April 2008
www.armyrotc.com/edu/mnstjohns

The Official FSB Magazine

FIGHTING SAINTS
ALMANAC

This is Our
PROGRAM

SY 2007-2008
The Year in Review
State of the Battalion
By LTC James C. Fischer

We are expanding. We currently have over 100 students participating in our program on our three campuses.

We are training. We learn critical skills at Warrior Forge, Airborne, Air Assault, Leaders Training Course at Ft. Knox, Leadership Labs, Ranger Challenge, the Army Ten-miler, and Bataan Memorial Marches.

We are learning. We study abroad. Our GPA is strong. We attend the Association of the US Army Convention in DC and the Marshall Conference in Virginia.

We are serving. We are RAs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, EMTs and volunteers. We donate to charity.

We are leading. We are team captains, club officers, business managers, and coordinators for Student Veterans.

We are growing. We are getting stronger through physical fitness and mental toughness.

We are remembering. We honor our alums, our veterans, our fallen comrades, our past.

We are succeeding. We work hard in the classroom, on campus, in our communities, and in service to our Country.

We are one battalion, one team, preparing to serve our Country as Army officers.

We are the Fighting Saints!

Cadet Rindahl leads the way on the 2 Mile Run during the Army Physical Fitness Test.
A Proud History - A Bright Future

The Saint John's University ROTC Battalion has been proud to help develop the leaders of tomorrow.

After the United States' entry into World War II, St. John's University began formal military training when, on 4 March 1943, a contingent of 150 airmen arrived on campus and became the first members of the 87th College Training Detachment of the Army Air Corps under the command of Captain Casey. In less than one year (to February 1944), St. John's prepared over 1,000 men for their roles as airmen and, in the process, developed a training program ranked fifth in the nation and first among the participating colleges in Minnesota.

With the breakout of the Korean War, the student population, especially in upper division courses, began to decline. On 25 January 1951, the Council of Seniors indicated its willingness to consider ROTC "to show our willingness to cooperate with the government in its defense program." Negotiations to secure a Navy ROTC program began but did not merit much attention, "since the NROTC requires a swimming pool." Efforts with the Air Force failed when the last available units were awarded to other small colleges in Minnesota.

Negotiations with the Army began and were completed on 13 May 1952, with Colonel Benjamin Chapla as the first professor of Military Science. The mandatory ROTC program began with school year 1952-53, and the first eight officers were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in May 1955. Among the original commissionees and, in fact, the top-rated cadet in his class was the Honorable David F. Durenberger, who has represented the state of Minnesota for many years in the United States Senate.

With the passage of the ROTC Revitalization Act of 1964, St. John's took advantage of all the changes and additions offered by that law. The program became voluntary and the new curriculum option was introduced in SY 1964-65. Enrollment in the basic course was mandatory until school year 1965. Beginning in 1968, students from neighboring St. Cloud State University were accepted into the program through the tri-college exchange. When ROTC was opened to women in 1974, female students from St. Cloud State University and the College of St. Benedict were also included. In 1987 the College of St. Benedict was recognized as a co-host, expanding its ability to attract four-year scholarship winners.

From 1990-1993, ROTC was offered to three additional schools: The University of Minnesota-Duluth, The College of St. Scholastica, and the University of Wisconsin-Superior.

From a relatively recent and humble beginning, approximately 1,300 officers have been commissioned from the three schools served by the Tri-College Exchange through the end of school year 2005-2006.
While most students were celebrating their last few days of summer, the cadets of the Fighting Saints Battalion were preparing for the upcoming year. Incoming first-year cadets were tested on their physical strength and stamina by taking the Army Physical Fitness Test.

Fourth-year cadets received various leadership training in preparation for the upcoming year. They reviewed the duties of the battalion level leadership positions, were introduced to the Military Decision-Making Process.

The Fighting Saints Battalion initial week was full of activities that prepared cadets for the upcoming year and was meant to reduce stress on the first semester of the training schedule.
Every year the Military District of Washington sponsors the Army Ten Miler. It is the premier running event of the US Army and the largest 10 mile race in the World. The course begins and ends at the Pentagon and the route passes by many of the great monuments in the city. Military units and bases around the world send teams to compete.

On October 7, 2007 the Army Ten Miler celebrated its 23rd annual race in Washington DC. 26,641 runners packed the starting line early in the morning with the sunlit Pentagon as a motivational backdrop. Among these thousands were five members of the Fighting Saints Battalion. Cadets Gregory Sandquist, Aaron Rindahl, Adam Larson, and I ran as a team and Mr. Alberto DeJesus accompanied us as cadre.

