

SIDELIGHTS

Fall 2023



University of Colorado at Boulder Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps



NROTC University of Colorado

Vision Statement

To develop students morally, mentally, and physically to become professional officers in the Naval Service; to reinforce the enduring core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment; and cultivate the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare them for service to our nation.

“If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

- John Quincy Adams

Commanding Officer

Team!

What a great Fall 2023 Semester for our unit! Thank you to all the Midshipmen, OCs, MECEPs, and staff members for a truly memorable semester as we welcomed our largest freshman (4/C) class in many years. Despite the large influx of new members, it was very apparent to me that our upperclassmen and our Top 5 leaders made a terrific effort on-boarding our newest members before our most important events of the semester.

Speaking of these events, the meticulous planning and execution of our Fall events by all of our Midshipmen OICs were exceptionally well done. Our New Student Orientation (NSO) laid the groundwork for quickly integrating our 4th class midshipmen and setting the tone for training. After many futile years of competing against the Army and Air Force ROTC in the annual Tri-Mil Field Meet, we finally took home the trophy with a near complete sweep of all events in dominant fashion. Just a few days later, 17 members of the unit participated in the Boulderthon races with many high placers. Seven of our runners ran the full marathon with MIDN Church placing 2nd with a 3:11 time, MIDN Coslick in 3rd place (3:16), and MIDN Skinner in 6th place (3:43).

Going into early October, MIDN Josh Taylor was recognized at the University Tri-Mil Advisory Meeting. Throughout the fall, our Midshipmen organized several tailgating events that attracted numerous NROTC alumni and helped strengthen bonds between our NROTC generations. Towards the end of October, we turned our attention to the Leaders Reaction Course for our Navy option members and the Fall Field Exercise for our Marine options members at the US Air Force Academy. All of our unit members received excellent training in these events. At the end of the month, we celebrated our Sea Service Ball at Coors Field (home of MLB's Colorado Rockies). Rear Admiral Scott Robinson was our Guest of Honor and his speech on leadership was truly memorable.

Going into November, we celebrated with our upperclass Midshipmen as they found out their service assignments and ship selections. In all cases, all of our Midshipmen received their first choices compared to a 66% nation-wide rate indicating how competitive our Midshipmen are compared to their peers. Additionally, all of our midshipmen competing for Change of Option and Sideloads were awarded scholarships, an impressive accomplishment indeed! Of note, our Color Guard set the standard with the sharpness of their performance in numerous on and off campus community events. Our MECEPs and OCs represented our unit by participating in several community volunteer events. We close out our semester with the annual Army-Navy flag football game to be played on Folsom Field and the commissioning of four of our students in December. We're excited for Midshipmen Aycock, Elder, Kurzenhauser, and Minimo on their upcoming commissioning as Ensigns in the Navy and look forward to their leadership in the fleet.

Going into the holiday break, I want to encourage all of you to stay sharp, fit, and focused on your chosen path. Enjoy your family time but always be ready! As exciting as our Fall Semester was, we're in for an even more exciting Spring. Colorado Meet 2024 is just around the corner and we are expecting over 20 ROTC units to compete before we tackle Sea Trials and Spring FEX.

Congratulations to all of you for working hard in your academics, physical training, and military training this semester. Special shout out to our large 4th Class for getting past the always tough 1st semester, we are very proud of your transition from High School to high performing college Midshipmen! Thank you also to our parents and family members that support all of our exceptional young men and women. The path to commissioning is challenging and your support is critical! I am continuously amazed and impressed at how accomplished our NROTC students are across the board and I have no doubt that the finest future Officers of the Navy and Marine Corps are being developed right here in Boulder. With that said, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



Semper Fidelis, and Sko Buffs!

Robert J. Bodisch,
Colonel USMC



Executive Officer

Buff Team,

This was another amazing semester and one filled with a few firsts.

