

**SPECIAL POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

**Our Newsletter has been in the works for a couple of weeks. The entire battalion has tediously labored to provide a means to display the remarkable accomplishments of the Battalion.**

**The long wait is over and we're happy to present The Spurs and Anchor.**

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## Texas NROTC Commissioning Ceremony



This fall the University of Texas at Austin Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps celebrated 75 years of service, generating leaders who are dedicated to a career of naval service and have potential for future development in mind and character to assume the highest responsibilities of command, citizenship and government. Following the Fall Graduation ceremonies, the Navy and Ma-

rine Corps welcomed four new commissionees into their fold.

The commissioning ceremony at the University of Texas at Austin can be one of the most memorable lifetime experiences. For many the journey is fraught with adversity and hardships. To some of the young men and women who selflessly devote themselves to a profession of arms in defense of their country, it may be hard to believe it's actually happening until they see their names on an official commissioning announcement.

For these individuals, the commissioning ceremony marks the culmination of a demanding degree completion program with an emphasis on developing the future leaders of our nation's military. Their accomplishment serves as a testimony to their perseverance and mental fortitude.





**2ndLt Tan Nguyen accepts his commissioning documents from CAPT Daniel**

**“2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Nguyen chose to pursue a life of service in defense of his nation”**

**2ndLt Graham Denniston receives the oath of office from his brother Captain Garret Denniston, USAF**

## 2nd Lieutenant Tan Nguyen, USMC

Tan Nguyen a 2010 graduate from the University of Texas at Austin was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps following a private ceremony in the Eastwood Room at the Union Building on August 1, 2010.

He graduated with distinction with a degree in Management Information Systems from the McCombs School of Business. Following graduation, Nguyen will report to Quantico, Virginia for further training as a Marine Second Lieutenant at The Basic School.

The difficult journey for his family started before Nguyen was born. His father received a commission in the Army of Republic of

Vietnam in December 1975 from Thu Duc Military Officer Academy and courageously served alongside US military forces before becoming a prisoner of war in June 1975 following the fall of Saigon until 1981. In 1993, his family immigrated to the United States, leaving behind everything they knew for a new beginning in an unfamiliar place.

Following the example of service to his nation set forth by his father, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Nguyen chose to pursue a life of service in defense of his Nation and give back to the country that has provided opportunities to his family.



**2ndLt Nguyen stands with his proud parents following the commissioning ceremony.**

## 2nd Lieutenant Graham Denniston, USMC



Graham Denniston a December 2010 graduate from the University of Texas at Austin was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps following a very special ceremony inside the Texas State Capitol Senate Chamber on December 17, 2010.

He graduated with distinction with a degree in History from the College of Liberal Arts. Following graduation, Denniston will report to Quantico, Virginia for further training as a Marine Second Lieutenant at The Basic School.

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Denniston began his journey as an enlisted member of the United States Marine Corps, achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant. His experiences in the fleet further instilled his commitment to serve his country. He applied and was accepted into the Marine Enlisted

Commissioning Education Program (MECEP), a curriculum designed to provide outstanding enlisted Marines the opportunity to serve as Marine Corps officers.

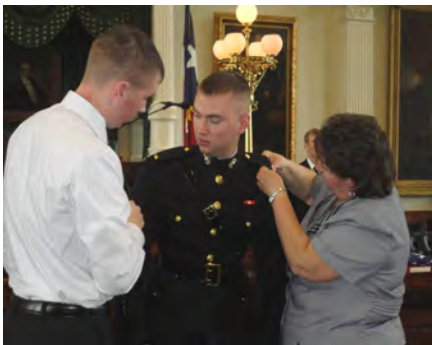
**Landon and Wesley Denniston affix new 2ndLt bars to their father's uniform. They are assisted by 2ndLt Denniston's father Tom Denniston and Father-in-law John Fraser**



*“ His experiences in the fleet further instilled his commitment to serve his country.”*

## 2nd Lieutenant Kevin Stelter, USMC

Kevin Stelter, a May 2010 graduate from the University of Texas at Austin was also commissioned as a Second Lieutenant



**2ndLt Stelter's mother Lillian and brother Kyle affix 2ndLt bars on his uniform.**

in the United States Marine Corps following a very special ceremony inside the Texas State Capitol Senate Chamber on December 17, 2010.

He graduated with distinction with a degree in Economics from the College of Liberal Arts. Following graduation, 2ndLt Stelter will report to Quantico, Virginia for further training at The Basic School.

