

The Shamrock

Academic Year 2011-12

In this issue:

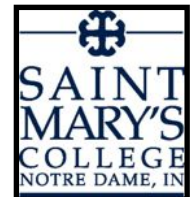
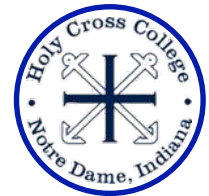
Alumni Profiles p. 3-6
In Memorium p. 15

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Fightin' Irish
Battalion



Dixon Challenge

Putting Fall Semester Skills to the Test

By MICHAEL DOMPIERRE

This year's Dixon Challenge served as a training culmination exercise in a unique way for each class. For freshmen ("MSIs"), it was an opportunity for them to incorporate and apply all that they had learned from the very beginning of Frosh-O. For sophomores ("MSIIs"), Dixon Challenge enabled them to refine their skills as team leaders and to serve as the "middlemen" in helping to both mentor the MSIs and to assist the juniors ("MSIIIs") in their leadership development. For MSIIIs, especially Platoon Sergeants, Dixon Challenge was the latest assessment (or as I like to think of it, "checkpoint" in our preparation for this summer's Leadership Development and Assessment Course known as "LDAC") of how well we could apply the tactical skills taught to us throughout the semester. Finally, for the seniors ("MSIVs"), Dixon Challenge was a test of their planning and mentoring, as they were forced to juggle many logistical details in the set-up and execution of this multi-stage event. It also gave them an opportunity to assess our learning and determine what to emphasize during the spring semester for the MSIIIs.

Dixon Challenge is designed to be a physical, mental, and tactical challenge for each cadet. This year's Challenge began with an open ranks inspection of each Platoon with a simultaneous Army knowledge quiz of each cadet. Each Platoon then broke off to a different event. My Platoon, "Bravo 2," began with the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST), which consisted of one member of the Platoon shooting at simulated targets on a screen (graded on average accuracy) while the rest of the Platoon performed aerobic/cardio exercises.

Dixon Challenge

(Continued from Page 1)

All members of B2 got a turn, yet in retrospect we all agreed that we should have selected our targets faster so that more could have fired and boosted our Platoon average. We then proceeded to the indirect fire lane. In this exercise, our Platoon was given a condensed OPORD and a few minutes to plan for expected contingencies. We were then forced to make quick decisions after we received fire: we all yelled “incoming,” found cover and concealment, and immediately began tactical combat care on three members of the Platoon who had been wounded. Each member of the Platoon was forced to either apply a field dressing, assist in a buddy carry, or help write a 9-line MEDEVAC report to be sent higher.

B2 did an excellent job, and we all developed a renewed sense of confidence as we headed over to the obstacle course. The course consisted of low crawls, tire flips, carrying water jugs, pull-ups, and a truck pull to top it all off. Cadet Leahy and Cadet Lott, designers of the course, kept us motivated throughout the ordeal and we did a lot better than I expected. After two years of Dixon Challenge, I can say that this year’s course proved to be the most difficult, yet most enjoyable at the same time. It was yet another exercise in quick decision-making, and we each did our part to finish the course as a Platoon tied for first. We then proceeded to the grenade assault course, where we had some initial difficulty throwing the grenades the proper distance (in addition to the problem of some throwing them like baseballs); however, B2 adjusted fire and we began to consistently hit our targets. Finally, our Platoon proceeded to the Drill and Ceremony event, where our Platoon Sergeant would march us within a designated area while being evaluated by MSIVs. Our Platoon performed exceptionally well, considering that many struggled at the Drill and Ceremony lab the month before.

As a whole, this training event was run very efficiently by the MSIVs, and all (especially the MSIIIs) received realistic, LDAC-oriented training that will serve as a solid foundation for the further instruction we will receive beginning next semester. I was very pleased with the effort put forth by each class. While this may sound cheesy, I really mean it. After speaking with a handful of MSIs and MSIIIs, they each said that they had big projects, papers, and tests that they were trying to juggle that particular week. Despite the time constraints they each said they faced, it was evident to me that they had taken the time to prepare themselves for this physical and tactical challenge so as to put the interests of their Platoons first, before their own. I know that they realize that they are stronger because of their decision to muddle through and to refuse to give up at any moment during their preparation and execution of this year’s Dixon Challenge.



Alumni Connection: LTC Chris Walls '89

College and Graduation Year: Notre Dame Class of 1989

Major: Electrical Engineering

Undergrad Memories: I was a trombonist in the marching band for all four years. Great experience. Senior year the we got to travel to Tempe, Arizona for the Fiesta Bowl and the Irish defeated West Virginia University to go undefeated and win the national championship.



LTC Walls currently commands the 4-413th Forger Battalion (SROTC)

What kinds of assignments did you have as a junior officer? I branched Signal Corps and ended up meeting my future wife (a 1989 Marquette graduate) at Signal OBC (Officer Basic Course). We were both assigned to Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, and deployed at the same time in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm. I was assigned to the 50th Signal Battalion, 35th Signal Brigade as a Telephone Line of Sight Platoon Leader. On the deployment my platoon laid infrastructure for radios. After 3 years each on active duty, my wife and I both made the decision to join the Army Reserves (USAR).

What were some of the biggest surprises you found in the USAR? Before my active duty deployment to Saudi Arabia, I worked with some Reserve signal units on a multi-component exercise. As active duty units, we of course were smug and arrogant and thought the reserve guys were ate-up. I hadn't really thought about the Reserves until we did that pre-deployment field exercise with them.

