The Irish Pennant

The University of Notre Dame Naval ROTC- Spring 2017
A Message from the CO

Irish Battalion,

Greetings and most well deserved congratulations on another successful academic year in the history books!

You’ve collectively accomplished a tremendous amount since my last letter; your battle rhythm included such world-class events as Bull-Dog prep at Ft. Custer, Small team training with NDISP, Naval Special Warfare weekend, and Naval Leadership Weekend just to name a few. Hosting close to 300 midshipmen from over 30 states across the Nation to share leadership insights with the Chief of Naval Operations, Commandant of the Marine Corps, Director of the National Security Agency, Commander of 6th Fleet, Commander of Surface Forces, and a Fleet Master Chief was phenomenal and eye watering to witness! Your assembly of speakers was simply the GOAT. Success in operations does not happen by accident – it requires a commitment to excellence and focused attention to detail by everyone on the team. Special recognition for those that were key contributors for these events include MIDN 1/C Zubic for his leadership in support of Bull Dog prep, MIDN 2/C Dablain for NSW weekend, and MIDN 2/C Karlin and Bombara and their support staff for NLW. I’d also like to recognize MIDN 3/C Seamus Long for his work setting a new benchmark in connecting us with alumni. Of course every organization’s accomplishments are enabled by the leadership at the top so my hat is off to your BCO MIDN 1/C Smart and her ‘Big 6’ leadership team for their vision and hard work other the past several months - a truly super job by all concerned.

As you all know, this will be my last letter as your Commander Officer and I wanted to spend a moment telling each of you that I commend you all on your volunteer spirit and your commitment to answer a calling to service. You have all volunteered to stand and protect a human ideal that is so elegantly articulated in our Constitution. I can think of no greater honor or duty – you should take pride in this
choice. I am proud of each and every one of you. So as you are serving in our Navy, remember this – your path will not be easy and sometimes it will demand everything you have and more. It is precisely in these difficult moments with heat and fire that you will forge and quench and sharpen your leadership skills to a razors edge. Accept this and anticipate it.

Go Irish, Go Navy, and God Bless the United States of America.

TACAMO - Go forth and do great things!

Captain John P. Carter, US Navy, Commanding Officer
In the previous edition of the Irish Pennant, I closed the XO’s Corner by asking you to enjoy your winter break as well as challenging you to reflect upon your past performance in order to prepare yourself in conquering the spring 2017 semester both academically and professionally. You did just that – you all crushed this past semester!

With final exams and final project submissions fast approaching, remain focused on your academics and keep the full-court press engaged. I have all the confidence in the world that you will do superbly. Best of luck – study effectively and efficiently!

On the professional side of training, the Battalion of midshipmen continued to impress me on their performance and lasting results. For example, Bravo Company opened up the semester and led the most successful Naval Leadership Weekend to date. We learned about “Professionally Meeting Commander's Intent,” “Caring about Your Subordinates,” “Networking, Preparing, & Owning Your Role as a Leader: Making the Tough Calls,” “Warriors Optimizing Outcomes,” “Think & Give Time for Reflection,” and “Swing.” Use these bumper stickers as a memory jogger to reflect upon the important leadership characteristics that were shared with us and what it means to positively contribute within our Profession of Arms.

The Battalion continued to excel within the community and enhance the Naval ROTC partnership with the University in events such as the outreach to St. Joseph Grade School, fighting and raising money for charity via Bengal Bouts, volunteering and running in the Holy Half Marathon and Run Forest Run races, serving breakfast at Our Lady of the Road (a.k.a., Monroe Park Food Coop), persevering through
inclement weather to smartly execute Father Jenkins' Presidential Pass In Review, and much more. Bravo Zulu Midshipmen!

In closing, I challenge the ‘rising’ First Class, Second Class, and Third Class midshipmen to take full advantage of your upcoming summer cruises. Your professional training benefits are directly proportional to what you put into your experience. Therefore, give it your best, observe leadership from the Fleet deck plates, ask questions to officers and enlisted alike, and have fun.

