

# The Lookout

Georgia Tech Naval ROTC



December 2017

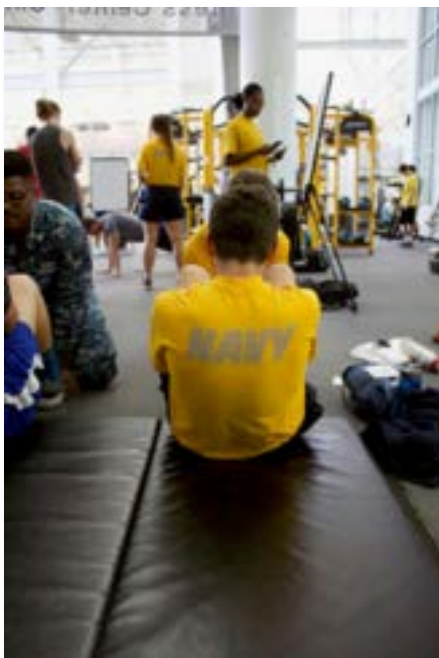
# Navy SEAL Challenge

MIDN 4/C Beck

On 4 OCT, midshipmen of the NROTC unit and other members of the Georgia Tech community got to see how they measured up against America's best by participating in the annual Navy SEAL Challenge. The event, which took place at the Campus Recreation Center, consisted of five events: a 2-minute max set of push-ups, a max set of pull-ups, a 2-minute max set of sit-



ups, a 500 yard swim, and a 1.5 mile run. These are the same events run during the Navy's Physical Screening Test (PST) which is used to evaluate EOD and SEAL candidates' physical readiness. Throughout the all-day event, the battalion's midshipmen showed up in their PT gear looking very unified and ready to put out! Many midshipmen also volunteered to help the Navy Recruiting District - Atlanta staff keep the event running smoothly. All participants received a t-shirt, and those who completed all five events were entered to win prizes. Overall, it was a fun and safe event for everyone to challenge themselves physically and mentally. Congratulations to this year's male and female first place finishers: Bryful Sun and Melanie Moenning! Our midshipmen will keep training for next year's Navy SEAL Challenge!



# Joint PT's

MIDN 4/C Beck



Throughout this semester, our Navy ROTC unit has had several joint force PT's with the Army and Air Force ROTC units here at Georgia Tech. While we still mustered bright and early at 0545 on SAC fields next to the CRC, we did so alongside our fellow Army and Air Force cadets. These joint operations are always a great opportunity to show what we are made of and have some fun meeting and interacting with aspiring officers from other branches. It certainly increased camaraderie within the Georgia Tech ROTC community, as we are all very busy and rarely have a chance to gain familiarity with one another during the normal school week. There is hardly a better way to get to know a fellow airman or cadet than sweating it out at 0600! During the Air Force Joint PT, students separated into classes but combined branches to complete a track and body weight workout while lined up side by side on the field. During the Army Joint PT, each midshipman paired up with a cadet and completed a set of workouts including a fireman's carry and paired sit-ups. Each pair then ran a mile to finish off the workout. Many students got to know each other during this workout: "My partner was actually someone I knew from before, but Joint PT was useful in that I got to teach him about the Navy, and he told me a lot about the options the Army has upon commissioning. It also doesn't hurt that there's healthy competition during PT. Got to represent for the Navy," said MIDN 1/C Medrano.

# Veterans Day Run

MIDN 4/C Ward

On Friday, 10 November, sometime between 0445 and 0520, Georgia Tech Navy Battalion midshipmen awoke to conduct the annual Veterans Day run. A joint affair with the other Tech ROTC branches, the run encapsulated the Pi mile - a 3.14-mile loop around the Atlanta midtown campus. The route began outside Bobby Dodd stadium at 0600, went south to North Avenue, took a northwestern turn toward the Campus Recreation Center and West Village, came east on 10<sup>th</sup> Street, and headed south back towards Bobby Dodd.



Each branch formed into three squads to make a platoon and everyone was arranged so that there was enough separation in between. At the very front, leading the formation, were the holders of the American flag and each branch's flag. Navy and Marine Corps midshipmen took turns grabbing our flags and sprinting around the entire succession of platoons, screaming passionately "NAVY!" or "MARINE CORPS!" MIDN 4/C Nguyen commented, "the flag had a lot more drag than I expected and it was tough, but it was great to push myself and motivate everyone at the same time."



