

# the yale Sea dog



Vol. XII

THE YALE SEADOG, August 2025

Issue No. I



## Dear Family and Friends of the Yale NROTC Bulldog Battalion,

As Spring 2025 comes to a close, we reflect on a semester marked by growth, challenge, and achievement. From early morning drills and rigorous academics to leadership milestones and memorable unit events, Yale NROTC midshipmen upheld the highest standards of excellence and camaraderie.

Now, with over 50 Midshipmen joining us this fall—our largest Battalion in recent memory—we're ready to take on the year ahead with renewed energy and purpose.

We're proud to present the 12th volume of The SeaDog and look back on an exciting spring semester.

Go Bulldogs!

Very Respectfully,  
MIDN 2/C Benjamin Sibold

# BULLDOG BATTALION: SPRING 2025 REVIEW



## **SeaDogs Undergraduate Association Leadership**

President: MIDN Aliza Allison  
Vice President: MIDN Cleber Redondo Jr.  
Treasurer: MIDN Gavin Copper  
Secretary: MIDN Elisa Kim

## **The SeaDog Newsletter Staff**

### **Editor**

MIDN Benjamin Sibold

### **Writers**

MIDN Carter Hamilton  
MIDN Regina Obnial  
MIDN Ava Gordan  
MIDN Diya Jha  
MIDN Aidan Flynn

## **Midshipman Chain of Command Spring 2025**

Commanding Officer: MIDN Victoria Smithson  
Executive Officer: MIDN Evan Kwong  
Sergeant Major: MIDN Regina Obnial  
Operations Officer: MIDN Ashley Tanaka  
Company Commander: MIDN Alex Monteagudo  
Squad Leaders: MIDN Jack Kim  
MIDN Liam Sullivan  
MIDN Esha Bolar  
Training Officer: MIDN Grant Tucker  
Supply Officer: MIDN Amiah Hanson  
Public Affairs Officer: MIDN Benjamin Sibold

# Yale NROTC Staff



**CAPT William E. Johnson, USN**  
Commanding Officer

**CDR Sean Cooper, USN**  
Executive Officer

**Capt Sumer Johnson, USMC**  
Marine Officer Instructor

**LT Nicholas Gioia, USN**  
Surface Officer Instructor

**LT Ryan Buck, USN**  
Submarine Warfare & Nuclear Power Officer

**LT Paige Miles, USN**  
Submarine Warfare & Nuclear Power Officer

**1st Sgt. Chaz King, USMC**  
Assistant Marine Officer Instructor

**Edward Walters**  
Supply Technician

**Doris Maldonado**  
Human Resource Assistant

**Elizabeth Viloudaki**  
Yale Administrative Coordinator

## **Captain's Corner: A letter from the Commanding Officer of Yale NROTC**

*CAPT William (Bill) Johnson*

The summer of 2025 marks the halfway point of my time here at Yale NROTC and a great opportunity to reflect on my experience so far and what lies ahead. As you can imagine, my current job is not as arduous as commanding a sea-going submarine, but I did feel like I was treading water at times during my first year at Yale. I was definitely challenged trying to provide a Yale-caliber education in teaching Naval History and Leadership & Ethics while attempting to stay a step or two ahead of some incredibly bright Midshipmen. My second year gave me an opportunity to build off and refine what I taught the previous year, and I look forward to continuing that growth of the curriculum going forward. I absolutely love being in the classroom, and I continue to learn from the class as I facilitate great discussions among the students. Honestly, I could not ask for a better place to be as my 30+ year career draws to a close.

With fantastic support from Yale admissions and a Battalion of Midshipmen that are phenomenal advocates for our program, it has been great to see NROTC Yale grow from 35 students my first year to 43 students last year to 50 Midshipmen this coming year, by far the largest in the Ivy League. The quality of the program remains strong as well with great Midshipmen leaders putting together fantastic training events. As I reflect back on this past year, I have fond memories of a fun PT event running up East Rock, NROTC continuing its undefeated streak against our sister ROTC units in the Commander's Cup, doing pushups with the Midshipmen as that Yale Football team racked up the points at the Heroes Game, hearing the stories of our Color Guard competing (and having some fun) in New Orleans at the Tulane Drill Meet, an absolutely phenomenal Leadership Conference including shipmates from our NATO allies, and a very fun and entertaining Dining In. My wife and I also so enjoyed hosting each Midshipmen class at our house for a home cooked meal, a bit of Navy trivia, and some quality camaraderie. Another great year!

