

The University Of
Memphis



Naval Reserve
Officer Training
Corps
Spring 2026
Commissioning
Ceremony

Sequence of Events

0900

Ceremony Begins

Arrival of the Official Party

National Anthem

Invocation

Commanding Officer Remarks

Guest of Honor Remarks

Commissioning

Silver Dollar Salute

Benediction

Anchors Aweigh

Marine Corps Hymn

End of Ceremony

Reception and Cake Cutting

1130

Commanding Officer / Professor of Naval Science
CAPT C. Brusca, USN

Executive Officer
CDR X. Sun, USN

1/C & 2/C Advisor
LT C. Daymude, USN

3/C & 4/C Advisor
LT A. Keefer, USN

Marine Officer Instructor (MOI)
Capt. J. Sutton, USMC

Assistant MOI
GySgt T. Broadrick, USMC

Human Resources
Mr. C. Crawford, USN (Ret.)

University Secretary
Ms. A. Wright

The University of Memphis History



The University of Memphis was founded under the auspices of the General Education Bill, enacted by the Tennessee Legislature in 1909. Known originally as West Tennessee State Normal School, the institution opened its doors on Sept. 10, 1912, with Dr. Seymour A. Mynders as President.

Students in the first classes selected blue and gray as the school colors and the tiger as the mascot. Tradition holds that the colors, those of the opposing armies during the Civil War, were chosen in commemoration of the reuniting of the country after that divisive conflict.

Over the next decade, The Desoto yearbook was created, the first library was opened in the Administration Building, the first dining hall was built and the first men's dorm was built; today that dorm, Scates Hall, houses the College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's offices. In 1925, the name of the College changed to West Tennessee State Teachers College. Three years later, the Brister Library was built, named after two-term president John W. Brister. In 1931 the students created a campus newspaper, The Tiger Rag; and in 1935 the school's agriculture department was discontinued. The College changed names again in 1941, becoming Memphis State College, and in 1946, J. Millard Jack Smith became President, the first alumnus to hold the position.

In 1950, graduate studies were initiated, and in 1954 the school switched from a quarter to a semester system. In 1957, the state legislature designated Memphis State full university status. In 1959, the University admitted its first black students, and the first doctoral programs began in 1966. The 1970s, under President Cecil C. Humphreys, saw new buildings constructed across the campus, including a University Center and a 12-story library. In 1983, MSU became the first public university in Tennessee to gain accreditation of its entire curriculum. The 1990s were characterized by another name change and another building boom. In 1994, MSU became The University of Memphis, and the Ned R. McWherter Library was completed.

Moving into the 21st century, the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality and Resort Management and the FedEx Institute of Technology have made their mark on the University landscape. Today, The University of Memphis is one of Tennessee's three comprehensive doctoral- extensive institutions of higher learning. Situated in a beautiful park-like setting in the state's largest city, it was the flagship of the Tennessee Board of Regents system until 2017 when its governance changed to the University of Memphis Board of Trustees. It awards more than 3,000 degrees annually. With an enrollment of approximately 20,000 students, The University of Memphis has 25 Chairs of Excellence, more than any other Tennessee university, and five state-approved Centers of Excellence.

Commanding Officer Captain Christopher Brusca, USN



A Pico Rivera, CA native, CAPT Chris Brusca enlisted in the Navy after high school in 1993 as an Operations Specialist. While serving aboard USS Vandergrift (FFG 48), he was accepted into the Broadened Opportunity for Officer Selection and Training (BOOST) Program.

He graduated from the University of San Diego in 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. In 2006, he earned a Master of Science in Global Leadership from the University of San Diego School of Business.

He has participated in deployed operations in the Western Pacific, Arabian Gulf, Horn of Africa and the Baltics, while participating in operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

At sea, he was the commissioning commanding officer for USS Charleston (LSC 18) and followed with a second command tour of the LCS training ship, USS Kansas City (LCS 22). For Major Command, he was dual hatted as Commander, Logistics Forces U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and Military Sealift Command, Central.

Ashore, he served as Assistant Professor of Naval Science at NROTC San Diego; at Engineering Assessments Pacific; as the maritime liaison officer for Commander, Joint Special Operations Command; maintenance and material readiness officer for Commander, US Third Fleet; and the Director of Warfighter Integration at The Missile Defense Agency. His awards and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (2 awards), and various other personal, unit and campaign awards.

Guest of Honor

Rear Admiral Kevin Kennedy, USN



Rear Adm. Kennedy is a native of Gloucester, NJ, and graduated from Villanova University in 1996 with Bachelors/ Masters Degrees in English Education. He received his commission via the Naval ROTC program.

Rear Adm. Kennedy's sea duty assignments include, Electrical Officer on USS Normandy (CG-60), Navigator on USS Tortuga (LSD 46), Operations Officer on USS Stout (DDG 55) and USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55), Executive Officer on USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79), Commanding Officer on USS Gravelly (DDG 107), N5 on the staff of Commander, Carrier Strike Group EIGHT, Deputy Commander/Commander, Destroyer Squadron TWO-EIGHT, and Commander, Carrier Strike Group FIFTEEN.