During the run itself, motivated midshipmen alternated calling cadences, coming out of the formation to act as platoon commander. Seventy-odd voices in near unison, chanting along to age-old Navy and Marine Corps cadences seemed to make all early morning fogginess fade away. The run ended by running up and back down Freshman Hill which runs east to west alongside Bobby Dodd Stadium. While the run was finite, its purpose was not: to honor military veterans whose integrity, valor, and sacrifice we revere.

# Midshipman Service Selection

MIDN 4/C Ward

During the month of October, Georgia Tech Naval ROTC midshipmen soon to graduate received their service assignments from the Naval Service Training Command (NSTC). It is the first detour on their winding path to the fleet, determining which community they will serve in as leaders and technical experts. Midshipmen are generally commissioned as unrestricted line officers, eligible for command ashore and at sea.

The unrestricted line communities of the Navy are Submarine Warfare, Surface Warfare, Aviation, Naval Special Warfare, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal; within each there are more specialized designations. Midshipmen, when choosing their service selection, rank their preferred designations. These are considered by NSTC during the assignment process, but the final decisions ultimately depend on the personnel needs of the Navy. Probability of being assigned to one's preferred community depends on many factors, including class rank, cumulative GPA, aptitude score, and unit involvement.

## Naval Aviation (Pilot)

MIDN 1/C Danny Hughes chose Aviation (Pilot) as her top choice and is ecstatic about her future Flying Navy. "Flying is amazing! Naval Aviation is fast paced, efficient, and effective, and it's an absolute honor that I have been selected to join the team..." she said. Naval Flight Officer (NFO) and Pilot designations involve extended training pipelines upwards of two years to earn one's wings, a journey that takes dedication and willpower to succeed. As Flight Officers and Pilots are often highly coveted, competitive jobs, MIDN Hughes offered some advice to future hopefuls: "Work hard in your classes. GPA is the thing with the biggest effect that you have the most direct control over. Secondly, study for the ASTB (Aviation Selection Test Battery)...Help out your peers and always be open to the idea of changing the way we do things in ROTC - that's the best way to end up with a high class ranking."

## Surface Warfare (Nuclear)

Set to join the Surface Warfare (SWO) Nuclear (N) community is MIDN 1/C Kiersten Martin. The SWO (N) option is highly technical and challenging, especially in the classroom, as SWO (N) oversee the nuclear reactors and their personnel aboard aircraft carriers, multibillion-dollar megaton cities at sea. They go on to alternate tours, from leading on conventional surface ships to operating nuclear propulsion plants. MIDN Martin is intrigued by her future opportunities, choosing the SWO option due to the travel possibilities and immediate leadership roles. "I'm grateful for the opportunity but extremely nervous about the interview process and the notorious 'Nuke' School." In offering her two cents to interested midshipmen, she commented, "work really hard in school and keep your grades up [...] and express interest to LT Vangel as soon as possible so he can give you all the necessary resources, information, and help."

## **Submarine Warfare**

Chosen to start on the path to earning his dolphins is MIDN 1/C Rafael Murphy. Like the SWO (N) designation, submariners must be chosen (through an application involving an interview) to attend Naval Nuclear Power School, a 24-week graduate-level course of study covering the foundational knowledge necessary for a theoretical understanding of nuclear propulsion. From there, submariners attend the Nuclear Power Training Unit for 26 weeks which involves hands-on exposure to naval reactor prototypes and fuses the classroom derived concepts of nuclear propulsion with practical application. Lastly, submariners attend the Submarine Officer Basic Course for 12 weeks, learning about submarine operations before reporting as a division officer. MIDN Murphy chose the "Silent Service" for its meritocratic nature, crew cohesion, and the necessarily well-rounded nature of expertise needed to operate a complex beast with few people. MIDN Murphy recommended to future submariner hopefuls "[to go] into your classes with the intention of learning the material, not learning for the test. If you understand physics and calculus at a fundamental level and can put it into practice, you will do well on the interviews. Go into your summer cruises with the intent of knowing all the pros and cons to make an educated choice."

