Notre Dame Welcomes Visiting Midshipmen for Annual Naval Leadership Weekend

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Dana Hulke, USNR

Hundreds of dress blue jackets and white covers funneled into Hesburgh Library in the early morning of Friday, February 25th for the opening ceremony for the annual Naval Leadership Weekend. Hosted by the University of Notre Dame Naval ROTC program, Naval Leadership Weekend is a much anticipated annual event which draws midshipmen, officers, enlisted, and civilians together for a series of engaging speakers, activities, and of course, delicious meals. This was the 16th annual Naval Leadership Weekend which hosted over 125 students from dozens of universities.

Thanks to the scheduling expertise of MIDN 2/C Taylor Sheppard, several brilliant speakers imparted valuable knowledge at the opening symposiums on Friday. Taking the microphone were Notre Dame’s own CAPT Dale Neece, Commanding Officer of the NROTC unit; followed by CAPT Matthew Dolan (Notre Dame alum), United States Naval Academy JAG; RADM Brian LaRoche, Deputy Commander of Military Sealift Command; Superintendent Paul Whitesell, Superintendent of Indiana State Police; and CDR Mark Prokopius (Notre Dame alum), Deputy for Readiness at Submarine Squadron 6.

Each presentation offered a unique view on the central theme of the weekend: dynamic leadership from multiple perspectives. By examining a variety of situations and leadership styles, participating students learned how to become better naval officers, both in the Navy and the Marine Corps.

RADM LaRoche conducted a series of ethical decision games based on his experiences to help students discern the best course of action in situations involving sexual misconduct, command deterioration, and poor ethical decisions. “Perceptions are just as powerful as reality,” RADM LaRoche warned midshipmen. Superintendent Whitesell of the Indiana State Police powerfully described why we are able to perform our nearly impossible mission each and every day. He helped students understand that they were born to defend their country, and that they must do so with honor and integrity. CDR Prokopius concluded the first day of symposium with carefully chosen suggestions to aid future leaders, drawn from his experience on submarines. “Set the standard; communicate the standard; execute the standard,” he advised.

Saturday, February 26th, opened with an engaging symposium by Col Julian Alford, the Commanding Officer of the Marine Basic Corps School (TBS). He discussion detailed how a young officer, which the attending midshipmen will all be within a few years, could gain the respect of his or her troops. He relayed that by becoming involved with the unit, not only fellow officers and peers, but NCOs and the young enlisted as well, a mediocre leader can grow into a superb leader. “When your men say ‘our lieutenant’ you know you’ve made it,” he said. Furthermore, he showed students how to become a combat leader. “A combat leader must be a problem-solver, a decision-maker, an adaptive and critical thinker with a bias for action.”

Between Col Alford and Maj Hart, the Marine Officer Instructor at Notre Dame, students have learned that “leadership means making people do what deep down they know they should be doing anyway,” a valuable lesson for all leaders, regardless of branch, specialty, or command.

The weekend continued with a special activity designed for 2/C midshipmen. Broken into small discussion groups, students worked through ethical decision games designed to put into practice the values imparted by the previous speakers. By analyzing the actions of each of the characters in the various scenarios, students learned how to respond to specific situations, as well broadening their understanding of the essential leadership traits necessary for their future careers.

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I would first like to thank you for allowing me to serve you this semester as BCO. I truly hope that you have learned and grown as much as I have these last few months. It has been an immensely bittersweet semester for me, because as the light at the end of the tunnel approaches ever faster I find myself reminiscing more and more about the past few years that we have spent together.

4/C, this Fall you arrived on campus bright eyed and bushy tailed, full of eagerness and enthusiasm. Most of you have retained the eagerness, while losing the looks of fear that initially graced all of your faces. Never lose that eagerness and desire to learn, because the learning will never be done. Make yourself better every day and realize that graduation is a whole lot closer than it currently appears.

3/C, with your second year came a new found confidence, and more importantly, a commitment. This year, you committed a good chunk of your young adulthood to the service of our country, but just as importantly, to the service of the men and women that you will soon lead. When you are up late into the night writing a paper that doesn’t seem to matter, completing a seemingly endless PT session, sleeping in the mud, experiencing hate and discontent in Quantico, or deep underwater somewhere abroad, remember that your pain is simply preparation. You are preparing yourselves for a life of servant leadership, marked with sacrifice and love for your men and women. Work yourself into the ground and strive to improve yourself in everything you do, not for yourself, but for your Sailors and Marines.

