Where has the time gone? As a first year CO my first task was to do a lot of watching and listening because I already knew this was a high performing organization dedicated to the mission and upholding the highest standards of conduct and professionalism. The seamless operation of the staff and MIDN Battalion despite the simultaneous transfer of the previous CO coupled with the retirement of the XO was a welcome sign that all I needed to do was guide the ship vice driving it.

It has been a distinct pleasure to watch this battalion mature from four individual classes into a cohesive unit that looks and acts like a seasoned team. New Student Orientation brought together eight high school “kids” with juniors and seniors who were clearly still growing into their new roles. Fast forward seven months to Northwest Navy where I saw a tight unit organize, train and then “deploy” 850 miles away to compete and win against units twice our size (and much better rested). In every respect this battalion has exceeded in accomplishing the mission. As I write this article the battalion average GPA is an astounding 3.33, we batted 1,000 for service assignment and are preparing to send several juniors to their four star nuclear interviews early. In short I could not be more proud.

The world of 2016 is vastly more complex than the Cold War in 1989 when I commissioned. Back then it was easy; the U.S. versus the great Soviet Bear with a few regional hotspots that lasted days not years. Today our graduates will face multiple simultaneous conflicts that can erupt with almost no warning and at the speed of cyber. In addition you will be the generation that resolves incredibly difficult social challenges such as women in ground combat, gender identity, marijuana legalization and the ethical limits of torture and interrogation. As evidenced by extremely well written papers on these subjects by our seniors, these are subjects that have been suppressed or ignored, in this country, for in some cases nearly a century. I truly believe that the class of 2016 will be regarded as part of one of America’s great generations for their contributions in solving these issues.

For the three under classes remember and stay focused on your mission. First and foremost is to graduate and complete your degree on time. Every resource of the staff is dedicated to that end. GPA and order of merit sets the stage for everything you will do in the future. Secondly is to prepare yourself morally, mentally and physically to be an officer in the Navy or Marine Corps. We have a great advantage with our building and location in Salt Lake City. The real world will be tougher, prepare now. Live your dream every day. The day you pin on your wings, dolphins, trident etc. will eclipse every other day in your life. That is our 100% focus; the only limiting factor is your desire and motivation.

In closing I’m reminded of what senior officers told me about promotions. Promotions are not a reward for your efforts as much as they are about someone retired and we need you to step up into that hole. As we farewell MSgt Orndorff for 20 years of dedicated and faithful service and as I look to retire with the graduating class of 2018, we will both go proudly and with confidence that you all are more than ready and will do it better than your predecessors. To the graduating seniors, fair winds. To the other three classes, strap in, because it is only going to get better.

-Captain Springer
I have been incredibly lucky to see the battalion grow as a unit and to watch the individuals who make up the battalion develop morally, mentally, and physically. You have accomplished a great deal this year and you should take pride in your achievements. For our newly commissioned officers, the road ahead will be more difficult. Our graduating class will serve the United States in a time of change, uncertainty, and unblinking scrutiny from the media. These challenges require character, a sense of purpose, intellect, and discipline. You have all these qualities and though your growth and development are never complete, you are fully prepared to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

You have my great respect for volunteering to shoulder the burden of leadership and to care for the United States and for the young men and women who protect this great nation. Accomplishing your future missions and caring for those under your command will require enormous effort and will test your limits, but your service will reward you. You are part of something much larger than yourselves and your efforts make a difference in the lives of others. Enjoy the honor of serving your nation and of serving your Marines and Sailors.

To the families of our newly commissioned officers and our midshipmen, take great pride in your midshipman's accomplishments. Our midshipmen are rigorously preparing themselves for bright futures. They could not do this without the support of their spouses, parents, and siblings. We cannot express how appreciative we are of your support. Thank you for what you do.

This May we say farewell to Master Sergeant Orndorff as he retires after 20 years of honorable service. The unit has been lucky to have a man of such character and professionalism. While we will miss Master Sergeant Orndorff and his sense of humor, it is reassuring to know that his leadership will echo throughout the Navy and Marine Corps as the officers he trained take charge of their platoons and divisions.

-Major Holt
LT Michael Head is a native of Los Banos, California. Upon graduation from Los Banos High School in 2006, he attended the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD.

He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2010 with a B.S. in Information Technology and orders to Naval Nuclear Power School in Charleston, SC. Upon completion of Power School, he completed Submarine Officer Basic Course in Groton, CT en route to Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit Ballston Spa, NY. After the successful completion at NNPTU Ballston Spa in March 2012, he received orders to USS Toledo (SSN 769), stationed out of Groton, CT.

