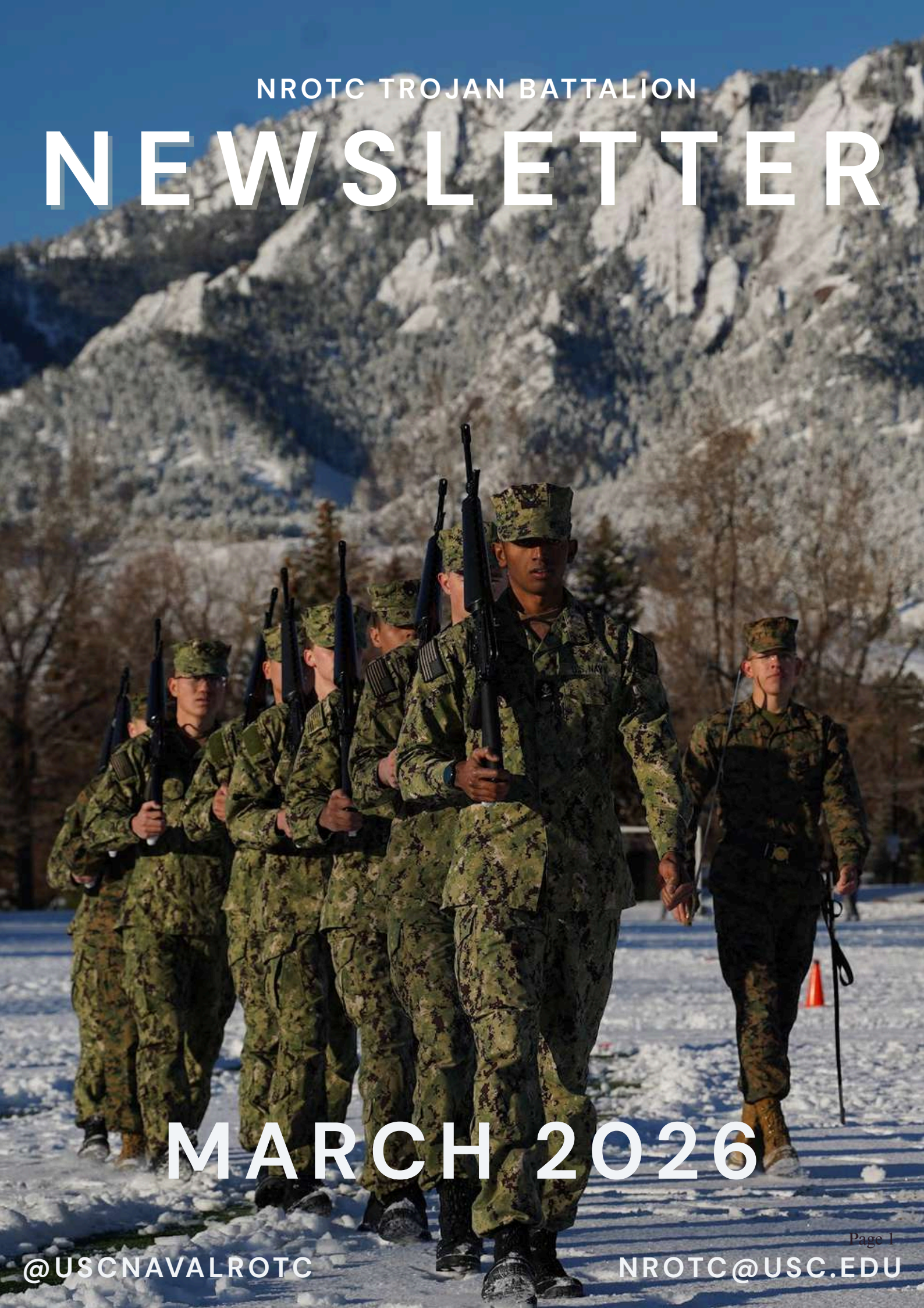
NROTC TROJAN BATTALION

NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2026

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Trojans Give Back

2026 NJROTC Superbowl Volunteering

On February 21, midshipmen and active duty staff from the Trojan Battalion traveled to Santa Ana High School to assist with the NJROTC Area 21 Super Bowl. The following week, on February 28, they supported the NJROTC Area 22 Super Bowl at El Camino Real Charter High School. Both weeks, from early morning until the hot afternoon, high school JROTC cadets from across Southern California participated in various competitive events, testing their physical fitness through curl-ups, push-ups, and sprint relays, uniform appearance in a personnel inspection, proficiency in armed and unarmed drill, and knowledge in an academic test. USC NROTC's mission was to assist the host schools in the efficient execution of these competitions.

