

University of Notre Dame Army ROTC

# THE SHAMROCK

**Welcome** *by* LTC J. Scott Vitter, Jr.

To the Notre Dame Army ROTC Fightin' Irish Battalion,

It is my distinct honor to welcome you to campus for the 2009-2010 Academic year. As Cadet Battalion Commander, it is with extreme excitement that I welcome you to a new year of training with ND AROTC! With Frosh-O complete, we have only just begun! Our semester is jam-packed with training opportunities: M4 range for the MSIII's, Battalion Field Training Exercise, Warrior Night, Combat Water Survival Tests, Company and class PT, monthly APFT's, not to mention weekly Leadership Lab. By December, I promise you will have seen, done, and learned a lot about the military, and most importantly, about Army Leadership. If you accept, Notre Dame AROTC gives the tools by which you will become a Leader. And soon, if you are willing, we will use them as 2LT's in the US Army.



MSI's: Welcome to ROTC. We're excited to have you here, and I hope you are ready for the upcoming year. Your introduction to college and ROTC these first months will challenge you mentally, physically, and emotionally. Take your time to get adjusted to these new commitments, but always come prepared to every training event, because there is a lot for you to learn.

MSII's: It is great to have you back. Your MSII year signifies a huge step in your development as a leader. This year, you are responsible not only for yourselves, but for taking care of your soldiers. Embrace this in ROTC by seizing the moment, and executing your implied NCO tasks to perfection. This year, you will polish your technical skills in preparation for LDAC. Devote the time and effort required to improve, and to establish your spot in the Battalion.

MSIII's: As NCO's, you have inherited the Battalion. Our success and failures will depend upon your motivation, diligence to standards, and commitment to Army Customs and Courtesies. In short, the Battalion belongs to you. They are your soldiers, and you must take care of them. This year you will work hard prior to your deployment to faraway Palomas.

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As your commander, I promise to give you the tools for success at LDAC, but you will be the one to learn, practice, and implement successfully.

MSIV's: Surprisingly, the hardest job is likely ours. Our challenge is to plan thoughtfully in order to prepare our subordinates for success. The Battalion is growing, affording great difficulties and opportunities. If we succeed, we will prepare training for our MSI's, MSII's, and MSIII's that is more challenging than ever.

Again welcome back. In parting, I exhort you to embrace your responsibilities. You are in charge of your fitness, your academics, and your fidelity to your commitments. You are special people, and are making an extraordinary choice by being an Army ROTC cadet. I applaud you, but beyond that, challenge you to go above and beyond the call. If you do that, then we are in for a wild (in the best way possible) semester!

God, Country, Notre Dame,  
c/ LTC J. Scott Vitter, Jr.

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## Summer Training:

CTLT: Cadet Leader Training

Looking at a summer dominated by a month at LDAC, I was faced with the decision every ROTC junior is confronted with: how to make money in an Army dominated summer. No civilian job would take me for two months with a strange break in there for some romp in the woods of Ft. Lewis. As every good American does, I chose to look to the government. Lo and behold, my fears of a summer bereft of income were assayed by the CTLT option. I randomly pointed to several slots on MAJ Dukeman's computer, and next thing I knew, I had orders for the 3/3 ACR in Ft. Hood in my AKO.

I was attached to an artillery unit with the 3/3 while in Texas. My job basically entailed shadowing a recently promoted captain who was a platoon leader with the howitzer battery. The unit had just gotten back from a tour in Mosul (where they encountered the MITT team on which our own CPT Carter was serving) and as such had their guns in reset, leading to a more interesting experience. The unit was basically trying to get back into the swing of things and again get up to combat ready status, so my experience was interesting. I was faced with several situations I had never contemplated in my short Army career, including guarding a suicidal soldier. I did everything from a regimental run to qualifying on the M9 pistol to inventorying an arms room. Many may not know it, but the M48 bayonet may still be found in the 3/3 ACR Regulators' arms room. While knowing this little tidbit did not actually improve me as an officer, the experience of inventorying did.