## **Naval Special Warfare (SEALs)**

MIDN 1/C Matt McGee was one of two midshipmen in this year's lot of to-be graduates designated for the exceedingly selective Special Warfare - Sea, Air, Land (SEAL) community. Navy SEALs perform various missions including unconventional, counter-guerrilla, and clandestine operations. Before reaching the famously grueling 24-week Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) training, midshipmen must first be invited to the intense three-week Navy SEAL Officer Assessment and Selection (SOAS) program. The program itself entails constant evaluation by SEAL officers and chiefs and determines who receives orders to BUD/S. Nationally, only a handful of midshipmen/officer candidates from the United States Naval Academy, Navy ROTC units, and Officer Candidate School are picked to attend. An even smaller group receives orders to BUD/S. MIDN McGee chose this route for a host of reasons: "I want to pursue a purposeful, engaging career, and I think the Naval Special Warfare meets these criteria and more. It is a hard charging community with high standards, and I am excited to surround myself with such high caliber people. I am looking for a brotherhood of like-minded individuals, and I really connected with my classmates pursuing this community." To midshipmen who dream of wearing the trident, MIDN McGee advised, "commit."

# The Culminating Event

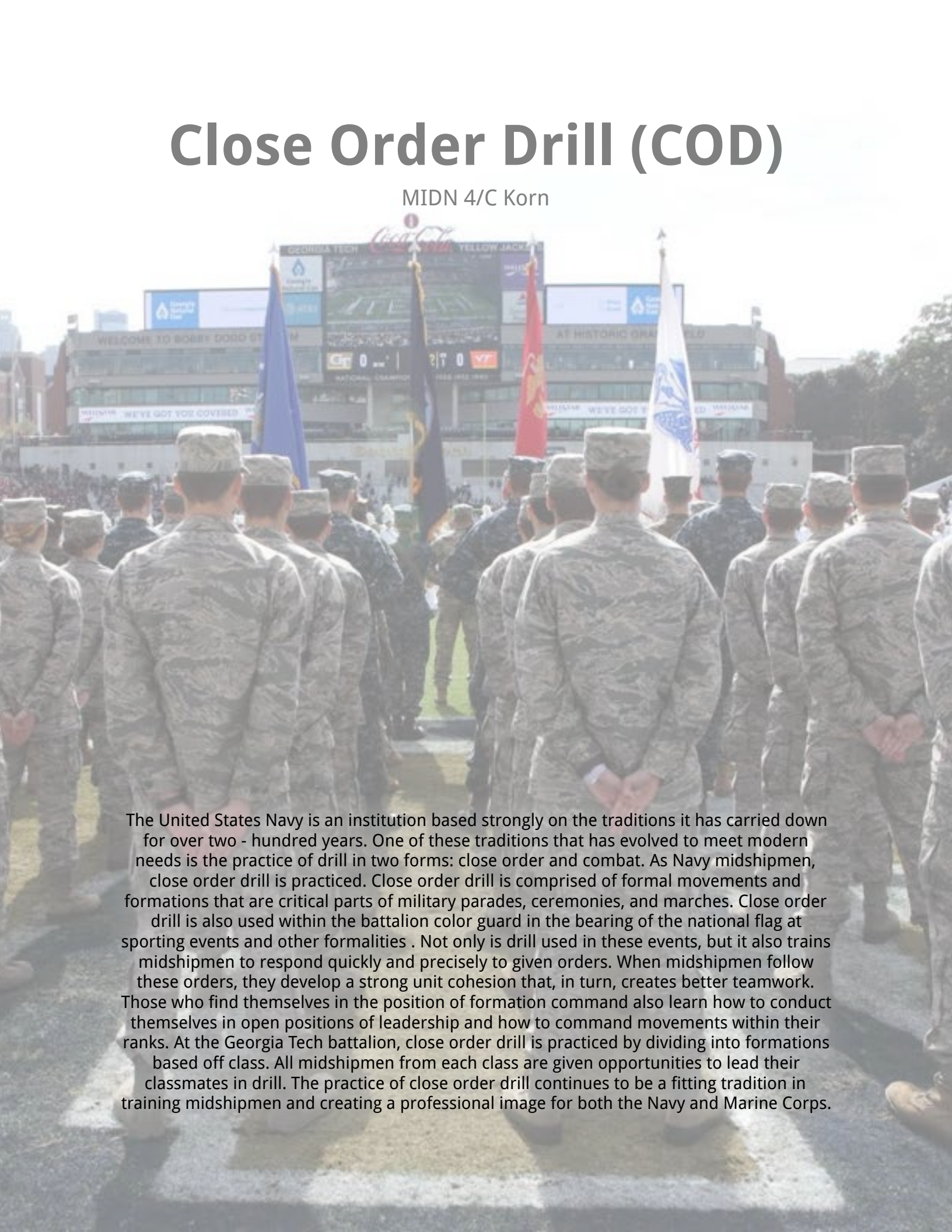
MIDN 1/C Shaw



The Marine Platoon conducted their semi-annual field exercise (FEX) in the beautiful city of Albany, GA. The 3-hour car ride down allows the Marine ops to mentally prepare for what's to come in the next 24 hours. The goal of the FEX is to physically and mentally challenge each MIDN and prepare them for the stress they will receive at Officer Candidate School (OCS). This is a valuable time for the 4/C to learn what is expected of them at OCS. The OCS graduates evaluate the MIDN in billets in order to see how they lead in a chaotic environment. Do they shutdown and let their emotions get the best of them, or do they persevere through the adversity and accept any challenge that comes their way? The first day kicked off with the O-course and E-course. MIDN Park had the fastest O-course time finishing at 1.02 seconds. Bravo Zulu. When nightfall hit, the MIDN completed an excruciating land navigation course. They had to battle through thick brush of the Albany forest in order to reach their