

THE SHAMROCK

Newsletter of the Fightin' Irish Battalion

May 2024

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GOD, COUNTRY, NOTRE DAME.



Spring Field Training Exercise

By CDT Ryan Oesterle '27

In early April, the Fightin' Irish Battalion made its way back to Fort Custer to conduct a Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX) with the cadets of the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University. Upon arriving early Thursday evening, CDTs were immediately divided into four intermixed platoons and given the opportunity to meet everyone; from there, after a brief MRE dinner, each platoon crafted SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) and practiced drills to prepare for the upcoming two days.



MSIII Cadets pose for a picture before range day

Friday started bright and early for everyone. After a very quick breakfast and transportation deep into the fort, the CDTs of the first two platoons were issued weapons and began the first of 6 STX (Situational Tactical Exercise) lanes. Over the course of 16 hours, they conducted Movement to Contact, Ambush, Raid, Attack, Defense, and Patrol Base Operations labs before spending what was left of the night sleeping in the woods.

Meanwhile, the MSIs and MSIIIs of the other two platoons began their Friday with a series of round robin training exercises. They practiced TCCC (Tactical Combat Casualty Care), SINCGAR Radio set-up and etiquette, and the assembly and disassembly of a variety of weapons. Following this, the MSIs and MSIIIs practiced on the Engagement Skills Trainer (EST), which electronically simulates firing an M4 Rifle, and then made their way to the range where they conducted M4 precision training. Throughout this time, the MSIIIs of the other

two platoons spent their morning completely on the range where they qualified on the M4. The day culminated with everyone completing both Day and Night Land Navigation. The platoons spent Saturday doing the opposite of what they did on Friday. Finally, on Sunday, the Fightin' Irish Battalion said goodbye to the other two schools and made their way back to campus, where they were greeted by a special lunch.

With the MSIIIs serving in positions of leadership throughout the training exercise, JFTX gave them ample opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and ability, which will serve them well during Advanced Camp later in the Summer. Meanwhile, JFTX allowed the MSIs and MSIIIs to perform in-depth the many skills and tactics that they have been exposed to and have practiced throughout the year. The ability to conduct this training exercise with two other battalions of highly-qualified CDTs makes this JFTX one Notre Dame is truly grateful for.

CDT Stewart halts during a STX lane



Presidential Pass In Review

By CDT Lily Smith '27

The University of Notre Dame's Tri-Military ROTC Presidential Pass In Review is a yearly event that honors the dedication of nearly 300 cadets and midshipmen to selfless service. Dating back to World War II, Notre Dame's commitment to shaping future military officers is symbolized in this ceremony overseen by University President Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.

This year, however, was Fr. Jenkins's final time presiding over the event, accompanied by the incoming University President, Fr. Robert A. Dowd. The gathering on South Quad not only showcased the leadership of the Army, Air Force, and Naval ROTC programs, but also emphasized Notre Dame's enduring support for those who aspire to serve the nation.

Father Jenkins presented The Fightin' Irish Battalion with the 2023 7th BDE GEN MacArthur streamer prior to the beginning of the ceremony. This award recognizes the battalion as the best in the 7th Brigade made up of 38 schools.

The Pass In Review serves as a reminder of Notre Dame's long standing military legacy and its ongoing commitment to preparing future leaders for the armed forces.

Beyond its ceremonial significance, as the cadets and midshipmen stand in formation, they embody the three values of the university: God, Country, Notre Dame.



Tri-Military cadets and the Fightin' Irish Battalion participating in the Pass In Review ceremony



Sandhurst Competition

By CDT Sarah Mahoney '25

In October, the Fightin' Irish Battalion's Ranger Challenge team won the 7th Brigade Ranger Challenge competition at Ft. Knox, which qualified the BN to send a team to the annual Sandhurst Military Skills Competition for the second year in a row. While the competition is named after the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in the UK, it has always been held annually at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, since 1967. The competition began with the presentation of a British Officer's sword to West Point as a prize to promote military excellence and has evolved over the years to include more teams. This year the Irish faced off against 10 Company teams from West Point, 15 Army ROTC units from across the United States, 5 service academy teams, and 17 international military ally teams. Each team is composed of 11 CDTs, two of which must be female.