It was great to work with actual soldiers in the Army. The soldiers quickly developed a nickname for me ("cadot" based on the pip rank I wore) and were incredibly fun to work with. I spent many an hour at the M4 zero range with a SSG who showed me just how strong our NCO corps is. I saw the perfect example of a PL-PSG relationship (even if the PL was a West Pointer), and I got to experience what life in garrison is all about: finding ways not to die of boredom. All joking aside, I did enjoy my time at Ft. Hood, even if the government felt the need to allocate my pay to some other cause (I'm not sure what it was, but it better be worthy) rather than my bank account.

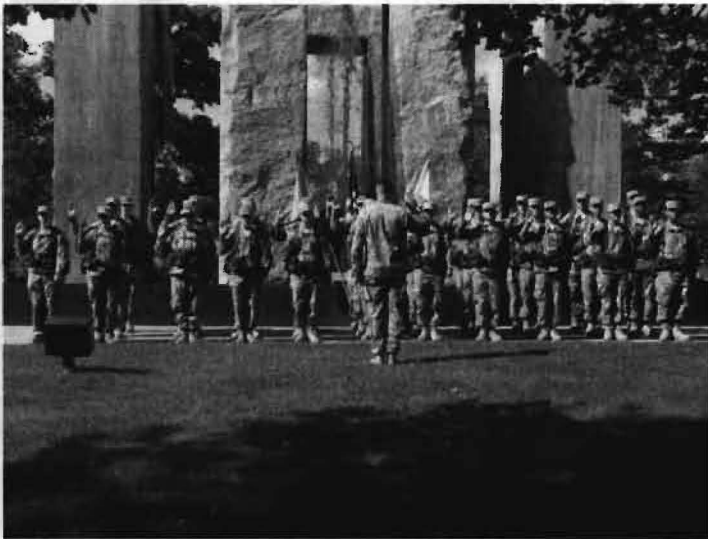
c/MAJ Richie Blomstrom

## NSTP: Nurse Summer Training Program

c/CPT Kailyn VanBeckum

Prior to LDAC I had the honor of attending an Army Internship Program at Ft Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX. I worked at Ft. Sam for 3 weeks as a nurse intern. I was assigned a preceptor and worked every shift she worked and cared for every patient she cared for. This experience was one of the most amazing nursing experiences I have ever had. With me at Ft. Sam were 12 other cadets, as NSTP cadets we logged 120 or more clinical hours; time worked with patients in the hospital. We also had to put on an inservice for our floor as well as produce a hospital wide project. Our project focused on infection control in the hospital. We set up our research poster in the main entrance and handed out clean identification badges and wipes to clean them with after the person was completed with their visit. Our project was a success and many people were educated on proper ways to decrease the spread of infection. Aside from these projects the clinical time is what really made NSTP special. I worked on a 14 bed Intensive Care Unit and rotated to the Emergency Room for a day. During my clinical time I became stronger and more efficient in my basic nursing skills; especially assessing the patient and performing skills such as inserting an IV or drawing blood. This time with my preceptor also allowed me to see the big picture and everything I have to look forward to when I commission this May and become an Army Nurse.

c/CPT Kailyn VanBeckum



## Freshman Orientation

Freshman Orientation: A New Cadet

Growing up with my father being in the military was the major influence for me wanting to be in the military. I believe that service to your country is key to a strong nation. Obtaining the Army nursing ROTC scholarship was a great achievement, but following through the four years of college is going to be even better. Coming from a military family I think I knew a few things, but in the end you have to start at the bottom and work your way up. I believe you must learn how to serve before you can lead. I really

enjoyed entering to this program as a freshmen and learning from more experienced cadets. I look forward to these next four years in the Fighting Irish Battalion.

c/PVT Andrew A Velez

## Frosh-O: Round Two

c/CPL Kelly Davis

Coming back for Freshman Orientation week as a MS-II is much less stressful than the first time around. Our class no longer had to worry about wearing the uniform incorrectly, saluting somebody who is not an officer, or passing that first PT test. We were given a week to ease back into ROTC and help the freshman on their way. A substantial amount of time was spent hanging out in the cadet lounge, waiting for someone to need our help. This ensured that we had plenty of time to catch-up after being away for the summer and almost finish the series Band of Brothers. Had it not been for a malfunctioning DVD, we would have also had the glorious opportunity to watch Mean Girls as a class.

