

News Release

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Mt. Pleasant's Underwater Classroom

On July 16th, nine students from Mt. Pleasant's Marine Corps JROTC program completed the Open Water Scuba certification course conducted by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. This is an extracurricular activity, which began in May, that involves approximately 100 hours of classroom, pool and ocean work. The course was taught by Mr. Brian Nelson from Pacific Offshore Divers.



Classroom work and swim conditioning prepared students for the basic scuba skills practice which was conducted in the pool. Students were required to pass an entrance test consisting of a 10 minute tread water and 200 yard swim. To ensure students were in condition to meet the rigors of the course, pool training sessions were conducted in advance. Although these were demanding, they were sometimes fun as they included activities such as underwater hockey which is played with spatulas and a hockey puck. Once the students were judged to be ready, they traveled to Monterey to demonstrate their scuba diving proficiency during five ocean dives conducted over two days to earn their open water certification.

The basic scuba instruction required students to apply mathematical skills they received in school, and they learned physiology and Earth science. Special emphasis was placed on marine biology and environmental issues. The students' organizational skills were honed and their work ethic was tested as the course was conducted over multiple days at four locations. Their equipment load and maintenance requirements were much more than other high school students experience. They sometimes did not return home from instruction until 11:30 PM, and they had to leave San Jose at 5:15 AM on the two days they went to Monterey. The course demanded that their levels of maturity and responsibility rise well above that which is expected of other high school students. One participant remarked that they worked much harder than expected and was surprised that they learned a lot more than just scuba diving skills. However, all students agreed that it was well worth the effort.

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