



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN
U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY
101 BUCHANAN ROAD
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21402-5100

July 21, 2008

Dear Parents, Relatives, and Friends,

Greetings from the United States Naval Academy and historic Annapolis! I hope your summer has been enjoyable and that everyone is healthy back on the Home Front. For those of you I have not had the pleasure of meeting recently, I want to let you know that our USNA Summer Training Program is running smoothly and is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ complete and the new Class of 2012 is on the Yard looking sharp with about three weeks until their Plebe Parent's Weekend. Before I go into further detail about this summer's numerous successes, I also want to take a few quick seconds to introduce myself to the Naval Academy Family. It has been a little over a month since I officially assumed the duties on 6 June 2008 as the 83rd Commandant of Midshipmen. In taking over the responsibility of this very important position, I would like to express my honor and gratitude at being added to the Naval Academy leadership team. I come to you most recently from the Pentagon where I served on the CNO's OPNAV Staff working operations and policy in N3/N5. Prior to that, my operational command was as Commander of Carrier Air Wing TWO based in Lemoore, California. During the period from October 04 – August 06, we completed two western Pacific/Indian Ocean deployments with highlights including Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina relief and several other major operations and exercises. I have been blessed with a tremendously exciting and rewarding Navy operational career and I hopefully bring many of those Fleet attributes with me as I settle on the shores of the Severn River. A family man at heart, I also want to highlight how fortunate and lucky I am to have such a wonderful spouse and family that fully supports the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps missions. I am the proud father of three sons and a daughter with ages ranging from 5-15. Our little angel was the last to arrive and yes she has daddy wrapped around her little finger. The family has not yet arrived in Annapolis, but I expect them to join me soon and be settled into our new home here at USNA around the beginning of August.

Before I shift my focus to the newest members of our USNA family, I would like to first highlight some of the summer activities of which the rest of our Brigade have completed. Our Midshipmen have done a tremendous job so far this summer; participating in a variety of professional "Fleet" training events both locally and abroad. Here are just a few examples:

- Shortly after Commissioning Day 2008, 40 1/C MIDN and 147 3/C MIDN led 2,250 rising high school seniors from around the nation through our USNA Summer Seminar. For three 6-day sessions, the Midshipmen exposed these young men and women to life at the Naval Academy with the hope that they will eventually join us as future members of the Brigade.
- As part of our efforts to maximize fleet exposure this summer, Midshipmen in Blocks 0, 1 and 2 have thus far completed training with over 80 different Navy and Marine Corps commands in 37 cities in the U.S. and overseas. This does not include the training still to be completed in Block 3 from 19 July – 15 August.

- On I-Day, 250 1/C MIDN detailers accepted the challenge of leading and indoctrinating the Plebes for 1st set. Their leadership and dedication has been both impressive and exemplary, and they are now preparing to pass on the challenge to 248 2nd set detailers. This turnover will occur during the formal parade and Tecumseh Court ceremony on 23 July.

Now, I would like to take a moment to welcome the newest members of our Naval Academy Family – the members and families of the Class of 2012. A total of 1,261 Plebes participated in the Oath of Office Ceremony on 02 July. Although they are only on training day 20, the Class of 2012 has already demonstrated significant team spirit and unity as they tackle the daily challenges of Plebe Summer. They begin each day (except Wednesday and Sunday) with physical development and then continue with a full day of activities and training geared toward professional and mental development. Some highlights of their training thus far include:

- Academic placement exams
- Close-order drill
- Weapons qualifications
- Basic damage control training
- Basic sailing training
- Endurance (obstacle) courses
- Guest lecture by ADM Charles Larson on Navy core values

Another important milestone was the Plebes first phone calls home on 13 July and as I write this letter they are very close to their next opportunity. From what I understand, these were exciting discussions and filled with a variety of stories and emotions. Plebe Summer does present a new and challenging environment that can be stressful and difficult for some, but we are pleased to see that all of our young men and women are staying focused and taking the challenges head-on, one day at a time. I can assure you that your Naval Academy Family is dedicated to ensuring your Plebes stay healthy and safe, and most of all we strive to set them up for success. We want to see each and every Plebe succeed here this summer and go on to become official members of the Brigade of Midshipmen this fall.

As we look out to the future and upcoming important events, I thought you might be interested in the following dates for planning and scheduling purposes:

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| • Plebe Parents Weekend | 8-10 August | Parents Forum (1000 on 8 August) |
| • Reform of the Brigade | 16 August | 1/C leave expires at 1800 |
| | 17 August | 2/C and 3/C leave expires at 1800 |
| • Fall classes begin | 20 August | |
| • Thanksgiving Break | 26 November | Early academic schedule (MIDN can depart on leave following their last academic obligation) |
| | 30 November | Leave expires (all classes) at 1800 |

I know this letter was somewhat long, but I do hope that after reading it you appreciate the truly impressive accomplishments your Midshipmen are achieving. I also know that this correspondence just couldn't possibly address every aspect of this summer's events so I plan on

talking to you again before the Brigade starts its reform on 16 August. As I close, I do hope to see many of you around the Yard in the near future. Please stay healthy and always keep our young men and women in your thoughts and prayers.

NAVY BLUE & GOLD FOREVER!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Klunder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Klunder
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commandant of Midshipmen