Orientation Week at Fort Custer

Guest Writer: MIDN 4/C Bryan Cooley, USNR

While walking across campus to the Pasquerilla Center on the morning of 15 August, I never thought that in a few short hours I would be questioning my speed, my strength, my sanity, and even the volume of my voice as my fellow 4/C midshipmen and I were indoctrinated into Notre Dame’s Naval ROTC program. Over the summer, I frequently wondered how O-Week (Orientation Week) would be conducted. Was I walking into disciplined, professional course-of-instruction or a lax summer camp designed to acclimate the incoming freshmen to the ROTC environment? The former was confirmed for us by Gunnery Sergeant Kennington, who stepped onto the bus taking us to Fort Custer and informed us that this week in August was “not going to be a meet-and-greet.”

My classmates and I soon realized we knew nothing about standard military customs, such as standing at attention, getting in formation, and sounding off (so all our responses could be clearly heard). After a slow start, we started to learn these and other military skills, and by the end of the first day we could see small improvements in our performance. One of the best parts of O-week was that in the middle of this trial-by-fire learning process came events that were not only extremely enjoyable but, for some, were once in a lifetime opportunities. Our second day began with the Physical Readiness Test and continued with instructions on weapons safety and proper handling. The instruction sessions may not have been the most exciting part of O-week, but by the third day we were able to send rounds down range! While I believe it is impossible not to have fun shooting, it was especially enjoyable as a brief relief from the constant stress of O-week. We were all happy to take a break from marching and memorizing our knowledge book, and it was a great weapons familiarization for many midshipmen.

The next day, we learned land navigation and spent the better part of a day roughing it through the woods around Fort Custer. As we were all new freshmen and did not know each other yet, the land-nav evolution gave us the opportunity to get to know our fellow classmates through interaction in small groups. The bonds we developed on the land-nav course were tested on our final day at Fort Custer, when we returned to our small groups to tackle the Leadership Reaction Course (LRC). The LRC is essentially an obstacle course, with stations including tank traps, simulated minefields, and various water obstacles. Each station has a specific goal, and we had to rely on each other and our ability to communicate effectively to complete the course. Although O-Week was tiring and some of us were homesick, it was also a great experience as it provided unique opportunities (such as learning to shoot and navigating around the woods) and allowed us to develop leadership skills.

During O-Week, personal mistakes were frequent. I, for instance, made the error of addressing Sergeant Leichty as “Sarge,” but these mistakes tended to create some of the best and funniest memories. One of these memorable moments was the Marine Option shout off, in which Midshipman 4/C Thomas Kleiber thought that the most effective mode of intimidation was to yell “cherry pie”. Midshipman 4/C Jacob Hook surprised us all with his complete annihilation of his target when shooting the M9. Other memorable events were the Harry Potter duels we enjoyed while waiting in formation, and many of the midshipmen getting drenched from the water portions of the LRC. These memories made O-Week not only a time for growth and development, but also a time to build strong friendships with our classmates.

O-Week was undoubtedly tougher for some than it was for others, but one thing is for certain; it took every midshipmen out of their comfort zone and forced them to adapt to a new environment. Now that we can step back and reflect on our experience, we can view all the yelling, mistakes, and questioning of one’s personal abilities at O-Week as worthwhile experiences. On the bus back to Notre Dame, with the Golden Dome and the start of the school year in sight, I definitely found an appreciation for the learning experience that was O-Week, and now that the monotony of the academic year has set in, I would not mind swapping study time for range time.
Welcome back! We are off to a great start this school year: NROTC is in the lead for the Tri-Mil Commander’s Cup, and we didn’t have a day of snow in South Bend until December. We began the fall with an incredibly successful O-Week. This is the third year in a row that we have held O-Week at Fort Custer, Michigan, and I can truly attest to its continued success because of the dedication, initiative, and leadership displayed by the 1/C midshipmen who participated.