When I got off of active duty, my first assignment in the USAR was with a Drill Sergeant Battalion whose mission was to go Basic Training for two weeks each summer and take the place of active duty Drill Sergeants during summer leave periods. These guys were doing round-robin style basic skills training and it was dress-right-dress. It really changed my mind. Every unit, active or reserve, has its challenges—there are good Soldiers and bad Soldiers everywhere. You'll find broke reserve units and broke active duty units. Nobody's exempt from being broke. You'll find excellent units in every component too.

What was your transition into the world of civilian employment like? I had to make some adjustments. I actually was told by my first civilian employer that I was conducting myself in a manner like on active duty, and that I had to relate to people differently. There wasn't a command relationship anymore—you had to convince people to do something. But, you learn real quick how to get people to do stuff for you because they want to, and not because they have to, and that skill is useful in the military and civilian sectors.

Continued on Page 4

Attention young alumni transitioning out of military service...

The Leaders In Transition Certificate Program in Career Management is presented by the University of Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business Master of Nonprofit Administration Program in collaboration with the Center for Social Concerns and Career Center. Members of the military are most welcome!

The program will be held July 29 - Aug 3 and is free to participants, including housing in an air conditioned dorm (double occupancy). In addition, a \$150 stipend is available to offset travel and food costs.

For more info or to apply, see:
http://socialconcerns.nd.edu/postgraduate/leaders_transition.shtml

Alumni Connection (Continued): LTC Chris Walls '89

How have you been able to balance a civilian career, family, and USAR service? It's been a blessing to have a wife in the Reserves because she "knew the deal;" I never had to explain to her why I had to go play Army. It was always a challenge when we'd have training on the same weekend, but it was a huge benefit to have my wife's parents living nearby and able to take the two kids for the weekend or whatever period of time we were gone. My wife recently retired after 22 years of service. The kids usually just tune out when we speak in "Army language" over the dinner table. Sometimes they give us a teasing hassle about it. 😊

I work for Rubbermaid, with my boss I always feel funny putting in for military leave. In 2011, I probably took nearly 30 days of military leave. That's quite a bit of time away from work that other employees don't get. But my boss continues to assure me that the benefit that I bring from the Army Reserves—the discipline, the professionalism, the self-motivation, that the Army forces me to stay in shape physically and handle crisis and stress—is worth it because those skills are so valuable in business today. He supports it not just because of the service to the nation, but because the Army continues to provide professional development, i.e. going the pre-command course and other Army schools. They see the difference it makes when I come to work. It stresses them a little bit, but they see the benefit of my association with the Army Reserves.

For many officers with an interest in medical, law enforcement, legal, international development, engineering, and finance professions, the Reserves are a great component to consider. They can make a good living in civilian professions and enhance their professional development with a corresponding Reserve officer career. The majority of Army medical, JAG, Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, logistics, engineering, military police, and finance assets are in the Reserve component.

For other Fightin' Irish Battalion alumni considering entering the Reserves, what are the unique leadership challenges officers in the Reserves might encounter? Reserve component leadership is a lot different than active duty component leadership. The job has to get done during the month, even though you're not actually "on duty." On active duty, you see your Soldiers every day. In the Reserves, you have to resign yourself to the fact that the mission goes on even when you're not on duty. As you rise in responsibility level, it generally takes more time to get your mission done. You're not doing it for the money as you move up—you need to have that frame of mind, and the ability to motivate the soldiers in your unit to accomplish the mission off-cycle as well. For example, if someone needs to fill out paper work mid-month, do online classes, or participate in a conference call outside of your monthly training, your leadership has to be sufficient to motivate your Soldiers to keep getting the job done. The only way to do this well, is leading by example. Full-time expectations for a part-time force is always a challenge, as Reserve leaders that's what we respond to.

Alumni Connection: MAJ Nate Hicks '02

College and Graduation Year: Notre Dame Class of 2002

Major: Mechanical Engineering

Undergrad Memories: I lived in Dillon Hall all four years and was an RA my senior year—had a great time playing intramural basketball and soccer and competed in Ranger Challenge all four years.



What types of assignments did you have as a junior officer? I commissioned into the Transportation Corps (TC) and attended Transportation OBC at Ft. Eustis, VA. My first assignment was with the 28th Transportation Battalion, 37th TRANSCOM in Mannheim, Germany in October, 2002. I spent my entire active duty career with the 28th Trans BN and held key leadership roles as a Platoon Leader, Executive Officer, and Detachment Commander. I deployed to Camp Arifjan, Kuwait as the commander of the 260th Transportation Detachment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. While deployed, my unit was responsible for the daily tasking, tracking and quality assurance inspections for the Heavy Lift VI contract. This contract provided civilian trucking assets that drove with the military convoys into Iraq, providing roughly 70% of the trucking capacity in theatre. The most interesting and challenging part of this experience was when we helped move the 1st Armored Division from Kuwait to Ramadi. This involved staging over 600 trucks and 30 convoys. I rode with one of the lead convoy sets and made stops in Diwaniyah, Camp Victory, and Ramadi; truly an unforgettable experience. After returning to Germany, I decided to transition off of active duty army in March, 2007.

You're now a Military Intelligence Officer in the Army Reserves. How did you get into this career field?

In the fall of 2007 I joined the Army Reserves and was surprised to find that because of personnel shortages, I was able to fill an O1A (branch immaterial) slot in a Military Intelligence Group. This meant that the unit would allow me to fill a vacant Military Intelligence (MI) officer position even though I was not branch qualified (by attending OBC or Captain's Career Course). Having this position gave me the opportunity to attend Captains Career Course (MI-CCC) and complete a branch transfer. I am now branch qualified as a 35D (All Source MI Officer) with a secondary Military Occupational Skill (MOS) identifier in TC. I find the MI career track extremely interesting and very relevant in today's Army.