Planning for this event began during the Spring Semester where CDT Sandquist coordinated with SGM Steve Grublesky from the General Vessey Chapter of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) to arrange travel and accommodations once in Washington DC. CDT Sandquist is the President of the Fighting Saints Battalion AUSA subchapter. The main event after the Ten Miler is the AUSA national meeting. This convention provides a view into where the Army is and where it is moving. Contractors come to show their products and how they will better our Soldiers' lives and help accomplish the mission. It is a three-day long event that is well worth attending.
Every year a Ranger Challenge Competition event is held at Camp Ripley, MN allowing ROTC colleges and universities from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota to compete in seven different military skill events. Those events are: Rope Bridge, Grenade Throw Course, 10k Ruck Run, Weapons Disassembly, Basic Rifle Marksmanship, Patrolling, Physical Fitness Test.

The Fighting Saints Battalion sent two teams to the competition during the fall of 2007 led by captain Will Durbin with the help of assistant captain Matt Schwegel and junior captain Cody Martin. The teams were made of skilled and motivated cadets from SJU, CSB, and SCSU. Both teams were very competitive and the team building between the cadets was excellent due to the multiple early PT hours, afternoon training, and social events after school.

After two days of intense competition, the Black team stood in the final formation at 6th place and the Gold team in 10th place. Ranger Challenge was a great team building experience between the three schools and helped to reinforce the lessons and skills learned in ROTC. The new and veteran members of Ranger Challenge returned from the competition with a sense of pride and accomplishment.
The 2007 Fall FTX was held at Camp Ripley this past September. The MS I and II cadets had a chance to go out to a rifle range and get familiarized with the M16 rifle while engaging targets at 25 meters. The MS III cadets had the chance to get some great night land navigation training in preparation for Warrior Forge this summer.

On Saturday afternoon, the battalion conducted a squad level competition. Squads were matched against each other with the task of negotiating an obstacle course. By the end of the weekend, the Fighting Saints Battalion was ready to take on the coming challenges of the semester as a team.
Veteran’s groups from around the state of Minnesota gathered in St. Cloud to help put on the State’s most spectacular Veterans Day Parade. Pedestrians watched in awe as the officers, floats, marching bands and military vehicles and veterans all push through the streets of St. Cloud.

After the parade, a memorial service was held at near-by Apollo High School. Other festivities were held at various locations throughout the city. The 2007 Veterans Day Parade offered our cadets the unique opportunity to pay tribute to our nation’s heroes. Emotions ran high as the cadets of the Fighting Saints Battalion marched through the streets of St. Cloud.

Thanks to all of the men and women in the U.S. Armed Forces past and present for their unselfish and dedicated service to our nation. It is these individuals that make our country great.
The 30th of November brought upon us our annual Fighting Saints Dining-In. The event was flawless thanks to numerous hours of preparation by Cadet Koenig who was constantly running around the event making sure everything was right where it should be and squared away.

The evening was held at Gorecki Hall, a new ballroom on the beautiful campus of College of Saint Benedict. The Dining-In gave us the chance to welcome everyone as a Battalion by dressing in our Class-A’s and engaging in some entertainment, led by Cadet Anthony Muccio who acted as Mr. Vice. Mr. Vice is the ringmaster of the show, leading the antics such as Rucksack Twister, Nerf Field Artillery, and assigning drinks from the Grog (a mixture of numerous substances that represent tradition for the Battalion and the Army).

We were treated to a fancy meal by the St. Ben’s caterers and some hilarious skits that the Cadets performed that had the whole room laughing out loud continuously. We had an all around very good time while honoring an important Army tradition.
The end of the 2007 Fall Semester was a pivotal time for five former cadets of the Fighting Saints Battalion. It marked the end of five young Lieutenants’ lives as a cadet. The accumulation of over four successful years through ROTC led to the commissioning of Timothy Biocic, Daniel Frantz, Corey Hake, Adam Kramer and Eric Neutkens as Second Lieutenants.

This was a pivotal moment in these young men’s lives as it has pointed them in a new direction in their lives as an Army Officer. They have successfully completed all necessary training as a cadet to have the honor of earning the Bar of Gold.