2/C, the battalion is yours. You are on your last lap, so enjoy every minute of it. As your senior year flies by, take the time to appreciate what you have received from these great universities. You have made lifelong friends, developed your personal morality, shaped your leadership styles, increased your knowledge exponentially and matured more than you will ever know. Make sure that you ask questions while you still are safely within the ‘bubble’, because pretty soon you will find yourself in the real world. Mentor and lead the underclassmen in everything you do, not only for their benefit, but for the development of yourselves as future officers. More than anything else, get excited for what awaits you in the next few years!

1/C, that was a heck of a ride. We have experienced the most thorough green light, yellow light, red light brief in the history of the Navy, we have traveled to every corner of the globe, we have distinguished ourselves in every realm imaginable, and best yet, we haven’t even left school. In mere months, we will find ourselves in the air, on the land and in the sea everywhere from the mountains of Afghanistan to the ravaged coasts of the Japan. We will fight the Taliban, capture pirates, rescue the helpless and feed the hungry. I look forward to seeing each and every one of you bring pride and honor to our unit, our university and our naval services. I am honored to have been able to work with you these past few years, but more importantly, I am grateful to be your friend.

Battalion, I will leave you with words from a better man than myself: “raise the bar, play to win and be great.” Fair winds, following seas and Semper Fidelis.
A Message from the CO

CAPT Clarence Earl Carter, USN
CO Notre Dame Naval ROTC Unit

Notre Dame is special. I have sensed that throughout my career, as I interacted with many naval professionals that claim Notre Dame as their alma mater. Now I know why, as I begin to realize “the Notre Dame experience” first-hand.

I was extremely honored to be selected by the Navy and the University to serve my final tour on active duty in South Bend, under the golden dome. From the second I stepped on campus, I have been impressed by the hospitality of the University community and NROTC Unit Staff, and by the consummate professionalism of the Battalion of Midshipmen. You represent the very best of America, and I know your families are as proud of you as I am. Whether in the classroom, on the athletic field, in the drill hall, or in social settings, you exude pride in your nation, your Service, your school, and yourselves. While I have had the opportunity to get to know only a relative few of you thus far, I look forward to learning more about each of you as we interact in the months ahead.

I am a product of the NROTC Program at Vanderbilt, a unit which, at the time I graduated, was about the same size as Notre Dame’s unit is today. I was selected for the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program by Admiral Rickover on Valentine’s Day, 1980 (that experience is a story for another day), and became a career submarine officer following my accession training. While I did not enter the NROTC Program ever dreaming that I would become a submariner, much less a career Naval Officer, I now cannot imagine my life having taken any other course. I have been blessed to serve on three attack submarines and one ballistic missile submarine, commanding USS SCRANTON. In the almost 10 years since I left submarine command, my career has focused on two major areas—submarine waterfront support, including my major command, or Commodore tour; and staff duty in Washington, DC, where I worked for the Chief of Naval Personnel in several different capacities. While my Washington tours were richly rewarding, there is no better job than command, and no better place to be in command than at NROTC Notre Dame.

My wife, Lea, and our three children, ages 10-14, will join me here in late June, once school is out in the DC-area. We are purchasing a home in Granger, and look forward to fully immersing ourselves in the University and the community. In my free time, I love to watch sports, and I enjoy both running and a huge golf handicap. I completed my first marathon late last year, an accomplishment I never envisioned when I was younger. (If there is a theme emerging here, it is that you should remain flexible to the opportunities that life presents—they may evolve to something far better than you ever envisioned.)

In the near term, I look forward to completion of exams, graduation/commissioning for the Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s classes of 2011, and to hearing the sea stories you will bring back from summer cruise. While you are seeing the world, we will be preparing for the class of 2015 to join us in August.

We also say farewell this month to two great Americans who leave quite a legacy here at Notre Dame—CAPT Dale Nees, who retires as Commanding Officer after 32 years of service, and Major Dave Hart, our stellar Marine Office Instructor, who returns to lead Marines in the field. Their contributions to NROTC Notre Dame have been invaluable, and they will be truly missed.

As world events of early May have reminded us, there is no better time to serve in the United States Navy or Marine Corps—nor is there more need for capable leadership of our Sailors and Marines in the future, in order to counter the threats that our country will continue to face. Congratulations on a successful year, and to the Class of 2011, on your graduation and commissioning. God-speed, travel safe, remain vigilant, and keep charging!