Since 1932, the NROTC program has offered qualified graduates a commission in the United States Marine Corps. 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Stelter completed a four-year immersion program at the University of Texas at Austin that educates candidates not only in the classroom, but in all aspects of their life - in their dormitory at Jester Hall, on the athletic fields, and during their summers in the fleet. The result of this comprehensive process is a collective group of young leaders primed to shape the fu-

ture of the Navy, Marine Corps, and our country.

As part of the commissioning ceremonies, 2ndLt Stelter chose Captain Ken Tofel, United States Marine Corps (retired) to administer the Oath of Office.



**The Stelter Family standing with Marine Corps' newest commissioned officer.**

# Ensign Christopher Veenhuis, USN

Christopher B. Veenhuis an August 2010 graduate from Huston-Tillotson University was also commissioned as an Ensign in the United States Navy following a very special ceremony inside the Texas State Capitol Senate Chamber on December 17, 2010.



**Ensign Veenhuis' mother Jan Burton and Father Jack Veenhuis affix officer shoulder boards to his uniform.**

He graduated with distinction with a degree in Political Science from the College of Liberal Arts. Following graduation, Ensign Veenhuis will report to Pearl Harbor, HI for assignment as a Surface Warfare Officer.

Ensign Veenhuis began his journey as an enlisted member of the United States Navy, volunteering in Submarines and achieving the rank of first class petty officer. His experiences in the fleet further forged his commitment to serve his country.

He applied and was accepted into the Seaman to Admiral Program (STA-21), a curriculum designed provide an opportunity for enlisted personnel who possessed

outstanding qualifications and motivation for a naval career to obtain a commission.

Both Christopher and his wife Kelly Veenhuis gained commission through this program.



**Lieutenant Colonel Tony Waterbury, USMC, (retired) administers the Oath of Office to Ensign Veenhuis.**

***"People should have the opportunity to excel, and be all they can be, even if they don't get a perfect or traditional start." -Admiral Boorda***

For the four graduates, their journey to become an officer in the United States Navy and United States Marine Corps took many paths. They stand ready to support and defend the Constitution of these United States against all enemies. When these graduates raised their right hand they pledged their lives to their country. Many will lead their sailors and Marines into harm's way. This is an obligation not to be taken lightly. It is a privilege of the highest sort. Their roads may be different but one common ideal exist between them all. They are all counted amongst the young people who will protect the freedom cherished by past and current generations and all those yet to come.





# CO's Corner

CAPTAIN Dan Dixon

ion and the myriad of events that have taken place throughout the semester. The plan is to release a Newsletter after each semester and one immediately after Freshmen Orientation at the end of August to cover the summer training and orientation evolutions. As always, we welcome your feedback on the format and the content of these Newsletters.

Greetings family, friends and alumni of our UT NROTC Unit – it has been a real pleasure and privilege to work with each and every one of the midshipmen, MECEP (Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program) and OC (Officer Candidate) students this past semester. Our entire Unit staff composed of CDR Butch Neuenschwander, Maj Ty Kopke, LT Greg Lozeau, LT Christian Rivera and Gunnery Sergeant Jason Roush are all new to the NROTC program as of last summer and the learning curve has been steep. We frequently comment about how fortunate we are to have such a talented and motivated group of students who have made the choice to serve their country and to pursue a commission in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Our objective with this Newsletter is to keep the families of our students and the alumni updated on the Battal-

The Fall was busy for all of us, especially for our freshmen (4/C) midshipmen. They developed into a cohesive and motivated group that successfully handled not only the adjustment into university life, but also the shock of entering the military with our early AM drill and physical training sessions. I look forward to watching this group develop into our future Navy and Marine Corps leaders over the next 3-4 years.

Meanwhile, our seniors received their service selection assignments in late October. Overall, our Battalion did very well with a majority getting their first choice. This is a credit to their superb performance the last 4-5 years in the program. We have 1 submarine, 2 surface warfare (nuclear), 2 surface warfare, 1 naval flight officer, 3 pilot, 1 intelligence

and 1 medical doctor selectees. Additionally, we will have 4 Marine graduates and commissionees this spring and summer who will select their specialties after completing The Basic School in Quantico. Congrats to all our seniors who will be graduating in May and August of this year.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our 6 December graduates. The Newsletter describes the Commissioning Ceremony we had in mid-December for 3 of these graduates. The last 3 will have their commissioning this spring and likely join their fellow Longhorn Marines in the April class at The Basic School in Quantico.

