They walk among us and go unnoticed. Training and bidding their time till the day of reckoning comes. They are your friends, your family, your professors and your classmates. They are those who believe in serving something bigger than themselves, doing what no one else wants to do. They are the men and women of ROTC, future leaders and currently some of the hardest workers on Indiana University’s campus.
Jack Shams is a sophomore Advertising major in the Media school and a Cadet and Team leader in ROTC’s Alpha company. On the surface he seems as though he is any old regular student, but with a closer look at his schedule and you will see differently. Three time a week his day starts at 5 am for physical training along with the whole ROTC battalion. From there he has a whole slate of regular classes in addition to ROTC lab twice a week. Although this week’s lab was a little different.

This week they played paintball, but this not your run of the mill paint ball game, this is training. The United States Armed Forces are no joke so neither is ROTC’s combat training. Each cadet was handed a US Army issued M16 replica paintball gun, an CO2 air canister, paintballs, and a face mask and headed into the woods. Each team leader, like Cadet Shams, lead their troops into the thick- et and they set their positions to prepare for war like condition in ene- my territory.

The mission, to take down a band of enemy soldiers, comprised of higher-ranking ROTC member wearing black instead of army fa- tigues, while following all protocol and suffer- ing a minimal number of casualties. They begin by setting up a perimeter at the edge of the woods, cover all angles of possible attack. Then they go over all of the protocol again to ensure that everyone is in the right places, with their proper squads and knows where to go and when. This is what Jack Shams has to say about the combat training pro- cess: “It is honestly very nerve- rack- ing. Although there is no real danw- wger, one day I could find myself in this position and if I hesitate for a second then, that could be the difference between life and death. I definitely enjoy doing combat exercises but I always keep seriousness of the situation in the back of my mind.”

After a firm perimeter has been set and all instruc- tions were run over one last time, the games begin. Each team files out one by one in the wedge position, as to cover as much ground as possibly while still mini- mizing they effects of a possible enemy attack. They slower scour the woods in search of the enemy. Then with the enemy in sights, a voice is heard from the head of the wedge formation, “Contact” along with a descrip- tion of the number of enemies and from what direction and distance they are attacking. From there is where the action begins, countless shots fired from both sides, voices yelling instructions at each other, and then after a couple minutes... silence. This process repeated itself two other times until all enemy forces were subdued.

After the training exercise was complete, everyone exited the woods and returned to AO Bison, where they have a review of the combat train- ing and talk about what went
well and what did not. After the rundown of the training was complete here is what Assistant Professor of Military Science, Captain Seeley, had to say about his cadets: “Their focus is different from your average college student. Not to discredit anyone else but being a Cadet in college keeps a person busy and well-rounded. Committing themselves to living by a set of values bigger than themselves, they hold the line.” He also stated that his favorite part of the ROTC program is watching students mature into leaders.

After all the cadets were dismissed from lab, Jack Shams and his team, reviewed the how the training went amongst themselves for about a half hour. From there Jack went home put on his civilian clothing and then headed to the library, from the ROTC grind to that of a regular student. Although his actions may go unnoticed today, Jack Shams and all of IU’s ROTC battalion will be praised in due time for their dedication and future service to this great nation.