



Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps Unit Rensselaer

# Hi-Line Newsletter



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# Firsthand Account of Orientation Week

By: MIDN 4/C Conor Hanlon



As we stumbled into AR209 at 0800 on 19 August, earlier than most of us had awoken all summer, to say we were intimidated would be an understatement. Surrounded by unfamiliar faces and unsure of what to expect in the coming hours, we waited in silence. Needless to say, that silence was promptly broken when Midshipman Command Mast Chief (MCMC) Hartley entered the room. We picked up our carefully-packed duffel bags and made our way to the armory basement for gear issue.

Those first two hours in the armory basement on that sweltering 85 degree August morning may have been the hardest of the week. Carefully packing and unpacking our sea bags, being sure not to drop or forget a single article of our uniforms while being thoroughly inspected by CMC Hartley and MIDN Miles was certainly a shock to the incoming midshipmen. In those short hours we learned to stand at attention, deliver greetings, and recite the Sailors Creed with an emphasis on Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

Once we were through gear issue and our delicious

MREs, we marched our way up to our respective dorms to drop off our sea bags. Shortly after, we were back in AR209 in a much different mental state than we were just hours before. Our hearts were pounding with fear and excitement; not knowing for what may lie ahead. We would then be lectured on naval history, courtesies, conduct and policy, trying our hardest to always sit at attention. Our lectures would be followed by drill practice, where we worked relentlessly to make each move sharper and more on-point under the instruction of MIDN Miles.

The first night was unquestionably the hardest in my opinion. We were tired and felt unprepared for the week ahead. We laid in our racks with no way of telling when our doors would be pounded by the fists of MIDN staff to get us up and ready for our first PRT. However, it was in those hardest moments that we began to bond with one another. Soon enough, our minds had finally managed to calm down enough to let us drift off to sleep on top of our carefully made racks. . After what seemed like moments of sleep, we were awoken by MCMC's reveille, informing us that we had two minutes to be out of bed, dressed, clean shaven, with our teeth brushed, canteens filled, and standing at attention on the bulkhead.

### Orientation Week Cont'd

We sharpened up on our greetings, standing at attention became second nature, and we began to know the foundations inside and out. As stressful as each day was, we were lucky enough to have some time to breathe with our Division Officers each night. During those few short minutes, we got to know our fellow midshipmen, gained critical advice from our seniors, and reflected on the day as a whole. One of the things pushing us through that week was our DIVOs reminding us to be persistent, work together, and look out for one another.

Of course, the week was not all one monotonous cycle. There were the fun times: making shapes out of a rope while blindfolded, memorizing the contents of MIDN Snyder's mystery box, dodgeball, and of course, paintball. It was in those moments, and even the times when we struggled, that we really got to know our fellow midshipmen and learned the most important skills we needed to succeed: communication, teamwork, selflessness.

In the blink of an eye, it was Sunday and time for the Pass-in-Review. As we marched out, much to our families' surprise, we were a changed group of midshipmen. O-week taught us more than we expected to learn and forged friendships and bonds that will last far longer than the next four years. As we took our Oath of Office, administered by Captain Arensmeyer, it became official; we had taken the first step to commissioning as Naval Officers.



# Letter to My 4/C Self

By: MIDN 1/C Aryton Starks



Dear 4/C Self,

I'd like to start out by saying that you're almost there! Less than a year left of college and less than a year until you commission as an officer in the United States Navy. Seeing how you're fresh out of O-week and probably a bit unsure of your decision to join the NROTC program, I'd like to assure you that what you just went through is nothing compared to what's to come. Throughout the next few years there will be no one there to ensure you get eight hours of sleep before you have to wake up at 0500 for PT. There will be so much more to deal with than "left, right, left" and learning the handbook from cover to cover. And if you thought the BDUs were bad, wait until you have your first encounter with summer whites. O-week was a cake walk compared to what you'll endure over the next four years of your career at RPI. Juggling NROTC, school and other extracurricular activities is going to be tough but I'm going to encourage you to stick with it because I wouldn't trade the past three years for anything. Along the way there were some ups and downs but with a few words of wisdom you can get through it. My first piece of advice is to ask for help. Second, you are going to fail at many things. Third, try new things and

go into the unknown with an open mind. With these three things your years at RPI will be some of the best years of your life thus far.

