

The MILLINI



A publication from
THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



Message from the Professor of Military Science

by LTC Randall Smith

Greetings to the friends, families, and Cadets of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion. I stand at the end of my first year as the Professor of Military Science here at UIUC and wonder where the time went. Trying to keep up with, much less lead, these amazing young men and women is a joyous challenge. I could not be more proud of the Cadets and this program. Their growth as individuals and leaders is truly amazing to watch.

The Spring Semester proved more demanding and exciting for the Fighting Illini Cadets. The senior Cadets planned and executed numerous squad and platoon level tactical labs, to include an all-day “Super Lab” held on a Saturday. The Cadets trained in Illinois’ cold winter days and evenings to learn small unit tactical and leadership skills. Our tactical and leadership training culminated with a four day Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. Our Cadets planned a team FTX incorporating almost 50 Cadets from Eastern Illinois University. Watching them “embrace the suck” of training in the cold rain motivated me and assured me the future of our Army is in good hands.



Despite all their academic requirements and demands the Cadre placed on Cadets, they found ways to go above and beyond all expectations. For example, thirteen Cadets spent the majority of their Spring Break travelling to White Sands, New Mexico to complete all 26.2 grueling miles of the 75th Bataan Memorial Death March carrying at least 35lbs of dried food goods in their rucks. Collectively, the team donated over 500 lbs. of food to the local food bank at the finish line. These Cadets then conducted a Staff Ride for the Battle of Hembriillo Basin, applying their tactical and leadership knowledge to this historic conflict between the famed Buffalo Soldiers and Apache Natives. Five other Cadets completed the Norwegian Ruck March held at Purdue University.

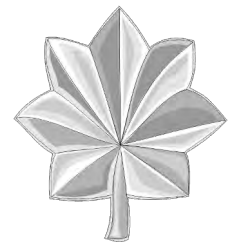
We ended our year with the Tri-Service Honors Day and later that evening the program’s annual Dining Out. This was a great day recognizing Cadets’ achievements and coming together to celebrate their hard work over the past year. I want to thank Colonel (Retired) Deborah Read and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Tina McGuffey for supporting these events and the words of wisdom they provided to our Cadets as extremely successful alum of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion. I would also like to thank the Reads for their efforts initiating the creation of an endowment to support the training our Cadets take on.

I want to congratulate all the Fighting Illini Cadets who earned recognition, honors and special training opportunities this year. Our Cadets earned slots for the Army’s Airborne and Air Assault Schools, Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency Program, and Cadet Troop Leader Training. Cadets also volunteered to attend Basic and Advanced Camps as trainers and serve as “Opposing Forces” or enemy for the tactical portion of Cadet Summer Training. In addition, Cadet Freeze earned selection to UIUC’s Senior 100 Honorary for being among the top 100 of this year’s graduating class across the entire university. Regretfully this summer, the program must farewell CPT Tanner and MAJ Johnson. You both have made lasting impacts on the Cadets, the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion, and the Army. Thank you. You will be greatly missed.

I want to close by congratulating and welcoming the 12 commissioning Fighting Illini Cadets to the Officer Corps as Second Lieutenants this summer, and thanking the Senior Class members for all their hard work this past year. You did an amazing job training our Cadets. Now take that same level of passion and drive in taking care of our country’s Soldiers.



ILLINI!



On the Front Cover: The top photo shows a portion of the battalion after the spring annual field training exercise at Camp Atterbury, IN. The bottom photo includes all the spring semester commissioned lieutenants and the current UIUC cadre outside of Foellinger Auditorium on the main quad, 15 May 2017.

Message from the Senior Military Instructor

by **MSG Bruce Hutcherson**

I would first like to thank all the students of this university who answered the call of this Nation to serve in the greatest fighting force in the world. I am confident with the competent young men and women in this program, the United States Army has an extremely bright future. I would be remiss not to thank the family and friends of these future warriors who support them every step of the way on their journey.

The Spring Semester continued where we left off at the end of the Fall semester. The expectations only increased as we prepared to commission 12 new Lieutenants into the U.S. Army. We also welcomed SFC Leon to the program. He arrived to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) the first week of January, coming from Fort Lewis. Since his arrival, he worked tremendously hard in the supply room to ensure Cadets were equipped properly to train and develop their military skills.

We also welcomed nine new Cadets to the program by having them take part in the Spring version of the Cadet Orientation Program (COP). This program was coordinated and executed by our Senior Cadets who provided mentorship to each new Cadet. The COP was designed to ensure the new members of our team could perform at the same level of those who joined us in the fall semester.

Then the real fun began. February increased the intensity of leadership labs by exposing the new Cadets to squad level tactics, movement techniques, and establishing a Patrol Base. Skills like reconnaissance, how to react to enemy contact, and setting up a squad ambush were honed.

As the Cadets headed towards spring break, many of them took part in our land navigation course in Farmdale, IL. With a return to learning more of the basic Soldier skills at Advanced Camp, the MS-III Cadets received a great practical opportunity to prepare them for this summer's training at Fort Knox, KY. For the Cadets who wanted to test their physical limits, several took part in the Bataan Memorial Death March and others in the Norwegian Road March during March. The Cadets also tried something new this year as 13 Cadets travelled to Georgia to participate in and successfully complete the Tough Mudder Competition.

UIUC Army ROTC completed an impressive training program before April arrived. However, the last month of the semester wasn't lacking in intensity. "Super" lab enabled all the Cadets to basically "show" the level of their basic Soldier skills. This was followed by Honors Day and the annual Dining Out. Both of these events were planned and executed by the Cadets and demonstrated their respect to the past and their "can do" attitude for the many challenges that face them in the future. For the culminating event of the semester, our senior Cadets put an enormous amount of planning and effort into our Spring Field Training Exercise conducted at Camp Atterbuty, Indiana. We conducted this exercise with the Eastern Illinois University Army ROTC Program, and focused on final preparation of our MS-III Cadets for summer training.



In closing, I wanted all our new Second Lieutenants to know how proud I am of each of them. You join a brotherhood which needs your leadership potential. I know it has been a long journey, but this has been an experience I know you'll never forget. Remember, as a leader, you don't always have to tell someone that you're in charge. Lead by example, and they will follow. Keep your powder dry and two scoops of **HOOAH!!!**



ARMY ROTC



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The Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion

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MS-I Class Updates

Farewell and Forever Illini

By Major Aaron Johnson MS-I Instructor

As we near the end of another semester I am deeply saddened my time as an Assistant Professor of Military Science is coming to an end here at the University of Illinois. As some of you know, my dream job in the Army was to be an ROTC Instructor. On 4 November 2014, my dream became a reality when I signed in with Mr. Ostwinkle and joined the Fighting Illini Team. Now, here I am 2 ½ years later and I wonder where the time went. Ok, so I know I spent most of it working on fulfilling superfluous taskings. But in all honesty, I also spent my time at UIUC working with some of the most dedicated Cadre and had the honor of helping train some of the most enthusiastic Cadets in all of Cadet Command. If I'm ever asked if I would have changed my time here at UIUC, my resounding answer would be "not on your life." While it hasn't always been easy or pleasant, I have learned a great deal. As most of you know, I plan on applying to become a Professor of Military Science starting summer 2018. While I know I can't come back to the University of Illinois, I will take the lessons I've learned over the past 2 ½ years, and if given the opportunity, will apply them to the ROTC Program I am assigned to. By the way, LTC Smith, I've already promised my MS-I class if they choose to transfer to my University I will wholeheartedly endorse their decision!



Since I don't have the opportunity to give a "last lecture" or awe inspiring General Patton "kill em' all" speech, I figure I'll take this forum to share some words of wisdom. Yes, MS-Is I can hear you sighing now... but fear not, the following are a few quotes I believe are relevant to any going away speech. If you ever find yourself wondering what you should do with your life remember, "Life is not a problem to be solved, but an adventure to be lived" from John Eldridge – "Wild at Heart." If you are ever scared about where your life may be heading post-graduation/commissioning remember, "Standing at the starting line we are all cowards" from Alberto Salazar – world class long distance runner and winner of the 1982 Boston Marathon. If you ever wonder how to be a Leader, remember, "If your actions inspire other to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a Leader" from John Quincy Adams – sixth President of the United States. When you get tired, and you will, remember, "Let your passion ignite a bonfire, and feed the flames everyday" from Amby Burfoot – winner of the 1968 Boston Marathon. If you ever doubt your purpose in life, remember, "What's the point of being alive if you don't at least do something remarkable?" from John Green – American author. I BELIEVE ALL OF YOU WILL DO SOMETHING REMARKABLE. If you ever find yourself changing the direction of your life remember, "You are never too old to set a new goal or dream a new dream" from C.S. Lewis – American author. So I bid you this, "Go confidently in the direction of your dreams! Live the life you've imagined" from Henry David Thoreau – American author. Finally, whether you find yourself in front of a formation of Soldiers or at the front of a classroom of Cadets, remember, "Let the light inside you shine brighter than the light that shines on you" from Dabo Sweeney – head coach of Clemson University Football Team.