We certainly are keeping busy – dominating both the annual Michigan NROTC flag football game and the Tri-Mil Commander’s Cup flag football game. The 4/C midshipmen have already had a positive impact on the battalion with their enthusiasm and motivating attitude. The 2/C and 3/C midshipmen are settling into their new jobs nicely as they accept more responsibilities. I have come to expect great things from these rising leaders, and based on what I have seen this semester, the battalion is in great hands next year! The 1/C midshipmen are taking full advantage of their leadership roles as they enjoy their last few months at Notre Dame and prepare to commission into the Navy and Marine Corps. The semester has been filled with a number of different events, like the Navy/Marine Corps Birthday Ball, a weekend full of Veterans Day activities – including unfurling a giant flag at a varsity basketball game, and (thanks to Halloween falling on a Monday this year) Halloween PT (including some great costumes).

Not a day goes by as BCO when I am not impressed with the midshipmen in the battalion who go above and beyond the call of duty. This semester owes its success to that unwavering commitment and dedication. I wish the best of luck to MIDN Prendergast and his staff next semester.

Keep up the good work and have a great Spring semester!

Editor’s Note

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my staff this semester. They have done an outstanding job ensuring we have an individual at every NROTC event so we can provide our friends and families with a record of our exciting semester. Bravo Zulu to my staff, and LT Panos, our advisor!
A Message from the CO

CAPT Clarence Earl Carter, USN

I have had the extraordinary privilege of being your Commanding Officer for just over eight months, and just completed my first full semester at Naval ROTC Notre Dame. What a great experience, made all the more so by an incredible team – our world-class Unit Staff and ROTC Tri-Mil colleagues; the very supportive University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College leadership, faculty, and staff; and most importantly, the finest students -- and Midshipmen -- in America, and their families.

There have been a number of highlights since my arrival, but none as special as the one-on-one time I was able to spend with each Midshipman during the Fall months -- getting to know you better; talking about your near-term challenges and your longer-term dreams; and discussing the incredible professional opportunities that await you, both during your time in the NROTC Program, and when you take the oath of office as a Commissioned Officer in the United States Navy or Marine Corps. From these chats, I was collectively struck by several remarkable things, though in no particular order of importance.

How much you do and how well you do it. Not only do most of you truly excel in the classroom, but you are in various bands and choirs, participants on numerous athletic teams, members of countless student organizations, leaders within your residence halls, and the list goes on and on.

Your commitment to service above self. You “bring the best of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s to life,” on these campuses, throughout Michiana, and even around the world, serving others individually, and through myriad organizations and charitable causes.

Your passion for the Naval ROTC Program, and your commitment to this Battalion. You love what you do, and it shows. You support the Battalion Leadership and the host of organizations that are run by the Battalion, with a level of passion and respect that is truly uncommon and refreshing. In doing so, you perpetuate the rich legacy of Notre Dame NROTC exceptionally well.

The incredible family support that you enjoy (no surprise why you all turned out so well). I have appreciated the words of greeting and support from your parents, whether stopping in the office to say ‘hello,” dropping me a short note, hailing me as I walked the campus, or greeting me at a distant football stadium. You are really blessed; thank them often!

Since my last Irish Pennant article, we welcomed the very impressive NROTC Class of 2015 to campus, and they have “hit the deck running.” They quickly assimilated into the Battalion during Orientation Week at Fort Custer, immersed themselves in a variety of Unit and campus-related activities, and with Fall grades just in, achieved an impressive, first semester average GPA of 3.19 – at an elite University!

We also welcomed two new members of our staff this past Summer—our new Marine Officer Instructor, Major Jackie Schiller, and our new Third Class Advisor, Lieutenant Gerald “Gus” Bennett. Both have quickly made their mark, while filling some big shoes. Following Lieutenant Bennett’s arrival, his predecessor, Lieutenant Julie LaFleur, left the Navy, following seven years of devoted service. While Julie’s presence on the staff is truly missed, she has remained in the area and visits Pasquerilla Center periodically. She also remains a mentor for many of those Midshipmen whose lives she so profoundly touched during her time as an instructor and advisor.