What are the roles of Military Intelligence units in the Reserves? I belong to a Strategic Intelligence unit within the MIRC (Military Intelligence Readiness Command), and my unit is aligned with a sponsor at the National Ground Intelligence Center. We provide intelligence analysis and assessments that are used to help develop strategic understandings of other nations' military capabilities and strategies. This is different from the tactical units that are responsible for providing real-time actionable intelligence assessments for units directly engaged with enemy forces.

What is your battle rhythm like for drill weekends in the USAR? My drill weekends start early Saturday morning and consist of formation, a quick detachment meeting where we outline the priorities for the weekend, and then we get to work achieving those priorities. We usually do administrative work like evaluations, mandatory training, physical training, etc. on Saturday and then we try to save Sunday for completing intelligence production tasks.

How have you been able to balance civilian career, family, and USAR service? I am happily married and have three kids age 5-and-under, so it can be very challenging to strike a balance. The biggest challenge is just making the most of each minute of the day and staying disciplined to make time for each aspect of my life. My civilian and Army Reserve jobs are very different, but the skills I've acquired in each help make me better in each job. The Six Sigma efficiency and productivity skills I've learned at GE (General Electric) Aviation help me as the Detachment Operations Officer to drive productivity and readiness in my Reserve unit. And the leadership skills I've developed in the Army have helped me to build relationships and manage projects in my civilian job.

Alumni Connection (Continued): MAJ Nate Hicks '02

What things did you find yourself adjusting to working in the civilian sector after leaving active duty?

I went to work for GE Aviation after leaving active duty and I worked as a design engineer for their military aircraft engines for several years. After working in a leadership setting for five years on active duty, I did have a hard time adjusting to not having any direct leadership responsibilities. I also had to adjust to not having the same level of personal connection with my colleagues as I had with my Soldiers and fellow officers in the Army. Nothing compares to the camaraderie that develops within a unit, especially after deploying together.

About a year ago I took a new position within GE Aviation and now I work as a customer service engineer in the Aviation Operations Center. This position is a perfect fit for me and I use a lot of the organizational and leadership skills I developed in the Army. I think the most important lesson I learned in the Army is how to lead without having to rely on rank or authority or giving commands. The most powerful form of leadership is that of example. Getting people to do things they may not want to do is made easier when you show that you're willing to roll up your sleeves and get your hands dirty, too. I learned that you have to have a vision of what you want your unit or team to do, show people how to get it done, and then step back and let them make it their own.

What are the unique leadership challenges of being an Army Officer in the Reserve component?

There isn't any difference in the basic principles of military leadership whether you are in the Reserves or Active Duty. There are, however, special challenges in the USAR. The biggest challenge is that you don't have daily interaction with your Soldiers like you would on active duty, so it can be really hard to stay engaged with their personal situations. It can also be really hard to have any Family Readiness Group (FRG) involvement since most reservists are spread out across a region. My unit has Soldiers from Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia, and Ohio, so we don't always get to see each other regularly.

What are some key things about the USAR that ROTC cadets and young alumni on active duty should know?

The old stereotype of the "weekend warrior" is really outdated and incorrect. When I was on active duty, it was easy to think that the Army Reserves and National Guard were inexperienced and lacked the professional expertise of active duty Soldiers. That could not be further from the truth today. The Army Reserves and National Guard have played a huge role in OIF and OEF and they also bring corporate or government service experiences to the table that make them extremely valuable to the Army. I was incredibly impressed with the talented officers I met at the Reserve Component MI Captains Career Course. It was such a diverse group of people with lots of experience in corporate America, law enforcement, and government intelligence agencies. I was also surprised to learn that the vast majority of young officers and NCOs in the Reserves have had prior active duty experience. My personal observation is also that a majority of mid-career NCOs and officers have all had deployment experience. I think this makes the Army Reserve especially valuable because these Soldiers bring Army experiences and combine it with civilian employment experiences.

Any advice for our graduating Second Lieutenants? The Army is a small place and is made smaller because of the number of moves that people make during their career. Keep in touch with your network of friends from ROTC and fellow officers you meet at BOLC and in your various assignments. Enjoy the Army and all the opportunities it will bring to your life and I promise you, it will be an enriching experience. I am very proud of my Army service and that I graduated from the ND ROTC program. The Fightin' Irish Battalion has a reputation for producing smart and thoughtful military officers and I wish you all the best of luck in your future careers.

The Real Frosh-O

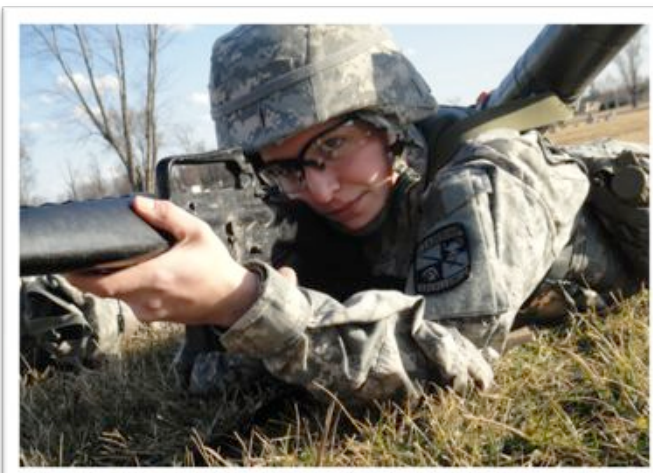
By COLIN O'SHEA

How much do you think you can learn in five days? What if I told you that after five days a kid who grew up in the suburbs could navigate dense woods armed with only a map and a compass in the pitch dark. Or that you could learn to handle and fire a M4 Carbine and shoot as if you've been shooting all of your life. Most importantly, what if I said that in less than a week you could come out with a new confidence in yourself and create friendships that will last you a lifetime. This is the experience of an Army ROTC Cadet at Frosh-O.

