



FIGHTIN' IRISH BATTALION

THE SHAMROCK

- University of Notre Dame
- Saint Mary's College
- Indiana University South Bend
- Hoy Cross College
- Bethel College
- Valparaiso University

B1 takes Iron Irish

c/CPT Jon Lagoy

The year's last inter-platoon competition, the Iron Irish took place on 7 April. In a twist of unfortunate fate, the week's previously-beautiful weather turned to clouds of thunderstorms, depriving zealous cadets of an opportunity for paintball glory in the cancelled culminating event. Nevertheless, the four platoons were not deterred and refused to let a little rain get in the way of fierce competition.

Station 1 took place at the Rockne pool and was overseen by c/CPT VanBeckum. The station consisted of two lanes and required a 100m swim (down and back twice). Each lane could only have a maximum of 4 cadets and after the first 50m, each cadet had to get out of the pool, walk to the end, walk back, and then get back in the pool to swim the last 50m. The winning strategy had some platoons placing their weakest swimmers first and their stronger swimmers in the back. It was a close competition between B1 and A2 with B1 ultimately winning, because A2 was penalized for having too many cadets in the pool at once.

Station 2 was a 3 mile ruck march around campus from Rockne to PC to Stepan. The event was overseen by c/CPT Lagoy and c/CPT Rodriguez. Since the event was timed and time did not stop until the last cadet crossed the finish line, the platoon had to inspire and motivate the most exhausted cadets toward victory, with the Platoon Leaders leading from the front and inspiring their platoons.

cont'd p. 3; see "Iron Irish"

Farewell from the outgoing Battalion Commander

I hope you all enjoyed the semester. We completed a ton of training: the STX labs, Army Ball, NDFTX, CFTX, and everything in between. I want to thank you all for your dedication and commitment to the Fightin' Irish Battalion. As long as you continue working to improve yourselves and each other, like you have this semester, this battalion will continue to be great.

I want to take this opportunity to expand upon something that I mentioned at deactivation lab. I encourage everyone to live life at 100% as a cadet, as a student, as a friend, and as a family member, especially given our current position in life. You can make whatever you want of college. You can slack off, or you can leave it all on the field. I know plenty of you have pulled all-nighters then gone to PT, or had a rough week and just wanted to crash, but rallied to have fun with your friends on the weekends. You have also come back from FTXs on very little sleep and proceeded to pound out seven or eight hours of homework or come to the aid of friends when they needed it. These are the attributes that really make great leaders, not natural land nav talent or freakish push up scores (although that stuff is very important too).

Continue to live life at full speed, especially now. You won't regret it.

Go Irish!
c/LTC Capretta

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Battalion crowns a boxing champ

c/CSM GERALYN JANKE

On the first day of the spring semester, cadets Ryan Slaney, Jon Lagoy, Greg Abbracciamento, Tom Dybicz, Jim Hasson, Josh Sandler, and Kevin Plude joined nearly 200 Notre Dame males in the university's heralded Bengal Bouts program. Seven weeks later, on February 27th, Slaney stood victorious after a championship bout as his teammates raucously applauded his conquest.

The journey to the tournament was long and difficult, but worthwhile. The cadets found themselves well-acquitted to the physical rigors of an exhausting sport, and found the hundreds of lax "pushups" performed at the beginning of a typical practice to be laughable after performing to a considerably more difficult standard in preparation for their monthly PT tests. At one point in the training phase, Slaney and Abbracciamento put aside their friendship for 8 long minutes to match fists and wits in a grueling spar. Having endured a blistering flurry from the eventual champ, Abbracciamento recalls: "I struggled to walk around for a while after that." More dedicated to weigh-ins than his peers, Sandler worked hard to shed a few extra pounds from his already-skeletal frame. Dybicz, on the other hand, took one of the pauses in a sparring session to curse his own paltry efforts at weight loss while sweating with typical profusion: "Dudes, I'm SO HUNGRY."

After four weeks flew by while the cadets precariously balanced ROTC, boxing, schoolwork, and sleep, the preliminary rounds began on February 13th with a great deal of excitement and plenty of nervousness. Sandler, weighing in at 133 lbs, lost a split decision to a worthy opponent. The curmudgeonly Kevin "Get Off My Lawn" Plude also lost a tough split decision, despite unleashing a wicked hook to his opponent's face in the second round. Abbracciamento lost unanimously. Dybicz lost another split at 166 lbs. The senior spoke for his comrades after the match: "Losing in the first round is very disappointing. But I don't regret all the time I invested in Bouts, if anything, I wish I had spent more. Standing in that ring is an incredible experience." In a wake of disappointing losses, Lagoy (133 lbs.) and Hasson defended the battalion's honor in exciting victories. Lagoy won a split decision, outlasting his opponent in the third round, and Hasson dominated his opponent to win unanimously in the competitive 189 lb. class. Slaney, ranked first in the 155 lb. bracket, was perturbed at having a "bye" and worked throughout the week keep his edge.

