

Cybersecurity Internship: Leading The Future Of the Navy

United States Navy

John P. Peck

CYSE 368

Summer 2023

Table of Contents

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Introduction
4. Section 2: Beginning of the Internship
5. Section 3: Management Environment at the Internship
6. Section 4: Major Work Duties, Assignments, and Projects
7. Section 4: Major Work Duties, Assignments, and Projects
8. Section 5: Use of Cybersecurity Skills in the Internship
9. Section 6: ODU Curriculum and its Preparation for the Internship
10. Section 7: Fulfillment of Internship Objectives
11. Section 8: Motivating and Exciting Aspects of the Internship
12. Section 9: Discouraging Aspects of the Internship
13. Section 10: Challenging Aspects of the Internship | Section 11: Recommendations for Future MIs
14. Section 11: Recommendations for Future MIs | Section 12: Conclusion
15. Section 12: Conclusion

Cybersecurity Internship: Leading The Future Of the Navy

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving professional world, internships have become a crucial pathway for students to gain practical knowledge and hands-on experience in their chosen fields. This paper aims to provide a reflection on my Navy ROTC internship experience at Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes, IL, and my time at Old Dominion University. Throughout this internship, I had the unique opportunity to serve as a Midshipman Instructor, participating in the challenging training and mentorship of Midshipman Candidates (Candidates/MCs) seeking to enter into the Navy ROTC program. The decision to pursue an internship at RTC Great Lakes was influenced by my desire to challenge myself and gain exposure to the Navy's leadership, and to see the transformation of a citizen to a service member just as I went through 2 years ago. As a student at Old Dominion University, I recognized the value of engaging with a real-life military environment, where discipline, teamwork, and effective leadership are important. I wanted to immerse myself in an experience that would not only prepare me for my career in the Navy but also teach valuable life skills.

Throughout my Navy ROTC internship, I established specific learning outcomes that I aimed to achieve. These objectives served as guiding principles, shaping my approach to mentoring and leading the Candidates effectively. The three primary learning outcomes are as follows:

Develop Effective Leadership Skills

As a Midshipman Instructor, my goal was to enhance my leadership abilities. I aimed to adopt and adapt different leadership styles to best serve the Candidates' needs and create an environment that nurtures their personal growth, potential, and well being.

Enhance Communication and Mentorship Abilities

Effective communication and mentorship play important roles in shaping future Navy officers. I sought to improve my communication skills to better connect with the Candidates and offer valuable guidance throughout their training journey.

Foster Teamwork and Discipline Among Midshipman Candidates

Ensuring a sense of teamwork and discipline among the Candidates was a central objective. I aspired to lead by example and encourage a culture of mutual respect and cooperation within the cohort.

This paper is structured to provide a comprehensive experience of my Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes. Section 2 will dive into the orientation and initial impressions during the first week of the internship. Section 3 will explore the hands-on training and

leadership experiences encountered during the second week. In Section 4, I will elaborate on the third and final week, focusing on the integration of leadership skills and the accomplishment of learning objectives. Finally, Section 5 will conclude the paper with a reflection on the overall impact and personal growth achieved through this transformative internship experience.

Section 2: Beginning of the Internship

The organization where I interned is the Recruit Training Command (RTC) located at Great Lakes, IL. RTC Great Lakes is the United States Navy's only boot camp and is responsible for training and transforming civilians into Navy sailors. Established in 1911, the facility has a rich history of preparing individuals for naval service, making it an iconic institution within the U.S. Navy. RTC Great Lakes has played a pivotal role in shaping the Navy's manpower for over a century. Initially founded as a naval training center, it evolved into a dedicated recruit training command in 1998. Throughout its history, the organization has adapted to meet the changing needs of the Navy and has continually updated its training methods to reflect the demands of naval operations.