At 0630 my alarm went off. It was August 14th and today was the day I was to leave for college. There was one problem: I hadn't packed for college yet. So for the next hour and a half I spent getting this and that for the next four months of my life (obviously not up to Army standards). The relatively short car ride to South Bend was filled with emotion; excited that I was about to live out my dreams of attending Notre Dame and joining the U.S. Army in one go but at the same time I had a sense of uncertainty. The fact that I don't come from a history of military service I felt as if I was jumping into the unknown; not sure what was going to happen the next week.

I was instantly welcomed to the Army ROTC family the moment I walked into the door. After I signed in, my Chalk leader Cadet Wagner personally walked me through the maze of getting my gear and quickly adjusting before I was to leave with the rest of the Fighting Irish Battalion. After a quick goodbye, we were off for Fort Custer, a Michigan National Guard training facility. It may be a little cheesy but it was at this point that I knew that a new chapter in my life was about to begin.

The first aspect about the Army that every new cadet figures out is that no matter what task you are doing, it must be done with a sense of urgency. As soon as we stepped off that bus we were instantly ordered to fall into formation (none of us had a clue how to do this). After a bit of instruction us newcomers unloaded all of the rucks from the truck (fairly heavy to say the least) for not only us but also for the upperclassmen. The rest of the night was focused on learning the basics of conduct and courtesy (how to address different ranks, how to march in formation, etc.) The real fun started the next morning.





The Real Frosh-O (Continued from Page 7)

Cadet Morris, a junior and former Marine, promptly arrived at the barracks at 0500 to give us a rude awakening. We were given five minutes for “hygiene” and to change into our gear. This was the first time I’ve ever had to fit brushing my teeth, using the bathroom and change into my clothes in less than 300 seconds; and all of this was occurring at five in the morning with the sophomores constantly reminding us how little time we had.

We were all off to our first experience with the infamous APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test). With only five hours of sleep under my belt, the pushup and sit-up test in addition to the 2-mile run seemed like a blur. It was not the most enjoyable event of the week but I was glad to get it over with. The rest of the day was filled with class after class to prepare us for the coming week. The seniors spent most of the class showing us how to interpret a grid coordinate and plot it on a map in preparation of land navigation the next day. In land navigation, the goal is to successfully find different landmarks in a given area with the use of a map, grid coordinates, a protractor and a map.

For a second morning in a row we were woken up at 0500 and bused over to a staging area in the middle of a forest preserve. Us freshmen were paired with a senior and were given our coordinates. Having lived in the suburbs of Chicago all my life, I’ve never really experienced navigating through the back woods. Luckily as a rookie my objective was not too difficult as the targets were placed in mostly easily enough locations; during the day at least. Later that night we returned to that same woods with different locations to find but with one added element: darkness. Land navigation at night was a challenging experience that I enjoyed taking on. At one point, my partners and I had traveled 400 meters into the forest (with the help of a little bit of light from the sunset) but by the time we were ready to head back, it was pitch dark. In what took 35 minutes to complete felt like hours as I had to walk through thick vegetation with less than 1 feet of visibility as a result of my fogged up goggles. The next day was about to become the highlight of the trip: range day.

Wednesday had been a day I’d been looking forward to for weeks. I had never shot a gun before and what better way to start then shooting the amazing M4 carbine. After a few hours of instruction by experienced NCOs from Fort Benning, Georgia, we were taken to a zeroing range to match up the red dot sight with the weapon. After taking those few practice rounds, now came the qualifying range. In this range you shoot from three different platforms: prone supported (you can use a simulated sandbag to rest the barrel on for support), prone unsupported and from a kneeling position. Then a series of targets pop up ranging from 50 meters away up to 300 meters away. After I fired all 40 rounds I was on an adrenaline high that lasted for the duration of the day. Unless you’ve had the pleasure to fire this beautiful, yet destructive weapon, it’s hard to compare it to anything else.

Our last day at Fort Custer was relatively short with our only activity being a Leadership Course where us freshman had a turn to become a leader. We took turns leading teams through a course that tested both our leadership ability and being able to work under pressure. After the course we headed back to campus where we reunited with our parents at an oath ceremony as we were formally inducted as first year ROTC cadets.

I feel honored that I was able to experience training at a real Army training facility that very few ROTC battalions have the pleasure too. I’m looking forward to returning to Fort Custer next summer but thankfully this time I won’t be a freshman.

Warrior Night

By JACK PEARL

This semester has been full of both physically and mentally challenging events in the Fightin' Irish Battalion: leadership labs, the Fall Field Training Exercise, and a record APFT to name a few. Everyone has been working hard with little time to relax or let up. A few weeks ago before Thanksgiving, however, the whole Battalion came together to take part in a team building activity of a different kind. There were no pushups, battle drills, or marching involved with this event. Instead, we drank from a hearty grog and took part in various inter-platoon competitions that built morale and brought all of us together in camaraderie. Yes, this event is known to the Fightin' Irish Battalion as Warrior Night.

A long-time tradition in the program, Warrior Night is a unique way for cadets to blow off some steam while getting a chance to joke around and have fun with fellow cadets. Warrior Night began with the cadet officers of the battalion joining forces to make what is known as "the grog." For starters, this grog was brewed in a big old toilet... needless to say, whatever drink was being made before our eyes was not promising. Into this unused toilet (let's hope it wasn't used!) the seniors poured a whole slew of ingredients that have no business being in the same beverage. An ungodly mixture of Gatorade, coffee grounds, baking soda, Tabasco sauce, and several other arbitrary household ingredients formed a diabolical concoction that literally steamed from the bowl. Delicious.