Captain Earl Carter
Commanding Officer and Professor of Naval Science
Words From the XO

As another outstanding academic year draws to a conclusion, I would like to share some thoughts with you. First, congratulations on your accomplishments this year, both academic and extracurricular, with special emphasis on those events of the Spring Semester. As I look back and reflect on all that you have accomplished, I am astounded by your continued dedication and professionalism to your battalion, your university, your community, and your Navy and Marine Corps. Allow me to brag on your behalf about the multitude of events you have recently "aced" which include the Flyin’ Irish Basketball Tournament, the multiservice Deployment for Training (DFT) to Ft. Custer, and the heavy battalion participation in the Bengal Bouts. But there is much more.

This semester’s events that were student led initiatives (including conception, planning, and execution) deserve special recognition. The Naval Leadership Weekend (NLW) symposium, which was held in February, was fantastically organized and led by a dedicated staff of midshipmen, not staff. This two day event attracted 125 midshipmen from 33 units across the nation to Notre Dame where they were exposed to a multitude of incredible speakers and panelists consisting of esteemed professors and active duty warriors such as VADM William McRaven, the Commander of the Joint Special Operations Command. This was a phenomenal event about which I personally received many rave reviews from midshipmen and staff members from other units. Likewise, the Trident Naval Society’s March Madness 10K run to benefit the Wounded Warrior Project was a student, not staff, initiative that raised over $4000 for this worthwhile cause. I would also like to recognize the newly formed club, ROTC Women, which held many significant events this semester including a "Women in War" panel discussion featuring five distinguished members, including a female two star flag officer, RADM Wendi Carpenter. The success of this new organization is quite evident. It was recently recognized as the Notre Dame Club of the Year in the special interest division, and our own LT Julia LaFleur received honors as the overall Notre Dame Club Adviser of the Year. The Fighting Irish Midshipmen continue to knock it out of the park with their campus and community involvement and their commitment to serving others! You have much of which to be proud!

This brings me to my next point - something I would like you to ponder as you will soon leave Notre Dame and St. Mary’s this May. To all of you as you depart Notre Dame and St. Mary’s in the coming days, I would like to remind you that you simultaneously embrace every opportunity that your summer NROTC training avails to you and return in the Fall ready to carry on smartly as your predecessors, spanning his footsteps and to provide safety and security to your fellow citizens. They rely on us to carry out our duties with the utmost courage, restraint, diligence, professionalism, and integrity. They sleep peacefully at night with their families knowing that service with you. First, congratulations on your accomplishments this year, both academic and extracurricular, with special emphasis on those events of the Spring Semester. As I look back and reflect on all that you have accomplished, I am astounded by your continued dedication and professionalism to your battalion, your university, your community, and your Navy and Marine Corps. Allow me to brag on your behalf about the multitude of events you have recently "aced" which include the Flyin’ Irish Basketball Tournament, the multiservice Deployment for Training (DFT) to Ft. Custer, and the heavy battalion participation in the Bengal Bouts. But there is much more.

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Major Dave Hart, USMC

Marine Officer Instructor, Notre Dame Naval ROTC Unit

It is hard to believe that my tour at Notre Dame is one month from ending. The past three years has been an exceptional experience for me and my family. I thank all of you associated with this program for that. Midshipmen of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s your drive, desire to do right, and performance are inspirational. You have much to be proud of, and I am humbled and honored to have had the opportunity to serve with you.

I typically write my bi-annual Irish Pennant article about what a great job the midshipmen of the battalion did during the semester and then offer my recommendations on what they should be doing to better prepare themselves for the rigors of leadership. In this article, I am going to address how the midshipmen (and parents) of this battalion have influenced me, and have better prepared me for my own professional and personal challenges in the future.

