

# USF BUCCANEER BATTALION SUMMER NEWSLETTER



## USF SPRING 2018 BATTALION PHOTOGRAPH

The mission of the NROTC Program is to develop young men and women morally, mentally, and physically, and to instill in them the highest ideals of honor, courage, and commitment. The program educates and trains these individuals for leadership positions in an increasingly technical Navy and Marine Corps.

The University of South Florida is a cross-town enrollment affiliate with the University of Tampa and is one of 150+ officer commissioning sources across the country. Selected applicants for the program are awarded scholarships through a highly competitive national selection process and receive full tuition and other financial benefits at many of the country's leading colleges and universities.

Ultimately, the NROTC program commissions college graduates as Navy or Marine Corps officers who possess a basic professional knowledge and understanding for the leadership skills required for the United States Navy or Marine Corps.

The Buccaneer Battalion strives to motivate members of the unit to become knowledgeable and humble future leaders. Through hard work and dedication both within the unit and in the

local community this goal was again accomplished during the Summer 2018 semester.

Summer training is an integral piece of the NROTC program. Summer training opportunities are wide-ranging and depend on the rank that each midshipman holds. For example, for rising third-class midshipmen, CORTAMID is the culminating event of their first year in the program versus rising first-class Marine-option midshipmen are put to the test at Officer Candidates School (OCS). No matter which summer training evolution each midshipman completed, each received invaluable knowledge and experiences that we so eagerly wish to share with you in this issue.



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## SUMMER COMMISIONING CEREMONY



### Ensign Katelyn Sleeter

Ensign Katelyn Sleeter, hails from Ocoee, Florida. She graduated from the University of South Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Engineering and a minor in Naval Science and Leadership. She was sworn in by LT Jeffery Ledford and pinned by her parents, Gerald and Suzanne Sleeter. After commissioning, ENS Sleeter conducted her first salute and exchanged the ceremonial silver dollar with her mentor, Staff Sergeant Jose Arroyo. She is now a class leader in her Basic Division Officer Course (BDOC) class in San Diego, California. Once completing her school, she is scheduled to report to the USS Preble, DDG 88 out of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

### 2nd Lieutenant Pierre Rene Sajous II



2nd Lieutenant Sajous hails from Irvington, NJ. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on August 29, 2011. He has been attached to 1st Battalion 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division in Kaneohe Bay, HI and The Basic School in Quantico, VA. 2nd Lt Sajous was a member of the Buccaneer Battalion NROTC at the University of South Florida, Tampa for just over a year but believes that his, "limited time spent with the unit was enough to build connections and make memories to last a lifetime". 2nd Lt Sajous will return to The Basic School as a student to undergo the rigorous curriculum where he plans to pursue a continued career in the infantry. He wishes to remain on the east coast and to one day take command of a Combined Anti-Armor Team (CAAT) platoon in the operating forces. He also claims one day he will be the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

When asked what impressions the battalion had left on him and if he had any parting words, 2nd Lt Sajous said:

*"I had a great time here. I wasn't here very long but I've met a lot of new people both with and without military experience that have given me a new perspective on being a leader. I'm anxious to return to the operating forces and excited to run into old faces that I have left behind and have met here as well. I would much rather be remembered for having a joking personality, but if I were to pass on any wisdom I have gained here, it would be to continuously strive for improvement, to never be satisfied with mediocre efforts, and to not be afraid of failure. Even a golden child can be bronze from time to time."*



### Ensign Joshua Baker

Pictured to the left is Ensign Joshua Baker with Staff Sergeant Jose Arroyo after receiving his first salute as a commissioned officer.

Ensign Baker received orders to LPD 19 USS Mesa Verde in Norfolk, VA.



## OFFICER CANDIDATES SCHOOL (OCS)

The mission of OCS is to educate and train officer candidates in Marine Corps knowledge and skills within a controlled and challenging environment in order to evaluate and screen individuals for the leadership, moral, mental, and physical qualities required for commissioning as a Marine Corps officer.

