Greetings from the Jayhawk Navy!

As I wrap up my first year in the Jayhawk Navy it’s now vividly clear that I have a great job! I couldn’t be more pleased with the quality of my active duty and civilian staff, and in particular the young men and women of the battalion with whom I serve. Having watched the Class of 2013 graduate and receive their commissions in May, the same can be said for the quality of Ensigns and 2nd Lieutenants this unit routinely produces. Here’s what we’ve been up to.

**Competition Time.** The University of Nebraska NROTC hosted The Great Plains NROTC Competition Day on March 3. Teams from KU, Nebraska and Iowa State competed against each other in a number of events, with KU taking first place in Color Guard and the Pistol Shoot. MIDN Smith recounts her experience: “The Nebraska competition was a great learning experience that forced everyone involved to adjust under pressure to some changes and still prevail. At the last minute uniforms were changed for all events, including the inspection, as well as changes to the schedule. I personally was a member of the Drill team and the Commander for the Color Guard, which received 1st place. It’s always fun to compete but it’s also great to get to know everyone on a deeper level. A highlight of the trip was karaoke our last night because we all relaxed and had a great time getting to know each other.”

**The Best of the Best.** On April 24th, many members of the Battalion were presented with awards at the Spring Awards Ceremony. We are very fortunate to have several local and national organizations that help support our Unit with these prestigious awards including the MOAA Jayhawk Chapter who presented the graduating seniors with their first set of gold bars for commissioning. This year was unique for the Unit as we were able to introduce a new award, the Dwight G. Rickman Scholarship. With your contributions to the endowed account over the past year, we were able to give two - $500 scholarships as well as a Marine Officer’s Sword. This fund was established in 2005 in memory of Dwight G. Rickman who went missing in action in 1973. In order to sustain the scholarships, we need to continue to raise a minimum of $2,000 annually and ask for your continued support. A big “Thank you!” to those who have or are planning to contribute. Giving is easy to do on our website (listed below) or by sending a check to the Unit.

**Supporting those who served before us.** On April 27th our Color Guard participated in a Massing of the Colors event in Topeka, KS alongside the Army and Air Force. The ceremony was hosted by the Topeka Military Order of World Wars to re-dedicate some sixty names to the MOWW monument in the All Wars Memorial in Gage Park. ENS Slaughter, who has been an integral part of the Color Guard during his time at KU, had wonderful things to say about KU’s participation: “It was our first time attending the massing of the colors event and I sincerely hope that it’s not our last. It was such an honor to be included in such a large display of various organizations, but moreover the sense of belonging in a gathering of those who have come from all over Kansas to demonstrate their dedication and pride in being a part of something greater than the self or service, but a part of our nation. I was fortunate to meet a few veterans who had words of advice and who were content to see so many young Americans who were passionate and ready to take the reins for the coming future challenges. Although I have commissioned, I look forward to seeing pictures and hearing stories from those within the Battalion who may be given the opportunity to go and represent my Alma Mater and the United States Navy.”
Weekend Warriors. April 26th-28th, our future Marine’s participated in Warrior Weekend, and annual event that the Semper Fi Society uses for practical application of skills they have learned throughout the year. The skills applied during the weekend included: night land navigation, 12 mile hike (beginning at 0400) with loaded packs, and SULE (Small Unit Leadership Exercise) practice. The training is especially geared towards preparing those who are going to Officer Candidate School. This year, an emphasis was placed on creating an environment that was similar to that found at OCS. In an effort to mirror OCS, the active duty staff and current OCS graduates did their best to increase the stress level, as well as deprive the Midshipman of sleep and comfort. The fact that it was cold and rainy the entire weekend only added to the stressful and realistic environment. Suffice to say they came home cold, wet and muddy…and motivated for more.

MIDN Frickey remarked, “Having just returned from OCS, I can say that the new style of Warrior Weekend was significantly more beneficial. In fact, the first Field Exercise at OCS was extremely similar to Warrior Weekend, including the land navigation in the rain, sleep deprivation, and stress level.”

Starting a New Chapter. To wrap up the semester, the Joint Commissioning Ceremony was held at the Kansas Union on May 20th, the day after the University’s Spring Commencement. Present at the Joint Service Commissioning were KU Chancellor Bernadette Gray-Little as well as RADM Phil Davidson, USN, the Flag sponsor for the Jayhawk Battalion. RADM Davidson administered the oath of office to each of KU’s Cadets and Midshipmen earning their commissions. He then gave a keynote speech in which he challenged our newest officers to do their very best in the service to our nation. Towards the end of his remarks he stated, “If you remember only one thing from what I tell you today, it is this, be a person of integrity.” It was a great honor to have him welcome our newest officers to the fleet. The Ensigns and 2nd Lieutenants were each excited to begin the next chapter of their lives as their families and friends shared in the moment. “It is a fantastic feeling to have earned a commission as a naval officer,” said ENS Nathan Slaughter, one of the newly-commissioned officers. “This is the culmination of years of hard work and has been a dream of mine since I was in high school. I am excited at the opportunity to serve my country and it is a proud moment for my family who has supported me in this journey.” ENS Slaughter is currently attending schools and will be reporting to a ship homeported in Yokosuka, Japan. As an aside, two weeks after the commissioning we found out that RADM Davidson had been selected as the next 6th Fleet Commander, and a third star.