Upon reporting to USS Toledo, he served as Damage Control Assistant for a seven month CENTCOM deployment. After a successful deployment, he relieved the Main Propulsion Assistant to manage Machinery Division throughout an eighteen month shipyard overhaul. During this time, he and his wife Michelle welcomed their first child Aubrey.

In May 2013, he earned his Submarine Warfare Qualification and attended Prospective Nuclear Engineer Officer School (PNEO). After successfully completing PNEO, he returned to the USS Toledo to serve as the Assistant Engineer.

In March of 2015, he reported to the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit, University of Utah where he is currently serving as Assistant Professor of Naval Science and Junior/Senior student advisor.

LT Head’s awards include Navy Achievement Medal (3 awards) and various unit, service and campaign awards.
LT Sean Feeney is a native of Pottstown, Pennsylvania and enlisted in the Navy July of 2002 as a SONAR Technician (Surface).

Upon completion of “A” and “C” school in San Diego, LT Feeney reported to USS Winston S. Churchill in 2003, out of Norfolk, Virginia, where he promoted to First Class Petty Officer and qualified as an Enlisted Service Warfare Specialist. His wife Lauren and he had their first child Connor during this tour. He was selected as a primary Surface Warfare Officer Candidate for the Seaman-to-Admiral 21 program while onboard.

After completing his STA-21 prerequisites at the Naval Science Institute in Newport, Rhode Island, he reported to NROTC Unit The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, where he earned his B.S. in Computer Science and his commission in 2011.

He reported to USS Forrest Sherman on June of 2011 where he served as Anti-Submarine Warfare Officer for his first division officer tour. He earned his Surface Warfare Qualification in July 2012. During this assignment, USS Forrest Sherman independently deployed to the Sixth Fleet Area of Responsibility.

Upon completion of his first division officer tour, he attended the Surface Navigator Course in Newport. He returned to USS Forrest Sherman as Navigator where he deployed to the C6F and C5F Areas of Responsibility. Lauren and Sean had their second child, Lilian, during this tour. He reported to the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps Unit, University of Utah, January 2016 where he serves as an Assistant Professor of Naval Science and Freshman/Sophomore Advisor.

LT Feeney’s awards include Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal (5 awards), and various unit, service and campaign awards.
The year was 2013, and I was beginning New Student Orientation at the University of Utah. I was one of the first few to show up. I remember MIDN Nash rolling into the study room with a tank top, a unbuttoned shirt, and some incredibly long hair. We were all nervous. Out of nowhere, a large, very angry looking bald man enters the room. He gives us all one good stare and simply says, “good!” This was my first experience with MSgt Orndorff. From here on out, I knew that we were in for a couple good years. As freshmen Marine options at the time, we were always fearful of entering into the hidden and dark layer that he calls his office. Each time, the standard encounter occurred. I would walk in, produce the proper greeting of the day, only to receive a slur of words that I will not write here. The meeting was stern, and when we were finished, he would yell at us to get out of the office. During my sophomore year, MSgt didn’t seem to change much. Being sophomore Marine options, we still had a lot of growing up to do, and MSgt was tough on us because of this. It wasn’t until recently that I saw a shift within MSgt Orndorff. While he still may call me a “dumb-dumb” or dish insults in my direction, MSgt became more of a mentoring figure. As many know, junior year of college is the year that Marine options go to Officer Candidate School. It is one of the biggest progressions that Marine options must overcome before claiming the title of United States Marines. When I met with him this year, I received the usual slur of words, but this time was different. This time I also received much needed advice and encouragement in undertaking this challenge. I realized that in the end, him being hard on us in the beginning has actually helped me grow up and mature into the person that I am today, and that in the end, he has been training us from the beginning to not only pass Officer Candidate School, but succeed there, and succeed as future officers in the United States Marine Corps or the United States Navy. For this I am grateful, and will miss walking into your office next year to find you staring angrily at your computer screen, only to later realize that in fact, you were playing Candy Crush or watching kitten videos. So from all of us at the University of Utah NROTC unit to you, thank you for the time and dedication that you put into us, and enjoy your retirement.

P.S. We’re sorry we didn’t win that drill trophy this year.

-MIDN 2/C Williams
The Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) Program was established in 1926 to provide a broad base of citizens knowledgeable in the arts and sciences of Naval Warfare. The program provided an opportunity for young men to undertake careers in the naval profession. In the beginning, there were six NROTC units located at the University of California at Berkeley, Georgia Institute of Technology, Northwestern University, University of Washington, Harvard and Yale Universities. In June of 1930, 126 midshipmen graduated from college, and received commissions in the United States Navy. At least three of the graduates went on to obtain flag rank.