Congratulations to our soon-to-be Ensigns and Second Lieutenant. Your arduous work and commitment to excel culminates later this month at your commissioning ceremony. We are proud of your numerous academic and professional accomplishments. Your actions over the last four years laid a solid foundation for you to navigate your way through a successful Naval career, whether it be for five years or twenty years. Outstanding job and welcome to the Wardroom!

DEMAND THE BEST! FLY NAVY! GO IRISH!

COMMANDER Charles Dittbenner II, USN, Executive Officer
Midshipmen Bid Farewell to Maj. Jones

On Thursday, 19 January 2017, Maj. Jones met midshipmen in the wardroom to say goodbye. After two and a half years of serving as NROTC Notre Dame’s Marine Officer Instructor, advising Marine options, coordinating battalion operations, and mentoring future officers, Maj. Jones has transitioned into his civilian role at the University of Notre Dame.

At the farewell, Maj. Jones shared some thoughts on the NROTC program as well as his goals for his tenure here, which centered around the development of midshipmen and his personal mentoring role. He then answered a few questions and shared individual goodbyes with midshipmen. As a small token of appreciation, the midshipmen gave Maj. Jones a dozen Dunkin Donuts to share with his family. While he will not be far away, his presence will be missed by the midshipmen.

MIDN Author -- 1/C Tembe
I want to thank the entire battalion for an outstanding semester. You should feel a great sense of accomplishment going into your summers. Whether it is Naval Leadership Weekend, Pass In Review, service events, or even just an average Wednesday drill, your consistent dedication and professionalism have been motivating for the Big 6. The Big 6 had three focuses for this semester: accountability, organization, and engagement. We could not be prouder of the entire battalion for embracing these themes wholeheartedly from squad POA&Ms to uniform inspections. You have definitely spoiled your seniors, since your enthusiasm makes our everyday leadership enjoyable.

Needless to say, this is a bittersweet time for the seniors. As I, like every Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s senior, have been reflecting on my time here, I cannot help but notice how our unit has changed since my freshmen year. We have an incredible organization system that is tied to the battalion structure, which gives more midshipmen leadership opportunities. The unit has improved its communication system while managing to minimize the number of “voluntold” events put on each semester. And finally, our unit is becoming even more connected to the Notre Dame community through programs like ND Day and Military-Veteran Emersion. All these changes have exponentially increased the unit’s ability to produce combat ready Navy and Marine Corps officers.

Just like me, I hope that this year’s freshmen will see incredible changes to the program three years from now. In order to make these changes, you need to empower your shipmates up, down, and laterally within the chain of command. This support helps you and your peers not only become leaders, but also teammates. Though navigating the leader-teammate balance may be difficult at times, you will gain a deeper respect, trust, and (most importantly) life-long friendships with your fellow midshipmen.

Not only will you have to care for each other, but you will also have to ask yourself what you can uniquely contribute to this organization. For someone who loves teaching, maybe this is though tutoring 4/C in general chemistry. For someone else who is passionate about world affairs, maybe this entails starting current event
dinars. Even the littlest contribution can make a huge impact on the cohesiveness and development of the unit.

As our days at Notre Dame and Saint Mary's quickly fall into the single digits, I again want to thank all of you on behalf of the senior class for helping us develop into both leaders and teammates over the past four years. If any of you need anything, remember the class of 2017 is just Facebook message or an @alumni.nd.edu email away. All we ask in return is that you are the LOUDEST cheerers for the Irish next football season!

To the 2/C: the 1/C are ready to pass the baton. We can’t wait to see how you will grow and improve the unit next year!

Fair Winds and Following Seas,
MIDN 1/C Katherine Smart

Go IRISH! Go BELLES!
On 24 February 2017, the 22nd annual Naval Leadership Weekend commenced, this year with the theme, “Ready to lead, ready to follow, never quit.” This year’s tremendous planning and coordination efforts were led by MIDN 2/C Karlin and Bombara. Over 150 other midshipmen (along with Notre Dame’s 100) were in attendance from around 35 units from around the country. The Friday of the conference was a full day that consisted of speeches by RDML Evans, FLTCM Beldo (Ret.), Gen Neller, a panel of Junior Officers, and Ethical Decision Games.

