



USNAPT 2025 SPRING TRAINING

Spring training is a welcome occasion !! The team Mids travel to a more comfortable climate to unlimber from the doldrums of cold weather, readying to tackle a new season.

It's especially relevant to the plebes. They were selected as team members in the fall, have spent significant afternoons in ground training in the loft, and a trip or two to the wind tunnel to acquaint themselves with being suspended in a rapid flowing airstream. They have also been oriented to performing on ground crew for demonstration jumps. Now, they will have occasion to experience actual exits from an aircraft at high altitude, learning the basics of body control in free flight, including the necessary experience of controlling a parachute deployment, and guidance to a safe landing. Clearly the motive for joining the team, ... and finally occurring !

The plebes will be following the USPA AFF agenda in their progression from first jump to being ungripped by jumpmasters as they learn self-control in freefall. The activities in this portion of training are supervised by certified staff members of Skydive City in Zephyrhills, FL, with occasional assistance from qualified members of the team. The plebe phase after AFF includes jumps with coaches as they begin to master the finer points of the sport in more complicated maneuvers. After spring training, additional advancement can be assisted by team coaches. The objective is to become an A-licensed skydiver, recognizing the ability to attend any drop zone and be accepted as qualified skydivers, capable of interacting with other experienced jumpers in activities which accommodate their attained skill level.



Meet the newest members of the USNAPT - Class of '28 Jumps to date: L to r ; Finleigh Schrichte 16, Maisie Swift 16, Sophia Urrea 16, Trevor Johnson 18, Luke Binney 18, Kevin Russ 11, Joshua Winarto 19, Henderson Cabell 20, Ezra Kennedy 1

This article on the Skydive City spring training session will focus on the upper classes, the more experienced jumpers, who are now in the advanced stages, possessing higher licenses, contending for the dual missions of the USNAPT: demo jumping and competition. A plebe's career with the team will provide numerous opportunities for deserved performance recognition in the future. ... We also hope this article will provide the less-initiated audience with the purview of USNAPT composition, procedures, and objectives.



l to r: Matt Cecala, USNAPT Coach, 1/C Brett Dumais, team TO; 2/C Conner Mollberg, team Capt.; Myles Hall, Ethan Clark, Maeve Carrigg, Henry Borthwick, 3/C Kevin Kucik, Luke Wordelmann, Jason Lenning, Sam Baisden, 2/C Brody Boggs, Kobby Boateng, 3/C Audrey Paiz, 2/C Julian Saldana, 4/C Sophia Urrea, Luke Binney, Henderson Cabell, Trevor Johnson, Kevin Russ, Finleigh Schrichte, Maisie Swift, Joshua Winarto.

Special recognition is due to several aspects of activities occurring during the period in FL:

1/C Brett Dumais was the only firstie of the team to attend this session. He was fulfilling his duty as the 2024 training officer (TO). He spent considerable time during the winter at the loft in preparing the plebes for this excursion. As the only undergraduate team member holding the USPA AFFI, he was charged with shepherding the plebes in the important task of providing advanced ground preparation for the onset of their new adventure. In addition, he made a few AFF training jumps with the plebes. Brett also possesses the USPA Tandem Instructor (TI) rating and the full USPA PRO rating, recognized by the FAA.

Ens. Nate Basford, '24, and former USNAPT, dropped' in several times. He made numerous jumps with the team as he took time after a duty assignment in Charleston, continuing training in nuclear engineering, in preparation for reporting to Georgia for submarines.

James Baisden, father of 3/C Sam, as well as Carl Baisden, Sam's uncle, were in attendance for the entire training session. Both gentlemen, retired firefighters, displayed a welcome presence, presenting a supportive and meaningful demeanor which highlighted the family aspect of the team. Their contribution to the event was collateral to team entertainment and unity, including an all-embracing friendliness which was spiritually uplifting.

George Davenport, who operates a Brazilian Jiu Jitsu training facility in Virginia called "The Forge", and has been on hand for several USNAPT events, including on AFFI staff at Skydive Orange, was present for the entire episode of spring training. He assisted in AFF levels with plebes. George also is rated as a TI.

Chris Schrier, honorary USNAPT member, completing his rehab from knee surgery, and newly recognized as a resident of Florida, was on hand for the duration in his usual role as Mr. Utility for team activity. He expects to resume jumping in May.

The most serious part of training is in canopy accuracy and smoke & banner flying, for performance in skydiving demos before the public; including formal parades on the Yard, athletic competitions by Academy varsity teams with visiting colleges and universities, and invitations to airshows from various organizations who find value in USNA representation at their events. The USNAPT invariably impresses onlookers with their precision and aerial competence, enhancing the reputation of a premier educational institution of the United States. Also including direct competition themselves with other colleges and institutions; most notably the USAF Academy in Colorado Springs, and the USMA at West Point, NY. These venues provide the occasion for exploits in precision aerial athletic performance, in the 3-dimensional arena, demanding of great constitution of character, pride, strength, teamwork, motion-perspective and leadership preparation ... Their next competition will be at West Point on April 16 – 19, vying for annual possession of the Commander-In-Chief Trophy, against USAF and USMA. ... Stay tuned for results !!

