CAPTAIN’S CORNER

Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

Another successful year has ended and as we reflect, it was filled with many positives. As you read through the newsletter, you will find the Battalion was incredibly busy with community service, schoolwork, and officer development. We began the semester welcoming 13 new midshipmen through our New Student Orientation (NSO).

This year we re-marketed the “Annual Homecoming Alumni Tailgate” to the “Alumni and Family Tailgate”. We broadened the invites to include the Student Veterans Association, Veteran’s Alumni Committee, and members of the KU Army and Air Force ROTC programs. These changes were a success and resulted in a great turnout. We hope those in attendance last fall enjoyed the tailgate, and we welcome you to join us once again this coming Fall. More information will be provided as we approach the event. If you would like to provide feedback or alumni events you rather prefer, please contact the Unit.

The tragic loss of Midshipman Nicholas Herren has been difficult, but also provided an opportunity for the battalion and University to come together to provide comfort and support. The midshipmen led a candlelight vigil and created a memorial fund. I know Nick’s spirit will carry on with his shipmates as they continue towards their careers as officers in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Looking forward, we have several upcoming events including midshipmen summer training, new student orientation, and color guards at KU football and basketball games.

Thank you for your continued support!

Rock Chalk and Go Navy!
CAPT Dave Meron

A Jayhawk Final Salute
Nicholas A. Herren
KU NROTC MIDSHIPMAN 2012-2016

Nicholas Andrew Herren, 21, of Alma, Kansas, died Sunday, November 27, in Johnson County, Kansas, as the result of an automobile accident. He was a life-long resident of the community.

Nick was born March 16, 1995, in Topeka, Kansas, the son of Terry and Patricia Cebulski Herren. He attended St. John Lutheran School and graduated from Wabaunsee High School in 2013.

Nick was attending Kansas University and was a senior in Business Finance in Supply Chain Management. He was the Battalion Executive Officer for KU Naval ROTC. He also was President of the Semper Fi Society, and a supervisor at the KU Recreation Center. He was involved with Habitat for Humanity and The Big Event at KU.

Nick was very active in many organizations. He loved all sports and lettered in High School football, basketball, cross country and baseball. He loved to hunt and fish and he was a member of the Pep Club, National Honor Society, FFA, FBLA, and was the Kansas State President for Skills USA. Nick was also an active member of St. John Lutheran Church in Alma. He was an officer of the youth group, served as an usher, and participated in many church activities.

Nick is survived by his parents, Terry and Patty Herren; his sister, Alison Herren; his grandparents, Willis and Mildred Herren, all of Alma; and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.
This past summer I was fortunate to report to Naval Base San Diego shortly after the end of the KU academic year to attend CORTRAMID.

My first full week was Aviation week. Throughout the week, we toured different squadrons at NAS North Island and had opportunities to ask questions about Naval Aviation. A highlight of the week was when each midshipman had the opportunity to ride in a T-34C as well as a MH-60S. During the second week of CORTRAMID my company spent time at the submarine base at Naval Base Point Loma. There we underwent different training evolutions such as damage control and ship driving. Also during the week my company went underway on an SSBN for 24 hours where we could roam the ship and ask questions to any of the crew members.

Following submarine week, we had the chance to learn about the surface navy during Surface Warfare week. My favorite memory of the week was a day spent across San Diego Bay at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado where we practiced some man overboard drills aboard a Landing Craft Utility (LCU) and went on rigid-hulled inflatable boat (RHIB) rides. I learned about many surface specialties throughout the week that I had never heard of before. My final week of CORTRAMID was Marine week.

We spent the week at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton learning about Marine Corps history, tactics, and equipment. Some of the notable evolutions during the week were the Infantry Immersion Trainer where we used munition rounds to learn the basics of squad movement and clearing buildings, learning and running the Marine O-Course, and going through a very basic personal defense training that culminated in an opportunity to take part in a pugil stick fight against other midshipmen.

Over the four weeks, I learned more about the Department of the Navy and its many communities. Every week I could ask numerous Sailors and officers anything from what their day to day lives were like to what they looked for in a young officer coming into the fleet. Going through all the evolutions and having the opportunity to experience the different communities was both motivating and allowed me to see different jobs that I did not know about or did not previously have any interest in.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION
MIDN 4/C Shepard Petit

On August 15th, 2016, 13 eager college freshman line up outside of the Military Science Building. They stood as lonely candidates from all different backgrounds and cultures. The candidates said goodbye to their family and headed down the hall: The first steps on a path toward a commission in the Navy or Marine Corps. All ready to change from individual candidates into a cohesive group of midshipmen.

New Student Orientation, or NSO, is a compact week of training used to adjust the new candidates into ROTC life. The use of peer instruction and upperclassmen leadership enables the candidates to properly prepare for battalion life. Each day introduces new challenges that support teamwork and cohesion, challenging the candidates mentally, morally, and physically. Upperclassmen facilitators and unit staff kept constant watch on the candidates, correcting and instructing every move. NSO activities included early morning physical training, Naval heritage and history, drill instruction, and paintball. At the end of the 5-day long orientation, the candidates become midshipmen.

NSO challenged me more than I had thought. The early mornings were a new part of my lifestyle that I was not used to. Strict word for word compliance to commands and attention to detail were stressed at a high level. Most importantly, teamwork was expected and supported throughout the week. For example, we had to move a 200-lb. log through the obstacle course. Individually, this task is impossible. Only as a cohesive, communicating unit could we have moved the log through the obstacle course. Another example of our teamwork was the cleaning periods known as “field days.” Each candidate was responsible for a specific area to clean. If one candidate failed, we would all fail. We
received the basic building blocks needed to build strong group cohesion for our entire college and naval career.