Now that the grog was prepared, each cadet was given a tall, frosty glass (more like small, steaming plastic cup I guess) of grog in order to take part in the toast. This toast was dedicated to our Commander-in-Chief, the United States, the University of Notre Dame, and, finally, our fallen comrades. A small round dinner table with a white tablecloth was placed in the middle of the gym at Moreau Seminary as a reminder to everyone of those who had made the ultimate sacrifice; to remind us that they were unable to join us because they died for this country and for our freedom which allows us to take their place on the field of battle. Although this night was designed for everyone to just have fun, it was important to take a moment and remember our fellow Soldiers.

Then it was on to the festivities of Warrior Night. After a bountiful feast of Dominoes pizza, each platoon competed in somewhat of a trivia, Family Feud-esque game. Essentially, each platoon was asked a ridiculous question and a member of the platoon being asked the question was supposed to respond with an equally ridiculous answer. If the answer was deemed acceptable (funny) by the judges, the member would sit down and the platoon would gain a point. If it was unacceptable, the member who gave the answer earned himself another taste of the grog, and the platoon received no points. Both good and bad answers were followed by laughter, either because the answer was awesome, or because it was enjoyable to watch someone else suffer yet again at the hands of the grog; either way, much fun was had at this event. Several rounds of this were done until there was a winner.

After this, everyone gathered around a computer screen to watch class skits. This was each class's chance to poke fun at people in classes ahead of them with essentially no repercussions. Some were more well-done than others, but they were all enjoyable and were the cause of quite a few laughs.

Next up were the feats of strength. First was the Tug-O-War. Again, this event was platoon vs. platoon; naturally, Bravo Co., 1st Platoon (more commonly known as B1, the Best One) emerged victorious. After this, several rounds of dodge ball were played. It started out as a platoon competition but after the first round it became more of an upperclassmen vs. underclassmen match. While this was going on, sumo-wrestling matches took place. Two people suited up in obnoxiously big sumo suits and basically just bounced towards and flopped on each other. This may have been the most amusing spectacle of the night.

And just like that Warrior Night was over. Sure, it might not have been every college kid's idea of a fun Friday night, but it was truly a great time. And it was very important. Yes, the reason a Soldier goes to war is love of his country and his conviction to defend its freedoms. But, the thing that keeps him motivated day-in and day-out is the man next to him in the trenches; it is the bond he has made with his fellow Soldiers that keeps him going. This night was all about forming those bonds.

Maryland Colorguard

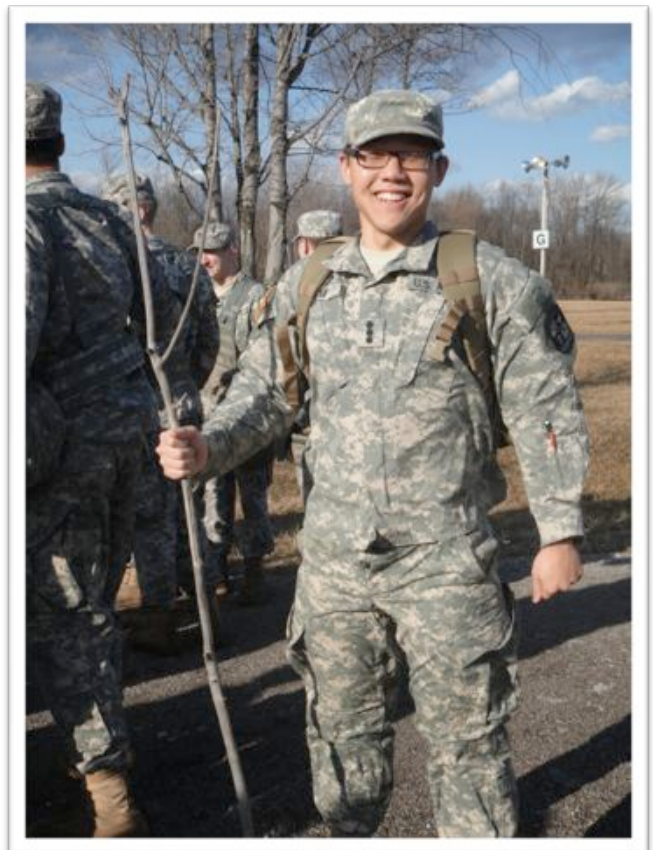
By SABINA FISCHER

On November 11th, Cadet Corporal Kelly and I traveled with MSG Haydt, Gunnery Sergeant Kennington, two Air Force cadets, and four Midshipmen to Washington D.C. for the Notre Dame—Maryland football game. We were in charge of presenting the colors at this Notre Dame “home game.” We stayed at the same hotel as the band and we had the opportunity to visit the different monuments and tour Washington D.C. at our leisure until 1430 on Saturday. At that point, we drove to the University of Maryland to practice with the bands of both schools.

Not only did we serve as color guard before the game, but all eight of us were a part of the half-time show. The bands of Notre Dame and University of Maryland put on a half-time show in tribute and recognition of the armed forces in honor of Veteran’s Day. The band played each branch of the military’s song and spelled out NAVY, USAF, USMC, ARMY, and USMC with their formations on the field. Our part of the show included presenting each branch’s flag, along with the American flag during its respective song during the show. After practicing for both the color guard and half time show, we made our way to Fedex Field in Landover Maryland for the big game.

We all had a fantastic time at the game. It was a really incredible experience. Each of us met and spoke with General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was one of the guests of honor at the game. He spoke to each of us separately and gave us his coin. We were all in awe of the general and felt extremely lucky and privileged to have met such a distinguished official.