The midshipmen of this battalion have renewed my faith in their generation. The greatness and excellence so often associated with this nation’s World War II generation has seamlessly transcended to the current generation. The average age of the midshipmen was between 8 and 11 years old when the terrorist attacks of 9/11 occurred. Since that day, the United States has been actively engaged in what has evolved into a long and grueling war. The current generation of midshipmen grew up in a world in which the threat of another attack on the United States was ever constant. The events of 9/11 led a chosen few in our nation to courageously answer the call to service. Despite the real danger associated with serving in the military during a time of war and the overwhelming peer pressure to pursue a much safer and more financially lucrative profession, these midshipmen have chosen the path less traveled. They have decided to selflessly place themselves in harm’s way and run towards the sound of gunfire. They not only chose to serve in the military, but they chose to serve in a capacity in which they will instantly be accountable and responsible for the lives and well being of this nation’s most prized asset – our enlisted Marines and Sailors. The selfless maturity and moral and physical courage associated with their decisions to pursue this career path is absolutely humbling. Parents, you too have much to be proud of – your midshipman is a direct reflection of the phenomenal manner in which you taught, coached, mentored, and raised your son or daughter. Being awarded a national four year NROTC scholarship, gaining admission into either the University of Notre Dame or Saint Mary’s College does not happen by accident. These significant accomplishments are only attainable through hard work and a well guided disciplined life style. Midshipmen, you owe much of your current success to those that raised you. You are model citizens, and our country desperately needs you. Do not ever forget that! I hope I can do as well raising my own children that your parents did with you. Midshipmen, thank you again for setting such a fine example and for the sacrifices you are about to make. As my family and I transition from Notre Dame to 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, we will be taking a little bit of the Fighting Irish with us to 29 Palms (specifically 2ndLts Sabol and Lough).

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new MOI, Major Jackie Schiller, and his family to Notre Dame. Maj Schiller will be joining the NROTC unit from 1st Battalion, 4th Marines at Camp Pendleton, California. He has a phenomenal reputation and is exactly what this program needs and deserves. Future naval officers, I look forward to serving with you in the operating forces. Remember to stay focused – you owe that to the future young Americans and their families that you are going to serve. Semper Fidelis.
Midshipmen Make Good Showing at Annual Bouts

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Robert Blume, USNR

The Bengal Bouts boxing tournament, one of the most renowned traditions at our University, celebrated its 91st anniversary this year with a record number of participants. As always, the competition began with novice training and instruction in late October which continued through the bouts in February and culminated with the finals in March. The focus of the tournament “Strong bodies fight, that weak bodies might be nourished” is the guiding principle behind the bouts. To help support missions in Bangladesh boxers raise money through ticket sales, which go directly to the Holy Cross missions.

Several midshipmen, including: MIDN 4/C Duden, 4/C McCormick, 4/C Thomas, 3/C Blume, 2/C Chapman, 2/C Grady, 2/C Raic, 2/C Simone (unable to fight due to injury), 1/C Gallagher, 1/C Garcia and 1/C Richer participated in this years event. MIDN 3/C Blume, decided to take part in the tournament because all the past participants I had talked to really enjoyed the experience. I also thought that it would be a good way to stay in shape and decided it’s never a bad idea to raise money for a good cause. I can honestly say that everything about the tournament exceeded my expectations. Those of us who were novices went through four months of grueling training with practices four times a week that were many times like a supersized Battalion PT. But what really amazed me was the fraternity and sense of teamwork that was prevalent during every practice. Even though we would all soon be competing against each other, everyone was working together to help others improve. Three time defending champion MIDN 1/C Garcia even went to the next level by making himself available every morning to help other Midshipmen boxers improve.

By the time the actual tournament came around, even the novices felt like they were ready to get in the ring and give it a go. The excitement in the JACC, even for the preliminaries, was palpable, and during my fight I could not help but feel like I was reliving high school glory days. I ended up losing in a split decision but I still had a great time and plan on competing again next year. Several Midshipmen fared better than I did, and in the 176 lb. weight division it was clear that MIDN 1/C Bernadro Garcia and the Bengal Bouts captain and club president Dom Golab were on a collision course for each other. They met in the final and after a long, hard fought, back and forth fight, Golab did, and in the 176 lb. weight division it was clear that MIDN 1/C Bernadro Garcia and the Bengal Bouts captain and club president Dom Golab were on a collision course for each other. They met in the final and after a long, hard fought, back and forth fight, Golab came out on top. Despite failing to pull off the 4-peat, MIDN Garcia will leave behind a lasting legacy as a Bengal Bouts boxer and will always be remembered as a champion.