The Marine Corps entered the NROTC Program in 1932, offering qualified NROTC graduates commissions in the United States Marine Corps. In 1968, Prairie View A&M became the first Historically Black College (HBC) to host the program. In 1972, the Secretary of the Navy authorized 16 women to enroll in the program and attend school at one of four colleges. Women may now participate in the program while attending any NROTC affiliated college or university. In 1990, the NROTC Scholarship Program was expanded to include applicants pursuing a four-year degree in Nursing, leading to a commission in the Navy Nurse Corps. This article can be found at http://www.nrotc.navy.mil/about.html.

The University of Utah’s NROTC Unit was established on 15 August 1945. The Unit’s first campus home was located in the field house near Rice Eccles Stadium, where the NROTC personnel were quartered. Meals were served in the Union Building cafeteria, and Naval Science classes were held wherever classroom space was available.

On 3 August 1946, the Naval Science Building was completed on campus at a cost of $203,000. The building contains an armory, library, office, classroom, supply spaces, and a small bore firing range. This officially became the unit’s home in early 1947. At the beginning of the 1990’s, the unit was selected for disestablishment. It was however reestablished in 1994 and continues to grow. This article can be found at http://nrotc.utah.edu/about/.

Our current unit has thirty Midshipmen, six Officer Candidates, and three MECEPS. Our active duty staff includes one Senior Enlisted Marine, two Lieutenants, an Executive Officer and a Commanding Officer. The University of Utah’s NROTC members participate every week in Battalion physical training, Naval Science Classes twice a week, Battalion Labs, and other events.
New Student Orientation greatly impacted us. We worked on and built our team work skills, which were virtually nonexistent the first day and still hard to detect the beginning of the second day. We also caught a glimpse into the character of all the other freshmen we were experiencing this with, if NSO was as successful for everyone as it has been for me, we were able to discover the shortfalls in ourselves and repair them. There are things that will take a while to fix, but we were able to identify the problem and start down that road towards improvement. NSO indoctrinated us into our future lives for the next nine to forty years, however long we decide to stay in. We got to see firsthand the experiences the people we will be leading went through, which helps give us a greater respect for them, because we have experienced the same situation they have.

-MIDN 4/C Zeimet
On February 25, 2016 the University of Utah NROTC unit and the Air Force ROTC (AFROTC) unit spent their afternoon labs in correlation with each other to develop a sense of comradery amongst the two branches as well as develop skills, employ newly formed teams, and allow for healthy competition between the Navy and Air Force units. The Joint Lab started off at 1515 when the two units split their people up into four different groups containing around nine midshipmen/cadets per team. The four teams were then ordered to disperse and head to their specified stations: tug of war, vehicle pull, workout relay race, and dummy carry. Every station tested each members character whether it be his/her endurance, motivation, judgment, or other qualities that a successful leader must have. For some groups certain stations came easier to them than others did, but in the end everybody put in work and got rewarded.

-JOINT AFROTC LAB
-MIDN 4/C Taylor
Dining In

Traditionally speaking, the mess night dates back to the times when the great Roman Empire and their legions of warriors would dine together as brothers the night before going into battle. The tradition of the mess night would bring the unit together one last time before the battle, and the possible death of some warriors on the battle field. Although we’re far from the days of the Roman legion, the traditions continue from generation to generation to ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps team never forgets where we came from. Hard, realistic training helps our nation win the battles of today, but remembering those who came before us, dining to their honor, and keeping the customs, courtesies and traditions alive will ensure that the Navy and Marine Corps continue to be the fighting force we are today for generations to come.

At the 2016 Naval ROTC mess night, the Marines, Sailors, and Midshipmen of the unit took their place in a long line of tradition. We laughed, we celebrated, and we remembered those who have gone before us, fighting for this great nation. Memories were made, and traditions were passed down. Next year, and for years to come, the Naval ROTC unit will continue to enjoy the long tradition of the mess night, while remembering that we are only sharing these traditions because those who have gone before us didn’t let tradition go to the way side.

-Gunnery Sergeant Brewer, USMC
The Bulldog Prep course prepares Marine-option Midshipmen physically, intellectually, and morally. The course’s design implements strenuous conditioning sessions, professional classroom instruction, and practical skill exercises, all to prepare and condition Marine-options for Officer Candidate School.