The first, maybe the most important words I have for you are to ask for help. Getting into RPI means that your high school performance was exceptional, but I can assure you that high school classes do not compare to the classes you will take at RPI. You are going to be surrounded by some kids who are natural geniuses and can pick up on concepts in one lecture and, unfortunately, you will not be one of those kids. You may be wondering how you can compete with those kids and my answer to you is to ask for help. Your peers, the TAs, and even the professors are all great resources to talk to when it comes to understanding material. You might think you can do it on your own, and you will try to at first, but it will be much easier if you accept the fact that you need help and seek assistance early. Asking for help can also go beyond the classroom. There are people around to help you with everything from rides to the airport, to improving your PT scores. RPI and NROTC are not going to be easy to get through on your own so please remember to ask for help. Being in a place like RPI failure is bound to happen, add in the stress of waking up early for NROTC and staying up late dealing with homework and clubs or teams and it be-

comes even more probable. As much as I'd like to say you will do well on every test and get an A in every class, that is nowhere near how your experience goes.

You do get some As, some Bs, a few Cs, maybe a D or two, and yes you flat out fail things. And it is going to be okay, from these lows you will learn a lot. You learn how to study better, how to start things earlier than the night before they're due and you learn how to ask for help. Your failures will also not be limited to the classroom. Spring semester freshmen year you will fail push-ups and be on remedial PT. Waking up early to work out another day of the week was less than ideal, but it made you stronger and it allowed you to bond with a different group of peers. Failure is going to happen to you in multiple areas of life and its going to be hard in the moment, you will move on and you will learn and become better for having failed.

My final piece of advice to you is to try new things. I know the unknown is scary for you but I encourage you to push yourself outside of your comfort zone. Some things you try will go well, other things not so much, but venturing into the unknown will be the cause of some of your fondest memories. I don't want to spoil much, but CORTRAMID will be a huge step outside of your comfort zone. Every day you will be forced to try something new like striking up a simple conversation.

### Letter to My 4/C Self Cont'd

Even around campus I encourage you to try new things. Junior year you'll need some community service hours and you'll volunteer at Genericon. Although it is not a scene you ever thought you'd be a part of, go into it with an open mind. I promise you that you will have a great time and meet some of the nicest and most creative people and it will change your view on the event and the attendees. I won't ruin anymore of what's to come, just know that in trying new things you have a lot of fun, meet a ton of great people and form some great memories.

Straight out of O-week, joining the NROTC program at RPI might not seem like it will be the highlight of your college

career. After having already completed three years I can honestly say that college has been a challenging time, but you have developed and learned so much within the short time you have been here. You will get to see and do things you never imagined experiencing and you will create some great memories along the way. At this time, the road ahead may seem frightening but if you apply the lessons I have come to learn and ask for help, remember that failure is inevitable, and try new things; your time at RPI will be time well spent.

## Our Unit Motto

By: MIDN 3/C Erika Tischbein



*It's Our Legacy... Define it, Shape it, Make it Happen.* The RPI NROTC unit motto hangs proudly on both the wall in the ward room and the wall in the electronic classroom. Not only is it displayed but it is also recited again and again. Midshipmen sing it on humps in the early morning and shout it during uniform inspections. It is a part of each midshipman and is carried with graduates as they leave the unit for the fleet. Legacy is a strong word filled with meaning. On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the RPI Men's Hockey coach, Seth Appert talked to us about leadership and he stressed the importance of legacy. The hockey team gathers each year to look at the pictures of previous classes and admire their contribution to the team. Their dedication and respect of those who came before them shows the legacy they left behind. At one point, when MIDN Hartley was asked what his goals were for his life, he said he hopes the 4/C remember him like he remembers his senior staff. Not only did his leaders leave a legacy by gaining his respect but they inspired MIDN Hartley to do the same. Maybe in a few years some of the current 4/C will say the same thing about him and the cycle will continue to repeat. The second part of the motto, *Define it, Shape it, Make it Happen*, describes the process of making such an impact on future generations. *Define it:* In order to achieve greatness, attainable goals must be set. *Shape it:* Now the goals are set, work towards them. Effort and a positive attitude can go a long way. *Make it Happen:* If these steps are followed, the goals will be met and success will happen as the legacy follows. This small moto may be short and sweet but the things it represents are huge.

*"It's Our Legacy... Define it,  
Shape it, Make it Happen"*

# CORTRAMID

By: MIDN 3/C Owen Gavner



This past summer, the 3/C went to CORTRAMID summer training. A majority were in the second section out of Norfolk, Virginia. It was four weeks through July into August. Personally, I found the

weather to be quite different from what I am used to, being from Buffalo, NY. Besides a few rainy days, we had hot, humid and sunny days for most of our time. Our rotation of the weeks consisted of Marine week, surface warfare, submarine week followed by aviation week. The consensus of the other groups was that we ended up getting the best possible rotation.