In the February 17th quarterfinal, Lagoy lost unanimously, while Hasson steamrolled his opponent in a fight that was stopped with 20 seconds left in the first round.

In the February 24 semifinal, Slaney won a split decision, characteristically landing punches in the third round despite his exhaustion. Hasson, however, lost a brutal split decision to Bernardo Garcia, a Marine option cadet with NROTC. Hasson's physicality was almost enough to win the match, but the judges decided against him, and Garcia went on to win a championship.

And so on February 27th, Slaney was the lone Army cadet remaining in Bengal Bouts. Cadets from every grade in the battalion came out to cheer him on. He didn't disappoint, again "going the distance" to win a split decision. The fight was stopped a number of times—once because he knocked his opponent's mouthguard out, and once because he bloodied his opponent's nose—which seemed to halt Slaney's momentum. Nevertheless, he won the 155-lb. championship to rancorous cheering from his fans. MSG Tripp, Commandant of Cadets, offered: "The aloof boxing master known as Slaney took the easy way out and kept hitting his opponents nose to win." Slaney is in good company, joining Jim Devereaux '09, an Engineering lieutenant, as Bengal Bouts champion.

By participating in the Bouts, our cadets raised over \$2100 for the Holy Cross mission in Bangladesh. Furthermore, they honed some of the time-management skills and pain tolerance requisite of a good Platoon Leader.



Top (left to right): Abbracciamento, Slaney, Dybicz. **Bottom:** Lagoy, Sandler, Hasson, Plude. With the notable exception of c/Sandler, boxing didn't make these men any prettier.



Iron Irish (cont'd from p. 1)

Station 3 was a pull-up competition at Pasquerilla Center that was ran by c/CPT Slaney and c/CPT Abbracciamento. The event was scored by taking the platoon average from the amount of pull-ups performed divided by the number of cadets in the platoon. MS IV platoon leaders were actually included in this event, which made c/2LT O'Keefe—renowned for his shapely biceps—particularly joyous and cheerful. C/2LT Vitter's B1 platoon that won the event.

Station 4 was an EST (engagement skills trainer) event that was ran by c/CPT Dybicz in the beautiful Stepan Center. The event was initially beset by technical issues so the first platoon, B2, instead underwent a motivating surprise smoke session that included pushups, bear crawls, and sit-ups in body armor which was intended to replace the event entirely. As MSI c/Quick described it as “rather difficult” and offered “it was upsetting we were the only PLT to do it.” c/CPT Dybicz conceded: “I threw down the gauntlet for B2, and they rose to the challenge. It was great to see them pushing through the pain and refusing to quit.” SFC Boardman later saved the day with his technical troubleshooting. In a “stress shoot” intended to in some small way replicate the challenge of shooting accurately in combat, each cadet performed 30 pushups intended to rush their breathing prior to taking a few quick shots. B2 eventually came back later in the day and managed to place first, having overcome the initial smoke session.

Going into the event, hopes were high. To some, it was a chance to end the year with a positive note, to prove themselves as one of the better platoons, or to finally get a streamer for their bare guidon. To others, it was the time to defend their reputation. According to MSI c/Dowdey, “it felt great to win with B1 especially for my first competition... the victory was a good make-up for Warrior Night.” B1, valiantly led by c/2LT Vitter, eventually won the competition. Victorious, c/Vitter said, “We may not be the biggest or strongest platoon out there but we worked together and that's what the competition was about.”

Irish compete for German Badge

c/SSG Louisa White

From February 19th through the 21st, a select group of cadets traveled to Camp Atterbury to compete for the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge in a challenging test of participants' mental and physical abilities. Graded events consisted of a 200m swim, a 5 km (males) or 3 km (females) distance run, pistol marksmanship, a written first aid test, high jump (or long jump), shot put, timed sprints, and culminated in a ruck march.

To prepare, the Irish held multiple training sessions focusing on the most technically difficult events – high jump, shot put, and pistol shooting. This time was well spent. Following their performance in Camp Atterbury, cadets Rodriguez, Gleason, Lott, and White each earned a badge in the competition, three golds and a silver, respectively. Separation between these badges can be attributed to hitting 5/5 vs. 4/5 targets on the pistol range, rucking at least 30 lbs for gold standard (30 km for males and 24 km for females in 5 hours) or silver (25 km vs. 20 km in 4.17 hours). After the excruciatingly difficult ruck march, the cadets reveled in their badges and ignored their blisters.

Having sacrificed a weekend to compete in place of studies or relaxation in addition to early morning practices practicing, these cadets are now prized with a foreign award that they can continue to wear on their dress uniform throughout their commissioned service years within the Army.



BN attends Army Ball

The battalion's annual Army Ball was hosted in McKenna Hall on February 11th. A formal dining-in event, Army Ball is designed to promote esprit de corps and to give cadets a glimpse of the timeless traditions of the Army. The night consisted of a dinner; addresses from Mike Brey, men's basketball coach, and LTC Crist, BN Commander; and dancing. For those new to the battalion, like Kyle Hunsberger, it offers an opportunity to associate with battle buddies at their most formal—and their most uninhibited.



c/CSM GERALYN JANKE TAKES A BREAK FROM HER REIGN OF TERROR TO POSE WITH PREDECESSOR COLIN RAYMOND.