We continued our trend back towards becoming the dominating NROTC Unit most of our Alumni remember. It looks like we are finally on the upslope after several tough years of small incoming classes. After all was said and done, we ended up with the largest Freshman class in recent history consisting of 36 Midshipmen, 1 Navy OC, and 9 MECEPs. This brings the size of our unit up to 105. While still small by historic CU standards, we remain one of the largest NROTC units in the country. We also boast very unique numbers when it comes to NROTC programs. We have an almost even split with 52 Navy and 53 Marine Options. Of those 53 Marines, 25 are MECEPS, making up almost 25% of our entire battalion. With more MECEPs than any other school, our program offers a distinct advantage when it comes to leadership training as these Marine Corps Sergeants and Staff Sergeants bring with them 6 to 10 years of active duty experience each. Additionally, our new OC was already an accomplished sailor before his selection to the STA-21 program. CS1 Calucag is a Navy Culinary Arts Team award winner who came to us from the INDOPACOM staff in Hawaii.

This semester we assisted San Diego NROTC by taking over responsibilities for one of their newly commissioned officers. This Ensign was involved in a horrific accident the day of his commissioning last spring and has a long recovery ahead. He spent the past several months in Colorado making remarkable progress at a specialist rehab facility. In a wild turn of events, during one of our visits to the hospital, Col Bodisch and I discovered his grandfather is a CU NROTC Alumni from 1969.

We were also honored to host several career enhancing events including visits from: MajGen(ret.) Mullen, Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Marines from Camp Lejeune's 2nd EOD Company, LCDR Foster and LCDR Zinger from NIOC Colorado discussed the Information Warfare Community, Maj Dittmer provided our Midshipmen with an overview of the Reserve forces, and LCDR(ret) Smith spoke about leadership and responsibility as a Junior Officer.

In other unit news, we expanded our Midshipmen Leadership team from a "Top 4" to a "Top 5" by transforming the traditional PAO role into our Battalion "COMSTRAT Officer." This Midshipman or MECEP will run a team charged with ensuring CU NROTC dominates the information space. To support these efforts, we procured a unit drone for the team to document our activities and support our expanded Social Media Presence. Expect to see some great footage in the coming semester!

Also, a huge shoutout to our civilian staff for their continued amazing support. Two of them were recently recognized for their stellar work: Mr. Gary Lovato received an award in recognition of 30 years of outstanding Government Service. Our Supply Tech, Mr. Jerry Weymiller, received his award in recognition of 20 years of Government service, and also received a shout-out from NAVSUP as the only NROTC supply tech in the last 5 years to pass their rigorous inspection with zero discrepancies in ESA functions.

Finally, in another indication of our growth, the University granted us a small expansion into an additional space here in the Stadium. This seemingly minor upgrade allowed us to solve two problems at once. Not only can we handle the additional supplies required to support our influx of new students but, when the new semester starts, we will officially have separate dedicated changing rooms for our male and female Midshipmen. For those who have seen the spaces recently, (or anytime in the past decade) you know how difficult it could be to find a clean place to change after Training. This has been on our list of problems to solve since last Fall, and it was great to have the University support our proposed solution.



Expect a busy and exciting Spring Semester! This upcoming Colorado Meet is poised to be biggest and best yet!

