



# The Crow's Nest

## MESSAGE FROM THE BATCOM:

My dearest battalion, what an honor it has been to serve you all. This semester was full of amazing experiences, and I believe we've grown even closer as comrades in arms.

Not only have we shown each other how successful we can be, but we represented ourselves well at other universities! It was our first time at The Ohio State University, where we were able to place 3<sup>rd</sup> in the squad drill competition, place in the endurance race as part of a Chicago Consortium team, and get a taste of shiphandling in a simulator. It was also our first time at Loyola for the Army-led Iron Rambler, and we showed the Army who the real warriors are by taking first in the male and female team competitions.

Aside from those exciting events, we held our annual Dining In and attended the Notre Dame Leadership Weekend, as we have in the past. Our marine options attended a Bulldog Preparation weekend, where they were able to hone their navigation and PT skills. Lastly, we attended the first Women in Naval Service Symposium, where both males and females alike were able to come together and discuss women in the Navy and Marine Corps.

This semester, we have six commissionees, five of which are Navy options and one being a MECEP. Three of our seniors will be entering the Surface Warfare community, one will become a Submarine officer, one will become a Naval Flight Officer, and one will become an Aviator.

Overall, I felt that this was an incredibly successful semester, and our unit was able to finish the school year strong. I look forward to seeing our IIT and UIC graduates in the fleet, as I know we will all make a lasting impact on the Navy and Marine Corps!

- MIDN 1/C Kasie Braun



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# Dining-In

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BY MIDN 4/C BRADY MIDDLETON

On April 7, 2018, the Chicago Consortium gathered to participate in “Espirit De Corps” and build camaraderie between staff and midshipmen. The event was held at Loyola University Chicago’s Water Tower Campus and the setting was filled with awkward situations, laughter, and most importantly fun.



MIDN Braun and MIDN Chorvat were the Officers of the Mess and they successfully ran the event smoothly. They created an atmosphere that was fun and also comfortable. Some highlights from the event include MIDN Strevey walking around with a “Strevey’s

Special” tee shirt, midshipmen creating skits that not only entertained midshipmen, but made our staff chuckle, and lastly CAPT Brian Howes USN(Ret) sharing his experience of being a midshipman, understanding our role as military professionals, and understanding the challenge we have ahead as Officers in the Naval Service. The night ended with midshipmen drinking the grog, reflections and photos from



the 1/C midshipmen, and most importantly the feeling and spirit of camaraderie in the Chicago Consortium. Overall, this past Dining-In was a great event, and everyone left with good spirits and full stomachs. Special shoutout to OC Carillo for his planning of this event, and his clear communication throughout semester!

# DRILL MEET

## BY MIDN 4/C XAVIER NAVA

From 02 March - 04 March 2018, the Illinois Institute of Technology battalion, worked along side their Chicago consortium cohorts at Northwestern University, and Loyola University-Chicago to participate in the “Buckeye Nation NROTC Drill Competition” hosted by The Ohio State University NROTC Unit.

The drill meet consisted of various separate events such as: shooting, endurance race, color guard, and squad drill, dodgeball, ship handling, king-of-the-circle, and unit staff challenge. The endurance race was the first event of the drill meet to take place. It challenged the midshipmen not only physically but mentally as well. The ten-mile course hosted ten exercise stations (eleven including the final obstacle), each obstacle was spaced differently from each other. Each station required that it be completed by all members of the group working together, some obstacles included: log carries, rope climbs, pull ups, and buddy carries. The course took its participants through Ohio States University’s beautiful campus and some of its wonderful sights. IIT and UIC members that competed in the endurance race included SSgt Clark, Midn 2/C Busalacchi, Midn 2/C Garcia, MIDN 2/C Hunt, and MIDN 4/C Cuartero.

Next up was the color guard competition. Led by MIDN 3/C Coria, the team consisted of MIDN 2/C Garcia, MIDN 2/C Arandia, MIDN 1/C Cernok, and MIDN 1/C Newberry. The team placed fifth place, although this was not anticipated by the team it demonstrates that there is room for improvement for the team.

Lastly for the team events was the squad drill competition, led by Midn 2/C Busalacchi. The drill team consisted of MIDN 4/C Cuartero, MIDN 4/C Middleton, MIDN 4/C Nava, MIDN 3/C Thompson, MIDN 2/ Hunt, and MIDN 2/C Thew. Although some members from the drill team were exhausted because they were also apart of the endurance team, the drill team performed very well. Their hard work and effort was enough to earn them third place.

The drill meet provided everyone with an opportunity to mix and mingle with midshipmen from many different units and make lasting connections that will stick with them far beyond the fleet. The planning and coordination for the trip and the competition itself are the reasons why the unit takes part in these events. Congratulations to the IIT/UIC NROTC Unit for their hard work and completion of a successful competition!



