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Message from the BATCOM

MIDN 1/C Busalacchi

Dear Battalion,

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your Battalion Commander for the Fall 2018 semester. Looking back over the past few months, I am confident that our unit will be in good hands pushing forward.

As we all have realized by now, learning and adapting is a never ending function in life, and especially in the military. At the IIT/UIC NROTC Battalion, this theme holds true now more than ever. As our numbers have decreased over the past few years, I say without hesitation that our adaptability, dedication, and perseverance have continued to increase.

We began the semester with a Fourth Class coming out of two different New Student Orientation Weeks, and one Second Class midshipman returning from Sea Trials. Both of these summer programs were a welcome change from the methods of the past, and both have yielded great results. Two of our First Class midshipmen earned the title United States Marine upon graduating Officer Candidate School, while our favorite Navy option First Class midshipman came back from a successful first class cruise, fully prepared to become a nuclear Surface Warfare Officer after graduation and commissioning next semester.

Physical fitness and education were primary focuses this semester, and it is always a privilege to see midshipman make improvements. Fitness test scores increased across the board, and we are looking forward to another successful academic term come January. Military Ball on 17 November was a successful celebration, and break from the hustle and bustle of the city. All of this combined with the Marine/Marine option field exercise, endurance lab, awards lab, the German Armed Forces Military Proficiency Badge qualification event, the list of successful unit functions from this past semester goes on, and is good reason to hold our heads high leaving campus for winter break.

Finally, to my fellow midshipmen: I am proud to have been able to share these, and many more experiences with you over the past three and a half years. Never forget to stay motivated, take advantage of any and all opportunities possible, hydrate, and get after it. I look forward to seeing you all in the fleet.

Very Respectfully, Midn 1/C Busalacchi

GERMAN ARMED FORCES PROFICIENCY BADGE BY MIDN 3/C CUARTERO

On September 21st through the 23rd, Western Illinois University Army ROTC hosted a public event which gives military cadets and midshipmen the opportunity to earn the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge, or GAFPB. This award is given to standout service members that excel in physical strength and endurance. The GAFPB also tests a service member's skill in firearms. The activity was open to the public; both students and other cadets/midshipmen spectated the event.



Participants competed in the following events:

1. 11x10m sprint test
2. Chin-up test (flexed arm hang)
3. 1000m run
4. 100m swim in uniform
5. Pistol qualification
6. Road march (3.75 to 7.5 miles)



MIDN Hunt, Midn Busalacchi, and MIDN Cuartero got the opportunity to participate in the event. The three midshipmen went with Cadet Horvat, Cadet Evans, Cadet Franchi, Cadet O'Donnell, and Cadet Eraas. They were led by Captain Sacks.

"The GAFPB makes servicemembers marked men and women," said Illinois Institute of Technology education officer Captain Jonathan Sacks. "This is a great opportunity for cadets and midshipmen to participate, as they will get a prestigious medal before even becoming commissioned officers." IIT is joined by five other Chicagoland units: The University of Illinois at Chicago, Loyola University, Northern Illinois University, Lewis University, and Northwestern University.

The cadets and midshipmen performed the first three events at Leatherneck Stadium on the first day. In addition to competing in these athletic events, the cadets and midshipmen had the opportunity to meet other service members from schools around Illinois and even some out of state.

A few out of state schools will be participating in the event as well, such as Nebraska University. "Hopefully in the future, we'll have an even better turnout to what we already received." said SFC Howard Clifford, IIT cadre Sergeant.



After the events finish each day, the participants get a chance to relax and enjoy the town of Macomb for an evening. The next day was followed by the swim in uniform and the pistol qualification. On Sunday, the participants competed in the road march, which took them around the entire town and through the surrounding farms.

Overall, the entire event was a success. Every midshipman and cadet from IIT returned home earning the GAFPB. The event was tough, competitive, but a lot of fun, and WIU is looking forward to hosting the event again in the future.

ENDURANCE LAB BY MIDN 4/C JONES

On Thursday, 27 SEP 18, the IIT/UIC NROTC Battalion carried out a series of exercises designed specifically to promote physical fitness and teamwork. The goal of this lab was for midshipmen to further develop and expand their physical strength and other closely related skills under the supervision of midshipmen and active duty staff and with the greatest possible safety.

The endurance lab kicked off at 0835 and did not conclude until 0945. It was held in the Keating field of the IIT campus. The lab consisted of two teams racing against each other in the four stations. Throughout the exercise, the teams were timed and also observed to ensure that rules were followed while completing each station.

Station one was a log carry. Each team was to carry the log a total of 100 meters while only being allowed to advance forward by doing lunges. Walking with the log was prohibited during this event. Before the event started each team learned how to move by shoulder carry with lunges.

