

# The Tide and Current

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-  
LINCOLN NROTC

15 September 2024



## Falling Back Into Formation

Welcome back to another exciting year with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Naval ROTC unit!

Last year brought many changes, including the addition of new staff members who have already made a significant impact on our program. As we move forward into the Fall semester, we have much to look forward to this year, including different training opportunities, leadership development, and seeing what our new Midshipman Chain of Command has to offer. Together, we will continue to grow and build ourselves into future Navy and Marine Corps Officers.



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newsletter  
you can expect:**

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Dear Friends, Family, and Alumni,

As the new school year begins, I am thrilled to share some exciting updates from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln NROTC. This fall, we return with renewed energy and a strong commitment to excellence. Our unit has experienced tremendous growth over the past year, with our numbers increasing by over 50%. We are now a proud battalion of 38 dedicated Midshipmen, all eager to embark on the challenges ahead.

Last spring, we had the honor of commissioning three outstanding seniors—two into the United States Navy and one into the United States Marine Corps. Their achievements are a testament to the hard work, discipline, and dedication that define our program. We remain focused on our mission to train and prepare these young men and women to defend our great nation.

I am also pleased to report that the renovation of our historic and beloved J.J. Pershing Military and Naval (M&N) Building is progressing well. It is on track to reopen next year, and we look forward to returning to a facility that reflects the rich heritage and bright future of our program.

We have several events that promise to make this fall an unforgettable semester. The Annual Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball, our fall field exercise, and the joint field meet with other ROTC branches are just a few of the highlights we eagerly anticipate. These events not only build camaraderie and teamwork but also sharpen the skills essential for future leaders of our military.

Thank you for your continued support of the UNL NROTC. Your encouragement and commitment help us maintain the high standards that have become the hallmark of our battalion. We look forward to an exciting year and sharing our successes with you.

Go Big Red!

- CAPT Bowman

# Taking the Helm: College Programmer to Commissioning Senior

By MIDN 1/C Grady Henexson, Battalion Commanding Officer

Ever since first joining the unit at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, I've been continually inspired by the wisdom of the staff and guidance of the upperclassmen whom I've had the pleasure of calling my friends. Now, as a senior, it feels odd to be the mentor, instead of the mentee. Yet, this program has prepared me now, more than ever to take the helm.

This Fall semester, I will be serving as the Battalion Commanding Officer (BNCO) of the Blackshirt Battalion. It's an incredible honor to be entrusted with this billet by the NROTC staff and I hope to hold the trust of my friends and classmates who believe in me to fulfill it. I'd be naive to say I know what to expect with this new title. I know there will be countless challenges, successes, and, most importantly, failures that we will face and overcome. From the start of the semester, we aim to set our goals high and train aggressively, systematically, and purposefully. Excelling academically in the classroom is vital so we can focus on pursuing our personal goals as individuals and future officers alike. We have incredible opportunities this coming semester to carry on traditions such as the Annual 9/11 Stair Run and the 249th Navy & Marine Corps Ball. Additionally, we hope to begin new events for the battalion which can endure for generations of Blackshirts to come.

I'm humbled to be surrounded by the smartest, most determined men and women who make every day in Lincoln feel like home. From sharing "war stories" from the 2021 Nebraska vs Michigan football game to welcoming incoming freshman at New Student Orientation, every one of us holds memories we'll share for a lifetime. I couldn't imagine making these memories anywhere else or with anyone else but this unit. There truly is no place like Nebraska.







## Spring Semester Recap

The Spring semester was full of different events, of which include the 124th Submarine Birthday Ball in Omaha, PT with the Husker football team, Spring Field Exercise in Iowa, the annual Colorado Meet, the Chancellor's Review, and much more. As we gear up for the upcoming fall, take a minute to look at what our

Midshipmen accomplished last year. Our unit truly came together, from moving out of the M&N Building for renovation to placing second overall at the Colorado Meet. We have made so much progress and are excited to share it all with you.



### Husker Football PT

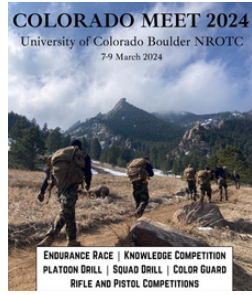
In mid-March, the UNL NROTC staff and Midshipmen were given the amazing opportunity to organize and lead a physical training for Husker Football's "Team Commitment Week." The physical training was designed to promote healthy competition and to push players' physical limits. Players conducted the Marine Corps Combat Fitness Test (CFT) components, a supply run, and team calisthenic exercises.