RDML Evans is the Commander of Naval Service Training Command and is responsible with the training of all enlisted recruits, NROTC midshipmen, and OCS candidates. He began the conference by saying that outstanding leaders invest in their people; in order to do this, you have to teach you sailors how to be successful and take care of your team. RDML perfectly embodies what he believes to be important for successful leaders. By visiting this conference and speaking to future leaders, he is investing in his people and the future of the Navy.

The next speaker of Friday was FLTCM Beldo, who had just recently retired. Being the sole enlisted speaker in the conference, she gave a very interesting perspective on what she believes to be leadership. Some of the key takeaways from her talk include: set expectations early and always communicate, lead with humility, manage your sailors’ expectations, and always represent the Navy, even when not in uniform. Her speech was also very engaging with multiple sea stories, and she ended many of her lines with, “Can I get a Hooyah.” Finally, FLTCM Beldo was very accessible to the midshipmen, always willing to answer questions and even eating lunch with midshipmen in South Dining Hall.
The main speaker of Friday was Gen Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps. The first half of his talk focused on his thoughts on leadership. Some of the key points from his talk are: show compassion for mistakes that are honest and forgivable, solve the problem instead of walking away, and set expectations of what followers should expect from their leaders. The second half of Gen Neller’s talk focused on the problem associated with alcohol in the armed services; in fact, it is the leading cause for people to be unsuccessful in the military. An officer should serve as a positive example of using alcohol wisely and should also talk about the problems that alcohol can cause with those they lead. All in attendance at NLW are grateful for Gen Neller taking time to come to Notre Dame and speak on leadership. The next segment of Friday was a JO Panel that consisted of LT Barron (a submariner), Capt Dossetto (a field artillery officer), LT Jean (a nuclear surface warfare officer), LT Shaw (a test pilot), and LT Trindle (a SEAL). Each JO spoke on how they have been leaders in the Navy and Marine Corps and gave specific examples. Some key takeaways from the panel were to pursue excellence, build and earn trust, be empathetic, encourage courage, be continually improving, and be adaptive. The panel then split up into different parts of Jordan Auditorium to discuss their perspective communities in the Navy and Marine Corps. The final part of Friday consisted of Ethical Decision Games for all visiting midshipmen. These EDGs consisted of actual and hypothetical scenarios that JOs have encountered while serving in the Navy. It is good for future leaders to be experienced to this decision-making process before commissioning, because the possible choices are almost never just black and white. In the end, the Friday of NLW was a very engaging day for officers and midshipmen alike, and by the end, it was clear that everyone went home with at least one new perspective on what leadership means.

MIDN Author – 4/C Culligan

25 FEB 17 marked the second day of Notre Dame NROTC's Naval Leadership Weekend. The yearly leadership symposium draws midshipmen from units across the country and features presentations by a number of highly-regarded individuals in the Navy and Marine Corps. On this rainy Saturday morning through afternoon, the audience of more than 250 midshipmen were fortunate to have the opportunity to hear from distinguished leaders and speakers VADM Christopher W. Grady, Dr. Michael C. Desch, ADM Michael S. Rogers, and VADM Thomas S. Rowden.
The Commander of 6th Fleet and a Notre Dame alum, VADM Grady started off the morning energetically, with an impassioned presentation supplemented by scenes from modern cinema which displayed a myriad of differing leadership styles. VADM Grady drove home important points concerning a leader’s tactical competence and composure all while highlighting the very tangible threats soon to be faced by the audience.

Dr. Desch, the only civilian lecturer of the conference, proposed a stimulating comparison of the foreign policy of both the current President and of Presidents past, namely Andrew Jackson. Dr. Desch is the professor and chair of the Department of Political Science at Notre Dame and an accomplished author. His presence at the event was appreciated by all, as he brought a fresh take on a critical analysis of the sitting administration and their international agenda.

ADM Rogers is the Commander of U.S. Cyber Command and the Director of the National Security Agency. His time slot was circled by many at the start of the conference and garnered high levels of interest during the extensive NLW planning process. A terrific storyteller, ADM Rogers engaged the midshipmen for nearly ninety minutes with anecdotal stories that he credited much of his leadership development to, with a majority of stories revolving around his first tour on the USS Caron (DD 970). ADM Rogers was extremely personable throughout his lecture, speaking candidly while dispelling sea story after sea story, each one more thought-provoking than the next.