Station two was low crawl. For this event each team member had to low crawl a distance of 50 meters while transporting a peg egg. In this event midshipmen were not allowed to look up while transiting the peg eggs. If they were caught looking up, midshipmen had to do 5 burpees.

Station three was a stretcher carry. Once finished with the second station the teams now had to complete a total of two laps around the track while carrying rescue rads on the stretchers. At the start of this event the stretcher had to stay above the midshipmen's heads while being carried but it was later changed to being able to carry it at the waist.

The endurance lab concluded with Station Four which was a rucksack workout. This final station consisted of each team completing a total of 50 pushups as a team, counting them out loud as they were completed, and then once finished running a total of 3 laps still carrying their rucksacks.

The endurance lab was a great experience for Midshipmen to build camaraderie and test their physical and mental strength while competing in a stressful environment. By motivating and working together with their teammates, both teams successfully completed each station and excelled in taking this opportunity to improve their physical and mental readiness.



MARINE FEX BY MIDN 1/C GARCIA

Once a semester Marine Option midshipman from the IIT and Northwestern BN participate in a Field Exercise, or FEX, during which midshipmen gain valuable experience in the field, better preparing them for OCS and The Basic School. This semester's FEX was held from 19-21 OCT 2018 at Fort Custer Training Center (FCTC), Augusta, MI. The goal of the weekend was to conduct training in basic small unit leadership, weapons handling, land navigation, patrolling, and endurance training in a controlled field environment. Throughout the weekend, the 1/C midshipmen taught classes to underclass midshipmen using knowledge and experience they gained from OCS on subjects such as patrolling, terrain models and issuing a five-paragraph order. On the first day of the FEX, midshipmen hiked 6+ miles to the BIVOAC site where they received further classroom instruction from the 1/C midshipmen. They then applied what they had learned throughout the course of the day by navigating the land navigation course, leadership reaction course (LRC) and conducting small unit leadership evaluations (SULE).



During the LRC, midshipmen were broken into fireteams. Each member was given a chance to take the role of a fire team leader and attempt maneuver through an obstacle such as getting their fire team over a wall with only a barrel. Under a set amount of time, the team leader would receive an order, create an order for their FT, issue the order using the 5-paragraph model, and execute the plan. Using the same skills gained from the LRC and class room instruction on patrolling, the 5-paragraph order, and small unit leadership, Midshipmen also lead a fire team through the SULE courses set up by 1/C midshipmen. Tasked with seeking out and destroying an enemy objective, the team leader would again create their own order, issue the order to their fire team, and execute. Though the weekend was challenging, the experience was ideal in preparation

OCS, where Marine Option midshipmen would be tested more rigorously, leading a squad size element through SULE courses and conducting a 8+ mile hike. For the Spring semester, Marine Option Midshipmen will participate in a Bulldog Prep weekend at Fort Custer Training Center (FCTC), Augusta, MI, in conjunction with the University of NROTC as well as several other NROTC units and Officer Selection Offices. There AMOIs of the attending NROTC units will participate as Sargent Instructors in order to create a more chaotic environment and further prepare Marine Option Midshipmen for the rigors of OCS.



UNIT CAMARADERIE DINNER BY MIDN 4/C JAGUSAH

On the 9th of November, the IIT unit had our Camaraderie Dinner. This dinner was held to increase unit camaraderie and cohesion by bringing the members of our unit together in a less formal setting, allowing fourth class and first class midshipmen alike to come together for an enjoyable evening filled with good food and conversation.

This semester's camaraderie dinner took place at Franco's Ristorante, an Italian restaurant not too far from the Illinois Institute of Technology campus. While it was a bit crowded, the ambiance was good as the restaurant played a wide variety of music in the background and had enjoyable lighting. The meal sizes were also such that everyone had plenty to eat, even if they didn't think they'd ordered that much food.



Less midshipmen were able to make it to the dinner than anticipated, but it was still a fun night out. Some highlights of the night included MIDN Cuartero discussing personalized playlists he could make for some of us, and MIDN Jones engaging in discussion over the course of the night, even as MIDN Willertz brought in some odd and amusing topics of conversation. Overall, the dinner was a success. When we left the restaurant for the brisk November air, it definitely felt as though we had been among friends.

SWO COMMUNITY DINNER BY MIDN 4/C JAGUSAH

On the 24th of October, the IIT Unit had our SWO Community Dinner, which took place at Lou Malnati's Pizzeria in downtown Chicago. The event was intended to be a less formal, though still professional, environment for the CO, LT Fontana, and a special guest retired EDO to tell us midshipmen about their careers in the Navy, life in the fleet, and the specifics of being a SWO.