As I prepare to teach Naval History in a couple weeks and we approach the Navy and Marine Corps' semiquincentennial birthday, I reflect on the incredible role our sea services have played in our Nation's history, and how our Midshipmen will play their own part in that history as they get ready to put on Ensign or Second Lieutenant bars in the near future. Our services have had their challenges over the past 250 years, both in peacetime and in times of war, and today's Navy and Marine Corps are no different. Although our undeclared war in the Middle East has come to a close, we still have our servicemen and women operating in that region with state and non-state actors working to destabilize it. We continue to face a rising threat from China, and Russia's actions in Ukraine are a threat to NATO. Weapons technology is evolving rapidly, and we need to keep up and be able to respond. On top of that, our military is arguable being pushed to be more politicized which can have damaging effects up and down the chain of command.

What gives me confidence in the face of these challenges are the people I have served with and the Midshipmen on the verge of starting their service. We truly have the most capable and talented men and women trained to the highest levels ready to respond to the trials of our nation. Know that what lies ahead of you as you prepare for your commission will not be easy, but it is tremendously important and rewarding; it is you and your shipmates and fellow marines that make the difference. I am excited about what lies ahead of you, and I am proud to play a small part in preparing you for service.

All the best as you get ready to start another school year,

Captain Bill Johnson

## **A Year in the Seat**

*Commander Sean "Torch" Cooper*

Shipmates,

As we throttle up for the new academic year, I wanted to take this opportunity to reflect on my first year serving as your XO. I came to Yale directly from an operational tour on a Strike Group staff, deployed to the western Pacific, planning and executing complex joint and multinational operations, and eager to bring that experience back to the academic environment which had nurtured a young Midshipman Cooper more years ago than I would like to admit. The team here at Yale has exceeded my expectations.

The greatest enjoyment has been getting to know the fine young men and women of the Bulldog Battalion and personally experiencing their strength, commitment, and ingenuity. From early morning PT sessions to passionate discussions of leadership in classes to huge undertakings like the Yale Leadership and Strategy Conference, our future officers have continued to meet and exceed the high standards expected of them. Their resilience and enthusiasm are particularly notable, especially as they balance rigorous academic loads, their ROTC responsibilities, and wildly varied extracurricular activities from varsity athletics to fraternity life to musical performances.

The Battalion planned and executed complex and rewarding evolutions, from our annual Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball and our annual Field Exercise at Stone's Ranch in the fall semester to competing at the Tulane Drill Meet and of course the Yale Leadership and Strategy Conference in the spring semester, along with too many other events to list. Certainly, hearing from distinguished leaders such as Captain Michael O'Hara of the Naval War College and retired General David Berger, 38 th Commandant of the Marine Corps, were great experiences, but the most impressive part of these events was the initiative, professionalism, and ownership shown by the midshipmen leaders of these events.

As we look ahead to the next semester, I challenge each of us to remain focused on growth, both personal and professional. The path to earning a commission as a Naval or Marine Corps officer is not always easy, but it is always rewarding. Take ownership of your development, hold yourselves and each other accountable, and strive each day to serve your shipmates, your unit, and your country with honor.

To the families, alumni, and supporters of our unit: thank you for your continued encouragement and involvement. Your support is integral to our mission, and we are grateful for your partnership in shaping the next generation of leaders. Having had the privilege of serving alongside these midshipmen and the honor of watching eight of them commission into the Navy and Marine Corps this summer, I know our sailors and Marines are in good hands.

Keep your airspeed up and your ball centered,

Very respectfully,

Torch

# **From the Fleet to the Classroom: LT Miles' First Semester at Yale NROTC**

*Lieutenant Paige Miles*

I chose to attend the Naval Academy and select submarines for the same primary reason: to be part of a tight-knit community committed to growth, excellence, and service. That same reason made Yale NROTC my top choice when it became an option for my shore tour. Reflecting on the mentorship and opportunities provided by the officers at USNA, I aspire to offer even a fraction of that support to the midshipmen here.

