

NROTC TROJAN BATTALION

# NEWSLETTER



# FEBRUARY 2026

# TROJANS IN SOUTH BEND

## 2026 NOTRE DAME LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

BY MIDN 3/C ROMERO

On 5 February, MIDN 1/C Phoebe Turner and MIDN 3/Cs Romero, Burgos, and Aguirre traveled to South Bend, IN, to attend the University of Notre Dame's 31st Annual Naval Leadership Weekend.

On Thursday evening upon arrival, midshipmen and staff from units across the country met for a brief introduction for the weekend, followed by dinner and liberty.

The conference kicked off with a group photo on Friday morning, followed by the first day of speakers: Col Brietta Larmon, USMC, CAPT Michael Jelinek, USN, and 1st Sgt Randall Parkes, USMC (Ret.). After Friday's speakers, midshipmen split up into different warfare community breakout rooms for an informal Q&A with officers of the respective communities. MIDN Aguirre and Romero attended the aviation breakout, while MIDN Turner and Burgos went to the nuclear power breakout. The evening ended early and was closed out with dinner and liberty.

On Saturday morning, the conference continued, where midshipmen listened to CMC Jonathan Reicks, USN, SgtMaj Ernest R. Twigg, USMC (Ret.), and CAPT Kelly J. Mahaffey, USN. Each of the speakers talked about their backgrounds and experiences both in and out of military service, giving their perspectives on leadership and how it has changed. Ending in the early afternoon, midshipmen were given free time before cocktail hour for the Keynote Dinner and



Trojan Battalion MIDN pose for a picture with USC Alum 1st Sgt Randall Parkes, USMC (Ret.)



A group picture of all conference attendees

Address at the Notre Dame Stadium. Brigadier General Roger R. Machut, USMC (Ret.) gave the final speech before dinner, a wonderful ending to the conference weekend.

The Trojan Battalion thanks Notre Dame for hosting a wonderful weekend of leadership, experience, and knowledge!

# 1/C SPOTLIGHT: MIDN 1/C PHOEBE TURNER

## SERVICE SELECTION: NAVAL REACTORS

MIDN 1/C Phoebe Turner will commission into one of the Navy's most selective communities this Spring: Naval Reactors (NR). Originally hailing from Croton-on-Hudson, New York, MIDN Turner is majoring in Electrical Engineering with a minor in Physics. Drawn initially to military service by a desire to challenge herself and serve something greater, MIDN Turner ultimately chose the Navy because she believed it would push her personal and professional growth the furthest, a decision that has shaped her four years as a member of the Trojan Battalion.

One of her favorite battalion memories was during her sophomore year, when she got to attend the annual Naval Academy Leadership Conference. There, she and fellow midshipmen connected with international delegates from around the world, trading uniform insignia and forming friendships. Experiences like these, she says, highlight what makes NROTC unique: bringing together people from vastly different majors, backgrounds, and perspectives into a single, tightly connected community. That camaraderie and diversity is what she will miss most after commissioning.

MIDN Turner cites her time serving as Academics Officer as her favorite billet, where she enjoyed going above and beyond to mentor younger midshipmen, helping them succeed academically through direct mentorship and implication of tutoring sessions. Her leadership philosophy was heavily influenced by former staff member Lieutenant Commander Jack Tribolet, whose honesty, openness, and belief in midshipmen left a lasting impact. "He made it very clear that he believed in everyone and kind of drew out people's strengths," she reflected, an example she has worked to emulate with underclassmen.

Originally interested in the broader nuclear community, MIDN Turner was ultimately drawn to Naval Reactors by its deeply technical focus and opportunity for engineering oversight. Rather than operating complex systems, she was motivated by the chance to understand the theory and design behind them. The NR interview process was rigorous, but MIDN Turner credits her preparation not to short-term studying alone, but to four years of academic and extracurricular commitment. "Almost every single extracurricular I've done was brought up in my interview and we talked about what I did and how it has benefited me as a student and a possible NR candidate," she explained. "For any job in the military, everything you do in college is preparing you."

She advises midshipmen pursuing competitive communities to work hard at pursuits that genuinely align with your identity. After beginning college envisioning a different career path, MIDN Turner changed majors and rebuilt her academic trajectory through persistence and long-term effort. "Work really, really hard at things that align with who you are as a person and what you want in life," she said. "Things will work out the way that they're meant to."

Among the more surprising facts about her: while she studied abroad in New Zealand, she spent some time living with Buddhist Thai Forest monks, an experience reflecting the curiosity and openness that have defined her leadership style. One of her biggest lessons from NROTC has been the importance of being approachable. Remembering how intimidating upperclassmen could seem as a freshman, she has made deliberate efforts to reach out first and foster connection within the battalion.