At Santa Ana, Col Tracy Perry served as the head judge for the personnel inspection, with LT Cobarruvias joining as an additional judge. At El Camino Real, CDR Buschor held the role of head judge for personnel inspection. At both competitions, SSgt Arzate served as a judge for the unarmed and armed regulation drill events. MIDN served as judges in a variety of roles, from assistants on the exhibition drill pads, to grading the cadets' form while conducting push-ups and curl-ups, to proctoring the academic test.

Lessons in Leadership

USC Marshall Experiential learning Center

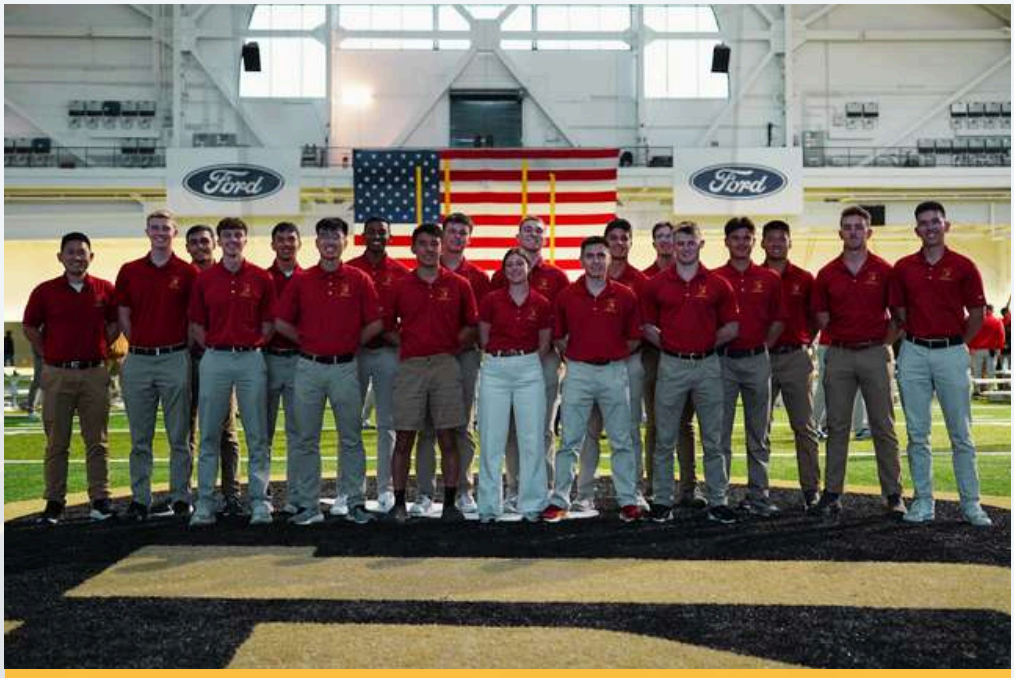
On February 26, 2026, the Trojan Battalion had the opportunity to attend the USC Marshall School of Business's Experiential Learning Center (ELC) during PROLAB. The ELC, per the Marshall website, "is a behavioral laboratory that enables students to learn critical management skills by participating in 'business-like' activities. Topics covered include group decision-making, problem solving, making presentations, and business negotiations just to name a few. Students learn by actively engaging in ELC activities and receiving immediate feedback by reviewing their recorded interactions."

