This semester has been a learning experience for us all. We all have spent the semester managing both our classes and our Battalion duties. Through the semester, we have experienced incredible opportunities: we have had a chance to participate in the Mariner Skills Simulator, the Piedmont Consortium Field Meet, and watch Staff Sergeant Browning extend his enlistment in the US Marine Corps. Semper Fi has had some of it’s own experiences, including learning Land Navigation and participating in a weekend-long Field Exercise. Our members have achieved academic excellence, physical excellence and have grown as future Marine and Naval officers. This spring, we will have X graduating seniors commission to Ensigns and Second Lieutenants.

No matter if members were a part of the Marines or the Navy, the Battalion came together this semester to accomplish amazing things. We have to thank our leaders, Captain Gillespie, Lieutenant Colonel Shellabarger, Lieutenant Meek, Lieutenant Showanes, Lieutenant Watson, Lieutenant Yaeger, Major Merles and Staff Sergeant Browning for their continued dedication to our development as future officers in the US Navy and the US Marines. Without them, we wouldn’t have the skills to succeed in the future.

Our Battalion has accomplished major goals this semester, but we must continue to give our all to maintain this high level of success. We must continue to better ourselves through the summer cruises and into next semester in order to become successful Naval and Marine officers. Keep up the hard work, Battalion!
On 7 January 2015, new Battalion Commander, MIDN Noyes, welcomed back the battalion from Winter Holiday. MIDN Noyes also inspired the battalion when talking about his three tenets - preparation, professionalism and initiative. MIDN Noyes then informed the Battalion on current issues surrounding the Navy and the Marine Corps.

One topic covered was the various benefits of military working dogs in the Marine Corps. These dogs are trained to save Marines by finding IEDs. However, this may not be the only way that these dogs protect their comrades, as there are times for Marines to play with the dogs, relieving stress. The second topic covered was the death of Abdishakur Tahliil, a Chief Intelligence Officer for the terrorist organization Al-Shabaab. Tahliil was killed by Hellfire Missiles used during the drone strike.

Shortly after MIDN Curtis’ brief, Lt. Colonel Shellabarger and Lt. Yaeger presented graphs that included last semesters PRT/PFT scores as well as the GPAs of the battalion. They urged the battalion to continue to improve and to not be satisfied with where we are. Following up on the points previously made, MIDN Cumbo presented the battalion with tools and tips to succeed in the spring semester. Afterwards, Major Merles, Lt. Yaeger and Staff Sergeant Browning described the various billets in a round robin style discussion. The battalion talked about duties of the billets, which were aided by anecdotes of previous and current billet holders. The discussion was very useful, as some MIDN may not have known what exactly the roles of the billet holders entail. This discussion will help MIDN who intend on holding billets in the future learn about what their job will be in that position. Lastly, MIDN Noyes wrapped up lab by reminding us to continue on the journey that we have embarked and of our goal to someday lead Sailors and Marines.

- MIDN 4/C Detrick
In this week’s lab, we began with the CO’s welcome aboard message. We were introduced to his three tenants of intent: Mission, excellence, and growth. From there, MIDN Mazaleski was officially sworn in as a Midshipmen. MIDN Mazaleski has been dedicated to the Battalion, and his hard work has been observed by all. We are proud to have him join the MIDN ranks. Next, awards were presented by the Battalion Commander. From there we had a motivating Navy/Marine Corps update lead by Midshipman 1/C Kloecker. MIDN Kloecker informed us of the increasing presence of US Marines on Naval vessels, provided an update on actions against ISIS in the Middle East, and introduced us to the new French nuclear powered aircraft carrier the Charles-de-Gaulle which will aid us in policing waters in the Middle East and Mediterranean.