Looking ahead, MIDN Turner hopes to become the kind of officer others instinctively turn to when challenges arise. She aims to be someone who is trusted for their competence, judgment, and reliability. Her goal is, "To be the kind of officer where, when something goes wrong, the first thing that someone thinks is, 'We gotta go get Ensign Turner.'" Through academic rigor, mentorship, and quiet dedication to improvement, MIDN Turner leaves the Trojan Battalion prepared to take on responsibility and to represent the unit well in Naval Reactors.



# QUI SCIT VINCIT

## TROJAN BATTALION INTEL OPERATIONS SECTION

The Trojan Battalion began the semester with the all-new Intelligence Operations Section, which has since been recognized as an official part of the unit. MIDN 3/C Alex Baret spearheaded the foundation of this program and now serves as the Trojan Battalion Intelligence Officer.

Intel Ops members are responsible for drafting weekly situation reports (SITREPs), which cover the context, current situation, analysis, and likely future developments of current global events. The SITREPs are sent out to the Battalion each week ahead of Thursday's PROLAB to provide a streamlined and in-depth recap of recent developments.

Members of Intel Ops MIDN 2/C Wyatt Morris and MIDN 4/C Maxine Nocker have been assisting MIDN Baret with the past few weekly current events briefs during PROLAB, providing comprehensive explanations and analyses of current events covered in the

week's SITREP, as well as adversary updates about military technologies and strategies of America's adversaries.

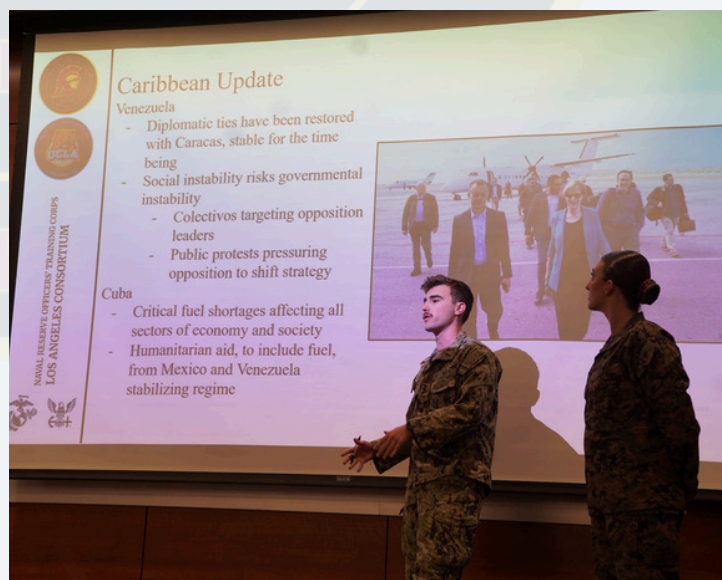
When asked what Intel Ops means to him, MIDN Baret said, "Trojan Intelligence Operations has been established to provide quality information and analysis on geopolitical and military developments in order for Midshipmen to better understand the world that awaits them upon commissioning. I believe that it is currently filling a gap for knowledge and engaging Midshipmen to think critically from the tactical to strategic level. Looking to the future, I hope to expand its staff and capabilities to branch into more diverse topics to include discussion and synthesis that will continue to engage and encourage Midshipmen in preparation for service in the fleet."



See left: The Trojan Battalion Intel Ops' seal, featuring the slogan "Qui Scit Vincit," Latin for "He Who Knows, Wins." This slogan represents the mission of Intel Ops: fostering a culture of intellectual rigor in order to shape informed, and in turn more lethal, warfighters.



MIDN 3/C Baret briefs the Trojan Battalion on the buildup of U.S. naval assets in the Middle East.



MIDN 2/C Morris provides an update on the current situation in the Caribbean in the wake of January's Operation ABSOLUTE RESOLVE.

# JANUARY BATTALION MEMBER OF THE MONTH: MIDN 3/C LOGAN BANKS

January's Battalion Member of the Month is Marine Option Logan Banks. MIDN 3/C Banks hails from Loomis, CA, and is pursuing a degree in Real Estate Development.

MIDN Banks distinguished himself among his peers through exceptional initiative, professionalism, and work ethic. This semester, he has devoted significant time and effort to planning and executing Friday Marine Option PT sessions, consistently exceeding expectations and enhancing the quality of the program by securing unique training resources. Additionally, he led a breakout discussion with thorough preparation and professionalism, demonstrating strong leadership, attention to detail, and a strong commitment to the readiness of the Trojan Battalion Marine platoon.

