

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

# NAVAL ROTC

# *The Side & Current*

Fall 2018/Spring 2019



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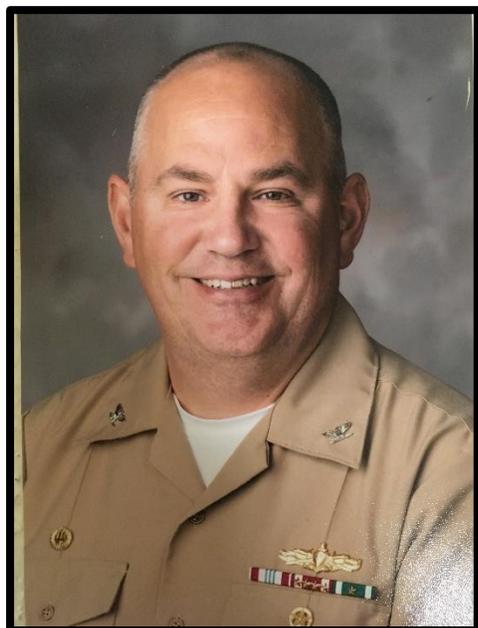
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## The UNL-NROTC Mission

To develop Midshipmen morally, mentally, and physically, and to imbue them with the highest ideals of duty, honor, and loyalty in order to commission graduates as officers who possess a basic professional background, are motivated toward careers in the naval science, and have a high potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship, and government.





*A Message from the Commanding Officer*

## Big Red Welcome

By Captain Mark A. Lakamp

Greetings to all Shipmates, Alumni, Family, and Friends, As the 2018-2019 academic year winds down, we can reflect on a very successful year, and look forward to a very promising summer and 2019-2020 academic year. Academically, our students did very well, with over half of the Battalion earning academic stars and maintaining a GPA over 3.30. We also had the pleasure of welcoming two new members to our staff - Mr. Joshua Niles as our Supply Technician and Ms. Tammy Grassmuck as our Human Resources Assistant.

This May, Midshipmen Kniowski, MacDougal, Pollara and Tews will be commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the United States Marine Corps and Midshipmen Adams, Bruning, and Carithers will be commissioned as Ensigns in the United States Navy. ENS Adams will begin flight training as a student naval aviator in Pensacola, FL; ENS Carithers will attend BUDS as a candidate Navy SEAL in Coronado, CA and ENS Bruning will report to USS PORTLAND (LPD 27) in San Diego. Our four Second Lieutenants will report to The Basic School in Quantico, VA this summer.

We wish all of our newest officers the very best as they start their careers! Well done!

I hope you all have a very safe and enjoyable summer. We will have some of our midshipmen deployed on ships, submarines, and attending training across the country around the globe. We look forward to hearing their sea stories in August and welcoming the class of 2023.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first academic year at the Husker Battalion leading the Blackshirts of National Defense. Thank you for welcoming me and my family to Nebraska. Go Big Red!

M. A. LAKAMP

CAPTAIN, USN



*A Message from the Executive Officer*

## Shifting Seas

By Commander Lawrence Henke

In the past year there have been sweeping changes proposed for the NROTC program from higher headquarters. All the proposals are well intentioned but like any other new change, some will survive and thrive some will not. As the academic year ends, I am proud to say we kept our eye on the mission and will commission another outstanding class. With pride and satisfaction, I can say this is one of the finest classes top to bottom to walk the p-ways of the M&N building. Further, the can-do spirit from all the Battalion members that come to Nebraska constantly pushed me to be better. As the future NROTC program changes take shape I can only hope the agents of change would come observe our Battalion to see how to get things right. The spirit here is infectious and will be a welcome addition to any wardroom in the fleet.

If the students are the spirit that gives the building life, the staff is the heart that keeps the program on task and freshened for the next task to come. I was impressed with the staff upon my arrival and somehow, we have continued to get better during my time here. Others should be as lucky, because that rarely happens. I am grateful for my time here because of the staff and their attitude to get the mission done.