After months of sacrificing personal time to train, the Irish Rangers departed from campus on April 20th with one goal – dominating this year's competition and finishing better than they had the previous year. The team started off the week strong with the Order of March Relay, which included three running legs weighted down with plates and weapons (CDTs Herrmann, Radtke, and O'Gara) as well as two swimming legs including a high dive and underwater obstacles (CDTs Thornburg and Mahoney). This early victory gave the team an advantage in picking their starting lanes for day one of the competition. In the time between the initial Order of March Relay and the start of the competition, the team spent several days training on weapons systems, TCCC (Tactical Combat Casualty Care), land navigation, and numerous other skills that may be assessed over the course of the competition. The team also attended a conference hosted by the Modern War Institute, which featured panelists that were experts on interoperability, joint operations, and the theory of future warfare. Most importantly, the team had the opportunity to explore West Point, familiarize themselves with the terrain, and make relationships with the other teams that we may one day share a battlefield with.

On Friday April 26th, the Irish Rangers, donned their rucks and prepared themselves to give it their all for the grueling two day competition. The first day of competition included eight physical and skill based lanes which were scored based on points or time. These events included the grenade assault course, M17 qualification, functional fitness, TCCC, and more. In addition to the competitions at each lane location, the team had to conduct timed movements between lanes in which they raced against five other teams that shared their starting lane location. Each of these movements involved running approximately 1-2 miles over hilly terrain with a ruck and an M4 rifle.

The culminating event on Friday evening was a grueling 8.5 mile team ruck movement from the West Point plain to Camp Buckner over terrain that rose thousands of feet in elevation, finishing 10th of the 48 teams. At the conclusion of Friday's competition events, the Irish Rangers were in 18th place, which was 6 of 16 ROTC Teams. The team was hungry for more, and knew they could capitalize upon Saturday's events to improve their team placement.



Saturday's competition events started just after the sun set, as CDTs Mahoney and O'Gara competed as a two person team in night land navigation from 0000-0200, finishing 5th overall in this event and as the first ROTC team. This early victory set the tone for the second day of competition, as the team flew through the obstacle course, successfully conducted the M4 stress shooting event, called for fire, and masterfully executed great physical effort on the final event known as "The Crucible." The Fightin' Irish Sandhurst Team's grit, tenacity, and unparalleled comradery propelled them to finish 10th of 48 teams and as the 2nd place overall ROTC team. The determination, cohesiveness, and high morale demonstrated by the team are a true testament to the qualities of the entire Fightin' Irish Battalion.

Congratulations to the members of the Sandhurst 2024 team, you make us proud to be a part of the Fightin' Irish!



Sandhurst 2024 Team with LTC Kobbe and CPT Henderson



CDT Mahoney, CDT Stewart, and CDT Thornburg during competition

Team: Peter Herrmann '24 (Ranger Co. Commander), Sully O'Hara '24 (Ranger Co. XO), Matthew Stewart '25 (Ranger Co. NCOIC), Ethan Barhydt '24, Ethan MacMillan '24, Conall Nugent '24, Sarah Mahoney '25, Ryan Radtke '25, Estela Ralston '25, Sean O'Gara '25, Collin Thornburg '27



The Holy Half Marathon

By CDT Grace McKenna '25

On April 13, runners from the Fightin' Irish Battalion set off for one of the best Notre Dame traditions—the Holy Half. The Holy Half Marathon is one of the largest student events held every year on campus. Over 1,700 runners participate annually either running a 6.2 mile race or 13.1 mile race. Runners come from Notre Dame, Saint Mary's College, and Holy Cross College, as well as the South Bend community, Irish fanbase, and alumni network nationwide. Runners take pride in their training for and completion of the marathon. For ROTC Cadets it is a similar feeling. Though Physical Training is a regular norm for all Cadets, people who successfully complete a half marathon are home to less than 1% of the population. In simple terms, it is no easy feat. Cadets train many weeks, sometimes months ahead of time to prepare for the Holy Half. This year, about thirty Cadets took to the starting line including LTC Kobbe! Though most casually run with friends enjoying the views of campus, the cheering crowds and friends passing by, and the warm spring weather, some push themselves to new levels. Notably, the Fightin' Irish had four runners place in the top 100 finishers.