Five days after we arrived in Lawrence, we had transformed from unknown individuals into midshipmen of the Naval ROTC at the University of Kansas. Many challenges are ahead of the class. However, now we are developing ourselves while preparing to serve something greater than ourselves.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS WING 1 CHANGE OF COMMAND**

On Friday August 12th midshipmen and staff from the Jayhawk Battalion visited the Change of Command ceremony for Strategic Communications Wing 1 at Tinker Air Force Base in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The Jayhawk contingent consisted of two aspiring aviator midshipmen, two staff aviation Ensigns, and the Commanding Officer, CAPT Dave Meron. The festivities took place in the hangar of the VQ-4 Shadows, the Air Reconnaissance squadron commanded by CAPT Meron from 2009-2010.

The ceremony was host to several high-ranking Navy officers including Admiral Cecil Haney, Commander US Strategic Command, and Vice Admiral Mike Shoemaker, Commander Naval Air Forces. Both Admirals spoke during the ceremony in favor of the outgoing wing commodore CAPT Brian McCormick as he turned the reigns over to CAPT Edward McCabe.

Following the ceremony, the Jayhawk staff and midshipmen met with Admiral Haney to garner some of his wisdom as STRATCOM. The Admiral was particularly interested in learning about the chosen career paths of the Ensigns and midshipmen. Admiral Haney enjoys connecting with the youth of the Navy, and has plans to visit the entire

Jayhawk Battalion at KU during the fall semester. CAPT Meron guided the group of midshipmen and staff onboard an E6-B, where he shared his time and experience as a Naval Flight Officer and Naval Aviator.

The entire occasion proved to be a significant professional development experience for both the Ensigns and midshipmen in attendance. Very few midshipmen can witness high profile events in a fleet setting such as this, and fewer still will ever interact with a Four-Star Combatant Commander.

**DR. BOB RUN**

MIDN 4/C Timothy Cooper

Dr. Bob Frederick, an educator and a former athletic director for the University of Kansas, was an inspiration to his staff and students. When Dr. Bob died on June 12th of 2009, his legacy made a lasting impact with those closest to him. His family and friends rallied together to form an annual 5 kilometer run to support his mission and the Dr. Bob Fredrick Scholarship program.

This year’s event took place on September 17th at Rim Rock Farm. Rim Rock is also used by the University of Kansas Cross Country Team for its meets.

KU Naval ROTC sent four 4/C Midshipmen: Nick Heyroth, Shepherd Petit, Alex Speckin, and Tim Cooper. They began by leading stretches and dynamic warm ups before the event kicked off. Soon after, the colors were presented by volunteers and the National Anthem was sung.

The midshipmen started off the race strong and motivated other runners during the event. As the race went on, Nick Heyroth led the other midshipmen towards the finish, with Petit, Cooper, and Speckin behind him. Out of the group, Heyroth finished 28th place, Petit took 34th, Cooper finished 40th, and Speckin was 52nd out of 158 total runners.

After completing the race, the midshipmen met Colonel Bernie Kish, a retired Army officer who served in Vietnam and Cambodia. They discussed plans for what they wanted to do in Navy and Marine Corps as well as the race itself. They concluded the event with a small breakfast while cheering on the other runners completing their race. The four midshipmen spoke with many of the event’s participants, many of whom knew Dr. Bob personally. They left the course with newfound
knowledge of a man they had never met, but instantly knew.

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**ALUMNI TAILGATE**

MIDN 4/C Hope McAlexander

The KU NROTC program hosts an alumni tailgate each year, traditionally before the Homecoming football game. KU NROTC alumni are invited to KU to celebrate and get to know new midshipmen. On October 22, we gathered in the Military Science parking lot to carry on this tradition.

To increase participation, some changes were made for this year's tailgate. The other ROTC branches were invited and were encouraged to bring their families along with them, as well as the Student Veteran’s Association and Veteran’s Alumni Committee. The event was extremely successful.

We were fortunate to have great weather throughout the morning. There was an abundance of good food, music and outdoor games for people to play throughout the tailgate. Some midshipmen brought their dogs, which just added to the entertainment. The families mingled and got to meet the new midshipmen and their friends as well as getting to talk with the officers and their spouses.

Personally, I enjoyed the event very much. It is nice to periodically have relaxed social events. I met new people from the different branches here at KU and their families. My family also got to talk to Captain Meron, Lieutenant Ziomkowski, and Lieutenant McGinnis.

It was a lot of fun for everyone that came, and I hope we have an even better turnout for next year!

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**BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY/SERVICE DRESS BLUES INSPECTION**

MIDN 4/C Alex Speckin

The United States Navy was born on 13 October 1775 when the Second Continental Congress created the Continental Navy under the lead of George Washington. From that day on, the United States of America has celebrated the birth of America’s Navy through its main birthday tradition, the Pass the Cake tradition. The Pass the Cake tradition is a ceremony in which the most senior Sailor and the most junior Sailor of a command come together to cut the Navy’s birthday cake.

To celebrate the Navy’s birthday, midshipmen of the Jayhawk Battalion performed a Service Dress Blues inspection followed by our very own Pass the Cake ceremony. The midshipmen were inspected by our Commanding Officer, CAPT David Meron and our Executive Officer, CDR Joe Cooper. The inspection begins with a thorough review of the uniform, itself. If the inspector does not find major discrepancies, midshipmen are then quizzed on general Naval knowledge, ribbons and uniform etiquette. After the inspection, the midshipmen gathered in the unit’s Learning Resource Center for the Pass the Cake tradition. The ceremony was carried out by MIDN 4/C Alyssa Sharp and CAPT David Meron.

