End of the Semester: a Fond Farewell  
By: LTC Michael Wawrzyniak

The school year is nearly over and in many ways it has flown by. As we close out this semester, I want to thank all of you for your commitment to be a part of ROTC and to serve your country as future officers in our Army. This commitment is something to truly be proud of as it signifies your willingness to be part of something bigger than yourself, servants of the Nation, and not just individuals. You all have collectively accomplished a great deal this year for our program while making significant progress towards each of your personal and professional goals.

Once again, this has been an outstanding semester in many ways and here are a few highlights. We started off with a couple challenging events by executing the rigorous Summer Training Program and taking part in the German Proficiency Badge competition at Camp Atterbury, IN. Notably, Scott Vitter and Catherine MacMillan both finished first by a large margin in the male and female road marches for the German Badge out of a field of roughly 350 cadets from 20 schools. The Army Ball in February was certainly a quality event put together in large part by Megan Walerko; Ryan Slaney certainly held nothing back as he went on to win the Dance Off competition. Both of our Field Training Exercises definitely accomplished their respective training objectives regardless of some extremely cold spring weather. The Freshman and Sophomore FTX culminated with an exciting force on force paintball showdown as part of platoon lane training. This year will end as every other with the annual commissioning ceremony on 17 May as the Seniors complete their ROTC journey and begin their adventure in the Army.

Many of our cadets await exciting and unique training experiences this summer in a variety of locations. Here is a summary of where they are going: Seventeen junior cadets head off to Fort Lewis, WA for 32 days of the Leadership Development and Assessment Course while three future cadets will go to Fort Knox, KY for the Leader’s Training Course. Several of our juniors will get on the job experience at Army internships with Jack Galagan going to a medical internship at Fort Sam Houston, TX, Matt McGeehan going to the Pentagon for a Military Intelligence internship, and Meg Frechette traveling to Brussels, Belgium to work in a NATO headquarters. Three other juniors will go to actual Army units for Cadet Troop Leader Training with Curtis Ballard going to Fort Jackson, Stephen Iacovo heading to Fort Sill, and Kevin Garcia traveling to Germany. Additionally, cadets Capretta and Raymond will attend Airborne School while Cadet Bennett takes on Air Assault School. Finally, Marina Rodriguez will travel to Turkey as part of a cultural internship and Cadet Blomstrom trains this summer with USMA cadets at their Summer Training Program.

-Continued on pg 2

Also in this Issue...
- Farewell Message from the CSM
- A lieutenant’s experience at BOLC II
- Photos From Army Ball
- Remembrance from Mountain Warfare School
- ROTC Blood Drive
- Experiences at the Combined FTX
- German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge Competition
- Experiences at the Notre Dame FTX
- Recap on Summer Training Program
- To the MSIII’s - Tips for LDAC
- Senior Retreat
Farewell - continued from pg 1

Next year’s cadet chain of command has been selected for first semester. They will start their initial planning this week. As usual, the first big event will be Cadet Orientation that will start on 18 August. All of you should plan on returning to campus on the 17th and be ready to get the year off to a great start by bringing in the new cadets. August seems a long time from now, but will be here before we know it.

As I prepare to depart Notre Dame, I will take with me fond memories and more importantly confidence that our program is developing the type of leaders needed in the Army. I look forward to seeing some of our Notre Dame ROTC alums out there in the Army and I hope to cross paths with many of you in the future. For anyone who happens to find themselves going to Fort Bragg in the next few years, do not hesitate to look me up. I would be happy to see a familiar face and assist you in whatever you are doing.

Study hard for finals and close out the year on a positive note. Have a great summer as you truly deserve it. Finally, I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors and may God bless each and every one of you.

A Sergeant Major’s Summer Message
By: c/Matt McGeehan

As another semester winds down, we get a chance to step back and look at what we have accomplished. From STP through the Notre Dame FTX, the MSIV leadership has provided us with many opportunities for good training. Hopefully everyone, regardless of level, was able to learn something and is a little better than they were when the semester started.

Just because the school year is ending does not mean our work is done. In many ways, things are just now starting. The MSIV’s are about to be pushed out into the real world. The MSIII’s are about to be pushed off to LDAC. There are also many of you slotted for summer training opportunities, ranging from Ft. Benning to Germany. Whether you will be at Airborne School or taking a well deserved summer off, make the most of your experience and come back next year ready to start the whole process over again.