It has been a great honor and privilege to get to know you all. Thank you Cadets for inspiring me to be a better version of myself. If any of you need anything from me I can be reached at (210) 241-0991 or at aaron.j.johnson.mil@mail.mil. Good luck to the future 2nd Lieutenants of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. May God Bless You All and God Bless America.

MS-II Class Updates

The Path We Traveled and the Path Ahead End of the Year Dispatches from the Military Science II Class

By Captain Dave Tanner MS-II Instructor

As I stated in the last issue of the MILLINI, “The MS-II year of Army ROTC often proves a unique transition for Cadets.” Our MS-II class handled this year’s challenges with determination, motivation, and energy. The growth we as Cadre, and I in particular, were privileged to witness is inspiring. As I sometimes tell the Cadets, “Cadre aren’t here to make things easier, we’re here to make you better.” MS-II responsibilities and growth weren’t always easy, but the results show they definitely are better. By getting better, both individually and as a part of the larger team, their tasks, drills, and actions actually become easier for them. They are now in a position to move up to leadership positions of greater responsibility, and I’m confident they are poised to excel in their duties and training as MS III Cadets. As is the case with any of us, they continue to have plenty of opportunity for ongoing growth and development as Cadets and future commissioned officers. LTC Smith’s goals for our program include getting better every day, and I’m confident by their continuing to do just that this class will fortify the strength, quality, and reputation of The Fighting Illini Battalion as we move further into the 21st Century.

Several MS-II Cadets provided me their perspective either looking back on key events or memories from their development this past year as a MS-II Cadet, or looking ahead to what they expect to encounter as a MS-III. Below is a compilation from those perspectives. I hope you enjoy them, and maybe even find yourself thinking “I remember when. . .”



The Path We Traveled: Memories of MS II Year



Cadet Dylan C. Hopp, Cedar Park, TX/Champaign, IL, Major: Journalism. Throughout the 2016-17 Academic Year I had opportunities to develop as a leader and Soldier in Army ROTC. One aspect of this past year that struck out to me - interconnectivity, or building on skills learned in one career path and applying them to others. I have the unique opportunity to incorporate my skills acquired through the National Guard by applying them to ROTC and my academics, and vice versa.

As an ROTC Cadet, I am trained to be a leader. Throughout my MS-II year a lot of training had me involved [simultaneously] as a follower to upperclassmen, and a role model to MS-I Cadets. I believe, this leadership prep will ease the transition to an MS-III leadership role. I held the role of Team Leader and mentored new Cadets to the program on basic warrior tasks, like Physical Readiness Training (PRT) or wear of the uniform, while still learning followership. I also worked extensively with MS-IV leadership as the Assistant

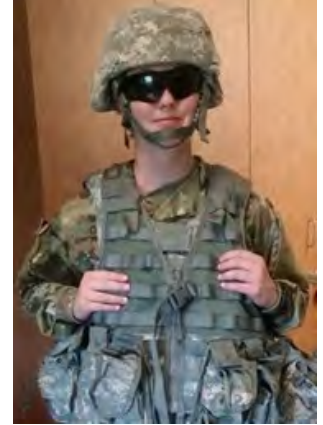
S5, providing Public Affairs expertise and media coverage of battalion events.

With my National Guard career as a military broadcaster and Public Affairs Specialist, the Guard set me up for success in my academic field and in ROTC. The S5 shop often called on me to provide Public Affairs support. Working in a small shop like the S5, I established a battle rhythm in our operations. One memory that sticks out to me is covering parts of the Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Camp Atterbury, IN. In particular, I captured a photo of Cadets executing an obstacle at the Field Leader’s Reaction Course (FLRC) which I am proud to say was picked up by the 3rd ROTC Brigade as their Facebook cover photo. Not only was this an honor, but something I can possibly use to further my academic career. My MS-II year was beneficial because of my involvement in new activities like Team Leader, providing multimedia coverage of battalion activities, commanding Color Guard details, and leading the Push-up Crew.

MS-II Class Updates

The Path We Traveled: Memories of MS-II Year (Continued)

Cadet Jessica Costa, Mechanicsburg, IL, Major: Animal Sciences. My favorite memory as an MS-II is the first record Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) during the spring semester. I completed many APFTs before, but I never achieved the maximum number of pushups. That day, I did. I earned my highest APFT score in my military career on that PT test. This motivated me to try to get an even higher score on my next PT test. This experience taught me how setting goals for yourself can be self-rewarding and encourage you to progress and reach higher standards for yourself. Once you reach those expectations; however, it can be discouraging to regress. This is my favorite memory because it taught me what I am capable of and I learned anything less from that point on would be unacceptable.



Cadet W. Mason Potts, Mansfield, IL, Major: Accounting. In my first semester as an MS-II and my new role in our battalion, I was able to have more leadership opportunities. Within my squad I was a Team Leader, which meant I not only had to be squared away, but also help those in my team to succeed. This position taught me what it means to lead and care for those who look to you. I was able to apply these qualities many times throughout this past semester.

Along with being a Team Leader, I was also fortunate enough to be a Co-Captain for the Ruck Club's Spring Norwegian Ruck March. This is an event consisting of a ruck march with 25 lbs. for 18.6 miles and must be done under 4.5 hours to receive the Norwegian Ruck Badge. I established days and times with the people interested in the event and we were able to train several times prior to the event in late March. That morning we were on the road by 0230 and had a 1.5-hour drive, with step off at 0700. The weather was perfect that day and the five of us were ready for our long ruck to begin. As I was half way through with the ruck, I had to

continue to remind myself what I was doing and to keep the motivation present in my thoughts. The final four blocks to the finish were the hardest as I could see the finish, yet it looked farther than I could bear at that moment, but thanks to the support of the MS-IV with us, I found what I needed to get myself across the line. That day, I was among those to complete the ruck in the time allotted, while the others on our team finished strong not too long after. The experience from our first practice to completion of Norwegian is something I will always look back upon and think of those days when we pushed ourselves further than ever before.

Cadet Iraklis Analitis, Plainfield, Illinois, Major: Computer Engineering. I entered this program my Sophomore year, which is nontraditional; however, I felt welcomed since the first day I came to physical training. I was never exposed to the basic Soldier tasks or any kind of drill and ceremony, but everyone was patient and supportive. I was able to learn interesting things this entire year, different from my normal curriculum, and I enjoyed the experience the entire way.

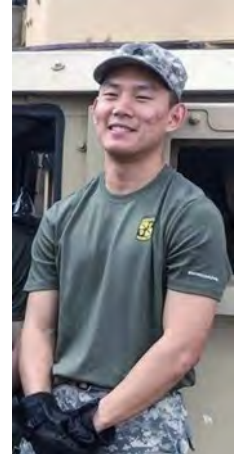
My favorite memory of my MS-II year in ROTC was my participation in our Field Training Exercise (FTX) in Camp Atterbury, Indiana. That weekend was a lot of firsts for me and it was some of the most fun I have been able to experience in college so far. It was certainly a difficult weekend, but it was very rewarding. During the FTX, I was instructed on the proper way to handle, operate, and maintain a real rifle. Safety was of the utmost importance throughout the entire trip, but we were able to have some fun on the range for both practice and a qualification run. The trip was no doubt hot, humid and sweaty, but it was worth it because the entire time I was given the ability to do what Soldiers do and able to learn so many new things. After the FTX was finished, I even received an award for my motivation and have kept it since. The things I learned at the FTX helped me develop my own competencies as a Soldier so I will be able to better lead next year as an MS-III. If I did not have this initial exposure, I would have no path to develop these skills. The FTX was the first step in my personal development to lead others. As a future MS-III, I feel prepared to help the new cadets in the same ways the current MS-III Cadets assisted me this past year.



MS-II Class Updates

The Path Ahead: Expectations for Junior Year

Cadet Andrew Lee, Arlington Heights, IL, Major: Finance. For incoming MS-III enrolling in the program next year (2017-18), I think we can all expect more responsibility. Some may have bigger roles than others, but I do not think having the biggest role is the most important. What is more important is how seriously the MS-III's take the role they are assigned and how well they execute it. Because if we cannot excel with the subordinates under us, the entire battalion will be affected. My expectation for myself during the upcoming MS-III year is to be able to develop my subordinates' Esprit de corps: "a feeling of pride, fellowship, and common loyalty shared by the members of a particular group." I want every Cadet to be proud of who they are and remember why they initially joined this program. I want every Cadet to form lifelong bonds and continue to encourage, and teach each other. I know all these expectations do not happen just because I explicitly state I want it. Action must follow. I will continue to develop myself throughout the spring semester and upcoming summer, so I am ready for my MS-III year. There are many people I need to reach out to in order to gain valuable advice, but with desire and motivation to succeed, I know I can be a great MS-III Cadet. I am excited for the upcoming year.