It is incredible to see these Cadets train together, but also the whole campus come together to support South Bend. All proceeds from the Holy Half are split between three local charities. This year, over \$50,000 was raised for Education Bridge, Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph, and Girls on the Run Michiana. These charities are important to the South Bend community. Education Bridge works to empower young people in South Sudan, through a holistic education, to end poverty and violent conflict in their communities. Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph is a nonprofit organization located in South Bend that provides youth access to safety, shelter and hope. They provide an emergency shelter for teenagers, support the homeless, and assist in managing future lives. And Girls on the Run's goal is to inspire 3rd through 8th grade girls to be healthy and confident through an interactive curriculum that integrates running. The Fightin' Irish is proud to be part of this inspiring and incredible event and will continue to run for good and serve the community that it loves.



To the left, CDT Kate Sear, CDT Estela Ralston, and CDT Grace McKenna crossing the finish line



To the right, cadets posing for a photo after completing the Holy Half



MSIV Staff Ride

By CDT Sadie Stinson '25

Every year, the Fightin' Irish MSIVs, along with the Cadre, conduct a Staff Ride. This year, the seniors and Cadre visited Gettysburg, PA, Arlington, VA, and Washington, D.C. The group departed immediately following the Holy Half, arriving in Gettysburg that night. The following two days, the MSIVs had the chance to immerse themselves in the history of Gettysburg and the Battle of Gettysburg. Prior to the Staff Ride, each senior was assigned a key figure in the battle to research and prepare a biological monologue. Once in Gettysburg, the MSIVs were given the opportunity to present their monologue on the actual field that the battle occurred. Following two successful days in Gettysburg, the group headed to Washington, D.C., where they visited Ford's Theatre, the White House, the World War II Memorial, among other sites.

On the final day, the MSIVs visited Arlington National Cemetery, before heading back to South Bend. When reflecting on the trip, MSIV CDT William Shepherd stated "It was such a great experience. Having never been to DC or Gettysburg, I had such a great time with all my classmates exploring both places while learning battlefield tactics, important life lessons, and spending time with everyone. It really was a great last hurrah for our class." Thank you to Dr. Detoy and the Notre Dame Club of Gettysburg for their hospitality and expertise!



Clockwise from top right: CDTs Gentine and Oldre pose by their respective states; CDTs Gardy, Kowalski, and Gentine pose for a photo in front of the White House; MSIVs pose for a photo with Father Corby's statue; CDT Katherine Hill smiles while on the battlefield; MSIVs and Cadre with the ND Club of Gettysburg



CDT O'Hara's Army Ball Speech

As the Battalion Commander, CDT Sullivan O'Hara gave a speech at the annual Army Ball. Below is a transcript of his speech.

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests, and Parents. My name is Cadet O'Hara, and I was selected to serve as the Cadet Battalion Commander for this semester.

It was an unbelievable honor to have been selected, especially when I consider the astonishing capabilities and accomplishments of my class, more on that to come.

I did not start out in the Army ROTC program. I began my time at Notre Dame in the Air Force ROTC program. However, I quickly began to question this decision the more I saw what the Army program here was all about. I remember sitting in my Air Force class, watching a platoon of grizzled white field veterans returning from battle with the Ariana forces, and thinking to myself that I might have made a mistake. I had this realization again during STP, a program where cadets of all branches are invited to come and compete for slots in Army summer schools. There I was, laying on my back, helmet held high in the air, conducting flutter kicks, when one of the senior "black shirts," came over and yelled: "why are you in the Air Force?" I honestly had no response. These experiences, along with many others, eventually led me to join the Army ROTC Program.

I was nervous when I first joined. I was a sophomore and knew almost no one, and to make matters worse I tore my ACL about a week in so I wasn't able to fully participate for nearly a year. As it turned out though, none of that mattered. The cadre and Cadets in this program welcomed me in as one of their own. They showed me the ropes, and I immediately knew that the Army was the place for me.

That being said, I was not immediately good at being in the army. I distinctly

remember being at my first lab. For parents, lab is when we go into the woods and essentially play army in order to build leadership skills and prepare Cadets for our Junior year Cadet Summer Training. I was laying on the ground, pulling security. My team leader came over to me, and asked me for a sector sketch. Having absolutely no idea what it was, but not wanting to look stupid in front of the cool Army kids, I drew a landscape of exactly what I saw in front of me that likely provided little to no tactical value. However time progressed and I did eventually learn the ropes.