As always, the events of the year have remained the same, but we took on each one with Big Red gusto. All greatly added value to a successful program with the goal to commission another outstanding class prepared to go off to do the Nation's business around the globe. As they leave, I am confident the incoming freshman will again renew the spirit in the building. I am confident because as in the past they will come in from around the Midwest. They will come to this aging building based on a gut feeling they have it is the best place for them to succeed. I am thankful for the spirit that renews each year and will fondly brag about Nebraska and its Midshipman after I execute the next set of orders



*A Message from the Naval Officer Instructor*  
**Surface Training for the Next  
 Generation**

By Lieutenant Paul Hast

Shipmates, Students and Alumni – What an outstanding year we have had at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and what an even better year for the Department of the Navy’s Surface Forces. Following an in-depth review of the Navy’s surface training pipelines for junior officers, I can report that this is arguably the best time in the past several decades to commission into the unrestricted line community as a prospective Surface Warfare Officer (SWO). The surface community has increased training time in the school house from 8 to 13 weeks, now including newly developed Officer of the Deck and basic ship handling coursework. SWO training facilities have upgraded and increased the quantity of ship handling simulators, allowing junior officers the opportunity to maximize their comfort and ability before reporting to their first ships – ready to drive!

Commander, Naval Surfaces Forces Vice Admiral Brown speaks frequently about establishing a culture of excellence and I am certain that we are doing that here at Nebraska. Locally, we have upped the ante by rebuilding our Navigation and Naval Operations course curriculum to ensure established dominance in the fundamental basics of being a SWO. We are taking a heavier focus on ship handling and sailing rules instruction, and we are excited to report being less than 18 months away from having state of the art simulation equipment in our facility in Lincoln, NE. Additionally, we have recently established professional relationships with our local U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender and have already conducted our first damage control training day on the pier under the direction of Cutter Gasconade’s crew.

As we close out the 2018-2019 school year at Nebraska, we are preparing to send our Midshipmen out to the fleet in various capacities. Among the newly commissioned are two Ensigns who will report to the Basic Division Officer Course this fall, followed by ultimate travel to their first ships of duty assignment as prospective SWOs. We will send our top talent to assist at the new summer cruise crucible event, SEA TRIALS, established to train and prepare our rising Juniors. Additionally, Nebraska will take part in the first ever nationwide New Student Orientation this summer at Naval Station Great Lakes, where many of our Class of 2023 will create their first memories of the Naval ROTC program.

Take In All Lines – Another busy year awaits!



*A Message from the Naval Officer Instructor*  
**New Challenges for Our Future  
Leaders**

By Lieutenant Andrew Thompson

It's been a great year here at Nebraska. Watching the "Blackshirts of National Defense" develop into the Navy and Marine Corps' future leaders has been a pleasure. Having some part in the mentorship and training that goes into producing such well-prepared group of young people has been rewarding and an experience I will never forget. My first experience with Nebraska ROTC happened when I reported to my first ship, the USS TOPEKA (SSN-754). My mentor, Jeff Skiles, a senior lieutenant onboard the ship, was a previous Battalion Commanding Officer here at Nebraska. He was a great submariner and showed me the ropes. He's now heading to Department Head School where he will prepare to take on higher levels of leadership on his next boat. Jeff's mentorship and success on the Topeka are a testament to the quality product the Nebraska ROTC Unit produces.