Ashore, Rear Adm. Kennedy has served as: Flag Aide to Deputy Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Assistant Surface Warfare Officer Community Manager, Navy Personnel Command; Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff, U.S. Joint Forces Command; Joint OPT Lead on the Joint Staff J3, Naval Surface Force Requirements Officer, Strategic Director in the Strategic Warfighting Innovation Cell (SWIC); OPNAV DCNO N7; Director, Surface Warfare Officer Distribution (PERS-41); and Director, Distribution and Career Management (PERS-4). Rear Adm. Kennedy assumed duties as Commander, Navy Personnel Command/Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel September 2025.

He is authorized to wear the Legion of Merit (Gold Star in lieu of Fourth Award), Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (Gold Star in lieu of Third Award), Navy Commendation Medal (Silver Star in lieu of Sixth Award), Navy Achievement Medal (Gold Star in lieu of Second Award), and various unit, campaign, and service medals.

Ensign Carson Brimhall



Ensign Carson Brimhall was born and raised in Memphis, Tennessee. Motivated by a desire to lead and serve, he pursued a commission in the United States Navy through the NROTC program while studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Memphis. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering, developing a strong technical foundation in thermodynamics, fluid mechanics, and systems design. Throughout his academic career, he earned recognition on the Dean's List for multiple semesters, reflecting his commitment to academic excellence and disciplined work ethic.

During his time in NROTC, Ensign Brimhall held several key leadership billets, including Company Executive Officer, Platoon Commander, Squad Leader, Accountant Officer in Charge, and Wardroom Officer in Charge. In these roles, he was responsible for planning operations, managing personnel accountability and finances, mentoring junior midshipmen, and supporting the professional development of his peers. These experiences strengthened his ability to manage teams, execute under pressure, and uphold the standards of naval service. His summer training included aviation exposure with Strike Fighter Squadron 106 (VFA-106) in Oceana, Virginia, where he gained firsthand insight into fleet aviation operations, squadron organization, and the demands of tactical airpower.

Ensign Brimhall has been selected to serve as a Naval Aviator and looks forward to continuing his professional development while upholding the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment.

Ensign Owen Cook



Ensign Owen Cook hails from Marion, North Carolina. He attended the University of Memphis, where he majored in Engineering Technology. During his time in the unit, he held several collateral billets, including Commissioning Officer in Charge and Awards Officer in Charge. Since the age of 11, Owen has aspired to be a fighter pilot; watching his uncle fly F/A-18s inspired a will that, after several years of hard work, has now found a way.

Ensign Cook remains steadfast in his goal to become a naval aviator and will carry the lessons learned from the unit throughout the rest of his career. He has been service selected as a Student Naval Aviator and will report to Naval Flight School following his commissioning. He aspires to fly the F/A-18 Super Hornet.

Second Lieutenant Matthew Feis



Second Lieutenant Matthew Feis was born and raised in Marietta, Georgia. He attended Rhodes College to study Political Science for his undergraduate degree. A dedicated athlete, he played varsity football and lacrosse in high school and went on to play Division III lacrosse for the Rhodes team for two years. Alongside the military and athletics, he is passionate about his hobbies, including hiking, reading, writing, and keeping up to date on films.

Second Lieutenant Feis has been heavily involved in the NROTC unit since his freshman year. He served as the Public Affairs Officer, managing external communications and representing the unit to the university and community. He also served as Company Gunnery Sergeant, responsible for discipline, training standards, and operational readiness. Additionally, he was the Officer in Charge of Mess Night and the Assistant Officer in Charge of the annual Freedom 5K, where he helped raise \$3,626 for the Company. In the spring of his senior year, he served as the Company Commanding Officer, entrusted with overall leadership and performance oversight. Beyond NROTC, he is a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity and served two terms on the Rhodes College Interfraternity Council (IFC) managing Public Relations and drafting revisions to the IFC Constitution and Bylaws.

Second Lieutenant Feis will now attend Law School prior to attending The Basic School in order to become a Judge Advocate for the Marine Corps, where he will then provide legal advice to commanders and assist Marines and Sailors with legal matters.

Ensign Dylan Haas



Ensign Dylan Haas, a native of Dayton, Ohio, was driven from a young age to continue a profound family legacy of service. This heritage includes his grandfather (Army), great-grandfather (Navy), father (Air Force), and multiple generations of his family in law enforcement. Following four years of high school NJROTC, he attended the University of Memphis to pursue a naval commission and a technical education.

Ensign Haas graduates *magna cum laude* with a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology, concentrating in Mechanical Systems and Automation and Control, with a minor in Naval Science. A consistent Dean's List student, he was inducted into the Tau Alpha Pi Honor Society and founded the University of Memphis Ducks Unlimited Collegiate Chapter. In recognition of his superior academic achievement, military bearing, and leadership excellence, he was selected as the unit's Distinguished Honor Graduate.