When I first arrived at Yale, I assumed NROTC would be essentially the same as USNA; instead, I found that they are dramatically different. Rather than dwelling on those differences, there is a key similarity in that the real impact of a commissioning path depends far more on what you put into it than on what it gives you. As the mission statements proclaim, both offer incredible opportunities for moral, mental, and physical development, but the magnitude of that growth is highly dependent on the individual and community's efforts. A question I often asked myself in college was if I would look back in a few years and know I had made the most of my time. Though challenges are guaranteed in the fleet, you can prepare yourself for many of them now. Develop skills in time management, communication, follow-through, organization, and discipline now, and your future self and sailors will thank you. You will be busy, and things will be hard, but you didn't choose NROTC because it was the easiest path. When you don't know how you can do it all, remember that you were chosen because you are capable, and when you fall short, you can get up with the help of your friends and keep going.

The best advice I received on the boat was that no matter how busy you are, you are never too busy for a sailor asking you for something. That mindset allowed me to build trust and relationships with sailors that otherwise wouldn't have been possible. All of my proudest moments from my JO tour are times when I could be there for a sailor. The saying is "ship, shipmate, self," but ships don't go on missions without sailors.

We all have fallen into thoughts about the grass being greener elsewhere. During my JO tour, which consisted of time on an operational SSN, an operational SSBN, and a shipyard SSGN, I saw one constant: every crew thought their situation was the hardest. In reality, each had its advantages and disadvantages. Focusing on the negatives or idealizing the "other side" only leads to disappointment. Instead, focus on finding the good, learning the "why" behind things, and solving the problems that can be fixed. A positive mindset that seeks solutions and amplifies the good can make all the difference, whether on a ship or on campus.

Unique to Yale NROTC compared to other ROTC programs is the culture that empowers the Midshipmen to be largely autonomous and lead their own training. This invaluable experience reflects the leadership of CAPT Johnson and the high caliber of midshipmen at Yale, whose commitment to the program ensures this autonomy is not wasted. The efforts put into the Leadership Conference, PT plans, and labs demonstrate that Yale Midshipmen take ownership of their development, making the most of their time here. As the unit continues to grow, I am excited to see the innovative ways the Midshipmen will shape the Battalion. I am incredibly grateful to be part of Yale NROTC and look forward to seeing the amazing ways our Midshipmen lead and serve in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Lieutenant Paige Miles

## **From the Field to the Classroom: Capt. Johnson's First Semester at Yale NROTC**

*Capt. Sumer Johnson*

My experience thus far as the Marine Officer Instructor (MOI) at Yale NROTC has been absolutely phenomenal! I will admit when I received news I was being assigned to Yale, I had a not so flattering idea of what it might be like to be a part of a military organization on an Ivy League campus. But my expectations have been positively exceeded. It's hard to pick a favorite memory from last academic year, but the Tulane Drill Meet is definitely a standout. To see the color guard's skill progress from...not so great...to placing top seven in the largest ROTC drill meet in the country made me very proud. Which brings me to maybe the most important point on my reflection over the past year. The quality of our Midshipmen. I feel very confident in the future of our Navy and Marine Corps seeing the bright, intelligent, driven, and charismatic leaders in the making here at Yale. It's been a true privilege to be a small part of that, and I look forward to another great year at Yale.

Captain Sumer Johnson

## **Class of 2025 Service Selection**

*Jordan Romano: Submarine Warfare Officer*

*Ashley Tanaka: Submarine Warfare Officer*

*Sofia Verich: Student Naval Aviator*

*Victoria Smithson: Surface Warfare Officer*

*Tori Imhoff: Surface Warfare Officer*

*Andrew Sung: Marine Corps Officer*

*Courtney Johnson: Marine Corps Officer*

*Evan Kwong: Marine Corps Officer*

## 2025 Leadership and Strategy Conference: Directors' Notes

This past year, I had the honor of serving as one of three directors for our annual Yale NROTC Leadership and Strategy Conference, and it truly was the highlight of my Yale experience so far.

