



# Sidelights

Fall 2019



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# The University of Colorado Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Vision Statement

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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 Thomas J. Dodds, USMC

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It has been a great first five months and I have been extremely impressed with the Battalion's accomplishments, professionalism, and strong desire to succeed. The level of commitment, grit, and proactivity demonstrated by the students and staff has been exceptional and is indicative of stellar units. I am proud of what this team has done and honored to be part of it.

The spring semester holds numerous commitments and culminating events that will require us to manage our time and resources wisely. Build the time into your plans to ensure that we can properly account for our people and equipment. Accountability of people and things will be imperative to unit success during this high operational tempo time.

Also, ensure that we are looking out for one another. With challenging schedules, changes in leadership, and life in general comes stress. Take the time and have the fortitude to reach out to someone if it appears that they are struggling, regardless if they are senior, a peer, or subordinate. People are our greatest resource!

Again, congratulations to our five new 2nd Lieutenants and two Ensigns that were commissioned in December 2019. We wish you well in your follow-on training and we have no doubts that you will make this unit and the University of Colorado extremely proud. Looking forward to the Spring commissioning!

Get fired up!

VADM James Stockdale: *"The test of character is not 'hanging in there' when you expect a light at the end of the tunnel, but performance of duty and persistence of example when you know that no light is coming."*



# Executive Officer:

## Commander Regina Kauffman, USN

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I am enormously fortunate to be here as Executive Officer of NROTC, University of Colorado. I arrived in July, from the USS CARL VINSON, where I thoroughly enjoyed my tour as Combat Direction Center Officer. My husband Keith is a CU NROTC Alumni. He and our three children are excited to be in Colorado. I have big shoes to fill. Commander Charles Brown did an incredible job before me, and we are thankful for his service.

I reflect on the battalion's significant accomplishments in the Fall, led by MIDN 1/C Aldrich, MIDN 1/C Osteen, MIDN 1/C Morrissey, and MIDN 1/C Fitzmaurice. To start the semester, MIDN 1/C McMullen and an extremely professional team conducted New Student Orientation integrating our 4/C Midshipmen into the unit. The Top 4 and MIDN 1/C Bellon led

the battalion in successful field exercises and leadership courses locally and in Colorado Springs. In October, Gunnery Sergeant Lemke oversaw an extremely professional Sea Services Ball, honoring the 244<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Navy and the Marine Corps. Retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Ivers inspired us through his motivational talk that demonstrated realities of the battlespace, the patriotism of those who answer the call to service, the stamina of those on the front lines, and the heroism of those who give the ultimate sacrifices. Alpha Company, led by MIDN 1/C Blaskowski and MIDN 1/C McMullen, conducted dynamic exercises over three days in the snowy training grounds near the Air Force Academy. At the November Homecoming Game, Colonel Dodds swore in 50 recruits into four services. Later in the game, the CU NROTC Alumni and Veteran Alumni groups came together in a marvelous halftime celebration. Also in November, MIDN 2/C Lee was lauded by the Denver Council of the Navy League for her enlightening presentation of the political-military situation in the Pacific region.

Throughout the semester, the Color Guard, led by Gunnery Sergeant Stockman, demonstrated impressive skill participating in the Homecoming Game, the Veterans Day celebration at the University Memorial Center, the Boulder Star Lighting Ceremony, and other events. I applaud the leaders, planners, and battalion for noteworthy academic and professional achievements of our Midshipmen, Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program and Officer Candidate students, and other active duty students. I am looking forward to continued improvement, focus, and creativity in the Spring 2020!

Thank you to the battalion and staff for welcoming me and making this an outstanding place to develop students to be professional officers. In my first semester, I learned what it means to be a teacher, mentor and a continuous learner, among many other things. I will endeavor to serve this NROTC unit in every way I can. I am so fortunate to be in the company of exemplary and caring staff members who will go out of their way time and again to look out for our students and make our battalion better.

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# Words From The Top Four

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## Battalion Commanding Officer MIDN 1/C Aldrich



Over the course of the Fall semester of 2019 I had the honor of serving as the Battalion CO for the CU Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps. It was an incredible and invaluable learning experience that I feel has helped me become a well-rounded leader, ready for the fleet. My team and I put a lot of hours into upping the work tempo within the battalion, with the goal of pushing everyone to become better in order to raise the bar. I believe we achieved this goal, and now on the other end this battalion is filled with skilled leaders ready for the next challenge. I could not have been the battalion CO without my amazing teammates

in the top four. MIDN Morrissey, Fitzmaurice, and Osteen made my job easy. They are some of the most competent and squared away people I have ever had the pleasure of working with. This unit means a great deal to me, and I cannot express how much I enjoyed my time leading my peers as the BNCO, or “boomer actual” as I was so affectionately named. My advice for the current battalion leadership of the Spring semester is as follows: lead with humility, always seek advice from those who know more than you, keep your ears open, and be adaptable for when the plan goes off the rails. I have complete faith this top four is going to crush it this semester.