The Navy needs well prepared junior officers more today than it has in a long time. The challenges these officers will face during their first sea tours are unique and dynamic. The Navy's mission of winning wars, deterring aggression, and maintaining freedom of the seas is under new and pressing threats. In the South China Sea, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is building man-made islands in order to make territorial claims to previously established international waters. Some of the Midshipmen here at Nebraska will likely be among those that sail into those contested waters to ensure the South China Sea remains open to trade and commerce. The Russian Navy is building new and highly capable submarines at rates not seen since the Cold War. The future pilots, surface warfare officers, SEALs, and submariners of the Nebraska ROTC Battalion will be responsible for maintaining the U.S. Navy's edge over those new Russian assets. The challenges facing America's Navy are always changing and it is impossible to say what the next generation of Naval leaders will face, but we do know Cornhusker Midshipmen will be up to the task: mentally, morally, and physically.



*A Message from the Marine Officer Instructor*

## Next Man Up

By Captain Travis Horner

The Blackshirts of National Defense battalion graduated four Marine Second Lieutenants and four Navy Ensigns this year. This is the largest graduating class of my tenure thus far. The battalion loses a wealth of institutional knowledge as these eight men depart to begin their careers in the naval service. They will certainly leave the battalion better than they found it. This should be all of our goal during any tour of duty.

The departure of this senior class will bring with it many challenges as they pass the torch to the rising seniors. It is also a valuable lesson in leadership that is no different than the operating forces of the naval service. Normal tours of duty are scheduled as 2-3 year rotations. Experienced Sailors and Marines execute orders as new Sailors and Marines arrive and are expected to fill their boots. This highlights the importance of leadership development in subordinates. We devote a great deal of time and energy on the art and science of leading others through our own personal and professional development. We overlook the importance of developing our subordinates at the peril of our unit's sustainability and longevity. The torch must always be passed to prevent it from extinguishing. The question then is, "How do we develop our subordinates into effective leaders?"

Leaders must refrain from developing a zero-defect mentality. Fostering a zero-defect mentality stifles ingenuity and initiative. Allow subordinates to make mistakes. Expect subordinates to make mistakes. Focus more on their bias for action and their decision-making process rather than the decision itself or its outcome. Sound judgment is developed through experience. NROTC is the perfect environment to develop leadership in subordinates. There are no bullets flying. The cost of an incorrect decision is inexpensive and the time to make them is now. Ultimately, there are few decisions in life that are permanent.

I offer that developing leaders is the most important aspect of my job. The current graduating class has made my job easy. I have the utmost confidence in their potential to leave the University of Nebraska and leave their mark on their respective service. It has been another great year here at the University of Nebraska. I look forward to my last one.

Go Big Red!



Change of Command being conducted between MIDN Macdougall to MIDN Kniewski



Marine Options after completing Red Thunder field training



## MECEP Thoughts

By SSgt Bohnenkamp

My transition to an Officer in the Marine Corps has not been customary when compared to the career path of a typical Midshipman. This “non-traditional” path known as MECEP (Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program) cross-pollinates enlisted Marines into the Commissioned ranks of the Marine Corps after a trying application process. For our own personal and professional reasons, myself and three other Marines (GySgt Roehrich, SSgt Garnica and SSgt LeMoine) vacated our enlisted careers to make this transition. Hailing from various corners of the Marine Corps, we each faced our own unique challenges in making this transition. In my case, the most challenging aspect of the process was the humbling experience of returning to an initial training environment at the Officer Candidates School (OCS). It is not pleasant to be berated by Marines who had been your peer only a few weeks or days before. For others of us, it is challenging to return to a civilian-university environment that requires a whole new set of priorities and is vastly different from military culture. We all have challenges in our transitions, regardless of our previous military experiences, and we also have our own apprehensions. My initial impressions were incorrect about the ease with which I could slide into the commissioned ranks.

Despite my own best effort to fully grasp the transition, there remained nagging questions about how to approach my new role in the Marine Corps. Perhaps most arduous, how do I step in front of young Marines as a newly minted Commissioned Officer, but also as an 11-year former Staff Non-Commissioned Officer (SNCO)? How do I walk the line between a humble 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant and an experienced veteran? These among many other questions have been on my mind over the course of the past 3 years at the University of Nebraska. But it has also become clear to me during this 3-year tenure that these questions are no less profound than those on the minds of the young Midshipmen that will also soon lead Sailors and Marines. Their doubts bear a striking similarity to my own. These questions are those that will drive us to be humble, concerned leaders. They should reassure rather than discourage our efforts to be better leaders because they force us to look for answers and improve our tradecraft!