Thank you for the support and encouragement of our midshipmen, MECEPs and OC's. They are a terrific group who inspire and motivate all of us every day. I am thankful we have such a talented group to carry on the torch of leadership in our Navy and Marine Corps. As always, my door is open and my email is available for any questions/concerns you all have.

Go Navy, Semper Fi and Hook em Horns!



# Safety First

CDR Vernon “Butch” Neuenschwander



I know it can be tough to send your son or daughter away to school, hoping they will do well and be safe. So I wanted to explain how we address safety at UT NROTC.

In the fleet the Executive Officer (XO) is the Operational Risk Manager onboard the ship. This is a fancy way of saying I am the senior safety observer. In 20 years, I have served on 6 ships, all of them capable of carrying hundreds of Marines. With so many dangerous moving parts and equipment to get the Marines to the beach, it is easy to see that safety was always my number one concern.

Nothing has changed since my

arrival to UT last summer. We take great strides to ensure everything we do has been critically thought out. From simple fitness training to the “Run to Dallas”, we brief the plan numerous times in order to be ready for anything and we always have safety observers at every event.

As the warmer months approach, our Battalion members will be enjoying spring break and eventually summer break. It is important that they keep safety in the forefront of their activities. The majority of military off duty accidents happen in the summer months. We will have several safety briefs before the semester ends but I would like to ask your help in reminding your family members to keep it safe. They are embarking on wonderful careers in the Navy and Marine Corps and it would be a shame if they lost that opportunity due to an unfortunate accident that could have been avoided.

As a side to my duties as Senior Safety Observer, I am also the senior motorcycle rider at the unit. I have completed several advanced riders courses, served as a Ride Captain for the Patriot Guard Riders in Corpus Christi and consider myself a very experienced but cautious rider.

With rising gas prices, many people turn to transportation of the two wheeled variety. It is a requirement that any member of the battalion that rides a motorized two wheeler (moped, motocross bike, sports bike or big Harley like me) reports directly to me with all of their information. Austin is challenging enough in a car but more so on two wheels.

Safety is a state of mind. I remember using a weed eater as a kid with no eye protection. You will never catch me doing that now. I want to see every member of our battalion graduate, get their commission and enjoy a career like I have. It is the best profession in the world!

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*“Safety is  
a state of  
mind”*

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## MOI's Corner

Maj Ty Kopke



Two fundamental concepts guide me in training the students here at the University of Texas NROTC: 1) Treat them like officers in order to prepare them to be officers, 2) Teach them how they would do it in the fleet. Their hands won't be held, and the decisions won't be made for them. This philosophy has been manifested by raising the standards and expectations from being college students to being naval officers.

ROTC forms have been replaced with the same Navy and Marine Corps forms used in the fleet. We run the unit

and assign responsibilities the same as a fleet unit and we hold them accountable. The students have learned how to write a naval letter from the Naval Correspondence Manual. They have learned about e-mail etiquette.

They have learned how to counsel and evaluate their subordinates. The students have learned about "involved leadership" and "asking the right questions." As with all Marines and sailors they have met the challenge and exceeded expectations. Not a single student failed their physical fitness test. In fact

the battalion average has soared. The students also answered the call academically. The average GPA for the battalion was nearly 3.1! This was all accomplished by coaching the students in their decision making, allowing them to make mistakes, but most importantly by not doing it for them!

Their hunger for knowledge and drive to be the best has been inspirational and leaves no doubt in my mind that the future of the Navy and Marine Corps is in good hands.



## Freshman Orientation 2010

MIDN 3/C Michael Lowe



On 20 Aug 2010, the Midshipman Candidates of the class of 2014 reported to The University of Texas Naval ROTC for Freshman Orientation. This period of instruction, coordinated by MIDN 2/C Erik Zuber, provided a quick introduction into Navy/Marine Corps customs and courtesies. It also indoctrinates them into the lifestyle of a UT NROTC Midshipman. Unlike previous orientations, this year's Freshman Orientation was almost exclusively executed by the Midshipman, with supervision and guidance from the active duty Marines.

The Freshman receive instruction from the Orientation Staff

# Freshman Orientation



The first day consisted of initial paperwork, establishing each midshipmen in the NROTC computer system. The freshman class then entered the classroom phase where they were the first NROTC students to enjoy the new classrooms in the Sanchez Building. Briefs covering many topics were taught including overviews of the Navy, Marine Corps, and UT NROTC history. The day ended with a seminar from a former Recon Marine over the importance of dieting and fitness.