The food was good, the stories were fun, and the night was full of lots of laughter. On the far side of the table, much of the CO's conversation was directed towards MIDN 1/C Hunt and his upcoming challenge with choosing a ship and port preference for where he'll be stationed at. On the other side of the table, we were told of what a tight-knit environment EDO life is comprised up of, which can make it almost like its own community within the SWO community.

As the night wore on, two or three or more pizzas were ordered and the conversation moved to more casual areas, salty stories and sage advice. LT Fontana gave us tips on staying safe in Chicago and also some experience based cautionary tales on choosing your liberty mates wisely. All in all, it was a night where everyone could get to know each other and really say that they got something important out of it, whether it was some of the best pizza they'd ever had, or a piece of knowledge they'd take with them for years to come.

FIELD MEET BY MIDN 4/C ARTEAGA

To finish off the semester, our consortium came together on Friday the 30th of November and had a fun field meet. It was hosted at UIC in their Recreation facility. This field meet consisted of volleyball, basketball, and capture the glow belt (a slight twist on capture the flag). This gave our midshipman a perfect opportunity to get to know each other and work together towards a common goal. There are not many opportunities to be with our other half of the consortium but when we do get together, we truly enjoy every second of it. Since our unit is smaller than most, it is really nice to be able to see and speak with more midshipman who have the same goals as us.



The active duty also joined in on some activities which made it all the more fun. Being able to play alongside the active duty staff gave us a moment to really appreciate them as individuals. In fact, one of the teams for volleyball was a majority of active duty staff and they absolutely dominated. They won the overall tournament but it was still fun competing with them.

As we waited for our teams to get a chance to play, some of us went to the open hoop and played basketball so there was never a dull moment. Once all the basketball and volleyball teams got a chance to play, we all came together to play capture the flag. It was personally my favorite part of the night because there truly was no working alone. In order to win you needed to collaborate a plan with your teammates and you also had to make sure your teammates stood out of "jail".



Then, to officially end the night, we all sat down and had a meal together. We ate a bunch of Mexican food and just talked and laughed with each other. It was truly a great night and a wonderful way to end the long semester.

MILITARY BALL BY MIDN 4/C WILLERTZ

On November 17th the Illinois Institute of Technology NROTC unit participated in the consortium's Military Ball. This event was held at The Estate by Gene and Georgetti with the primary purpose of celebrating the 243rd birthday of both the Navy and Marine Corp. As is customary with such events a POW/MIA ceremony was conducted with a guest of honor present as well as the CO's of both the IIT consortium and Northwestern University. The evening's events started with a flag ceremony where the colors were paraded in followed by all 1/C Midshipmen and their guests. After the 1/C Midshipmen and their guests were seated the cake was escorted into the ballroom. A message was played by both the Navy and the Marine corps celebrating the joint birthday. After which the oldest and youngest member present cut and tasted the first slice of cake as is customary. The cake was then escorted out of the ballroom followed then by dinner. Around halfway through the dinner IIT's CO introduced the guest of honor who made a speech reminiscing about his time at IIT. The rest of the evening was spent dancing. MIDN Thompson was given charge in narrating the POW/MIA ceremony with MIDN Jagusah, MIDN Jones, and MIDN Willertz on cake detail. Both the messages played by the Navy and Marine Corps were stirring with Captain North stating, "That video makes me want to go an reenlist right now even though I'm not an enlisted!" MIDN Bussalachi started the dancing off right performing a back flip on the middle of the dance floor and with that the mood was set. With several remixed songs the dancing was intense with several dance offs occurring through the night. Later that evening to improve upon his already exemplary performance MIDN Bussalachi employed the help of MIDN Strevey to do a dual back flip causing much applause. Much laughter was shared at watching MIDN Willertz's vigorous dancing which can at least be stated as enthusiastic.



NEW ACTIVE DUTY STAFF: LIEUTENANT JOSHUA N. SMITH, USN

LT Smith was born in Madison, WI and raised in Austin, TX. He returned to Madison as an undergraduate student, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and a minor in Naval Science in December 2013. After graduation, he attended Nuclear Power School in Charleston, South Carolina and Prototype in Saratoga Springs, NY. Upon completion of his nuclear training, LT Smith reported to the USS San Francisco (SSN-711) for her final deployment.



LT Smith has spent the last two years attached to the USS Seawolf (SSN-21) working through strenuous production and abnormal test procedures to support her return to sea. He has served as the Main Propulsion Assistant, the Assistant Weapons Officer, and the Assistant Engineer during his sea tour.