Cadet Jordan Holm, Plainfield, IL, Major: Molecular & Cellular Biology. Leadership is an extremely difficult and complex task in any environment. Not only does a leader need to know how to accomplish a goal, they also need to correctly command a diverse team. The pressures of this job are only increased when it comes to combat operations. Ambushes, raids, reacting to fire, establishing patrol bases, and many more tasks must be lead by an experienced officer in the Army. Amazingly, these tasks are accomplished in a seemingly easy way by the UIUC Army ROTC MS-III class.



In my first semester with the program, I participated in labs involving all of the aforementioned tasks by following the leadership of the MS-III class. The missions were completed with decisive action, strong communication, and confidence by those appointed above me. At times I felt lost, with little idea of what exactly should be going on at a given moment. However, I was reassured by my superiors that during their time in my position they felt the same. This reassurance left me with hope that a year from now I would be as well versed in military operations as the MS-III class, conducting missions in a way that displays the

Army leadership attributes and competencies. Leadership qualities I value include: character, presence, intellect, the ability to lead, develop others, and achieving the mission assigned. I specifically intend to use what I learn in the MS-III courses to develop myself into a well rounded leader. I plan to learn how to communicate to my team in a way which is easily understood and leads to action. Communication is invaluable in ensuring every member of a team can be utilized in order to accomplish the mission. Additionally, communication can be used to build trust up within a team. During every lab, my squad leader provided a good understanding of the mission and what was expected of me. I learned to trust my squad leader, and those around me, in order to get through each mission. I would like to incorporate this into my own leadership strategy and hope to gain the knowledge necessary during my junior year with ROTC.

Lastly, I intend to inspire others with my use of the skills taught to me in the MS-III course. There are many role models within the Fighting Illini Battalion who provide constant reminders of how I should carry myself. The MS-III Cadets serve as my reminder to give my very best in every action I carry out. In my opinion, this is the most important quality of a leader. I am hopeful I am able to emulate these Cadets when given a leadership role next fall and will surely keep them in my mind when I am considering how to lead my team. In conclusion, the MS III class taught me a tremendous amount and I am hopeful to become an equivalent leader in the future.

MS-II Class Updates

The Path Ahead: Expectations for Junior Year (Continued)

Cadet Michael H. Alexander, Chicago, IL, Major: Agricultural and Consumer Economics. When I become an MS-III, I expect to have a leadership position which extends far beyond just rank and title; I expect to serve as an example for others to follow and give those who need help all I can. I expect to lead the way. I expect to share my knowledge with others so their path and future become clearer. The highest and most important expectation is the one I hold for myself and will continue throughout my entire life: to be better tomorrow than I was yesterday. This is the foundation of what is expected from an MS-III Cadet. I don't want to let my fellow Cadets down.



Cadet Jarrett A. Kapusta, Westmont, IL, Major: Economics/Political Science. As a soon to be graduate student and future MS-III, I expect nothing less than a challenging introduction to my role in Cadet leadership. I fully expect to struggle through my first few weeks as I learn all I can about the battalion and my role in it. From rules and regulations, to the vast array of expertise required to lead, I have quite a bit to catch up on. I do, however, have the utmost faith in the battalion and my fellow Cadets to assist me in my transition. I will learn quickly, and hopefully be a competent member of my team. I am confident in my abilities as a student, and through the program I will learn the fundamentals of Army life and leadership. I will learn to lead, and I will learn to become the quality Cadet I know I can be.



Fighting Illini Army ROTC Cadets from the MS-II class at the 2017 Dining-Out. Pictured from left to right in the front row: Cadets Binh Phung, Madison Jolley, Michael Hill, Robert Ware, Michael Alexander, Jessica Costa, Andrew Lee, and Jonathan Becker. In the second row: Cadets Joseph Gancarski, Benjamin Guo, Jarrett Kapusta, Patrick Reynolds, Pasha Orloff, Jordan Holm, Barsbold Darmabal, Alex Rachesky, and Taylor Edwards. Not pictured: Cadets Dylan Hopp, Tyler Igunbor, Thomas Jackson, Larry Jones, Jaime Ortiz, and Reid Shoemaker.

MS-III Class Updates

Advanced Camp and the Summer Ahead An Overview of Current Military Science III Students *by Captain Nathan Elkins MS-III Instructor*

This semester the MS-IIIs have been worked very hard in order to prepare for Advanced Camp. There are a lot of changes taking place this summer for our senior Cadets. For starters, Cadet Command is bringing back the RECONDO Badge, for which our Cadets will need to meet some very high standards to receive it. There are also several go/no-go events Cadets must complete and/or meet the standard in order to pass Camp. This summer they will have to; find four of six points on a night to day transition Land Navigation (Land Nav) course, pass with at least 80% on a written Land Nav test, qualify with a M4 rifle, complete all obstacles on the obstacle course, pass the Army Physical Fitness Test, and complete a 12-mile ruck march.



In order to meet these changes we put greater emphasis on specific training in order to ensure our Cadets are confident in their abilities. The MS-IIIs have been getting weekly written Land Nav tests using both the Tenino and Fort Knox maps along with going to the Land Nav course at Camp Atterbury and Farmdale Reservoir. During the Spring FTX, all MS-IIIs had the opportunity to group, zero, and qualify with the M16A2 rifle and MSG Hutcherson conducted an additional class on marksmanship in order to build our Cadet's confidence in their abilities. During class we also spent a considerable amount of time going over Troop Leading Procedures, Squad and Platoon tactics, Battle Drills, preparing 5-paragraph operation orders and creating terrain models using the Cadet's terrain model kits. Cadet Isaac Choi had this to say about this semester, "I've gotten the chance to learn, rehearse, and practice the tactics being evaluated at camp. Coming into my junior year, I had a general understanding of tactics, but was not confident. We had the opportunity to dedicate an entire week to learning, teaching, and practicing tactical scenarios numerous times. More often than not, something always went awry from the original plan and it gave me the chance to work on my critical thinking by thinking on the spot. Rather than coming up with a plan that is perfect, I learned that it's more about making a decision and executing it right away. It was a struggle during certain labs, however, it was good practice for advanced camp. No amount of knowledge on tactics could ever be more valuable than the actual practice of leading when something does not go according to plan."



MS-III Cadets on an early morning ruck march through the heart of campus.

MS-III Class Updates

Advanced Camp and the Summer Ahead (Continued)

Some of our Cadets did some amazing things this semester in order to prepare themselves as future officers. Cadet Ben Kusinski said this about his preparation, “I decided to challenge myself to train and complete the Bataan Memorial Death March, a 26.2 mile ruck march in memory of the American and Filipino soldiers who were forced to march 70 miles by the Japanese during World War II. Every week leading up to the event I would march between 8 and 14 miles with a ruck that weighed between 35 and 65 pounds. On the day of the actual event, I completed the full march with a ruck that weighed 55 pounds. After completing this, I gained a plethora of confidence in my ability to complete the 12-mile ruck at Advanced Camp”. During Super Lab, all of the MS-IIIs completed an eight-mile ruck march in under two hours, which is above the standard they will be required to meet at Advanced Camp.



Cadet Ben Kusinski during Bataan.

This semester the MS-III Cadets have also been learning and working on understanding and improving their leadership attributes and competencies, which is how they are evaluated at summer camp. These include; character, presence, intellect, leads, develops, and achieves. Cadets worked on their own Cadet Officer Evaluation Report Support Forms using the attributes and competencies to set and achieve goals. They were also evaluated and counseled all semester using these attributes and competencies in order to prepare them for the same evaluations at Advance Camp. Cadet Angie Park had this to say about her FTX experience, “Those different leadership roles at Spring FTX, not only did it develop my mental agility and better sound judgment, but also gave me an opportunity to learn from others. The great peers I had around me were a great resource to learn from, while also giving me an opportunity to acquire new skills I can use in my life.”



Fighting Illini Army ROTC Cadets from the MS-III class at the 2017 Dining-Out. Picture from left to right in the front row: Cadets Craig Muncaster, Susruth Pattekar (kneeling), Fidel Toto, Megan Zurliene, Angeline Park, Isaac Choi, Hannah Wright, and Dylan Shearer. In the second row: CPT Nathan Elkins, Cadets Alex Kim, Lanise Branch, Kurt Kuzur, Andrew Jacobs, Ben Kusinski, Zigmaz Zamora, Alex Nava, Katherine Kezon, and Samuel Chung.