When asked what he thought battalion members could take away from the experience, Battalion Commander GySgt Letizia said, "I believe the ELC is extremely beneficial to members of the battalion is because it allows members to gain hands on experience in leadership opportunities, such as learning how to effectively communicate, delegate tasks, and assign roles when necessary." The Trojan Battalion is very grateful to the Marshall School of Business for their hospitality and this opportunity to learn and grow in their leadership skills.

2026 CU BOULDER DRILL MEET

Overview

Each year, the NROTC unit at the University of Colorado Boulder hosts a drill meet, drawing other NROTC units from all across the country for participation in friendly competition. Events include Iron 4/C, Shooting, Knowledge, Endurance Race, Drill, and Color Guard. This year, 26 midshipmen and 3 staff members traveled to Boulder, CO from March 5-8 to represent USC in competition.



Trojan Battalion attendees pose for a group photo at the closing awards ceremony.

MIDN 4/C Browder particularly enjoyed spending quality time with upperclassmen and getting to know them in a more casual setting. Each participant trained hard to perform well in respective their events, making the Trojan Battalion proud.

Iron 4/C: MIDN 4/C Filiben, Holley, Turk, White

The Iron 4/C event began with a push-up portion, in which MIDN completed as many push-ups as they could by the end of the two-minute timer. This was immediately followed by multiple repetitions of a circuit comprised of 30 push-ups, followed by calisthenics such as flutter kicks, squats, and crunches.

The second portion proved to be tough, with ammo can lifts followed by buddy carries. The event concluded with a max set of pull-ups for each MIDN.

The participants' preparation for the event was primarily conducted individually, yet the intensity of their preparatory efforts allowed them to thrive during the competition itself. Leading up to the event, MIDN 4/Cs Filliben, Holley, Turk, and White focused on their short burst running endurance to prepare for the circuit portion of the event. The Navy options were also taught how to properly buddy carry prior to the event.

The Trojan Battalion earned 4th place in the event. Reflecting on the team's performance, MIDN Filliben said, "I feel extremely proud of my team for performing to the best of their abilities." Congratulations and Bravo Zulu to all competitors!

Shooting: MIDN 2/C De Fina, Tran, 3/C Baret, Hammond, Kundu, Williams, 4/C Axtell, Miles

The USC NROTC shooting team is grateful to the alumni league for funding live-fire practices leading up to the competition. In preparation, the team conducted three live-fire training days using both the M1911 pistol platform and the M4 carbine. These sessions allowed MIDN to become more familiar with the shooting sequence and improve their recoil management.

Although the team did not place in the competition, they gained valuable experience and lessons learned, and are motivated to return stronger and better prepared in the future.

Knowledge: MIDN 2/C Heitman, Wyman, 3/C Kundu, 4/C Turk

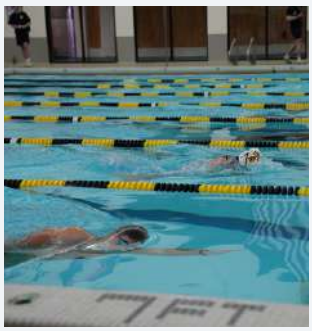
Returning as last year's first-place team, the knowledge team entered a restructured and more demanding competition. Despite the heightened difficulty, they delivered a strong performance, demonstrating depth of knowledge across topics ranging from Naval history to weapon systems. While they ultimately did not advance, the team represented the unit with professionalism and expertise.

Drill: MIDN 2/C Heitman, 3/C Estrada, Jothiprakasam, Zendejas, 4/C Browder, Finnell, Holley, Moore, Zhang

Members of the Drill Team mustered early Saturday morning to conduct drill in the snow. MIDN 3/C Zendejas, following a drill card, led the team through precise and synchronized movements while being evaluated by a Drill Instructor. The team's coordination was made possible by their practice in the weeks leading up to the meet.