Dining in with the Fightin' Irish

c/CPL Kyle Hunsberger

Even though I wasn't looking forward to wearing my Class-A uniform all night, after the meal was served at this year's Army Ball I really didn't have much to complain about. The food was great and it was fun sitting down with other cadets and their dates to socialize outside of classes.

This was my first year at the event and I think it is a great way for us to honor both the United States Army and the Fightin' Irish Battalion. The evening was both formal and entertaining—excluding a few of the dance moves I witnessed during the dance off between the MS IIIs and the MS IIIs—and exposed us to tradition and camaraderie characteristic of the Army.

The close competition of choreography in this year's contest was very impressive and slightly disturbing. Although I'm not a qualified judge, from my perspective of the dance floor it did seem like the MS-IV dance crew was robbed of this

year's title. But the MS IIIs still put on a great show, and I feel as though some of them have chosen the wrong profession and might want to consider a job on Dancing with the Stars. The dance off was an amusing way for everybody to relax and hang out. And after the juniors and seniors finally decided to take their charades elsewhere, it was nice that everybody else was able to enjoy the dance floor too.

Events like this bring the Battalion closer and raise morale amongst cadets. A formal dinner requires a lot of planning, from meals and nametags to guest speakers and DJs, and this year's coordinators—cadets Rodriguez and Lagoy—did a great job of pulling it all together for everyone else to enjoy. I look forward to attending next year's ball, when we MS-IIIs will give this year's winners a run for their money.



The 2009 Ranger Challenge team. See p. 10 for associated lore.

FIELD TRAINING EXERCISES

In the spring semester, the Fighting Irish conducted two Field Training Exercises (FTX). These weekend training events are the heart of the training schedule and an invaluable opportunity for cadets to develop technical and leadership skills. With a great deal of preparation by the MS IV class, underclassmen received quality training at each event.

A weekend in the field

c/CPL Griffin Bonnema

The energy in the air was palpable as the MS Is and IIs mulled about the water tower at St. Mary's College in the final minutes before the annual Notre Dame FTX (NDFTX) kicked off on 16 April. We were about to embark on an adventure through the Tom Dybicz land navigation course, kicking off the spring Notre Dame field training exercise with a bang. It was a beautiful day, perfect weather to trek through the woods in search of the elusive landnav points.

We looked forward to a weekend of training that would include day land navigation in the woods of St. Mary's College, night land navigation across the fields and forests of Culver Military Academy, a full day of squad STX (Situational Training Exercise) lanes on Saturday, another evening of land navigation, and a massive patrolling lane. This last event culminated in a giant force-on-force paintball fight that emphasized the difficulties of large scale tactical operations.

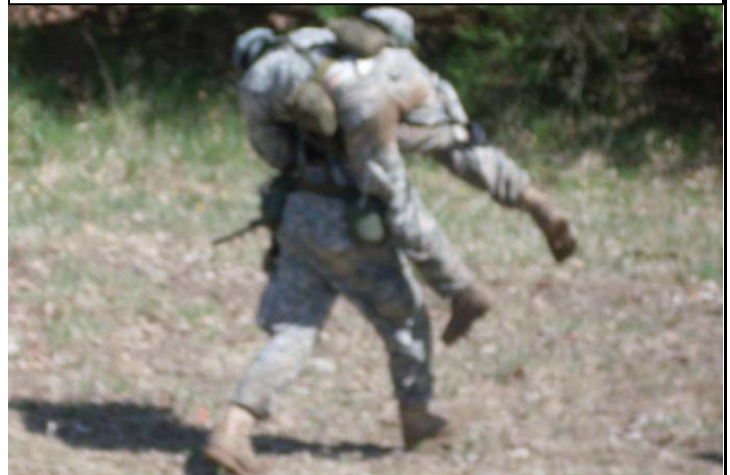
Most of the MS-I and II cadets had experienced STX lanes and landnav in the fall FTX and weekly leadership labs, but there is always more to learn. As a group, we learned how to deliver better operation orders during STX lanes, how to more accurately count our paces and find our compass azimuths in land nav, how to conduct basic platoon sized movements in force-on-force. The gentlemen of the battalion, eternally grateful for an experience most Notre Dame students will never have, even learned how to clean out port-o-jons to Master Sergeant Tripp's standards.

Individually, we all learned things too. I learned how to keep my cool when I get stuck in a dark scary thicket in the woods during night land nav. I learned that keeping track of my whole squad during STX lanes is not only very important to achieve success but is also harder than I appreciated. I learned not to march fearlessly into a swamp despite my compass' assurance that indeed the swamp was the best way to go. I learned how to fall into said swamp like a champion. I learned that the best way to sleep is to put my poncho over my face so I don't wake up covered in frost in the morning.