They will now move on to further training at BOLCII and continue to the Officer Basic Course of their selected branch before arriving at their first duty station. On behalf of the Fighting Saints Battalion, we congratulate these newly commissioned Lieutenant’s as wish you the best of luck in your future!
The MS IV class kicked off their spring break three days early this year, with a visit to Gettysburg Pennsylvania. Fourteen senior cadets, led by LTC Fischer and MAJ Errington, took to the battlefield to complete months of preliminary study, witnessing firsthand the terrain that commanded the most decisive battle of the American Civil War. Formally known as a staff ride, the MSIVs analyzed the course of events of the battle, the behavior of key leaders, and their use of the topography before completing the experience with a thorough exploration of the grounds on which history was forever changed.

Sites visited included McPherson’s Ridge, on which Buford met Heath, Little Round Top, where Chamberlain broke the Confederate attempt to flank the Union line, and Cemetery Ridge, where the Confederate hopes of imposing its will on the North were permanently dashed. Undisputedly, the most memorable ground for the FSB cadets and cadre was below the crest of cemetery ridge, where on the 2nd of July, the 1st Minnesota charged and routed a Confederate brigade, suffering monumental casualties in the process.

The cadets were able to discover, or, more precisely, taste 19th century culture with a 5 star dinner at a thematic post-colonial era restaurant. They were also privileged to enjoy the luxurious guest accommodations of the US Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, and the warm hospitality of the Philadelphia airport USO.

Undoubtedly, much was gained from this valuable experience that enhanced the cadets’ appreciation for the complexities of war fighting. The importance of analyzing terrain and the difficulties of command and control are two topics not fully understood without a real world exploration of a battlefield. The temptation of criticizing commanders of that battle for ‘obvious’ blunders and seemingly foolish mistakes diminishes when confronted with their limited perspective at the time. Ultimately, the Gettysburg staff ride facilitated a stronger appreciation of the magnitude of military leadership that the MS IV class will soon begin to undertake.
Sixteen cadets and five cadre members of the Fighting Saints Battalion drove 22 hours on March 27, 2008, to participate in the 19th Annual Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands, NM. The march is in honor of soldiers - the fallen and the survivors - who were part of the Bataan Death March in April 1942 on the Philippine Islands. About 60,000 American and Filipino soldiers were captured by the Japanese and marched about 70 miles through intense heat with almost no food or water. Approximately 10,000 died during the march.
It is not uncommon for college students to miss a day of classes to sleep-in or start weekend recreational plans early. However, it is probably only the Army ROTC Cadet who skips those Friday classes in order to participate in an event which causes them to be evaluated while sleep deprived under highly complex and highly stressful situations: the Spring FTX (Field Training Exercise).

The schedule for the FTX was cram-packed with a variety of activities which gave Cadets a microcosm of what will be expected of them at LDAC (the Army's Leadership Development and Assessment Course). Beginning with M-16 qualification for the advance course Cadets on Thursday, the Cadets went through night and day Land Navigation, FLRC (Field Leader’s Reaction Course), Patrol Base Operations, and Squad STX (Situational Training Exercise) Lanes. The training was intense and demanding, but it was what is expected of the Army’s future leaders.

As they departed from the training site, Cadets gave out a cheer which echoed both their sense of accomplishment and relief. The significance of this event in their preparation to be an officer understood by all.
Friends & Sponsors
Thank you for your support!

The Fighting Saints Battalion would like to publicly thank the businesses and individuals who have supported our program over the past year. Without these generous contributions, we would not be able to provide your cadets the unique training and learning opportunities that help them achieve leadership excellence.

Barbers on St. Germain  St. Cloud, MN
Mahowald Insuranceable Valley, MN
Big Apple Bagels Apple Valley, MN
AUSA GEN Vessey Chapter
Grand Casino Mille Lacs / Hinckley
Red Lobster  St. Cloud, MN
Best Western Kelly Inn  St. Cloud, MN
Country Inn & Suites  St. Cloud, MN
American Legion Post 292 Richmond, MN
American Legion Post 1998 Appleton, MN
VFW Post 7902 Osakis, MN
Best Buy  St. Cloud, MN
Southtown Liquor  St. Cloud, MN
St. Joe’s Liquor  Store St. Joseph, MN
Timberlodge Steak House  St. Cloud, MN
Blackberry Ridge Golf Course  Sartell, MN

Please support our sponsors. If you are interested in joining their ranks, contact Mrs. Molly Wiemann at 320-363-2753. To stay in touch with our activities visit our website www.armyrotc.com/edu/mnstjohns.
This is Our Program