VARIOUS TRAINING EPISODES:

Observe a short video displaying accuracy challenges in pursuit of the USPA PRO-R rating, allowing for demonstration jumps into more exacting topographical locations. Also, practice in the added burden of trailing a banner for display of a special spectator interest. This is followed by a video of a 4-way team practicing for the competition event of formation skydiving (FS). Other event training includes the 2-way FS and the 6-way speed star. [\(video\)](#)

A special training moment included the first ever downplane with a midshipman. In this case, 1/C Brett Dumais, who passed his 600th jump, has achieved the USPA full PRO rating, the AFFI rating, and the Tandem Instructor rating, was selected. Due to his superlative skills in canopy control, and proven proficiency over years of competitive skydiving, Coach Cecala spent time in preparation. Ever cognizant of safety, Brett was allowed to spend time with Matt, who is a former OIC of the U. S. Navy Leap Frogs, a premier demonstration performance team, getting ready for the occasion. Assistant Coach George Davenport provided added safety oversight. The video provides validation of the wisdom of adding this maneuver under these special circumstances. [\(video\)](#)

After achieving the USPA B license, a jumper is qualified to pursue night jump training, a requirement for more advanced licenses, and the PRO-R rating. At Skydive City, 9 mids were subjected to an intense briefing regarding the special circumstances for night jumps, including the FAA regulations, and the unique protocols of the nighttime environment; also, the special lighting equipment which must be worn. Each participant is required to have made a daylight jump prior. [\(video\)](#)

There's always time to relieve the stress of training and turn to some old-fashioned fun, punctuating the coaching and drilling periods with a little frolic. After all, despite maturity, discipline, and comportment, preparing for a great responsibility as military officers, ... they are college kids. [\(video\)](#)

One of the more exciting aspects of USNAPT activity is the opportunity to jump from a variety of aircraft. Beginning with the first jump, the most frequently seen is the DeHavilland Twin Otter, such as that used at Skydive City, in Zephyrhills, FL, and by Skydive Orange, in Orange, VA. Subsequently, there's often a Movement Order, to Skydive Cross Keys, in Williamstown, NJ, where the Cessna Super Caravan is

in use. These same type of aircraft are in use at other locations often visited by team members; Paraclete in Raeford, NC, and Skydive Suffolk, in Suffolk, VA. At spring training, the mids had an opportunity to jump a Short Bros. Sherpa, an aircraft used by U.S. airborne operations. [\(video\)](#)

Other special occasion aircraft include the MH-60 and Lakota helicopters, the Grumman COD, the C-130, the C-17, and the venerable C-47. These aircraft have hosted USNAPT jumpers for various cooperative training ventures, airshows, and competitions. Like the Sherpa, the C-130 and the C-17 allow tailgate exits, although at somewhat higher airspeed,



Eurocopter UH-72 Lakota



Sikorsky MH-60 Seahawk



DeHavilland DHC-6 Twin Otter



Cessna Grand Caravan



Grumman C-2 (COD)



Lockheed C-130 Hercules



Boeing C-17 Globemaster



Douglas C-47 (WW2 Invasion Markings)

The most prevalent aircraft for Yard practice and event demos such as formal parades and various athletic events is the Cessna 182. This type of aircraft has been faithfully provided for many years by former team coach and current team pilot, Mike Davidson; a self-imposed duty of great value to team progress. Mike is a former XO of the U. S. Army Golden Knights, and currently MAJ-ret., USA. His dedication is scarcely recognized for the degree of burden, timewise and financial, required to maintain a readily available vehicle for valuable response to team needs. Such team loyalty is matched only by Bill Boniface, CAPT (ret.), USN, team Alumni Rep., and longest-serving team advocate, beginning as a midshipman in 1971,



continuing as a USNA Co. Ofcr., and presently carrying the responsibility of raising funds for the maintenance of the USNAPT, including the necessary capital to employ Matt Cecala as the current Coach. Matt joined the USNAPT as a midshipman in 2012, graduating in 2015, From there, he went on as Lt, USN, OIC of the Navy Leap Frogs, continuing as a reserve officer to accept his current role.

We trust this sort of presentation will display the USNAPT in a manner eliciting appreciation of their intensity of effort and manner of application required to achieve a level of performance worthy of their role in representing the USNA, the USN, the Marine Corps, and the loyal team supporters. That support is the essence of the team existence, from which all honors proceed. It's with great pride and appreciation that we entreat anyone who can perceive this value, to these wonderful youngsters and their leadership progress, as well as to our national integrity, to contribute to this ongoing ambition. We also trust that ultimately the U.S. Navy will assist with a USNAPT subsidy, on par with the programs at the USAF Academy at Colorado Springs, and the U. S. Military Academy at West Point. It's not without great sacrifice that these underpaid midshipmen carry the lion's share of expense involved in their training, travel, lodging, and polished preparation for their role as representatives.

With Sincere Thanks !!