Following these events, we had the privilege of hearing Major Merles and Lieutenant Yaeger speak on our warrior heritage and ethos. The focus of the brief was to increase awareness and pride in that we are all warfighters and are all warriors. The key points of the brief were to describe what our creed as warriors is, how we can upkeep the standards of are ethos, and what sets the warrior apart from the common fighter. From there, we broke out into platoons and were led through a discussion of our ethos by Platoon Commanders. It provided a rich environment to foster increased esprit de corps, as well as another opportunity for face to face feedback and discussion with battalion leadership. The closing discussion was on how we, as midshipmen, can better foster our warrior pride. After discussion, we broke out into midshipmen time, where the individual facets of leadership could interact with their peers they are leading for familiarization and feedback.

- MIDN 2/C Ayers
This previous week in lab we began with our weekly Navy/Marine Corps update. We discussed topics concerning the recent takeover of the Yemeni government and the new designator being applied to the LCS vessels.

The LCS vessels will be changing their designator to FF and will replace the Frigate class ships. This is to more appropriately designate the vessels with their mission.

We then transitioned into a Navy/Marine Corps check on color guard knowledge. SSgt Browning chose one MIDN from each class to properly designate the position of each flag represented in the color guard. After each MIDN took their guess, SSgt Browning opened it up to the rest of lab. After a brief discussion, the order was revealed to the battalion. The activity stressed the simple knowledge that we must retain as future naval officers. As Marine and Naval officers, knowledge that involves even the smallest of details can be extremely important to a situation.

From there we moved into break-outs: Alpha 1 in the Mariner Skills Simulator, Alpha 2 participating in a GMT, Bravo 1 conducting an Air brief and Bravo 2 conducting a submarine brief. The Marines broke out into their specific meeting as well. Alpha 2 met with LT Yaeger to discuss improvements and changes to the Navy’s stance on sexual harassment. Specifically, the new tactics we are utilizing to ensure we mitigate the chances of these events from continuing to occur. After our breakouts we formed up on the basketball courts and conducted drill until 1720. We practiced different drill commands, including interval spacing movements and salutes. Learning drill helps us develop military discipline, an important facet of military life. It allows us to display ourselves as a highly trained, disciplined fighting force, which instills public confidence in our abilities to keep our nation safe.
During the month of January, every platoon has been circulating through briefs on the different warfare communities that midshipmen can commission into upon graduation. Bravo 2 had the opportunity to receive a brief from our Surface Warfare Officer while sitting aboard the M.S.S. Hunt, which is actually a virtual simulation of a ship bridge. During the brief, midshipmen learned about the timeline for becoming a surface warfare officer, what duties a young officer can undertake during their first and second tours, and learned about a day in the life of officer while at port or during deployment.

When the brief had concluded, midshipmen ran through a few simulations in order to learn how to drive the “ship”. Everyone rotated watch positions while attempting to direct the ship through heavy trafficked waters; to include the navigator, JOOD, OOD, the conning officer, radar and the helm. The ship had to avoid collision with a carrier and destroyer and attempted to rescue a downed helicopter. Although not everyone is experienced in every watch position, our 1/C and experienced Officer Candidates were able to navigate our ship safely through some challenging circumstances!

- MIDN Spaeth
Battalion lab on February 4th consisted of submarine speakers and a Tactical Decision Game (TDG), with the brief weekly Navy and Marine Corps update in between. The sub speakers were CMDR Patrick Clark, ETCS Thomas McKinney, and LT Kyle Gayle.

These gentlemen were the commanding officer, EDMC, and one of the junior officers, respectively, on the USS Newport News, a fast attack submarine. During the brief, topics such as junior officer training and progression in the submarine pipeline, capabilities and schedules of the various submarine classes, and a few sea stories were discussed. Overall, the brief was fairly informative; it expounded on many of the aspects of the submarine community the midshipmen had already been exposed to.

The TDG background was control of two DDGs, four SH-60Rs, and a Carrier Strike Group. The situation involved an oil rig off the coast of Yemen which the aforementioned assets had lost contact with. In addition, there was talk of pirates in the area. The two DDGs were 30 nautical miles from oil rig and the Carrier Strike Group was 300 nautical miles. The task was to decide how to act on the situation. Later in the situation, one of the Romeos was shot down and a decision on how to rescue the crew had to be made. A lesson learned from the situation was always request more support from surrounding allies who could have better abilities in the situation than the current assets.