Endurance Race | Swim Portion

MIDN 2/C Xie, 3/C Hansen, Huang, Lockwood, Williams, 4/C Nocker



On Friday night, the members of the Endurance Race team got aquatic for the pool portion of the E-Race. The first half consisted of a 1000 yard Combat Side Stroke swim split between two members who swam at the same time while the others did poolside team calisthenics. In the second half, three team members treaded water while holding a brick, and the others completed individual calisthenics, rotating as they finished. The team did very well, finishing first in their heat and getting off to a strong start in the competition. They attributed their success to clear communication and making and sticking to a thorough plan.

Endurance Race | Land Portion

On Saturday morning, the E-Race team got off to an early start, beginning a long and arduous race. Despite significant last minute changes to the race made the prior evening, the team adapted, strategizing and attacking every event with tenacity. They could not have achieved the success they did without the support of Capt VanderSchans, MIDN 2/Cs De Fina and Wyman, and MIDN 3/C Baret, all of whom completed the entire race with the team, providing snacks, hydration, and moral support. After 8 long hours, the team finished the race surrounded by other Trojan MIDN cheering them on. Despite not placing as highly as hoped, they had a great experience and look forward to returning stronger next year.

Timeline

0600 - START
- Log PT & Planks
- 0.7 mi buddy carry

0615
- 1.2 mi CASEVAC
- Combat Fitness Test (CFT)

0700
- Begin ruck to mountain

0735
- Begin mountain ascent

0935
- Reach summit
- Begin descent

1105
- Reach base of mountain
- Begin ruck to calisthenics field

1130
- Arrive at calisthenics field
- 3 begin calisthenics
- 3 begin 12-mile run with 25lb sand baby

1340
- Begin ruck back to Buff statue

1355
- Arrive at Buff statue
- 12 ranger pushups

1357 - END

Color Guard: MIDN 3/c Jothiprakasam, Zendejas, 4/c Holley, Moore, Zhang

In preparation for the Colorado Drill Meet, the Color Guard drill team met weekly to practice the required movements and refine the provided drill card sequence. Each session focused on building synchronization, sharpening commands, and improving overall precision as a team. Once the team felt confident in their performance, they coordinated with a Color Sergeant, connected through SSgt Arzate, who observed the routine and provided constructive feedback to help them improve.

On the day of the competition, the team gathered for a final practice before stepping onto the drill field to perform for the judges. The experience of training consistently over time and then executing the routine in front of drill instructors fostered a strong sense of confidence, discipline, and attention to detail within the team. By the end, the process had not only strengthened their technical performance but also reinforced the importance of teamwork and composure under pressure.

Guest Speaker: U.S. Navy CDR Meghan Gray

On March 12, the Trojan Battalion got to hear from USC NROTC alumna CDR Meghan Gray during PROLAB. CDR Gray is a Surface Warfare Officer who commissioned in 2007, earning a degree in Geological Sciences with a minor in Environmental Engineering. She has served in multiple operational roles at sea, including aboard the USS *San Jacinto*, USS *Preble*, and USS *Hopper*, with experience spanning combat systems, anti-submarine warfare, and operations leadership. Her deployments have included the Mediterranean, Indo-Pacific, and Arabian Gulf, supporting carrier strike group operations and ballistic missile defense missions. Ashore, she earned a master's degree in National Security Affairs and has served in key planning and training roles, including at U.S. Naval Central Command. She currently serves as Commanding Officer of USS *Charleston* (LCS-18), after previously serving as the ship's Executive Officer.