The primary product or service offered by RTC Great Lakes is its comprehensive recruit training program. This program transforms civilian individuals, known as Midshipman Candidates (Candidates), into disciplined, well-trained future officers who can contribute effectively to the Navy's mission. The training covers various aspects, including physical fitness, firefighting, firearm training, marlinspike, naval customs and traditions, and the core values of honor, courage, and commitment. RTC Great Lakes' major customers are the Sailors and Midshipman Candidates, typically consisting of recent high school graduates or college students seeking entry into the Navy ROTC program. These young individuals come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, united by their aspiration to serve the country and contribute to the Navy's mission.

RTC Great Lakes is the largest military training facility in the U.S., covering over 1,500 acres and housing thousands of trainees at any given time. The command is known for its intensive and challenging training programs, preparing candidates mentally and physically for the rigors of naval service. The Navy has a strong focus on developing leadership skills, instilling discipline, and fostering teamwork among the candidates. The beginning of my internship at RTC Great Lakes commenced with a comprehensive orientation program. During the first three days, all Midshipman Instructors, including myself, received specialized training to prepare us for our roles in mentoring and leading the Candidates.

The orientation emphasized the importance of the Candidates' well-being and the creation of a challenging yet supportive environment. My initial impressions of RTC Great Lakes were profound. The base exuded a sense of tradition, discipline, and dedication to service. Witnessing

the intense training and the commitment of the seasoned Navy Recruit Division Commanders left me with a deep sense of respect and admiration for the organization. As an MI, I felt a mix of excitement and responsibility. Being trusted with the task of mentoring and guiding the Candidates during their transformative journey was both humbling and empowering. The structure and efficiency of the orientation program demonstrated the Navy's commitment to preparing its leaders to be effective and compassionate mentors.

Throughout the initial training, I was struck by the camaraderie among the Midshipman Instructors and the shared mission of nurturing the next generation of Navy officers. The emphasis on teamwork and mutual support reinforced the value of collaborative leadership, which would prove instrumental in achieving our collective objectives during the internship. I am even still in contact with some of the MIs. I believe I have been introduced to some life-long friends that I will later meet in the fleet.

The beginning of my internship at RTC Great Lakes provided a strong foundation for the transformative experiences that lay ahead. The organization's rich history, dedication to excellence, and emphasis on leadership underscored the significance of my role as a Midshipman Instructor. With newfound knowledge and inspiration, I eagerly looked forward to the challenges and growth that awaited me in the subsequent weeks of this Navy ROTC internship.

Section 3: Management Environment at the Internship

The management environment at my Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes was characterized by a well-defined chain of command and clear lines of supervision. As Midshipman Instructors, we reported directly to the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the training program, who was a senior Navy Captain responsible for overseeing all aspects of the training and mentoring process. Under the OIC's guidance, there were also experienced senior enlisted personnel, including Petty Officers, who played crucial roles in providing mentorship and support to the Midshipman Instructors while we guided the Candidates. They brought a wealth of practical knowledge and expertise to the internship, contributing significantly to our professional development as mentors and leaders.

The general management structure at RTC Great Lakes was designed to foster a cohesive and effective training program. The organization followed a military hierarchy, with well-defined ranks and responsibilities. This structure ensured efficient communication, coordination, and accountability throughout the internship. At the top of the management structure was the Commanding Officer (CO) of RTC Great Lakes, responsible for the overall operation and management of the base. The CO worked closely with the OIC of the internship program NSI (New Student Indoctrination) to ensure the successful integration of the Midshipman Instructors and Candidates into the larger training environment. Within the Midshipman Instructor team,

there were designated Lead Instructors who provided additional leadership and support to their fellow instructors. Unfortunately I was not able to receive additional leadership jobs. These jobs were given to the 1st Class Midshipman. These Lead Instructors worked collaboratively with the OIC and played instrumental roles in implementing the training curriculum, managing daily activities, and ensuring the Candidates' progress.