- By MIDN 1/C Curtis and MIDN 1/C Farris
Explosive Ordnance Disposal, better known as EOD, is one of the Unrestricted Line communities NROTC Midshipman can be service assigned to. We were honored to have LCDR Shultz come and speak to us about his experiences within the community and the Navy as a Junior Officer. LCDR Shultz mainly spoke about the training pipeline and what is expected of a JO in the EOD community.

The training pipeline is very extensive and takes a very long time to complete. On average, it takes approximately 2 years to complete and go on deployment. Throughout this training pipeline you are tested constantly and pushed to your limits to ensure that you are prepared for whatever you might face out in the field. Some of the types of training you go through are EOD school, Dive school, Jump School, and HALO, among many others.

As LCDR Shultz gave his brief, he could not stress enough that as a JO it is always important to learn whenever and wherever you can. On top of that, being humble is a key aspect, no matter where you are in your career. A major concept for an EOD JO is being prepared for anything. For example, a recently pinned JO (within 2 weeks) had to give a brief to higher ups with very short notice. Overall, LCDR Shultz was able to paint a picture for the battalion of what is required of an EOD Officer and how a JO, no matter the community, should act.

Before wrapping up his brief, LCDR Shultz left the battalion with a good piece of advice: trust has a big part in what we do in the Navy, and it is up to us as future Naval Officers to uphold and foster this trust.
18Feb LAB
Lab on 18 FEB began with a brief by Master Chief Underdown on the Special Warfare community. He began by speaking about his past and his journey to becoming a SEAL. He briefly spoke of the training training pipeline and what occurs during each component. We looked at the different types of Special Warfare in all branches of the military and included information about joint forces. He explained the different missions as much as he could and spoke about experiences he has had working within his own community and with other communities. He shared valuable stories and gave advice to us as future leaders on how to conduct ourselves and deal with subordinates. An important take away was advice on motivating others and pushing individuals to their full potential. He ended his brief with a question and answer portion.

Following Master Chief Underdown’s brief, as a battalion we reviewed the Command Climate Survey from last year for all three schools with the XO. He went over both positive and negative comments that stood out. We were instructed how to effectively do the upcoming Command Climate Survey in order to find and eliminate problems specific to our battalion, and whether it be an issue with the active duty staff or the student chain of command. LT Yaeger briefly spoke about the Consortium’s SARC and Equal Opportunity points of contact.

The last brief we received was given by MIDN 1/C Kloecker concerning the End-Of-The-Year exercise. He explained the scenario of the situation we would be handling and which platoons would be opponents. He explained the basics of how the exercise was to be conducted and how it differed from last year. He introduced the rules that have been established and the areas that still in progress. We were given the opportunity to ask questions and voice concerns.

- MIDN Atchison
During this week’s lab, Vietnam War guest speaker, Colonel Finlayson, USMC retired, visited and spoke about his personal experiences in Vietnam. He discussed effective communication and intelligence strategies used in Vietnam and gave the battalion insight into the CIA/military relationship during Vietnam. Colonel Finlayson spoke of the similarities between the Vietnam war and the Iraq/Afghanistan conflicts while also touching on the keys to winning against nonconventional forces. Overall, the battalion gained much understanding of the progression of the Vietnam war, and was able to relate the US’s strategy to modern day conflicts. COL Finlayson also briefed the Battalion on his role as a CIA Provincial Reconnaissance Unit Advisor to the Tay Ninh Province, where he played a role in the Phoenix Program.

Bravo 1 was not in attendance due to MSS training and a surface brief. Alpha 1, Alpha 2, and Bravo 2 then split into Air, Sub, USMC, and Equal Opportunity GMT briefs. The 1st class had a DAPA and single parenting brief.