### Submarine Birthday Ball

On 05 April, several of our midshipmen had the honor of attending the USSTRATCOM 124th Submarine Birthday Ball in Omaha. This event celebrated the storied history and achievements of the submarine force, providing our Midshipmen with a unique opportunity to connect with distinguished officers and veterans. They enjoyed an evening of camaraderie, tradition, and inspiration, further deepening their appreciation for the vital role submarines play in the U.S. Navy today.

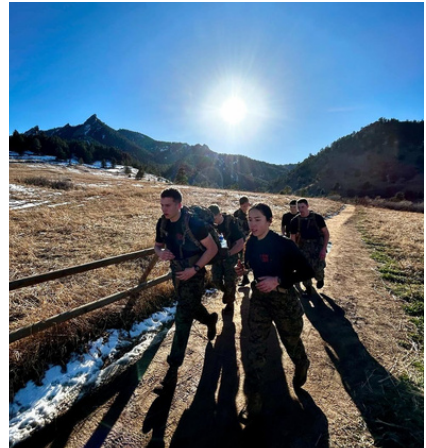




## Spring Colorado Meet 2024

In an adventurous journey marked by weather delays, our unit traveled to Boulder for the annual Colorado Meet. Despite the challenging conditions and arriving later than planned, our teams remained focused and determined. Their resilience paid off as they performed exceptionally well, demonstrating skill, teamwork, and perseverance. Against all odds, our unit proudly secured second place out of 17 teams. This trip strengthened our camaraderie, making it a memorable and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

- Shooting team took second place
- Knowledge team placed third
- Endurance team competed in many exercises, including, but not limited to rucking, pool evolution, and casualty evacuation.
- Color Guard placed third
- Drill team tied for fourth place
- Big shout-out and congratulations to MIDN 2/C Kohler for his work as Officer in Charge (OIC) of our trip to the Colorado Meet. Great work!





# Chancellor's Review

In April, Rodney Bennett, in his first year as Chancellor, held the annual review of the Cadets and Midshipmen of ROTC units at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This event celebrates the success of Cadets and Midshipmen as well as their commitment to military service.

From Chancellor Rodney Bennett (via [x.com/rodneydbennett](https://twitter.com/rodneydbennett)):

*"So pleased to participate in my first ROTC Review as Chancellor. I am so grateful to have been called to a university that believes in honoring those who serve their country, as I believe that military service is among the highest forms of service in which a person can engage."*



# Spring Commissioning

Congratulations to our newest officers for graduating and earning a commission into the United States Navy and Marine Corps on 18 May 2024.

Peyton Weigand and Kenneth Reese commissioned as Ensigns in the U.S. Navy. Dane Bowers commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Ensign Weigand, from North Aurora, Illinois, selected to be a Surface Warfare Officer. He will be serving on the USS Lake Erie (CG 70) following completion of Basic Division Officer Course in San Diego.

Ensign Reese, from Houston, Texas, selected to be a Submarine Warfare Officer. He will be heading to Charleston, South Carolina, to attend Naval Nuclear Power School.

2nd Lieutenant Bowers, from Westlake Village, California, is set to attend The Basic School in Quantico, Virginia, on 8 September of this year with hopes of becoming an Aviation Management Officer.

The Midshipmen and Cadre of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Naval ROTC would like to wish these new officers fair winds and following seas!



**ENS Peyton Weigand**



**ENS Kenneth Reese**



**2ndLt Dane Bowers**



**Group photo of the full senior class**



# Summer Cruises



## 3/C CORTRAMID

Midshipmen 3/C Janssen and Knudsen attended Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID) in San Diego, California. CORTRAMID gives Midshipmen the opportunity to be exposed to the various communities of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. These two participated in Marine Corps shooting drills with fireteams, flew in a T-34 trainer aircraft, rode the USS Sampson destroyer, and much more.



## FMF West

MIDN 2/C Martinez completed Fleet Marine Force (FMF) West in mid-June. MIDN Martinez completed a swim qualification, participated in force on force simulation, shot an M240 machine gun, flew in a CH-53, and climbed First Sergeant's Hill at Camp Pendleton in California, which stands as a memorial for Sailors and Marines who lost their lives during service.



## NSI Midshipman Instructor

MIDN 2/C Sherman attended New Student Indoctrination (NSI) phase I as a Midshipman Instructor (MI) at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois in June.

*"This new perspective gave me hands-on leadership experience and mentorship opportunities while making friends with new Midshipmen along the way. While the days were long and the instructing was tiresome at times, I'm extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity to help train and shape the next class of Midshipmen entering their respective ROTC units."*  
- MIDN 2/C Sherman



## Marine Corps OCS

MIDN 1/C Harju graduated Marine Corps Officer Candidates School (OCS) on 29 June 2024.