Sko Buffs,
CDR Gary "Wiz" Pembleton



Battalion Leadership

Midshipman 1/C Daugherty, Battalion Commanding Officer



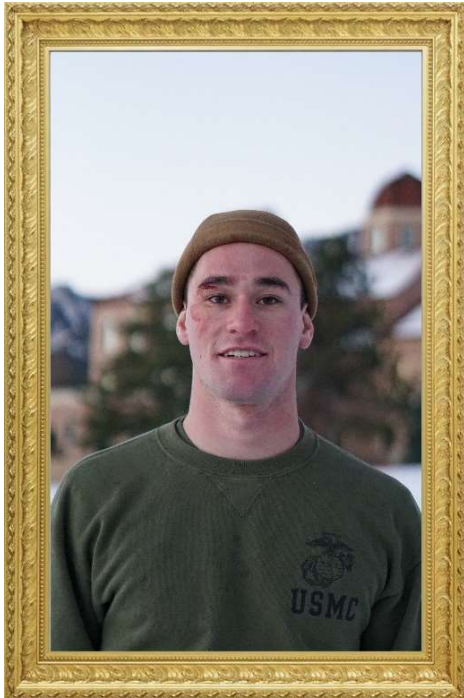
This fall semester was an overall success, and the Top 4 could not be more satisfied with the results of our training. We experienced historic growth whilst creating engaging, accelerated training. All midshipmen exceeded our expectations with the utmost professionalism and enthusiasm. The growth the battalion experienced this semester will be capitalized on this spring with the succeeding Top 4. From NSO to the LRC/FEX, this fall constructed an undeniable foundation for students to excel. Regarding my position, it was an honest pleasure to be engaged in such a leadership position. I can't articulate how proud I am of all the members of CUNROTC. The Top 4 team could not operate without the skills of smaller unit leadership, and we are thankful for the consistent communication and push for development. We continuously aim to achieve our unit's mission statement with the highest level of competency and execution. Bravo Zulu to everyone this semester, it was a pleasure!

Midshipman 1/C Tullie, Battalion Executive Officer



I had the great opportunity this Semester to be the BN XO of the Fall 2023 Semester. Working alongside BNCO MIDN Daugherty gave me a larger perspective of how the run ran on a day-to-day basis. As the Semester wraps up, I look forward to improving on what I learned about myself in this position.

Midshipman I/C Kirschenbaum, Battalion Operations Officer



It was a pleasure serving as the CUNROTC Battalion operations officer throughout the Fall 2023 semester. I would like to first off thank the Midshipmen, MECEPS, and OCs for its flexibility and hard work throughout the whole semester. Both Alpha and Bravo set high training objectives prior to the semester, built training plans, and were able to accomplish their semester goals. I'm thankful the opportunity to lead through this billet, the rest of the top, and the direction and guidance that comes down from the active-duty staff. I'm proud to be a part of this battalion and everything that we accomplished this past semester.

Midshipman I/C Eddington, Battalion Command Master Chief

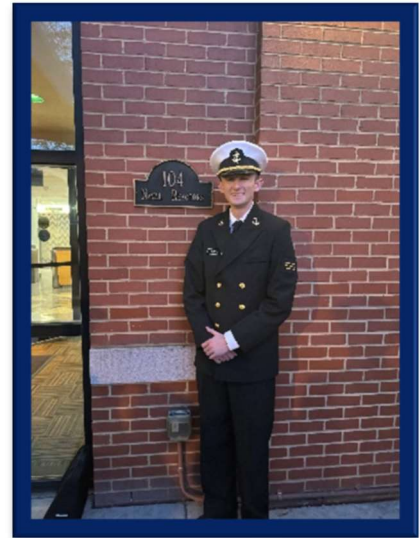


As the BN CMC, I was blown away this semester by our battalion's exceptional behavior and presentation. Our unit continues to set a high standard for ourselves and maintain it. Battalion members have pushed themselves beyond their leadership boundaries to learn beneficial skills this semester. The top four has watched both underclassmen and upperclassmen come together on events like our fall FEX, Navy LRC, and the 2023 Navy Marine Corps Ball creating some of the best battalion events we have had the chance to experience. It has been extremely rewarding to watch our unit better themselves through these challenges. I hope everyone continues to strive to both improve themselves but more importantly better improve our unit. Finally, I would like to thank everyone for allowing me to both learn and grow in this position. I am proud of our unit and look forward to continuing on this next semester at CU!