Colonel Finlayson’s speech to us gave us a lot to think over about the state of our country and military. By showing us the similarities, we were engaged into considering political forces working in the world today, and how they can affect us. The speech about keys to winning against non-conventional forces gave us some insight into his experiences in the Vietnam War. We are lucky to have heard his personal experiences.
Lt Col Shellabarger gave a short brief on safety over spring break. The main concern of the brief was to not use mobile devices while traveling. He offered statistics showing that texting and driving has overtaken DUI in deaths of college students. In finishing, he made the battalion make a promise to put down all electronic devices and pull over to the side of the road and use them if necessary.

The rest of the lab period was designated for the end of the year exercise (EOYE). While the battalion was still gathered in the Navy classroom MIDN Coleman and MIDN Lynch went over the Google Doc that will serve as this year's game board. Many midshipmen had questions after their presentation about specifics on how the EOYE was going to work this semester. After answering all questions, it became apparent that this year's Google Doc game board will allow the EOYE to run very smoothly this semester.

After MIDN Coleman and MIDN Lynch’s brief the battalion broke off into platoons and went to their designated classroom areas to work on their strategies for the EOYE. Each platoon went over this year’s EOYE scenario and the platforms they had available to them. After each platoon evaluated their resources they filled out a planning document in which they prioritized tasks that needed to be done in order to successfully achieve the goals of the EOYE. After plans were finalized, the platoons were broken up into respective naval communities. These communities included surface, air, and submarines, and each of these smaller groups began developing their community’s specific strategies. The battalion was dismissed from their prospective platoons’ breakout classroom at 1745.
To start lab of this week, MIDN Via gave a very informative and enlightening Navy and Marine Corps update to get the battalion up to date. One of the things emphasized was the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services) 20 year long project that the Navy has been working on. For the past 20 years, the Naval Historical Collection has been preserving firsthand accounts of female Sailors and Marines in the WAVES group. These accounts, all the way from 1995, are now available online for people to read and to learn from personal accounts about what the armed services were like for women in the past.

After the Navy and USMC update, the battalion broke out into separate GMTs including air, sub, USMC, and surface. Once finished with their respective GMTs, the 4/C-2/C broke off into drill practice while the 1/C broke out for the SAPR pre-commissioning video. The MIDN doing drill went out into the Brickyard in front of DH Hill library in order to practice their marching drill movements. They are preparing and practicing for the 25 MAR platoon drill competition that will take place next week during lab.

The MIDN practiced both standing and moving drill based on the drill cards they were given for the competition. The movements included facing movements, parade rest, hand salute, column and oblique movements, and to the rears and flanks. Each platoon worked on sharpening movements, going through with intensity, and obeying commands. This drill practice has not only prepared the MIDN for the competition; it has improved their drill skills which in turn helps them grow as future officers of the Navy and Marine Corps.

- MIDN 3/C Rodriguez
The End of the Year Exercise is a chance for the Battalion to participate in an activity which integrates the knowledge we have all learned throughout the semester. This year’s EOYE scenario involved two fake countries, at odds due to religious differences, a hostile takeover of territory, and anger due to developing nuclear and weapons programs in both countries.

This exercise tested everything we learned this semester and in those prior. We were required to evaluate motives, strengths, weaknesses, and other factors which could cause either country to act a certain way. The Battalion was broken up into two groups, one for each country. Each group had specific assets to control, including different ship platforms and weapons systems. The Battalion was also required to develop specific strategies for the conflict, including ship formations, movement patterns, and tactical strikes. During this exercise, each group made movements to further each of their objectives. They had to consider each move they were making, along with the moves of the other country. Each movement was tracked on a map.

A common theme that emerged amongst both groups was the importance of communication. Many members of the Battalion agreed that it was the most important aspect of the exercise. Without efficient and effective communication between each part of the group, the other parts wouldn’t have been able to be successful. This information is extremely important for each member of the Battalion to understand, as it will help each of us to become a better Naval or Marine Officer.

- OC Bradford
During this year’s Change of Command, we were honored with seeing the turnover of our Battalion Commanding officer and their staff.

At the end of every semester at NC State, the incumbent Midshipman Battalion Commander is relieved along with his/her staff. This exchange of command is instantaneous, which is unique to the Naval Service.