The second day started very early with some physical training. While still dark outside, the candidates abilities in the water were evaluated by MIDN 2/C Goodrich, MIDN 3/C Young, and MIDN 3/C Lowe at Gregory Gym. Afterwards, the candi-

dates were transported to the UT Police Department's training facility in Bee Caves to get the candidates familiar with firearm and weapons safety. While several candidates were shooting, MIDN 3/C Garcia led the orientation class in "mental motivation", a series of classroom style instruction various military topics to include uniform and rank structure. MIDN 4/C Lee would later describe

this evolution as "Memorable". Having concluded the firearms evolution and several instructional lectures the orientation class was given a colors demonstration by MIDN 2/C Strain, MIDN 2/C Tallant, and MIDN 2/C Guerra.

*"The first two days were the hardest," recalls MIDN 4/C Stephanie Meyers, "but it broke me out of my shell."*

The final day kicked off with a PT session consisting of a 2 mile run around campus, and one final brief about typical college life, what to expect on a daily basis, and how to handle situations that come up moving away from home and living on a college campus. At noon, the candidates joined







**The Freshman class receive their introductory lesson in survival strokes at the Gregory Hall outdoor Pool.**

their families to enjoy a lunch catered by Rudy’s BBQ with the midshipmen staff and Unit staff, and then prepared for their Oath of Enlistment. The candidates and their families gathered in the Sanchez Building for the Oath, administer by CAPT Dan Dixon, the new Commanding Officer of UT NROTC.

Orientation was a learning experience for everyone that was

involved. MIDN 4/C Kelly remembers “waving and saying hello to SSgt Bishop and 2ndLt Stowers—then quickly learning that was not a proper greeting of the day”.

However, one upperclassman looked at it from a broader perspective. “The Fall 2010 Orientation showed us several things we did right and many things we can improve on”, said

MIDN 3/C Culpepper, who is currently planning next year’s orientation. “our primary goal remains the same: to guide the incoming freshmen on the transition from civilian life into military life, and train them how to be Midshipman and one day, future officers in our nations Navy and Marine Corps.”



# Alumni Weekend



The Alumni Weekend kicked off on Friday, 12 Nov 2010 with a reunion golf tournament at the Star Ranch Golf Club. The Alumni were able to play a friendly match of golf while catching up with one another. Following the golf outing, the UT NROTC Alumni Dinner was held at the Austin Country club. An award ceremony was held at the conclusion of the dinner to recognize and honor the Distinguished Alumni. Saturday began with the Alumni Board of Directors Meeting at the new UT NROTC unit located in the Sanchez Building. At the conclusion of the board meeting, the board rededicated the WWII Memorial Library in its new location on the fifth floor of the Sanchez

Building. The library is named after Howard R. Lowe '44 and family, who have generously donated the large collection of material found inside the library. The Alumni Business Meeting then took place at Welch Hall. The Alumni Business Meeting is a chance for the alumni to meet and cover future plans for Alumni. At this meeting, many hard-working midshipmen were awarded scholarships by the Midshipman's Foundation. Following the scholarship award ceremony, the alumni were given an update on battalion events, achievements, and future projects from the Battalion Commanding Officer Midshipman Patterson. Concluding the weekend, alumni and

midshipmen joined each other's company at Speedway Plaza where the Alumni Barbeque was held. This was a great opportunity for the alumni and battalion to get to know each other in a social atmosphere. Pok-e-Jo's Barbeque catered the event and the event was a great success and an all-around good time. Many Alumni and students then attended UT football game to conclude an excellent weekend.

The Alumni Weekend is a great experience for all individuals present. This is a yearly event that allows for old friends to reunite and an opportunity for them to see how their efforts and donations are affecting the future of the University of Texas NROTC program. It is highly encouraged for all alumni and students to attend this annual experience in hopes that old memories can be passed down to future Naval Officers while new memories are made.

# Annual Run to Dallas



The Run to Dallas is a twenty-eight year strong tradition here at the University of Texas Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps. The event takes place during the week prior to the Red Rivalry Game between the beloved Texas Longhorns and our heated rival the Oklahoma Sooners. We as the NROTC program run one of the game balls from Austin to Dallas where the game takes place, while the Oklahoma NROTC program runs a ball from Norman, Oklahoma to Dallas.