MS-IV Class Updates

Forging the Future Lessons Learned by the MS IV Class *by Cadet Anthony Earll*

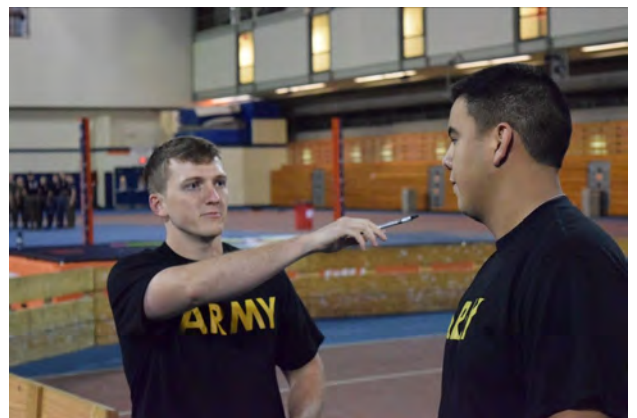
Senior year brought with it many challenges and exciting opportunities. From planning morning physical training sessions to devising new and creative ways to teach underclassmen Army tactics and doctrine, the MS-IV class constantly worked toward improving the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion. Although arduous, these challenges provided crucial lessons for the senior class to learn from and transfer to their units as second lieutenants. I decided to ask my classmates “How have the challenges of running the Fighting Illini Battalion prepared you to take on the responsibility of one day becoming a Second Lieutenant?” These are some of their responses:

Cadet Paul Genchanok, Branch: Cyber- This past semester as Operations Officer I learned what’s necessary to lead through subordinates. Operations are busy with weekly labs and multiple events being planned at the same time. My vision walking in was to set the organization up for success as much as possible, but if it was heading towards failure to use it as a learning experience. However, the temptation to take control and prevent failure was often too strong. Over time I learned to step back, accept failure, and hold others accountable for their actions. I saw this work better than trying doing everything myself. Being comfortable with uncertainty and using failure as a developmental tool is a skill which will help me build a team out of those I lead instead of seeking to do everything.



Cadets Paul Genchanok and Corey Maisch during the MS IV Staff Ride.

Cadet Clay Huston, Branch: Aviation- As the Battalion Command Sergeant Major I was responsible for the health and welfare of the BN. This included ensuring cadets received training that would enable them to pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), complete a 12-mile ruck, as well as ensuring all cadets were fully enabled to complete the tasks passed down to them by their MS-IV leadership. By stepping into this position I was given the opportunity to see how my leadership style affects those around me. By standing in front of cadets everyday I was able to develop my command presence and form the impression I want my soldiers to have of me. I plan on taking all lessons learned and implementing them to the fullest in my first position as a 2nd Lieutenant.



Cadet Clay Huston discusses the PT Plan with MS II Jamie Ortiz.

Cadet Samuel Eickstedt, Branch: Military Intelligence- As the Battalion logistics officer, I learned a whole lot about property and the necessity of accountability in accomplishing the mission. Conducting a battalion wide inventory check was an arduous but ultimately necessary process that will set up both current and future cadets for success. Although my section was small, I learned a lot about putting people in positions where they could succeed and playing off of each other’s strengths. Giving the members of my section tasks in their area of expertise and also some autonomy allowed them to flourish and I am very proud of all we have accomplished this semester. I plan on bringing these lessons with me to my first unit while also keeping an open mind so as to be able to tackle the unique challenges each mission, and soldier, presents.

MS-IV Class Updates

Forging the Future (Continued)

Cadet Brandon Ortiz, Branch: Quartermaster- As the Battalion S2 Intelligence Officer, I've learned not only about the planning and preparation that goes into making training a reality, but also as a senior and battalion level officer, I've been in the prime position to plan and manage multiple events as well as mentor the Cadets involved. From Cadre I've learned much



Cadet Brandon Ortiz oversees his section during the squad attack lab.

about the important principles to keep in mind to be best prepared as a 2nd Lieutenant (2LT). The first principle is the importance of preparation. As a 2LT, the best thing that we can bring to the table while we are gaining experience is as much preparation as possible in our events, training, and leadership. The second important principle I've learned is the importance of continued self-development. Pushing our limits across the board in our physical capabilities as well as our professional development is not only an ongoing process but also our own responsibility. Our own improvement and self-development is never 'finished' but always has a next goal, a next milestone for achievement, a next achievement waiting for us.

learned many tough lessons, but the one that sticks out to me the most is that I will always have to be developing myself for the rest of my career no matter how proficient I think I am. Every week was a new training challenge with a different lab and new days of physical training, and something always changed. We never perfected our plans or were 100% efficient. The opportunity to develop ourselves and others never ceased no matter how close I thought I was to getting something just right. There is always room for improvement despite the devil on your shoulder telling you to settle. Being an MS-IV this year in charge of so much and responsible for so many showed me that the only way is up. As a 2nd Lieutenant, you owe it to those you lead and serve.

Cadet Tyler Cordry, Branch: Infantry- Over the course of my two semesters being apart of the team running the battalion, I've

Cadet Luis Pantoja, Branch: Aviation- As a member of the battalion staff I learned many things but one that has had the greatest impact on my leadership capabilities is learning about the considerations that go into the planning process. As a battalion staff member I was tasked with planning multiple training events throughout the year. This experience allowed me to not only recognize the important factors that go into the planning process, but it also allowed me to recognize potential problems within the planning process. This would not turn out to be an overnight learning experience but an experience that was eventually learned through trial and error. I believe this is an important responsibility because a 2LT must be able to successfully plan unit training. A 2LT must be able to provide quality work in order for their platoon to have quality training.



Cadet Luis Pantoja outlines his expectations for the new semester during Town Hall.

MS-IV Class Updates

Forging the Future (Continued)

Cadet Cole Murray, Branch: Engineer- Running a Cadet Battalion is an excellent training regiment for becoming a Second Lieutenant (2LT). It supplies the experience of leadership on a level that other methods of training cannot supply. Transitioning from overseeing almost one-hundred Cadets to being in charge of a few dozen soldiers actually lightens the load in many aspects. Obviously, your soldiers will have greater needs and issues, but one is less likely to be overloaded when there are fewer subordinates to aid and when one's entire job revolves around caring for and preparing your soldiers. Being a Senior Cadet teaches you that time management is critical to being a good leader and it is required to graduate, therefore preparing better leaders and aiding those about to become Second Lieutenants.

Cadet Jonathan Rodriguez, Branch: Engineer- During my time on staff in the Fighting Illini Battalion, I've learned about the importance of preparation. There will be many times throughout my time as a 2LT where the plan I develop doesn't exactly go as expected. But through careful preparation, a good leader would be able to adapt to any situation to help accomplish any task at hand. As a 2LT, soldiers are going to expect you to lead them during tough situations, mentally and physically. A 2LT isn't expected to know all the technicalities that are required to accomplish specific missions. They are expected to prepare themselves and their soldiers to have the capabilities necessary to overcome any obstacle that should come their way. I plan on using the knowledge I learned in order to help develop my own soldiers and become an effective leader in the Army.



Fighting Illini Army ROTC Cadets from the MS IV class at the 2017 Dining-Out. Picture from left to right in the front row: Cadets Cole Murray, Brandon Ortiz, Chris Kerasotas, Morgan Cross, Clay Huston, Paul Genchanok, and Samuel Eickstedt. In the second row: LTC Randall Smith, Cadets Courtney Thompson, Phil Lee, Anthony Earll, Jonathan Rodriguez, Nick Freeze, Corey Maisch, Tyler Cordry, and Jason Marshall.

THE STORE

We received several requests from our alumni about making clothing and similar items available for purchase. As requested, here is the *Fighting Illini Army ROTC Store*.

“The Store” provides an opportunity to fulfill the requests of alumni, assist in marketing our program through our supporters, while giving the Cadets a fundraising resource.

A portion of the price (\$3-5) of each item will be allocated to supporting Cadet training, development, and related activities. All funding will be used for cadet activities.

S/S t \$ 12.00



L/S t \$ 15.00



Crew \$ 20.00



Hood \$ 25.00



5015 polo \$ 35.00



5091 polo \$ 35.00



If interested in purchasing any of these items, fill out an order form by going to the following website: teshurt.com/uiucrotc You will pay and receive your order straight from the vendor. If you have questions, please contact Eric Ashworth at eashwort@illinois.edu.

Thank you for your support, and we welcome suggestions for future products. We will continue to refine this effort as we receive orders. Watch for updates in future Millini editions.

