



THE CAPSTAN

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



FIELD EXERCISE

From 15-17 April 2022, Marine Option Platoon executed a multi-day field exercise (FEX) challenging Midshipmen to apply all they have learned in Marine Option lab over the year in order to physically and mentally prepare them for OCS.



Midshipmen practiced land navigation during daytime and nighttime as they were challenged to plot and find points at the land navigation course. Leadership skills of the Midshipmen were practiced through the Camp Parks Leadership Reaction Course (LRC) which gave each member of a fire team the opportunity to lead and direct their fellow midshipmen through completing a LRC station. Midshipmen were instructed in the basics of Fireteam tactics by the midshipman platoon commander and then given the chance to practice offensive and defensive strategies. These tactics were further employed in Small Unit Leadership Evaluation (SULE) with the use of fire team leaders making reactive decisions and using their knowledge of Fireteam tactics to guide their fireteam into securing the objective. Basics of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP) were taught by the Unit's Assistant Marine Officer Instructor. The final day of the FEX, midshipmen were stepping by 0600 to complete a 6 mile conditioning hike that tested individual physical and mental strength along with the Platoon's leadership in encouraging their midshipmen to complete the ruck at an impressive pace.

The Midshipmen endured cold weather and suboptimal weather conditions but the leadership and guidance of the Platoon Commander and Platoon Sergeant helped midshipmen appropriately prepare for such challenges.

COLORADO MEET 2022

NROTCU Berkeley traveled to the University of Colorado Boulder in order to compete in their annual NROTC meet. Berkeley competed in the knowledge team competition, color guard, and the endurance team race. In the knowledge team competition, each team consisted of four midshipmen. Teams competed in a family feud style trivia game answering questions ranging from naval history to basic land and celestial navigation. In the Color Guard competition, each team consisted of five midshipmen. Color guard teams competed in a drill event with the National Ensign, Marine Corps Colors, Navy Colors, and demilitarized M16 rifles or demilitarized M1 Garand rifles on a 30 yd x 30 yd drill deck. Teams were graded by Assistant Marine Officer Instructors on execution and overall military bearing.



Finally, the Endurance Team consisted of six midshipmen, with each team having to carry 4 packs totalling 180 lbs. The race all together consisted of 12 miles, 2900 feet of elevation gain, a calisthenics field portion, and around 3 miles of buddy carries in addition to the packs. NROTCU Berkeley took 2nd place in the Endurance competition behind only Colorado Boulder with a time of 5 hours 26 minutes.



MIDSHIPMAN OF THE SEMESTER



Over the semester, Midshipman Valdez-Blas consistently demonstrated his hard work ethic and reliability to all of his fellow midshipmen. Since his division leader was on late-arrival, Midshipman Valdez-Blas took charge and stepped up every drill to ensure that the disbursing division was prepared and ready for any occasion. Midshipman Valdez-Blas was recognized as an outstanding team player and always willing to step up to take care of extra tasks like taking accountability for his division or grabbing extra gear for events when needed. He conducted himself in a professional manner and took his role as a division member seriously, all while providing extra support for his shipmates when it was needed. Because of his dedication, hard work, and professional development over the semester, Midshipman Valdez-Blas proved that he is capable of upholding a high standard in any conditions. Congratulations to MIDN Valdez-Blas for earning Midshipman of the Semester!

CHANGE OF COMMAND

On April 28, 2022 MIDN 1/C Winchell addressed the unit for the last time as the unit midshipman commander and gave his advice to the returning midshipman to shape the unit through their actions. The change of command ceremony instated the new midshipman unit commander, MIDN 2/C Lee. The new midshipmen commander gave a speech to the unit about his eagerness for the next year and encouraged midshipman to stay vigilant and push themselves to explore the active duty community while at summer training.



COMMISSIONING SENIORS

After several years of preparing themselves mentally, physically, academically, and morally as midshipmen and diligent students at Stanford University, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, or the Cal Maritime Academy, our NROTCU Berkeley first class midshipmen are ready to commission into their respective service assignments in the United States Navy. Juggling Naval ROTC and acquiring an undergraduate degree at prestigious universities on top of extracurricular and personal activities is no small feat. Especially in an era of constant change in world events and international conflict, NROTCU Berkeley's graduating midshipmen, to-be officers deserve nothing less than our respect and commendation for committing themselves to defending our nation.

The following 1/C Midshipmen will be commissioning into the submarine warfare community:

MIDN Farrell

MIDN Moore

MIDN Tae

MIDN Winchell

MIDN 1/C Alexander will be commissioning as a Surface Warfare Naval Officer.

MIDN 1/C Le will be commissioning as a Cryptologic Warfare Officer.

MIDN 1/C Bang will be commissioning as a Naval Aviator.

MIDN 1/C Markow will be commissioning as a Naval Flight officer.



UNIT HISTORY

UC Berkeley has a storied history of producing men and women who serve in our nation's armed forces, with ROTC programs from all branches of the armed services. Many UC Berkeley graduates have distinguished themselves in their service in the Navy and Marine Corps even before the NROTC unit's existence. Brigadier General Bertram A. Bone studied here before leading a Marine Regiment as part of the 2nd Marine Division during the Okinawa campaign in World War II. After attending Berkeley, Oliver P. Smith went on to become a 4 star general in the Marine Corps and commanded the 1st Marine Division during the Battle of Chosin Reservoir. He is known for his illustrious quote from the battle, remarking, "Retreat, hell! We're not retreating, we're just advancing in a different direction." The NROTC program has produced many brave officers who served in the U.S Navy, such as Vice Admiral Kenneth R. Wheeler, class of 1939. He was commissioned as an ensign before serving on the island of Corregidor during World War II and being captured by the Japanese. The Arlington National Cemetery said the following about him:



"Lieutenant Wheeler was among a group of POWs headed for Japan aboard the transport ORYOKU MARU when the ship was torpedoed and abandoned. After assisting a seriously wounded Supply Corps shipmate to the beach, he, amidst significant enemy gunfire, repeatedly swam back to the ship to rescue others, an action which earned him the Bronze Star Medal. He was awarded a second Bronze Star for equally heroic and dedicated actions in January of 1945 in the wake of an attack on another prisoner ship. This citation reads in part: "When the prisoner group finally reached Fukuoka Prison Camp, he heroically endured below-freezing temperatures in unheated prison barracks to care for the sick and wounded and, as a result, contracted pneumonia, which almost resulted in his death. By his outstanding fortitude, great personal valor, and self-sacrificing devotion. . .he contributed greatly to saving the lives of many of his companions."