I personally enjoyed the events that the Jayhawk Battalion did for the Navy’s birthday. This was my first time ever wearing SDBs and it was a humbling moment when I finally understood what wearing that uniform represents. I was inspected by CDR Cooper, and it was extremely nerve racking for me. I had gone over my uniform numerous times looking for loose and fraying seams and I was still worried something could be wrong. I passed the inspection with flying colors, answering all the questions correctly. Finally, it was very motivating witnessing the Pass the Cake tradition because it made me realize that I am a part of something bigger than myself and that is one of the main reasons I decided to join the KU NROTC Program. All in all, my first celebration of the Navy’s birthday makes me want to be the one cutting the cake 30 years from now.
JOINT SERVICE BALL
MIDN 4/C Jack House

The Joint Service Ball is a time-honored tradition celebrated by all three branches of the Reserve Officers Training Corps stationed at the University of Kansas. It is a time for the cadets and midshipmen to get together and celebrate our camaraderie together, and is an opportunity to rub shoulders with those we may not get to see very often.

This year, the JSB was held at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel on November 4th. The event started with a cocktail hour in which the cadets and midshipmen could mingle and get to interact with one another. This was followed by the main event and dinner, where the cadets and midshipmen were seated with their dates and tablemates and served dinner before the main ceremony. After a round of toasts in honor of the President and the Chiefs of Staff, dinner was served and interaction between the branches commenced. After roughly an hour, it was time for the main event. Once dinner was cleared, the midshipmen and cadets were fortunate to have an Air Force Colonel provide an inspirational speech. Afterwards, seniors from each branch were recognized for their hard work and dedication, as well as their service selection once commissioned.

Following the ceremony, the dance floor was opened and once more, the midshipmen took it by force. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet with friends and superiors and enjoy a night of fun and camaraderie. I particularly enjoyed the singing of the service songs and hymns as it gave me a swell of pride in the steps I am taking to join the military. I couldn’t think of a better way to build that connection between all the midshipmen and cadets that makes us more than acquaintances, and turns us all into friends and family.

SALUTE TO SERVICE
MIDN 4/C Madison Wheat

Every year the University of Kansas reserves one football game to honor those who have served in our nation’s fighting forces. This game also honors those members who are currently serving as well. The whole purpose of the game is to remember the servicemen and women who are no longer with us, and to encourage veterans to come and partake in this football game dedicated to them.

This year, University of Kansas was playing against Iowa State University on November 12th. During the game, the Army, Navy and Air Force ROTC units from the University of Kansas carry the American Flag onto the field. As the flag was brought out, a moment of silence is taken for those who have lost their life protecting this country. This included the recent loss of KU Graduate, Sergeant First Class Matthew Lewellen who lost his life while serving in the country of Jordan. After this moment of silence, the National Anthem was played by the Army Band from Fort Leavenworth as a B2 Bomber did a flyover. I personally really enjoyed this Salute to Service Game and thought that it did an excellent job at thanking and honoring those who have served before us as well as current service members. Seeing those who have gone before myself and my fellow shipmates gives us a renewed sense of inspiration, respect, and motivation to strive to be like those men and women.

During the game, all the cadets and midshipmen cheered for our players as they put out their best to honor the veterans. Unfortunately, we lost to Iowa State University at the end. Overall, I think that the Salute to Service game was a success and a great event to honor those who have served and are currently serving in one of our nation’s great fighting forces.

VETERAN’S DAY VIGIL
MIDN 1/C Mark Kersey

November 11th, Veteran’s Day, is a day for people to honor the men and women who served in the military to defend this great nation. Each year, the KU Army, Air Force, and Naval ROTC units gather together to stand watch for 24 hours to honor the veterans, who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The cadets and midshipmen worked in unison to stand watch for the Vietnam, Korea, and the WWII memorials.

The cadets and the midshipmen guarded the Vietnam memorial and the Campanile.
WWII memorial on Saturday November 12th. All three memorials were guarded on Sunday November 13th until the conclusion of the Annual Veteran’s Day run.

This year is my last year at the Jayhawk battalion and I had the honor to stand watch at the Campanile WWII memorial from 0100 to 0200 on Sunday the 13th. All cadets and midshipmen met at the Army ROTC lounge at the Military Science building. The event coordinator then took all six of the cadets and midshipmen to the three memorials. After a proper reliving process, another Army cadet and I took the post to guard the Campanile WWII memorial. An hour of the watch was not a long period of time, but it gave me a chance to show the respect to those who served before me.

The last set of cadets and midshipmen took the watch of the three memorials on Sunday the 13th from 0900 to 1000, during the Veteran’s Day run at KU Memorial Stadium. This year, the Commanding Officer of KU NROTC unit, Captain David J. Meron, and the Assistant Marine Officer Instructor, Brody Goldthwaite, attended this traditional event and ran through all three memorials to honor the veterans of this great nation.

To many others, Veteran’s Day might just be a day off from work. However, it means much more to us: selflessness, loyalty, and courage. It is important for the three ROTC units to keep this tradition and pass on to the upcoming cadets and midshipmen.

MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY
MIDN 4/C Nick Heyroth

The Marine Corps birthday, November 10th, is a day that is honored by every Marine who has ever served. It is a day full of rich history and traditions that are passed down from generation to generation. Once a Marine always a Marine: this is the Marine Corps mantra; this is the brotherhood that the Corps exemplifies. The events that took place allowed me to see this firsthand.

I was a part of the Marine Corps birthday color guard. An event is held every year at the Dole Institute honoring the Marine Corps birthday. It consists of an opening color guard, reading of the Commandant’s message, singing of the Marine Corps Hymn, a guest speaker, capped by the cake cutting.

The thing that caught my attention most was the actions of the Marines that were there. Even the oldest Marine stood up at attention. Semper Fidelis at that moment for me meant more than it ever has before. The cake cutting ceremony was something I had never seen before. The oldest Marine, born in 1929, takes a bite of the cake and passes it to the youngest Marine. This symbolizes the passing of the knowledge from the oldest Marine to the youngest. The symbolism was extremely significant to me. It shows the amount of respect that young Marines have for the older Marines. I really loved this entire ceremony and hope that I can go back next year.

