

# USC NAVAL ROTC NEWSLETTER

October 2023

Edited by: MIDN Bella Sanchez  
and MIDN Rylan Giorgetta

## 1/C Service Assignment

By: MIDN Kaisa Liljenwall

As the only class to have their entire freshman year on Zoom, what better way than to commemorate their Service assignment than a Friday evening Zoom call. Following a week of uncertainty on when the announcement would even arrive, all First-Class Midshipmen gathered in the wardroom at 5 o'clock. Many showed up earlier than they have ever arrived for a muster, eagerly awaiting the announcement they have been waiting over three years for. Midshipman Battalion Commander Durban positioned his computer on the wardroom table facing the almost twenty-five eagerly awaiting Midshipmen. Colonel Juarez and the active duty staff logged onto Zoom at five-fifteen, their faces beaming with pride and anticipation for the announcement. After Colonel Juarez gave a few welcoming remarks, the slideshow presentation began.

The presentation began with the naming of those chosen as future Submarine Officers who will head to Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC upon graduation. Those who were assigned include MIDN Addington, Cheung, Hwangbo, Kott, Majam, and Piper.

Next, the Surface Warfare Officer Selects were announced. MIDN Chan, Cooper, Durban, Mun, Sanchez, and Office-Candidate Crowe will head to Basic Division Officer Course (BDOC) to learn to help lead the Navy's mightiest vessels.

The excitement continued with the announcement of the Surface Warfare-Nuclear Option selects. MIDN Cao, Harrison, and Kammereck will head to Nuclear Power School upon completion of their initial Surface tour and eventually work on an Aircraft Carrier. MIDN Kammereck's designation includes an option to transfer to the SEAL community later on in his career.



MIDN Piper, Hwangbo, Kott, and Cheung

Finally, there was the announcement of those who will join the aviation community. Those who were selected as Student Naval Aviators include MIDN Jenson, Larratt, O'Brien, and Whelan. MIDN O'Brien bravely joined the Zoom call all the way from Cape Town, South Africa where he is studying abroad this semester. Finally, MIDN Gallo was assigned as a Student Naval Flight Officer. He will be joining the future aviators in Pensacola, Florida upon graduation.

While the day of Service Assignment can be very stressful for Midshipmen, it is also a day that is filled with excitement and celebration. Following the announcement, Midshipman headed to Rock & Reilly's to celebrate their remarkable achievement and the incredible adventures that soon await them. Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



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# MIDN of the Month

By: MIDN Kelvin Cao



*MIDN Matthew Villena*

Midshipman 2/C Villena exemplifies the spirit of the Trojan Battalion. From San Diego, California, MIDN Villena studies Industrial & Systems Engineering and is well-involved inside of Naval ROTC. This September, MIDN Villena took on the challenging task of having a USC Enterprise Slack workspace created for the unit. As the midshipman staff plans to integrate Slack as the primary source of communication for the future, midshipman Villena has continuously worked hard to ensure a smooth transition and proper setup. By contacting USC IT, midshipman Villena saved the Trojan Battalion roughly ~\$1000/month.



*Trojan Battalion Midshipmen and President Carol Folt*



*MIDN Matt Villena and his younger brother MIDN Andrew Vilenna*

His excellence and dedication in his billet as a platoon athletics officer display great leadership potential and commitment to our unit. He also serves as the cadence caller within the communication platoon. MIDN Villena embodies what it means to be a USC midshipman.



*MIDN Villena and MIDN Herrington*

## La Habra JROTC Visit

by: MIDN Rebecca Wyman

On October 17th, USC's Naval ROTC had the honor of welcoming cadets from La Habra High School's NJROTC unit. Our goal for the day was to offer these students a comprehensive look into the life and opportunities within NROTC and to strengthen the bond between our institutions.