Both the color guard and half-time show went very well. We were able to spend a lot of time on the field and enjoyed supporting the Fightin’ Irish as they crushed the Terrapins. Both Cadet Kelly and I were extremely grateful for the opportunity to represent the Fighting Irish Battalion at the Notre Dame “home game away from home.” I thoroughly enjoyed my time in D.C. and am proud of the Tri-Military color guard performance.



ATLAS

By JULIA STEINS

Sometimes, as a college student, it is easy to feel like the Atlas of Greek mythology, struggling under the crushing weight of the world on your shoulders. A productive way to combat this stress and put one's problems in perspective is found in the form of another ATLAS. This one is not another mythical character, but one of the Fighting Irish Battalion's clubs. ATLAS (the Alliance To Lead And Serve), gives cadets a chance to leave their campus world and get out into the community to interact with the people of South Bend. This is a valuable experience for cadets because service to others is an integral component of any social institution including the military. As a matter of fact, selfless service is one of the seven Army Values. As Mihai Iancu, the cadet OIC of the club explained, "Military service is not just confined to on-duty time in uniform. Rather, it is an outlook which pervades everyday life through an obligation to better the world by aiding other human beings." It is important to remember that part of a Soldier's duty is to assist those around him, and it is important to integrate that spirit of service into everyday life.

So far this semester, ATLAS has been involved in several projects to benefit the South Bend community. The first event was organizing and hosting a successful Blood Drive which collected 205 units of blood, enough to save 556 lives. Volunteer work was also done twice to help build a Veteran's Center in downtown South Bend. This was an important project because this center was erected as a place for the many homeless veterans in the South Bend area to get assistance they need. As cadets, and future officers, this is a significant project in which to be involved. One of an officer's duties is to take care of their Soldiers. Veterans have sacrificed much to serve, and they deserve to live with dignity. ATLAS also assisted the Center for the Homeless with the Stuff-A-Bus food drive in which non-perishable donations were collected and sorted to stock the food pantry.

Service is a significant component of being a Soldier, a student, and a person in general. As the club NCOIC Michael Dompierre said, "Members of ATLAS all recognize that they are very fortunate to have the opportunities that they do and know that giving back to the local community is a way to express their understanding of this. We try to set up as many events as possible because we believe that service is not something you do, but is part of who you are. It's a great feeling to know that you made a tangible difference in the lives of others."



Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX)

By SEAN KELLY

The day and time had come. By 11:30 AM on Friday September 30th cadets of the Notre Dame Army ROTC Fighting Irish Battalion could be seen in formation on the Pasquerilla Center lawn prepared to leave campus for a weekend Field Training Exercise at Ft. Custer, Michigan. Cadets were preparing to return just six short weeks after Freshman Orientation, and they were ready to evaluate the effectiveness of the training that they had received during the labs in the preceding weeks.

Two hours after leaving the comfort of the Notre Dame campus, the Fightin' Irish Battalion arrived at Ft. Custer and jumped right into an FTX staple, Day Land Navigation. Cadet Leahy and Cadet Iancu were the MSIVs in charge of land navigation for the weekend and they briefed all cadets on the safety precautions of the training environment and gave instruction on finding proper road and woods pace counts. After that, point plotting and route planning began and actual land navigation could begin. Cadets had five hours to find six of their eight points located throughout the dense Ft. Custer terrain. Fightin' Irish cadets definitely earned every point as everyone emerged scratched up from the notorious thorns and brush of the Michigan woods. Weather did not cooperate during this portion of the FTX, but the rain only prepared us for will face as future officers.

Land Navigation was completed and a hot meal was served prior to classes. These classes were meant to provide information for the Squad Training Exercises the following days. MSIIIs and MSIIIIs were given instructions on AT4s and Claymore Mines. I found our class on the Claymore to be a helpful refresher and this was the first time we had received training on the use of the AT4. To everyone's appreciation, lights out time came earlier than usual Friday night in order to maximize energy for the next day of STX and night land navigation.

Saturday started early and ended late. Cadets completed ten hours of STX lanes including an Ambush, reacting to an IED, Movement to Contact, Recon, and Knocking out a Bunker. Different MSIII cadets led their squads through each lane with a few exceptions, and MSII cadets had the opportunity to be team leaders for at least one lane during the day. I felt like our squad became more cohesive throughout the day and reactions and actions on the objective also seemed to improve with each lane.

More than anything, this was a learning opportunity for everyone involved and every cadet came away from the STX portion of the weekend with certain skills or competencies that they wanted to improve. As I mentioned earlier, night land navigation started as the sun went down and in order to pass cadets needed to find four of six points in three and a half hours. This was useful practice for everyone, but it left some tired cadets once the exercise was completed.

The last major event of the FTX was patrolling. Patrolling in the fall semester is definitely a learning process, but it is better for MSIIIIs to make their mistakes at Ft. Custer than at the summer Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC). We encountered some bumps along the way as a patrol, but I know everyone felt that the experience left them with some good training. Every class seemed to make the most of this fall FTX and the training that they received and practice of field and squad skills will serve each cadet well.



Fall FTX: MSIII Perspective

By KYLE GRIFFIN

Two and a half years into my ROTC career, I knew what to expect going into the Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Fort Custer. There would be land navigation, leadership positions, and not too much sleep. However, that did little to ease my nerves. Being a junior in ROTC is a completely different experience than my first two years, which is a well-known fact. Even with this knowledge, it is difficult to prepare for the stress of leadership, of having accountability for everyone and everything beneath you, and of getting results above all else.