Later in the day we met as a whole battalion for cake cutting, reading of the Commandant’s message, and then several rounds of paint ball. There was no better way to celebrate the Marine Corps birthday. The Marines will continue these great traditions that I have witnessed long after I am dead. The Corps is eternal, just as the flame of the spirit of the Corps will forever burn in the hearts of the men and women who serve in it.

BLUE ANGELS HOMECOMING AIRSHOW
MIDN 3/C Kurt Wenske

Every year at the end of the airshow season, the world famous Blue Angels goes home to relax and regroup in Pensacola, Florida. After a grueling season away from family and friends, it is a much needed break. The homecoming show is famous for highlighting the Blue Angels at their best. The culmination of hundreds of hours of flight time and the home field advantage makes for an awe-inspiring demonstration.

This year was a particularly special year for the Blue Angels, as it was their 70th anniversary. Fortunately, I had the incredible privilege of attending the show with behind-the-scenes access. I was able to attend the show on Friday and Saturday in the Blue Angels VIP section. In this section, I met legends such as CAPT Donnie Cochran, the first African-American Blue Angel, and the first African-American Blue Angel Boss. Also in attendance was the team from the 2004-2005 season who were featured in the Discovery Channel Documentary, A Year in the Life. I was able to interact with, and see first hand, what it takes to wear a blue flight suit. Based upon the grueling maneuvers, precision, and professionalism demonstrated by each team member, it takes more than
being an exceptional pilot. Blue Angels have to be leaders, followers, motivators, and crowd pleasers.

In addition to spending the day with my heroes, I attended the anniversary dinner at the National Naval Aviation Museum. Upon arrival, I was immediately immersed in all things Blue Angel. Nearly every team member, honorary member, and spouse was in attendance. Notable guests included world-famous aerobatic pilot Sean D. Tucker, the mayor of Pensacola, The Chief of Naval Air Training, and a video appearance by Tom Cruise.

Throughout the night, I continued to interact with the legendary Navy and Marine Corps pilots. Regardless of what airplane these men flew, or which years they served, they were all similar at their core. They cared deeply not only about the Blue Angels, but the Navy and Marine Corps. It is clear the men and women selected for these roles are nothing but the best. They represent not just Naval Aviation, not just the Navy, not just the military, but the best America has to offer. They are a constant reminder of the goodness of our democracy. Here’s to another amazing 70 years.

WARBIRDS COMPETE IN KU INTRAMURALS
MIDN 1/C Ryan McMahon

A new tradition started in the University of Kansas NROTC Battalion this year as they participated in KU Intramurals for the first time. The most recent season was what the Jayhawk’s are best known for, basketball.

In years past, the KU NROTC Battalion has had a team compete at the annual Notre Dame ROTC basketball tournament, but were unable to this year. This did not stop the Warbirds from competing in the Men’s Intramural Division at KU. The season started in late January and on the 29th the Warbird’s took the court for the first game of the season. They came out strong, and through an impressive performance, pulled out the victory 57-47. Steam rolling into week two of the regular season, the Warbird’s took a second win, defeating their opponents 43-33. Suffering the absence of a few players due to seasonal illness, the Warbird’s fought hard with the third week’s opponent but, unfortunately, came up short with a 32-47 loss. The Warbird’s would not be deterred, when in week four they showed their resiliency by defeating their opponent 46-42, in a close game. Finishing the regular season with a three and one record, the Warbird’s looked toward playoffs as an underdog as they received the 14th seed in the tournament. This did not discourage the Warbird’s. They took the floor on March 6th for the first round of playoffs. They showed up strong and went into halftime up by a few points. After a defensive grudge match for the remainder of the game, they unfortunately suffered a crushing loss of 34-35. Their season ended.

The Warbird’s had a phenomenal season reaching the playoffs and competing with other teams at the University of Kansas. They were tested both physically and mentally when the games dragged on and they became exhausted. They fought through every game while proudly wearing the University of Kansas NROTC Battalion jerseys. They learned a lot about leadership and teamwork from their season and look forward to competing again next year.

FLEET TRANSITIONING PROGRAM
MIDN 4/C Shepard Petit

The United States Navy is constantly preparing Sailors for entry into the challenging pipelines offered by Naval Special Warfare (NSW). One program offered to Sailors to prepare them for NSW is the Fleet Transitioning Program. This program allows competitive Sailors from other areas of the Navy to develop their physical ability and compete for a NSW contract. To become physically and mentally competitive, the program consists multiple daily physical evolutions that are supervised by active duty NSW staff. As NSW contracts are competitive for both officers and enlisted, the mentally weak are dropped if they don’t improve their attitude or effort. Upon successful participation of the program and a competitive application, active duty Sailors are prepared to face the challenges of the pipeline ahead of them.

ROTC midshipmen can participate in the program for exposure and experience as a developing naval leader. During winter break, I received orders to the Fleet
Transitioning Program. Prior to my arrival, I had shown interest and ambition in becoming a Navy SEAL officer and wanted to further my knowledge of the community. In my daily routine, I participated in many physical evolutions including long sand runs, callisthenic sessions, water competency training, and multiple swim workouts. Due to the rigorous physical schedule, many Sailors lost interest and quit competing for a NSW contract. The growing challenge in each day was meant to prove a strong lesson in NSW: mental fortitude leads to success.

I successfully completed my time at the Fleet Transitioning Program before returning to Lawrence. I learned the specifics of how to become a Navy SEAL officer during my ROTC career. More importantly, I got exposure and leadership experience with active duty Sailors and look forward to applying what I have learned to my current professional life.