When it came time to finally receive branches and components, I was lucky enough to be selected for Active Duty and Branched Infantry. For me, this was undoubtedly the right choice and a dream come true, but that was far from the case for everyone, and in that lies the true strength of our Senior class. I am continually amazed by the quality of Cadet that this program is able to produce, and by the wide diversity of quality that we have.

Earlier I mentioned how honored I was to be selected as Battalion Commander, especially when I consider the accomplishments of my peers. We have now come to the point where I will elaborate on the excellence present within this graduating class.

To start, we have a class ACFT average of 563 out of 600, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the test, that is very good. We have an average GPA of 3.68. We have members who have been accepted to medical school, members who have won prestigious awards in the business world. We have three cadets who are in the final stages of competing for Fullbright Scholarships. 11 members of our rank have achieved the status of Distinguished Military Graduate, meaning that they ranked in the top 20% of cadets nationwide. We have Cadets who work with MIT's Lincoln labs and Special Operations Command to develop new technology to aid in that

field. We have one cadet who can both bench 315 lbs, a weight most struggle to squat, and is also going active duty cyber. Speaking of cyber, there were only 20 cyber reservists selected in the entire nation this year. 4 of them are in this room. While half of our class will be joining the Active Duty force, the other half will be serving in the reserves or national guard with jobs in

investment banking, consulting, doing years of volunteer service, attending law school, working in cybersecurity, Tech and data analytics, business strategy, and types of engineering that no amount of Notre Dame education could prepare me for. This list is by no means exhaustive. The students in the Army ROTC class of '24 are exceptional individuals, whose ranks I am proud to count myself among. Parents, you should be proud of the young men and women you have raised. Cadre you should be proud of the cadets you have mentored and taught. MS 1's, 2's, and 3's, you should see these seniors who stand before you as shining examples of what right looks like. Seek to emulate, and even surpass them when your time comes.

Thank you, and Go Irish.



CDT O'Hara gives a speech at the annual Army Ball



Senior Profiles



2LT Ethan Barhydt
Active Duty
Aviation

"Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me throughout my time at ND. I'm super grateful for the lessons I've learned in ROTC & I'm excited for the future! Go Irish"



2LT Jessica Bianco
Reserves
Military Intelligence

"I'm so lucky to have been apart of such an amazing group of people. Joining this battalion has been of the best decisions I've ever made, and I'm so grateful to have met so many amazing people through these past 4 years. I want to thank my friends and family for all of their incredible support along the way. The Fightin Irish Battalion will forever be the best place with the best people. Go Irish!"



2LT William Conde
Active Duty
Signal

"God, Country, Notre Dame."



2LT Connor Farrell
Active Duty
Explosive Ordnance Disposal

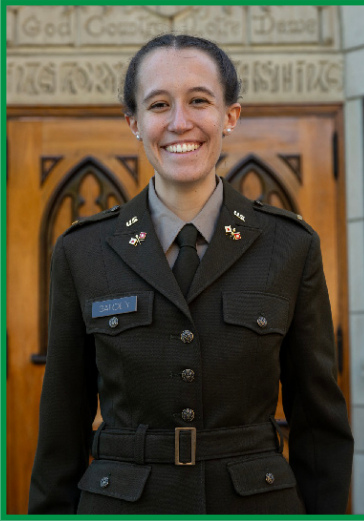
"I am so blessed to have so many people in my life who have supported me so far, thank you especially to my family and friends. Go Irish."



2LT Cecelia Fenton
Reserves
Military Intelligence

"I am so blessed to have been a part of this batallion and this University. I will forever be grateful for the people, memories, and opportunities this place gave me. Thank you to my family for being my biggest supporters---especially my big sister Nora, who has modeled the person and soldier I want to be. Thank you to the cadre and cadets who make the Fightin' Irish battalion so special. Go Irish."

Senior Profiles



2LT Victoria Gardey
Reserves
Signal

"Thank you to my family and friends for your endless support and love. I would not be who I am today without you. I feel so blessed to have been able to achieve this dream and to have attended Our Lady's University alongside my best friends. God. Country. Notre Dame."