The Spring Term is just underway, and commissioning/graduation are barely four months away. 1 look forward to another great semester with all of you, as I indeed have the best job in the United States Navy. Go Irish!

Captain Earl Carter

Commanding Officer and Professor of Naval Science
XO’s Corner

CDR Fritz Teuscher, USN

Midshipmen of Notre Dame and St. Mary’s, congratulations on a fantastic Fall semester 2011! The mild weather, like the past semester, has come to a quick end. It is hard to believe how fast the semester went by. It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming our new 4/C midshipmen and their parents to Notre Dame’s beautiful campus and to the rigors of the Naval ROTC program.

The highlight of the semester, at least for me, was the Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball on 28 October. Our guest of honor, General Anthony Zinni USMC (Ret), former Commander of CENTCOM, was impressive as he spoke most eloquently on the importance of our roles as officers, and future officers, in an ever-changing world and threat environment. Throughout the evening, and actually throughout the whole weekend, he kept commenting on how impressed he was with the high caliber of our midshipmen and on the great things they accomplish here at Notre Dame and in the local community. The other highlight of the evening was the company dance-off after the dinner. I know that our midshipmen are a very talented group, and they did not disappoint on the dance floor. You could tell that plenty of thought and hard work went into each company’s routine. Just think of the possibilities if we could get them to put that same amount of effort into their studies and physical training.

Just before the Thanksgiving break, many of our midshipmen, along with the cadets of our fellow ROTC programs, braved a rather chilly autumn night in November while standing vigil at the Clarke Memorial Fountain as part of our Veteran’s Day activities. The 24-hour vigil concluded with a university sponsored Veteran’s Day Ceremony on 11-11-11 that featured Father Ted Hesburgh C.S.C. and former Indiana Governor, Joe Kernan. The ceremony was well attended by numerous faculty and guests and was very professionally conducted. Once again, thanks to all who stepped up to assist in each of these endeavors.

Final exams and a well-deserved holiday break have ended. If midterms were any indication of things to come, I am sure the final semester grades will be outstanding. With everything the midshipmen have going on in their lives (NROTC obligations, physical training, sporting events, community service, and countless campus activities), it always impresses me how they continue to excel academically.

The Spring semester is now upon us, and the First Class Midshipmen have begun their last chapter at Notre Dame before starting their careers in the Navy and Marine Corps. Just a few weeks ago, the Navy Option Midshipmen excitedly began planning their futures in the naval service when they were assigned their warfare specialties in the Navy (Surface Warfare, Submarines, or Aviation). What I would give to trade places with any one of them! They will have opportunities and challenges that their student peers could never even imagine. Their upcoming service is the culmination of years of preparation and training and is a testament to the ideal of service before self. I admire these young men and women patriots!

Please reflect on your outstanding performance during this past semester and hit the ground running for the Spring semester 2012. While the First Class Midshipmen look forward to commissioning (and the Fourth Class Midshipmen look forward to one day becoming upperclassmen), we all look forward to another fantastic semester in South Bend and the upcoming opportunities for the Irish battalion to excel. FLY NAVY! GO IRISH!
Midshipmen of Notre Dame and St. Mary’s, you should be proud of yourselves - overall you have had an extremely successful semester. This year’s Freshman Orientation at NROTC Notre Dame set a new standard in best practices and is arguably the most ambitious in the country. This year’s orientation events included an M4 (rifle) and M9 (pistol) live fire, a land navigation exercise, cross fit work outs, a four mile conditioning hike, and a Leadership Reaction Course (LRC). For a second year in a row, the senior cadre and incoming freshmen deployed to Fort Custer Army National Guard Base in Augusta, Michigan. This year’s senior cadre performed magnificently and displayed maturity, professionalism, and leadership which set conditions for success and enabled this unit to accomplish an extremely aggressive training program that will serve all involved well. The seniors demonstrated what superb leading, teaching, coaching, and mentoring looks and feels like to the freshmen. All those that participated in this year’s Freshmen Orientation are to be commended.