Cadet Spotlight: Molly Hein

An Interview Piece by Cadet Anthony Earll

Cadet Hein's college experience is drastically different from the average student. Morning and afternoon, six days a week, Hein can be found at the Athletics and Recreation Center swimming laps and practicing her stroke for the University of Illinois Swim and Dive Team. Unlike other athletes at U of I, Hein is also a member of the prestigious Fighting Illini Army ROTC program. The same drive that Hein has to excel as a collegiate swimmer is also applied to being an exceptional cadet for the battalion. I wanted to interview her to see just what really makes her so dedicated to the program and the Army way of life.

Q: Tell me about yourself. Who is Molly Hein? What made you get into swimming?

A: I got into competitive swimming when I was 4 years old and have been doing it ever since. My parents met on their college swim team (St. Cloud State University) and my sister also swam for the Illini; she graduated last spring. Although swimming is a major part of my life, it is not who I am. I have a big passion for skiing, and I actually learned how to ski before I learned how to swim. My favorite thing to do is to go outside, forget about all of my problems, and spend time enjoying our earth. I am one of those people with a hammock on the quad.

Q: What made you want to do ROTC?

A: I have always felt a calling for the military and actually vividly remember the moment when I started feeling that calling. I was pretty young. I was watching TV and saw a commercial for the Army. The commercial was about telling your parents you had decided to join the Army and how hard it can be. From that moment on, I always had a little nag in the back of my mind to seek out a military career. I considered applying to West Point for a while, but decided that kind of lifestyle wasn't for me. I initially ruled out ROTC because I didn't think it would be possible to swim D1 and be in ROTC at the same time. Choosing not to go to West Point and thinking I wouldn't be able to do ROTC made me disappointed and I didn't really know why. Eventually I realized this was because being in the Army is what I was meant to do. My sister was actually the one who told me about the opportunities for athletes to be able to do ROTC here at UIUC because LTC Leung had gone in and spoken to the team about it. It was as if the stars had aligned because suddenly everything I had wanted to do in college fell into place and worked out.

Q: How do you balance the demanding life of being a D1 Athlete with ROTC and school work?

A: Balancing swimming, school, and ROTC is definitely a challenge. I have to sacrifice a lot to keep myself sane and do well in school, and that sacrifice typically is seen in my social life. I'm still able to have a social life, don't worry, but when it comes time to it and I really need to get things done, hanging out with my friends is the first thing to go. I have been balancing school and swimming my whole life and am used to working hard to do well, so that aspect isn't new to me. To brag just a little bit, I am really good at time management, which baffles people sometimes, but I just hate waiting until the last minute to do things. Having that skill is really helpful when I have a lot on my plate. Throwing ROTC in the mix is the new part for me, and it is where I think I have the most room for improvement. I come from no military background so I was a little shell-shocked trying to learn everything all at once on my first day, but as I got into the groove things started to get earlier. ROTC and being an athlete may seem like a lot, but you have a lot more time in your day than you think if you can work efficiently and be motivated.

Q: Have the leadership skills learned from ROTC translated into your performance as a student-athlete?

A: The leadership skills I've learned from ROTC so far have allowed me to just be a better teammate. You need motivation with any sort of group who is trying to accomplish something, so it works the same way for a team. Being able to pull from my ROTC skills to help motivate my team just seems like second nature now.



CDT Hein pulls security for her platoon.



CDT Hein takes a leap into the water to begin her race.

Cadet Spotlight: Barsbold Darmabal

My Favorite MS-II Memory: Forged in the Crucible of Ranger Challenge

With the MS-II year complete, it surprises me how much I have developed in the past two years as an undergraduate student. I have met an incredibly good group of friends that are as driven as I am with a sense of pride in what they do. ROTC has been a vital part of that development because of the challenges it has presented. Never in any other classes have I felt uncomfortable, felt driven, and been proud of the significant results.

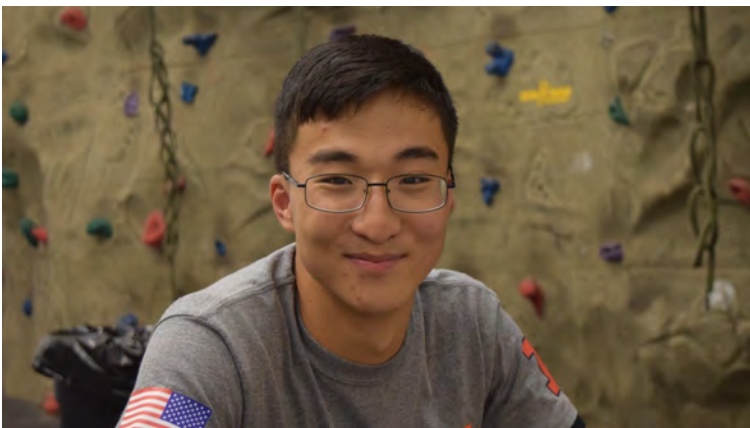
A memory I take with me is first semester sophomore year with Ranger Challenge. This event has been one of those things I am incredibly proudful to have done and one of the best opportunities to grow. During the competition, it was getting extremely late, and with the stations remaining we were behind. Our bravo team was feeling reluctant to continue after spending the entire day rucking around an estimated 20-plus miles. We were sweating, our knees hurt and mental exhaustion was setting in. As all of us slowly rucked up a steep hill, Ben Guo got the hint of the low comradery and started to yell in cadence. We were taken back at this, as we didn't expect it from Guo. One by one people started to follow suit and eventually everyone started yelling at the top of their lungs. Energy started to pick up in each of us and we started to step a little farther with more meaning. Before we knew it, we were at the top of the steep hill and we were still singing in cadence. It was an amazing feeling being able to keep our group upbeat despite the challenges and circumstances. It was at this point you realize that we were all in it together and that we were going to get through it. We all sacrificed our weekends to do this and we had a sense of mutual respect and cohesion.

I cannot say that I can match what I felt at that specific place at that specific time anywhere else. That's why it is unique and it does have a special place when I think about this year. It helps me to understand that as a future leader it's vital to have that sense of comradery in my unit. It makes a huge difference to have that feeling and it generates passion and a clear picture of why you are doing what you are doing despite how much it might suck.

As a leader, you must realize the power comradery has in being able to transform your subordinates to participate, to accomplish, and to seek a greater vision in life. It is very influential in a person's growth to see that vision. Another thing I learned is that comradery is not something that appears automatically and that it needs that leadership, informal or formal, to give it direction and ensure people taking their positions as needed. Guo in this case capitalized on the situation and reminded of us of our (shared) purpose.



Cadet Darmabal scaling a rope during the annual semester Ranger Challenge competition.



Left: CDT Darmabal enjoying a break from his busy schedule during the Cadet Orientation Program.



Right: CDT Darmabal with CDT Becker all smiles after completion of their Fall 2016 Ranger Challenge events.

Sand and Sacrifice

A Story of Ruck Club's Journey to the Bataan Memorial Death March

By Cadet Katherine Kezon

Over Spring Break, 13 members of the Fighting Illini Battalion's Ruck Club traveled to White Sands New Mexico to represent the University of Illinois at the Bataan Memorial Death March. For those who don't know, the Bataan Memorial Death March is a grueling 26.2 mile, 35-pound ruck march through sandy dunes to commemorate the sacrifices of the American and Phillipino service members held prisoner and forced to march 70 miles through the desert in 1942. This year was the 75th anniversary of the event and attracted over 7,200 participants and 2,000 volunteers from every walk of life imaginable.

As the co-captain of the Ruck Club, along with Cadet Fidel Toto, I was responsible for the planning, resourcing, and executing of our trip to White Sands. Cadet Toto and I had completed Norwegian Foot March together at Purdue University last April. For the two of us, Bataan was something to aspire to. We knew our Battalion had not participated in the event during our generation of ROTC, but we were determined to change that. Fortunately, so was our Professor of Military Science, Lieutenant Colonel Smith, who was our biggest proponent in making our dream a reality. Now, our Battalion has a solid plan to keep this tradition alive once again long after we graduate and commission next May. In fact, you would not believe the interest for next year's event. All 13 Cadets, even the lone MS-IV who is soon to commission, plan to participate next year and continue to represent our program with respect, grit, and motivation, just as we did this year.

It all started with try outs on a snowy December night. Our professor Captain Tanner drove past to see the herd of us rucking around Huff Field and called out the window of his car: "Are you all crazy?" I replied "Yes, sir." Crazy enough to dedicate hours every Friday and Saturday to 12+ mile long rucks through Champaign and the surrounding areas. Even crazier to smile through all the training and consider it the highlight of the semester. Freezing and exhausted, we'd return to the Armory each week to drop off our rucks and feast as a team. This became our battle rhythm and what created such a strong team and family—a group I am truly blessed to have shared this experience with.