The management environment at RTC Great Lakes proved to be highly effective in facilitating the Navy ROTC training program. The adherence to a clear chain of command and the military hierarchy promoted seamless communication and decision-making. This structure was especially crucial in a fast-paced and intense environment like RTC Great Lakes, where efficiency and precision were required.

The supervision provided by the OIC and Petty Officers was exemplary. Their experience, dedication, and willingness to mentor the Midshipman Instructors played a significant role in shaping our abilities as effective leaders. Regular meetings, training sessions, and feedback loops allowed us to receive guidance and refine our mentorship techniques continuously.

The general management structure's effectiveness was evident in the smooth execution of daily activities/evolutions and the achievement of training objectives. Lead Instructors served as strong liaisons between the Midshipman Instructors and the OIC, ensuring that expectations were communicated clearly and that challenges were addressed promptly. Additionally, the management environment's success was reflected in the Candidates' growth and development. As a team, we were able to foster discipline, teamwork, and a sense of purpose among the Candidates, preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead in their Navy careers.

The management environment at my Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes was characterized by effective supervision, a well-structured management hierarchy, and clear communication channels. The support and mentorship provided by the leadership team played a pivotal role in shaping the success of the internship program and the transformation of the Midshipman Candidates into future Navy officers. The management's commitment to excellence underscored the organization's dedication to preparing the next generation of naval leaders.

Section 4: Major Work Duties, Assignments, and Projects

As a Midshipman Instructor at RTC Great Lakes, my major work duties revolved around the training and mentorship of the Midshipman Candidates (Candidates) during their three-week stay. The responsibilities I undertook were crucial in preparing these young individuals for their future Navy ROTC program and, ultimately, their service as naval officers.

One of my primary duties was to mentor and train the Candidates in various aspects of Navy life and military service. I conducted regular training sessions on different evolutions such as naval customs and traditions, military drills and ceremonies, and essential knowledge required for their entry into the Navy ROTC program. By providing hands-on training and guidance, I ensured that the Candidates were adequately prepared as much as possible for the challenges they would face during their naval careers. Maintaining discipline and fostering teamwork among the Candidates were critical components of my work duties. I enforced strict adherence to protocols, regulations, and Navy customs, reinforcing the importance of discipline in a military environment. By encouraging collaboration and teamwork, I helped create a cohesive unit that supported each other's growth and development.

One significant project I undertook was the delivery of an Operational Security (OPSEC) briefing to the Candidates. In this briefing, I educated them about the importance of safeguarding sensitive information and understanding the potential risks posed by social media. By addressing issues like geolocation, ship movements, and personal identifiable information (PPI), I equipped the Candidates with the knowledge to protect themselves and the Navy from potential threats. The mentorship and training I provided to the Candidates were essential in preparing them for their future roles as naval officers. The rigorous training and disciplined environment at RTC Great Lakes instilled the values of honor, courage, and commitment, which are foundational to a successful naval career. By imparting these principles and facilitating hands-on experiences, I contributed to shaping competent and responsible future leaders for the Navy. Enforcing discipline and adhering to naval customs and traditions were fundamental to preserving the rich heritage of the U.S. Navy. By instilling these values in the Candidates, I ensured that they would carry forward the legacy of Navy excellence and service throughout their careers.

The OPSEC briefing project played a crucial role in mitigating security risks for the Navy. By educating the Candidates about the potential risks associated with social media and the disclosure of sensitive information, we aimed to minimize the chances of unauthorized access to classified data and operational plans. This project directly contributed to safeguarding the Navy's assets and mission effectiveness.

Fostering teamwork and mutual support among the Candidates was instrumental in creating a cohesive and effective team. As future naval officers, they would be required to collaborate and function as a unified force in various operational scenarios. By emphasizing teamwork during the internship, we laid the foundation for their success in future military endeavors.