To round out the afternoon of NLW Day 2, VADM Rowden, Commander of Naval Surface Forces took his turn on the stage. VADM Rowden challenged the midshipmen to be prepared for their ‘defining moment’ - and offered several moments of his own that he attributed had largely shaped his career. He also told perhaps the most humorous story of the weekend, detailing his interactions with and the infamous mind games of the legendary ADM Hyman Rickover. Like the presentations before him, VADM Rowden capped off his lecture with a Q&A. The dialogue between Midshipman and Admiral was consistent of an impressive symposium that featured some of the greatest leaders in the modern U.S. Navy, extraordinary individuals that provided the future leaders of the Fleet with ample takeaways for their journey ahead.

MIDN Author – 2/C Kelly
On 25 Feb 2017, Naval Leadership Weekend at Notre Dame was brought to an end with a formal dinner and keynote address from the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM John Richardson. Before the CNO took the stage, midshipmen from all around the country were able to interface with various active duty officers while eating dinner. This interaction provided a more individualized yet professional way in which to learn from the many experienced officers present throughout the weekend.

After being introduced by CAPT Carter, ADM Richardson took the podium to the sound of hearty applause. This address, highly anticipated by all in the room (midshipmen and officers alike), showed the current naval leadership's investment in their potential successors. The CNO's remarks focused on his Leadership Development Framework, sharing his vision of the current state and future of the Navy and Marine Corps. As leaders, competency and character values should be at the center of the future officers’ focus. Other points of discussion included goal setting, interaction with others in the fleet, and the importance of teamwork.

After his speech, the CNO took questions from the audience for almost 90 minutes. This period of time was engaging for all present, as the questions allowed personal interaction with the most senior officer in the Navy and topics were especially relevant and helpful to the midshipmen. One of the most touching moments of the address, spurred by a question from MIDN 1/C Galloway, involved the
CNO bringing his wife, Dana, onto the stage to discuss the importance of family. Not only did he discuss the importance of a support network in and out of the work environment, but also the importance of love and trust. Dana also took this chance to speak about her experiences with the Navy as a spouse, sharing some of the travel and successes of herself and husband as they have journeyed together.

The unity within a family translates to the teamwork and togetherness of the Navy. Questions abounded throughout the weekend regarding interactions with enlisted and officers alike, which continued at the keynote address. ADM Richardson addressed the significance of respect and mentorship with more experienced officers as well as similar respect and kind, strong leadership with future divisions. Working together and communicating effectively are high priorities in the Navy, and learning these skills as midshipmen will translate well to success as officers.

Overall, the keynote address was inspiring and will not be easily forgotten by all in attendance. The personalized speech and true commitment to the next generation of naval leaders was an incredible way to end a successful Naval Leadership Weekend.

MIDN Author - 4/C Bartlett
Pass in Review

On Wednesday, 19APR17, Air Force, Army, and Navy cadets and midshipmen participated in the annual Presidential Pass in Review ceremony. This ceremony serves to showcase the hard work and accomplishments of the cadets and midshipmen over the course of the academic year. Select seniors were honored with officer swords for their excellence in ROTC. The rainy day also featured an invocation by Rev. Peter Rocca, C.S.C, and remarks from the University’s president, Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C. The Tri-Military ROTC concluded the ceremony by executing a pass in review before Fr. Jenkins.
This ceremony was especially significant for the senior cadets and midshipmen. Because it served as the culminating event of the ROTC academic year, it represented the culmination of four years of training and professional development. Because the event took place on South Quad and is open to the public, many cadets and midshipmen had friends and mentors in attendance. Overall, the Presidential Pass in Review effectively showcased to the University the hard work and accomplishments of the Tri-Military ROTC over the 2016-2017 academic year.

MIDN Author - 1/C Tembe
Change of Command

On Wednesday, April 26th during the NROTC Battalion’s weekly drill period, the former Battalion Commanding Officer, Midshipman 1/C Katherine Smart, passed the Battalion’s flag to Midshipman 2/C Gregory Bombara, to symbolize the transition of Battalion leadership from one midshipman to the next for the coming semester. NROTC Notre Dame Commanding Officer, Captain John P. Carter, USN, presided over the ceremony, watching the graduating senior class leave responsibility in the hands of the rising seniors, and leaving the midshipmen with the challenge: “Make the battalion what it needs to be. Make us all better.”