Commissioning Graduates

Ensign Matthew Aycock

ENS Matthew Aycock is from Midland, TX and graduated with a chemistry degree. ENS Aycock will be going to Nuclear Power School to become a submarine officer. At CU he enjoyed his ability to ski, snowboard, climb, mountaineer, flyfish, and participate in chemical research. ENS Aycock has been in almost every leadership position from squad leader to Battalion Executive Officer. "CU Boulder NROTC has provided me with a strong lifetime network of friends and has become a kind of family to me over the last 4.5 years. I learned much in my leadership roles about myself and what it means to be a Naval Officer. The strength of this unit comes from the people. The students, MECEPS, and staff truly showcase the best and brightest this nation has to offer, and I consider myself lucky to be working with them. Despite my potential bias, CU NROTC is the best unit in the country.



Ensign Cody Elder

ENS Cody Elder is originally from Arvada, Colorado, and is majoring in Political Science. He is currently serving as the Bravo Company Commander and has held multiple billets within the unit. In his free time, ENS Elder enjoys woodworking, skiing, and writing and performing music. His first duty station will be Basic Division Officer's Course in San Diego, CA then stationed on USS BENFOLD in Yokosuka, Japan.



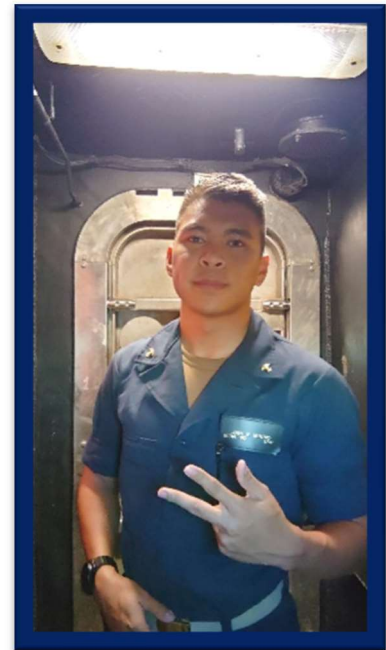
Ensign Thor Kurzenhauser

Born and raised in Northern Virginia, ENS Thor Kurzenhauser entered the University of Colorado in the fall of 2019 as a mechanical engineering student and CUNROTC midshipman. He has been on the Dean's list multiple semesters and is the recipient of the Chancellor's Achievement Scholarship. He has been active in his fraternity, Theta Xi, where he has participated in inter-fraternity sports and charity events, and he has played lead guitar with his band at both college and local venues. As a midshipman he has enjoyed developing leadership skills and fitness prowess; in 2022 and 2023 he led the unit's Endurance Team to victory at the annual NROTC intercollegiate Colorado Meet. Upon commissioning, Thor will become a third-generation Naval officer, following in the footsteps of his father and paternal grandparents. He is headed to Naval Base Coronado, San Diego, in February 2024 for further training.



Ensign Josh Minimo

ENS Josh Minimo comes from a family that is still serving in the Navy and has spent most of his life growing up overseas at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan. ENS Minimo chose to attend the University of Colorado Boulder because of Colorado's natural beauty and to major in mechanical engineering with a minor in space. As a midshipman in CU NROTC, he has held several leadership billets as a platoon chief, Bravo Training Officer, and student instructor for firefighting, damage control, and sea navigation. Outside of his studies and the unit, ENS Minimo has enjoyed hiking around Boulder and exploring Colorado with friends. Not once has he ever gone snowboarding or skiing in Colorado during the past four years. ENS Minimo is commissioning as a Surface Warfare Engineering Duty Option (SWO-ED Option). His first duty assignment will be aboard the USS PAUL HAMILTON (DDG 60), homeported in San Diego, California.



Congratulations
Commissionees!!!

New Student Orientation



New Student Orientation (NSO) is an integral part of CU NROTC's training program. It's mission is to train the incoming 4/C to understand and comply with the unit's high standards and expectations while also providing midshipmen instructors with new leadership experiences and opportunities. This year's NSO was particularly difficult for two reasons. Firstly, there was a record-breaking number of incoming 4/C. This proposed many planning, logistical, and staffing issues that had not been encountered previously. To combat this, our staff and instructors worked tirelessly throughout the summer to ensure a successful operation. The other difficulty encountered was the lack of access to the university's "Balch Field House." In previous years CU NROTC has utilized the field house to provide housing for the candidates. This year the field house was unavailable, and housing had to be relocated to Kitt Central. The distance travelled each morning caused timing and safety concerns. These issues were eliminated through strict scheduling and by placing a high priority on the instructors to ensure that all tasks were completed in an utmost and urgent manner. Overall, this year's NSO was a huge success, and it is an honor to have trained and mentored one of the largest classes of 4/C midshipmen into our unit.