Section 5: Use of Cybersecurity Skills in the Internship

Before the Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes, I had a foundational understanding of cybersecurity principles through my academic coursework and personal interest in technology. My prior knowledge included concepts such as data encryption, network security, and common cyber threats. I had some hands-on experience with basic cybersecurity tools and practices, such as virtual machines and server management.

During the internship, my exposure to cybersecurity expanded significantly, as I was tasked with delivering an Operational Security (OPSEC) briefing to the Midshipman Candidates. This project challenged me to dive deeper into cybersecurity concepts and understand their practical application in a military context.

To fulfill the OPSEC briefing, I had to learn the following key areas on the job:

Geolocation and Ship Movements

Understanding the significance of geolocation data and how it could inadvertently reveal naval vessel locations was crucial. I delved into geolocation technologies and their potential security implications for naval operations. This involved researching how adversaries might exploit social media posts and other online activities to gather sensitive information about the Navy's deployments and operational plans.

Personal Identifiable Information (PPI) Protection

I familiarized myself with the importance of safeguarding personal identifiable information, such as full names, ranks, job roles, and deployment schedules of Navy personnel. Recognizing the risks of oversharing on social media platforms, I emphasized to the Candidates the significance of being cautious about the information they disclose online.

Computer Security and Password Management

As part of the OPSEC briefing, I had to educate the Candidates about the essentials of computer security. This included topics like using strong passwords, enabling firewalls, and the dangers of reusing passwords across multiple accounts. I researched best practices in password management and cybersecurity hygiene to ensure I provided accurate and valuable guidance to the Candidates.

My on-the-job experience with cybersecurity during the internship significantly enriched my understanding of the subject matter. While I had previously acquired theoretical knowledge in cybersecurity, the practical application and real-world implications of these principles became more evident during the internship.

Working on the OPSEC briefing allowed me to grasp the paramount importance of operational security in military environments. I realized that the proper handling of information is not just a matter of individual privacy but a matter of national security. Understanding how even seemingly innocuous information can be exploited by adversaries highlighted the gravity of maintaining strict security protocols in the Navy.

Through the internship, I gained a deeper appreciation for the role of cybersecurity in safeguarding critical assets, both personnel-related and operational. The experience highlighted that cybersecurity is not solely a technical issue but an integral aspect of national defense and resilience against potential threats. Applying cybersecurity concepts in a real-world scenario allowed me to witness their practical significance firsthand. The exercise of educating the Candidates about the risks of social media and password vulnerabilities emphasized the immediate impact that cybersecurity awareness and best practices can have on ensuring the Navy's operational security.

My Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes provided a valuable opportunity to apply and expand my cybersecurity knowledge. The experience of delivering the OPSEC briefing deepened my understanding of cybersecurity principles in a military context and the critical role they play in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the Navy. By gaining practical experience on the job, I developed a heightened awareness of cybersecurity's importance in protecting sensitive information and contributing to national security objectives. This on-the-job experience has shaped my perspective on cybersecurity, instilling a deeper sense of responsibility and commitment to promoting secure practices in both professional and personal settings.

Section 6: ODU Curriculum and its Preparation for the Internship

The curriculum at Old Dominion University provided me with a solid foundation in leadership, communication, and general military knowledge, which proved valuable during my Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes. Courses in leadership and management, maritime sea power and affairs, and navigation equipped me with the necessary theoretical knowledge to effectively mentor and lead the Midshipman Candidates. Additionally, communication courses enhanced my ability to deliver clear and concise instructions during training sessions. Also, for the OPSEC brief I presented Intro to Linux, Cybersecurity Tech, and Society provided me with examples on how the enemy could get into your information such as brute force attacks and social engineering.

Several connections between my ODU education and internship skills were evident during the internship:

ODU's emphasis on leadership principles and effective communication directly translated to my role as a Midshipman Instructor. The Navy ROTC leadership courses provided insights into various leadership styles, which I could adapt to cater to the needs of the Candidates. Likewise, my communication training enabled me to tell them my expectations and instructions to the Candidates, ensuring they understood their roles and responsibilities. The military history courses at ODU show naval traditions and the importance of maintaining discipline and customs. This knowledge was essential in instilling respect for Navy traditions among the Candidates, fostering a sense of pride and commitment to their future service.