Most importantly though, I learned what will be expected of me and my classmates next year. We have a long way to go to be ready for LDAC next summer, but we are fully capable of rising to the leadership challenges we will face as juniors.



In addition to being fun, paintball stresses the importance of cover and concealment to cadets.



c/PVT Quick carries an injured battle buddy to safety.



c/CPL Kim, slain in a comfortable and carefully chosen place.

THOUGHTS ON THE CFTX

c/SFC Anthony Conklin

My experience at the Combined Field Training Exercise at Fort Custer this spring was a very positive one. The purpose of the CFTX is to evaluate the MSIII cadets on their readiness for the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC), testing their land navigation, leadership and Army knowledge as it pertains to squad missions. The CFTX is conducted in conjunction with several universities from Michigan. MS IIIs from these schools are placed into squads together, giving cadets the experience of leading and working with people they don't know, as such teamwork is integral to success at LDAC.

After a year of training, my experience at the Combined Field Training Exercise at Fort Custer this spring was a very positive one. Things started off well in the first iteration of night land navigation. On the same course in the fall, I had failed to find the necessary number of points to pass. On the CFTX, I was successful. The thick woods at Custer were unusually dark under the new moon. The points were difficult to find, because they were on dark green posts, and the sign that marked them as correct points often faced away from the roads. I found three out of five points. On the second night of land navigation, we were sent out in the snow to find three more points. Again, I was successful.

The Squad Tactical Exercises were positive for me and my squad. c/Miranda Fees was in my squad, and I felt that we were the two best prepared cadets. Our Operations Orders, rehearsals, and mission executions were very strong. c/Fees led a reconnaissance mission, in which she and a reconnaissance team made visual contact with the enemy in order to collect intelligence information. I led a Movement to Contact mission, in which my squad moved in a direction specified by higher command until we were engaged by the enemy. The members of our squad were all helpful, and everyone in the squad was there not only for themselves, but to make the squad as a whole better. The weather was cold and miserable (it rained and snowed), and it would have been easy to let morale dip and ruin the FTX. Our squad stayed positive, however, and as a result we all learned and improved as the weekend progressed.

The training that I've been given by the cadre and MSIVs these three years prepared my classmates and me for this weekend. Numerous times throughout the year, the MSIIIs were able to practice land navigation at the battalion's land navigation course in the woods behind Saint Mary's College, practice squad missions at White Fields on Notre Dame's campus, and have one on one instruction from personal mentors in the MSIV class to make us more prepared for the CFTX and, ultimately, for LDAC. After a long and difficult year, I have reached a skill level that did not seem attainable as freshman, or even at the beginning of this year.

View from the hospital

c/SSG Ryan McDermott

c/McDermott spent the CFTX weekend at Notre Dame with the flu. Here, he recalls the FTX.

This was the hardest FTX by far. People were going down left and right; it was utter chaos. I finally was hit by a JDAM on Thursday night, but not before taking out half of the enemies' forces with a hip-aimed machine gun. Thus injured, I had to spend the remainder of the weekend at Health Services. (As a side note, Health Services wasn't too bad, really friendly and very helpful staff. Even though they wouldn't let me leave the building for two days, they treated me well.)

Two words describe the CFTX: "good" and "trainin." I learned invaluable leadership lessons, made lifelong friends, and most importantly, discovered a new weight loss miracle that will make you shed 16 lbs in a day and a half guaranteed! I'm waiting for the patent now, and you can be sure it will become a national sensation in no time.

Hooah.

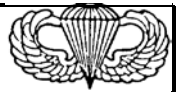
View from the OPFOR

c/CPL Justin Bourque

I had the opportunity to join the OPFOR (Opposing Force) for the CFTX during March of this semester. Throughout the weekend, I and 11 others "played" the enemy for the cadets from Notre Dame and various other universities in the area, including the University of Michigan and Michigan State. My position on the battlefield allowed me to see other cadets run tactical missions lanes from a very different point of view, preparing me for my MS III year and LDAC. I personally was assigned to be OPFOR for an ambush lane; my main responsibility was essentially to walk down a road where a U.S. squad was directed to set an ambush. To help cadets work on their first aid and detainment skills, I was also to act as if I was a wounded and conscious EPW after the firing stopped. These two roles allowed me to learn a lot about offensive positioning and controlling enemies on the objective. While walking down the road, I was able to observe what made certain positioning effective and ineffective. One thing that I found surprising was the ease by which I could see the cadets as they tried to find cover and concealment. Next time I am leading or taking part in a STX lane I will be more prepared because I have seen the most effective positioning from an enemy perspective. Similarly, I was able to see how cadets interacted with me as an EPW, and discovered some successful methods of dealing with uncooperative EPW's. Overall, I found the experience well worth my time, as the experience offered insights that are best experienced rather than taught.

