 21 November 2025, our unit attended the Cornell University Invitational Drill Competition, or CUIDC, hosted by the Cornell NROTC unit. There was a wide range of units participating in the weekend long event, including schools like West Point, the Naval Academy, RPI, Rutgers/Princeton, and more. Rochester NROTC placed 2 nd overall, winning platoon drill, weightlifting, and swimming competitions to achieve this standing.

Specific events in this competition include Platoon, Squad and Color Guard drill, which were led by unit leaders MIDN Downs, Barber, and Viator respectively. The platoon drill team is comprised of our 4/C Midshipmen, with MIDN Genson carrying the guidon. Squad and color guard are comprised of 3/C Midshipmen. All 3 teams practiced at least twice a week at 0530 to do well in these competitions.



Fall FEX

By MIDN 2/C Barber



Each year during the fall semester, the NROTC Marine Option Midshipmen and interested Navy Options attend a joint Field Exercise (FEX) with the Army ROTC. This year's FEX included basic field craft, weapons handling classes, a medical class, and several other training events. Throughout the weekend, Midshipmen worked alongside Army Cadets, gaining valuable experience in communication, teamwork, and adaptability.

One of the key takeaways from the exercise was the opportunity to develop and apply leadership skills in a realistic environment. Many Midshipmen took on positions such as squad leader, learning how to make quick, effective decisions under pressure while ensuring the safety and success of their squad. Working jointly with the Army Cadets provided a great learning opportunity for everyone involved, as both groups learned how to effectively communicate and operate together despite inherent differences in training.

This FEX provided crucial preparation for the Midshipmen as they prepare for Officer Candidates School (OCS) and, beyond that, their future service in the fleet.



Midshipmen in the Community

Alumni Visit

By MIDN 4/C Sarn

Meliora Weekend includes the NROTC Alumni Event, organized annually by the NROTC. The event brings together midshipmen from the university's NROTC unit, along with the graduates and their families. The event provides former midshipmen with an opportunity to interact with the university's battalion again and learn about the unit's growth. The midshipmen also have the chance to take the guests around the unit and talk with them about their experience in the fleet. The event provides midshipmen with a platform to learn from the university's graduated leaders while also strengthening the university's sense of tradition. The event marks one of the vital moments of the Meliora Weekend, highlighting the university's presence on campus.

Meliora Security & Volunteer Lab

By MIDN 4/C Witmeyer

This semester, NROTCU Rochester participated in various volunteer events serving both the university and the surrounding community. Meliora Weekend is an annual event hosted by the University of Rochester combining a family weekend, alumni reunion, and homecoming. The weekend includes a variety of events, lectures, and activities celebrating the university. Other volunteers from the community use golf carts to transport families and those with disabilities around campus. For the length of the event the midshipmen act as security for the golf carts, helping the university keep accountability of them by ensuring that only authorized individuals are driving around campus. Outside the university the unit also utilized one of its Wednesday labs to offer its service to the local Rapids Cemetery. The cemetery is the final resting place for people who served in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War. The unit helped with landscaping and the beautification of the area. Midshipmen laid mulch around multiple trees, cleared paths, planted flowers, levelled parts of the lawn, and were given the opportunity to learn about the cemetery's history and plans for the future. The work the unit did helps the cemetery with its ongoing restoration process and vision to become a prevalent community area. The unit believes heavily in community service and aims to participate in at least one unit-wide community service event per semester. Volunteering allows the unit and the midshipmen within to connect better with the Rochester community and give back to its hosting university. The unit is grateful for the support from the University of Rochester and surrounding community and will continue to give back to them wherever possible.

Dining In

By MIDN 3/C Wolfe

The Dining In Ceremony is a historic Navy tradition which entails dining, entertainment, and bonding activities with fellow midshipmen.

Along with dinner, there are traditional ceremonies—such as the folding of the National Ensign, parading the beef, and acknowledging Prisoners at War—and entertaining activities, such as placing "fines" against your shipmates, skits, and revisiting funny memories.

Once a year, the entire Battalion will gather in their most formal uniforms for a dinner-and-entertainment tradition as old as the U.S. Navy itself. This year, our freshmen put together a skit to poke fun at the upperclassmen, and the upperclassmen made a slideshow to "roast" each midshipmen individually.

We also formally announced the winner of our semesterly Honor Company Competition, and officially turned over the Battalion's command to our next Top 3 midshipmen in charge.



IRONCLAD FALL 2025