I have enjoyed my time as Command Sergeant Major this semester. It really has been an honor to take charge of such a fine program. If everyone is continuously trying to improve themselves, then we can ensure our battalion remains on top.

Experiences from BOLC II
By: 2LT Michael Johnson: Class of 2007

When I was originally asked to write this article about the second phase of Basic Officer Leaders Course (BOLC II), I thought I would give you some background about BOLC. But, you can get that on internet. Then I thought I would give you the week-by-week itinerary of BOLC II. But that too, you can find on the internet. Instead, I’m going to give you some insights, observations, and suggestions for when you go to BOLC II.

Before you even get to BOLC II, make sure you have prepared yourself. Get in shape physically. You take the APFT on Day 3, approximately, and you do not want to fail it. Much like at LDAC, passing the APFT is a requirement for graduation from BOLC II. If you don’t pass it on Day 3, you will be taking retests about every week. If you still don’t pass the APFT by graduation, they will recycle you. Three people from my platoon did not pass the APFT by graduation. They did not graduate and had to do BOLC II again, from the very beginning. Another part of being in shape physically is ruck marching. You have a ten-mile ruck march at the end of Week 6, so do not neglect getting your feet in shape to do this ruck march. It, too, is a graduation requirement. Also, make sure you have the basics of the packing list. No one is going to have you dump your bags and check for every item on the packing list. You’ll be an officer then, and they’ll treat you like one until you give them reason not to. If you don’t have every item on the packing list, don’t worry. You’ll be able to get what you’re missing at the Military Clothing Store once you get to BOLC II.

I strongly suggest driving to BOLC II. It was very nice to have a vehicle. It allows you to go off-post after you’re done for the day or go to a nearby city to get away from post for - continued on next page
continued from previous page - the weekend. Unlike at LDAC, you are not required to stay on-post all the time. Get out of the barracks and off-post. See the local attractions around post. However, if you do drive to BOLC II, do not arrive late. I say again, do not arrive late. If you miss your report date, they will keep you until the next BOLC II class starts, which is about three weeks later. I would suggest reporting around noon on your report date. It’s late enough that they will have everything set up, but early enough that you won’t be the last one to report.

On your report date, you will get to your company, give them some information about yourself, and get your room. The barracks at BOLC II are basically like a dorm. There are usually two or three people in a room, and the rooms are set off a main hallway. The rest of your report date is dedicated to moving into your room and meeting the other people in your BOLC II class.

I suggest that you bring a book to read or something to do in your downtime. There is a decent amount of downtime, especially during that first week when you are doing in-processing. But, the training you receive at BOLC II is pretty good. You get to qualify on the M4 with Close Combat Optic (CCO).

You do convoy operations. You spend time running operations out of a Forward Operating Base (FOB). You train for and run missions in an urban environment. You conduct night missions using Night Vision Goggles (NVGs). It prepares you well for the Current Operating Environment (COE) and what you might face down range.

Overall, BOLC II is good training. It is also an excellent opportunity to meet your fellow officers and develop some friendships that will last through your career in the Army. BOLC II has officers that are from all the branches and all the commissioning sources. It allows you to develop the network of people that can help you in the future. After all, in the Army, it isn’t always what you know, but who you know.

If you have any questions or would like any more information about BOLC II, feel free to email at mike.johnson10@us.army.mil. I will be more than happy to answer any questions or concerns you have about BOLC II or any other subject.

Photos from Notre Dame Army Ball
Friday, February 22, 2008

Cadets being introduced to Mr. Herbert Suerth during the receiving line.

The Saber Arch

- More photos on next page
Mountain Warfare: The Warfare of the Mountains
By: C/ Jim Pearl

I arrived in The Middle of Nowhere, Vermont and thought to myself, “Wow, I guess I’ll be staying in that building seeing as how it’s the only building on this base.” Yes, it was the smallest base I have ever seen. I take that back, the acreage was enormous; it’s just that there were no buildings to speak of on said base. But I digress. I soon learned I would be in 4th Squad, which meant nothing to me really seeing as how I didn’t know anyone anyways. I felt completely out of place. I felt like I was at the gym with mismatched knee socks and short shorts. So yeah, definitely out of my comfort zone.