objective. With less than 5 hours of sleep, the Marine ops got up and went for a motivating 9-mile hike. They took the scenic route through the flat plains of MCLB Albany. Shortly thereafter, the platoon conducted SULEs (Small Unit Leadership Evaluations). This is an event where select MIDN get to lead a squad size element through a mission. The squad leaders are evaluated on their ability to receive an order, develop a plan, deliver an order, and execute the mission. This is the final event of the FEX because it challenges everyone to maintain a combat mindset despite being tired, hungry, and sore.

# Close Order Drill (COD)

MIDN 4/C Korn

A group of Navy midshipmen in camouflage uniforms are standing in formation on a field. In the background, a large stadium is visible with various advertisements and signs, including "GEORGIA TECH", "Coca-Cola", "YELLOW JACKETS", "WELCOME TO BOBBY DODD STADIUM", and "AT HISTORIC GRAMFIELD". Several flags are flying in the background, including the American flag and a blue flag. The midshipmen are standing in rows, facing away from the camera towards the stadium.

The United States Navy is an institution based strongly on the traditions it has carried down for over two - hundred years. One of these traditions that has evolved to meet modern needs is the practice of drill in two forms: close order and combat. As Navy midshipmen, close order drill is practiced. Close order drill is comprised of formal movements and formations that are critical parts of military parades, ceremonies, and marches. Close order drill is also used within the battalion color guard in the bearing of the national flag at sporting events and other formalities . Not only is drill used in these events, but it also trains midshipmen to respond quickly and precisely to given orders. When midshipmen follow these orders, they develop a strong unit cohesion that, in turn, creates better teamwork. Those who find themselves in the position of formation command also learn how to conduct themselves in open positions of leadership and how to command movements within their ranks. At the Georgia Tech battalion, close order drill is practiced by dividing into formations based off class. All midshipmen from each class are given opportunities to lead their classmates in drill. The practice of close order drill continues to be a fitting tradition in training midshipmen and creating a professional image for both the Navy and Marine Corps.