This Fall’s physical training program has been extremely effective. The midshipmen battalion staff and physical training instructor are giving you what you deserve and are ensuring that the taxpayers (who pay your tuition) are receiving their money’s worth. You must continue to exploit this success during your well-deserved break. It is much easier (mentally and physically) to stay in shape than to get back into shape when school resumes in January. Be true to yourselves and execute a physical fitness regimen at home which focuses on your deficiencies.

As you enjoy your time away from school during the break, ensure that you also focus on spending quality time with your families and loved ones. Do not forget about the sacrifices and hardships your families endure both now and throughout the course of your careers. I would argue that they sacrifice far more than we do as Marines and Sailors and are every bit the hero that all of you are. Do not take them for granted and cherish the time you have with them.

Additionally, you need to continue to reflect on your personal goals. If you are meeting those goals, good on you - if you are not, adjust accordingly. As naval officers, those goals should not be self-serving; they should be made with the best interest in mind of those you are going to serve and lead. You get smarter, stronger, and faster for them. They do not get to choose their Platoon Commander or Division Officer - they get you. You had better be the best that you can be for them. Think about that as you sign up for classes in the spring semester; take courses that will challenge your mind so you can continue to evolve into the most capable decision maker possible. By joining this unit you have chosen a path that few Americans even dare to travel, and I challenge you not just to continue on this path haphazardly, but to attack this way of life with absolute tenacity.

I will leave you with a quote from President Ronald Reagan that I think effectively communicates the critical role that you will perform as a naval officer and member of the greatest martial culture on the planet. Shortly after 1st Battalion, 8th Marines took 241 Marine, Navy, and Army casualties in Beirut, Lebanon on the 23rd of October 1983, President Reagan stated to the press, “some people go through their whole life wondering if they ever made a difference, the Marines do not have that problem.” I would offer that American Sailors and the Midshipmen of Notre Dame and St. Mary’s do not have that problem either. You all make a positive difference every day. I commend you all on your chosen profession; you are an exceptional breed. I look forward to serving with you again next semester. Remember to stay focused - you owe that to the future young Americans and their families that you are going to serve. Semper Fidelis.
The Navy/Marine Corps Birthday Ball

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Robert Gates

On Friday, 28 October 2011, the University of Notre Dame’s NROTC unit hosted their annual Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball at the Hilton Garden Inn, located adjacent to the campus of Saint Mary’s College. Guests were excited for one of the NROTC unit’s most popular events of the year, which provides a chance for the members of the unit and guests to interact with each other in a fun environment.

After a cocktail hour reception, the annual birthday remarks from Admiral Jonathan Greenert, Chief of Naval Operations, and from General James Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, were read by MIDN 1/C James Day. Following these remarks, the guest of honor, General Anthony C. Zinni, USMC (ret.) spoke to guests. General Zinni stated that after having interacted with members of the battalion, he was excited for the future of the U.S. Navy and Services and that it was his opinion that the country was in great hands.

Following the speeches, one of the most traditional events of the evening, the ceremonial cutting of the cake commenced. A midshipmen color guard was present with a sword detail as the cake was presented to the Commanding Officer of the unit, Captain Earl Carter. Following tradition, Captain Carter cut a piece for himself, the most senior member of the Naval Corps. He then cut the next piece of cake for the youngest member of the Navy present, MIDN 4/C Paloma Luna. The ceremony was then repeated for the Marines with Major Schiller, the most senior Marine, presenting the slice of cake to MIDN 4/C Lucas Sullivan.