This year, the game ball was given to us by the coach of the Longhorn football team, Mac Brown, at the annual Torchlight Parade Rally that was held at the steps of the library tower. The

rally is an annual Torchlight and Parade held the Tuesday before the game. During the Torchlight and Parade students carry torches on a parade route through campus. The Midshipmen joined this parade of students, the Longhorn Band, the cheerleaders, dancers, student organizations, and the Longhorn

Football Team! Once this parade reaches the UT tower there are festivities, dancing, and motivational speeches for the game. After Coach Brown presented the game ball to the captain of our intramural football team, a short summary about the Run to Dallas by our Battalion Commanding Officer MIDN 1/C Patterson was presented to the rally.

After all the parade festivities end the real fun begins. The run begins on a Thursday afternoon as the battalion loads up a charter bus and begins the drive North to Dallas. The midshipmen run all night in shifts comprised of at least two runners at the minimum, one holding the game ball and the other carrying our battalion guide. Once we arrive in Waxahachie,





**The Midshipmen carry a game football and the UT NROTC guide On from Austin to Dallas**

on Friday we enjoy breakfast at IHOP then continue on to Dallas to do our ceremonial run into the stadium with the Oklahoma ROTC. The two battalions form two columns and run through the Texas fairgrounds to the Cotton Bowl Stadium's front steps. The day continues after several photos are taken to a football field in a park area to commence our annual flag foot-

ball game between the ROTCs. University of Texas NROTC unfortunately dropped the first flag football game this season after winning the previous nine games but are poised to make a comeback next year. After the football game the Battalion checked into their hotel in Dallas and took some much needed time to freshen up before heading out to a battalion

dinner. The following day was the actual football game which many students attended. Those students that did not have tickets watched the game together at La-Grange Sports Bar which is run by a former UT Alumni! The battalion then headed back to Austin on the charter bus ready for the Run to Dallas 2011!



# Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball

The 2010 Navy and Marine Corps ball was once again an enjoyable and memorable experience for all who attended. Held in the Ballroom of the Texas Union on the 29th day of October the UTNROTC battalion, guests, and alumni assembled together to celebrate the birthdays of their beloved services. Prior to the ceremonies, attendees were welcomed to Cocktail hour, in which all had the chance to meet and greet with another over beverages before the festivities kicked off.

Ding ding! As the dinner bell sounded all the guests moved to take their seats as the entrance of the Battalion Commander, the Unit Commander, and the guest of honor Rear Admiral Koenig, were welcomed in by the boatswains mate and sword line.

After the invocation was given and the colors were posted, Capt. Dan Dixon, the Commanding Officer for the UTNROTC unit, welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the ball. He briefly introduced RADM Koenig as well as several other distinguished guests before encouraging everyone to enjoy the festivities and take time to meet everyone who was there that night.

After an explanation of the significance and meaning of the table set for an empty chair in memory of members of the military who are POW/MIA,

dinner was served and toasts made to the Navy, Marine Corps, and all the sailors and marines who have died for our nation. For their meal, guests had the option of a steak, chicken, or vegetarian plate. The food was prepared perfectly by the catering company of the Texas Union.

Once filled by drink and food, guests were directed to the front of the ballroom as the birthday messages of both services were read aloud and messages given by the Chief of Naval Operations along with the Commandant of the Marine Corp. Both were projected onscreen for all to see.

The Guest speaker for the evening and guest of honor, retired Rear Admiral Koenig, then spoke. During his speech, he recalled his career as a submariner while reminding the officer candidates and the Midshipmen that you cannot take life for granted and that you can't always expect or

count on what you think tomorrow will hold. He enlightened everyone with several sea stories, as he recalled his career from a young newly commissioned officer and husband, through many highlights of his amazing career.

Once finished, the Marine's hymn was played and the traditional birthday cake was ceremoniously rolled out for the cake cutting. Joined by Captain Dixon and the RADM Koenig, the youngest service member, MIDN 4/C Meyers who was only 17 at the time, and oldest service member, US Marine Mr. Bob Brown, born in 1929, were served the first two pieces of cake. This concluded the ceremonies, signaling the beginning of the dance in which guests had the opportunity to loosen up and get their groove on. The Naval Ball was once again a great night for all who attended and all look forward to next years!





Traditions such as the cake cutting (previous page) presenting colors, parading the birthday cake, and having fun continued at the Naval and Marine Corp Birthday Ball