KANSAS CITY NAVY LEAGUE DINNER
MIDN 1/C Mark Kersey

The Navy League of United States was founded in 1902 under President Theodore Roosevelt. The main purpose and vision of the Navy League is to educate the public about our nation’s maritime force as well as supporting and aiding our maritime capabilities. There is a Navy League’s Greater Kansas City Council located in Kansas City that has been supporting the KU NROTC Battalion and many other reserve and active duty units for many years. This year, the President of the Council Ron Brooks invited the Commanding Officer of KU NROTC unit, Captain David J. Meron, and the Greater Kansas City Council Award Recipient Midshipman First Class Mark Y. Kersey to attend their annual dinner on January 19th.

This year, the annual council dinner was hosted at Plaza III, a steakhouse, at the country club in Kansas City. Captain Meron and Midshipman Kersey dressed up in their Service Dress Blues and attended the dinner. During the dinner, Captain Meron and Midshipman Kersey sat at different tables so they could talk to the ladies and gentlemen from the council. Midshipman Kersey had a great time talking to the retired service members as well as Midshipman Wheat’s (a midshipman at the KU NROTC Battalion) parents. After the dinner, Captain Meron and Midshipman Kersey each gave a quick presentation to the council about the purpose, the mission, and the members of the KU NROTC Battalion. The Greater Kansas City Council has been supporting KU NROTC Battalion for many years. As stated on their website, they are “Citizens in Support of the Sea Services”, and with the help of the Navy League headquarter, they have been providing over $250,000 scholarships and awards to support the midshipmen and sea cadets annually. It was an honor for Midshipman Kersey to attend the dinner and speak with the members of the council and to show his appreciation to the support of Navy League.

AVIATION CLUB TINKER VISIT
MIDN 4/C Jack House

On 27 Jan 2017, the KU NROTC Aviation Club had the privilege to visit VQ-3 and VQ-4, the E-6 squadrons at Tinker Air Force Base. Commanding Officer, CAPT Meron, took the Aviation Club to The Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial site and Survivor’s Tree. The experience was humbling as we, future Naval and Marine Corps Officers, reflected on what will be our charge as commissioned officers.

After taking a couple pictures, CAPT Meron’s contact in the VQ-4 and current OPS of the squadron, gave us the green light to come tour VQ-4. As we arrived at the gate to enter the Squadron landing bays, we were greeted by the OPS and all given a warm welcome. Other various officers greeted us as we started touring around the landing bay, and we eventually found ourselves in the CIC (Combat Information Center) of the Squadron at which point we had an opportunity to ask questions. Various members of the Jayhawk Battalion that attended could ask multiple questions the OPS, other officers of VQ-4, and also the enlisted components that make up the staff such as the Senior Chief and Master Chief.

As we exited the CIC, a few Junior Officers (JOs) as well as the OPS and other senior officers took the Jayhawk Battalion on a tour of the E-6. While inside the plane, we again had the opportunity to ask questions and receive insight into the life of Navy pilots, NFOs and the enlisted crew jobs.

Soon after finishing the tour we were treated to pizza in the wardroom where the Jayhawk Battalion members
found ourselves surrounded by JOs and senior officers alike. While eating pizza, we could hear quite a few stories from the officers there, as well as interview the JOs that had more recently completed flight school and gleam some tips and tricks into how we might proceed in our possible aviation careers. After getting the word from the Squadron’s Commanding Officer (CO), as well as our CO, CAPT Meron, we flew the E-6 Flight Simulator. Each midshipman got the opportunity to simulate flying the E-6 and making a couple of landings from the around the base. The midshipmen *attempting* to fly the simulator sat in the left seat, while CAPT Meron sat in the right seat, taking on the co-pilot role. As the midshipmen went through the scenarios, CAPT Meron would press buttons or pull back throttle to simulate different situations a pilot might face (stalled engine, no rudder assist, etc). He would then instruct us to fly the plane and make the landing, that may or may not have gone successfully. As the Jayhawk Battalion left Tinker, we each walked away with a new appreciation for the skill the pilots and NFOs of VQ-3, as well as the skill that our CO has in handling the unruly E-6. The trip helped motivate me and many others towards the aviation community, and increased our desire to make our hopes a reality.

**SEMPER FI HIKE**
MIDN 4/C Nick Heyroth

On February 17th the Semper Fi Society conducted a hike on the Main and West campuses at the University of Kansas. The entirety of the hike was 6 miles through a variety of terrains. All members of the hike were required to have an Improved Load Bearing Equipment (ILBE) pack containing between 50 and 60 pounds. Two staff members, Capt Mosqueda (MOI), GySgt Goldthwaite (AMOI), and 20 Midshipmen took part in the hike. 1st Squad Leader was MIDN Brown and 2nd Squad Leader was MIDN Heyroth. The Platoon Sergeant was MIDN Whitaker and the Platoon Commander was MIDN Bateman.

The day before the hike the PLT CMDR, PLT SGT, and the Squad Leaders did reconnaissance on the hike route, to fully understand the route and ensure it is in good condition, free of obstacles. The morning of the hike all members arrived promptly at 0430. Time was given to assure packs were of appropriate weight and were properly put together. Once these checks were complete the entire formation stepped off promptly at 0500. Once on West Campus, the platoon of motivators did a lap around KU’s obstacle course. The next maneuver was across the Battalion’s paintball course and deep into the woods. Once out of the woods, the platoon reached the halfway point to take a scheduled ten-minute break. Semper Fi then moved back toward the MSB. The platoon commander pushed the pace on the last half mile so the unit could finish well under the drop-dead time. The hike was a wake-up call for some as it was an OCS style hike including ships, heavy fog, and other military vessels. Juniors and seniors were paired up with groups of sophomores and freshmen to help guide the underclassmen through the situations, while teaching them the Rules of the Road as they went.