Although we had a lot of spare time, there was also a lot of work to be done during Frosh-O. As an MS-II we did not have the responsibility of teaching any classes to the new freshman, but we were busy helping the MS-III's throughout the week. This gave us much more of an opportunity to see how the battalion operates because there were many impromptu meetings that we would wind-up sitting in on. We were able to work on our own leadership skills as we helped guide the freshman through the week. Our roles during Frosh-O enabled us to transition from MS-I's who knew nothing to MS-II's who are ready to help shape the battalion.

c/CPL Kelly Davis

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### MS III Year Begins

c/SSG Joseph Flynn

MS III year is a tough year for any junior. No longer are we allowed the ignorance is bliss phase of MS I year and we no longer are simply a team member as we were as MS II'S. Now it is our time to step up and lead. We now run the companies and squads that make up the Battalion. If a member of one of our squads or platoons is struggling, it is now on us. It is our responsibility as their leader to get them squared away. It is a big step up. And if that was not enough to worry about, we also have one big mountain looming over our heads, LDAC. For that past few years we have heard the full spectrum of stories. Everything from grumpy TAC's and low speed squad mates to epic tales of night land nav and barracks humor. All this is enough to make even the most high speed cadet cringe. However, we are in ROTC to learn. We are expected to make mistakes. We are expected to learn from those mistakes and not make them again. MS III year is the make or break time for every Cadet. But by the time we are ready to leave for camp, we will have been prepared better than any other Cadet and will be ready to go and smoke LDAC.

c/SSG Joseph Flynn

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### LDAC Leads to the Beginning of the Final Year of ROTC

c/2LT Lagoy

LDAC may have been the culmination of three years of training with The Fightin' Irish Battalion, but it also further prepared the MSIV's to run the Battalion for the year. As MSIV's and recent LDAC graduates, we have the best understanding of LDAC, and it is from this experience that we derive our training plans for the upcoming year. Throughout the 29 days at Ft. Lewis, Washington, many of the MSIV's took note and paid close attention to the training and evaluations at LDAC so that upon returning to the Battalion, we could then use what we learned from our personal experiences at LDAC throughout the upcoming year to better prepare the MSIII's for own success at LDAC next summer. Indeed, immediately upon our return to campus for Frosh-O, the MSIV's got together and conducted an in-depth AAR of LDAC. While keeping in mind the sustains and improves learned from the AAR for each phase of LDAC, the MSIV's were able to get on the same page on how to follow-up on our LDAC experiences and this is in turn reflected in the training plans we have created for this new year. We were able to identify key areas of training the Battalion does that needed (or did not need) any changes implemented this year in order to better prepare the MSIII's.

During Frosh-O, many of the MSIV's utilized the week to spend long hours laboring away in the cadet office all day to pump out solid plans for the Battalion this year. The work was hard, the days were long and worst of all, we were always last in line to eat. But we had completed Warrior Forge and were indeed forged as such hardened warriors that no amount of time spent staring at an excel spreadsheet or powerpoint presentation could phase any of us in the least. We came to LDAC as cadets and left as warriors. And now it is up to us to infuse

the same warrior spirit into the MSIII's so that the Fightin' Irish Battalion's cadets can once again dominate at LDAC. Yes, we are indeed ready to run this Battalion. In fact, the MSIVs could probably solely pay their Sorin Dues if they charged the MSIII's/MSII's/MSI's every time they were asked, "So, how was camp?" There really is no complicated answer. The bottom line is this: take the training we do here seriously and learn as much as you can before you go; the more work you do in ROTC now, the less pressure and more hooah there will be at camp; ask as many questions from the MSIV's that you want; be comfortable with your own leadership style and build your competence and confidence up as much as possible. The training we have established for this year will no doubt prepare the MSIII's for LDAC by placing them in evaluated leadership roles throughout the year. It's up to the cadets themselves to get the most out of each training event and use each as one step closer to being prepared for LDAC. As MSIVs, we are the Battalion's resource for training every single one of the MSIII's for success at LDAC and the training we have planned for the upcoming year will guarantee just that.

c/2LT Lagoy

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## Field Training Exercise

### My First FTX

Going into the weekend, I honestly had no idea what to expect. I knew the Field Training Exercises were a large part of my ROTC education, and that they are great preparation for LDAC. I was aware that the FTXs are the peak of each semester and effectively test my ROTC capabilities. Having said this, I would love to say that I was pumped to go out to the field; that I was ready to take this challenge head-on with no regrets.