Midshipmen Participate in the Wounded Warrior Project

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Griffin, USMCR

On the relatively cold morning of Saturday, 26 March, the Trident Naval Society at Notre Dame hosted its second annual March Madness 10k Run raising money for the Wounded Warrior Project. The Wounded Warrior Project is a non-profit organization geared towards supporting and helping men and women injured while serving overseas. Many of midshipmen of Notre Dame’s NROTC battalion either volunteered or participated in the race along with well over 100 university students and staff.

The Wounded Warrior Run had a motivational start and finish, the Clark War Memorial Fountain. The run consisted of two laps around North Quad, St. Joseph’s and St. Mary’s Lakes, and God Quad with students and ROTC members stationed at every turn and throughout the course cheering on runners as they passed. Prior to the race the National Anthem was sung by members of ROTC who are also in university choral groups. The Ensign along with the flags from each branch were set up in front of the Clark War Memorial throughout the entire morning of the race.

“The Wounded Warrior was a great race for a great cause; I really enjoyed running it,” said MIDN 4/C Catalano, who was the first one to reach the finish from the NROTC Battalion. MIDN Catalano was also excited about the Tech-T’s shirts all the runners received for participating in the event.

The Wounded Warrior Run had approximately 175 participants and raised $5,000 to donate to the Wounded Warrior Project. This year’s event expanded with approximately 25 more participants who helped increase the size of the donation by one thousand dollars over the previous year’s event. So far the annual run has donated almost $9,000 dollars to the Wounded Warrior Project.

MIDN 2/C Martison, one of the Trident Naval Society staff members who helped organize the run, said, “We worked really hard to set up a great run and the results of our efforts showed in the number of people that participated. I hope that the event will continue to expand and involve more people from the Notre Dame and South Bend community, because it is such an inherently great cause. It is always awesome to go out and run, albeit such a comparatively small gesture, for people who sacrificed for our country.”

After the race Captain Nees canceled battalion PT for the following Monday morning due to the large success of the Wounded Warrior Run. The participants and volunteers of the NROTC battalion left the race in high spirits and a few extra hours of sleep for the upcoming Monday morning.
Flyin’ Irish Basketball Tournament

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Quinn Kilpatrick, USNR

During the first weekend of February, the Notre Dame Air Force ROTC hosted the 25th Annual Flyin’ Irish Basketball Invitational. The tournament hosts ROTC teams from the four branches of the military from throughout the country. Teams traveled from Texas, South Dakota, Virginia and Nebraska, among other places, to participate. The tournament consists of a Men’s and Women’s bracket with qualification rounds taking place on Friday and Saturday. After qualifications a single elimination playoff bracket is held on Sunday.

Our Notre Dame NROTC Unit fielded two men’s team and a women’s team. The women, led by MIDN 1/C McGarry and coached by our very own fourth class advisor, LT LaFleur, played Marquette, South Dakota State University, and the University of Iowa in the pool play. They fought hard and won one of the first two games, but lost a heartbreaker in the last seconds of play to Iowa. A strong showing by the 4/C women provided a great foundation for the years to come!

One of the NROTC Men’s team (led by 1/C Retzloff, 1/C Leis and 1/C Richer) played Trine, Wisconsin and Purdue Air Force ROTC in pool play. With convincing wins over both Trine and Wisconsin and a tough loss to Purdue they qualified for the playoffs. They got seeded in the single elimination tournament and unfortunately lost a tough game to Virginia Tech in the first round.

The second Men’s ROTC team (led by 1/C Garcia and 2/C McCabe) won all three of their pool games. In recognition of this success they received the 4th seed in the bracket play on Sunday. A close first round win over the University of St. Thomas gave the Irish the momentum to fight hard and beat Virginia Tech convincingly in the quarterfinals. The Irish played a rematch of last year’s championship game when they faced Texas A&M in the semifinals. A disappointing 1st half had them down by 15 early, but the team eventually found their touch on offense and came back in the 2nd half, only to fall short by 4 points. Overall, the tournament was a great success and was a chance to play competitive basketball against other ROTC units. In the end, the tournament is a great opportunity for midshipmen and cadets from Notre Dame to meet ROTC students from other colleges and universities around the country.

Notre Dame Naval ROTC Commanding Officer Change of Command

Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Kilpatrick, USNR

As the Spring term comes to a close and the 1/C receive their commissions, the NROTC unit at the University of Notre Dame also says farewell to Captain Dale Nees, USN, the Commanding Officer of the Notre Dame NROTC unit for the past 4 years. During his tenure at Notre Dame, Captain Nees has commissioned 72 Navy Officers and 19 Marine Corps Officers. Before coming to Notre Dame, Captain Nees’ last operational assignment was as Commander Submarine Development Squadron Five. After leaving Notre Dame, Captain Nees hopes to stay in the South Bend area and remain affiliated with Notre Dame.