The first few days went by somewhat slowly, as I still didn’t know anyone and we weren’t doing anything too exciting. Basically Day One we hiked through the muddy mountain in snowshoes because it was 50 degrees. As a native of New Hampshire, that’s pretty much tee shirt weather and there was virtually no snow on the ground. It didn’t make sense to me to be snowshoeing around in the mud, but I was new and thought perhaps I was missing something. I later found out that I in fact was not missing something and the whole day was more or less a flagrant waste of time. Good start. What added to sheer agony of passing the time was the fact that there was no phone reception to be found on base, except for one random spot on a nearby hill where you could pick up one bar, if you were lucky. Seriously, you’d go outside at night to call someone and there’d be what looked like a bunch of grown army men on an Easter Egg hunt. I wish it was an Easter Egg hunt, it would’ve helped pass the time.

So, in summation: I was completely cut off from civilization. Not to mention there was only one female in our entire class. Not to say one should be thinking about such trivial matters during training, it’s just odd when you start forgetting that the other gender does in fact exist. It was strange coming back - continued on next page
to ND where it’s about 50% male and 50% female (I made that statistic up) after having spent two weeks in an environment where the males outnumbered the females 60 to 1. Not to mention all the NCOs training us were (and still are for that matter) male.

On to the training! After the first few days, things started to pick up. We finally started applying what we had been learning in the long arduous classroom periods and it was pretty fun. We got to ice climb, which is deceptively effortless if you do it correctly (the ice axes do most of the work for you). We also got to learn some self-arresting techniques, which are basically learning how to stop yourself from sliding down a steep slope of ice with nothing but your pickaxe. Yes it was cool, but should it happen on a real mountain climb, it would be significantly less cool. Trust me.

One of the most fascinating things I learned at Mountain School is all the types of anchors you can use for a rappel. Of course one would prefer a sturdy tree or a jagged rock formation sticking out of the ground, but often times those are nowhere to be found. So some crazy guy decided stomping out a huge teardrop shape in the snow to wrap the rope around would be adequate. Turns out he wasn’t so crazy, as one of these teardrops can hold a tremendous amount of weight and will hold strong long enough for an entire platoon to rappel down before its integrity is significantly compromised. But it gets crazier! If you don’t have enough snow on the ground to do that, tie a rope around something, almost anything really, and use it as a dead weight. In other words, dig a hole in the ground or the snow, whichever you have, and bury it. That’s it! That’s a solid anchor. We lowered a SKED (collapsible litter) holding roughly 200 pounds as well as a guide man to ensure it didn’t get tangled in the brush down a slope of almost 60 degrees by tying a rope to a pickaxe, a 70cm pickaxe, and burying it in the snow. The thing did not budge once. Some other items you can use include a small piece of tube or even a Snickers Bar. (I did not make that up; professional climbers actually used a Snickers Bar as an anchor. Most delicious anchor ever.)

Now of course Mountain School was not all fun and games, there were plenty of tests as well. First was Land Navigation. That was fun, imagine rucking (yes we had a ruck…that weighed 60-70 pounds) through the mountains for about 5 hours where points can be over 1000 meters apart and there are no roads to help you. Good times. The rest of the tests were timed practical tests, such as knot tying, mechanical belay, ice screws, fixed ropes, rappel rope, SKED system, avalanche victim recovery (TransCeiver, which 90% of the students called a TransPonder for some reason.) and then a written exam. None of the tests were too difficult as long as you reviewed your big blue book beforehand. That’s right, I was studying for tests over Christmas break while everyone else was decking the halls and dreaming of dancing sugarplums and such.