However, there were other thoughts on my mind, including everything from what I would be missing that weekend, to wondering what I would most likely forget. Far and above those feelings, though, was a stronger emotion: fear. My fear was not that I would be incapable physically, or even mentally. I know I can push myself when need be and get the job done. What was really on my mind was trying not to look like an inexperienced freshman and not being "that cadet." While this term sounds vague, every member of the battalion knows its meaning. "That cadet" can be anyone from a forgetful MS 1 to a temporarily mistaken MS 3 (not MS 4s though, of course). It was my worst nightmare, not only because this was my first FTX and would thus leave an impression, but also because of my rank

(or lack thereof) in the battalion. I wanted a strong start to my career in the field where I stood out in only a positive way, if at all. I believe I met this goal with marginal success, at least as far as I know, which made my first FTX a success in my eyes and hopefully in those around me if they felt the same way.

c/PVT Kyle Griffin

## MSIII Prepares for LDAC

Going into the FTX, I knew that it was going to be the most difficult to date. Not only because as an MSIII, I would be evaluated in positions of leadership, but because there has been a lot of talk leading up to it. It seemed like all I heard was "get ready. It's going to be tough. You are going to be exhausted." That being said, I felt like everything I had learned from my MSI through MSII year had prepared me for this weekend. Even in pre-deployment, the responsibilities put on the NCOs of our Battalion were taxing. Once we arrived at Fort Custer, things really escalated. As soon as we reached the training area, we started Land Nav, which was on a much larger and more challenging course than usual. This larger course definitely made me work much harder than usual. What is nice about this course is that it more closely resembles that of LDAC. STX lanes on Saturday also were a challenge. Most of the MSIIIs have only led one or two lanes so far in our ROTC career, and so this was a fairly novel experience for us. But once again, the training I have received so far was enough to function as a squad leader. Night Land Nav definitely posed some challenges, but again was a great learning experience. The weekend ended with some FLRC, which was a nice little break from the past two days. This was one event that I have never led in any fashion, and so it was a great thing to get a feel for in our preparation for Camp. Overall, I feel that this fall FTX was the most challenging, but I have a feeling that it will also prepare my class and me for our evaluation at LDAC. The MSIVs have learned so much from their time at LDAC, and they are clearly committed to instructing the MSIII class on their way to success next summer.

c/SSG Alex Barbuto

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## Planning the FTX

This Fall's FTX was a successful event, as most cadets would attest. Training was effective and challenging, and cadets were exposed to a variety of events. On the surface, everything went off without a hitch. However, cadets should remember that such successful training was only possible with meticulous planning and preparation.

Under the guidance of c/LTC Vitter, c/MAJ Blomstrom, and c/MAJ O'Keefe, the MS-IV class began planning during frosh-o week. Ideas were thrown around the table, and a few particulars were set in stone. The FTX would take place at Fort Custer during Purdue weekend, and the main emphasis would be on STX lanes and Land Nav. c/2LT Hull took charge of Land Nav planning, putting together map packets and identifying appropriate Land Nav points within Fort Custer's training areas. c/CPT Pearl planned and detailed five different STX lanes, each with their own unique conditions, terrain, and battle drills. c/CPT Heatherly was the OIC for FLRC, and he chose specific lanes that were suitable for cadets who might have never done FLRC.