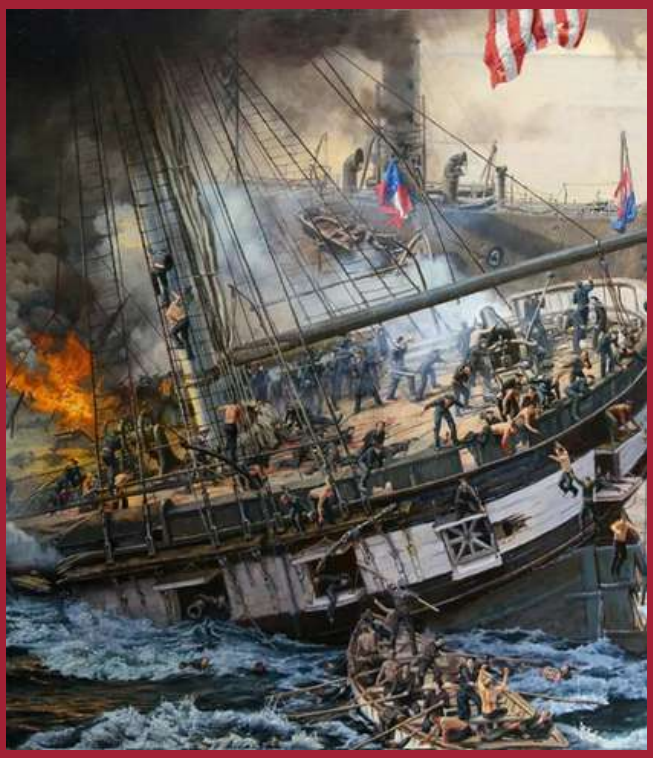
She spoke about the lessons she has learned throughout her career and gave advice to current MIDN about how to best take advantage of their time in NROTC. A tip that stood out to MIDN 4/C Holley was the concept that the habits you develop as a MIDN play into the basis of the officer you become. The Trojan Battalion is very grateful to CDR Gray for returning to USC to share her wisdom and expertise!

This Month in History

The Battle of Hampton Roads, 1862

In March 1862, during the Civil War, the Battle of Hampton Roads marked a revolutionary shift in naval warfare as the ironclads USS *Monitor* and CSS *Virginia* (formerly the CSS *Merrimack*) fought the first-ever duel between armored warships. Just one day prior, the *Virginia* had devastated Union wooden ships, proving how vulnerable traditional fleets had become. When the *Monitor* arrived, the two ironclads engaged in a fierce but ultimately indecisive battle, unable to significantly damage one another. Though tactically a draw, the engagement signaled the end of the era of wooden warships almost overnight and ushered in a new age of armored, steam-powered naval combat.

Source: https://www.britannica.com/event/Battle-of-the-Monitor-and-Merrimack



Welcome Aboard!

New Trojan Battalion Officer Instructors

CDR Alexander Buschor
Executive Officer (XO)

CDR Alex "Road Trip" Buschor, reported aboard as the new Executive Officer of the NROTC Los Angeles Consortium. CDR Buschor is from Long Island, NY. He graduated from the State University of New York at Onconta in 2008. After the completion of Officer Candidate School (OCS), he was designated as a Naval Flight Officer in December 2010. CDR Buschor's first deployment was with VAW-117 on the USS *NIMITZ* (CVN 68) flying the E-2C Hawkeye. After a shore tour as an instructor in the E-2C and E-2D, he deployed on the USS *THEODORE ROOSEVELT* (CVN 71) as a "Shooter" (Catapult and Arresting Gear Officer). CDR Buschor next reported to VX-30 in early 2021 as a department head while flying E-2Ds, P-3Cs, NP-3Ds and KC-130Ts on worldwide missions. His most recent assignment was the Officer in Charge (OIC) of San Nicolas Island in Ventura County. He is a published author and is working on a PhD in History.

LT Isabella Cobarruvias
Officer Instructor

LT Isabella Cobarruvias is the newest Officer Instructor (OI) at USC NROTC. She is from Oakdale, CA, and attended the University of California, San Diego. She earned a B.S. in Marine Biology and commissioned in 2021 through the NROTC San Diego Consortium as a Surface Warfare Officer. Through her time in the fleet, LT Cobarruvias has successfully completed two division officer tours. The first in Pearl Harbor, HI onboard USS *WILLIAM P. LAWRENCE* (DDG 110) as the Auxiliary Officer and then in San Diego, CA onboard USS *CANBERRA* (LCS 30) as the Navigator.