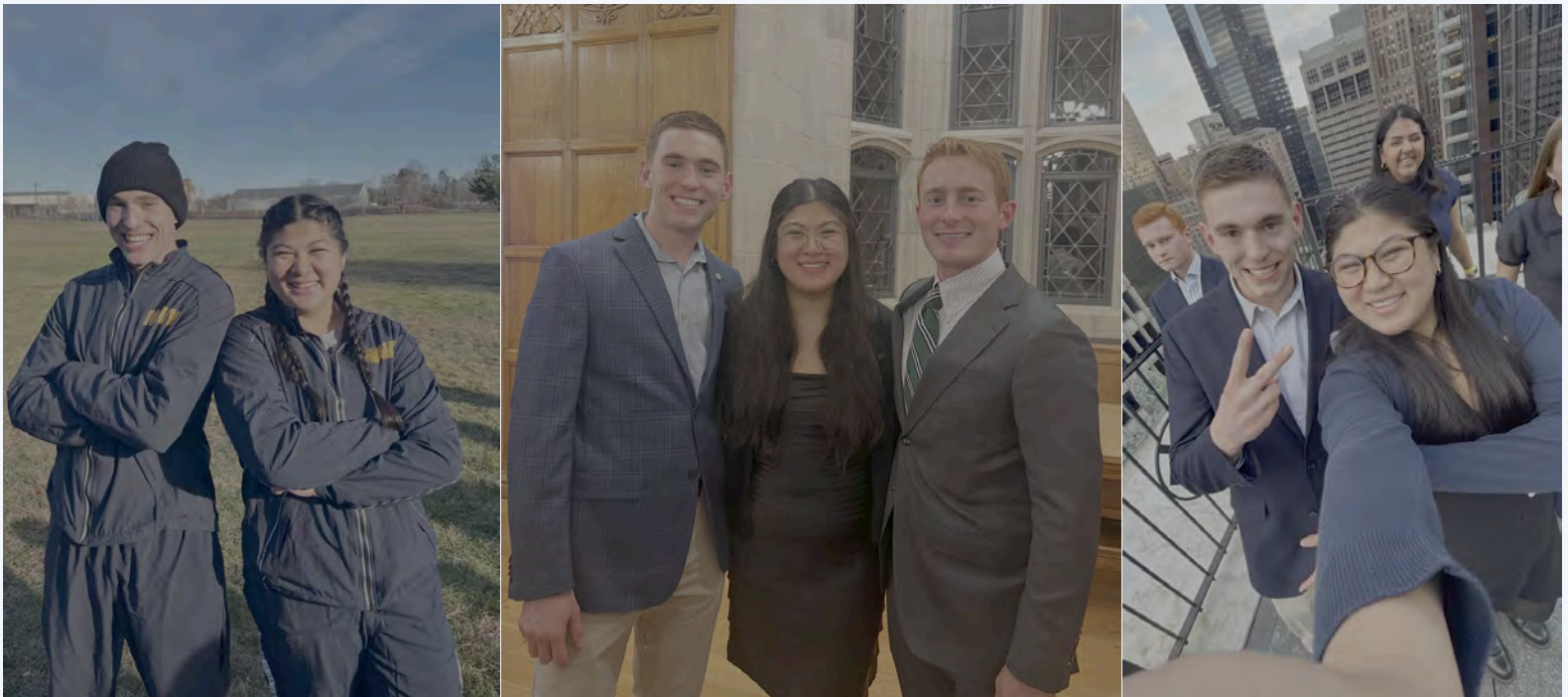
The best part of being a director was getting to work with each and every member of our team. From my fellow directors, Midshipman Carter Hamilton and Alex Adams, to all of the chairs and the 4/Cs who took the initiative to help plan an admittedly taxing and daunting event. The beauty of our team is that it's a completely volunteer force. Everyone who chooses to involve themselves with the conference does so because they want to be a part of something bigger than our daily ROTC commitments, and they believe in the influence we have as ROTC students.

Having been involved with the conference in past years, I would say the biggest difference as a director was the diplomacy aspect. Being part of the director team meant not only needing to delegate tasks to our chairs and team members but also learning how to make final decisions among the three of us. I can confidently say that between every midnight panic call the day before a staff meeting and every meal turned debrief, I've grown closer to my peers and grown as a leader.

Yes, the conference is about inviting people from all around the world to listen and engage with each other and our programming. Yes, it's really cool and terrifying to email admirals and state legislators, begging them to come. And yes, it's nice to have an excuse to set up weekly meetings where we spend at least 25% of the time talking about how to format the POAM.