With plans on paper, most of the MS-IV class performed a leader's recon of Fort Custer. For Land Nav, Hull and c/2LT Abbracciamento spot-checked each of the 30 land nav points to be used, using GPS systems to verify each point's correct 8 digit grid. Pearl and the entire staff walked through each STX lane multiple times before deciding on suitable AAs and objectives. Heatherly and Abbracciamento also reconned the FLRC site to ensure that safety measures would be met when cadets executed their missions. Finally, c/CPT Capretta reconned the barracks and DFACs to ensure that all cadets would have access to adequate sleeping quarters and chow.

Of course, all training must be approved by cadre members, who use practical and real-life Army experience to evaluate and eventually approve or change all training events. The battalion staff briefed an initial presentation to the battalion XO and other staff members, who offered hints and suggestions for fine-tuning the plan. When a suitable plan was in place, the staff briefed their plan to LTC Crist.

Much more work was to be done, and every Tuesday in the staff meeting, the MS-IVs continually organized and added events to the schedule. Finally, Vitter distributed a timeline, detailing a troops to task and coordinating instructions for the entire weekend. This document told every cadet where they had to be at what time, and it was thanks to this that not a single hard time was missed all weekend.

In all, the FTX was a success, partly due to the execution of the MS-IIIs, but also due to the planning of the MS-IVs. Together, these classes combined to effectively train for future leadership at LDAC and for future leadership in the Army.

c/LT Greg Abbraciamento

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## Warrior Night

### Fightin' Irish Warriors

Warrior Night is a tradition that the Battalion has had for many years. It is considered a dining in which is a tradition the Army has as well. Its main purpose is to bring together all members in our unit and have an enjoyable evening bonding together as well as to honor our Battalion's history. During this time we honor our unit's accomplishments, group accomplishments and individual accomplishments. This event is important because it is easy to forget in the midst of the business and training the bonds that



keep us together, and on this night we do just that; bond together and build the esprit 'de corp among our group. This year we had many team events consisting of a dodge-ball tournament and warrior sumo wrestling. We also performed skits about the life of the cadet. The sophomore class blew everyone away this year with an outstanding video sketch entertaining the entire Battalion. This event is something I have looked forward to every year and will miss it as graduation approaches; but I know as it is an Army tradition to have dining-ins, that there will be many more to come in my future. I feel this event was a great success, everyone bonded, we became much closer as a group on multiple levels and Battalion morale was increased.

c/CPT Kailyn VanBeckum

## Closing the Semester

As the semester draws to a close, I first and foremost want to commend each of you on the effort and commitment you have put forth in ROTC and your academic studies throughout the semester. Your efforts do not go unnoticed by the cadre or the communities and universities you represent. As I have told you, your decision to join ROTC sets you apart from your peers. You should take pride in your commitment to being part of something larger than yourself and serving your Nation.



This has been an exceptional semester. The smoothly executed Freshman Orientation kicked off the year, welcomed the largest freshman class in over 15 years, and set the tone for the semester. Since then, the Cadet Chain of Command has done a masterful job in planning numerous training events such as the Fall FTX, weekly labs, and physical training that continue to challenge each cadet and hone their individual and leadership skills. Throughout the semester, events such as the Dixon Challenge, Drill and Ceremony competition, and platoon competition have continued to foster a friendly yet competitive environment to build camaraderie within platoons and the battalion and to encourage each Cadet to raise their individual level of performance.

For those alumni that receive The Shamrock, I hope that this letter finds you well. This year's alumni football tailgate was the largest yet; attended by over 50 former Fightin' Irish and their families. We hope to continue to grow this event in the future and perhaps add some additional events to the weekend. We welcome all of your visits, updates, and emails as you stay connected to the program and help us maintain our long and distinguished lineage.

As we ready ourselves for the winter break and head into the New Year, I want to wish all of you a happy holiday season. Spend time with your family and friends – relax and enjoy all that this time of year celebrates. Take time to reflect on how fortunate we are and remember the Soldiers that are in harm's way in Afghanistan, Iraq, and around the world that will not have the opportunity to be with loved ones this year. Finally, with many of you traveling around the country during the break, I implore you to remain safe. Remember – you are a valuable member of the team and we want each of you back here next semester.

Happy Holidays and God bless each of you,  
LTC Randy Crist