Our final “test” was more of an FTX of sorts. We went to what is called “Smuggler’s Notch,” or “The Notch” for short. There we were to live in the harsh winter mountain climate for 2 days and 2 nights. It was cold. Scary cold. The first night, our only task was to set up our tent. We finished that at like 1630, so I got into my sleeping bag until 0600. No joke, I wasn’t about to go out in that weather. It sucked. The next day, my squad as well as third squad had three of our practical tests while squads 1 and 2 went on their “mountain walk.” We were finished by about 1130, so right back into the sleeping bag I went. Oh my gosh did I love that sleeping bag during those long cold days. It was immaculate. But the next day was our turn for the mountain walk while squads 1 and 2 did their tests. It was scary. We went up the mountain to a point where there was a sign that said “WARNING: Three climbers have died past this point in the last year. Turn back now. If you don’t know what you’re doing you can and will die.” Something to that effect. So being all hooah and whatnot, we then clipped into a fixed rope and made the trek the rest of the way up the mountain. On the top we maneuvered around to the other side of the peak and started climbing down the other side a bit, until we reached a sheer cliff. Time to clip in for a 300 foot rappel, right into our camp site. That one was scary. I have a thing about heights, and that was high. The wind was also blowing like crazy and my hands were frozen in place. No joke, when I got off the rope, I had to manually move my pinky fingers into a fist because they could not move on their own power. I didn’t really care though, because that rappel marked the end of Mountain School for me, and it meant I graduated, so that was a good feeling.

All in all, it was a great experience. I made a few friends while I was there, I learned a lot of stuff, mostly about ropes and carabineers. Seriously, if you like ropes you’d be on cloud nine at Mountain School. It’s like Rope Mecca. I recommend it to anyone who can get a slot. It’s fun and also, unless you’re in 10th Mountain, you’re not getting a slot to this school as an officer, so seize the opportunity if you get it.

So, in closing, the food there is amazing. Seriously.
Army Mountain Warfare Training School
By: c/Matt McGeehan

While most of you were laying out on the beach over spring break, I was busy climbing the mountains of Northern Vermont. Yes, I was that guy who volunteers to give up his spring break and a week of class in order to attend the Army Mountain Warfare School.

AMWS is a 14 day school which focuses on mountain mobility, survivability, and sustainability. In other words, you go outside and walk around mountainous terrain with a ruck sack on. It is actually even more fun than it sounds. I had the opportunity to snow shoe, ice climb, rappel, and ski. Can you climb a 30 foot vertical wall of ice in Ft. Lauderdale? Can you rappel down a 300 foot rock face on a cruise ship?

The course is taught by the Vermont National Guard. All the instructors are expert climbers and know what they are doing. While I was clinging to a rope trying to not fall a few hundred feet, the instructors were walking up and down the slope like it was as flat as Indiana.

All in all it was a very cool experience. Literally. It was pretty cold up there. Fortunately, they give you plenty of snivel gear to stay warm. On some of the colder days, I would wear five layers of jackets and three layers of gloves.

I would encourage you to bug the cadre until they get you a slot for AMWS. It was a great experience and I learned a lot. In the words of my section leader (a special forces, ranger qualified master sergeant) it was “Good training.”

Annual ROTC Blood Drive!!
By: c/Rose Manktelow

What was it that brought so many people to the blood drive? Was it the delicious chocolate chip cookies? Miniature-sized juices? The stickers that read “Kiss me I donated”? What ever it was the blood drive held on February 18th was a huge success!

It was wonderful to see so many people come out to support the blood drive. One donator remarked how she had always been so terrified to donate before. The welcome she received, the encouragement from the other volunteers, and, of course, the snacks made her feel at ease. She promised to donate again if we ever had another blood drive.

It is the people who continue to donate that keeps the American Red Cross blood banks “flowing.” From our cramped and tiny blood drive, the American Red Cross was able to collect 136 productive units of blood. One unit of blood is roughly one pint of blood. The blood will be used to help people in Michiana. It’s satisfying to know that the blood collected will be used by our neighbors that are in need. Our huge turn-out of 163 people helped to surpass our goal of 120 units. Every three units can save the life of one person. Here’s hoping that next year will be an even bigger success! For all those walked away with their “Kiss me I donated” stickers, I hope they remember to come back again next year.