*"The mission of Officer Candidates School (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."* (trngcmd.marines.mil)



# My Unforgettable Journey: Experiencing CORTRAMID in California

By MIDN 3/C Mitchell Janssen



Attending Career Orientation and Training for Midshipmen (CORTRAMID) was one of the best experiences of my life. Not only was it my first time in California, it was also my first time seeing US Navy ships and fully experiencing the ocean. Getting hands-on exposure in the fleet allowed me to see first-hand the communities I can commission into and make a more educated decision in the future.

During our first week, we operated flight simulators at Miramar, passed aviation swim qualifications, and flew in T-34 aircraft. These world-class pilots took us up to execute aerobatic maneuvers, fly in formation, and even let us take the stick and fly ourselves. As a bonus, we got a great view of San Diego and saw a few whales. I am appreciative of the opportunity to see how military aviation operates and pick the brains of the pilots. I loved learning about the aviation community and getting to fly over San Diego.

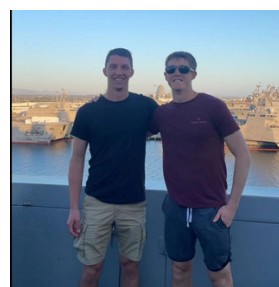
During submarine week, we worked through a damage control trainer where we learned how to fix busted pipes and operate as a team. I gained an appreciation for the importance of proper damage control and how quickly a situation can go south. The week culminated with us embarking on a ballistic missile submarine. This is easily the most incredible thing I have ever done, as it is such a unique experience that very few people have done. Just to be underway on a nuclear submarine is special but we also got to do things such as conning the boat, looking through the periscope, learning about the systems in the engine room, and just exploring the sub. Every sailor we talked to knew everything there is to know about the systems they operate, and they were happy to share their knowledge with us.

The following week, we traveled to Camp Pendleton and spent some time learning about the Marine Corps. We started out the week by learning how to operate the M-16 rifle and M-240B machine gun as well as understanding the basics of patrolling. Later in the week, we actually shot these weapons, which was exhilarating. Thursday was the best day of the week when we ran through a Corpsman PT and completed the Infantry Immersion Trainer (IIT). The IIT is a realistic training environment that simulates combat in the Middle East.

We were taught how to patrol urban environments, clear buildings, and, most importantly, operate effectively in squads and fire teams. We then applied everything we learned in a firefight against active-duty Infantry Marines. It was neat to experience a little of what Marines go through in combat, and this training gave me a more profound respect for them.

Our final week was with the Surface Warfare community. We completed firefighter training, learned about the roles of Junior Officers, and got a glimpse into the amphibious side of the Navy. Toward the end of the week, we went underway on the USS Sampson (DDG 102). It was awesome to get to experience this and learn more about the inner workings of a Navy surface ship. The last thing we did during Surface Week was an evolution where we had the opportunity to interact with Navy Chiefs. They led us through various stations designed to familiarize us with important aspects of the Navy, such as damage control, line handling, CASEVAC, and teamwork. Chiefs are arguably the most important people in the Navy. They bridge the gap between officers and enlisted and are knowledgeable about everything Navy. I learned that, as a Junior Officer, it is essential to turn to your chief for advice, wisdom, and guidance.

The Navy and Marine Corps culture promotes discipline, initiative, and professionalism. Whether it was enlisted, officers, or other midshipmen, everyone was committed to meeting this standard and motivated to serve their country. One of the best parts about CORTRAMID is that I got to experience it with one of my closest friends, MIDN Knudsen. We had a blast going through our training, meeting new people, and exploring San Diego. I am so grateful I had the opportunity to participate in CORTRAMID, as it was such a unique experience and solidified my commitment to serving my country.



# Building Marine Corps Leaders: Lessons from UNL's Marine Officer Program

By MIDN 1/C Colin Harju

OCS for me was the final cumulative exam for my NROTC career. However, it was not the exam you dread or stress about. I contribute this confidence to the Marine-Officer program here at Nebraska. Whether it be under the tutelage of Captain Scharfen and First Sergeant Glotzbecker, or the new staff with Captain Garretson and Staff Sergeant Taylor. One thing has remained the same: rigorous preparation and attention to detail.

Nebraska has a unique program that allows for more 1:1 instruction. Not only the official instructors have helped, but our MECEPs, Gunnery Sergeant Johnson and Gunnery Sergeant Bennett, have been irreplaceable in my development as a Midshipman and now a Marine.

The course of improvement here follows the crawl, walk, run style of instruction where the culminating event every semester is the FEX (Field Exercise). This exercise allows Midshipmen to combine all that they have learned throughout the semester, as well as learn other disciplines, into one weekend of toughness and practical application. It also taught me the importance of teamwork, warrior toughness, and leadership under a microscope. The performance of Nebraska Midshipmen has been evident at OCS, FMF east/west, CORTRAMID, and the Iowa FEX where Nebraska took home first in both the men's and women's categories for the Endurance Race. The endurance race consisted of a 7 mile ruck-run with workout and Marine Corps knowledge stations every mile. Midshipman Thibodeau and I were able to apply what we have learned from the curriculum here even while heavily fatigued.