# Words From The Top Four

## Battalion Executive Officer MIDN 1/C Osteen



In the Fall of 2019, I had the privilege of serving as the BN XO for the outstanding midshipmen of both Alpha and Bravo companies alongside MIDN Aldrich, Morrissey and Fitzmaurice. The most important thing I learned is to genuinely care about your people. No matter what other tasks are vying for your attention, remember: *mission first, people always*. You cannot accomplish the mission if you are not taking care of your people. I am very thankful for the opportunity to learn from my experiences and mistakes, and I hope others can as well. I look forward to seeing and hearing about the great things the future officers of this

battalion will accomplish.



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## Words From The Top Four

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Battalion Operations Officer

MIDN 1/C Morrissey



During the fall 2019 semester, I had the honor of working alongside MIDN Aldrich, Osteen, and Fitzmaurice while being the Battalion Operations Officer. As such, I was responsible for making plans, reserving locations, and picking instructors for Leadership Lab, as well as distributing the POW. While being the Battalion OpsO was a demanding task, it was one that I am extremely thankful for because it left me feeling better prepared for leadership positions that I will face in the future. It highlighted the importance of delegation to the many

talented members of the battalion. It also highlighted the importance of communicating the “why” in order to create a strong team. The battalion team is who made this job truly enjoyable for me.

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Battalion Sergeant Major

MIDN 1/C Fitzmaurice



This last semester I had the privilege of being able to serve the Battalion as the MIDN Sergeant Major. As SgtMaj I decided to challenge the Battalion more so than it had ever been challenged before. I think we did just that, creating an environment that tested even the best of the Battalion. Everything the Battalion accomplished this last semester, from excelling during more demanding Drill requirements to flourishing during more intense Battalion events, calls for congratulations. This battalion is what it is

because of the dedicated MIDN, MECEPs, OCs, and Staff who walk its halls. I must thank the team surrounding me, who remained adaptable during our time guiding the Battalion, and who taught me every day leaders should look like. Captain Colgrove, and AMOI, Gunnery Sergeant Stockman also deserve thanks as they were everything the Battalion could have asked for. As the MIDN Sergeant Major, I learned an immense amount about servant leadership and believe that thanks go to the members of the Fall 2019 battalion reading this right now.

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# Commissioning Graduates



*Commissionees after completion of commissioning ceremony. From left to right: 2ndLt Orozco, 2ndLt Jansen, ENS Stilley, 2ndLt McGirl, 2ndLt Camacho*

## Ensign Megan Stilley

Major at CU: Sociology

Service Selected: Surface Warfare Officer

Command Reporting to: Naval Base San Diego, San Diego, CA

## Ensign Thomas Rohrich

Major at CU: Mechanical Engineering

Service Selected: Submariner

Command Reporting to: Naval Nuclear Power School, Rochester, SC



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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Megan Fox

Major at CU: Russian Studies and Art History

Command Reporting to: The Basic School, Quantico, VA

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Daniel Camacho

Major at CU: Environmental Design

Command Reporting to: The Basic School, Quantico, VA

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Joseph McGirl

Major at CU: Business Management

Command Reporting to: The Basic School, Quantico, VA

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Hector Orozco

Major at CU: Criminal Justice

Command Reporting to: The Basic School, Quantico, VA

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Brandan Jansen

Major at CU: Business Management

Command Reporting to: The Basic School, Quantico, VA



*Ensign Rohrich receiving his first salute*



*2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Fox and Corporal Gustafson after the ceremony*

## CONGRATULATIONS FALL 2019 COMMISSIONEES

Good luck with your future endeavors. CU NROTC is proud of all your accomplishments.

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# Midshipmen Over Holiday Break

**The students of the NROTC unit at the University of Colorado are unique and talented. They are all highly motivated individuals who are constantly making strides to improve themselves and achieve their goals. However, they appreciate all break from the hectic college life. They all choose to celebrate these few weeks of freedom in different ways; Midshipmen Margaret Hubbeling and Evelyne Witherell each share their winter break experiences below.**

1. Where did you go and for how long?
2. Was there a specific reason you went?
3. What was the best part of the trip?
4. What was the most interesting thing you learned or saw?
5. How could you relate this experience back to your military career?
6. What are you most looking forward to this semester?
7. Is there anything else you would like to share?