This last speech from the outgoing Battalion Commander is normally done to reflect upon the successes and faults made, and a final chance to speak to your people while still in command. The new CO usually keeps his/her remarks short and lets their actions in the coming semester speak for themselves.

During this turnover, we got a chance to preview MIDN Mazaleski’s goals for the new semester. Further goals will be put out at the start of the new semester.

We are excited to see what MIDN Mazaleski brings to the battalion, and wish him luck in the new semester.
On 11 April, the Piedmont Consortium got together at UNC’s Field House in order to participate in the Annual Field Meet. During this meet, each Battalion competes in various events. This event is designed to encourage members from all three universities to develop competitiveness, team spirit, cohesion, and work as a team through a series of different events. This event is also a great opportunity to establish a relationship between the members and their families in attendance. Each year, we work to build the mutual relationships between the different schools in the Piedmont Consortium, and we look forward to these get-togethers each semester.

There were multiple events, including pushups, sit-ups, pull-ups, and sports events like ultimate Frisbee and volleyball. Though the victory margin was extremely small in most events, proving that the Consortium has placed an emphasis on a culture of fitness, NC State pulled ahead in multiple events, and came out on top in both the Field Meet and the following Drill Meet.

As a whole, the Consortium put its best efforts in, and each school did a great job. We at NC State are incredibly happy to have shown our best efforts as well.
MWR Events

During the semester, both Alpha company and Bravo company had Morale, Welfare, and Recreation events. These events are used to raise morale in the companies and help the members connect together. MWR is an extremely important way for the members of the group to keep their dedication and motivated.

On April 20, Bravo Company went to a Durham Bulls game. Even though the day had been stormy, and the game was delayed, Bravo Company had time to spend together, and enjoyed the game.

On April 25, Alpha Company enjoyed a day at Hard Knocks Laser Tag. Alpha company got to use tactical training in the battalion in order to beat other participants all day long.

Each company had a great time at their respective MWR events, and we’re happy to have this chance to get together in a different setting than normal.
On 8 May, our battalion held its annual spring commissioning ceremony. During this ceremony, we were honored with watching the senior Officer Candidates and Midshipmen become Ensigns and Second Lieutenants in the United States Marines and Navy. This ceremony includes each senior taking the Oath of Office for officers in the US Military. After the oath of office, the new Ensigns and Lieutenants have family and friends come up to change their insignia to the new Officer insignia. This includes changing shoulder boards and putting on a new cover with the Officer Crest on it. After the changing of insignia, the Officer is honored by a current or prior enlisted member giving them the first salute. This is usually an enlisted member of the military who is close to the new Officer.

During the years here at NC State, these seniors have worked extremely hard and have proven themselves as Midshipmen and Officer Candidates. We hope that their hard work will continue through their career as United States military officers. We are honored to participate in this milestone in their career.
Spring Semester’s graduating seniors, and their service selection are:

MIDN 1/C Butler, USNR — Naval Aviator
MIDN 1/C Coleman, USNR — Submarine Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Cook, USNR — Civil Engineering Corps
MIDN 1/C Crump, USNR — Submarine Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Cumbo, USNR — Surface Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Curtis, USNR — Nuclear Reactors
MIDN 1/C Fouratt, USNR — Submarine Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Howard, USNR — Submarine Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Klecker, USNR — Surface Warfare Officer (Nuclear)
MIDN 1/C Kloecker, USNR — Submarine Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Lynch, USNR — Surface Warfare Officer
MIDN 1/C Morrison, USNR — Engineering Duty Officer
MIDN 1/C Noyes, USNR — The Basic School
MIDN 1/C Pennington, USNR — Naval Aviator
MIDN 1/C Renaud, USNR — Naval Aviator
MIDN 1/C Wallace, USNR — Naval Aviator
OC Berlin, USN — Submarine Warfare Officer
OC Kauffold, USN — Submarine Warfare Officer
OC McCarren, USN — Submarine Warfare Officer
OC Trippe, USN — Surface Warfare Officer (Nuclear)