MIDN 1/C Smart and her team finished the semester strong, passing over the reins to MIDN 2/C Bombara and his team. MIDN 1/C Smart urged the Battalion’s midshipmen to always, “take care of your people,” and offered two final words of advice, “Don’t wait until senior year to get involved and use your talents to benefit the battalion, and cherish the friendships you make here at the battalion, they will carry you throw every up and down, both here, and in the fleet.”
The incoming Fall 2017 leadership, composed of MIDN 2/C Bombara and his team announced their main focuses for the semester, including technical proficiency and developing the mindset to overcome obstacles. New Battalion Commanding Officer, MIDN 1/C Bombara, then outlined the his team’s three pillars for the battalion: Discipline, Attention to Detail, and Tenacity, preparing the Notre Dame midshipmen for a semester, and career, in which every step taken should be “[a step] to be an asset to your team, and not a liability, so you can protect your family, friends, and your country.”
Junior Parents Weekend

On 18 FEB, MIDN 2/C and their parents gathered in the wardroom for an afternoon social during the University's Junior Parents Weekend. JPW is a fun-filled weekend that includes a gala, a class-wide mass and dinner in the JACC, and various mixers put on by colleges, dorms, and clubs. Like a majority of the weekend's events, the Notre Dame Naval ROTC JPW social was greatly anticipated by many members of the Junior class. The event marked the first time since O-Week that most parents had been in the same vicinity and offered the midshipmen a much-appreciated opportunity to meet the parents of individuals whom they have spent countless hours with during morning PT workouts, weekly drill sessions, and even the occasional social gathering in a crowded dorm room. The JPW social also allowed the parents a chance to introduce themselves to the Unit's command staff with appearances made by CAPT Carter, LT Miller, LT Malherek, and LT Williams.

Sandwiches were served on the trusty wardroom billiards table while a slideshow crafted by MIDN 3/C Doherty circulated candid and sometimes moderately embarrassing photos of the MIDN 2/C, much to the delight of parents and those not pictured. MIDN 2/C Fisk summed the event up, saying, "It was cool to have a bunch of the parents meet for the first time since O-Week. I feel like they've also learned a lot about the Navy in our two and a half years." MIDN 2/C Fisk's sentiments were surely echoed by the 2/C at large as the JPW Social was a hit among midshipmen and parents alike!
Dining In

On Friday, 28APR17, 1/C midshipmen gathered with unit staff and guest of honor, CAPT Earl Carter, USN (Ret.), to participate in their first Dining In ceremony. Much mirth was experienced during the section of the evening dedicated to toasts and challenges. CAPT Carter, former commanding officer of the unit, offered words of wisdom to the midshipmen, whose commissioning date approached ever more quickly. At this point in the ceremony, midshipmen took a break from the levity and solemnly considered the duties of the office on which they were about to enter.

However, this solemnity gave way to more jollity when the smoking lamp was lit, and MIDN Dale challenged MIDN Tembe to a rap battle. Having completed the first two rounds during the challenges segment of the night, the two midshipmen pulled no punches in this final written round. The observing 1/C midshipmen were very impressed with MIDN Dale’s bars, but MIDN Tembe emerged as the victor.

Overall, Dining In served to give the senior midshipmen an introduction to the formal dining ceremonies of the fleet, as well as meaningful bonding with the active duty staff who had trained and mentored them for years in their pursuit of a commission in the US Navy and Marine Corps.

MIDN Author - 1/C Tembe

Run Forrest Run

On the morning of Saturday, April 22, over 300 runners lined up on McCourtney Quad on campus to take part in the 3rd Run Forrest Run 5k and 10k. The quad was filled with a display of 900 American flags sponsored by Anthony Travel, among which the midshipmen, cadets, families, friends, and residents of the University and South Bend wandered. All of the people gathered together for this event, organized by Notre Dame’s AAS, TNA, and ATLAS service groups in conjunction with the Gary Sinise Foundation. With
the mission to “serve our nation by honoring our defenders, veterans, first responders, their families, and those in need,” the Foundation works hard, especially to help our military and wounded warriors, building homes for wounded warriors, serving meals to service members, and provide outreach and support programs. The Run Forrest Run 5k and 10k serves as a fundraiser for these efforts, a “run for the real LT. Dans”, a reference to actor Gary Sinise's wounded army lieutenant in the 1994 film Forrest Gump, that need our support.