The internship experiences reinforced several key aspects I had learned at ODU:

Collaborative teamwork was at the core of the internship environment. The importance of teamwork and mutual support that I had learned at ODU from being a Resident Assistant was further exemplified during the training and mentoring of the Candidates. I witnessed firsthand how cohesive teamwork with the Midshipman Instructors was essential in providing consistent and effective guidance to the Candidates.

The internship also exposed me to new concepts, techniques, and skills that I hadn't encountered in school:

The preparation and delivery of the OPSEC briefing introduced me to the specialized field of operational security within the military context. This experience required in-depth research and understanding of cybersecurity principles as they relate to safeguarding sensitive information within the Navy. While ODU had provided a general understanding of cybersecurity, the internship allowed me to apply this knowledge to specific security challenges faced by naval personnel.

Interacting with Midshipman Candidates provided me with valuable real-world experiences in applying military concepts and theories. It allowed me to see the impact of effective leadership, teamwork, and discipline in transforming civilians into confident and committed future naval officers.

Section 7: Fulfillment of Internship Objectives

Objective: Develop Effective Leadership Skills

Fulfillment: The internship at RTC Great Lakes successfully fulfilled the objective of developing effective leadership skills. As a Midshipman Instructor, I was responsible for leading and guiding the MCs throughout their training. I found my leadership style and adapted it to meet the needs of the MCs. I learned the importance of leading by example and displaying commitment to

Navy values. The structured leadership environment at RTC Great Lakes provided many opportunities to refine my leadership abilities and reinforced the significance of effective leadership in fostering discipline and cohesion among the Candidates.

Objective: Enhance Communication and Mentorship Abilities

Fulfillment: The internship significantly enhanced my communication and mentorship abilities. As a Midshipman Instructor, I regularly delivered training sessions and conducted one-on-one mentorship sessions with the Candidates. This experience allowed me to practice clear and effective communication, ensuring that the Candidates understood their roles and responsibilities, and the gravity of what they were joining. Additionally, I developed the ability to provide constructive feedback and support, encouraging the Candidates' growth and development. Working closely with the Midshipman Candidates in a mentorship capacity reinforced the importance of effective communication and empathy in guiding others.

Objective: Foster Teamwork and Discipline among Midshipman Candidates

Fulfillment: The internship at RTC Great Lakes effectively fostered teamwork and discipline among the Midshipman Candidates. As part of the Midshipman Instructor team, I actively promoted a collaborative and supportive environment. Through consistent reinforcement of discipline and adherence to Navy customs and traditions, we cultivated a sense of pride and responsibility among the Candidates. The structured training and mentorship programs facilitated teamwork and camaraderie, allowing the Candidates to work together cohesively and support each other's progress. Witnessing the transformation of individuals into a disciplined and united team reinforced the significance of teamwork and discipline in achieving common goals.

Section 8: Motivating and Exciting Aspects of the Internship

The Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes provided a multitude of motivating and exciting aspects that left a lasting impact on my personal and professional growth. Among the most inspiring elements were:

One of the most motivating aspects of the internship was witnessing the personal transformation of the Midshipman Candidates throughout their training. Observing these young individuals transition from civilians to disciplined and committed future naval officers was truly remarkable. It was fulfilling to play a role in their journey and witness their growth, determination, and sense of purpose develop each day. The strong sense of camaraderie among the Midshipman Instructors and Candidates was another exciting aspect of the internship. The collaborative and supportive environment created a bond that transcended the intense training.

Working together as a team and sharing a common purpose created camaraderie that brought me lifelong connections with other Midshipman Instructors.