The University of Notre Dame NROTC unit would like to thank Captain Nees for his time at Notre Dame. Though the NROTC unit will miss Captain Nees, the battalion is glad to welcome Captain Earl Carter, USN, who took command on 27 April 2011 as the new Notre Dame NROTC Commanding Officer. The event was presided over by Rear Admiral David F. Steindl, Commander, Naval Service Training Command.

Captain Carter graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1980 and gained his commission through the NROTC program. Before coming to Notre Dame, Captain Carter served as Executive Assistant to the Chief of Naval Personnel/Deputy Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, DC. The NROTC Unit would like to welcome Captain Carter and his family to Notre Dame!
Continued Page 1: Naval Leadership Weekend

After small group discussions, the group leaders presented their conclusions. While most scenarios were designed toward one particular course of action, one in particular captured the attention, both mentally and morally, of the midshipmen. The discussion forced them to choose between following direct orders, and thus saving the lives of Marines under your command, or disobeying those orders in order to save the lives of several hundred vulnerable civilians. The midshipmen argued the difficult subject, bringing to light persuasive points about leadership, human ethics, and decision-making.

CDR Fritz Teuscher, the Execute Officer at Notre Dame, was able to shine some light on the foggy subject. Though complicated, he admitted, the best course of action would be to alert the chain of command to the situation, several times if war warranted. However, a junior officer must ultimately trust his superiors and follow direct lawful orders. This activity helped the midshipmen sort through complex moral and intellectual issues before facing them for the first time in combat.

Finally, an academic panel discussed the question “The American people and their military: is there a disconnect?” Moderated by Dr. Gerard Powers from the KROC Peace Institute at Notre Dame, the panel included Rev. Michael Baxter, a professor of theology; Dr. Jonathan Caverley, a professor of political science; Prof. Bryan Pilkington, a professor of philosophy; and, Dr. Charles Rice, Professor Emeritus of Law. Many valid points were made by the panel, which disagreed not only of the presence of, but the nature of a disconnect. “The military does not make policy. The military must not be political . . . The military is at war but the nation is not,” Dr. Rice stated, arguing that a disconnect didn’t exist. Prof. Pilkington disagreed with Dr. Rice by saying that “conscription will not connect the American people to their military, but further divide us.” He argued that pluralism has created a disconnect, saying that our society has “superficial agreement, but deep disagreement.” The panel was unable to reach a consensus on this difficult and debated topic, but much interesting discussion was stimulated by the panelists and midshipmen alike.

Naval Leadership Weekend closed with dinner in the Notre Dame Stadium press box for all visiting students and speakers, with closing remarks by VADM William McRaven, Commander, Joint Special Operations Command. A successful weekend by all accounts, Naval Leadership Weekend continues to be an engaging and special event for the University of Notre Dame and all her guests.
Women in War Panel Discussion a Success for New Club

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Dana Hulke, USNR

Men and women from across campus crowded into the Oak Room of South Dining Hall on Thursday, January 27th, 2011, struggling to find open seats in the cozy space and overflowing onto the overhead balcony. Military uniforms dotted the room as both students in the audience and panel board members proudly wore their military dress. The focus of the panel discussion: Women in War.

The evening started with anthropologist Dr. Carolyn Nordstrom, professor at the University of Notre Dame. Beneath the image of the cross, she wove an image of a T-intersection, edged by barbed wire, where a young girl had been killed and hung out, like a crucifix. Women cannot avoid war, Nordstrom said. Even if they aren’t fighting, they will always be involved in it.

Thus was the topic of the first campus event put on by the new Women in ROTC Club, Women in War: In and Out of Uniform. The topic explored the role of women, both as civilians and combatants, in wars across the world, bringing together panelists from multiple disciplines and backgrounds. LT Casie Sweeney, a graduate of Notre Dame in 2008, sat between anthropology professor Nordstrom and political science professor Michael Desch, Dr. Anre Venter from the psychology department and RADM Wendi Carpenter, a pilot in the Navy.