This marks MIDN 3/C Banks' second time earning Battalion Member of the Month. He previously received this recognition for his outstanding performance during the Fall 2025 FEX, where he earned both the Teufel Hunden Award and the Super Squad Award.

Bravo Zulu, MIDN Banks!



MIDN 3/C Banks

## THIS MONTH IN HISTORY THE BATTLE OF IWO JIMA, 1945

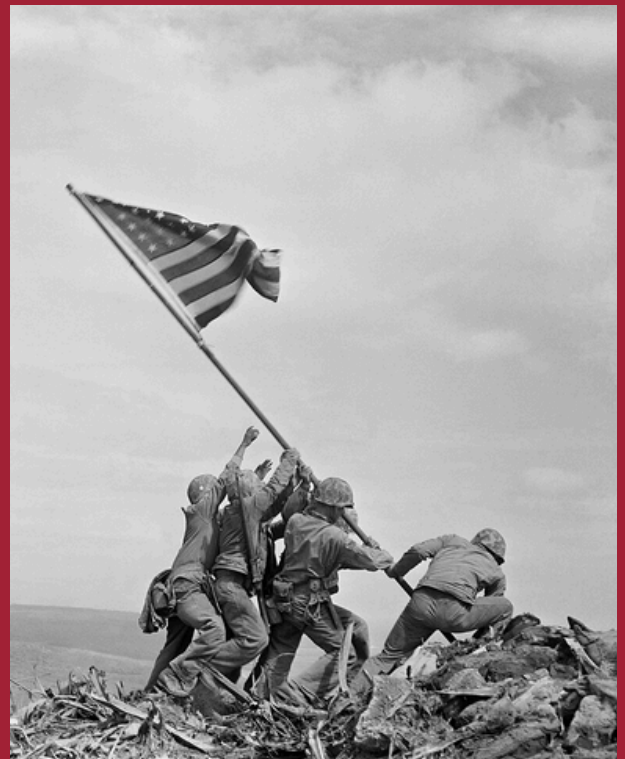
In the Pacific Theater of WWII, three Marine divisions consisting of more than 80,000 men were given the task of taking the Japanese island of Iwo Jima, which was approximately 10 sq. mi. in area and dominated by 556 ft. Mt. Suribachi. Following a naval bombardment recounted by Japanese Lt. Gen. Kuribayashi as "far beyond description," the Marines' assault began on 19 February 1945.

Following five tough days of fighting, the Marines took control of Mt. Suribachi on 23 February, raising an American flag in a stiff wind at the summit. This image was captured, becoming an enduring symbol of American resolve exhibited by Marines past and present.

The battle of Iwo Jima lasted 36 days and ended in American victory, but not without the cost of the lives of 5,931 Marines and 209 Navy corpsmen and surgeons.

Today, we remember and honor the sacrifices and valor of those who fought unwaveringly for the freedom we now enjoy. The legendary image captured during the Battle of Iwo Jima serves as a reminder of the enduring tradition of tenacity and excellence in the U.S. Marine Corps, which should inspire all who serve today to embody the same standards and principles in their own warrior ethos.

Source: <https://www.usmcmuseum.com/battle-of-iwo-jima.html>



The iconic photo of six Marines raising the American flag over the battle-scarred Japanese island of Iwo Jima on 23 February 1945.

# DEFENDING THE TITLE: COLORADO DRILL MEET

The USC Trojan Battalion is gearing up for the upcoming University of Colorado Boulder Drill Meet, with 26 Midshipmen dedicating countless hours throughout the semester to prepare for the competition. Their hard work and commitment have positioned the unit to compete strongly across all events.

This year, the battalion will participate in every category, including Armed Drill, Color Guard, Small Arms, Knowledge, Endurance Race, and Iron 4/C. Each event requires discipline, teamwork, precision, and endurance, skills the midshipmn have refined through consistent training and preparation which will also later translate to the fleet.

Last year, the battalion earned an impressive 1st place finish in Knowledge and secured 2nd place in Armed Drill. Building on that success, the team is aiming to expand its achievements and add more trophies to its display this year.



The Endurance Race team, led by MIDN 3/C Williams, after climbing Webb Tower in preparation for the mountain ruck portion of the race.



The Armed Drill team, led by MIDN 3/C Zendejas, conducts drill practice with rifles.



The Shooting team, led by MIDN 2/C Tran, practices at the Los Angeles Gun Club.

# LOOKING AHEAD... A SNEAK PEEK AT MARCH

Next month, we look forward to sharing about:

- The outcome of the CU Boulder Drill Meet
- Battalion members' volunteer work at JROTC events
- Our new Battalion Active Duty Staff Members
- And much more!



## LET'S STAY CONNECTED

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH TROJAN BATTALION AFFAIRS



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