Marine week consisted of sleeping in the barracks at Camp Lejeune, eating an assortment of MREs, and always moving place to place at a brisk pace. We were involved in so many different events during Marine week that looking back it seemed as if we spent a month's time during the first week alone. From taking a long ride in a CH-53 Super Stallion and an Amphibious Assault vehicle, to an explosives demonstration, going through a CS gas chamber, and getting to fire some different Marine infantry weaponry, there was never a dull moment. Gunnery Sergeant Finch kept us in line while giving us insights into his many years of service. Many Midshipmen held the opinion that this week was the best, despite the exhaustion, we experienced many things that we will not have exposure to again in our careers.

Surface warfare week was quite different in comparison. We toured several different types of ships, including the USS WASP, which is an amphibious assault ship. Between ship tours, we did several ship simulators, during which we would take the role of an officer on the bridge and give commands to steer the ship accordingly. The greatest difference from Marine week was the amount of free time. We spent this free time exploring Norfolk, which included many hours of playing pool and trying to

find the best gym. It was certainly a nice break after the intensity of Marine week.

Submarine week was the next week. For the first half of the week, we traveled out to meet the sub and spent 60 hours aboard. We spent our time on the bridge, exploring the engineering compartments, and playing cards, most notably the game President. The food was confirmed to be the best of all the other services, and we took full advantage of every meal. We got the chance to act as helmsman and steer the sub. After the first half of this week, we spent our time in hot and humid King's Bay, Georgia participating in various activities. We all had the opportunity to do a brief training in a wet trainer, where we simulated pipes bursting and how to repair them temporarily. Everyone enjoyed having the experience of diving in a submarine, especially when it came to angles and dangles.

Aviation week was spent back in Norfolk, during which we experienced the more relaxed lifestyle of aviators. Similar to surface week, we had a lot of time to explore Norfolk and spent considerable amount of time socializing with fellow RPI midshipmen as well as midshipmen from other units. The two most interesting things we did over aviation week were a flight in a trainer plane, T-6, as well as a helicopter ride in an H-60. My T-6 pilot did several barrel rolls, loops and upside-down flying pulling up to 4Gs. I was able to control the stick for a while, but was only confident enough to turn from side to side. It was an awesome experience that I'm glad I was able to have.

CORTRAMID provided a great insight into the different services including the life of a Marine. RPI Midshipmen ended up quite lucky with our rotation of the weeks. We enjoyed our mini-vacation in Norfolk, Virginia and the insights into our future careers that it gave us. We made many great and humorous memories that will forever live in infamy within our class, and into our time in the Navy.

# 1/C Summer Cruise

**By: MIDN 4/C Michael Landuyt**



Each year, every Midshipman attends a summer cruise. These summer cruises provide Midshipmen with experience in the fleet and learning opportunities to help prepare them for commissioning in the Navy. Midshipmen preparing for their senior year are able to attend summer cruises similar to the area in which they plan on commissioning. Our current Midshipman Command Master Chief, Midshipman 1/C Hartley, was able to go on summer cruise in Haifa, Israel. He was able to see what life as a Surface Warfare Officer would be like when he commissions following graduation. Hartley followed officers, stood watches and learned the general Surface Warfare lifestyle. The morning watches from 0300 to 0600 were rough to begin with but are an important part to get used to. As the fleet moved around the Mediterranean Sea, Hartley became acquainted with scheduling and only assured him of his decision to be a Surface Warfare officer after he graduates. He is now even more excited to commission this following year. On the summer cruise, he learned a lot about becoming an effective officer. Hartley found

that the best officers were personable and easily approachable for questions. Officers need effective communication skills in addition to being strong and giving orders. Midshipman Hartley explained how important it is for Midshipmen to stay out of trouble on their summer cruises and to always keep an ear open to what is happening on the boat. He was able to follow on a search and seizure exercise by hearing about it and asking if he would be able to attend. This is only one example of the many learning opportunities available on a ship outside of what is ordered to do. There are various perspectives to learn from, so it is important to talk to many officers to get the most out of the summer cruise as possible.