At Bulldog Prep, the University of Utah’s NROTC Marine Officer Instructor (MOI), Assistant Marine Officer Instructor (AMOI), and Marine Enlistment Commissioning Educational Program (MECEP) Marines all partake in the course as instructors. This provides Marine-Option Midshipmen with a wide variety of combined knowledge, expertise, and leadership styles so that they can learn and adopt those skills to use not only at OCS, but in their future careers as well.

-MIDN 3/C Cardona
The North West Navy competition is held annually between the University of Utah, University of Idaho and Washington State, the University of Washington, and Oregon State University NROTC units. Each school takes turns hosting the competition; this year, it was held at the University of Washington from April 1st-April 3rd, 2016. University of Utah boarded a charter bus around 0100 local time to embark on the thirteen-hour journey to Seattle. The journey was thankfully uneventful, and the unit made it to the hotel ahead of time. Battalion and staff members were able to enjoy time in the city before and after the opening ceremony, which for most was their first time in Seattle.

The competition began early with Physical Readiness Test (PRT). MIDN 4/C Taylor had the fastest run but Utah did not win the event. The next event was swimming. Utah won the swimming event and MIDN 4/C Garcia won personal awards for his stellar performance. Next was the Marine Corps Combat Fitness Test (CFT). MIDN 3/C Haber finished first in the running portion and MIDN 3/C Cardona had the fastest time for the maneuver under fire portion. MIDN 3/C Haber and MIDN 3/C Cardona were the top two finishers overall, but Utah did not win the event. Following the CFT was the 5k race. MIDN 2/C Guyer was the fastest runner followed closely by MIDN 4/C Smith and Sgt Wettstein. Utah did not win the 5k race. After a quick lunch at the football stadium, Utah reconvened in the Conibear Shellhouse for the knowledge bowl. Utah won each matchup and were the overall victors for the knowledge bowl. The colorguard competition took place on the football and although the team consisted of mostly 4/C midshipmen, they did well, however, they did not win. The second to last, and main event, was the regulation drill competition. The drill card had been chosen the previous evening and Utah was slated to go second. After a nearly flawless halted portion, MIDN 2/C Barnes, the unit leader, lost control of the platoon and was instructed to halt the platoon. After a tense conversation with the head grader, the platoon was allowed to continue the card and finished without incident. Utah miraculously came in third place in drill, but it would cost them the overall win. Utah surprisingly took the win in the tug-of-war competition after many coordinated heaves.

Utah came in second place overall, and the event was an eye opener to the Commanding Officer Captain Mark Springer who viewed the competition as a great morale booster, so much so that Utah will be looking into more competitions of the like for the future.

-MIDN 2/C Barnes
Commissioning

For many college seniors, spring becomes a time of anxious questions about what life will be like following graduation. For seniors in the Navy ROTC program, a secure job awaits and the opportunity to put their last four years of training to the test. If ROTC is a means to an end, commissioning is surely the end: but merely the beginning of a new path as an officer in Navy or Marine Corps. Commissioning officially marks the transition from midshipmen to officer, from reserve to active duty Navy. During the ceremony every senior selects an enlisted individual to render their first salute and an officer to read their oath. The ceremony is a symbolic transition of the acquisition of a midshipmen’s new officer rank.

Five midshipmen and one officer candidate (OC) will commission this year during the ceremony on May 6th at the Utah State Capital. Chase Stoddard will enter the Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) community and begin training in Panama City, Florida for dive school. McKenna Craig and Erica Bender will both begin careers as nurses in San Diego, CA and Bethesda, MD respectively. Jose Gonzalez selected the USS Gridley in Everett, WA. Ashley Taylor will pursue restricted line billet in Information Warfare. OC Carlson enters the Nuclear Power pipeline starting with power school in South Carolina. MIDN Stuart Follett graduated OCS and is now stationed with the Marines in Quantico, Virginia. Service assignments were released in the fall, while specific shipping dates for each senior have yet to be determined.

As an avenue of commissioning, the Navy ROTC program seeks to develop individuals morally, mentally and physically while fostering the highest ideals of honor, duty and loyalty. After four years of Naval Science classes, early morning physical training and drill sessions, weekly leadership labs and summer immersion cruises, seniors are expected to demonstrate the necessary qualities of a commissioning officer.

“The most rewarding part of my NROTC experience is observing how myself and my peers have excelled and changed. Just four short years ago we were all so timid and essentially useless as battalion members. Now that we are running the show and doing so as a team, it proves how much people can grow as leaders and individuals. The commissioning ceremony is probably the biggest turning point in my life thus far.”

-MIDN 1/C Craig