But the conference is also about empowering ourselves, as future officers, to listen to and work with each other to accomplish a common mission and leave a legacy.

Midshipman Regina May Obnial



## 2025 Leadership and Strategy Conference: Directors' Notes

Yale NROTC hosted their 10th annual Leadership and Strategy Conference on March 28th and 29th, 2025. Over 200 Midshipmen and Cadets from 30+ units across the United States as well as the service academies of the United Kingdom, Poland, Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands attended this year.

Keynote speakers included General David Berger, 38th Commandant of the United States Marine Corps, Rear Admiral Craig Mattingly, outgoing Commander of Naval Service Training Command, Mr. Jimmy Hatch, retired Navy SEAL, and Ms. Genevieve Chase, service member and veterans advocate. Conference attendees also enjoyed panel discussions on special operations in the great power era, assessing China's foreign policy, and shipbuilding and the American industrial base.

Between conversations on leadership, current affairs, and foreign strategy, Midshipmen and Cadets were able to socialize and connect with their peers from around the globe. New this year was a week of extended programming for the international attendees. During their stay, they were able to visit New York City and spend more time on campus immersing themselves with the Yale community. NYC activities included visiting the USS Intrepid museum, sightseeing, sharing dinner with the Yale Veteran Association at the Yale Club of New York, and attending a New York Knicks game at Madison Square Garden. While on campus, attendees visited Yale classes, toured campus, and explored the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, where they were able to view important documents in their nations' military history.

This year's conference was led by MIDN Regina Obnial, Alex Adams, and myself. The upcoming 2026 conference will be directed by MIDN Aliza Allison, Elisa Kim, and Benjamin Sibold. We can't wait to see what they have planned.

Midshipman Carter Hamilton



# The 2025 Yale NROTC Leadership and Strategy Conference in Photos



## Introducing Our 2025 Conference Team

Directors: Carter Hamilton, Regina Obnial,  
Alex Adams

Outreach Chair: Elisa Kim

Logistics Chair: Benjamin Sibold  
Programming Chair: Aliza Allison

International Coordinators: Eric Claassen,  
Katie May

Website Team: Gavin Copper, Oscar  
Minoso-Rendon

Outreach Team: Diya Jha, Haeun Rho,  
Logistics Team: Brogan Rogers, Aidan  
Caffrey, Jack Kim

Programming Team: Gabe Sachs, Victoria  
Hunter



## Yale NROTC at the 51st Annual Mardi Gras Drill Meet

At the end of February, some members of the Yale NROTC unit traveled to New Orleans to compete in the 51st annual Mardi Gras Drill Meet at Tulane University. The experience was both exciting and rewarding, as we had the opportunity to put months of training into practice and engage with other ROTC units from across the country.

Leading up to the competition, we prepared by studying videos of past performances to familiarize ourselves with the level of precision and discipline required. Seeing those same schools in person and competing alongside them was an incredible experience. Upon arriving in New Orleans on Thursday, after grabbing lunch, we headed straight to a nearby park to practice. The warm weather was a welcome change from the cold New Haven winters, and our final run-throughs left us feeling confident. After practicing we had to get beignets at Café du Monde, a New Orleans staple.

The competition was on Friday morning, and we were the very first school to go at the entire event. Stepping onto the drill field, we executed our routine just as we had practiced for months, ultimately tying for 9th place in the competition. It was an immensely gratifying moment, knowing that all the early mornings and long weekend practices had led to this. Afterward, we had the opportunity to explore Tulane's campus, observe other teams in action, and visit Tulane's ROTC Unit.

On Saturday, we visited the National WWII Museum, where we explored exhibits covering various aspects of military history. Throughout the day, as we walked through the streets of New Orleans, we had the chance to see the vibrant Mardi Gras parade floats lining the city, adding to the unique cultural experience.

Overall, the trip was an unforgettable experience. We look forward to building on this experience in the years to come. Beyond the competition, the trip gave us a chance to train together, explore a new city, and connect as a team.