The bottom informational facts came from the Blood Centers of the Pacific Website:

- 17% of non-donors cite "never thought about it" as the main reason for not giving, while 15% say they're too busy.
- The #1 reason blood donors say they give is because they "want to help others."
- Shortages of all blood types happen during the summer and winter holidays.
- Blood centers often run short of types O and B red blood cells.
- There is no substitute for human blood.
- If all blood donors gave three times a year, blood shortages would be a rare event (The current average is about two.).
- If only one more percent of all Americans would give blood, blood shortages would disappear for the foreseeable future.
- 46.5 gallons: amount of blood you could donate if you begin at age 17 and donate every 56 days until you reach 79 years old.
Trust Your Training
By: c/Jack Galagan

Driving out to Ft. Custer, we knew we had a great training opportunity in front of us. For many of us MS IIIIs, this would be the first and only chance to interact with cadets from other schools and battalions before LDAC, and we didn’t want to waste the chance to get ready for camp this summer.

Our first task was land nav, and this part of our training was a lot like the land nav we’ve done on ND FTXs before. After pace count, compass verification, and a safety brief, we were given our points and maps, and let loose to find our points. The course was a larger area than we’ve normally trained at Ft. Custer, which meant it was good training for the large size of the land nav course we’d see at Ft. Lewis. Most of us agreed the points were fairly easy to find once you got over the larger size of the course. Because of the number of cadets from other schools doing the same course, it was often hard to work independently, as there were numerous cadets huddled around almost every point I was looking for. Even worse, I overheard some of these cadets trading points and numbers, basically outright cheating on the course. Not only is this an integrity violation, it’s just plain stupid: we were out there to learn and train, and you don’t learn a thing when you cheat.

After land nav, we were sent to the barracks, and some of us IIIs were assigned garrison positions. These positions allowed us to show some leadership and initiative, and give us a warm-up for the kind of leadership that will be expected of us at LDAC.

The next day, after breakfast, we went right into a full day of STX lanes. Every single one of us MSIIIs agreed that this is where being a member of the Fighting Irish Battalion paid off. We all know that a successful STX lane begins with a strong OPORD and solid rehearsals; these fundamental components of the STX lane were sometimes completely neglected by other cadets. I saw and heard OPORDs that didn’t resemble anything I’d ever heard, and rehearsals were all but nonexistent. While this doesn’t necessarily mean an unsuccessful lane, it certainly doesn’t help. I know many of us IIIs were a little annoyed at the short time frame (20 mins) given to us to write our OPORD, disseminate it to our SQDs, and conduct backbriefs and rehearsals. But we did what we could with the time we had, and, because of the strength of our OPORDs, we were met with overall success.

There’s no doubt the MSIII year is the most important for an ROTC cadet, and the strides you make during this year helps prepare you for success at camp the upcoming summer. After the CFTX, most of us IIIs realized just how strong our program here at Notre Dame really is, and how well prepared we are. So, the basic lesson from the CFTX is this: trust your training. Trust that you’re being taught the right way to do things, and that with this training and your own hard work, LDAC will be no sweat.
The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency, *Das Abzeichen für Leistungen im Truppendienst*, is one of the few approved foreign badges that an American soldier can earn and wear on the dress uniforms. It is also one of the most sought after qualifications in the Army. Seven members of the Fightin’ Irish Battalion sacrificed one of their very few free weekends this semester to attempt earning the Badge. Held at Indiana University at Bloomington, we arrived Friday afternoon registered and began the 200 meter swim test. All passes with just about enough time to do it again.

We stayed at Camp Atterbury which was the location for some of the events. It was and hour-and-a-half or so away from Bloomington, but we were able to get a lot of sleep in preparation for more testing the next two days. Saturday morning we took the first aid test, indulged in a healthy breakfast, shot at the firing range, and drove to IU for the sports events. The firing range was a little nerve racking because there were 25 lanes or so and in our group every was reshooting except for us! Everyone qualified first time however, having hit all three targets four or five times.

After firing, we left for IU. Although the IU cadets were unsure of where we were supposed to be we eventually found our way over to their indoor track and did the high jump, shot put, and 400 meter sprint. Shortly after we went to the outdoor track and completed the 5k run. All of the Notre Dame cadets blew these events out of the water with more time to spare than anyone knew what to do with. As such, we were done for the day at about 1500!!

It was great, we all spent the afternoon watching a movie and bonding over delicious MREs! We were also able to get back early and pack up our rucks in preparation for the road march the next morning.