After the students showed up at USC, we kicked it off with a tour of the USC campus. The tour started at the PED, where most NROTC events take place, moved to Trousdale, and then to the Alumni House to show important parts of USC history. The group was then introduced to the freshman dorms including New North and Birnkrant as well as the two big libraries: Leavey and Doheny. The students also got to see the amazing views of the School of Cinematic Arts and the Viterbi School of Engineering. By showing cadets many different parts of campus we were able to illustrate the balance of military discipline with academic pursuits that NROTC students at USC enjoy. During the tour, we dedicated time to discuss the transition from high school to university life, emphasizing the differences and advantages of choosing between different colleges like USC and our sister battalion at UCLA.



*La Habra NJROTC unit in front of Tommy Trojan*



*MIDN Wyman with JROTC cadets*

Once the tour concluded, students were given presentations on a day in the life of NROTC, what to expect time commitment-wise, and the exciting events offered to students within the NROTC. Furthermore, we talked through the details of the Navy or Marine Corps full-tuition scholarships and provided guidance on the application process to ensure that these students have the information and opportunity to succeed. After the presentations were concluded, we had a Q&A session with Midshipmen of all experience and class levels so that the students could get all of their questions answered. At this time the Midshipmen also had the chance to share their story of joining NROTC as well as their experiences so far in NROTC.

What made this experience truly memorable was that of the participants, a majority were young women. It was heartwarming to see such a strong female presence in a field traditionally characterized by its male majority. I hope it heralds a positive shift in the number of women choosing to join the military. By breaking barriers and diversifying the military ranks, we can tap into a broader range of talents, perspectives, and leadership qualities that have long been underrepresented.

We had an amazing group of Midshipmen volunteer their time to help these students understand the discipline, camaraderie, and fun that being in NROTC provides. Hopefully the La Habra cadets were influenced by the day to continue their journey from JROTC to NROTC.

# Fall 2023 Marine FEX

By: MIDN Shrinivas Deolalikar



*Gunnery Sergeant Farr instructing midshipmen*

On the 21st of October, motivated Marine midshipmen rose early and mustered in the wardroom at 0330. The bright and early morning started with a trip to Camp Pendleton for the 2023 Fall FEX (Field Training Exercise). This training event, conducted alongside UCLA midshipmen, was the final evolution to demonstrate the hard work over that the past few weeks. In the weeks prior to FEX, Marine Option midshipmen learned skills that would prove to be paramount for the training evolution, including land navigation, fireteam and squad formations, basic weapons handling, and receiving and briefing orders.

Upon arriving at Camp Pendleton, midshipmen conducted dynamic warmups and were issued rifles before embarking on a 6 mile hike, with the final destination being the station for conducting LRCs (Leadership Reaction Course). Midshipmen from both units rotated between stations and alternated fireteam leaders, receiving and giving orders in order to complete the creative and demanding task laid out in the LRC.

Directly following the LRCs, midshipmen were sent out in buddy pairs to complete a land navigation course; the ideal end state was to have located each of the ten given points in the two hour allotment. Midshipmen used their acquired knowledge of compasses, terrain, azimuths, and land navigation to trek for two hours, going from point to point.

After completion of the land navigation course, midshipmen were broken up into fireteams and completed SULEs (Small Unit Leadership Evaluations). These mock scenarios were meant to gauge a fire team leader's ability to lead under fire. For each SULE, the fire team of that scenario received an order, modified it, and briefed it to his fireteam.

The cumulative event of the FEX was a squad SULE in which all of the midshipmen joined and participated. The squad SULE, more grand in its nature, was the ultimate cumulative assessment of all that the midshipmen had learned. Upon completion of the squad SULE, the midshipmen hiked back to their starting point and conducted a debrief led by Capt. Gabel and MIDN 1/C Trodden.

I am exceptionally grateful to have been afforded the opportunity to take part in the Fall 2023 FEX. The classes taught by the upper class midshipmen were instrumental in performing well at FEX, and their instruction was top notch. Attending the FEX reaffirmed my desire to work to commission as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.



*Midshipmen at Camp Pendleton*