MIDN 3/C Diya Jha



## French War College Visit

On an early Wednesday morning, February 26, Yale NROTC hosted the French War College along with Yale's Air Force and Army ROTC. The day began at the Lanman Center, where Midshipmen, Cadets, and French visitors kicked off their visit with a joint physical training session led by Training Officer MIDN Tucker. The PT consisted of groups playing multiple simultaneous games of soccer and basketball.

After, a joint breakfast was held at the Morse dining hall, where Yale Midshipmen frequently eat after morning PT. They then prepared to move on to a presentation led by representatives of the French War College. The French provided an overview of their armed forces, detailing the differences between our military branches, development, and strategic doctrines that underpin French military education. This was followed by a Q&A session. This session offered Yale Midshipmen a valuable experience to see into the French military while sparking thoughtful discussions on military structure and shared international cooperation.

The visit concluded with lunch at Branford College, providing an opportunity for some conversation. The informal setting allowed Midshipmen and French guests to exchange personal experiences and insights, further solidifying bonds and paving the way for future collaborative efforts.

Overall, the day was a testament to the enriching experience of international cooperation and camaraderie. Events like these deepen our understanding of global military traditions and reinforce the importance of building strong, lasting partnerships with our allies. Yale NROTC looks forward to more opportunities for cultural and professional engagement with our international peers.

MIDN 4/C Aidan Flynn



# What Was the Battalion Up To During Summer 2025?

## **Duncan Kilbride**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Internship in family wealth management at Twin Focus Capital

## **Benjamin Sibold**

*Key West, Florida – USS New Mexico Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Internship at the Federal Reserve in digital currency

## **Aidan Flynn**

*San Diego, California – CORTRAMID*

Middlebury Spanish Immersion Program

## **Esha Bolar**

*San Diego, California– FMF Fleet Marine Force Month*

Paralegal Internship at Belin McCormick Law Firm

## **Liam Sullivan**

*NSI Instructor*

Ran, swam, and lifted

## **Jack Kim**

*Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Studied abroad in Spain

## **Jack Ferguson**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Studied abroad in London

## **Aliza Allison**

*Mayport, Florida – USS Mason (DDG 87) Surface Cruise*

Wrangler at C Lazy U Ranch in Granby, Colorado

## **Tristen Lee**

*Korea–Project GO (Year 2, L3/L4 language study)*

## **Oscar Miñoso-Rendón**

*Mayport, Florida –USS Mason (DDG 87) Surface Cruise*

Fellowship at the Hudson Institute & Cyber Warfare Training at US Naval Academy

## **Gabe Sachs**

*San Diego, California – CORTRAMID*

Taught English and earned dive certifications in the Galapagos Islands

## **Aidan Pulmano**

*Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – USS Montana Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Prepared for FE Chemical Exam

## **Aidan Caffrey**

*Norfolk, Virginia – CORTRAMID*

Summer camp counselor

## **Elisa Kim**

*West Palm Beach, Florida – Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Studied abroad in Korea

**Noah Vedder**

Studied abroad in Georgia

**Carter Hamilton**

*Lemoore, California – Aviation Cruise*

Traveled and relaxed at home

**Cleber Redondo**

*Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – Surface Warfare Cruise*

Traveled

**Eric Claassen**

*Pearl Harbor, Hawaii – Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Studied abroad in Latvia

**Brogan Rogers**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Studied abroad in London

**Diya Jha**

*NSI*

Studied abroad at Cambridge University; CWE PTE through USNA (virtual)

**Grant Tucker**

*Key West, Florida – USS New Mexico Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Research at Yale Law School (Securities Regulations & Climate Law)

**Alex Monteagudo**

*Bahamas – USS Toledo Fast Attack Submarine Cruise + SUBFAM Pearl Harbor*

Volunteered at San Jose Elementary

**Haeun Rho**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Research Intern at Committee for Human Rights in North Korea

**Victoria Hunter**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Studied Abroad in London

**Derek Boyle**

*San Diego, California– CORTRAMID*

Worked at home

**Andrew Terkildsen**

Backend and AI Engineer at Blankslate Technologies

**Amiah Hanson**

*Groton, Connecticut – Fast Attack Submarine Cruise*

Project GO – Study abroad in Taiwan

**Alex Adams**

*NAS Whidbey Island, Washington– Aviation Cruise*

Research and Sailing

# The Spring 2025 Gallery