Modern warfare revolves around terror, Nordstrom remarked, who has spent thirty years on the front lines in wars around the globe. She told of places where every woman and child had been violated and brutalized.” One of the most convenient ways to tear apart a society is to tear apart a family and to tear apart a community.”

LT Sweeney recalled her experiences in Afghanistan, where she commanded a Female Engagement Team working to establish relationships with families across cultural barriers. Female Marines are seen as a third gender, she said. Not men and not women, but somewhere in the middle. Only after removing her Kevlar and letting her hair down would the local women invite her into the family compound.

Dr. Desch took another vein of thought in the discussion. “Males are physically stronger and larger than women, but with technology today, there is no longer the functional advantage of being male.” Instead, he noted, social change has to be thought about in terms of military effectiveness. Professor Venter, who served two years in the South African military after college, confirmed that gender had added little to ability in combat. “War changes you. You have to be trained to be certain things.”

As the panel came to its conclusion, the heart of the matter surfaced: war is gender-blind.

“There are a lot of female firsts out there,” said RADM Carpenter. “We’ve gotten the firsts out of the way... We can move on to other things.” As the first woman pilot to earn the rank of Admiral, she watches as women fill increasing numbers of positions, adding perspective and diversity to the changing military demographic. “Ducks pick ducks,” she laughed. As the make up of the military changes to include more diversity, selection boards are better able to promote quality leaders. “Gender doesn’t matter in the field”, LT Sweeney said. “You are either competent or you are not competent. You can either lead Marines or you can’t lead Marines.”
Notre Dame Naval ROTC Welcomes Gunnery Sergeant Kennington

**Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Katherine Griffin, USMCR**

New to the unit staff is Gunnery Sergeant Matthew Kennington, who arrived at Notre Dame in the Fall of 2010. GySgt Kennington enlisted in the Marines in December 1996 and went through Parris Island, South Carolina for his recruit training. Gunnery Sergeant Kennington’s Marine Occupational Specialty is as a Utilities Chief. During his time in the Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant Kennington has attended Marine Combat Training, Refrigeration Mechanic School, and Drill Instructor School. He has been on several deployments including OPERATION DESERT THUNDER/NATIVE FURY and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. He has also served as a Drill Instructor, Senior Drill Instructor, and Series Gunnery Sergeant for the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot in Parris Island and as a Sergeant Instructor for both increments of OCS this past summer. His awards include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with 3 gold stars. Gunnery Sergeant Kennington’s current billet is Assistant Marine Officer Instructor (AMOI) at Notre Dame.

As AMOI, he plays a significant role in the development of midshipmen, specifically the Marine Options. Since his arrival at Notre Dame, Gunnery Sergeant has been personally involved with the Navy/Marine Corps Ball, both the Fall and Spring DFT, the Change of Command Ceremony, and the Wounded Warrior Run. Gunnery Sergeant Kennington has also been involved first hand with the battalion by teaching and improving close order drill. On a daily basis, Gunnery Sergeant helps prepare the Marine Options for the challenges they will face during OCS, TBS, and as officers in the fleet through counseling sessions and physical training.

Midshipmen Celebrate the Annual Warrior Night

**Staff Writer: MIDN 3/C Katherine Griffin, USMCR**

On 29 April 2011, an all too infrequent warm spring evening, members of the NROTC battalion attended Warrior Night. The annual event is hosted in a large converted barn at South Bend’s Saint Patrick’s Park. The night kicked off outside with touch football, volleyball, and socializing. Around 1830 everyone headed inside for a delicious BBQ dinner and got ready to partake in the rest of the evening’s festivities. Once the President of the Mess, MIDN 1/C Eric Leis, announced the meat was “fit for human consumption” dinner began.

Directly after dinner there were formal toasts to both the Navy and Marine Corps and those who have gone before us. The guest speaker for this year’s Warrior Night was Brigadier General Richard L. Simcock II, USMC. General Simcock discussed the present warrior culture of the Navy and Marine Corps and compared them to the past. General Simcock motivated each and every midshipman, active duty officer, and guest to better prepare them mentally and physically as a warrior.

Following the guest speaker, the new Commanding Officer, Captain Carter, said a few words with regards to being a warrior. Captain Carter and the former CO of Notre Dame’s NROTC unit Captain Nees also congratulated the seniors on their upcoming commissioning and presented them with Ka-Bars. The unit then presented Captain Nees with a few parting gifts including a shadow box recognizing his 32 years of service.