As a Midshipman, the opportunity to immerse myself in a military environment was both thrilling and eye-opening. Living and working on a military base, engaging in drill and color ceremonies, and experiencing the traditions and customs of the Navy firsthand was an epic experience. This immersive military experience provided valuable insights into the life of a naval officer and reinforced my commitment to a career in the Navy. Being entrusted with the responsibility of mentoring and guiding the Midshipman Candidates was incredibly motivating. The ability to make a positive impact on their lives, inspire their dedication to service, and equip them with the tools for success in their Navy careers was deeply rewarding. Knowing that my efforts contributed to shaping the next generation of naval officers filled me with a profound sense of purpose. The internship offered an opportunity to uphold the Navy's core values of honor, courage, and commitment. Embracing these values in both my actions and leadership style was empowering, and witnessing how these values resonated with the Candidates reinforced the importance of living by these principles in every aspect of life.

Section 9: Discouraging Aspects of the Internship

While the Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes was a transformative and rewarding experience, there were some discouraging aspects that presented challenges and tested resilience:

The internship's high-intensity and demanding environment could be discouraging at times. The rigorous training schedule, long hours, and physically demanding tasks required constant focus and energy. Balancing the responsibilities of mentoring the Candidates, maintaining discipline, and ensuring their well-being demanded a significant level of dedication and commitment. The male Midshipman all had to sleep in a compartment together. The first few days it was great to see the comradery and hearing different experiences of their schools/units from other Midshipmen. After the first few days we all started to just want alone time due to working the long hours. We showered together, and slept together. We did get our own racks though.

As Midshipman Instructors, we were responsible for guiding the Candidates through a transformative process, which often involved overcoming personal challenges and homesickness. Witnessing the struggles some Candidates faced in adapting to the military lifestyle could be disheartening. While it was rewarding to see their growth, knowing that they were missing their families and facing difficulties was emotionally taxing. Furthermore, finding the right balance between mentorship and maintaining discipline could be a challenging aspect of the internship. While it was essential to provide guidance and support to the Candidates, we also had to enforce strict rules and expectations. Striking the right balance between being approachable mentors and

firm enforcers of discipline required sensitivity and adaptability. The intensive nature of the internship left little time for personal leisure. The constant focus on training and mentorship meant limited personal time for relaxation or engaging in hobbies. Coping with the lack of personal time and maintaining a healthy work-life balance could be discouraging, especially during the most demanding phases of the internship. As Midshipman Instructors, we held a significant responsibility in shaping the development of future naval officers. The weight of this responsibility could be daunting, knowing that our actions and leadership directly impacted the Candidates' experiences and futures. The pressure to ensure that we provided the best guidance and mentorship weighed heavily at times.

Section 10: Challenging Aspects of the Internship

One of the most challenging aspects of the internship was the physical demands of the training environment. As Midshipman Instructors, we participated in physically rigorous activities alongside the Candidates, which included early morning physical training sessions, marching drills, and other physically demanding exercises. Sustaining a high level of physical performance throughout the internship required discipline, endurance, and determination. The internship exposed me to emotionally charged situations, particularly when witnessing the struggles and homesickness of the Midshipman Candidates. As their mentors, we had to provide emotional support while maintaining a sense of discipline and professionalism. Balancing empathy with the need to enforce military discipline required emotional resilience and the ability to navigate complex emotions.

Balancing multiple responsibilities as a Midshipman Instructor, including mentoring, providing guidance, maintaining discipline, and fulfilling administrative duties, was challenging. Time management and organization skills were essential in juggling these responsibilities effectively. The intensive and fast-paced nature of the internship created high-stress environments. From delivering briefings to conducting drills, precision and accuracy were paramount. Managing stress and maintaining composure while guiding the Candidates through challenging exercises demanded mental fortitude. As a Midshipman Instructor, I encountered leadership challenges in guiding a diverse group of Candidates with varying backgrounds and experiences. Motivating individuals with different learning styles and effectively communicating instructions required adaptable leadership skills.