After the cake cutting ceremony, the dance portion of the evening began, starting with the most anticipated event of the night. The company dance competition took place with the 3rd and 4th class midshipmen from each company performing coordinated dances to the wild enjoyment of the onlookers. The winner of the competition was decided by the Battalion Commanding Officer, MIDN 1/C Taylor Sheppard, who came to the conclusion that Bravo and Charlie company were tied for the win. To break the tie, an impromptu company leadership dance-off was held. Although the COs and XO’s of each company put on a solid performance, Bravo emerged victorious. In the end, the 2011 Navy and Marine Corps Ball was pronounced a grand success, and guests left with a great sense of camaraderie and companionship while looking forward to the next year’s event. Special thanks go to MIDN 1/C Alicia Elliot and her staff for organizing this year’s ball.

Trident 24-Hour Run for Charity

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Michelle Kim, USNR

In the midst of all the usual excitement of a game day weekend (pep rallies, concession stands, tailgating, and home game activities) the Trident Naval Society reminded students, staff, and visitors to Notre Dame’s campus to help children and adults with special needs by raising money for St. Joseph’s County Special Olympics with its annual 24 Hour Run. Despite the gray and chilly weather, the 24 Hour Run could not have been held on a better day due to the publicity that the Trident Naval Society raised with the many visitors to campus for the Michigan State game.

For twenty-four consecutive hours, two midshipmen, one dressed in a shark costume and the other carrying a trident, ran constantly to publicize the Trident Naval Society’s support for the Special Olympics. Each midshipmen pair ran for an hour before handing off their costume or trident to the next pair of midshipmen. The first pair of runners took off at 1200 on Friday, 16 September, and the run ended at 1200 Saturday. This year’s midshipmen ran the entire 24 hours continuously, despite a few hitches, which included the shark’s fin falling off! Both the shark, a crowd favorite, and its trident carrying partner were able to raise awareness for the St. Joseph’s County Special Olympics fundraiser. By running all over campus, including the quiet confines of Hesburgh Library and the labs in Jordan Hall of Science, they motivated people to visit the Trident Naval Society booth set up next to the Clarke Peace Memorial Fountain and make a donation to the cause.

At one point, the persistent shark and trident carrier even ran inside the University Band’s drummer’s circle! MIDN 4/C Elizabeth Terino, one of the daring runners, was especially enthusiastic about her experience, “We ran through the drummer’s circle. It was really fun!” The booth, manned by other midshipmen in the unit, offered various treats and snacks to catch the attention of those passing by and encourage them to donate. Thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of the entire battalion, the Trident Naval Society was able to raise an outstanding $1380 for the local St. Joseph County Special Olympics. A special thank you goes to 2/C Alexandra Buckley, 2/C Elizabeth Schroff, 2/C Bill Leigh, 2/C Katie Griffin, 2/C Devon Graham, 3/C Hank Duden, 3/C Justin Rumps, and 3/C Chris Patterson for organizing the event.
The Irish Pennant
Naval ROTC
University of Notre Dame
Fall 2011

Welcome Major Schiller and LT Bennett!

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Robert Gates USNR

This fall, the unit excitedly welcomed Major Jackie L. Schiller to the Notre Dame NROTC Unit as the new Marine Officer Instructor, and Lieutenant Gerald “Gus” Bennett as an advisor and assistant professor. MAJ Schiller is originally from Canyon, Texas and enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1992. MAJ Schiller attributes his father’s military service, as a Sergeant Major in the Marine Corps, as his inspiration to join the Marines. After attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant, MAJ Schiller attended the University of New Mexico and was commissioned via the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) on 18 December 1999 with a degree in Exercise Physiology. His most recent assignment was to 1st Battalion 4th Marines 1st Marine Division, serving as a Rifle Commander, Weapons Company Commander, and Battalion Executive Officer. When asked about the most rewarding aspect of his career in the Marines, MAJ Schiller responded that he enjoys the leadership style exhibited in the Marine Corps. MAJ Schiller attained a Masters in Leadership from Grand Canyon University, and is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Strategic Leadership. In his free time, MAJ Schiller enjoys filling his “relationship bank account” with his family, lifting weights, and studying leadership. He is glad to be at Notre Dame, explaining he admires the pride people have in Notre Dame and its noble history.