Finally, the floor was open for informal toasts and skits. As always, each company’s 4/C and 3/C Midshipmen presented humorous skits to the battalion. Alpha company’s skit consisted of a newscast, broadcasting big news in the battalion. The skit even included commercials offering Retzlaff-in-a-Box, your very own PTI to keep you in shape. Bravo Company’s skit focused on their very own Company Commander, MIDN 1/C Asbury, and the group performed a Jazzercise themed skit. Charlie Company showed the battalion what goes on in the battalion office where all the 1/C get ready for drill every Wednesday. Following the skits, the Midshipmen, staff, and guests enjoyed celebratory cigars with one another. This year’s Warrior night was another successful event that motivated everyone to continue to push through the end of the school year and into the summer to better themselves for the future.
Presidential Pass-In-Review 2011

Staff Writer: MIDN 2/C Dana Hulke, USNR

After ironing their dress uniforms and polishing their shoes, cadets and midshipmen from all three ROTC units from the University of Notre Dame formed into ranks in the JACC arena. Friends and family looked on proudly as about 300 students presented themselves before the president of the university, Father John Jenkins, CSC, on Tuesday, 12 April for the annual Pass-In-Review ceremony.

Following hours of practice, the ceremony was flawless. A tri-military color guard presented the colors, while representatives from each unit carried their battalion’s flag. Rev. Peter D. Rocca, CSC, Chaplain of the ROTC units, gave the invocation and benediction, while the Navy Band Great Lakes performed the National Anthem, as well as several stirring marches, lead by MU1 Ryan Ringnald.

One of the most important parts of the ceremony involves honoring those cadets and midshipmen who have served above and beyond while in ROTC. Several awards were presented to the outstanding students from each branch, including Cadet Geralyn Janke and MIDN Eric Leis. “It’s an honor to be recognized from amongst my fellow midshipmen,” said MIDN Leis, recipient of the Captain John A McGurty, Jr. Award. He continued, “Everyone has worked hard over these past four years and given a lot to the battalion, and they all equally deserved to be recognized.” Cadet Janke, the Army Battalion Commander, awarded an Army Officer’s saber, said, “I was honored to receive it. There are a lot of people in my class who were just as deserving.”

Reviewing the ceremony was Rev John I. Jenkins, CSC, President of the University of Notre Dame. “It’s nice to have Fr. Jenkins tell us he appreciates having us on campus,” said Janke. Finally, each branch marched before Fr. Jenkins under the command of Midshipmen Tri-Military Commander MIDN 1/C Matthew Zak. “It’s nice to have large scale interaction with the other units, involving the entire program,” Leis reported. “I like the fact that we are all marching together, because marching itself is a cohesive activity. It’s a tangible activity where it is quite evident that you’re a part of a larger whole and it’s a cool opportunity when that ‘whole’ consists of the future leaders of our military.”

“The Pass-In-Review is a great opportunity to see how much of a presence ROTC units have at ND. There are not many times to see all three branches in uniform together,” said MIDN 2/C Alicia Elliott. “Considering how important ROTC is in Notre Dame’s history, Pass-In-Review is a rare chance to stand with your fellow midshipmen and cadets and feel a part of something bigger than ourselves.”

As wars throughout the world continue, we must look to the military as an example of professionalism and precision. Without cohesion, the future of the United States may resemble Benjamin Franklin’s snake. Pass-In-Review is just one of the many vibrant ways the military branches shows their support for one another, and the community for the brave men and women fighting abroad. As Major Hart says, “One team, one fight.”

Naval ROTC Commissioning Ceremony

Editor: MIDN 1/C Skye Gatchel, USNR

This year’s ROTC Commissioning Ceremony took place on 21 May 2011. This year’s senior class included one Naval Reactors officer, six Submariners, five Surface Nukes, eight SWOs, one EOD, two aviators, two NFOs and six Marine Corps Officers. Admiral J.W. Greenert, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, served as the commissioning official. Admiral Greenert gave good advice to the newly commissioned officers as well as tips on what to do and what not to do during your career. He reminded the students to give a big thank you to their parents, families and friends who have helped get them this far and made them who they are.

Thank you parents! These students have worked hard over the years, and Notre Dame has prepared them well to do well in the fleet. Congratulations seniors, may you have the best of luck and God Bless!
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