By far the most valuable experiences during my tenure here at the University of Nebraska has been in helping to mentor the Midshipmen. I could assuage some of my apprehensions by imparting the inventory of past experiences I have in the Navy and Marine Corps that we would soon shape together. Regardless of my previous experiences and enlisted rank I will soon consider these young men and women my peers in molding the future of the United States Naval Service and I could not be prouder!



Midshipmen Rifle Team posing in front of a police vehicle during the University of Boulder Colorado Drill Meet.



The NROTC battalion after winning the annual Army vs Navy football game



## Navy Ball

By MIDN 2/C Adams

This year I had the pleasure of coordinating the 243<sup>rd</sup> UNL NROTC Navy Birthday Ball. The previous year I was the assistant under the Navy Ball coordinator, and the assistant under myself this year will go on to plan next year's ball. There are a lot of fine details that go into planning the ball. Months in advance I started preparing for the ball by contacting the hotel, arranging dates, and setting a plan in action of getting it all completed before the start of the ball. As the Navy Ball Officer in Charge (OIC), I worked closely with Gunnery Sergeant Yeaman on all aspects. A month or two before the ball date he started preparing the key personnel for their parts in the ball ceremony.

Invitations are sent out, gifts are planned, meals are ordered, and the adjutant practices their confident stride. This year midshipman 1/C Alexander Kniewski was the adjutant, and he did a truly wonderful job leading the ceremony. The adjutant has arguably the hardest job during the ceremony and it is passed down year to year to Marine options with a strong bearing.

Each year we have the pleasure of inviting a guest of honor. This year Captain Orlando S. Bowman came from his position as Battle Watch Captain at STRATCOM in Omaha, Nebraska. CAPT Bowman commissioned as an ensign back in July of 1999 from the University of Maryland. He gave a nice speech about his past positions and talked about his pride in the Navy.

Navy Ball is a great chance to mingle with high ranking or retired officers and enlisted. They impart us with the knowledge they have gained from their long careers in the Fleet. They like asking the new freshmen what their goals are and then telling them all they know about it. The past couple years we have even been lucky to have a Rear Admiral attend our Birthday Ball.

As part of the ceremony, we have the youngest Marine and Navy option and the oldest Marine and Navy present come forward and share the birthday cake. I especially like this part of the ceremony since it signifies passing on the torch from young to old. They are lined on either side by our sword guard, starting with seniors and running all the way down to the freshmen. The fluidity they attain after all the work they put in never ceases to amaze me.



MIDN Macdougall proudly holding the NROTC Battalion's trophy after another 1<sup>st</sup> place finish for the Annual Joint Field Meet



E-Team during the hike portion at the University of Colorado-Boulder Drill Meet.



## Freshmen Year

By MIDN 4/C Cohan Bonow

I reported to my first day of New Student Orientation (NSO) at the NROTC Program in mid-August. The first few days were a little hectic. All of the new freshman, some knowing what to expect, others not, showing up at 0500 every morning for a week straight. The first day started out being introduced to our Gunnery Sergeant, which is an experience all in its own.

The remainder of that day and the ones following were spent physical training, getting a crash course in marching, learning military etiquette and courtesies, figuring out how to wear our uniforms, eating delicious MRE's, being yelled at, yelling back, and establishing our spots on the bottom of the totem pole.

Needless to say, it was a new experience for me and many of the other new Midshipman. While it seemed like a lot in the moment, it gave us a foundation of what the military would be like, and it was equipping us with all of the basic skills we would need to build on the foundation.