LT Bennett graduated from the United States Naval Academy in May of 2006 with a degree in English and German. LT Bennett’s first tour was aboard USS JOHN S MCCAIN (DDG 56), based in Yokosuka, Japan, as the communications officer. In December 2008, LT Bennett became the Operations officer for the HSV-2 SWIFT military detachment in Norfolk, Virginia. In this position, he deployed to South America and Africa, in participation with Southern Partnership Station and Africa Partnership Station. In March 2010, he attended Diplomatic Language School in Arlington, Virginia to learn Dari. Most recently, he deployed to Strategic Headquarters, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Kabul, Afghanistan, where he served as the Aide de Camp for the ISAF Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations. Notre Dame is excited to have both these individuals working with our midshipman! Welcome to Notre Dame!

Veterans Day Memorial

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Devon Graham, USNR

At 1600 on Thursday, November 10, midshipmen and cadets began a 24-hour vigil at the Clarke Memorial Fountain on Notre Dame’s campus in honor of U.S. veterans. At the end of this 24-hour vigil the Naval, Air Force, and Army ROTC units joined together for the Veteran’s Day Ceremony. The ceremony gives these midshipmen and cadets the opportunity to pay respect and thank past and present service members. MIDN 1/C Kaitlin Kleiber, a senior in NROTC said, “The vigil is my favorite part. I had several [non-ROTC] students remark to me that they think it is awesome that we do it every year. They seemed very impressed that there were ROTC students standing through the night, even in the snow and cold. I think it is a great time to reflect and remember those who have served before us.”

At the closing ceremony, the Commanding Officers of the three ROTC branches were present, along with three guests of honor: former Indiana Governor Joseph Kernan, Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, and District Director for Congressman Joe Donnelly, Mr. Hodge Patel. Governor Kernan spoke of his experiences serving as a Naval Flight Officer and as a prisoner of war in Vietnam. His presence at the ceremony was inspiring and truly a privilege for all in attendance. MIDN 4/C Hutchinson, a Navy Option freshman, shared her thoughts on her first Veteran’s Day Ceremony, “Seeing and participating in the vigil and ceremony was humbling and inspiring. I felt like I was part of something very special.” Every year when November 11 comes around, the ROTC units at the University of Notre Dame are grateful to be able to come together to honor and thank all those who have sacrificed to help protect this nation.

Fall 2010 Irish Pennant Staff

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Pennant CPO: MIDN 2/C Devon Graham

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Paul Cassani
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Success at the Marine Mud Run

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Devon Graham, USNR

This year’s annual Marine Mud Run was held on 10 September, and the Notre Dame NROTC Unit had its highest turnout of midshipmen since we began participating in the run! The Mud Run is hosted by the St. Joseph Valley Detachment of the Marine Corps League, and all of the proceeds from the event are donated to Toys for Tots. Thirty-seven midshipmen from Notre Dame stood at the starting line at 1015 in the morning and began the muddy race for the underprivileged children. This five kilometer course consisted of a mountain of mud, several wall obstacles, and pools of murky water for the participants to slog through. Participation in the mud run has been a tradition in the unit for years, and this year’s midshipmen continued to enjoy it. “The mud run was a great event. It definitely lived up to its name; I got real muddy,” explained Midshipman 3/C Thomas Catalano, who ran the mud run for the first time this year.

Last year, one of the Notre Dame NROTC Navy teams won the race, and the unit continued that tradition this year. It was a joint Navy/Marine Corps team who brought the boot plaque back to the unit. Navy Options 1/C David Simone and 1/C Michael Martinson and Marine Options 1/C Michael McHale and Sergeant Benjamin Leichty led the entire field to the finish line. As senior Marine Option Midshipman 1/C Victoria Hennings, having completed the mud run for the fourth and final time during her college career, expressed, “Being in the military is about so much more than fighting. It’s about giving back to our country and making America a better place. That’s why the mud run is so important, we get a chance to improve ourselves and improve our community at the same time, and it doesn’t hurt that we get a little muddy in the process!” Hennings thoughts ring true for everyone who participated in this event. The military is not just about fighting overseas; it is also about bringing unity home and working together as a team to better life in America. The mud run here in South Bend, Indiana will remain an important event for the unit as it gives the Midshipmen of Notre Dame an opportunity to give back and have a lot of fun in the process.