Within the NROTC unit, Ensign Haas held numerous key billets, most notably Company Commander, Company Operations Officer, Platoon Commander, Drill and Color Guard Officer in Charge, and Officer in Charge for this Commissioning Ceremony. Through these roles, he honed his skills in organized planning and initiative while internalizing the leadership principle of "taking care of your own." His summer training included a 2/C Surface Cruise aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) and a 1/C Aviation Cruise with VFA-106.

Having received his top assignment choice as a Student Naval Aviator, Ensign Haas will report to Pensacola, Florida, for flight school upon Commissioning.

Ensign Evan Klement



Ensign Evan Klement, a South Carolina native, was inspired by his father, Jonathan Klement (U.S. Navy, Electrician's Mate 1st Class), to serve in the U.S. Navy as an officer. He pursued his commission through the NROTC program at the University of Memphis, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. For his capstone project, he designed and prototyped a pipe identification and spraying system, and he also completed a minor in Naval Science.

During his time in NROTC, Ensign Klement served in numerous billets, most notably as the Fall 2024 Company Logistics Officer and Spring 2026 Company Operations Officer. Through these positions, he learned how to mentor, manage, and support his fellow midshipmen while gaining critical leadership experience. His summer training included a 1/C Aviation Cruise with Fleet Logistics Multi-Mission Squadron (VRM) 40 and a 2/C Surface Cruise underway on the USS Tripoli (LHA-7).

Ensign Klement has been selected for Naval Flight School as a Student Naval Flight Officer in Pensacola, Florida.

Ensign Kyle Magtira



Ensign Kyle Magtira was born in Los Angeles, California, and raised in San Diego and Yokosuka, Japan. Growing up in a Navy family overseas and inspired by his father's service, he developed a deep appreciation for maritime service and the global mission of the Navy. At the University of Memphis, Kyle earned a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, with academic interests in environmental engineering, renewable resources, and sustainable infrastructure.

During NROTC, Ensign Magtira served in several leadership billets within Gold Company, including Fundraising Officer in Charge, Recruiting Officer in Charge, Sea Cadets Officer in Charge, and Platoon Commander. These roles reinforced the importance of accountability, adaptability, and servant leadership. His summer training included a 1/C Surface Cruise aboard the USS Blue Ridge (LCC-19) and a 2/C Surface Cruise aboard the USS Tripoli (LHA-7). He also completed a Defense Threat Reduction Agency internship supporting counter-Weapons of Mass Destruction research at the FBI Laboratory in Quantico, Virginia.

Upon commissioning, Ensign Magtira will report to the USS Harrisburg (LPD-30) in San Diego as a Surface Warfare Officer. Selected for the Engineering Duty Officer (EDO) Option, he aspires to later contribute to the development and sustainment of advanced naval space systems.

Ensign Rhyannon Schmidt



Ensign Rhyannon Schmidt was born and raised in Calvert County, Maryland. Seeking new opportunities and an environment to grow as a leader, she chose to pursue a commission through NROTC at the University of Memphis, where she majored in Criminal Justice. During her time in the unit, she held several major billets, including Company Chief, Officer in Charge of the Color Guard, Officer in Charge of the 5K, and Officer in Charge of Volunteering.

As Company Chief, she oversaw physical training and upheld discipline, learning that leadership is earned daily through consistency and leading from the front. She focused on building a cohesive team culture rooted in mutual respect. Her training includes a 1/C Surface Cruise aboard USS Gonzalez (DDG 66), where she gained firsthand experience in shipboard operations. Inspired by her father's footsteps and a desire to be part of something greater than herself,

Ensign Schmidt selected the USS Essex (LHD-2) and enters the Surface Warfare Officer community committed to being an officer her Sailors can trust and confidently follow.

Anchors Aweigh

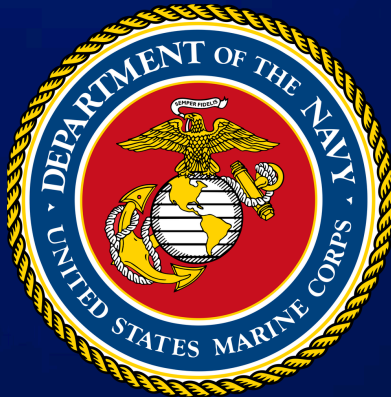
Anchors Aweigh, my boys,
Anchors Aweigh.
Farewell to foreign shores,
We sail at break of day-ay-ay-ay.
Through our last night ashore,
Drink to the foam,
Until we meet once more.

Here's wishing you a happy voyage home!



Marine Corps Hymn

From the Halls of Montezuma
To the Shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
of United States Marine.



**The University of Memphis
NROTC would like to give a
special thanks to all of those in
attendance for today's
ceremony!**