Section 11: Recommendations for Future MIs

Based on my experiences during the Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes, I offer the following recommendations for future MIs to make the most of their internship:

The internship involves physically demanding activities, so future MIs should focus on physical fitness before starting the program. Regular exercise and conditioning will help build endurance and strength, allowing interns to better cope with the physically rigorous aspects of the training.

Mental preparation is equally important. Understanding the challenges of the military lifestyle and mentally committing to the internship will help future MIs adapt more seamlessly to the structured environment. Familiarize yourself with military customs and traditions to develop a sense of respect for the service and a better understanding of the Navy's culture. Knowledge of rank structures, saluting protocols, and Navy core values will demonstrate a level of preparation and dedication to future mentors and superiors.

Effective communication is essential in a military environment. Future MIs should work on their communication skills, both in delivering clear and concise instructions and in active listening. Being able to convey information effectively and comprehend instructions from superiors and peers will enhance the internship experience. Leadership is central to the internship experience. Future MIs should work on developing leadership qualities such as decisiveness, empathy, adaptability, and the ability to inspire and motivate others.

If they are giving the OPSEC brief like me. MIs should familiarize themselves with the principles of Operational Security (OPSEC) before the internship begins. Understanding the significance of protecting sensitive information and the potential risks associated with social media and personal identifiable information (PPI) will be beneficial during the preparation of any OPSEC-related tasks.

The internship will present both opportunities and challenges. Future MIs should approach the experience with a growth mindset, being open to learning from mistakes and embracing new experiences. A positive attitude toward personal growth and continuous improvement will contribute to a more rewarding and transformative internship. The Navy ROTC internship demands dedication and a strong work ethic. Future MIs should be prepared to give their best effort in all tasks, whether it involves leading Candidates, conducting training, or fulfilling administrative responsibilities.

Section 12: Conclusion

My Navy ROTC internship at RTC Great Lakes was an unforgettable and transformative experience that left an impact on my personal and professional development. Throughout the internship, I witnessed personal growth, embraced leadership responsibilities, and gained valuable insights into the military lifestyle. Several key takeaways have shaped my perspective and will continue to guide my college journey and future career path.

The internship experience has undoubtedly influenced the remainder of my college time in multiple ways. Firstly, it has reinforced the importance of discipline, time management, and commitment to my academic studies. The rigorous training schedule during the internship underscored the significance of balancing academic responsibilities with extracurricular activities. Additionally, the internship has deepened my appreciation for the leadership and communication skills I have acquired through my college courses. I now recognize their practical application and the significant impact they can have in guiding and mentoring others. I am more motivated than ever to actively engage in leadership roles on campus and participate in initiatives that promote teamwork and collaboration. The internship also sparked a passion for cybersecurity and its critical role in national security. As a result, I plan to pursue additional coursework and research opportunities related to cybersecurity during my college time, further expanding my expertise in this topic.

The Navy ROTC internship has had a profound influence on shaping my future professional path. The experience reaffirmed my dedication to a career in the Navy. Seeing the personal transformations of the MCs and playing a role in their development as future naval officers has made me excited about contributing to the Navy's mission. The internship also highlighted the importance of cybersecurity in the military context, which has a desire to pursue a specialization in cybersecurity within my future Navy career. I plan to work in areas that involve the protection of sensitive information, ensuring the Navy's operational security and contributing to national defense efforts. Furthermore, the leadership experiences and mentorship opportunities during the internship have inspired me to assume more significant leadership roles for my unit next semester.

Overall, New Student Indoctrination at RTC Great Lakes has been a journey of growth, learning, and self-discovery. The experiences and challenges have strengthened me and made me excited to serve in the Navy, and instilled a sense of pride in being part of a dedicated and disciplined command. As I move forward in my college journey and future professional path, the lessons and experiences from this internship will continue to guide and inspire me to be a capable leader in service to my country.