I cannot thank my past and current staff along with the amazing MECEPs enough for their tutelage and mentorship. They spent many late nights and early mornings ensuring there was no lesson skipped nor training missed. They took time and money out of their pockets to ensure that I wouldn't just pass but do well at OCS.

If I were to give advice to any Nebraska Midshipman or incoming freshmen worried about OCS I would say run far, lift heavy, listen to staff, and *you will succeed*.



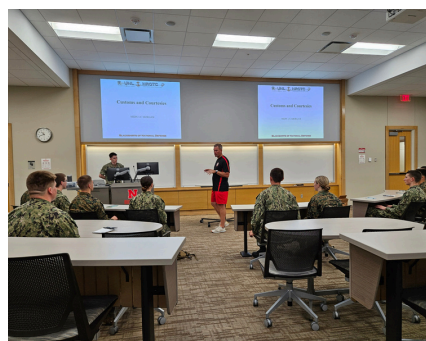
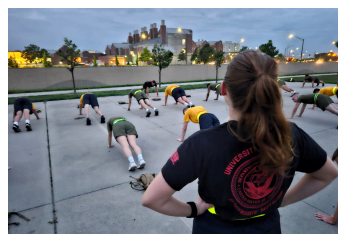


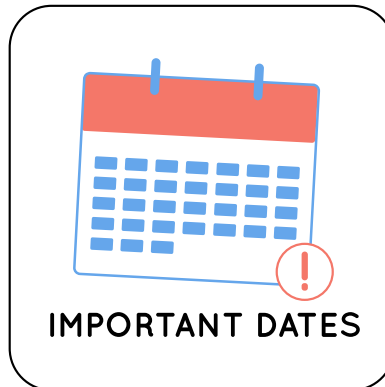
# New Student Orientation

On 21 August 2024, incoming freshmen to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln NROTC Battalion began New Student Orientation (NSO). The mission of NSO is to orient new students to naval service, the NROTC program, and the university. Beginning on day one, 4/C Midshipmen started with a Physical Readiness Test, learned uniform and grooming standards, naval service customs and courtesies, chain of command, close-order drill, and Navy and Marine Corps values. Continuing on day two, 4/C Midshipmen participated in an introductory PT to get an idea and feel for how our unit trains. Later in the day, freshmen were taught how to write chits, had the chance to speak with Lincoln Police Department Officer Hellmuth regarding safety and living in Lincoln, and continued with drill. To begin the last day of NSO, Marine Officer Instructor (MOI) Captain Garretson, led a tough warfighter PT. The freshmen then met with their NROTC advisors for initial counseling, had a discussion with Assistant Marine Officer Instructor (AMOI) Staff Sergeant Taylor, listened to NSO-closing remarks from Commanding Officer, Captain Bowman, and enjoyed burgers cooked by our Battalion's very own MIDN 1/C Simpson and MIDN 3/C Knudsen.

We welcome fourteen new students to the Blackshirt Battalion, Midshipmen 4/C:

Timothy Benson, Beatrice, Nebraska, Navy option  
Elianna Byrne, St. Charles, Missouri, Marine option  
Dylan Castro, Annapolis, Maryland, Marine option  
Jackson Christmas, San Antonio, Texas, Navy option  
Thomas Clark, Weatherby Lake, Missouri, Marine option  
Thomas Cowan, Alexandria, Virginia, Marine option  
Ben Huebert, Papillion, Nebraska, Navy option  
Sydney Kuenning, Lincoln, Nebraska, Marine option  
Avery Leptien, Omaha, Nebraska, Navy option  
LaBrian Parker, Bellevue, Nebraska, Marine option  
Zachary Parsons, Lincoln, Nebraska, Navy option  
Garin Pohl, Longmont, Colorado, Navy option  
Elijah Sebey, Papillion, Nebraska, Navy option  
Alexander Wirken, Kansas City, Missouri, Navy option





## Important Upcoming Dates and Events

- September 27-29 ----- Fall FEX
- October 21-22 ----- Fall Break
- November 8 ----- Marine Corps Birthday PT
- **November 9 ----- Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball**
- November 11 ----- Veterans Day
- November 27-December 1 ----- Thanksgiving Break
- December 20 ----- Last Day of Fall Semester
- December 21 ----- Fall Graduation and Commissioning





*Thank you for reading!*

LOOKING TO GET IN TOUCH?



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University of Nebraska-Lincoln NROTC



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