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The 2017 United States Naval Academy (USNA) Leadership Conference was a profoundly enriching experience with lessons that will serve me well during my time in the battalion, my ensuing naval career, and throughout my life. The main themes of the conference were establishing trust and building teams. Distinguished speakers and panelists found unique ways to refer back to each theme. General Amos, the 35th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, spoke to this at the conference saying, "Combat is not an individual sport" and "success on the battlefield depends on teamwork". The most impactful panel was held on the third day, in which a few Marines and Special Operators spoke of the importance of the trust that they had formed with their respective teams before they went into combat. They shared that this trust helped them restore their humanity once they left the battlefield and helped them recover from mental health struggles. These were days that were filled with incredible personal narratives and illuminating discussions that I will not soon forget.
The 62\textsuperscript{nd} annual Student Conference on National Affairs (SCONA), held at Texas A&M University, was an unforgettable experience in which we were able to learn directly from the world’s innovators and decision-makers. The theme of the conference was securing the homeland against all enemies foreign and domestic. Students were divided into roundtables with topics ranging from weapons of mass destruction, securing America’s critical infrastructure, and mitigating economic warfare. Each group developed a policy proposal over the course of the conference and presented it at the conclusion of the conference. In addition to developing a policy proposal, we had the privilege to hear from speakers such as Admiral Rogers, director of National Security Agency, General Robert B. Neller, the 34\textsuperscript{th} Commandant of the USMC, and Dr. Tawfik Hamid, an Islamic scholar. We were also able to form relationships with other delegates and facilitators. Looking back on this conference we were able to learn about challenges that face our nation and the possible solutions to confront these issues which are lessons we will take to the fleet.
Notre Dame’s 22nd annual Naval Leadership Weekend (NLW) was full of opportunities to learn from some of our Navy and Marine Corps’ most remarkable leaders. NLW gave MIDN an opportunity to step into an environment outside the classroom that continues their education and training as leaders. This was accomplished by promoting a critical examination of leadership. Speakers such as Admiral Richardson, Admiral Rogers, General Neller, Vice Admiral Grady, Vice Admiral Rowden, and Rear Admiral Evans delved deep into the intricacies of military leadership and proficiency.

During the conference, there were also opportunities to speak one-on-one with Junior Officers from the surface, submarine, aviation, Marine Corps, and SEAL communities. With representation from nearly half of the nation’s NROTC units, NLW offered an incredible opportunity to network with our future shipmates. After examining different viewpoints and leadership philosophies during the day, we were encouraged to explore the beautiful Notre Dame campus and surrounding attractions. The combination of memorable experiences and the expansion of our familiarity with those who we will fight beside made for a weekend we’ll certainly never forget.
Tulane University Drill Competition

MIDN 2/C Barragan

This February, we had the opportunity to participate in both the color guard and drill team events for the annual drill competition at Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana. After months of practice, the squad, drill, and color guard teams were ready to compete against major universities and service academies across the nation. We performed with great effort, sharpness and intensity. Our efforts paid-off; we placed second in regulation drill and saw great performances from color guard and squad drill.

After the competition, we had the chance to explore vibrant New Orleans during Mardi Gras. We visited some famous locales and had a thrilling time. I can surely say we all had a great experience, and we'll be sure to have an even better showing next year!
The 2017 Hatton-Sumners Leadership Conference was an exceptional and rewarding experience replete with opportunities to network with both civilian and military “game changers”. A multitude of leaders spoke and demonstrated fortitude and leadership acumen. The 3 keynote speakers stood out to me the most. Nadia Lopez, a high school principal, spoke of revolutionizing inner city high schools to help assure and motivate underprivileged students. Dr. Barry Posner highlighted the universal human intrinsic ability to become powerful and effective leaders. Caroline Boudreaux gave an emotional, interactive speech that involved her decision to start a company in support of orphanages in India.

Between speeches and meals, there were leadership exercises such as team building, ethical decision making, and discussing cross-cultural leadership cases. This conference broadened my understanding of leadership tools, and how to properly implement them to achieve my goals.
The Navy Field Exercise (FEX), hosted by the MECEPs and Marine option MIDN, gave Navy MIDN an introduction to the life of a marine option. The FEX consisted of patrols, confidence courses and delicious MREs. The day started off with the Camp Bullis Confidence Course where MIDN had the opportunity to overcome obstacles, both mentally and physically. Although difficult, the MIDN had the opportunity to push themselves to the next level and to encourage their shipments through various hardships.