Our trip to Bataan would not have been possible without the efforts of every individual member. In total, the 13 of us spent approximately 250 hours working concession stands at the Illini football and basketball games to fundraise for this event. We were able to raise an additional \$2,500 through our independent efforts to mitigate the cost of such an endeavor. Very importantly, this would not have been possible without the amazing and generous financial contributions from several of our alumni who specifically donated to Ruck Club's efforts. As a team, we also collected almost 500 pounds worth of non-perishable foods to fill our ruck sacks with, which gave the march a whole new meaning.



Ruck Club collects food for the Road Runner Food Pantry.



Ruck Club at the White Sands Missile Range.

Sand and Sacrifice



Cadet Katherine Kezon

After all this preparation, training, planning, and fundraising, Spring Break arrived and we loaded our vans for the 20-hour drive to New Mexico where poor LTC Smith and CPT Elkins learned much more about their Cadets than they probably would have hoped. While the trip accounted for very little free time, we still managed to conduct a staff ride on the Battle of Hembrillo Basin where each Cadet was assigned a topic to educate the group on.

The morning of the event, we loaded the vans at around 0330 to head to White Sands Missile Range, which was electric with excitement and nerves for what everyone was about to endure. Before we could SP, something very important needed to happen: we needed a reminder of why we were about to embark on this ruck. Throughout the opening ceremony of the Bataan Memorial Death March, you could have heard a pin drop. Everyone's full attention was to the re-telling of the story of the horrors of Bataan. There was a chilling silence as the final survivors of the Bataan Death March were driven past and onto the stage. I caught a bad case of Goosebumps as the speaker announced to the crowd the names of the survivors who had past since last year's event and shared with us the poem these service members had written about themselves during their time as prisoners:

"We're the battling bastards of Bataan. No mama, no papa, no Uncle Sam. No aunts, no uncles, no cousins, no nieces. No pills, no planes, no artillery pieces. And nobody gives a damn. Nobody gives a damn."

The event was full of empowering highs and challenging lows for each of us. At Mile 3 we ran into a group from a Ranger Battalion who had cadences blaring from their portable speaker. We sounded off along with the crowd before they took off in a sprint ahead of us. The Fighting Illini brought the motivation to Mile 10 when we turned on our speaker and blasted our own music. I will forever hold the memory of our Cadets and the crowd around us (to including Warrant Officers and Senior NCOS) singing along in full force to "Escape (The Pina Colada Song)" as my favorite moment of the trip. On Mile 14 several were forced to stop and tend to blisters. Mile 22 consisted of what was called the sand pit, a treacherous uphill of thin sand. Hearing the song "Move Along" during Mile 23 was the push some of us needed to finish strong. Finally, crossing the finish line with two of my close friends Cadet Sushruth Pattaker and Cadet Sam Chung was an overwhelming feeling of accomplishment, strength, and humility that I will carry into the physical and mental challenges I face throughout my military career. I am so proud to be a part of this team who came together as a family for a greater cause, who chose to lean in and embrace the suck, and who made the trip to White Sands, New Mexico my most cherished memory of ROTC and college. I don't care what anyone says, there would have been no better way to spend Spring Break.

The seventy-five thousand odd service members and their sacrifices and struggles must never be forgotten. Their story must not go untold. Held prisoner and forced to march seventy miles without food, water, or medical care, these men charged forward in a time of total distress and abandonment for something much larger than themselves at great cost. It was a privilege and the opportunity of a lifetime to pay my respects through marching in this simulation, which proved itself to be one of my biggest physical and mental challenges to date. Great humility and appreciation comes with knowing the Bataan Memorial Death March was nothing in comparison to what these men endured in their pursuit of American and Phillipino freedom. When it got tough out there, we all had to show some grit and dig deep. What I found in my personal reflection was perspective and an overflowing amount gratitude for the men of Bataan and all veterans who have carried the weight of freedom in their own way, even when they felt there was no hope. It may not have been obvious then, but to the battling bastards of Bataan, we give a damn.



The Bataan Team posing for a picture at the end of the march.



Cadet Orientation Program

Summary: On January 18th, new Cadets within the Fighting Illini Battalion participated in a two day Cadet Orientation Program. Cadets who joined the program in the Spring 2017 semester were briefed the expectations and given guidance from senior Cadets about the opportunities offered. Instruction also covered basic soldier knowledge such as rank structure, customs and courtesies, wear and appearance of the Army uniform, as well as familiarization with the gear issued to them. Senior Cadets within the program were then paired with new Cadets on how to have success in ROTC.



New Cadets get familiar with the new gear they were issued.



Cadet Wright teaches new Cadets about the seven Army values



Cadet Muncaster instructs how to properly assemble their TA-50 gear.



Town Hall

Summary: On January 19th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their town hall lab. Cadets were reintroduce to the leadership within the battalion after a long winter break. During the presentation, Cadets gained insight of the training schedule for the upcoming semester, ROTC clubs and opportunities, as well of the expectations from the PMS, LTC Smith. Awards were also presented for the academic success cadets sustained in the previous fall semester.



LTC Smith briefs about his goals for the battalion in the new semester.



Cadets listen to the expectations they'll face in the spring semester.



Cadets are awarded for their academic success in the fall semester.



Fighting Illini Blood Drive

Summary: On January 24th, the Fighting Illini Battalion hosted their community blood drive to help the Community Blood Services of Illinois gather donations in order to save lives. Cadets promoted the event wide through social media to draw attention from other students and locals campus wide. Throughout the day, Cadets and students outside the program came to donate blood reaching the goal of over 50 donations.



Cadet Darmabal enjoying the view while donating.



Cadet Analitis holds up his free t shirt for his donation.



Cadet Ortiz applies pressure to his arm after donating blood.



TMK/Security/TLPs

Summary: On January 26th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their TMK/Security/TLP lab. Cadets were instructed how to effectively use a Terrain Model Kit and the purpose behind them. The MS I's and MS II's received training on the responsibilities of being an effective team leader within their squads. The MS III's were given a company level Operations Order and informed how to debrief their mission to a platoon while using Troop Leading Procedures.



Cadet Cordry instructs Cadets how fill out a range card.



Cadet Pattekar uses a TMK to prepare his OPORD.



Cadets are given a class on TMKs.



Patrol Base/Special Teams

Summary: On February 2nd, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their patrol base and special teams lab. Cadets received training on basic patrol base operations, including proper entry and set up for a patrol base, ideal qualities for a patrol base location, as well as priorities of work upon establishing a patrol base. Instruction also covered tasks and procedures for special teams such as Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW), First Aid & Litter, and Demolition.



Cadets maintain security within their patrol base.



Cadets demonstrate how to set up a patrol base.



Cadets establish the limits of their security.



Squad Reconnaissance

Summary: On February 19th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their squad reconnaissance lab. Cadets were instructed on basic operations conducted in a squad area and route recon, including proper establishment of an Objective Rally Point (ORP), appropriate communication when leaving an ORP, as well as communicating accurate radio reports. MS III's were also evaluated in executing Troop Leading Procedures and how they briefed an Operations Order to their squads.



Cadets prepare radio reports after conducting a recon on their objective



Cadets maintain security within their ORP.



Cadets move tactically to recon their objective.



Squad React to Contact

Summary: On February 16th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their squad level react to contact lab. Cadets were instructed on how to properly react to direct and indirect enemy fire while moving in a tactical squad formation. Instruction included, basic proficiency of Individual Movement Techniques (IMTs), practice of special teams, operating a successful squad attack, as well successfully breaking contact from the enemy. MS III's once again practiced delegating their Troop Leading Procedures and briefed an abbreviated Operations Order.



Cadets conduct a squad attack, assaulting through enemy fire.



Cadets move in a tactical formation towards their objective.



Cadets maintain security within their Objective Rally Point before moving out as a squad.



Squad Ambush

Summary: On February 23rd, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their squad ambush lab. Cadets were instructed with the basic knowledge in a squad ambush operation. Instruction included an orientation level of understanding of a squad ambush for MS I & II's led by MS IV's. MS III's conducted an execution lane before MS I & II's rejoined them for another execution lane. MS III's were also evaluated on how they delegated Troop Leading Procedures as well as briefing an abbreviated Operations Order. Cadets also practiced delivering reports to such as a Situation Report (SITREP) and 9-Line Medevac Report.



Cadets move to assault to their objective.



Cadets maintain security while special teams search EPWs.



Cadet Kezon collaborates with Cadet Toto while scouting the objective.



MS IV Staff Ride

Summary: On February 24th, the MS IV's of the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their staff ride examining the Battle of Tippecanoe to develop analytical skills in military history through the use of Battle Analysis. Cadets were required to conduct research on events leading to the battle, as well as a key leaders during the battle, to have a better understanding of the situation prior to. Mr. Ashworth led the staff ride to ensure Cadets understood the consequences and the outcome of the Battle of Tippecanoe.