I was also assigned to be the OPFOR NCOIC (noncommissioned officer in charge) for the weekend. This challenging job presented an invaluable opportunity for peer leadership role in preparation for future cadet leadership opportunities. Unfortunately, one of the challenges I had to face was a lack of preparation, as I knew I would be leading only a few days before we left. As such, it was somewhat difficult to have intimate knowledge of the timeline. I felt as though I was constantly asking the Chain of Command for information that I should have known before we left. All told, the CFTX was challenged me to be an effective leader and was a great experience that was well worth volunteering for.

THREE WEEKS OF PAIN



The BN's Summer Training Preparation (STP) is designed to test cadets' physical endurance and mental determination as they compete with one another for slots to Airborne and Air Assault School.

Upperclass "Blackhats" (so-called for the color of their instructor headgear) who have been to these schools direct and participate in PT with younger "Charlies" (phonetic shorthand for "cadet") for three intense weeks. No cadet's experience of the battalion is really complete without experiencing the pure joy that is STP. Take a moment to step into our heroes' boots...

Life of a Blackhat

c/1SG Ryan Degnan

5 A.M.

The beast awoke. Anger rising inside him, he knew that Charlies, too, were waking.

Charlies. Ugh. Nothing angers a blackhat more than a Charlie. The thought of one alone is enough to send a blackhat into unparalleled rage. Such rages are legendary, rivaled only by Howard Dean presidential campaign speeches. Actually looking at one of those unfortunate enough to be named Charlie is another story entirely. Standard English's lexicon is devoid of verbiage which satisfies description, and I will not attempt to overcome the language barrier here.

As STP began, six ordinary men were transformed by that anger. Before the sun's rays could quell their fury each morning, those men had unleashed their wrath on Charlies in the form of severe physical conditioning. Pushups, flutter kicks, pushups, overhead arm claps, pushups, burpies, pushups, side straddle hops, pushups, sit ups, pushups, cherry pickers, pushups, crunches, and pushups name only a few of the blackhat's weapons of choice. When Charlies weren't gasping for breath, their lips quivered in fear of the blackhats' physical prowess.

Each morning was the same. The Charlies would huddle in a cold formation in front of the JACC, shamefully knowing they had not arrived on time. For a blackhat, timeliness is of utmost importance. Already enraged, the blackhats knew this would not be a pleasant morning for the Chucks. The Chucks knew it, too. Wincing, they proceeded to give painfully incorrect answers when questioned on knowledge, only worsening their predicament. By the time the Charles felt the warmth of the indoors touch their body, their minds wished they were back outside. The JACC meant PT.

This cycle repeated itself day after day for three long weeks. The Charlies were unstoppable force hurtling towards freedom, while the blackhats were the immovable object standing in their way. In the end, the expected stalemate came to fruition. Having completed the three week regime, each Chuck was free of blackhat reign, and things were good. But not all was lost by the blackhats: psychological damage is permanent.

Cadets Vitter, Pearl, Slaney, Degnan, Hasson, and Raymond brought—and endured—the pain.

TO BE A CHARLIE

c/SSG Hanratty

At the ripe young age of 18 (though upwards of 20 for a few stubborn, returning vets) – as Charlie is just figuring out that quarter dogs were never an animal and the girls he dances with at parties on Fridays actually go to school across the street – he is plucked from his rector's protective embrace, from the nights of dreamy, harmonious sleep that only a parietal-governed dorm can deliver, and plunges into a world unlike anything he dreamed possible at Her Lady's University. With the moon yet to set in these fleeting moments of the previous night (evidenced by the Club Fever crowd just now reentering the dorm), he arises to the dreadful howl of his alarm. It is as if the alarm, knowing what is to come, mocks him. Nevertheless, he laces up his most comfortable pair of boots, fastens his 20-pound SAPPE vest over his ever-racing heart, slings his battle-worn rucksack upon his ever-broadening shoulders and ventures out into the crisp January air.

The crispness will not last long. As a matter of fact, only minutes later Charlie finds himself standing at attention, chin held high and chest out ready to face the beast Blackhat that he knows lurks nearby. Yet even with the knowledge of this impending strike, it is not fear that grips Charlie ... only a heightened sense of things. So after that last preparatory breath of cold air rushes into his lungs as the Blackhat burst through the door of the JAAC – as though it had in some way offended him – Charlie does not budge, or even blink. Armed with his perfect pushup form, rock hard abs, and unflappable Airborne knowledge he stands tall in the face of the Blackhat ... in the face of this god-like incarnation, awaiting 2 hours of certain pain...in the face of the toughest PT ND's Army ROTC program has to offer. And why? So that one day he will be the Beast with the shiny silver wings on his hat.

15 days Charlie stands tall and battles gallantly. In the third week, exhausted from the previous fortnight's struggle, he blitzes through a PT test, only to trudge 12 agonizing miles with a loaded rucksack to the end of this war the next day. And finally in that moment at the finish line – legs exhausted, ACUs soaked – the Charlie is vindicated for the pain he has endured. He is officially an STP graduate.

After the three weeks of pain, cadets Schmal, Lott, and Courtney earned slots to Airborne, and c/Hanratty earned a slot to Air Assault. Cadets Meyering, Miller, White, Gleason, Bonnema, Spinelli, Colter, Williams, Rushford, and Dieckman earned personal satisfaction and street cred.