# SEAL Weekend

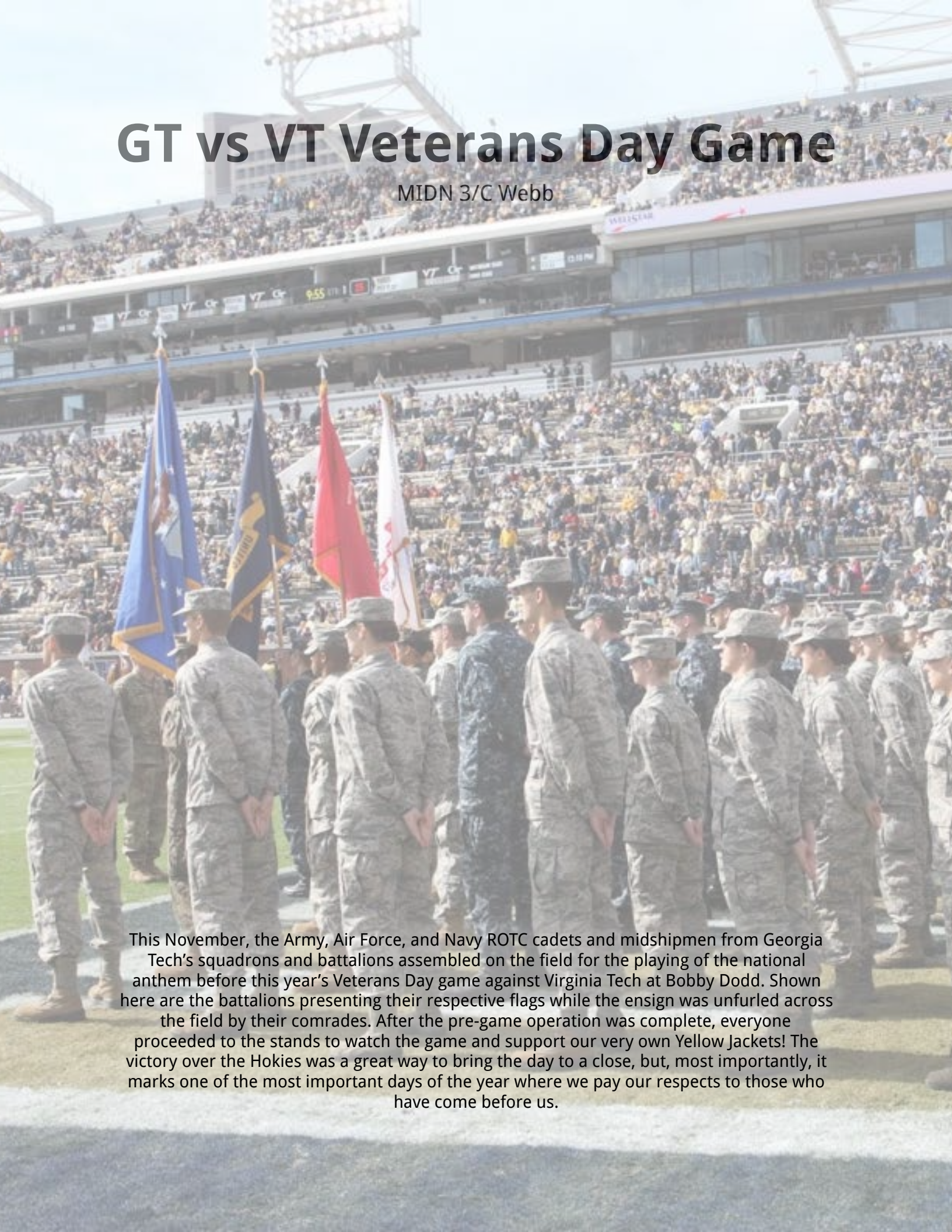
MIDN 3/C Hornung



This semester, the battalion hosted a SEAL Familiarization Weekend for midshipmen aspiring to commission into Naval Special Warfare. Meant to give a glimpse of what SOAS (SEAL Officer Assessment and Selection) would be like, the weekend was packed full of intense workouts, informational sessions, and other physically intense evolutions. While not graded, the weekend provided the many midshipmen who attended an opportunity to push themselves both mentally and physically in an effort to experience and train for what SEAL officers encounter every day.

# GT vs VT Veterans Day Game

MIDN 3/C Webb



This November, the Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC cadets and midshipmen from Georgia Tech's squadrons and battalions assembled on the field for the playing of the national anthem before this year's Veterans Day game against Virginia Tech at Bobby Dodd. Shown here are the battalions presenting their respective flags while the ensign was unfurled across the field by their comrades. After the pre-game operation was complete, everyone proceeded to the stands to watch the game and support our very own Yellow Jackets! The victory over the Hokies was a great way to bring the day to a close, but, most importantly, it marks one of the most important days of the year where we pay our respects to those who have come before us.