Luckily, I am a firm believer in the idea that these types of situations bring out the best of people who provide the effort. By tossing cadets into situations that they have been trained to handle, but have not actually experienced in real life before, the FTX prepared people for a multitude of situations. The ability to take a job head on, feel the responsibility, and come out the other side with a new understanding of what you can handle, is vital to officers in the Army as well as many civilians. For example, junior cadets experienced “garrison positions” for the first time this past weekend. These leadership roles must schedule all of the personal time that cadets have, including time for food, hygiene, and equipment issue. After getting all the leaders on the same page, the timeline must be enforced to a high standard. This task does not seem overwhelming on the outset, but putting all of the responsibility on a few key shoulders adds to the pressure.

A Platoon Sergeant or First Sergeant has to maintain accountability of their people at all times, and if they mess up, their mistake will be very visible. On top of that, any mistake made by garrison leaders will most likely lead to discomfort felt by their troops, whether they only have five minutes for breakfast or they do not have time to shower. This pressure can bring the best out of people, or the worst, but either outcome leads to development for the future.

The FTX was a valuable chance for ROTC cadets to employ all of the training we have received over the past few months. The younger cadets were able to gain domain knowledge while the older ones were forced to use it. The chances for cadets to truly develop as a leader can be few and far in between, especially in a large battalion with many people vying for the spotlight, but this weekend was a prime example of cadets rising to the occasion.



Veterans' Day

By ROBERT MCKENNA

It is not only encouraged, but essentially required that we, as Army cadets, revel and take pride in the mandatory events of the battalion. Warrior Night, Army Ball, FTXs, ruck marches, and all the others are laced with the sentiment that we ought to be enthusiastic about everything we do, and this makes perfect sense – if you don't like what you're doing, don't do it. To be perfectly frank, the regular functions of the battalion usually do little to excite me week by week, but I get truly inspired when November 11th rolls around.

This year, I had plenty to do for Veterans' Day. As NCOIC for the Marauders, I was charged with helping to organize several tri-military colorguard details in addition to serving a vigil shift and attending the evening ceremony. Combined with classes, I had my hands full.

The night before, I passively griped to my roommate about the busy day ahead, and we talked about General Biology class the next morning. When I complained that I might miss it if nobody came to relieve me from my half-hour (nobody did, and I wound up staying another half-hour), all he said was, "Forget biology, that's more important." I mulled over that simple statement long into the night, and I thought about the gravity of what he had said. It is easy to forget why what we do is important as we go through the long procession of days, and the Veterans' Day vigil can too easily become another Google Doc to fill out, another time slot to serve because the chain of command wants it that way. My roommate's comment reminded me of why we take the time to stand on all sides of Stonehenge every November; we do it not just to commemorate the dead but celebrate the living and those who will live after us. Our gallant dead are not dead so long as we remember them, and yet they are more than a mere memory or a name in a book. They are a living part of what the Army is today because of their hard work, courage, and sacrifices, just as we, the officers and cadets of today, are improving the Army and America for the future now.

That day in November was long and cold, but by the end, my thoughts on the bustle of mandatory events and details had irrevocably changed from the previous night. The military, the Army, and the Fightin' Irish Battalion is a family, and a good family takes time to come together and pray. I'm blessed to be a part of this family. Veterans' Day does not simply entail a set of duties and activities; it is a sacred rite, a time to look back at the past of the Army, prepare for its future, and enrich its present.



Cadet Community Service: ATLAS/Red Cross Spring Blood Drive

By MICHAEL DOMPIERRE

This spring semester, ATLAS, the Fightin' Irish BN's service group, in conjunction with Trident (NROTC) and the Arnold Air Society (AFROTC), organized and helped run a Red Cross Blood Drive to benefit local South Bend area blood banks that are experiencing a critical shortage. ATLAS members coordinated with Tri-Mil for several weeks in order to raise awareness for the drive and to ensure that all staffing requirements were met. This coordination effort included registering interested donors at sign-up booths at both dining halls the weekend before, informing hall rectors, and putting up posters in ND residence halls and around campus. This type of on-campus service opportunity is a great way to promote the BN (and all ROTC branches at ND) and to show other students that we in fact do much more than weekly training and PT.

In a typical year our group helps to run one blood drive each semester, and ATLAS is fortunate to have a solid core of volunteers who consistently give up their valuable time in order to make a difference. Thanks to the efforts of Cadets Iancu, Davis, Bedard, Quick, McKenna, Matt Jozwiak, and Allen Jozwiak, the event was well staffed and the Red Cross was provided with the human resources needed. ATLAS cadets were in charge of running a sign-in table, assisting nurses and donors as it became busier throughout the day, and providing snacks and drinks to donors to ensure they were kept comfortable. Our group had a tougher time meeting our pre-drive registration goal this semester, yet each of us played a significant role in the drive's success nonetheless. To make up for the lower initial registration numbers, we decided to make an effort to distribute flyers and talk to students around campus during the drive itself with the goal of boosting the overall return for the day. Thanks to this additional publicity, we were able to collect 87 units of blood, which according to the Red Cross is enough to save 261 lives.

The success of the blood drive can be attributed to the hard work of each service group in planning, publicizing, and organizing this event—we made a tangible difference in the local community that will be felt by those who are truly most in need. Our group looks forward to expanding participation in this drive in the fall and to again applying the leadership skills learned in class and labs in a practical way for the benefit of those most in need in the South Bend area.



6 Schools, 3 Days: Combined Field Training Exercise

By KYLE GRIFFIN

The juniors in Army ROTC, known in the program as MSIIIs, departed for Fort Custer on March 30th with a lot on the agenda. The two-day training event, called a Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX) was a coordinated effort between six different ROTC battalions, including cadets from Michigan, Michigan State, Eastern Michigan, Central Michigan, and Western Michigan. The programs conducted land navigation and squad training exercises in order to prepare junior year cadets for this summer. Come June, all MSIII cadets will head to Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) for a month in order to be assessed as cadets and future leaders.