Army clubs flourish

ATLAS standing tall

c/CPT Greg Abbracciamento

Alliance To Lead And Serve (ATLAS) came out of dormancy this year, became a fully-operating Notre Dame SAO club, and regained its role in the Fighting Irish Battalion. Under the stalwart leadership of c/CSM GERALYN JANKE, it started off the Fall 2009 semester by organizing a Tri-Military ROTC blood drive with the Red Cross in September. A great turnout of blood donors and a willing group of cadet and midshipman volunteers made the event of success, with over 250 pints of blood collected in the course of the two-day drive.

In October, ATLAS volunteered at the Robinson Community Learning Center in support of their Youth Entrepreneurship Program. One specific project the inner-city youth do is help with parking during home Notre Dame football weekends. To help make this easier for them, the group spent two days painting lines and numbers on their parking lot. In November, ATLAS held a Battalion-wide food and clothes drive for the Salvation Army in South Bend. With requests for donations throughout the week, culminating in a platoon competition at Warrior Night, the BN collected over 450 items to donate, just in time for the Christmas season.

ATLAS finished out the fall semester in December with two events. The first involved Camouflage Kids, an organization targeted at the families of deployed service members. The children affiliated with the program participated in a “College Game attending a Notre Dame game and listening to a talk by Coach Mike Brey. They and other prizes. They also received a t-shirt. ATLAS provided logistical support in terms of directing the children and distributing items. Vincent de Paul Joseph’s County, we participated in an Adopt-a-Family program. Through donations, we were able to provide toys, gifts, and groceries to a three-year-old girl and her mother. Spring 2010 meant more opportunities for February and March, the Notre Dame indoor track meets.



Day,” which included Notre Dame basketball to a talk by Coach ATLAS provided terms of directing the distributing items. Vincent de Paul Joseph’s County, we Adopt-a-Family the battalion’s able to provide toys, to a three-year-old at Christmastime. more service ATLAS. In it volunteered with Athletic Department equipment used for

In late March, ATLAS co-sponsored the first ever March Madness 10K with Arnold Air and Trident Naval Society—the respective community service clubs of Air Force ROTC and Navy ROTC. All proceeds from this race benefited the Wounded Warrior Project. The race started at the Notre Dame Clarke Memorial Fountain, which honors the University’s fallen soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen. ATLAS helped with planning, registering runners, volunteering on race day, and participating in the race. Attracting over 150 runners, the three clubs raised \$4000 in race registration fees and donations in what will become an annual event.

In April, volunteers worked at the Center for the Homeless Charity Auction. This is an annual formal event that auctions off vacations, sports tickets, sponsorships, and other items through both a silent and live auction. There was also a dancing competition during which people pay to vote on dancers throughout the night. The group provided the computer and printers, and were involved with check-in and check-out procedures for all the attendants. The night raised thousands of dollars for the Center for the Homeless.

Coming full circle, the group finished out the semester with a second Red Cross Blood Drive. Again with the support of cadets and midshipman from Air Force ROTC and Navy ROTC, ATLAS sponsored an excellent event, collecting over 200 pints of blood during the two-day drive.

Army clubs flourish *cont'd from p. 8*



From left to right: c/Abbracciamento, c/White, c/Hanratty, c/Bonnemma, c/McNaughton, c/Kirchner, c/Kim

Marauders lead the way

c/1LT Richie Blomstrom

This year, the Irish Marauders Color Guard and Drill Team participated in many exciting events, increasing team cohesion from the previous year. Early practices, under the auspices of distinguished c/NCOIC Hanratty, focused on the basics of color guard ceremonies. This year, Army ROTC received the highly coveted color guard duty for the USC game. c/CPT Abbracciamento led a hand-picked team that rendered honors before kickoff and was even invited to sit on the sidelines during the game. c/CPT Rodriguez led the tri-military color guard for the home football game against Navy, a difficult task given the different branches she was required to coordinate with.

As the academic year went on, the focus shifted to providing color guards for basketball games. Here, many junior members of the team stepped up, particularly the new freshmen members, whose dedication and responsibility were appreciated.

A trip to New York City for the St. Patrick's Day parade was the capstone to a successful year. Eight members of the Marauders led the NYC Parade in conjunction with the 69th Infantry Regiment. The Marauders were able to tour the city and visit Times Square, Rockefeller Center, and Ground Zero. Bystanders praised the team for their professional appearance and behavior; the event provided excellent publicity for both ROTC and for Notre Dame.

The Marauders team is in excellent hands next year, as c/Hanratty will take over as OIC and c/Bonnemma and c/McNaughton will perform NCO duties. Cadets of all MS years are urged to join the club next year, as it not only adds valuable points to accessions, but also provides an excellent and informal weekly social outlet for all cadets.