This is great preparation for the midshipmen’s summer cruises and future careers, where they will utilize this knowledge while underway, and keep them one step ahead of their peers. In the future, KU NROTC plans to conduct more MSS lab sessions, and continue to develop the knowledge and skills of the midshipmen.

**MARITIME SHIP SIMULATOR LAB**
MIDN 2/C Bill McNichols

On 8 February 2017, during Unit Lab at 1530, the Navy options of the KU NROTC Battalion met in the new Maritime Skills Simulator (MSS) room. MSS provides midshipmen training ship driving and the navigation of coastal waterways. MSS is installed on every computer in the room and allows users to simulate standing watch on the bridge of many different classes of ships, call out orders as Officer of the Deck, and brush up on Rules of the Road. Many different maritime situations can be displayed and run through in real time, including exiting harbors (such as San Diego or Norfolk), give-way/stand-on vessel situations, anchoring at sea, navigating through low visibility, and much more. On this day, the midshipmen simulated the evolution of getting underway on a DDG through a narrow channel while navigating around many different obstacles including ships, heavy fog, and other military vessels. Juniors and seniors were paired up with groups of sophomores and freshmen to help guide the underclassmen through the situations, while teaching them the Rules of the Road as they went.

This is great preparation for the midshipmen’s summer cruises and future careers, where they will utilize this knowledge while underway, and keep them one step ahead of their peers. In the future, KU NROTC plans to conduct more MSS lab sessions, and continue to develop the knowledge and skills of the midshipmen.
and opened the eyes of a few that struggled through it. It provided an important learning tool to gain experience in what is expected of the candidates at OCS. The quick pace was the most difficult factor to deal with. Leadership experience was also gained during the hike. Squad leaders had to keep their squads motivated and report accountability to the platoon sergeant. The platoon commander had to put the entire hike together, from operation order to execution. The experience will help all those involved to be more prepared as future officers.

Although this was a short hike, a lot was learned and it was invaluable to develop these midshipmen into Marine and Navy Officers. These hikes give experience in leadership, execution, and planning. This will give midshipmen more experience, and a chance to better themselves.

**COLONEL HOLDEN VISIT**  
MIDN 3/C Patrick Nagle

On the First of March this year, the Jayhawk Battalion had the honor of hosting Retired Colonel Tom Holden at Navy lab. Colonel Holden began his Marine Corps career as a 1st Lieutenant flying the CH-46 on resupply missions and personnel transport in South Vietnam. The CH-46, commonly referred to as “The Phrog” was beloved by all pilots who flew her. It is a medium-lift tandem rotor transport helicopter. Colonel Holden expressed high praise and admiration for the eccentric bird. He would later take part in Operation Frequent Wind. Frequent Wind was the operation that evacuated United States personnel from the embassy in South Vietnam during the Fall of Saigon. Many may remember the famous photograph of the Huey taking “the last” trip out of Vietnam. Colonel Holden, however, remembers it differently. He is aware of the photograph, but says the Huey was not the last off the ground. It was a Phrog, piloted by none other than Colonel Holden. He described the harrowing mission in grave detail, describing landing on the roof of the embassy to wait for a Marine while Vietcong troops raced up the stairs toward the awaiting helo. He later took part in the infamous New Orleans rooftop shootings, assisting the police department in taking down Mark Essex in his CH-46. He recounts getting reprimanded for the incident, but rewarded at the same time. To this day, he is unaware if the punishment ever made it into is USMC file.

Colonel Holden is a true American hero, and we are forever indebted to him. After he recounted his iconic career and life experiences with the battalion, he opened the floor to questions. Midshipmen asked a range of questions from OCS to flight school to general officership. Col. Holden shared what he learned in his career and important advice to help the young officers in training become better citizens and better leaders. It truly was an honor to have Colonel Holden speak with the Jayhawk Battalion, and he will always be welcome here at the Jayhawk Battalion.

**BOULDER DRILL MEET**  
MIDN 3/C Kurt Wenske

Saturday March 4th, the Jayhawk Battalion competed at the University of Colorado Boulder’s Annual Drill Meet. Members of the battalion competed in four events throughout the weekend against nine other universities. The midshipmen participated in the Endurance Team Competition, Platoon Drill, Color Guard, and Rifle & Pistol Competition Shooting.

The Endurance Competition was the first event of the day. The competition includes a pool race, rope climb, pull-ups, carrying a 60lb sandbag up a hill, buddy carrying for a half mile, and a 13-mile hike while carrying a 40lb pack. The team finished fifth which is not a disappointment since they improved their time by over an hour and a half from last year and improved their overall ranking by four positions. With most the team returning next year they look to continue to better their score.
The second event was Platoon Drill, where our team of 18 midshipmen were assessed by other universities staff NCOs (non-commissioned officers). They were assessed on their precision of movements given in the drill card. The drill card included column marching, facing movements, and form inspections. The dedication that the midshipmen gave preparing for this event proved beneficial because they placed first. Color Guard is the third event that was during the competition. The Color Guard was assessed on how they presented the colors and form marching. The Color Guard once again improved on their placement from last year’s competition of fifth, placing second this year.

The last competition held was the Rifle & Pistol Competition Shooting where they had to travel a half hour away from campus to shoot. Within the rifle event, the team had to shoot a target at 25 yards from different positions which include: prone, kneeling, and standing. The pistol competition consisted of shooting at targets with multiple ranges varying from 7-25 yards while in the standing and kneeling positions. Through their hard work and perseverance, rifle finished second and pistol finished third. Once again improving on their scores from last year where they placed fourth and fifth respectively.

The Jayhawks took home a lot of hardware and were proud to finish second overall a mere 1.5 points away from placing first. The Jayhawk Battalion is a shining example of hard work, determination.