The run was kicked off with a speech from Gary Sinise Foundation Ambassador, Navy SEAL Billy Wagasy, discussing the important work that the Foundation does and thanking the participants for their support. The speech echoed the sentiments of founder Gary Sinise, "Freedom and security are precious gifts that we, as Americans, should never take for granted. We must do all we can to extend our hand in times of need to those who willingly sacrifice each day to provide that freedom & security. While we can never do enough to show gratitude to our nation's defenders, we can always do a little more." And the race began, with the 5k loop circling the campus, passing iconic landmarks including the Golden Dome, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, St. Mary's Lake, South Dining Hall, the ‘Stonehenge’ Fountain, Hesburgh Library, Jordan Hall of Science, and finally finishing back at McCourtney Quad by the wonderful flag display. Among the runners were CPL Matthew Bowman, a wounded Marine who was injured in Afghanistan, who handcycled the 10k course, and Douglas Babcock, our own “Forrest Gump”, a veteran and South Bend resident who has dressed up for the last three years as the film character to run the 10k.

Overall, the Run Forrest Run was a remarkable success, thanks to the efforts of the ROTC midshipmen and cadets, University and local volunteers, and Gary Sinise Foundation involvement. MIDN 2/C Dan Fisk, TNS squad leader, said of the event, “It was an incredible effort from over half the Battalion to raise over $10,000 for the Gary Sinise Foundation. Midshipmen came together from the wee hours of the morning to volunteer and run this
awesome event.” From setting up flags in the display at 0430 to checking in runners to color guarding the event, the Notre Dame Navy ROTC battalion worked hard to make the event successful and a tribute the men and women it honored.

MIDN Author - 4/C Baldwin

The Holy Half-Marathon

“Our legs want to fall off, but I would definitely run one again,” quipped MIDN 4/C Maddie Lee. This reaction may be echoed by the approximately 1700 runners who took place in the Holy Half Marathon on 1 April 2017. Unlike last year, the weather was warm and sunny, allowing all to participate. This half-marathon has been a Notre Dame tradition for 13 years, and has grown immensely, even requiring a cap on the number of runners that may sign up. Among the 1700 were many members of the Fighting Irish Battalion, including 4/C Breslin, Mullaney, O’Brien, Lee, Schleicher, Feeley, Mortemore, and Dour as well as 2/C Karlin, Baglini, Bombara, Plofchan, Fisk, and Althoff, among others. This strong participation demonstrates the NROTC’s unit dedication to both fitness and service.

As a student, it can be challenging to find the time and motivation to train for and run 13.1 miles. However, the experience can prove extremely rewarding. According to MIDN 4/C Mike Breslin, “it was a lot of fun to run all
over the beautiful campus with people from all over the country.” The event encourages goal-setting, personal drive, and good fitness levels for all, attributes that many midshipmen already possess. The intensity of a half-marathon coupled with a gorgeous campus and lots of cheering help make the race a positive experience.

Not only does the event benefit the individual participants, the money raised from registration fees goes toward charitable organizations. The Holy Half is one of the largest student-run events at Notre Dame, and it benefits different charities each year. This year, the four “exceptional organizations” that benefitted were Education Bridge, South Bend Center for the Homeless, the Youth Service Bureau of St. Joseph County, and The Logan Center. These varying local charities will use the funds raised to continue to provide services to those in need. With many beneficiaries, from the runners and volunteers to the deserving organizations, the 13th annual Holy Half Marathon was a raging success, and will hopefully continue to be so for many years to come!

MIDN Author - 4/C Lauren Bartlett

BENGAL BOUTS

“Strong Bodies fight, that weak bodies may be nourished.” This is the slogan of Bengal Bouts, the annual men’s boxing tournament, that takes place every spring semester at The University of Notre Dame. This tournament allows students to showcase the boxing prowess that they had accumulated from the Notre Dame men’s boxing club and giving the students a chance to test their mettle against their peers. Much more importantly, however, and the reason for the event’s slogan, is the fact that this annual event is paired with the Holy Cross Missions in
Bangladesh, so the tournament helps to raise money for a worthy cause.

