

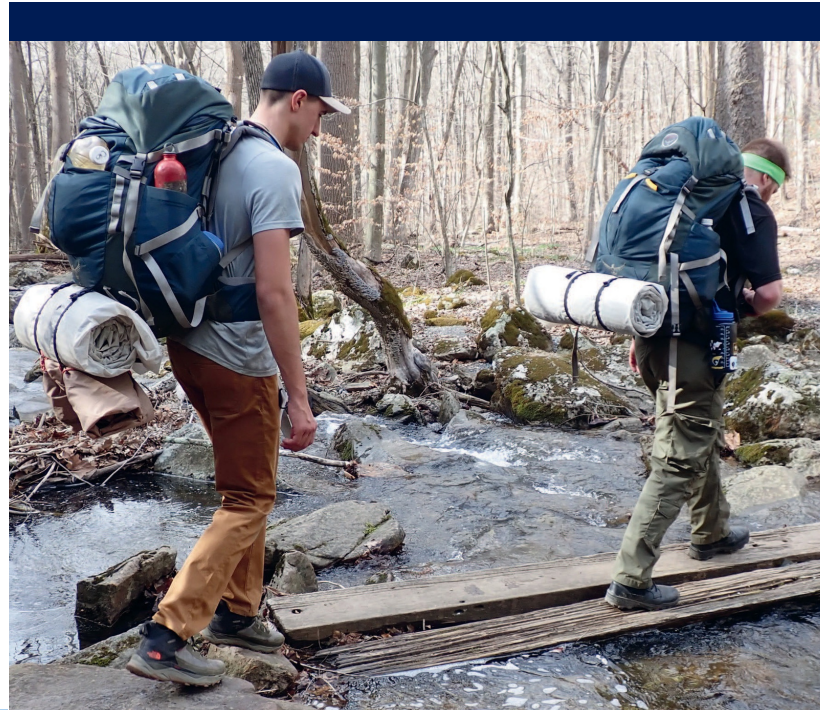
ELD

**THE CENTER FOR
EXPERIENTIAL
LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT**

UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY



The Center for Experiential Leadership Development (ELD) serves as the bridge between the Leadership, Education, and Development (LEAD) Division's curriculum and leadership experiences outside the classroom. ELD draws connections between behavioral science theory and experiential leadership practice.



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USNA Class of '77

Gettysburg Leadership Encounter



The Class of '77 Gettysburg Leadership Encounter occurs for Brigade leaders over two days in June and one day in December at the Gettysburg Battlefield and nearby Gettysburg College. Varsity team captains and Brigade unit commanders learn about the responsibilities and challenges of command through lessons from the pivotal U.S. Civil War battle. Midshipman leaders attend classes and breakout discussions covering the leadership tenets of loyalty, standards, and action.

"GLE made me realize that I am the driving force behind midshipmen development, and not just on my team. Because of the rank that I will wear all year I will have a greater effect on my underclassmen than my other classmates, and I have a duty to help any and all midshipmen achieve the mission of USNA."
-Katie Golbranson, Class of 2024



The battlefield study enables networking and team building through a cohesive network of peer support that facilitates professional relationships within the Brigade. During the academic year, these leaders meet monthly over breakfast to discuss current leadership challenges and lessons within the Brigade.

"GLE helped put what we are doing at the Academy in perspective for what we will be doing once we commission as officers. The GLE staff did a phenomenal job connecting aspects of the battle to our jobs as leaders of the Brigade." - Reagan Quilty, Class of 2024



NOLS

NATIONAL
OUTDOOR
LEADERSHIP
SCHOOL

NOLS provides field-based leadership practicums designed to support and complement classroom leadership theory by allowing students to execute and reflect on real-world decision making in austere, unpredictable, and dynamic wilderness environments with immediate consequences.



NOLS focuses on four types of leadership: Directed leadership, peer leadership, active followership, and self-leadership. During the summer, midshipmen attend three types of courses in Alaska and Wyoming, including backpacking, mountaineering, and sea kayaking.