March Battalion Members of the Month: MIDN 3/C Baret, 4/C Nocker, & 2/C Morris

For the month of March, battalion leadership decided to honor multiple members with Battalion Member of the Month rather than recognizing one single person. Those selected were the inaugural members of the Trojan Battalion Intelligence Operations, who were recognized for their consistent hard work behind the scenes to deliver weekly battalion intelligence reports, along with weekly current events briefs during PROLAB.

→ MIDN 2/C Morris hails from San Diego, CA and is a Navy Option MIDN majoring in Economics and Data Science. He hopes to eventually service select aviation and enjoys surfing, hiking, and traveling in his free time.

→ MIDN 3/C Baret of Rumson, NJ is a Marine Option MIDN majoring in International Relations with a minor in Geospatial Intelligence. He seeks to become an Infantry Officer upon commissioning and completion of TBS, and enjoys surfing and diving.

→ MIDN 4/C Nocker is from Santa Barbara, CA and is a Marine Option MIDN majoring in Health and Human Sciences with an emphasis in Psychology. She is interested in the intelligence and aviation communities, and in her free time, she enjoys traveling and anything involving the outdoors.

Bravo Zulu to these MIDN for their accomplishment!

New NROTC Trojan Battalion Gear Store!

The Trojan Battalion has launched a new online gear store, making it easier for family and friends of the battalion to represent! All proceeds from the store go to the Midshipman Fund, directly benefiting the battalion by increasing resources for activities and more. A special shoutout goes out to MIDN 2/C Wyman for setting up the store and MIDN 3/C Southworth for her artwork that is featured in many of the designs (shown below)!

Show your support today by clicking the link below and checking out the merch, all of which was designed by members of the battalion!

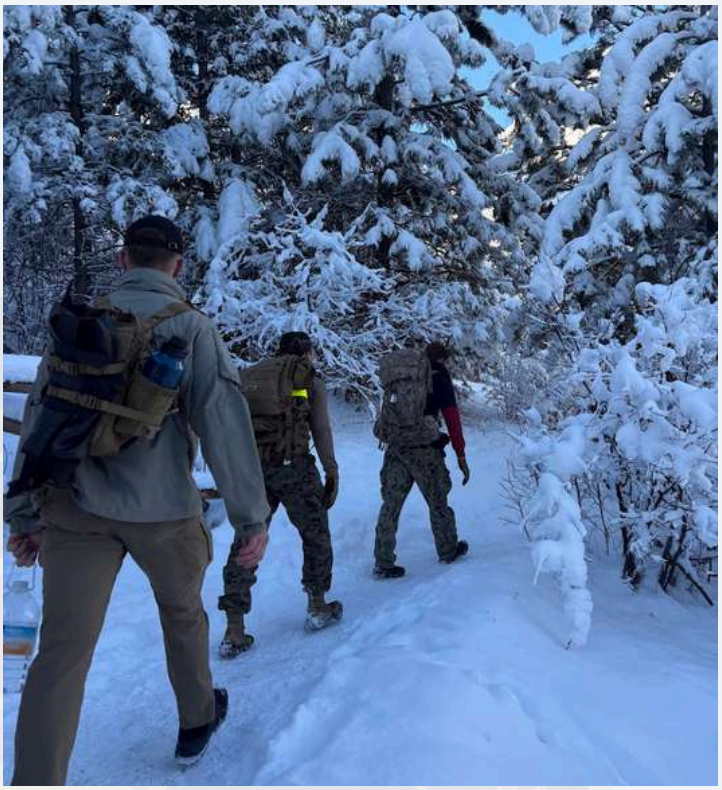
https://usc-nrotc-merch-shop.myspreadshop.com/

Looking Ahead...

A sneak peek at April

Next month, we look forward to sharing about:

- The Northwest Navy drill meet
- Trojan Victory at Blood Madness
- Our many award recipients
- Annual Dining In
- Spring FEX
- And much more!



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