MIDN Bonderer, OIC

Tri-Mil

The Annual Tri Military competition on October 5th was a tremendous success this year for our Navy and Marine Corps team. After a long dry streak, we are once again the rightful owners of the TRI-MIL Trophy. Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC's each put together three teams of their highest physically performing cadets and MIDN in their Units. The competition included a sled drag carry event, litter carry race, pugil stick fights, tug of war, and a staff circuit. Our MECEPS, MIDN, and Staff came to win this year. There must be a special shout-out to our Endurance Team (E-Team) training for Colorado Meet 2024 in the Spring where they will compete against multiple other schools in an exhausting race up Chautauqua Park and the Boulder Campus. They have been training hard each week, and with two of our teams composed of E-Team members, we were undefeated in the race events. We won almost every event leading to absolute domination in the scoring and an overall victory for all 3 of our teams. Thank you to all the participants and supporters who came to watch or support our Navy-Marine Corps Team from afar. We are not going to let this Trophy go anytime soon. GO NAVY and SEMPER FI!

MIDN Ford, OIC



LRC



This last semester, the Navy Midshipmen traveled to Jacks Valley at the Air Force Academy to conduct training in small group leadership skills. The underclassmen were selected to lead their team through difficult physical and mental challenges on the Leadership Reaction Course. The instructors provided feedback on their leadership which begins their journey of developing their own leadership style. The upperclassmen were selected to lead their platoon on a 4-mile land navigation challenge that put their leadership skills to the test. They were expected to map a safe area of travel while behind simulated enemy lines and maintain accountability of their platoon. Several simulated casualties were staged, requiring the platoon leadership to conduct medical

evacuations and practice their first aid skills on serious simulated injuries. The fall LRC (leadership reaction course) provided the Midshipmen with leadership experience and tested their ability to react to unexpected circumstances.

MIDN Aycock, OIC

Sea Service Ball

The Sea Service Ball was held on Friday, October 27, 2023, at Coors Field, in which CU NROTC celebrated the 248th birthday of the United States Marine Corps and Navy. This event serves as a reminder of the sacrifices that have been made by our services and the honor and respect we have for those who have served. This year's Sea Service Ball was the largest Sea Service Ball CU NROTC has held to date with around 250 total attendees. Members and guests of the Naval ROTC Battalion watched and participated in the birthday ceremony which was enacted in accordance with Marine Corps tradition. The Guest of Honor, Rear Admiral Scott Robertson inspired and motivated future Navy and Marine Corps officers as well as active-duty Navy and Marine Corps service members. Following the ceremony, the battalion, staff, and guests enjoyed a delicious meal and were allowed to move around and observe Coors Field from the club level. The 248th birthday ball celebration was a success and allowed the battalion to commemorate the history of the Marine Corps and Navy while providing the opportunity to pass on the traditions to future leaders.

MIDN Pitones, OIC



FEX



This past fall, we saw the sizeable fourth class entering the battalion. With this, we were given the opportunity to train and leave an impression on the fourth class. During our semesterly FEX, Alpha Company leadership designed an awesome plan that allowed these fourth-class midshipmen to participate in land navigation both night and day, work within fire teams, and get their first taste for building a five-paragraph order. The battalion midshipmen and MECEPs got to practice using and adjusting Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) during a scavenger hunt and throughout the nighttime evolutions of the FEX. The latter portion of the FEX involved a quick and intense force-on-force conflict between the two platoons. Looking forward to our spring FEX, the unit will integrate and apply what has been learned in force-on-force scenarios.





CU NROTC battalion Fall 2023