There were many different channels of information preparing for this event coming from the IU cadre and cadets from other schools, so the Notre Dame cadets were unsure as to whether there would be a packing list or just a prescribed weight. As a result, all the Notre Dame cadets over packed thus increasing the already high level of difficulty. The road march, in my opinion, was the hardest event physically and mentally. The standards for the gold badge for males was 18.7 miles in 5 hours and for females was 15.4 miles also in five hours. I was the fastest female coming in at 3 hours and 6 minutes and Vitter, was the fastest male coming in at 3 hours and 9 minutes! If nothing else, that is a testament to the higher standards of the Notre Dame Fightin’ Irish BN.

I congratulate all who also earned the badge: Slaney, Capretta, Vitter, and Saurer. The GAFBMP was a lot of fun and is very do-able. I strongly encourage those who were not able to go this year or who were considering it to do it next year. It is a very cool piece of flare that can be added to the uniform, and no one wants to have the bare minimum when it comes to flare!
NDFTX from the Eyes of the MSI’s
By: Ryan Degnan

I do not mean to begin this article with a cliché, but, to be honest, it fits. Before leaving for the NDFTX, I had no idea how much I was going to learn in the next two days, and when I sat down to write this article, I had a completely different goal in mind than what I’ve come to now. I started writing thinking it would be best just to give a summary of the weekend’s events, but eventually came to the conclusion that it would be better to attempt to put you, readers, in the shoes of myself and my classmates. You see, going into our first FTX last fall, we were MSI’s with less idea of what was going on than your average goldfish at PETCO. We knew nothing of OPORDs, of the gear we were lugging around on our backs, or even of what a STX lane really was. This time around, things were different (dun dun dun).

We rolled into the Fort Custer on a beautiful Friday afternoon, sprung out of the vans, and quickly formed into our squads under c/Corporal Slaney’s intimidating direction. Only moments later, we found ourselves on the day land nav course, which, aside from helping us to gain confidence for the night course ahead, gave us our first chance to see how we would do on our own — we were grateful for the chance to shoulder some responsibility. After finishing the day land nav, we ate a quick MRE dinner before moving into the night version, our last task for day one, then packed up and headed for the barracks, thanking God for beautiful rain and loving cadre.

When the second day began we packed up, cleaned the barracks, and drove out to begin the STX lanes. Unlike the fall FTX, STX lanes were no longer completely foreign us, and I cannot begin to describe how helpful it was for us to have an idea of what the OPORD meant, how the execution was going to work, and what our individual role in the execution was going to be. Because we knew what was happening, it gave us the opportunity to better observe and learn from each situation. Furthermore, by using paintballs this time, we were able to obtain a real understanding of what cover and concealment actually meant. Their importance became especially apparent to those of us, myself included, who were lucky enough to be OPFOR on the ambush lane. Walking down the road waiting for the attack to start, I thought I’d be able to last at least a minute or so before being hit, but I was mistaken. Just seconds after the attack began I found myself lying face to the ground, hit no less than seven times, wishing there had been a large tree in the middle of the road that I could have hidden behind. Retrospectively, it was these experiences, experiences that demonstrated the consequences of failing to perform the basics, that continued to make these STX lanes such a positive learning experience for us throughout the day. By the day’s end, I believe it is safe to say that the majority of us had come out feeling confident enough to even lead a lane, if we hadn’t already.

Finally, on day three, we rounded out the FTX with a squad vs. squad exercise. The two squads began on opposite sides of an objective and were given the mission to go secure it. I was assigned pace and compass in my squad, and, as soon as we were given the go ahead, began leading us at a run on a 63 degree azimuth towards the point. I was little scared I would end up leading us in the wrong direction at first, but quickly found out fifty meters in that this was the least of my problems when a small stick interrupted my jog and sent me flying into the dirt, no doubt to the amusement of those behind me. In fact, later on I would be told it looked like something out of a movie, with my legs flying up above my head and time physically slowing down for everyone to watch. It was certainly one of my finer moments. Eventually, though, I picked myself up and we climbed the hill towards the objective, where an epic battle began.