The following months would be spent staying on top of school work, physical training three mornings a week, naval science classes, drill, and lab. The battalion also works security for all Husker football games and helps clean the stadium after some of them. We pride ourselves on having the fastest clean up time with the fewest people. We work color guards for many sporting and other university events.

Freshmen in the battalion are also tasked with cleaning the rifle range, and the Wardroom (a private area exclusively for NROTC midshipmen to hang out and study). As a 4<sup>th</sup> class Midshipman (freshman) you are certainly kept busy, and you certainly have your work cut out for you. That is just how things are as you try and build your way up, forming responsibility, discipline, respect, and a solid work ethic. However, you also have many great opportunities to go on trips, compete in competitions, learn, and have a ton of cool experiences in the Battalion.

For anyone one with strong goals and aspirations, it is all doable, and well worth it. Build good study habits, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. While certainly easier said than done, it all circles back to building discipline and responsibility. My number one piece of advice to any high schooler looking to join NROTC is to focus on school. Get good grades, a good GPA, do well on standardized tests, and get involved in sports or leadership opportunities. Just this year I have learned countless things and am a significantly better person than I was prior to joining. I wouldn't trade a single one of my experiences thus far for anything else, and I would highly recommend this program to anyone interested.



GySgt Yeaman instructs Freshmen during New Student Orientation.



Color Guard led by Midshipman Neu at the Navy and Marine Corps Ball.



## Game Day Security

By MIDN 3/C Stiles

Everyone in Nebraska knows that in the Fall, Saturdays are for Husker football. On game days, over 100,000 fans come to Lincoln to soak in the atmosphere. Some of those fans come just to tailgate or watch the game in restaurants or nearby bars. However, over 90,000 of them funnel inside Memorial Stadium to see the game first-hand. With that many people in one place, it takes a lot of work to ensure everyone's safety. Everyone sees the heavy police presence, meant to monitor for threats and disputes. What most don't realize, however, is that ROTC Midshipmen and Cadets provide the first line of defense going into the stadium.

On game days, Midshipmen live a much different life than the average college student. Their entire day is dedicated to keeping Memorial Stadium safe. Three and a half hours prior to kickoff, the Blackshirts of National Defense gather in the Military and Naval Science building for accountability. Once all Midshipmen are accounted for, they step it over to a separate building near the stadium where check-in and the pre-game safety brief is held. There, everyone is briefed by the Lincoln and UNL police departments, as well as the athletic department on topics like game details and possible threats. Following the brief, all Midshipmen and Cadets head off to their assigned locations and wait for the gates to open.

Once the gates are open, the ROTC Event Security stand post at each gate, scanning the crowds coming into the stadium, and checking bags for contraband or dangerous items. Once the gates finally slow down near kick-off, all but one person at each gate goes inside the stadium to watch over their designated section, which can range from the highest sections of the stadium to down lining the field. As the Athletic Department Support Officer, I have the unique role of assigning all the Cadets and Midshipmen their respective gate and section, checking them in, and supervising throughout the game to ensure each gate and section is properly staffed.

Working security for Husker football games is a unique experience, especially as college students ourselves. It gives us the opportunity to network with the Cadets in other branches and provides our Battalion with the funds needed to do fun events throughout the semester, like the Colorado Drill Meet, Kansas O-Course, Warrior Night, and the Navy/Marine Corps Ball. Having the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of Memorial Stadium and the 90,000 fans inside it is a very large and time-consuming task, but one we take great pride in and will continue to do.



Marine Options during 7-mile hike on Red Thunder field training.



GySgt Yeaman instructs Midshipmen on Marine Corps Martial Arts Program.

