

Sidelights

Fall 2018



The University of Colorado Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps 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.



Commanding Officer: Colonel Michael J. Gough, USMC

“Why do I want to serve as an Officer and a leader in the military?” In our Naval ROTC program, we examine “leadership” in academic classes and through practical application. But at the heart of leadership is really understanding the “why” we want to serve as Officers. This year at our Sea Services Ball, we commemorated the 243 years that the Navy and Marine Corps have been serving our country – and that Officers have been given the privilege to lead our nation’s best, sometimes in the worst of situations. Our guest speaker for the event highlighted the importance of each of us understanding our motives and “why we want to serve.” But truly knowing the “why” is a very difficult task.

Throughout the year, the Executive Officer and I interview numerous High School seniors who are looking to earn an NROTC scholarship. We ask the applicants “what do you want to do in the Navy or Marine Corps?” Most easily and confidently answer this question. But when given the follow up question of “why?” many applicants stumble. Some might answer that they’ve always wanted to serve. Others might say they are following a family tradition. Others might say they want to seek adventure. While others might say they want to be challenged and be the best they can be. All of these common reasons may be good starting points, but most fail to illuminate the true and very personal “why?”

I don’t intend to use this space to suggest to you your own “why” or to judge your personal motivations. My own reason to join the Marine Corps 29 years ago was because I wanted to live up to the image of the Vietnam Veterans that I had met toward the end of my time at college. It wasn’t until a few months after joining that I began to understand this reason alone wouldn’t see me through the tough personal challenges of serving as an Officer. I had to find my real and personal “why.” It wasn’t very long after this realization that I found it – or more aptly stated, it found me. And it continues to motivate me to this day.

For our new Ensigns and Second Lieutenants, we wish you luck at your first duty station or first specialty training evolution. I’m confident that you all will succeed. I encourage each of you to do the tough self-reflection required to understand your own motivations – your own “why” that will carry you through your future challenges as a leader. Knowing why and matching it to mission will only increase the depth of your success and personal satisfaction as an Officer.

Good luck, and Semper Fidelis.

Executive Officer: Commander Charles W. Brown, USN

“A college degree is a tremendous investment of time, effort, and money. And at a university of this caliber, it is an opportunity for exposure to first class resources and people. If I can impress upon you one thing with my first Sidelights contribution it would be to TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY!”

I wrote those words in the spring of 2016’s Sidelights. These words still definitely hold true now as they did then. But what is missing? What is the money question? It is “How?” There are numerous books, videos, and seminars, with tons of information that tell you how to be successful. I’ll write just a bit about a key component of how you can take advantage of your opportunity here.

Discipline.

Easier said than done and it takes a lifetime of practice. How many of us turned our alarm off and decided “I’ll work out tomorrow morning” or “I’ll just get the notes from.....” or “... just one more episode”?? Guarantee we all had some version of that take place; we aren’t robots, we’re human. That being said some folks out there are better able to get past looking at their running shoes for 17 minutes straight deciding whether or not to hit the trail.

The hardest step is often the first one.

But once you take it you are good. After you make the choice to crack open that book or finally get around to budgeting your finances or going to the gym, work toward that goal progresses. Even if you don’t have your most optimum study session or best workout you made headway toward your goals and the next time you’ll build off of that momentum. And sacrificing an evening with friends to put in more study is going to feel good when you receive that A or that C+ depending on the challenge you were facing.

The only person you should compare yourself to is you yesterday.

None of us are going to become discipline experts overnight. If the robot next to you has a 4.0, a perfect PT score, and is voted Mr./Ms. Universe (odd only Earth participates) good for them. Ask how they do it. Start small and pick your battles. It’s about self-improvement. It could be something as small as reviewing class notes for the day at 1900 each evening or planning all your meals for the week on Sunday. Find small ways to make discipline a habit. I think some guy gave a speech about making your bed. The Captain has a saying on his office door, “Success is the sum of small efforts repeated day in and day out!”

Congratulations on a successful fall semester! Happy holidays and have a great break!

Words from the Top Four



Battalion Commanding Officer
MIDN 1/C Wember

My time at this Unit has been a great learning experience. As a 4/C Midshipman I thought I knew everything I would need to know to be able to lead. I was proved wrong very quickly. However, by immersing myself in the opportunities provided by the Battalion, I was able to learn about leadership from some of the best people. The people that I have met during my time here will be friends for life. I do not think I will come across

an organization outside of the military where there is such a high level of mutual respect for every person involved in the operation of the business. This mutual respect is what made my time as BNCO a memorable experience. If I messed up, I was told so in a way that would cause me to learn from my mistakes and not just shrug them off. One of the memories I will never forget was cutting the cake at the Sea Service Ball in front of the Battalion; it was a true honor. My parting advice is my own personal motto: "be the purest form of your own expectations." If you do that, you will set the example and others will follow.



Battalion Executive Officer
MIDN 1/C Althouse

Over the previous semester I had the privilege of being CU Naval ROTC's Battalion Executive Officer. During this semester we focused on the future of Naval ROTC and making the training of our Midshipmen engaging and memorable. To do this, we dedicated great focus to integrating the freshman class of 2022 into our ranks and insuring that they had the tools necessary to succeed in their first year of college. Our goal with the Trident and Semper Fi Company Command-

ers was to make training usable and memorable. I can confidently say that this battalion has changed over the past semester in a positive way. Excitement and honor lies ahead for our battalion and I am excited to see where it goes.