MIDN 3/C Hubbeling is an active member of the NROTC unit here at the University of Colorado. Outside of unit events, she stays busy with her Mechanical Engineering homework and rugby practices. She comes to Boulder from Fort Collins but has found that college has kept her busy enough that she only has time to go home over fall and spring breaks! She loves to stay involved in the unit, and has been on the Endurance, Rifle, and Drill teams during her time here. She finds that she has less time for unit teams as she

moves through her major and has started to pick up billets, but she loves working behind the scenes and creating opportunities for the new midshipmen to try out some of the things she has loved doing.

Over break, MIDN Hubbeling travelled to Hong Kong with her family to visit her sister who lives and works there. She had never been to Asia before this trip, so it was a very exciting opportunity for her. Her family left at the beginning of break and arrived in Hong Kong on Christmas Eve. It was very exciting for MIDN Hubbeling to be able to celebrate the holidays in a new way by mixing customs from home with customs local to Hong Kong and her people. The Hubbeling family stayed busy while in Hong Kong. Rare were the days where they didn't come back to the hotel on one of the last trains, their feet heavy from the many miles they had walked that day. MIDN Hubbeling is unable to pick a favorite out of these days, however, as each held something new and unique. She saw the Tian Tan Buddha and the sky glitter from the Symphony of Lights. She walked through Hong Kong Disney and through neighborhoods that still bear traces of British rule and earlier Asian history. She ate countless different kinds of food, each unique but all delicious.

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This trip was really exciting for MIDN Hubbeling because she got to see how her sister's new home and how she spends her time, as well as how the local people go about their days. There are many things she learned from this trip that she will carry with her into her career as an officer. MIDN Hubbeling thinks that there are few things that make a better officer than having awareness of other people and cultures. It is to her to recognize the backgrounds that people come from and the viewpoints they hold, whether she will be working with them or just visiting their home for a few days. She also believes it is important to travel and see more of the world as it can help open people's minds to new ideas and ways of doing things or solving problems that they might have never thought of before. MIDN Hubbeling is also looking forward to a new rugby season. She is looking forward to the opportunity to grow both as a student and as a leader through various academic and military events.



## Midshipmen Over Holiday Break

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Midshipman 3/C Witherell is an integral member of the Sophomore class here at the University of Colorado Boulder. She is currently enrolled in Astrophysics and hopes to one day fly for the Navy. She comes from a military family; her father was a fighter pilot in the United States Marine Corps, and still works as a test pilot, even though he has since retired from the service. MIDN Witherell has been a huge help to the rest of the unit through the hard work and dedication she has put into her billet positions. She organized the Tri-Mil competition – a

physical competition between the University of Colorado's AROTC, AFROTC, and NROTC units. She has also assisting in drill planning for the upcoming Colorado Meet and has been a guiding hand for other midshipmen during her time as a squad leader.

MIDN Witherell is used to staying very busy during the school year, and that didn't change when she went on break. She travelled with her family, including her identical twin sister Caroline, to Whistler Blackcomb, British Columbia, Canada. MIDN Witherell, as an avid skier, loved every one of the six days she was there and made sure to spend as much time as she could

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shredding up the mountain. She said that the “80 centimeters of snow we got there was definitely the best part” of her trip and made it an unforgettable experience for her.

However, the trip was not only an opportunity for her to get out and ski; it also gave her a chance to interact with people of another country and culture who also speak other languages. MIDN Witherell studied French in high school and she was able to put this knowledge to good use as French is one of the national languages in Canada. There are not many opportunities to speak French while on campus in Boulder, so MIDN Witherell cherished the opportunity to gain a little more practice in a language she has fallen in love with. She also said that “many of the road signs were in Squamish – the native language” and that it was very cool to see unique cultural markers like them while on her trip. She has learned a lot from this cultural excursion and is looking forward to using it as a learning experience for her future military leadership positions as it has helped expand her world view and understanding.

MIDN Witherell also wanted to share a few fun things from her trip and what she is looking forward to at school. Her flight got changed and she didn’t recognize that it had. Because of this she was almost unable to make it back to the United States and had to spend over 36 hours in airports on her way home. She is now acutely aware of the importance of triple checking flight details as she has no desire to repeat this experience! Additionally, she is very excited to play for the unit’s recreational Softball team and has high hopes that they will repeat their league championship. She is looking forward to a great spring semester and is excited to see what kind of training and experience she will gain along the way.