After chowing down on MREs, the MIDN learned brief navigation skills, patrolling tactics and formations. We learned that each of these aspects of patrolling are necessary for combating opposing forces. We learned how to approach contacts, attack combatants, and maneuver a fire team. The MIDN then put these new skills to work by going on a patrol. During the patrol, MIDN worked as squads and fire teams to carry out objectives while facing informants, random citizens, and even combatants. This event, although challenging, allowed for MIDN to gain leadership experience and knowledge and develop their overall aptitude for military service.
Midshipman’s Foundation Breakfast
MIDN 2/C Summers

Once again this semester, we had the opportunity to enjoy our semi-annual Midshipman’s Foundation Breakfast. This event allows 1/C & 2/C Midshipmen as well as graduating MECEPs to enjoy the company of some of the distinguished members of the Midshipman’s Foundation including Bob Collins, Max Miller, Jack Ritter, George Blume, and Adm. Weldon Koenig, USN (Ret.). I love events like this because we get to fellowship with people that were formerly in our shoes, not to mention that there always seems to be a vast wealth of leadership experience and great sea stories to hear and learn from as we approach our respective careers. I’m certain that all of the MIDN that attended really appreciate this opportunity to enjoy the conversations and the contributions of the Midshipman’s Foundation that allows this event to happen. I look forward to participating again next semester!
Yale Leadership Conference
MIDN 2/C Corey

MIDN Carr, Summers, and I attended the 2017 Yale University NROTC Leadership Conference in New Haven, CT. We received some motivating words from now-retired General McCRystal on the importance of understanding an organization's leadership and backbone and how to empower your people to move the organization forward. The following events consisted of South China Sea aggressor simulations in which the attendants analyzed the aggressor and strategized using US forces while considering multiple geo-political perspectives. This is a truly great opportunity to discuss present day issues with other MIDN and guests with diverse backgrounds, and we look forward to making this an annual event.
Each semester the Leatherneck Platoon holds a Field Exercise (FEX) in order to train marine option MIDN in preparation for Officer Candidate School (OCS). Their success at OCS will determine if they are fit to commission as Marine Corps Officers. The training was conducted at Fort Hood this year. The FEX was planned and made possible thanks to the work of the upper class Marine option MIDN, who have already passed OCS, and the MECEPs. A select group of Navy option MIDN also volunteer to participate in the FEX to act as opposing forces during the evolution. Overall, it made for some extended training time, but also a great opportunity to engage leadership skills in a time-sensitive environment.
Awards Ceremony
MIDN 2/C Charles Ryan

Midshipmen had the privilege of receiving various awards from UT NROTC Alumni during the Spring Awards Ceremony. Awards received were: the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Reserve Officer’s Association, CNO Distinguished Graduate, Navy League, USAA, AFCEA Educational Foundation, Military Officers Association of America, Military Order of World Wars, American Veterans, Order of Daedalians, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Daughters of the American Revolution, Sons of the American Revolution, Society of the War of 1812, Patriotism Award, American Legion Awards, Sons of the Republic of Texas, and National Defense Transportation Association, AFCEA Medal of Honor. MIDN Charles Ryan and MIDN Ryan Carr receiving the prestigious Senator Martin Dies Jr. ROTC Leadership Award and LT Ryan Edwards receiving the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal for his excellent work as associate professor. Congratulations to all.
As one of our last Battalion events, we enjoyed an evening of dining and leisure upon Lake Austin. To mark the end of another successful year we soaked up the beautiful weather, delicious food and even better company. It was a bitter sweet close to my last semester. It was a peaceful night spent reminiscing about the last four years with some of my closest friends. The theme of the night was senior sendoff and with commissioning right around the corner it was nice to say some goodbyes. We also recognized our departing Air Warfare Officer, LT Edwards. The incoming Battalion Commanding Officer (BNCO), MIDN 2/C Parker Rost, shared his intent for the coming Fall semester and beyond. We also heard from the outgoing BNCO, MIDN 1/C Jobin Murickan and CAPT Teets. A Huge thanks goes out to the OIC, MIDN Pagio and her AOIC, MIDN Rogelstad, for organizing this event!
Spring Commissioning
19 May, 2017

Cruz Ashe - USMC Aviator
Alex Ebarguen - USMC
Christopher Guerra - USMC
Kevin Rodriguez - USMC
Martin Sanchez Jr. - USMC
Cecilia Beavers - Naval Aviator
Jacob Bishop - Naval Aviator
Conor Martin - Naval Aviator
Jobin Murickan - Naval Aviator
Joshua Ruiz - Naval Nurse
Luis Sanchez - Surface Warfare Officer