I didn’t last long in the fray, dying midway through during a flanking maneuver alongside Ryan McDermott. As the battle raged around us, we laid there for another twenty minutes discussing life, death, and how awesome it was when an enemy’s mask exploded in white after he was hit by a paintball. Sensing the FTX was coming to a close, we also talked about the past day and a half how helpful they had been. Because of a relatively laid back nature, we believed it had been extremely successful in building our confidence and introducing us to leadership positions. We felt that as a whole, our class was leaving infinitely more prepared than we were coming in. We agreed that upon leaving that hallowed, paint ridden, ground, our class had gained confidence for the future; we were ready to move up.
STP: Wistful Memories Recalled By Class Leader
By: c/Ryan Slaney

I’m sure everyone knows about STP, the three week long Sweets and Treats Program put on by c/Hicks and his merry gang of Black Hats: Sir Air Assault Janke, Ma’am Airborne/Air Assault Piscal, and SGTs Airborne McGeehan and Pearl. There were many reasons for us to do STP—to vie for a summer school slot, to get in prime shape, or to have a fun time early in the morning.

The day to day activities were inspection followed your run of the mill PT: 1000 pushups one day, 1000 sit-up competitions, stair workouts, sprint workouts, climbing ropes. That’s not the stuff I’ll remember; there were several instances of humor and standout moments in those weeks that I’d like to share here (in no particular order):

1. For the first four days or so I was an awful class leader, and couldn’t get anything right (that last part actually lasted about fifteen days). Anyways, Sgt. Airborne McGeehan would let me “buy” information from him, for the price of a beaten face. However, what I kept forgetting was that when I went down, the whole class went down. My bad, Charlies.

2. “Sir Air Assault’s Hard Life”: One day, Sir Air Assault Janke went on a rant about his rough childhood: “It’s been tough, growing up with the name ‘Sir Air Assault’.” No one on the playground wants to play with the kid named Sir Air Assault.” All of a sudden, Sir Airborne Hicks demanded “EVERYONE BEAT YOUR FACE for Sir Air Assault’s hard life!” We all willingly obliged. Following this, Sir Air Assault went on about how he wanted to have children, and pondered what to name them. When I suggested not naming them Sir Air Assault, all of a sudden Sir Air Assault was in my face demanding to know why his name wasn’t good enough. He then proceeded to suggest the name “Fruit of My Loins 1.”

3. Another morning, we were honored by the presence of Sir Air Assault Janke’s twin, Sir Air Assault Evolution Janke. A very confusing morning for all, until we realized that the Ancient Greek Goddess of Victory had not marked Sir Air Assault Evolution’s face.

4. One morning, we arrived at the JACC at 0604 instead of 0600. As we fell in on Sir Airborne Hicks and I met his stony angry gaze, a lump rose in my throat and my stomach began tying itself into several knots. “Everyone hurry up and get your stuff inside. No human should have to witness the punishment you all are about to endure,” were his only words. With dread we hustled inside to await our fate, (which later made several of the octogenarian walkers in the JACC faint with fear and exhaustion).

5. During the 12-mile ruck march, Sgt. Airborne Pearl ran alongside Bennett and me to quiz us on required knowledge. I must confess, here and now Sgt. Airborne: All my flawless responses to the Pokémon questions you asked me were actually provided to me by Bennett, and you were none the wiser! I am sorry to have made a fool out of you.

6. One of the first mornings, Sgt. Airborne Pearl asked me how I was feeling. With straight bearing I loudly responded “CLEAR SGT AIRBORNE!” I then proceeded to sniffle, as my nose was sending its mucus lubricant down to my upper lip. “Why did you tell me ‘Clear’ Charlie 16? That didn’t sound clear to me!” said Sgt. Pearl. As I tried to stammer out a response, he smiled evilly and said: “Beat your face!”

7. After a run in the JACC one day, I was hydrating out of my canteen, when Sgt. Pearl came to me and demanded: “Tell me a joke, Charlie-16.” Out of earshot of the other Black Hats and most Charlies, I composed myself, came to the position of parade rest, and responded: “Your face, Sgt. Airborne!” I was made to then beat my face for vulgarity, and upon returning to the standing position I was again made to beat my face for disrespect of a Black Hat.