Cadet Maisch briefs on his key leader.



Mr. Ashworth leads the staff ride of the Battle of Tippecanoe.



Cadets gather for a photo on the memorial of the Battle of Tippecanoe.



Platoon Reconnaissance

Summary: On March 2nd, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their platoon reconnaissance lab. MS I and II's were given an orientation phase level understanding of platoon recon operations. Instruction included setting up a platoon Objective Rally Point (ORP), conducting a leaders recon, and sending proper radio reports. MS III's conducted an execution lane before MS I & II's rejoined them for another platoon recon. Similar to the previous labs, MS III's were also evaluated on how they delegated Troop Leading Procedures, briefed an Operations Order, and delivered various reports during reconnaissance.



Cadet Ruxlow maintains security.



Cadet Genchanok instructs Cadets how to conduct a platoon recon.



Cadets maintain security within their ORP.



MS III Land Navigation Day

Summary: On March 4th, the MS III's of the Fighting Illini Battalion participated in a land navigation course in order to further prepare them for advanced camp in the upcoming summer. MS III's traveled to Farmdale Recreation Area in order to conduct land navigation. Cadets used a map and compass in order to navigate the terrain and find various points scattered around the area.



MS III's plan their route prior to departing.



Cadets navigate terrain to find their next point.



Cadet checking the map to ensure they are on the correct path.



Platoon React to Contact

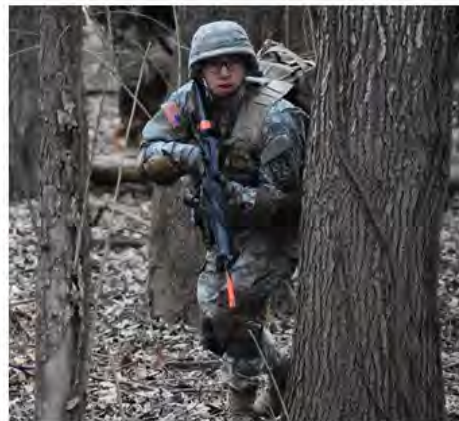
Summary: On March 9th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their platoon react to contact lab to have baseline knowledge on how to react to enemy fire. Similar to previous labs, MS I's and MS II's were given an orientation phase understanding of platoon level react to contact operations. Instruction included how to conduct a platoon attack, breaking from enemy contact, proficiency in Individual Movement Techniques, and sending up radio reports. MS III's conducted an execution lane, before MS I's & II's rejoined them for another iteration. MS III's were once again evaluated on how they delegated Troop Leading Procedures, briefed an Operations Order, and delivered various situational reports.



Cadets return fire to enemy contact while seeking cover.



Cadets assault through their objective during an instructional walk-through iteration.



Cadet Tkacyzk moves swiftly towards the enemy deep in the woods.



Platoon Ambush

Summary: On March 16th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their platoon ambush lab to have a baseline knowledge on platoon ambush operations. Instruction included proficiency in Individual Movement Techniques, communication of radio reports, and practice of special teams. Cadets received 20 minutes to plan, brief, and conduct rehearsals before they departing to execute a single lane. MS III's were once again evaluated by MS IV Observer-Trainer-Mentors on how they delegated tasks, briefed an Operations Order, and maintained control of their element.



Cadets brief their plan before departing.



Cadets suppress fire during a platoon ambush.



Cadets use Terrain Model Kits to help visualize their plan.



Superlab

Summary: On April 1st, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their annual superlab in order to execute platoon-level tactical operations building on training outcomes from prior labs. Cadets executed two lanes in which leadership rotated before the start of each lane. Lanes required planning, briefing, and rehearsals prior to departing for execution. MS III's were evaluated on how they performed on each lane as well as their planning and preparation. Prior to the start of the super lab, Cadets participated in a six mile ruck march conditioning them for advanced camp in the summer and field training exercises later in the school year.



Cadets maintain security keeping watch for the enemy.



Cadets move tactically toward their objective.



Cadet Zurliene briefs her plan to her platoon.

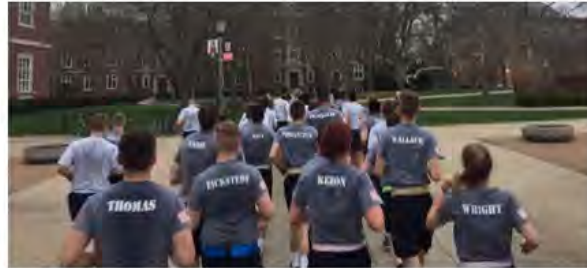


Cadets react to contact by getting on line.



Red Flag Run

Summary: On April 3rd, the Fighting Illini Battalion coordinated with the Air Force ROTC detachment 190 within the University of Illinois and conducted their annual Red Flag Run. During PRT, Cadets ran across campus and planted red flags across different quads to help promote the campaign. The Red Flag campaign is a campus program that uses bystander intervention strategy to address and prevent sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking on college campuses. The campaign encourages friends and other campus community members to say something when they see warning signs, sexual assault, dating violence, or stalking in a friend's relationship.



Cadets run in formation across campus to help promote the red flag campaign.



Cadets help promote campaign awareness with red flags.



Cadets stand in formation listening to LTC Smith as he provides his thoughts on the significance of the Red Flag Run.



Dining Out

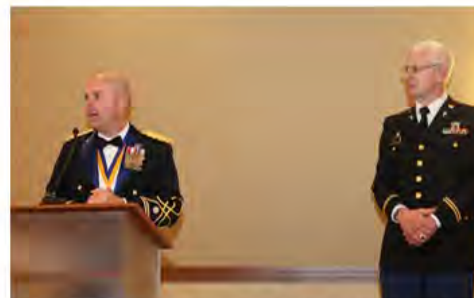
Summary: On April 8th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their Dining Out ceremony at the I-Hotel to reflect on training throughout the school year and to increase esprit de corps throughout the battalion. Several alumni, special guests, and family attended the special ceremony to help celebrate the accomplishments of the Cadets within the battalion. The evening's events included a formal receiving line, comments from the guest of honor LTC (Ret) Tina McGuffey, a special video and slide show, dinner, and a cake cutting ceremony.



Cadets and guests partake in a receiving line before the night's ceremonies.



Cadet Cross partakes in the cake cutting ceremony.



LTC Smith welcomes Chaplain (LTC) Boyd to the podium shortly before benediction.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Honors Day

Summary: On April 8th, the Fighting Illini Battalion participated in the Tri-Service Honors Day Ceremony. This event commemorates the various accomplishments of Cadets in the Army ROTC Battalion in the areas of physical training, scholastic achievements, and extracurricular activities.



Cadet Pattekar receives the American Legion Scholastic Excellence Award.



Cadet O'Connor receives the Sons of the American Revolution Society Award.



Cadet Freeze receives the Distinguished Military Graduate Award.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Open House

Summary: On April 13th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their semi-annual open house in order to appeal to students around campus. Open house is an event which the Cadets within the Fighting Illini Battalion offer students from across the university's campus the chance to participate in some activities and check out some of the opportunities offered within the Army ROTC program. Some of the activities offered during the event included a one-rope bridge, shooting air rifles, hand grenade tosses, and rock wall climbing.



Cadets teach other students about some of the weapons used in the Army.



Cadets help other students climb the rock wall.



Students participate in the one-rope bridge.



Field Training Exercise: Day 1

Summary: April 20th, the Fighting Illini Battalion departed campus for Camp Atterbury, IN to partake in their semi-annual FTX with the EIU Panther Battalion. Cadets partake in the Spring FTX in order to ensure the MS III's are better prepared for Advanced Camp during the upcoming summer. Upon arrival to Camp Atterbury, Cadets conducted a ruck march toward land navigation course 1A. Cadets then organized into their new platoons in order to create unit cohesion before conducting mission operations the next day.



Cadets ruck toward Land Navigation Course 1A.



Cadets load buses to begin movement towards Camp Atterbury, IN.



Cadets listen to a safety brief before stepping off for land navigation.



Field Training Exercise: Day 2

Summary: On April 21st, the Fighting Illini Battalion and Panther Battalion continued their field training exercise. Cadets rucked toward Range 019 to conduct range operations and zero their weapons to gain confidence and weapon familiarity. During this time, Cadets were given a Basic Rifle Marksmanship class and a communication class to better them for range and mission operations. Afterwards, cadets returned to land navigation course 1A to begin their first platoon field mission operations.



Cadet Pantoja instructs a Basic Rifle Marksmanship class before MS I's & II's step on the range.



Cadets zero their weapons in order to qualify.



Cadet Muncaster and Cadet Barto communicate radio reports to HQ during mission operations.