# Unit Spotlight: Kevin Driscoll

MIDN 3/C Guild

Tutor hours. You either hate them, or you hate them; however, it's undeniable that they help thanks in large part to the unit tutor, Kevin Driscoll. Driscoll, a 7<sup>th</sup> year Physics PhD student, has been the unit tutor for quite some time, and has helped many a midshipman, be it with integration, MATLAB, or the well-loved WebAssign.

This opportunity to work with students is one of the major factors that initially interested Driscoll in the NROTC tutoring position.

"I think what initially brought me here was the professional development. I'd like to be a faculty member at a university and part of that is teaching," said Driscoll.

However, as with anything, being a proficient teacher takes practice.

"The number one thing that you can do to get better at teaching, just like people in the military do, is train to do it over and over and over again," he explained.

The ability to practice his teaching skills isn't the only thing that brought him here, though.

"While not the highest paying tutor job, it's quite convenient. It's right on campus, and I don't have to find students who need help with a particular subject," Driscoll shared.

While these reasons might be what initially inspired Driscoll to become the unit tutor, many more keep him here.

"Here I have the opportunity to practice explaining things like calculus, or MATLAB, or engineering topics, things that I'd have to explain as a professor, but that aren't explicitly covered in the physics curriculum," he said.

The people he gets to work with also influence how he views his role.

As Driscoll explained, "I'm not sure how to put it, I think in some ways the midshipmen feel a little different than other students."

"It's also a really minor detail, but you keep your rooms neat and clean, and I really like that," he continued.

Outside of his role as the unit tutor, Driscoll is very involved in his research with the Physics department.

"Most of my work is with cold atom physics. Whenever I tell people what I've been up to, I tell them that 2013 and 2014 were really productive, and I've basically been doing nothing since then," Driscoll related.

However, failing and feeling like progress isn't being made is just part of the job.

"When I tell this to someone who is actually doing research, their response is always 'Oh, you're actually doing research then,'" he continued.

As with any true academic, Driscoll likes to set aside time to continue to learn about fields that interest him. He combines his enjoyment of philosophy, which he studied during his undergraduate education at Duke University, with his love of physics by keeping up with studies in the philosophy of science. This is just the tip of the iceberg, however.

"I also pay attention to the cases brought to the Supreme Court. In high school, my senior project was a 'pamphlet' that was 60 pieces of paper about Supreme Court and how their decisions affect society. It wasn't quite long enough for me to feel okay calling it a book," he shared.

Driscoll's unbounded knowledge and love of learning make him a great resource; however, what makes him a great tutor is his ability to relate to students, whether that be through a relevant example that helps to clear something up, or a witty joke.

"One year I want to learn more about NSO, and for the first tutor hours sessions just come in and start yelling. They would all be yelling 'This midshipman doesn't have any physics homework!' It would be great," said Driscoll.

Next time you're at the unit during tutor hours, which are from 1700-1900 on Tuesday's and Thursday's, be sure to pop in the Navigation room to say hello or ask a question. Without a doubt you'll learn something new.

## Change of Command

MIDN 3/C Webb

As each semester of school and ROTC comes to a close and everyone begins busying themselves with study for final exams, the battalion meets one last time to perform what is perhaps our most solemn ceremony, save for commissioning: change of command. In a change of command ceremony, authority is transferred from the outgoing battalion command officer (BNCO) to incoming BNCO. The unit guide, which is symbolic of command of our unit, is delivered to the outgoing BNCO

by the outgoing master chief (CMC). They then pass it to the incoming BNCO who then passes it on to their new CMC to be taken away. This fall, after a long semester of hard work and



improvement in almost every aspect of battalion operation, MIDN 1/C Sasser relinquished command to MIDN 1/C McGee. While bittersweet, it brings the entire fall semester to a close as we ready ourselves for another challenging and productive spring!

## **PRT Studs**

The end of the semester also brings the official Physical Readiness Test (PRT) for everyone in the battalion. Congratulations to MIDN 1/C Guidera, MIDN 1/C McGee, and MIDN 3/C Hornung for getting perfect scores, and a shoutout to MIDN 3/C Hornung for setting the new battalion male sit-up record with 150 sit-ups and to MIDN 4/C Beck for setting the new battalion female running record with a 9:14 1.5 mile run time. Until the spring, Go Navy!