## Battalion Staff



Captain Mark A. Lakamp



Commander Lawrence Henke



Lieutenant Paul Hast



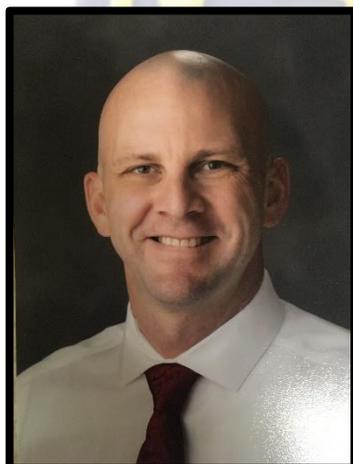
Lieutenant Andrew Thompson



Captain Travis Horner



Gunnery Sergeant Thomas Yeaman



Mr. Joshua Niles



Ms. Kim Pappas

# Top Six Fall 2018



Battalion Commanding Officer  
MIDN MacDougall



Battalion Executive Officer  
MIDN Bruning



Battalion Administration Officer  
MIDN Le



Alpha Company Commander  
MIDN Lamar



Bravo Company Commander  
MIDN Contreras



Battalion Operations Officer  
MIDN Kernes



# Top Six Spring 2019



Battalion Commanding Officer  
MIDN Kniewski



Battalion Executive Officer  
MIDN Hytrek



Battalion Administration Officer  
MIDN Quan



Alpha Company Commander  
MIDN Neu



Bravo Company Commander  
MIDN Walsh



Battalion Operations Officer  
MIDN Contreras

# Graduating Seniors

Spring 2019



MIDN Alexander Kniowski  
Hometown: Holland, MI  
Service Selection: TBS



MIDN Kaelin Bruning  
Hometown: Omaha, NE  
Service Selection: Surface Warfare



MIDN Grant MacDougall  
Hometown: Urbandale, IA  
Service Selection: TBS



MIDN Seth Carithers  
Hometown: Clarks Hill, Indiana  
Service Selection: BUD/S

## Graduating Seniors

Spring 2019



MIDN Curtis Pollara

Hometown: Newbury Park, CA

Service Selection: TBS



MIDN Seth Adams

Hometown: Chlang Mai, Thailand

Service Selection: Flight School



MIDN Jackson Tews

Hometown: Waterloo, NE

Service Selection: TBS



SSgt Bohnenkamp

Hometown: Omaha, NE

Service Selection: TBS

## Graduating Senior

Summer 2019



MIDN Colton Morris

Hometown: Omaha, NE

Service Selection: Surface Warfare



## Tide and Current Staff

Spring 2019

The Tide and Current Staff would like to thank all of the writers for their contributions to this article of the Tide and Current.