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**USS HAWAII VISIT**

MIDN 2/C Charles Richmond

On Wednesday, 08 March, the Jayhawk Battalion welcomed three crew members from the Virginia-Class fast attack submarine, USS Hawaii (SSN 776). The boat’s weapon’s officer, a junior officer, and the assistant navigator visited campus from their homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. This was the first time that the Jayhawk Battalion has hosted a department head from a submarine in recent years. The crewmembers started the day by giving a morning brief on the Virginia Class to LT McGinnis’s naval weapons class. The 45-minute brief was very informative, touching on everything from their sonar systems to the future Columbia-Class ballistic missile submarine. In the afternoon, prospective nuclear midshipmen led the group on a campus tour, culminating in a special tour of Allen Fieldhouse. As avid Jayhawk fans, the Chief and his wife were very excited to see Allen Fieldhouse and the Original Rules of Basketball for the first time.

Following the tour, the crewmembers gave a submarine brief to all the Navy-Option midshipmen. This brief lasted longer than expected due to the midshipmen’s numerous questions. It was a welcome experience to interact with a Chief for many of the midshipmen, as it was the first time for many of the freshmen.

Finally, LT McGinnis and the prospective nuclear midshipmen went to dinner with the crewmembers at Free State Brewery. This provided the midshipmen with an opportunity to hear sea stories from the gentlemen, and receive career advice and tips for their upcoming summer cruises aboard submarines. The three midshipmen were honored to receive coins from the Chief’s Mess of the Hawaii, one of which is already on display in the Battalion’s coin collection.

The Jayhawk Battalion is very grateful for the opportunity to learn from these gentlemen, and look forward to future opportunities to grow their professional knowledge.

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**THE BIG EVENT**

MIDN 4/C Alyssa Sharp

The Big Event recruits thousands of students, faculty, and staff volunteers from KU to work at local job sites within the Lawrence community. Big Event volunteers spend one day of service helping Lawrence residents by completing projects within their neighborhoods. These projects can range from working on someone’s personal property to helping community parks. Several midshipmen took it upon themselves to participate in the Big Event to give back to their community. They were placed at Peterson Park to help clean up the community garden. The midshipmen followed the instructions of the two ladies that manage the garden. The tasks included, but were not limited to: cleaning up trash and brush, moving mulch and lumber, and making structures to grow plants in.
The ladies in charge were amazed and thrilled at the pace and efficiency that the midshipmen worked at. They were more pleased to see the midshipmen having fun with tasks that could otherwise be perceived as boring.

In the end, the midshipmen completed all tasks requested of them and were allowed to leave a bit early. The time spent helping spruce up the community garden allowed the midshipmen to reflect on their duty to give back to their community. The Big Event helps to understand how important it is to keep in touch with those around you. It allows for community members to see the volunteers in a light that they previously may not have had opportunity to. The Big Event promotes creating connections that can last a lifetime with both the community and fellow volunteers. Working together towards one goal allowed the midshipmen to form bonds with one another. It appears dirt and sweat were the best recipe for an incredible day.

SUMMER WHITES INSPECTION  
MIDN 1/C Josh Gathright

Every semester, to maintain proper military order and discipline, the unit conducts an inspection. In the Fall, it’s focused on the Service Dress Blues. In the Spring, the focus is on the Summer White uniform. When the 4/C midshipmen go on their summer cruise, they wear their summer whites, so this inspection gives them the proper guidance on how to wear the uniform.

At the inspection time, the unit forms up, takes accountability, and the Captain inspects the company. As future officers, this is important, as we will be expected upon commissioning, to know how to properly wear the uniform; what the expectations of others in the uniform are; and how to correct others when they are wearing it wrong. It also gives the midshipmen chain of command practice properly forming a unit for inspection, and gives those without a billet to observe how it is performed.

When wearing a uniform of the United States Military, it is important to know how to properly wear and take care of it while you are wearing it. Wearing summer whites gives the battalion good practice in this duty, and provides an opportunity for upperclassmen to provide guidance to the underclassmen. While it might seem to be a mundane task, there are many lessons that are taught, and learned, during this process every semester.

RANGER BUDDY CHALLENGE  
MIDN 3/C Kathleen Meeds

On April 8th, I had the opportunity to participate in Army ROTC’s Ranger Buddy Challenge with Midshipman 1/C Henselman. The competition was hosted by KU’s own Army ROTC and started with three laps around Rim-Rock Farm’s infamous 5K course with rifles and 35-pound packs. All teams had two hours and 20 minutes to finish the hike. Henselman and I were the second of two female teams to finish during the required timeframe, coming in just seven seconds shy of the max time. We then moved through 20 stations that required the completion of different tasks, such as identifying grenades, buddy carrying, applying tourniquets and pressure dressings to a dummy, and calling in a 9-line MEDEVAC from a given scenario. The competition ended with a final lap around Rim-Rock without rucks.

In addition to this, Henselman and I saw and helped a heat casualty in our division, got pelted with paintballs, and had to low crawl under wire down a muddy hill to get into a creek. As difficult as this all was mentally and physically at the time, we had a great time. We placed second in the female division, comprised of Army cadets and us female midshipmen. We also won the “Overall Best Battalion Award”.

Getting to compete and then contributing to KU’s win made the experience even more memorable. Participating in RBC was my first time doing anything Army related, so I enjoyed getting a sneak peek into some of the skills cadets learn before becoming commissioning. Additionally, as Army ROTC’s unit is based one floor above the Naval ROTC Learning Resource Center in the Military Science Building, it was nice getting to know our neighbors. Participating in RBC makes me hopeful that we will have more interaction between the different units at KU going forward. A cadet already asked for my contact information to set up a joint-lab next semester, and a couple of midshipmen
have expressed interest in competing in RBC next year. This experience was one for the books, and I’m already looking forward to doing it again next year.