2LT Cullen Geahigan
Active
Signal

"Any success one might wish to accredit me with here at Notre Dame is owed to the support and encouragement of no less than three people (and undoubtedly many more). First, I wouldn't be at Notre Dame without my mom. She led me down the right path, and gave me the tools to get there. Second, while my professors collectively encouraged me to pursue my interests at Notre Dame, Professor Rosato stands out as a mentor and a friend. He embodies the best virtues of the Notre Dame faculty, and is an example of the quality of mentorship this university can provide. Finally, my friend Colin Shea allowed me to laugh off the mountain of mistakes I've made over the last four years."



2LT Anne Gentine
National Guard
Medical Services

"Thank you to my family, friends, and cadre for the tremendous support over the last couple of years. I'm so grateful for the experiences I have had that have helped me grow into the person I am today. All of which could not have happened without all of your encouragement!"



2LT Juliet Hare
Reserves
Military Intelligence



2LT Peter Herrmann
Active
Infantry

"Notre Dame Army ROTC has been an absolute blessing for me. These four years have been an unparalleled experiences and I am lucky to have been part of such a special class. I would like to personally thank my Mom, Dad, and sister for all of the support they given me all these years. I owe everything to them! I would also like to thank the cadre for all of their guidance, mentoring, and unwavering counsel.."

Senior Profiles



2LT Katherine Hill
Reserves
Cyber

"Thank you to my family for being my greatest inspiration and to the entire battalion, past and present, for the invaluable training, experiences, and encouragement. Together, your support has empowered me to pursue excellence, both as an officer and as a person. I promise to make you proud, fueled by your support, patience, and prayers during this next phase."



2LT Daniel Hughes
Active
Ordnance

"Thank you to my family, cadre, and peers within this great battalion. It is through your support that I have been able to live out my dream of an education centered on God, Country, Notre Dame. I look forward to this next phase of life appreciate all who have gotten me to this point. Fightin' Irish!"



2LT Megan Hughes
Reserves
Cyber



2LT Juliana Jorgensen
Reserves
Military Intelligence

"Thank you to my friends and family for supporting me throughout my time at ND. I'm super grateful for the lessons I've learned in ROTC & I'm excited for the future. Go Irish!"



2LT Lucas Kopp
National Guard
Medical Services

"Thank you to my parents and my brothers for being my #1 fans and my biggest supporters. I couldn't have done any of this without you and I'm so proud to be your son. I'd also like to thank this battalion and this program, especially the cadre and my fellow cadets for pushing me and encouraging me to do my best at all times."

Senior Profiles



2LT Gabriela Kowalski
Active
Explosive Ordnance Disposal

"Thank you to my family, friends, and cadre for supporting me throughout these 4 years of college and ROTC. The amount of support I received from everyone helped push me in everything that I did and inspired me to reach for what sometimes seemed impossible. Thank you again and go Irish!"



2LT Joshua Lehman
Reserves
Cyber



2LT Ethan MacMillan
Active
Cyber

"A huge shoutout goes to the people in the Fightin' Irish Battalion that made this my home for 4 years. Thank you will never be enough. GO IRISH!!"



2LT Samuel Martinez
Active
Finance Branch Detail Infantry

"Thanks will never be enough"



2LT Conall Nugent
Active
Armor

"It's been a winding road, but credit goes out to my peers, cadre, and family. I would not be the person I am today without their guidance. God, Country, Notre Dame."

Senior Profiles



2LT Sullivan O'Hara
Active
Infantry

"Thank you to my family for supporting me, the Cadre for mentoring me, and to my peers for holding me accountable and pushing me further than I ever thought possible."



2LT Katherine O'Neal
Active
Medical Services

"There are so many people who I want to thank for supporting me. I would not be here without the Hughes family or Mr. Pratt, who believed in me before I even thought Army ROTC was a possibility. Thank you to the cadre for all the time and energy you pour into every cadet in this program. Thank you to my very best friends who I have made in this program – you have made every early morning immeasurably better. Thank you to my family, who are always in my corner, cheering me on from thousands of miles away. I will always be so grateful for the memories and bonds I have made. Go Irish!"