Captain Mark A. Lakamp

Commander Lawrence Henke

Staff Sergeant Bohnenkamp

Lieutenant Paul Hast

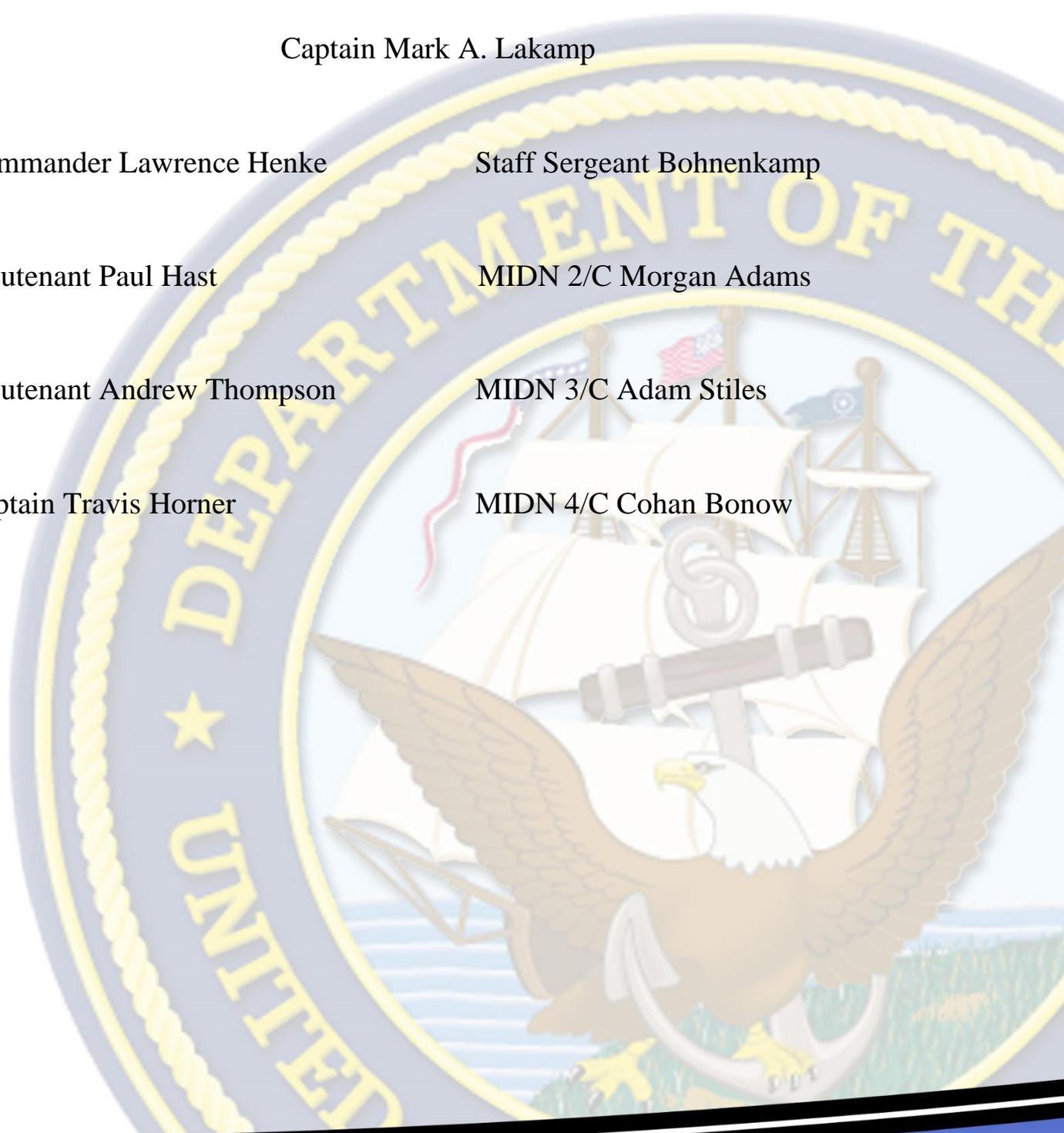
MIDN 2/C Morgan Adams

Lieutenant Andrew Thompson

MIDN 3/C Adam Stiles

Captain Travis Horner

MIDN 4/C Cohan Bonow



A special thanks to all of our donors  
who continue to support the  
Blackshirts of National Defense. Your  
donations are greatly appreciated.

Dear NROTC Alumni and extended family,

For the Midshipmen, Sailors, and Marines of the NROTC Unit, University of Nebraska, training continues to develop these future military leaders through a broad range of valuable experiences, such as the University of Notre Dame Leadership Conference and Orientation Week (“O-Week”). Unfortunately, Navy funds cannot be spent for these specific events. If you are interested in helping our students attend these excellent developmental opportunities, please consider providing a monetary donation (UNL Foundation #30277). Your donation will directly support the students enabling their further development.

Thank you. **GO BIG RED!**

REMINDER: Your financial contributions allow the NROTC Foundation to make students stronger in all areas. Your donations to the NROTC through the UNL Alumni Association are always welcomed and tax- deductible to the extent allowed by law. Thank you for your generous support!

Very Respectfully,

M.A. Lakamp

Captain, USN

Professor of Naval Science

YES! I'D LIKE TO SUPPORT UNL-NROTC.

Enclosed is my check made payable to: UNL Foundation #30277 for \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: All personal information is kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with any organization outside NROTC.

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