The Notre Dame NROTC Midshipmen are always well represented in the event, and the spring 2017 tournament was no different. This year, an astounding six MIDN from the unit participated in Bengal Bouts. MIDN Rafferty and Breslin represented the 4/C, MIDN Long and MIDN Altoff were the lone fighters from the 3/C and 2/C, respectively, and both Dale and Kappaz fought as 1/C MIDN. These MIDN had varying degrees of success in their brackets, but all represented the unit well and epitomized the fighting spirit of the NROTC MIDN whether they were eliminated in the first round or whether they made it to the finals.

Both 4/C warriors unfortunately were bested in the first round of fighting, both, however, put up good fights. Hopefully will use their defeats to fuel themselves to perform even better next year!

3/C Long had more success, however, winning his opening round match. In the next round, however, he was to fight a highly recognized boxer, Sean Flynn. Long fought valiantly, but Flynn’s straight punches, while a common combination of strikes, were quiet effective, carrying his victory.

1/C Dale had a similar tournament to 3/C Long, winning his first match and then losing in the second round to a very skilled combatant. After his first win, MIDN Dale knew he was out skilled against Montana, a boxer who shocked many making it to the semifinals last year. Dale had hoped to overpower his opponent with his superior athleticism, but eventually lost the bout.
2/C Altoff performed very well in the tournament despite being a novice boxer. The fact that Altoff is new to the sport attests to his athletic ability, already having won two bouts. He thrived in the team workouts and hoped to be able to translate this to a high punch volume in his semifinals match against Dan Andree. Andre moved extremely well around the ring and was much more composed than his experience as a second year boxer would indicate. Dan stayed composed and stood at range, his smooth combination punching, heavily featuring a slick slap hook with his right hand, was tough for Altoff to deal with, resulting in the MIDN’s loss.

Perhaps the most anticipated fighter was returning champion MIDN 1/C Kappaz. MIDN Kappaz came into Bengal bouts as the top seed of his bracket, and fought his way once again to the finals. Kappaz’s opponent, Joaquin, likely the most skilled counter-puncher Mike has encountered was a very strong fighter and ended up taking the championship this year, unfortunately.

The MIDN representing the NROTC program in Bengal bouts raised money for a great cause regardless of whether they had their hand raised in any matches ad should all hold their heads high. They represent honor, courage, and commitment in the ring, and one can only hope to see these warriors return next year.

MIDN Author – 3/C Lillie

Senior Retreat

From Friday, 17FEB to Saturday, 18 FEB, 20 senior cadets and midshipmen gathered for camaraderie, spirituality, and guidance. From icebreakers to blessings, from ethics to lessons learned, and from sardines to dodgeball, participants spent 25 hours preparing to commission. Fr. Rocca led two prayer services and a mass over the course of the weekend geared
toward preparing seniors spiritually to become officers in the United States Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.

The cadets and midshipmen, progressing through the last semester of their university career, took the time to slow down and engage in meaningful reflection about what it means to morally fulfill one's duty as an officer in the US military. This focus of the weekend included a presentation on moral decision making by Lt.Col. Kelly, USA, a “Cadre Panel” featuring LTC Pratt, USA, Maj. Jones, USMC (Ret.), COL Bowen, USAF, and CAPT Carter, USN. These evolutions provided midshipmen and cadets an opportunity to ask in depth, thoughtful questions to inform their thinking on such issues.

Another focus of the weekend was on camaraderie amongst the senior classes of each branch. Throughout the weekend, small group discussions and free time allowed cadets and midshipmen to develop the bonds that had been formed over the past few years into deeper friendships. A long game of sardines occupied most of Friday night, and Saturday afternoon held a reprise of the dodgeball tournament that had begun almost four years earlier at the freshman retreat. In the words of MIDN 1/C Dale, the senior retreat “solidified my opinion that the best friends I’ve made the last four years, and the last 22 years, have been the ones beside me training to defend the country.”