CDT Gunnar Oldre
Active
Branch TBD



2LT Kathleen Sajer
Reserves
Medical Services



2LT William Shepherd
Reserves
Cyber

"Thank you to my family, you were my rock. I am also so thankful to have been given the privilege of working and growing alongside such amazing individuals as there are in the Fighting Irish Battalion. With supports like these, I knew I could never fail. God. Country. Notre Dame."

The Tri-Military Commissioning Ceremony

By Professor of Military Science, LTC William B. Kobbe

On 18 May 2024, the Fightin' Irish Battalion participated in the University of Notre Dame's Tri-Military ROTC Commissioning Ceremony culminating with **24 Army Cadets** affirming the Oath of the Commissioned Officer and officially achieving the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army.

The event took place in the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center with over **800 family members and friends** in attendance with countless others watching on livestream to share in the moment. General Bryan P. Fenton ('UND Army ROTC '87) served as the Distinguished Guest Speaker and administered the Oath of Office as well as words of wisdom to the newly commissioned Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Officers.

The 24 new 2nd Lieutenants will assume a diverse array of assignments and military occupational specialties. 12 of the 24 will proceed into the Active Army representing the following branches: Signal (2), Transportation, Ordnance/Explosive Ordnance Disposal (2), Infantry (3), Aviation, Cyber, Armor, Medical Service. 10 of the 24 will serve in the U.S. Army Reserves representing the following branches: Military Intelligence (4), Medical Service, Signal, and Cyber (4). The four cyber selection is significant as the USAR selected 20 total officers, no school received more than 1, the Fightin' Irish Battalion claimed 4! The USAR Officers will serve a variety of civilian jobs from consulting, medicine, banking, and engineering to name a few. 2 of the 24 will serve in the National Guard (Wisconsin and Michigan) as Medical / Health Service Officers, both planning to attend Medical School to serve one day as Army Doctors.



The Army's 24 Newest 2LT Lieutenants with General Bryan P. Fenton

This collective team has accomplished many feats over the past four years. They graduate with a cumulative **GPA of 3.68, 11 Commission as Distinguished Military Graduates** representing the top 20% of the nearly 5500 Cadets commissioned, and they led Notre Dame's Irish Rangers to back-to-back 7th **BDE Ranger Challenge Championships** (beating out 37 other schools); culminating in a 10th place Sandhurst International Skills competition hosted at the U.S. Military Academy, placing **2nd in the ROTC category** to Texas A&M (274 total ROTC programs) and beating 14 Country Teams and 14 ROTC teams in the process.

More importantly, this graduating class left a **lasting legacy** on the program. **The program's size is the largest since 1998** and we anticipate the program growing with the projected incoming Class of 2028 in August. **The Class of 2024 ensured standards remained high and we never sacrificed quality for quantity.** They successfully persevered through the COVID Pandemic and one famous (perhaps infamous due to the cold weather conditions) Field Training Exercise their 1st year, but most importantly, they continued the incredible culture of family and competition within the University of Notre Dame's Army ROTC Program. Their immense impact will be felt for years to come. They truly **"Lead Like a Champion Today!"**

"God, Country, Notre Dame"



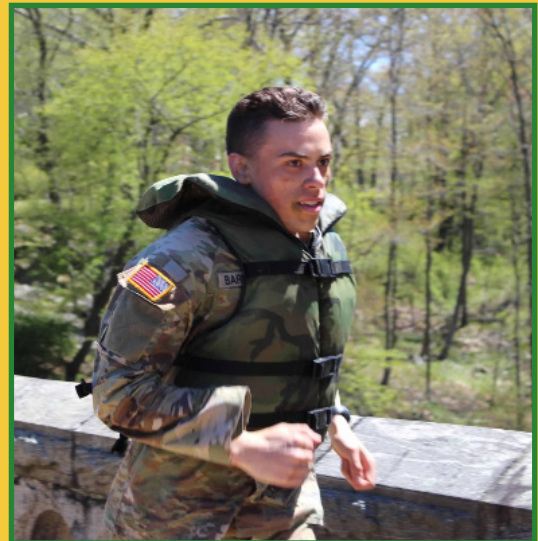
Guest speaker, GEN Bryan Fenton, addresses the Class of 2024 and guests.



Cadets Affirm the Oath of Office



Thank you for your continued support of Notre Dame's Fightin' Irish Battalion!



Have a wonderful summer and look out for the Shamrock's return in the fall!