## Midshipmen Abroad

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**Midshipman 2/C King had the opportunity to study abroad last semester. This opportunity is available through the University for students who meet the prerequisite for their degree and who also maintain an excellent GPA. Midshipman King went to Australia over the semester and though she misses the “down under”, she is happy to be back in the unit for her Junior year.**

### Australia Abroad

I burst through the door almost hitting my surfboard on the frame. I quickly place it up against the wall and apologize for almost damaging my sandy, ocean dwelling partner. Immediately after I sprawl out on the floor, convinced I’m going to pass out from heat exhaustion.

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It is the hottest day of the year in New South Wales. Summer is approaching, but also Christmas. I'm not used to this idea. Usually there has to be a substantial amount of snow and stressful engineering exams to get into the Christmas spirit. Still getting used to the Southern Hemisphere, my time here is almost up. This is my last day in Wollongong, Australia. I went surfing at my favorite beach this morning. There was a haze over the escarpment from the fires that have surrounded the area for about a month now. The haze enhanced the teal of the ocean waves contrasted by my yellow board. The salty taste in my mouth, I cherish. The trek home from the beach was more than I bargained for. Over 100 degrees, smoke filling the air, fatigue from the surf but that didn't really matter. What hit harder was the fact that all of my new friends I had made while abroad were all traveling back to their home countries. My professors had said their last goodbyes as we handed in our final exams. I walked past the now familiar campus one last time. My semester outside of the United States was closing and I would soon be leaving what came to be my third home.



I will never be able to thank the people and programs that allowed me to come to this place enough. I ponder this as I lay in sweat on the floor. The differences between myself and the people I met were more than just uncomfortable at first but had blossomed into some of my closest friendships. My perspective of myself in the world, as a midshipman to commission into the US Navy in the following year, grew more than can be expressed. I am more certain than ever it is one of service in any capacity available. I still feel as if I am building this conviction and gaining new perspectives as I return to America but feel it will propel me into the fleet. I was blessed to travel through Asia and surrounding countries as well; I saw some of the most beautiful places in the world: Milford Sound in New Zealand, the Great Barrier Reef in Cairns, and the Phi Phi Islands.

Those places were astounding, but as always, the human soul is most compelling. My eyes were widened by the way people live outside of the United States, whether in poverty in Thailand, natural disasters in Australia or human conflicts in Hong Kong, I can say they all re-enforced the path I am on to gain a college degree in environmental engineering, join into the greatest international force, and develop into a person worthy of serving not just her country but the world.

I am certain that those reading this in some way contributed to this opportunity. I would just like to say thank you for this experience. It was truly a once in a lifetime adventure.

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# Alpha Company FEX

The Alpha Company Final Exercise (FEX) consisted of three days in the cold and snow at Jack's Valley. The main thrust of the exercise was to give all Marine-option Midshipmen - 2/C



and below - the opportunity to be evaluated and given feedback in the areas of land navigation, patrolling, operations orders, small-unit leadership, and mental toughness in order to prepare them for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Over the three-day period, the 2/C

Midshipmen were rotated through various platoon-level billets and were expected to take full responsibility for carrying out the training schedule and procuring their own supplies in various resupply missions throughout the training complex. The MECEPs and OCS-complete Midshipmen constantly evaluated the billet-holders and squad-members in leadership, bearing, and unselfishness; this evolution would not have been possible without them.

The constantly-changing leadership billets and unknown schedule created a rapidly changing environment in which the Midshipmen had to adapt, and they did so impressively. With no exception, the 2/C billet-holders stepped up to the plate and demonstrated leadership abilities which, up until that point, had not yet seen.



Despite giving up Halloween weekend for this evolution, the Midshipmen exhibited drive, resolve, and compassion for their fellow Midshipmen. It is my belief that all the trainees left Jack's Valley having gained confidence in some areas and having uncovered personal deficiencies in others. Fortunately, the extensive feedback provided by the MECEP and 1/C evaluators will serve as a framework to assist the Midshipmen to improve on those deficiencies in the future and make them the best future Marine Officers that they can be.



# Sea Service Ball



The 2019 Sea Service Ball was one for the ages. Retired Master Gunnery Sergeant Ivers had the audience at the edge of their seats with a speech that instilled motivation and esprit de corps like no other. The night continued with great food, dancing and time spent celebrating our beloved Naval traditions as well as a chance for Midshipmen and staff members alike to share sea stories or personal hobbies and passions.