Words from the Top Four



Battalion Operations Officer
MIDN 1/C Hebenstreit

I feel so lucky to have been able to join the CUNROTC community. It's crazy to think about how much I've learned in my time here as I've advanced billets. That being said, what's more rewarding is seeing the younger students develop as they do the same. CUNROTC and the Staff in general really support a culture of excellence and it shows through its Midshipman. As BNOPS I had the opportunity to work with plenty of different Midshipman and I have always been impressed with their dedication and professionalism. It's been an honor to be

a part of this Unit and I'm glad to see its being left in very good hands.



Battalion Sergeant Major
MIDN 1/C Rial

Mistakes are the best thing that has happened to me as Battalion Sergeant Major. I called "attention" to the whole battalion on the wrong side of the formation, I got corrected for not thinking critically, and multiple teams got lost on the first battalion event I was OIC for. Looking back at all those mistakes I am so grateful I got to make those mistakes here rather than in the fleet as a Second Lieutenant. The opportunity to be in

the top four was the best training I could have received in order to become a better officer. I got to start the year off by organizing a leadership reaction course and CASEVAC, I also got to organize the annual Army/Navy game, which I'm happy to say we won 20-12, and the change of command ceremony. Working with the other billets this semester, the top four, and the staff has developed as a more effective leader and taught me to take extreme ownership for the planning I am involved in. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be Sergeant Major and I would like to say Congratulations to all those commissioning this Fall.

Alpha Company



Alpha Company Commander
MIDN 1/C Miller

I am very grateful for the opportunity to be Alpha Company Commander this semester. All of the credit goes to my staff and the help and guidance of Captain Colgrove and Gunnery Sergeant Stockman. I believe that all Midshipman were able to learn and establish and refine a baseline of skills that will help them in their careers and at Officer Candidate School. Alpha Company's FEX in Jack's Valley was simulated off the field exercises at OCS. The Midshipman were able to practice land-navigation, fire and movement,

fireteam formations, and a hike under weight. I am extremely pleased with their achievements and I look forward to seeing how they advance next semester. I could not have accomplished anything this semester without the help of staff and my fellow Midshipman. I also want to congratulate all of those commissioning this semester. Semper Fi!

Bravo Company



Bravo Company Commander
MIDN 1/C Kirschner

This semester has certainly proved to be the culmination of three difficult years in ROTC. It is an interesting challenge to be chosen as the head of an entire company, expected to train midshipmen in a discipline I have not yet commissioned into. All of my success can be attributed to the incredible team I worked with, and all of my mistakes will serve as excellent learning experiences. Throughout the years, ROTC has served to ground me and force me to learn mature lessons most college stu-

dents aren't faced with. I will move into the future, ready to learn and ready to use the lessons I have gathered.

Commissioning Graduates



Elena Chavez

My experiences during the last four years at the CU NROTC program have challenged and empowered me to grow as an individual. In my time here I have learned that showing up will only get you partly there, the rest comes from taking pride in everything you do. NROTC will give you the tools to develop into a professional individual, but knowing what kind of leader you want to be requires digging deeper. Find yourself through mentorship, reading, teaching, and surrounding yourself with people that support and motivate you.

Take advantage of the opportunity to be in a college environment where you can be exposed to different perspectives, skill sets, and lifelong friendships. It will not only help you become a well rounded individual but the experiences earned and variety of responsibilities will ease up the transition to becoming a naval officer.

My advice for everyone going through NROTC, is to fight for your passions, and work on improving yourself each day, the earlier you start the more you can work to become it.

“Discomfort is the admission to a meaningful life”- Susan David



Travis Dominguez

I spent 3 years here at CU NROTC and I have enjoyed them. I was Range Safety Officer for several semesters and got to be part of the Colorado and Wisconsin Meet. The MECEP program is the best program in the USMC. I am lucky to have been part of this unit and look forward to commissioning.

Commissioning Graduates



Andrew McGady

I have spent four years at the CU NROTC unit and have enjoyed them all. I have learned a lot about what it means to become a USMC Officer. I look forward to commissioning, going to the Basic school, and ultimately returning to the fleet to serve my Marines.



Jacob Vornholt

It's a little difficult to summarize and reflect on four and half years of experiences, but I'll do my best. My time at CU Boulder was fantastic and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't going to miss it. Being apart of the NROTC program here was probably one of the most defining aspects of my college career. I met more than a handful of individuals that became some of my best friends. NROTC is also where I met some of my most trusted mentors, individuals that helped me grow as leader and as a person.

Throughout my time here I've had so many great experiences, from my 2/C summer cruise where I got to watch B-52 bombers carpet bomb an island in the middle of the pacific to be woken up to Africa by Toto blasting through a loudspeaker at four in the morning so we could go march through the snow. Overall, I'm thankful for all the opportunities and experiences this program has provided and am excited to finally be heading out to the fleet. Best of luck to everyone in the spring semester!

CASEVAC/LRC



The Casualty Evacuation/ Leadership Reaction Course was an evolution designed to test leadership under stress. It was a physically demanding event that required midshipmen to work together in order to complete their various missions.

Sea Service Ball



The annual Sea Service ball was put on this year by MIDN 2/C Delong. Following the opening ceremony which included a cutting of the cake, speeches were given by the commanding officer, Colonel Gough, as well as a guest speaker RADM McLane. Following speeches and dinner, NROTC members and their guests hit the dance floor.