# IRON RAMBLER

BY MIDN 4/C JAMES STREVEY

It was the 23rd of February of 2018 and the majority of midshipmen at the UIC/IIT NROTC unit were getting ready for the Iron Rambler Challenge. As the midshipmen mustered at the IIT tower at around 1400, none of them knew what to expect. They were on their way to Loyola university to compete with the NROTC unit and against the Army ROTC unit that they have up north. This event was planned to replace the AMOI challenge but no one knew what this event was. No one knew what they were about to do or how physically difficult it was going to be. All they knew was that this event was going to be fun and boost their camaraderie within the unit.

Upon arrival at Loyola University, the midshipmen were marched off the bus and met up with the Loyola Unit in their campus's gym and workout building. The consortium relaxed and talked together for about half an hour waiting on instructions from the staff. Finally, they were told to go outside, register with your teammate, and get your t-shirt. But still, the midshipmen still did not know what they were about to do. Not even the Army ROTC students knew what this event entailed. We all patiently waited until the Army Master Sergeant came and told us all what we were doing here.

There were three events for both males and females. One individual and two team events. One person from each unit did the individual event, from the IIT unit this was MIDN 2/C Hunt, he did a great job. The next two events were the team events where pairs of either male or female midshipmen did a circuit of various PT exercises to try and beat everyone else. The first circuit was base around one of Loyola's quads and was very difficult. You started with running while carrying a 45 lbs plate twice around their quad which was about 800m. Then after that you did more exercises with the plate including burpees and over head presses. After all your exercises were done you ran around the quad two more times to finish the circuit. The second circuit was pretty similar with a running element and then an almost cross-fit element in the middle, but the second one had some partner dragging exercises. Once both circuits were finished for both male and female, the units met back up inside and had dinner while the results were shared.



The NROTC units from both up north and south did an amazing job, and the male team consisting of Marine options MIDN 2/C Busalacchi and MIDN 2/C Garcia won the team male competition. This event was really based on the idea of camaraderie and teamwork. One of the main reasons why my teammate and I made it through was because the other midshipmen were right there next to us cheering us on, making us push harder. Now not only did this event challenge us physically, but it challenged us mentally as well. It was really difficult and we had to keep telling ourselves to not give up and to not slow down. Mental toughness is not optional in our lines of work. All in all this was a great event and everyone who went did a great job. As midshipmen we can never forget that we are a team and a family and I think that this event made us realize that even more.

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# NOTRE DAME LEADERSHIP WEEKEND

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BY Midn 2/C NICHOLAS BUSALACCHI

2018 marked the 23rd consecutive year of the Notre Dame Leadership Weekend, graciously hosted by the University of Notre Dame NROTC Unit staff and midshipmen. This annual leadership conference gathers midshipmen, NROTC staff members, and distinguished guest lecturers from the Navy, Marine Corps, civilian, and government sectors from across the country together in order to expand on the leadership development programs implemented daily at our host universities. The two and a half day event gives midshipmen an exclusive opportunity to listen to and engage with well respected leaders from a variety of different fields, hand selected to speak on their knowledge and experiences regarding the fundamentals and principles of leadership.

As can be expected from the midwest, the 8th-11th of February was a weekend filled with inclement weather and cancelled flights, but mother nature wasn't enough to stop the Notre Dame team. The weekend consisted of midshipmen arriving on the 8th and getting checked in, followed by a meal and introductory brief from Notre Dame NROTC lead midshipmen and the unit's Executive Officer. The 9th began with a formal introduction from MIDN Dale of Notre Dame, the midshipman Officer in Charge, and then into the first speech by the 14th Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, MCPON Steven Giordano. MCPON Giordano has served the Navy for 29 years, and focused his lecture on the importance of humility in officership, and the three main traits one must improve upon every day in coordination with humility: authenticity, competency, and courage. The next speaker was Tom Schreier, who is the Founding Director of the Inspired Leadership Initiative at the University of Notre Dame. Mr. Schreier's speech was followed by a short break and chow at the Notre Dame South Dining Hall, then back to the Mendoza College auditorium to hear from SgtMaj Donna Dunbar (USMC, Ret.). SgtMaj Dunbar may now be in the real estate business, but her 27 years in the Marine Corps is still fresh, as she recently retired in 2016 after an illustrious career. SgtMaj Dunbar was followed by a Junior Officer panel, in which five junior officers gave brief introductions, then broke off into individual rooms for midshipmen to engage in small talks. The Junior Officer panel was comprised of LT Chris Malherek (USN pilot), Capt Taylor Drescher (USMC, Logistics), LT Mary Coyne (USN, nuclear submarines), LT Kevin Isaak (USN, surface warfare) as well as a Naval Lieutenant from the SEAL community.

With the first set of speakers complete, Saturday the 10th began with Marine Corps Maj Regan Jones, the current Director of Military and Veteran Affairs at the University of Notre Dame. Maj Jones left the Marine Corps in 2017 after a career as an Infantry Officer with multiple combat tours, followed by his final assignment as a staff member for Notre Dame NROTC. Maj Jones was followed by Chris Stevens, a Co-Director at the Inspired Leadership Initiative at Notre Dame, as well as one of the Co-Founders of the Keurig Coffee System. Midshipmen broke for lunch, and returned to hear a speech from the current mayor of South Bend Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttegieg. "Mayor Pete" as the locals address him, served as a Naval Reserve Officer from 2009-2017, when he took a 7 month leave of absence from being mayor in 2014 in order to deploy to Afghanistan.