"A life-changing training opportunity that I will never forget. I learned a great deal about peer leadership, competency in an unknown environment, and being mindful of living in the moment."
- Maximus Lear, Class of 2024

"I learned more about myself and various leadership skills than ever before in my life. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done, both physically and mentally, but also the most rewarding."
- Andrew Bacilek, Class of 2024

Outward Bound Summer Block



During the Summer course, Outward Bound promotes effective teamwork and leadership development by providing wilderness expeditions and trainings that emphasize the ideals of character, leadership, and service.

This transformative learning experience, where students develop new technical skills as well as a sense of teamwork, self-confidence, and a desire to make a difference, is designed and delivered by a community of the industry's most skilled and dedicated educators and instructors.



"Outward Bound provided a fantastic experience for learning peer-to-peer leadership with our crew. Canoe camping and backpacking in the wilderness fostered teamwork and close friendships that I will never forget."

- A.J. Merrill, Class of 2025



Outward Bound Spring Break Expedition



During Spring Break, select midshipmen and military veterans hike for five days along the Appalachian Trail (Harpers Ferry area). They experience cold weather, some snow, and lots of time to bond and discuss leadership and life lessons with each other.



NALC

Naval Academy Leadership Conference



Each January, the midshipman NALC team host over 300 external delegates from 80 schools for their annual leadership conference, including 30 international midshipmen and cadets from a dozen countries. One hundred midshipmen additionally serve as delegates. In 2023, the NALC team partnered with The Stockdale Center to present *Returning with Honor: Trials to Triumph*, which focused on the experiences of the nearly 500 Vietnam War prisoners of war.



Panels included *Strength through Adversity: The League of Wives, A Flag Officer's View; The Front Line to the Home Front; and Boots to Business: Prior Military to Business*. The Forrestal Lecture was given by three former Vietnam POWs in a panel format, featuring CDR Everett Alvarez, USN (Ret.), CAPT Charlie Plumb, USN (Ret.), & RADM Rob Shumaker, USN (Ret.). Other speakers of note included MajGen Charles Bolden, USMC (Ret.), RADM Margaret Klein, USN (Ret.), BG Rhonda Cornum, USA (Ret.), and Mr. John Crowley, CEO of Amicus Therapeutics.



"Leading NALC strengthened my organizational and logistical skills, while developing healthy relationships between different teams to enact a vision that required everyone's best abilities" - Charlie Sewell, Class of 2023

NAWN

Naval Academy Women's Network



The Network empowers and equips midshipmen to navigate careers as leaders through increased opportunities for engagement, education, and experiences with officers and graduates, cultivating an inclusive and diverse mentoring network of women and men from USNA, the Fleet, and the Operating Forces. The Network typically involves 400-500 midshipmen annually and provides Lean-in Circle opportunities, as well as four networking events throughout the year to foster mentoring and future retention of women service members. Events occur in various venues both on and off the Yard, including the annual Military Leadership Symposium.



St. Benedict's Preparatory School

Newark, New Jersey



St. Benedict's Preparatory H.S. provides select midshipmen opportunities for small-unit leadership and mentoring. St. Benedict's Prep is a co-ed Benedictine Catholic secondary school in Newark, NJ serving approximately 600 students in grades 9-12, many of whom are underprivileged. Each May, midshipmen lead small teams of freshmen on the Appalachian Trail for five days. During late summer, midshipmen work with the incoming cohort of freshmen as they join the St. Ben's community.



"St. Ben's provided an ideal opportunity to practice servant leadership. People may not always respect you simply because you are put in charge of them. You need to demonstrate how much you care about them. I had to work very hard to show that I was invested in the students' success"
- Erik Brandon, Class of 2024

Midshipmen hone their leadership skills, developing mentoring relationships with the students that often continue for many years and gaining a better understanding of the vast array of social and cultural dynamics that they will likely encounter once they graduate.

Northern Marianas Battlefields

Language, Regional Expertise, and Culture



In an effort to retrace the World War II island-hopping campaign, Colonel Pallotta and Captain Qu led a well-rounded and enthusiastic group of seven midshipmen to the Western Pacific. Over two weeks and across the International Date Line, the group explored Hawaii, Guam, Saipan, and Tinian as part of the Language, Regional Expertise and Culture (LREC) program through the Center for ELD. While on the trip, the group explored the various battlefields of the Marianas, including a visit to the atomic bomb pits on Tinian, the Suicide Cliffs of Saipan, and the World War II Memorial to the People of Guam.