Navy and Marine Corps Color Guard

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Devon Graham, USNR

It has long been a tradition of military units to use flags and or banners to represent themselves in battle. These flags were symbolic for military units, and loss or damage to them was considered dishonorable. This tradition led to the creation of the Color Guard, to ensure the protection of the flags. This tradition of the Color Guard exists today within the military and on Notre Dame’s campus for ceremonial displays and presentations of the national Ensign and other identifying flags.

The University of Notre Dame’s Color Guard teams represent the Naval ROTC unit at football, hockey, soccer, and numerous other sporting events on campus. The Fall 2011 Color Guard Commanding Officer, MIDN 2/C Elizabeth Schroff, said that she felt “privileged to be a part of the Color Guard team.” This sentiment is repeated by all the midshipmen 4/C, 3/C, and 2/C, involved in the Color Guard. The Color Guard team consists of four fireteams, each with two rifles and four flag carriers. 4/C midshipmen make up the fireteams, 3/C midshipmen act as fireteam COs and XOs, and there are two 2/C midshipmen who are the CO and XO of the entire Color Guard team. Being a part of the Color Guard team gives 3/C and 2/C midshipmen a leadership opportunity teaching incoming midshipmen the aspects of Color Guard.

MIDN 3/C Lopes is a fireteam CO this year, and when asked about his involvement he replied, “The opportunity and privilege I’ve had to lead a Color Guard team in bearing and honoring our nation’s colors has truly been one of my most rewarding experiences at Notre Dame.” This year, a Tri-Mil fireteam was invited to present the Colors for the University of Notre Dame vs. University of Maryland football game held at FedEx Field in Maryland. The Color Guard team and Gunnery Sergeant Kennington completed a long, but rewarding, twelve-hour drive each way in order to represent the University and the Naval ROTC unit at the game. Another moving Color Guard event took place during the Naval Academy football game.

Prior to the game, Color Guard teams from each of the three ROTC units came out onto the football field to display the colors while the national anthem rang. The midshipmen who take a part in the Color Guard team do so with pride, whether it be walking out onto the football field on a Saturday afternoon, or coming out for a night practices after a chaotic school day.
Notre Dame Flag Football Remains Undefeated

Guest Writer: MIDN 1/C Reed Looney, USNR

The unit's flag football team traveled to Ann Arbor, Michigan Friday, 9 September with hopes of coming away with their sixth straight victory over Michigan's NROTC Unit. Every year, the two teams meet for a friendly competition on the gridiron. In recent years, Notre Dame has been dominant on offense, shredding the Wolverines' secondary with big play after big play. This year, however, it was the Irish's defense that anchored the team, shutting out Michigan 38-0.

Led by cornerback MIDN 1/C Matthew Abeling and safety MIDN 1/C JP McCabe, the secondary came away with 7 interceptions. MIDN Abeling and MIDN 2/C Quinn Kilpatrick had two interceptions each and MIDN McCabe, MIDN 1/C Nick Raic and MIDN 2/C Kevin Hickey all had one. MIDN Hickey started off the scoring with his interception, returning it 53 yards for a touchdown. The Irish secondary proved impenetrable, forcing Michigan to attempt running the ball. Led by defensive end MIDN 2/C Matthew Tansey, the Notre Dame defensive front held the Wolverines to less than 50 yards on the ground.

Unfortunately, two key players for the Irish were unable to participate in the game. Veteran quarterback MIDN 1/C Reed Looney and center MIDN 1/C Tom Fagan were sidelined en route to Ann Arbor when an oil line in MIDN Fagan's car ruptured. MIDN Looney, who was driving close behind, stayed with MIDN Fagan until a tow truck arrived. Though no other players had taken snaps in practice at those positions, the Irish were able fill the voids with talented underclassmen.