After a weekend of bonding and reflection, the seniors of the University of Notre Dame’s Reserve Officer Training Corps found themselves reinvigorated and eager to leap into their new roles as leaders of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines.

MIDN Author – 1/C Tembe

**NROTC Notre Dame Attends USNALC**

From 22-25 January 2017, MIDN 1/C Tembe, MIDN 2/C Karlin, and MIDN 2/C Bombara attended the United States Naval Academy Leadership Conference (NALC17). The conference began in 1984 as a way for senior midshipmen and cadets from each service academy to learn about leadership, and expanded in 2002 to include delegates from other
universities. Today, the conference includes delegates from USNA to Penn State to the Indian Navy. For the past few years, Notre Dame has sent its Naval Leadership Weekend (NLW) coordination team to the conference to inform the execution of NLW.

This year’s theme was “Forging Team Spirit: Sharing the Vision,” which shone through the weekend as the driving force for many of the conference’s presentations. NALC17 featured many distinguished and powerful speakers, not the least of which being the 35th Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James Amos and the 16th Master Sergeant of the Marine Corps, Master Sergeant Carlton Kent. The two legendary USMC veterans were not only part of NALC17, but also represented the 2017 installment of the Forrestal Lecture Series. Gen. Amos and MSgt Kent teamed up to deliver one of the most powerful segments of the conference. The two began by explaining the great deal of respect and they had for each other, and what it means to train the next generation of leaders. The body of their presentation comprised of compelling stories of Marines who epitomized their two core takeaways from their near century of combined military service: the battlefield importance of teamwork and the true meaning of honor and sacrifice. Their words inspired both the conference delegates and the Brigade like few others’ could.

The presentations were punctuated by small group breakout sessions, where teams of 10-12 delegates guided by a midshipman conference staff member debriefed the remarks and tackled issues relevant to leadership and team-building in general. Because each team represented a cross-section of the conference, each delegate was able to engage with vastly different viewpoints from his or her own, whether coming from an active duty, commissioning program, or civilian background. This aspect of the breakout sessions added another dimension to the experience of the conference.

An additional but significant benefit of the conference was the opportunity to interact with USNA midshipmen. This is an experience not often afforded to NROTC midshipmen and was very enlightening. This interaction served to strengthen the bond between two otherwise separate commissioning programs, that the bond may grow even stronger in the fleet.
Other speakers included Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy Ms. Jodi Greene, Chief of Naval Air Training RADM Dell Bull, and panels representing diverse warfighting and public defense backgrounds. Navy SEAL Chief Daniel Luna served as the closing speaker. Through his “Blue Collar Tips” he connected with the audience as his “future bosses” and imparted the wisdom on officer-enlisted relations he had gained from his time in the Navy. Chief Luna’s remarks rounded out a weekend full of leadership training that will leave lasting marks on our world’s next generation of leaders. NALC17 was an experience that MIDN Tembe, Karlin, and Bombara will never forget.

MIDN Author - 1/C Tembe

Flyin’ Irish Tournament

On March 3rd 2017, the Notre Dame Air Force ROTC unit hosted their 31st annual Flyin’ Irish Basketball Tournament where ROTC units from across the country met and competed in a basketball tournament.

Members of the Notre Dame Navy ROTC unit played on a total of three teams in the tournament: one Navy men’s team, one Tri-Mil men’s team, and one women’s Tri-Mil team. Although the teams that were represented by the unit didn’t fare so well in the tournament there were some very memorable moments that came out of the weekend.

One highlight came when some Midshipmen came to support the Notre Dame men’s Tri-Mil during their game against a team from St. Thomas. After misreading the scoreboard and thinking that Notre Dame was behind the MIDN’s began passionately cheering on their team. However, it turned out that Notre
Dame was leading the game with a final score of 43-13.

The unit looks to improve next year, and according to the team leader, MIDN 2/C Patrick Colley, the team's prospects are hopeful. According to Colley “We aren't losing a single senior from the first team, which bodes very well for next season. Take this year's talent and add a little experience, you've got yourself a dangerous team going into next year.” While the unit played well this year, there is certainly room for improvement and with some hard work and practice the unit should be a force to be reckoned with next spring.

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