### MIDN 1/C RICE shares:

*"OCS is the place where those who want the privilege of leading Marines must go to learn to follow. While there, you are intentionally put in a state of exhaustion and hunger and then evaluated on your performance in leadership, academics, and physical fitness. You are also evaluated on your response to failure because you will fail. You are assigned a platoon staff that instill the basic disciplines and procedures of being a candidate and their responsibilities in billets. The training evolutions are compounded on top of each other to the point where your body barely keeps up. Overall the training is difficult and long, but in the end is worth it because you earned it."*



Above, MIDN Manns stands in line for gear issue during day one at OCS.

### MIDN 1/C Manns writes:

"Your training and preparation as a Marine option MIDN in the NROTC program all lead up to the lessons you will learn at OCS. During your time on Brown Field you will be evaluated in the basics of leadership, including your physical fitness and academic ability. These six weeks will require you to self-reflect as you fail and develop your leadership style while simultaneously mitigating the stressors of physical and mental fatigue. Nothing at OCS is impossible although at times it may seem to be. In those moments revert to your training, think critically, and remember the reason why you want to become a future leader of Marines."



Above, MIDN Rice, MIDN Stringer, and 2ndLt Bailey are pictured at Officer Candidates School.

### MIDN 1/C Johnson describes:

*"Well, I'll start by saying nothing at OCS is difficult by itself, it's how they layer events and stress on top of each other that ultimately creates that environment they want you to be able to thrive in. OCS taught me your body will go way farther than your mind will, and it also taught me to put others in front of myself, without even realizing it. They do such a good job of engraining that "team spirit" and group mindset that even when you leave OCS, you instinctively want to do things to make others' lives easier. I had to do OCS twice and if I had a choice to do it over again, I would. The lessons it teaches you not only apply as a Marine Officer, but it teaches you how to be a better citizen."*

## SURFACE WARFARE CRUISE

### From MIDN 2/C Mihm:

*"For my cruise, I went underway on USS Anchorage LPD 23 out of San Diego, California. A total of 17 Midshipmen, 3 ROTC, and 14 Academy, went underway for 17 days around San Clemente Island and along the coast of California and Mexico. During this time, Anchorage was working on completing the last workup stage known as COMPTUEX (Composite Training Unit Exercise). This is essential for each US Navy Carrier Strike Group to perform before departing for deployment. Therefore, I was able to see how an ARG (Amphibious Ready Group) worked together when facing a threat from remote-controlled boats and during simulated strait transits. Working with Gator Navy allowed me to see the Surface Navy, the Marine Corps, and Aviation. All in all, I had a great time, talked with a lot of enlisted personnel with various personalities, visited every part of the ship, saw and participated in multiple exercises, and saw first-hand how the US Navy and Marine Corps operate while underway on an Amphib."*



## SUBMARINE CRUISE



### MIDN 1/C Reyes-Munoz

MIDN Reyes-Munoz went underway with the USS Olympia (SSN 117) whose homeport is in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. MIDN Reyes-Munoz shares the following about his summer cruise:

*"I was able to observe multiple drills that were the highlight of the week. I also got multiple tours of the engine room that helped solidify the information learned in Ship Systems 1. A cool takeaway was that I became proficient in the game of cribbage. And favorite part was being able to meet a variety of people from the states and meet them in a more personal level. I enjoyed seeing the interaction between officers and enlisted. The officers kept a relaxed environment that didn't stop the enlisted from ever speaking up."*

Pictured above is MIDN 1/C Reyes-Munoz hiking the Moanalua Trail in Oahu, Hawaii before cruise.



## AVIATION CRUISE

### MIDN 1/C Betancourt writes:

*"This past summer, I was attached to HSM- 49 (The Scorpions) for my 1<sup>st</sup> Class Aviation Cruise. Over my cruise I had the privilege to meet most of the squadron, participate in a Hail and Bail, use a Helicopter Simulator, understand the processes prior to and post flying, as well as fly a helicopter alongside a LCDR. I had a fantastic time going out with the other MIDNs to a Padres Game, multiple restaurants, beach bonfires, and playing beach volleyball more times than I can count. Overall, it was an unforgettable experience for me."*