Rifle team returns

c/CPT Rick Heatherly

On April 23rd, six members of the Sorin Rifle Team and MSG Tripp headed south to compete in a rifle competition for the first time in three years, shooting against Purdue University. The Notre Dame team showed itself to be a formidable opponent, coming in just 400 points behind Purdue, whose winning score was 4400 points. Our own team, which was made up of cadets Barbuto, Pfarr, Loughery, Dowdey, Johnson, and Blomstrom, traveled to Purdue at a distinct disadvantage, having only had the chance to fire the weapons they would compete with twice before the competition. By contrast, Purdue had been shooting every week for the entire year. Despite their underdog status, the Sorin rifles put up a good fight and set themselves up for a very good match next year.

c/OIC Richie Blomstrom and c/NCOIC Alex Barbuto worked tirelessly to bring the rifle team out of its two-year dormancy.
see RIFLE TEAM p. 10

Army clubs flourish *cont'd from p. 8*

You can't spell "RRRANGER" without "anger"

c/1LT Jim Pearl

This past fall, 11 stalwart young men trained tirelessly every morning for six weeks straight. Were these men masochists? Maybe. Were they a dedicated group of hard-nosed ruffians? Absolutely. This handful of men, nay, warriors, nay, ballers, were none other than the members of the Ranger Challenge Team. They trained in the art of physical fitness on a daily basis, performing various upper body, core, and endurance workouts, as well as other less conventional feats of strength, such as rope climbing and ruck running.

Six weeks of training can make a man thirsty...thirsty for glory. That is just what these men craved, and their thirst would not be slaked until they drank from the cup of glory. The day of reckoning came during the fall break of 2009. While other round cheeked and button-nosed students curled up in their blankets slothfully sipping their delicious hot chocolates and indulging in the choicest of cured meats, these warriors competed in feats of strength, intelligence, and proficiency against 40 other schools.

It was a strange year for the group of rag-tag misfits. It was the first year there had been so many other teams, twice as many as previous competitions. But they would not be deterred. The Irish started off with a bang, tying for first in the Army Physical Fitness Test with a team average of a perfect 300. Things were going well. But all good things cannot last forever. They took a few hits during the competition, excelling in the physical aspects, but faltering in the more technical aspects. Events included a PT test, obstacle course, land navigation, weapon assembly, disassembly and functions check, a stress shoot, and a rope bridge competition. The rope bridge is where most of the troubles occurred. The setup was unlike anything they expected. Having practiced tying bridges on trees for the better part of six weeks, they were crestfallen to find that the bridges had to be strung between two smooth wooden poles. Now I'm no physics major (or am I?) but I'm going to go out on a "limb" and say that the friction caused by the bark on the trees helps keep the rope in place. Sure enough, the rope bridges were not up to their usual standard. Indiana Jones himself would be hesitant to cross such rickety structures.

The setback was not dwelled upon for long, as the team rallied and performed in outstanding fashion during the ruck run. Despite having to scale three menacing hills (known as Misery, Agony, and Heartbreak) during the 10 kilometer ruck run, the scrappy group of Ranger Challengers excelled, finishing with one of the fastest times.

Did the Ranger Challenge Team take first place? No, they did not. However, they now know what to expect and are anxious to taste sweet victory in the fall of 2010. And thus the Ranger Challenge team got an early on next year's competition, meeting for unprecedented spring practices, and recruiting new blood to take the place of last year's seniors. Look for big things next fall from c/OIC Degan and c/NCOIC Sandler's group.



RIFLE TEAM

cont'd from p. 9

Aside from the match at Purdue, the rifle team also participated in a number of different activities this year. While the high precision .22 caliber rifles that would be used against Purdue were being repaired, the Irish honed their skills on pellet rifles, focusing on the four fundamentals of shooting (I won't tell you what they are, but you can find them in FM 3-22.9). Along with target practice, the team also engaged in a number of stress shoots, training to engage targets in a simulated combat environment with elevated heart rates.

During the second semester, the team went to the range twice to practice with the .22 rifles, shot against Purdue, and shot at a local range the following weekend. At the local range, they had a chance to fire an AK-47, L1A1, AR15, and several other weapons.

The members of the Sorin Rifle Team exceeded all expectations this year. These cadets dedicated a substantial amount of time to practice and competition, making time outside of school, homework, and ROTC obligations. Thanks to help from the team's advisors, CPT Carter and MSG Tripp, the team was able improve their shooting and set themselves up well for next year.

The Battalion will soon be losing 14 MS IVs, commissioning May 15th.

Gregory Abbracciamento
Richard Blomstrom
Thomas Capretta
Thomas Dybicz
Rick Heatherly
Jeremy Hull
Jon Lagoy
Ethan McWilliams
Patrick O'Keefe
Jim Pearl
Marina Rodriguez
Elaine Teske
Jeffrey Scott Vitter
Kailyn Van Beckum

ORDINANCE
SIGNAL CORPS
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, branch detail INFANTRY
SIGNAL CORPS, branch detail INFANTRY
SIGNAL CORPS
FINANCE
FIELD ARTILLERY
JAG CORPS
AVIATION
MILITARY INTELLIGENCE
MEDICAL SERVICES
ADJUTANT GENERAL
ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERING
NURSE CORPS

Congratulations to our graduates, and best of luck to Ryan Slaney as he pursues an Aviation commission!