This weekend provided a good chance for Notre Dame cadets to measure their progress in ROTC against others who are in the same position. Cadre from every school evaluated the cadets on their domain knowledge and leadership capabilities, providing a preview of the evaluations that will take place this summer. By working with other programs, Notre Dame's ROTC program was able to simulate an environment similar to LDAC, where cadets train with others they have never met, and are evaluated by Cadre they do not know.

With all of that in mind, the expectations were high for Notre Dame cadets going into the weekend. The training was a combination of individual and team based exercises, calling for precise execution as well as control when in a leadership position. Even though the CFTX was one of the first tests for the juniors, the cadets succeeded. The Notre Dame battalion had lofty expectations, especially after receiving the MacArthur Award this past semester, which recognized the battalion as one of the top eight programs in the country. Overall, the weekend provided an excellent opportunity for Army cadets to continue their training for this summer, and gave a glimpse of success in the future.

Underclassmen in the Lead: Notre Dame FTX

By CHARLES LOGUE

On April 13th, the Freshman and Sophomores of the Fightin' Irish Battalion headed to Culver, Indiana for an opportunity to get their first taste of responsibility in the cadet command structure. While battalion events are normally conducted by the MSIII class, on the NDFTX, leadership positions are filled by sophomores. The cadets conduct their activities in groups called squads, each of which is composed of about 8 squad members.

According to Cadet Bedard "Being in a command position was definitely a great experience. You definitely learn a lot from having to be the one gives orders and makes things happen."

One of the most important activities on the FTX was the land navigation course, in which cadets have four hours to find a set of points marked in the Culver forest. To find these points they are given the distance and direction to the point. Cadets practice their compass skills to properly follow the magnetic azimuth (direction) and utilize a pace count to measure the distance they have traveled.

One of the most important team and leadership building activities in ROTC is the Squad Training Exercise, or the STX lane. In each STX lane a cadet is selected to act as squad leader, who will practice the Army Troop Leading Procedures and lead the squad on whatever mission has been given to them. STX lanes on the FTX are especially enjoyable as each cadet is issued a paint ball gun to use on the lane. Possible missions include movement to contact, ambush, recon and squad attack, which are conducted against an opposing force (OPFOR) who the squad must reconnoiter or eliminate as part of their objective. According to Cadet Logue: "We had a really great time pasting the OPFOR with paint balls."

The climax of the FTX is the patrol lane, which has double the usual number of cadets involved. There were two patrols, one led by Cadet Logue and one by Cadet Bedard. Patrols offer unique challenges to organization and leadership due to their size, but are especially fun because both patrols end in paintball combat against each other until one patrol has been destroyed.



In Memorium

Specialist Chris Patterson

Valparaiso University sophomore and member of the Indiana Army National Guard's 713th Engineer Company, Chris Patterson was killed in action in Kandahar, Afghanistan on January 6, 2012.

Patterson was a music education major who took leave from his studies at the University this fall to serve in Afghanistan with his Indiana Army National Guard unit based out of Valparaiso. During his time on campus, Patterson was involved in many activities, including ROTC, VuVox a cappella group, Phi Mu Alpha music fraternity, and the University Chorale.



Photo Courtesy U.S. Army

Brigadier General Terence Hildner

Commander of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), General Hildner passed away on February 3, 2012 in Kabul, Afghanistan. Hildner graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1984. His 30-year military career included tours in Germany, in Kuwait and Iraq, commanding troops during the Persian Gulf War.

Hildner is survived by his widow, Cindy; his two daughters, Brittany and Julie; two sons, Jonathan and Ryan; and his parents, Robert and Susan.



Professor of Military Science Update

Now that I have one complete semester under my belt as the Professor of Military Science (PMS), I can now confidently validate my initial assumptions of how impressive this program really is. The cadets continue to excel and are always looking for ways to get better. Furthermore, Cadet Command recently announced that the Fightin' Irish Battalion was one of the top eight programs in the country, and earned the MacArthur Award for the previous school year. I would like to congratulate my predecessor, Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Randy Crist, his team, and the cadets themselves on a job well done!

Also, special recognition and congratulations to our graduating class of 2012:

Cadet Griffin Bonnema	Active Duty	Field Artillery
Cadet Justin Bourque	Active Duty	Field Artillery
Cadet Andrew Gassman	Active Duty	Armor
Cadet Patrick Gleason	Active Duty	Field Artillery
Cadet Mihai Iancu	Active Duty	Ordnance
Cadet Ryan Jenks	Active Duty	Signal Corps, Branch Detailed Armor
Cadet Julian Kim	Active Duty	Military Intelligence, Branch Detailed Infantry
Cadet Madeline Krueger	Reserves	Adjutant General
Cadet Brett Leahy	Active Duty	Infantry
Cadet Connor Lott	Active Duty	Infantry
Cadet Daniel McGiffin	Nat'l Guard	Ordnance
Cadet Jane McNaughton	Active Duty	Military Intelligence, Branch Detailed Chemical
Cadet Kevin Plude	Active Duty	Signal Corps
Cadet Joshua Sandler	Active Duty	Infantry
Cadet Amanda Urban	Active Duty	Ordnance
Cadet Trevor Waliszewski	Educ. Delay	Judge Advocate General



Finally, let me continue to re-iterate my commitment to re-connecting Army ROTC Alumni to the current program. Please visit our new website and Facebook links to see what's going on and tell your friends as well.

Everyone is invited to join us this Fall at the BYU-ND Army ROTC Tailgate on 20 OCT 12.

Go IRISH!!
LTC John Polhamus

Alumni Football Tailgate – Oct 20th (ND vs. BYU)