AWARDS CEREMONY
MIDN 3/C Wolf

On Wednesday, April 26\textsuperscript{th}, the KU NROTC battalion hosted the Annual Awards Ceremony. The purpose of the event is to highlight the stellar work of Jayhawk midshipmen. Over the course of the year, midshipmen work assiduously to achieve quality grades, while striving to engage with, and give back to the Lawrence community.

This year was a significant year for the ceremony as there were new awards added to aid in recognizing the accomplishments of the battalion. The Mustang Award was a new award given to two outstanding midshipmen for their hard work in academics and leadership. This scholarship seeks to assist with the expenses of college with a sizable monetary sum. The Captain John “Buck” Newsom Memorial Award was given with similar nomination criteria as the Mustang, but in addition to a monetary award the recipient’s name is engraved on a memorial plaque that resides in the halls of the Military Science Building.

Later, our Commanding Officer recognized the hard work our Assistant Marine Corps Officer Instructor, Gunnery Sergeant Goldthwaite. Gunnery Sergeant Goldthwaite has been instrumental in training the battalion during his two years at KU. During his tenure he led drill, color guard, physical training, and military bearing. Captain Meron recognized his efforts by awarding him One Tough Marine, an autobiography of First Sergeant Donald N. Hamblen. The book is befitting as Gunnery Sergeant Goldthwaite is being promoted to First Sergeant before he leaves for his next command.

The ceremony also offered time for the unit to interact with veterans within the Lawrence community.

Opportunities to interact with our veterans are always a privilege when they do occur. The ceremony is a time for reflection and recognition of the hard work that occurs during the year. The Jayhawk Battalion is extremely grateful for the support we receive from the veterans within our community.

This year was also sobering for the Jayhawk battalion, as we sought to honor one of our own. Every year the Semper Fidelis Leadership award is given to the most deserving Marine midshipman who demonstrates excellence in leadership. This year the award was posthumously awarded to Nicholas Herren. It was an honor to have the Herren family present at the ceremony to accept this award. MIDN Herren exemplified what it means to be a leader, and the award honors his amazing accomplishments, sacrifice, and service to his nation. The legacy he left with us will live on forever in the form of the Nicholas A. Herren Memorial Leadership Award.

ALLEN FIELDHOUSE TOUR WITH ARCHITECT
WARREN CORMAN
2ndLt Nicholas Morrison

On May 4\textsuperscript{th}, 2017, the Jayhawk Battalion had the honor and privilege of hosting Warren Corman, a WWII vet and the last living architect of Allen Fieldhouse. Mr. Corman, just like most young men at the time, enlisted in the United States Navy at age 17. After completing Seabee school, he served in Okinawa until the end of the war; upon which he returned home and earned a degree in Architectural Engineering from the University of Kansas. He stayed in Lawrence and helped design and construct Allen Fieldhouse.

Mr. Corman began his presentation by sharing several stories of serving in Okinawa, talking about his experiences working with Marines in a foreign country. What was more impactful was that he expressed his deep gratitude for the lessons he learned from serving in the US Navy and emphasized how vital those lessons were later in life. It was readily apparent that the Navy helped him become the man he is today.

After the talk, Mr. Corman led the Battalion on a tour of Allen Fieldhouse. He shared stories of the building process and about the famous coach, “Phog” Allen. One of the more memorable moments was when he talked about the difficult task of trying to get steel for the fieldhouse, saying it was one of the biggest challenges they faced. The steel company refused to give him the steel but then, as they were leaving the meeting, Mr. Corman ran into an old friend who
happened to be the Vice President of the steel company. His friend promised him that they would get the steel.

At the end of the tour, the Battalion had the special honor to see our Assistant Marine Officer Instructor promoted to First Sergeant. Overall it was a great experience that I will always remember. We are grateful that Mr. Corman took time to speak to us and show us around the fieldhouse.

COMMISSIONING
MIDN 4/C Alex Speckin

The drive to become a Naval or Marine Corps Officer is the one thing that everyone in NROTC has in common. This drive is what motivates midshipmen to push themselves to new limits; for them to transform themselves into the best officers they can be. After four or five years of countless hours of studying, waking up at 0430 two to three times a week to PT, and maturing as adults and future officers, commissioning is the reward for all the work.

Commissioning to me is one of the most sacred parts of the joining the Armed Forces because once the oath is said and the gold bars are pinned on, that person now has an instant responsibility to uphold the image and core values of the armed forces. I was lucky enough to help set up on the ground floor for the 2017 University of Kansas Joint Commissioning Ceremony. I assisted with the rehearsal and took pictures during the ceremony. It was strange greeting all the future officers as they slowly filed in because in a little over an hour I would no longer be on a first/last name basis with those commissionees; they will be Sirs or Ma’am and 2nd Lieutenants and Ensigns.

As everyone began to sit down and go to their assigned positions, I could not help but wonder what this will be like for me in three or four years. The ceremony was one that I will never forget for multiple reasons. The guest speaker, CAPT John “Irish” Keilty gave an amazing speech on what it means to serve and how everyone plays a major role in protecting and providing for the United States. When they began to recite the oath, I couldn’t help but get chills because at that moment those were not just words, they promised before God to protect and serve, and faithfully discharge duties.

The most solemn moment of the ceremony was the playing of taps in memory of Nicholas Herren. It was incredible to experience all the emotions that came along during that short, but powerful song. His family was then presented with a Marine Corps officer sword. Finally, the service songs were played as well as the KU Alma Mater. All in all, this is what joining NROTC is all about, working day in and day out to reach the day of commissioning. I know I have a lot of work to do to become ready for that moment, but I am also excited for what the future holds.
Please consider giving to the Dwight G. Rickman Naval Award fund and the newly established Nicholas A. Herren Memorial Leadership Award. Your tax-deductible contribution to the endowment fund shall be used to provide awards to deserving students in the Naval ROTC program.

Donations can be made online at:
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