Parting shot

c/CPT Tom Dybicz

ROTC is leadership development. I think we can take two things from that: 1) the cadre realized you have leadership potential when they signed you up and 2) that quality is being *developed*; you are not necessarily being *trained*. So you need to meet your leadership halfway. To prepare yourself for your career in the Army, you need to seek opportunities to develop yourself as a leader.

It's not uncommon for a sophomore PT stud (and I was this guy) to think that ROTC is "easy" or "stupid" or mostly "a waste of time." But the biggest challenges of ROTC are not physical or technical. They are leadership challenges. How can you get your subordinates and peers—or even your superiors—to do things that they don't naturally want to do, things that are good for them (which is to say, good for the organization) but require sacrifice—be it pain, time, or a loss of face? As you step into your next duty position, whether as a TL, PSG, or BC, look for opportunities to make this organization work better. Be a leader.

If you come to work with the right attitude, you can accomplish a great deal, and leave this organization better than you found it.

MS IIIs head to LDAC

Throughout the summer of 2010, the BN will send 19 of its members to the Leadership Development Assessment Course (LDAC) at Fort Lewis, Washington, where they will train and be evaluated with peers from ROTC programs across the country. Graded portions of LDAC will complete these cadets' accessions packets as they prepare for branch selection in the fall. After a year of preparation and training described above, we are confident that our MS IIIs will be very successful at LDAC and represent the Fightin' Irish well.

Keep up the fight.

Hail and Farewell

The Battalion also will miss the leadership of MAJ Sean Straus, Operations Officer, and MAJ Joe Kosek, Recruiting Officer. MAJ Straus is leaving Notre Dame after his second one-year stint with ROTC, and MAJ Kosek is graduating from Notre Dame for the second time, this year with an MBA from the Mendoza College of Business. Thank you for your dedication and best of luck in the future.

At the same time, we are lucky to have SFC Bruce Boardman join our cadre. We look forward to learning technical and tactical skills from him and hearing more gator hunting stories from his youth in South Florida.



WHERE DID THE SEMESTER GO? Another whirlwind year has passed in the Fightin' Irish Battalion and as I look back at the semester, I am impressed with all that we have accomplished. From the largest freshman class in recent memory to the senior chain of command, you have continued to push yourselves and each other, making yourselves better prepared as the Army's future leaders. The battalion enjoyed significant growth this year adding nearly 50% to our ranks which has increased the number of leadership opportunities available considerably. Throughout this growth, the battalion maintained its high standards and reputation for quality.

The training that the MS IV's designed and implemented this semester has been phenomenal. The labs in the snow-covered, wind-swept White Fields' Woods during the Notre Dame winter were executed to standard and equipped each Cadet with the tools needed to lead a squad. There is no better evidence of this than the CFTX where our MS III class set the standard among our cluster in performing STX lanes. The ND FTX conducted at Culver in April was again another outstanding training event. Once again braving the cold nights and the Relay for Life music medley, the MS Is and IIs got some valuable experience on land navigation, leading their peers on squad missions, and reaping the benefits of the cadre's barbecuing expertise. The Iron Irish tested each platoon's ability to perform as a team in a friendly competition -the driving rain that we did this in was just an added bonus. The Army Ball provided a time to gather as a battalion and share a night of camaraderie and tradition. While the dance moves exhibited by some of the classes have permanently scarred the judges, the night was fun and a great reinforcement of the battalion's strong bonds.



While I am extremely pleased with what we did in training, I am as proud of the revitalization in our clubs and teams this year. The Rangers trained hard, won an event at the Ranger Challenge, and have committed to winning it all next year. The Rifle Team not only became active again this year but also competed in a match against Purdue as a culminating event. ATLAS was extremely active throughout the year in the community and on campus highlighted by raising over \$4000 for the Wounded Warriors Foundation and receiving nearly 500 pints of blood in our two blood drives. The Marauders participated in the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade for the second consecutive year and the Color Guard represented us at countless games and events. The work you put forth in these efforts truly represents the best this campus has and reflects the University mission.

Despite all that we have accomplished this year, the fight doesn't stop here. As you get ready to take a well-deserved break, the MS IIIs stand poised to head to LDAC. Trust in yourself and your training and you will do well. Some will head to Airborne, Air Assault, CTLT, and other internships to earn their wings or experience Army training. Regardless of what your summer entails, remember that you represent more than just yourself. Stay smart, stay safe, and stay in shape. We want to see each of you back here in the fall.

Finally, to our graduating seniors; congratulations on all you have accomplished both as students and as Cadets. You have certainly made a positive impact on the program and I know that you will set the standard as you join the Army's ranks. I encourage you to stay in touch with the battalion and when you can, to come back and share your experiences with the Cadets.

Go Irish!
LTC Crist