Not in Kansas anymore! Several of our MIDN were granted the opportunity to participate with Project GO this summer, travelling to Morocco for a language intensive study program. Here are a few words from MIDN Castans about his experience:

“This is a picture of MIDN Glen Karnes and me at the Chellah Roman ruins in Rabat, Morocco. During our Project GO funded study abroad trip to Morocco, we studied Arabic for two months at Al Akhawayn University in the city of Ifrane. Academically, we covered two semesters of beginner Arabic in just two months. This caused us to have a test every Friday, and over two hours of homework every day. During the weekdays, we had five hours of class followed by studying every day. However, on each weekend, we traveled to a new city in Morocco. I personally traveled to eight different cities with other students that I met in the program, and went to two different cities for class trips. My favorite places were: the Sahara Desert, the street performing city of Marrakech, the indigo painted mountain city of Chefchaouen, the enormous market city of Fez, and finally, the summit of Mt. Toubkal, the second highest peak in Africa. We also participated in community service learning every Wednesday. This event consisted of traveling to a nearby city in order to interact with the kids that lived there. This was a great cultural experience because we got to practice using our Arabic, and learn about these particular kids’ lifestyles. Throughout our last month, the Muslim holiday of Ramadan was celebrated. Even though I did not participate in Ramadan, I was able to gain a new kind of respect for the people who had to endure fasting every day. Now looking back on this adventure, I realize how fortunate I am to have received the opportunity to experience a new culture, explore a country, become a worldlier person, learn Arabic, and make lifetime connections and friendships with other students, ROTC midshipmen, cadets, and U.S. Officers. I am extremely grateful for this opportunity and the positive impact that it will have on my future military career.”
Hail and Farewell. In July, the Battalion bid farewell to our Marine Officer Instructor, Major William Seelmann, who retired after 23 years of truly outstanding and dedicated service. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors and many in our unit owe him thanks for three years of mentorship and guidance which helped make KU’s NROTC the success it is. Major Seelmann was instrumental in the land acquisition and construction of the new KU ROTC Obstacle Course. Featured on the left is a picture of Major Seelmann working on the obstacle course with a few other Marine option MIDN. A long desired and essential training device, KU is now one of a handful of NROTC units with a USMC obstacle course, and makes us more competitive with other Universities to host a competition in the future. We also welcome Maj Seelmann’s relief, Captain Brian Collins – an infantry officer. Captain Collins earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science through the Marine Enlisted Education Program at UCLA in 2005. In his 17 years of service, Captain Collins has served in a myriad of capacities that directly correlate to the responsibilities of a Marine Officer Instructor such as Assistant Marine Officer Instructor, Executive Officer, and Operations Chief. I have no doubt that he will meet and exceed the high standards established by his predecessor.

Welcoming the Next ‘Crop’. As the summer comes to an end, we are looking forward to welcoming 19 members of the class of 2017 to our Orientation and Indoctrination program beginning August 19th. The activities and instruction offered during O&I include basic military drill, challenging physical activities, campus familiarization and an introduction to life in the Jayhawk Battalion, and as college freshman. O&I will help develop camaraderie and allow them an extra week to settle in to their new settings prior to arrival of the KU student body. Based on the high school and testing scores in their scholarship packages, they have once again set the bar higher than the class before them. If you want to be impressed, come to the Annual Alumni Tailgate event in September and meet these awesome men and women!

Alumni Event. Speaking of the Annual Alumni Tailgate, this year we will host it before the Salute to Service KU vs South Dakota home football game on September 07. We will start the tailgate at the Military Science building at 4 pm, kickoff is at 6 pm. The KU Ticketing office is offering tickets at a cost of $15 each with the promo code SERVICE2013. If you are interested in attending the tailgate, please RSVP to the Unit by 03 SEPT by calling 785-864-3161 or emailing nrotc@ku.edu. We hope to see you all here!
**Upcoming Events:**
- 19-24 August: Orientation and Indoctrination
- 26 August: First Day of Fall Semester
- 02 September: Labor Day – Offices Closed
- 07 September: Salute to Service and Alumni Tailgate (KU vs South Dakota)
- 12-15 October: Fall Break

As the opportunities and challenges of another semester soon get underway, you can be sure that the support that our Alumni and Friends offer to our young men and women is integral to their success. We thank you for your continued support. Please know that the doors are always open for our wonderful alumni. I encourage you to stop by anytime just to say hello, or walk the passageways of yesteryear, or more importantly to meet the impressive young men and women who will be “manning” our fleet.

CAPT Dave Schweizer

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