8. The last morning, I had told Sir Airborne Hicks I would flex him in for breakfast, since he had run out of meals. However, I did not, and he called me out: “Slaney, you bastard, I can’t believe you promised to flex me in and didn’t.” With perfect timing, Dybicz replied “Payback’s a bitch Sir Airborne!” That’s all I can think of now, this article has been long winded and I realize that many of these remembrances include only me; however, I’m sure all you other Charlies out there have many more memories. What I really want to say is that all of you who thought about doing STP, but didn’t, is that next year I hope to see many more cadets along side me each morning.
LDACistan: the Fledgling Nation of Hopes, Dreams, and Unjustified Fears
By: c/Phil Hicks

My esteemed MSIIIs, Let me give you some of the advice that no one has given you yet (since you’ve had plenty of the other advice)….

Take a deep breath, you will do fine. In fact, you will do exceptionally well. You want to know the truth? The hardest parts of LDAC were not what you would think. For example, the greatest physical challenge was not the APFT, the road marches, the obstacle course, swim test, or IMT course (though certain aspects of each of those were taxing at points). The hardest challenge physically was the urinalysis; it took me three times and four painful hours. That is, I was recycled twice, and that was only a couple days after I had my pupils dilated like no other for the flight physical and had been punctured in the arm in the wrong place a few times for the blood test. Essentially, inprocessing was the greatest physical hurdle to overcome. For the love of all that is good and holy in this world, max the PT test, because you are all capable of it.

Mentally? Land Nav? OPORDs? Severe boredom? No… don’t underestimate any of those challenges (night land nav was a smoker, and I had two of the same points I had during the day), but the greatest mental (and emotional, social, etc) challenge at camp was dealing with other people, particularly those in my platoon. This may sound a bit antisocial, but I only liked about 3 of the cadets in my platoon by the time it was all over. Then again, I don’t make friends quickly (in college I had no friends until near the end of freshmen year), and I had never previously lived in such close quarters with so many people for such an extended period of time. That being said, make friends early, and don’t make enemies ever!

Let me leave you some words of land nav wisdom: “Navigate from known points.”

ROTC Senior Retreat
By: c/Meagan Walerko

Going through the daily grind of school, extracurricular activities and ROTC commitments, it is easy to push thoughts of the future to the back of your mind. At least for myself, I am stubbornly refusing to face the fact that in two months I have to become a “real” adult. Other than finding out what branch I got and what duty station I will be at, I have given little to any thought about what my life will actually be like and what my job as a Second Lieutenant will include. Therefore, going on the senior ROTC retreat was not only an enjoyable experience, it was comforting, to say the least. Getting a chance to talk to other cadets and midshipmen about how they feel and what they are expecting was very reassuring. I quickly realized that we all seem to be in pretty much the same boat. No one was too sure about what to expect, and all were having very mixed emotions about leaving this place we have called home for nearly four years.

As you all know, Campus Ministry holds both a freshmen and senior retreat for all ROTC cadets and midshipmen. I remember the freshmen retreat like it was yesterday. When we first arrived the only faces I knew were the Army cadets, but people were quick and eager to get to know each other. Now, during the senior retreat, you either know all of the people by face, if not by name, and many of them you probably see regularly. For four years we have been going through similar, yet at the same time, very individual experiences and by sitting back and listening to everyone, you can tell how much they have all grown while here. Through the small group discussions, the question and answer sessions, and even the down time you realize how much you can relate with each other in aspects that other college kids just wouldn’t understand. The retreat’s focus was to not only look back on our last four years, but also look ahead to our future in the military. A key component of this was, of course, how religion has and will play a role in our military careers. We had cadre members of each service come in and discuss their experiences with us and then we got to pick their brains about what we might expect and how to prepare for it. This was an eye opener to me and I was grateful to hear it because many of us will have to face similar situations in the not to distant future- whether we are ready to or not.

Although we didn’t get that far from campus (we were at the Moreau Seminary), it felt like I went on a little weekend vacation. Coming back, I felt refreshed and relaxed. It was just what I needed to gain perspective, put my mind at ease about the future I refuse to think about and to get some quality time with people I have been friends with for the past four years. As part of the planning committee, I got to see comments from the participants. Many wrote similar things about how it was comforting, relaxing and just what they needed to help them make the difficult transition out of this bubble that is our world. If I had one suggestion to make, however, it would be that I think Campus Ministry should hold a retreat for each class year.