### MIDN 1/C Carney shares:

*"I was assigned to the HSC-21 Black Jacks for my First-Class Aviation Cruise. During it I was able to observe the day to day operations of an aviation squadron while sitting in on their briefs. I learned the proper procedures in case the aircraft crashes in the water, including how to exit the aircraft and deploy the LPUs as quickly and as easily as possible, and how to call and signal for help once I get afloat. I was able to go to the Navy NITE Lab, where they taught us how to calibrate and use the night vision goggles that are attached to the helmet. Later on, we were allowed to use the helicopter simulator several times in order to be somewhat prepared to fly the MH-60S, which we got to fly around the beaches of San Diego. Above all, I got the amazing experience of being in San Diego and getting to see the culture there."*



## MIDN 1/C Walker shares:

"This summer, I checked in with VFA-213 Blacklions based at Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia for my 1/C MIDN Cruise. During my time with Strike Fighter Squadron 213, equipped with the F/A-18F Super Hornet, I experienced a plethora of evolutions. Our first week involved a lot of Junior Officer (JO) discussions, roundtables and meetings with both the XO as well as the CO. These JO discussions included topics, such as: pipeline track, tactics, deployments, work/life balance, personal highlights, why the strike community, and then in-depth conversations on sea stories. From beginning to end, I was able to garner more insight about the many different aviation pipelines, log a few hours of Super Hornet simulation time, personally experience airport traffic pattern work, and then learn the role of a Landing Signal Officer (LSO) and how they keep the jets safe. Additionally, I became competent in the intricacies of the strike community, but also living up to the expectation of working hard and playing harder.

If there were two experiences I could take with me from this training, it would be the numerous one-on-one times with the JOs, experiencing their life from a first-person perspective, and the back-seat ride in one of their up aircraft. Although the back-seat ride served as the culmination of my training and included many high-performance maneuvers, my range of expectations was outwardly satiable. The Strike Fighter community has a stigma placed on them, but, being blunt, these officers both men and women, are confident, look out for their brothers and sisters, love what they do and would do anything to train the next generation.

I am very blessed to have such an impenetrable support system whether with my fiancé, my family, or raw opportunities with 213. I look forward to soon being a part of the world's greatest Navy, but also a community that I have huge passion and drive for. With haste and enthusiasm, I am excited to share and give back to both my unit and the community."





## CORTRAMID

## MIDN 3/C Stevens

*"Before this summer, I thought CORTRAMID was all about the Navy and what it had to offer. Being that I had no intention to switch from being a Marine option, I did not think CORTRAMID was going to be all that beneficial for me. Before hearing from the other Midshipmen about all of their cool experiences at CORTRAMID I thought it would be non-applicable, but understanding what life is like in the Navy is invaluable. Not only did I get an opportunity to see how the other half operates, but I can now compare and contrast the organizational cultures of the two. As a scholarship Marine option with an extremely high chance of going on a MEU one day, getting to understand the basics of shipboard life and spending the time to learn the Navy's way will pay dividends in my future. The Marine Corps is an expeditionary, amphibious service. The key word is amphibious, as in water. That's a big part of what makes the Marine Corps different as a service, and that is one of my main takeaways from CORTRAMID."*



## MIDN 3/C Riley

*"My 3/C summer cruise was an unforgettable experience. Encountering the many things you've been learning in a classroom gives you a different perspective about it. This summer cruise allowed me to travel to California, a place I haven't been before. It granted me the opportunity to drive a submarine, navigate my way around various ships, shoot various weapons, and fly in aircraft around the city of San Diego while interacting and learning from active duty members and other midshipmen from schools around the United States."*





## SEA TRIALS

### MIDN Maxwell describes her experiences as...

*"MIDN Shaffer and I got to partake in a pilot program for the new "sea trials" training evolution that is being implemented from this year forward. Ninety midshipmen went to Jacksonville, Florida and learned lessons in leadership, navy knowledge, seamanship and ship handling, as well as getting qualified with the M9 service pistol, basic damage control, second class swim qualification, and active firefighting. It was early mornings and late nights, hot and humid, and the drill instructors were with you at all time. The final culminating event was 12 hours of grueling physical training and teamwork that tested all that we learned over the 10 days. I would do it all again in a heartbeat."*