The most important aspect of holding this game is the camaraderie it builds between the two units. After congratulatory handshakes, friends who had met during summer cruise were able to catch up with each other in the friendly post-game atmosphere. The Wolverines will travel to South Bend next year to try and end Notre Dame's six game winning streak. The two units are already looking forward to the next meeting on the gridiron.

Change Of Battalion Command Ceremony

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Robert Gates

On 7 December 2011, the Notre Dame NROTC Unit held its semi-annual change of command ceremony in DeBartolo Hall. The practice of this ceremony is unique in that it is specifically prescribed by U.S. Navy Regulations. Nothing like it exists in the Army or Air Force traditions, yet it has been a tradition in the Navy and Marine Corps since the Civil War era. The change of command ceremony is used to muster all hands and allow them to witness the official transfer of authority between Commanding Officers. It centers on the formal reading of orders for the relieved officer and the officer to be relieved. In the past, as news travelled slowly, the reading of orders was meant to ensure that only authorized officers possessed command authority.

The Battalion Command Leadership Team for the Fall 2011 semester was composed of MIDN 1/C Taylor Sheppard as Battalion Commanding Officer (BCO), MIDN 1/C Kevin Brainard as Battalion Executive Officer (BXO), and MIDN 1/C Brent Shawcross as Battalion Operations Officer (BOPS). The battalion staff this semester displayed increased responsibility and decision-making power within the battalion of midshipmen. The results of their agenda could be witnessed throughout the semester with increased leadership through all levels of the battalion. The exiting staff had an outstanding semester and set the bar high for the incoming staff. The Battalion Command Leadership Team for the Spring 2012 semester includes MIDN 1/C Prendergast as BCO, MIDN 1/C David Simone as BXO, and MIDN 1/C Victoria Hennings as BOPS. The change of command ceremony began by calling the battalion to attention and then Fr. Peter Rocca administered the invocation. The orders for MIDN Sheppard and MIDN Prendergast were then read aloud, and at their conclusion, MIDN Sheppard handed the unit flag to MIDN Prendergast, symbolizing the transfer of authority. The ceremony closed with words from the battalion Commanding Officer, MIDN Sheppard and MIDN Prendergast, and a benediction by Fr. Rocca. We all have great expectations for MIDN Prendergast and his team, and know they will perform admirably.
The Father Jenkins Run is an annual event in which all ROTC units at Notre Dame, including Army, Air Force, Naval ROTC, run in formation with the President of the University, Father John Jenkins, C.S.C. This year’s run was held on Tuesday, 27 September. Midshipmen and cadets gathered early in the morning for the run, which started at 0630, the usual time for ROTC physical training evolutions. On this Tuesday morning, Fr. Jenkins joined us, despite the early hour and rain, as a show of continuing support for the ROTC units on campus.

The relationship between Notre Dame and the military, specifically the Navy, has been strong for many decades. Notre Dame has long recognized the debt of gratitude it owes the Navy. During the Second World War, Notre Dame almost closed due to a significant decline in enrollment from students joining the war effort. It was the Navy’s decision to make Notre Dame a training site for midshipmen that allowed the University to remain open. This tradition is kept alive each year as the University graduates newly commissioned naval officers, who exemplify the values and ideals that make Notre Dame such a special place.

The Father Jenkins Run is just one way Notre Dame continues to express its support for the military presence on campus. Even under the pouring rain, the President of this university came out and ran two and half miles with us, and he had a smile on his face the whole time. In an address to the entire formation of midshipmen and cadets following the run, Fr. Jenkins echoed his message from previous runs, reasserting the University’s commitment to the military as well as the high regard which he holds for the members of ROTC. This year’s run was, as always, a motivating exercise and a reminder of how fortunate we are to attend a school as special as Notre Dame. The entire battalion looks forward to the run next year.