Field Training Exercise: Day 3

Summary: On April 22nd, the Fighting Illini Battalion and Panther Battalion partook in the third day of their FTX. Cadets continued their platoon field mission operations throughout Camp Atterbury, IN. Field operations consisted of several missions including react to contact, hasty defense, and platoon raids. MS III leadership rotated with the start of each new mission. Cadets were also evaluated by cadre and Observer-Controller-Trainers (OCT) to help develop each leader.



Cadets maintain security during field operations.



Cadets react to contact while on their platoon field operations.



Cadet platoon leadership gather to discuss their next movement.



Field Training Exercise: Day 4

Summary: On April 23rd, the Fighting Illini Battalion and Panther Battalion participated in their final day of their joint FTX. Upon wake-up, MS III's participated in a land navigation course to further prepare them for Advanced Camp. Meanwhile, MS I's & II's from both battalions began their recovery phase and conducted rifle cleaning. After completion of the land navigation course, MS III's participated in ruck march back towards cantonment. Before departure back to campus, cadets conducted an AAR on the entire joint FTX.



Cadets of the Fighting Illini Battalion pose for a picture after a successful FTX.



Cadets ensuring accountability of sensitive items during recovery phase.



MSG Hutcherson leads an AAR on the events from FTX.



Combat Water Survival Training

Summary: On April 27th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their Combat Water Survival Test (CWST) at the Stephen's Family YMCA. MS II's and III's completed a Swimming Diagnostic Test (SDT) as well as CWST to determine a Cadet's confidence in water and their overall swimming ability. The SDT composed of a 10-minute swim and a 5-minute water tread. The CWST was made up of a 10M weapon carry, Load Bearing Vest (LBV) and weapon drop, as well as floatation techniques.



Cadet Cordry instructs cadet Becker how to properly drop their weapon and LBV in water.



Cadet Genchanok instructs cadets how to use their ACUs as floatation devices.



Cadet Rachesky conducts the 10-minute swim.



Freshman Hazelton Competition

Summary: On April 27th, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted their annual Hazelton competition. MS I's were tested on their proficiency in military knowledge, bearing, and skills at the MS I level. Cadets were evaluated on various events and categories to include: APFT score, sector sketches, grenade throws, gear layouts, grooming standards, and a written quiz on the MS I class curriculum. Cadet Roy Kim successfully completed the rigorous and stressful evaluation to become the Hazelton Award recipient.



Cadets are evaluated on their drill and ceremony skills.



Cadets observe their sectors of fire to fill in order to fill out range cards.



Cadet Wallace is evaluated on his grenade throw.

Alumni Contributions

Fighting Illini Alumni Lead the Way

by Mr. Eric Ashworth, Cadre Sponsor for Alumni Outreach

What a semester we had and the Fighting Illini Alumni continue to lead the way in supporting our Cadets in their training and development effort. Here is a short summary of what the alumni have done for the Cadet Battalion this past few months:

Dining Out Guest Speaker: One of the highlights of the semester was the annual Dining-Out. Former alumna and current member of the Fighting Illini Battalion Hall of Fame, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Tina McGuffey, was our guest speaker and several other alumni joined us as well. She provided a female Cadet perspective during a time when the U.S. Army ROTC was just introducing female Cadets into their ranks. The challenges and rewards she and other female Cadets faced gave the current Cadets a greater understanding of our history and how we all possess the ability to overcome unfamiliar situations if we try. See page 26 for more details about this semester's Dining-Out.



Dining-Out Guest Speaker LTC (R) Tina McGuffey

Hall of Fame: The Fighting Illini Battalion Hall of Fame is preparing for our next induction ceremony in the spring of 2018. We have received a few applications since our last edition so we thank all of you who sent forward information on the accomplishments of our alumni. We are still taking applications throughout the summer if you haven't had the chance to collect all of the required information. We will hold our next board this fall in preparation of next spring's induction ceremony. This will be the earliest we will be able to hold our ceremony due to the ongoing renovation project of the first floor of the Armory Building.



The MSG James L. McLain Memorial Library has moved to the 3rd floor of the Armory building while renovations occur to our first floor offices. The UIUC Army ROTC is still accepting donated books if you are looking to downsize your personal collections.

Military Library: Thanks to several alumni that donated their personal books to the MSG James L. McLain Memorial Library, our Military History Library has grown to over 1500 books and journals. We updated our catalog this semester and discovered that alumni had donated over 400 books to our program since the last published listing of 2015. These books are typically donated as people look to "downsize" their personal libraries. However, with the Cadet Battalion increase in numbers, these new books have already supported student book reports, research projects and individual reading enjoyment. So keep thinking about us if ever you are in a similar downsizing situation at home.

Alumni Contributions

Fighting Illini Alumni Lead the Way (continued)

The **Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund** has been established and is already close to 50% towards its goal thanks to alumni donor support. This fund was initiated by Retired Colonel Deborah Olson Read and with the help of her husband, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Rick Read, and the University of Illinois Foundation, this endowment became a reality in 2017. With the university celebrating its sesquicentennial, it was the perfect way to conclude an exciting semester for the cadets.

This endowment is open to any donor interested in supporting the current cadets. Once the endowment is completely funded, the Cadets will have an annual budget from the university forever. So in the future, many of their special training events will be planned knowing ahead of time that funding for them is already available. These special events are valuable for retaining cadets because most of them challenge the cadets to work as a team in an area outside of their comfort zone. Events such as the Ranger Buddy Competition, the Bataan Memorial Ruck March, the Rifle Team Competitions, the Scabbard and Blade Honor Society, the Norwegian Ruck March and the Tough Mudder Competition receive significant cadet participation but none of them receives funding by Cadet Command. Most of these events are physically demanding and require significant training to prepare the teams. These events provide the Army ROTC Program additional leadership opportunities for the Cadets.

Of course, if you are interested in financially supporting the Cadet but prefer to have your donation go immediately to support cadet events, the **Army ROTC Alumni Fund** still exists. This is our operating fund, so 100% of this fund supports Cadet day-to-day events and is used to fund immediate requests from the Cadets. If they decide to design a new Cadet Battalion t-shirt or want to reduce costs for attendance to the annual Dining-In or Dining-Out, this fund covers these costs.

Either way, we hope you will continue to support our Cadets through one of these funds. Donations from Alumni directly impact and make it possible for the program to continue to provide the quality of development and the strong esprit de corps of the Battalion. Contributions should be made through the University of Illinois Foundation, which provides you a possible tax advantage. Just Visit <http://www.giving.illinois.edu/> for the certified University link and be sure to indicate to which fund your contribution is directed towards—**Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund** or **Army ROTC Alumni Fund**. Your donations make an impact, and are greatly appreciated by the Cadets. We appreciate the support of our Alumni to the development of these young leaders. We also want to stay in touch. Please forward us your questions or new ideas to (217)-244-1407 or arotc@illinois.edu. Thank you.



A photo commemorating the start of the Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund by Debbie and Rick Read. Also pictured is Eric Ashworth, representative of the UIUC Army ROTC Department.

FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC: FORGING STRONG LEADERS SINCE 1868 ... AND INTO THE 21ST CENTURY



Staying in Touch with The Fighting Illini Battalion

University of Illinois
Foundation

Recruiting, Donations
Visits, Expertise

Upcoming Calendar: Alumni continue to ask for ways to support the current Cadet Battalion. The best way is through your willingness to share your experience with them. Please consider supporting one of these upcoming events:

- **Guest Speaker for the Cadet Orientation Program.** From 24-26 August, we will welcome the newest members in the Fighting Illini Battalion as new Cadets attend the first of three days of ROTC classes to provide them a better understanding of what occurs in their Army ROTC classes and labs. Each year a guest speaker provides initial remarks to the Cadets and their parents.
- **Scabbard and Blade:** This renewed Military Honor Society is going strong but Alumni guest speakers would support the development of these young officers. Each semester the Cadets hold meetings and your participation as a guest speaker to discuss how your time as a Cadet molded your career would be beneficial in their leadership development.
- **Veterans Day Football Game.** Each year the Army ROTC Battalion conducts a “Loyalty Oath” Ceremony during the Salute to Veterans Football Game at U of I. This is a great retention event for the Cadets. This year we are looking to expand this celebration to include a pre-game tailgate party. If this is something you would be interested in and perhaps assist in the coordination of this event, please contact us. This year’s game occurs on 11 November against Indiana University. This would be a great opportunities to meet and socialize with our current Cadets.
- **Guest Speaker for any Military Science class.** Each year, alumni speak to specific military science classes on their experience. If you would like to speak to current Cadets, please let us know the topic and the time you are available so that we can coordinate for you to be a guest speaker in one or more of our classes.

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