### MIDN Shaffer shares:

*"Sea Trials, the new 10-day summer training program for NROTC midshipmen, was an experience that refined many of the skills I have been taught during my time in the Buccaneer Battalion, fostered an environment of teamwork and friendship, and developed me as a future Naval officer. Sea Trials was a worthwhile challenge. The days were long however almost every second was used productively. Drill instructors constantly howled commands at us, not hesitating to get in our face if we didn't show speed, respect and intensity. We [midshipmen] had the opportunity to qualify with the M9 service pistol, and amazingly everyone who tried qualified. We ran damage control and fire simulations guided by the enlisted personnel who do it all day every day and sat through various presentations to include Basic Life Saving skills, the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape (SERE) program, Rules of the Road, and basic ship handling. On the final day we were put to the test with a culminating event known as Battle Stations (that I cannot speak much about). Battle Stations tested us on the skills we were supposed to have learned, teamwork and physical fitness; everyone passed! The knowledge passed on to us and the experiences we had are invaluable, I am proud to have been selected for this opportunity."*



## EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL CRUISE

At Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story with Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group (EODGRU) 2, midshipmen from the U.S. Naval Academy and from Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) participated in an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) summer cruise. The cruise is used to identify potential EOD officers prior to their senior year. MIDN 1/C Theodore Sandoval represented the Buccaneer Battalion this summer at Little Creek and came back with great stories to tell and experiences to share.



Pictured on the top left is MIDN 1/C Sandoval beginning to rappel during a helicopter rope suspension technique training course and, pictured below, he is participating in a combative training course. MIDN 1/C Sandoval shares:

*"I learned a lot about the EOD community and about myself while on my cruise. I'm very grateful I was given the opportunity to attend EOD Summer Cruise."*



*I got a more detailed look at all the platoons within the EOD community. I really enjoyed being on or near the water, so I became really interested in Diving and Salvage, and Mine Counter Measures. What I can tell others is that from this cruise, I found out you may plan for a day, but you never know what will happen. So, if it is out of your control, 'prepare for the worst, hope for the best.'"*

## SCHOLARSHIP AND ADVANCED STANDING RECIPIENTS

- MIDN 2/C Alex Birchler, 2-Year Scholarship
- MIDN 2/C Rachel Cabrera, Advanced Standing
- MIDN 2/C David Collins-Hahn, 2-Year Scholarship
- MIDN 2/C Virginia Ware, 2-Year Scholarship

## PROJECT GLOBAL OFFICER (PROJECT GO)

MIDN 2/C Logan Woods was selected to participate in Project Global Officer (Project GO) whose mission promotes critical language education and intercultural dialogue opportunities for Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) students. MIDN Woods shares:

*"This summer I spent two months in China with the Project GO program studying 2nd year Chinese. I've learned a lot in class while being here, but definitely more just through living in China and spending time talking to local people. I spoke Chinese all day, every day. I've been lucky enough to travel to several places in China on the weekends when I don't have class and the experiences I've had here I will cherish for the rest of my life. The small friendships I've made, the food I've eaten, and what I've learned about the culture I will never forget. I highly encourage anyone interested in learning a foreign language to try Project GO."*



MIDN Betancourt was also selected to travel to the University of North Georgia. MIDN 1/C Betancourt writes the following about her experience:

*"I was part of the very first Japanese class Summer Language Institute had put together. I learned two semester's worth of Japanese in six weeks. It was extremely intensive. My day was scheduled from 0830-2030 every weekday and Saturday, but with time spent eating and studying, my day usually didn't end until 0130. However, it was an incredible learning experience. It helped me appreciate the culture and its people more, realize that perseverance and hard work pays off, and form strong bonds with my classmates. We covered movies, cooking, games, ceremonies, and festivals over the six weeks, all while learning essential grammar points for the language. Overall, I highly recommend future MIDNs to apply for the scholarship, because my one regret was not doing it sooner."*





Buccaneer Battalion, University of South Florida

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