After a short break, midshipmen broke into small groups once more to participate in ethical decision games. These small groups were led by pairs of Notre Dame midshipmen, and presented tough moral and ethical situations for the attending midshipmen to contemplate and discuss, in order to facilitate leadership and decision making skills in a small group environment. The weekend ended with a keynote dinner and speech by Lawrence Greenspun, the Director of Public Sector Engagement at the Drucker Institute, a renown social enterprise developed to improve large organizations and leaders in society. Mr. Greenspun also teaches a graduate course in leadership as part of Notre Dame's ESTEEM Master of Entrepreneurship Program. Participating IIT/UIC midshipmen were: MIDN 1/C Arandia, MIDN 1/C Cernok, MIDN 1/C Newberry, Midn 2/C Garcia, and myself.

# FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE

BY MIDN 2/C MICHAEL GARCIA

Prior to attending Officer Candidate School, Marine Option Midshipmen undergo required training called Bulldog Preparation. Bulldog Prep encompasses strenuous PTs and Hikes, as well as classroom instruction in land navigation, small unit leadership, offensive combat, and Marine Corps history. The culmination of this training is the Field Exercise, or FEX, during which students gain valuable experience in the field, better preparing them for OCS and The Basic School. For the Spring semester, Marine Option Midshipmen participated in a Bulldog Prep weekend between 15-17 March 2018 at Fort Custer Training Center (FCTC), Augusta, MI, in conjunction with the University of Illinois NROTC as well as several other NROTC units and Officer Selection Offices. 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 AMOIs of the attending NROTC units also participated as Sargent Instructors in order to simulate OCS. During the FEX midshipmen were housed in squad bays, ate at the chow hall, and received further classroom instruction on land navigation and five paragraph orders. Midshipmen then applied what they had learned throughout the course of Bulldog Prep, on the land navigation course, leadership reaction



course (LRC) and small unit leadership evaluations (SULE). The LRC is essentially is a group of mini challenges and obstacles that are carried out as a fire team. Each member was given a chance to take the role of a fire team leader and attempt 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, issue the order, and execute, using the 5-paragraph model taught prior. 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 U of M staff. Tasked with seeking and destroying an enemy objective, the team leader would again create their own order, issue the order to their fire team, and execute. The last event of the Bulldog Prep weekend was a 5-mile hike through across Fort Custer Training Center. Though the weekend was challenging, the experience received was ideal 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.

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# *Women in Naval Service Symposium*

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BY MIDN 4/C MATT CUARTERO

On 24 Mar 2018, the University of Michigan's NROTC unit hosted their first Women in Naval Service Symposium. The event was hosted to inform primarily female midshipmen about the many aspects of Naval Service; female officers from almost every naval and marine community appeared at the symposium to discuss a multitude of topics such as military life, travel, career/education opportunities, relationships, and everything in between. One of the main focuses of the symposium was the empowerment of women in naval service. There are endless opportunities for women in the armed services and it is vital to have a positive environment where all are equal.

Midshipmen (over 150) from all over the country showed up to the event. This gave them the opportunity to interact with active duty women officers and enlisted personnel. Some of the naval communities that were present was Surface Warfare, Submarines, Special Warfare, Aviation, and Reserves. Among these communities included other duties in which these female service members take part of, such as OMBUDSMAN and EOD, so the midshipmen present were able to listen to female officers from more specific communities, too.



The day began with a discussion with Command Senior Chief Samir Carney and Staff Sgt. Carly O'Shanick; they answered questions from the enlisted side of life. They were then followed up by LT Megan Miller, who is a detailer. She provided information regarding officer designations, job opportunities, and time in service. After LT Miller, Rear Adm. Sara Joyner spoke to the midshipmen and answered questions. She spoke of her personal trials and balancing military life with family life throughout her 29 years of service.

After the talk with Rear Adm. Joyner, the midshipmen took a lunch break. Following that, there was a breakout discussion between the male and female midshipmen to talk separately about issues regarding equality among gender, and the importance to have a positive climate where every service member supports and respects each other.

The last two sections of the symposium involved a separation of groups based on warfare communities. Finally, the female officers had a panel in which they all were open to any questions posed by the midshipmen. After this event, the discussion section of the symposium was over. The Michigan NROTC unit hosted a dinner for all involved, where the guest of honor, bestselling-author Lisa Mininni ran a fun exercise which grouped up midshipmen into different strategies of thought processes. The Women in Naval Service Symposium was concluded after the dinner. Overall, the event was very informative in regards to life as a female service member, and the speakers had great stories and lessons to tell and teach. It was an empowering event which inspired equality among all servicemembers, and the IIT/UIC unit is looking forward to next year's Women in Naval Service Symposium.