There were many memorable moments from the summer cruise. Hartley particularly remembered watching a Syrian village off the coast be taken over by rebels. He continued to watch as the Syrian Government bombarded the village. He described the aftermath as “everything was gone”. This experience was symbolic of the many difficult things that will be required in the Navy; our job is to help prevent these acts from happening.

# Military Appreciation Football Game

**By: MIDN 3/C Andrew Zhang**



What a time to be alive. The 2015 Military Appreciation Game took place at ECAV Stadium on a bright and early, sunny September Saturday. With minimal wind breeze and ideal playing conditions, the RPI Engineers hosted MIT to a great football game, and the atmosphere was ecstatic. MIDN Freedman had this to say on the game: “I was pumped. It was my first football game of the year, and I couldn’t wait to see the RPI

team in action.”

After a rough start in which the MIT Engineers were able to score a touchdown on their first drive, the RPI Engineers rallied to defend their home turf and shut MIT out for the entire rest of the game. RPI scored on the following drive, and it was smooth sailing from there. The offense cut through the MIT defense like a knife through butter, and by the end of the first half it was 28-7.

***Article Continued on Page 8***

## Military Appreciation Football Game Cont'd

At halftime, the military competition commenced. The RPI Navy, Army, and Air Force ROTC units brought out their best athletes in a grueling competition of athleticism, agility, and teamwork. Each squad consisted of 4 Cadets or Midshipman to compete in a relay consisting of sprints, push-ups, burpees, and ammo can raises. MIDN Kulahiglu, MIDN Riley, MIDN Runyan, and MIDN Maldonado bravely took up the challenge and competed on the Midshipmen's behalf. Throughout the entire race, the competition was down to the inches, and everyone looked on par. However, at the last station in the relay, Army was able to gain the lead and ended in first. Navy, however, was able to fend off Air Force and placed a respectable second place.

In the end, we were all winners. RPI was able to handily keep their momentum and defeat MIT 42-7, and the ROTC units learned a lot about each other through some friendly competition.



# Marine Corps Fall FEX

By: MIDN 4/C Conor Hanlon



On a chilly fall morning, 17 October 2015, members of the RPINROTC Unit embarked at 04:30 for the annual Fall Field Exercise at the Rotary Scout Reservation in Averill Park, New York. The objective of FEX is to prepare Marine Option Midshipmen for Officer Candidate School which they must all participate in the summer following their 2/C year.

The day began before the break of dawn with a 6 mile ruck march with fully loaded packs, led by 1/C Midshipmen Locker and Ash. While some Midshipmen did struggle with this exercise, once completed, all Midshipmen agreed that it was a great workout and provided a taste of what all Marines will go through at some point in their careers.

Following the ruck, while digging into their MREs, the Midshipmen were given a brief face painting tutorial. From there, they began their lesson on land navigation. After practicing land navigation for over an hour, it was time for Small Unit Leadership Evaluation (SULE). After an instructional session with Midshipman 1/C Ash on briefing a mission and practicing squad and fire team formations, the Midshipmen were given a chance to demonstrate their competence of the material. Each Marine Option and a select few Navy Options were given the opportunity to brief their squads on a mission and execute the mission, leading three fire teams in specific formations and movements.

Once SULE was completed, the Midshipmen were briefed on survival tactics and shelter building by Midshipman 2/C Fielder who attended Mountain Warfare training this past summer. After the briefing each Midshipman was given the opportunity to construct a shelter with their fire teams. The last exercise of the night was night navigation, a fun yet challenging experience for many Midshipmen. Armed with only a compass, Midshipmen were sent into the woods to navigate a particular azimuth for a given distance until they reached their objective, a task that proved to be more difficult than one would expect.

Finally, the very long day was wrapped up with a bonfire and barbecue. Midshipmen were given the chance to ask those who had been through OCS valuable questions on their experiences and what to expect. Sitting around the fire gave each Midshipman the opportunity to reflect on everything they had learned during FEX, and grow closer as a unit.



# Hi-Line Newsletter



# Dear Alumni,

Each day, we sit in the same classrooms, walk the same hallways, and study the same courses as you once had. The times have changed, but our traditions and customs have not. I speak for the entire unit when I say we are proud to continue the great legacy you helped create. We would greatly appreciate any contribution you may be able to provide. Help us to continue training the nation's best.

*Thank you.*

Very Respectfully,  
MIDN Benjamin Montgomery  
Midshipman Commanding Officer



## NROTCU RPI

AS & RC Room 201  
110 8th Street  
Troy, NY 12180

Phone: 518-276-8001  
Fax: 518-276-4788



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