"This battlefield study provided a fantastic orientation to the Western Pacific, which drew upon the region's rich culture and history. Walking the islands where so many had sacrificed provided a connection to World War II that transcended what any book could provide. The trip was certainly the highlight of my Naval Academy experience" - Carson Hillier, Class of 2023





The midshipmen gained outstanding opportunities for professional development and an orientation to the contemporary Pacific security environment. The trip worked to make up for the Navy and Marine Corps community exposure that the Class of 2023 lost due to COVID-19.



Sisters Academy of New Jersey

Sisters Academy operates on a 10-month, extended-day school year model and provides support for preadolescent girls (grades 4–8). The program helps students realize their potential by using education and mentorship as their tools for success. Two midshipmen are invited to participate in professional training in experiential leadership via a combination of practical experience and guided reflection.



"Sisters Academy allowed me to develop my leadership skills outside of a military setting—to earn the girls' trust and respect without having any legitimate authority over them. Like I learned in leadership class, leadership is a relationship. I taught character lessons along with STEM classes, trying to inspire the girls to seek a higher calling in service to others. It is an experience I will never forget."
- Megan McGrath, Class of 2026



As mentors and role models, these midshipmen strengthen their creative problem-solving skills, enhance their innovative thinking, and hone their ability to adapt to dynamic situations.

TMF

Spring Break Expedition



During spring break 2023, sixteen midshipmen and three USNA staff members joined hiking guides and fellow USNA alumni for the inaugural USNA-TMF Spring Break Hike. Over five days, the group journeyed in and around the Shenandoah Valley's trails and waterways.

Similar to the Outward Bound hike, this veteran and midshipmen expedition challenges participants to negotiate leadership scenarios in a cold, austere, and dynamic outdoor environment, often at altitude. Guides teach trail behavior, survival skills, teamwork, and leadership skills such as those practiced by Marine Captain Travis Manion, USNA Class of 2004.



"The major lesson that I took away from this hike was to be present in the moment. I never noticed how busy and crammed my life was until I went on this hike and was able to take a step back and breathe. I learned that no matter how hard (or cold) it will get, it will inevitably get easier (warmer). There is no reason to pity and feel sorry for yourself. You have to make the best of every moment."

-Kerra Miller, Class of 2026



Outdoor Odyssey ★★

Founded by Major General T.S. Jones, USMC (Ret.), Outdoor Odyssey in Western Pennsylvania pairs area youth with high school mentors, providing these teams with a unique wilderness experience. Incorporating leadership skills, high adventure, and team-building, Outdoor Odyssey sets the stage for a year of follow-on activity between the mentors and their teams. Individual and team resiliency lies at the core of everything they do.



Midshipmen spend the first week leading Florida high schoolers, serving as counselors and platoon commanders, concluding with a military-style Crucible experience. The remainder of the time is dedicated to training high school seniors to be mentors for younger at-risk middle schoolers who spend summer days at the camp.



*"Outdoor Odyssey not only armed me with a multitude of leadership tools, but it also gave me the opportunity to practice using them immediately. I still use many of the philosophies that I learned at camp in my daily life. I've taught lessons from Outdoor Odyssey to every midshipman that I have led at the Academy."
- Jordan Corpuz, Class of 2024*

NL425 Engineering Leadership

Engineering leadership is offered by the Aerospace Engineering Department as an upper-level humanities course to better prepare students for leadership and project management roles in a technical and experiential environment. During practical application projects, students practice project management and technical leadership skills while working in teams. In order to achieve this objective, NL425's curriculum addresses three areas: leading engineers' teams, leading engineers' work, and leading engineers' innovation.



The course provides instruction using lectures, reading assignments, classroom discussion, group projects, and various experiential learning activities with content that focuses on the themes of communication, team dynamics, creativity, and project management. The class is taught by CAPT Ken Reightler (ret.), USNA Class of 1973, a former NASA astronaut.





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