

The MILLINI



A publication from
THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Department of Military Science

Message from the Professor of Military Science

By LTC Randall M. Smith

Welcome back to the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion. Our Cadets and Cadre stayed busy this summer and successfully completed an incredible amount of training. As I enter my third and final year as the Professor of Military Science I remain extremely confident that our nation's future is in great hands.

We capped off this summer by commissioning two more lieutenants. Congratulations to 2LT Megan Zurliene and 2LT Brian Bell. Their achievement marks a very successful year for our program as overall we commissioned 22 officers this year.

This summer 19 of our Cadets completed Advanced Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky. They achieved a 100% passing rate and all requirements were successfully completed the first time. This is a great testament to the training conducted last year by the Cadet battalion and to the commitment of our Cadets to excel as future Army Officers. We also had nine Cadets attend and complete Basic Camp. Several of these are "lateral entry" Cadets, or Cadets that were required to complete Basic Camp in order to join our MS-III class in preparing for Advanced Camp next summer.

We had 14 Cadets participate in the Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) program this summer by serving with active duty units all over the world, including in Hawaii and Kuwait. Other Cadets trained in cultural understanding and language programs in places as far away as Mozambique and Oman. They studied various languages with Project Global Officer (GO) while others had the opportunity to complete internships with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Several of these Cadets wrote about their experiences in articles in this journal. I'm amazed at the set of skills they are going to bring to the Army as lieutenants compared to those a generation ago.

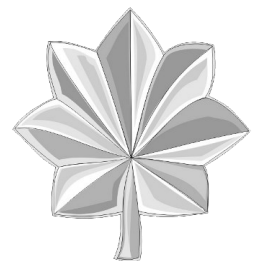
To begin the semester, we started off the new school year with our Cadet Orientation Program (COP) which had over 30 students volunteer to attend. After several hot days of conducting physical training, drill and ceremony, and other basic Soldier tasks, they completed COP and are motivated to excel as members of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion.

I would like to close by congratulating two members of our team. SFC Leon and MAJ Willis who both earned selection for promotion this summer. A testament to the quality of the team we have here at UIUC. I also want to thank our alumni and friends of the program who support the Cadets with their time as mentors and with financial donations. Your commitment truly allows us to better develop the next generation of leaders.



ILLINI!!!

** Photo on Cover: Current Cadets at the Camp Atterbury (Indiana) Rappel Tower during the Battalion Field Training Exercise



Message from the Senior Military Instructor

By MSG Bruce Hutcherson

I would like to welcome all of our newest members to our program. You will quickly learn that our program is a tight-knit group of students, who are committed to excellence and possess a desire to lead our nation's finest Soldiers. As I mentioned during our Cadet Orientation Program (COP), this program will potentially push you to limits that you probably didn't realize that you possessed (physically and mentally). Remember that this is a learning organization, so we expect Cadets to make mistakes, but we also expect them to learn from those mistakes and perform better given the opportunity.

To our returning Cadets, all of the Cadre are enthusiastic upon your return back to campus. As you advance in the program, increased responsibility will be asked of you. Never reject an opportunity to develop and improve yourself technically and tactically. Some of you were assigned to different leadership positions during COP, which I'm sure will not be an experience that you will soon forget. By this point, your leadership attributes and competencies have already been established. Build upon them throughout your experience in ROTC as well as in your future career as an Army officer. Your future Soldiers will expect nothing less.

The first month of the semester will be action-packed. We'll begin with our first monthly Army Physical Fitness Test during the first full week of school. Leadership labs will include map reading and land navigation training. Regardless of what branch an officer receives, map reading and land navigation will always be a vital part of your experience as an Army leader. A select group of contracted Cadets will have the opportunity to earn the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (GAFBMP) by successfully completing a competition event at Western Illinois University. M4/M16 rifle zeroing and qualification at the Champaign Police Training Institute will prove to be an exciting but educational experience before our Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). As a Soldier, you must be able to "shoot, move and communicate" effectively. Notice how being able to shoot is the first step.

We'll be executing training differently this year for the Fall FTX, due to weapons training being held near campus beforehand. To highlight some of the activities that Cadets will partake in during the FTX, Cadets will focus on maneuvering through the Confidence Course, completing the Field Leader Reactionary Course (FLRC), land navigation, road ruck marches, establishing Patrol Bases and the rappelling down the Rappel Tower. The Rappel Tower is a new edition to our FTX that we hope to incorporate in future years in the program.

Lastly, this program will better assist you in developing the essential tools and competencies necessary for leading our young men and women, both in garrison and in a deployed environment. I look forward to engaging with each and every of you in the near future.

AIR ASSAULT!!!



ARMY ROTC



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ARMY STRONG®

THE STORE

The Fighting Illini Army ROTC Store is still operational but since this summer, all purchases will have a new look to them. Across the university, the Column “I” design is leaving. The university wants to maintain the Block “I” so we need to change to keep up with the times. Therefore, starting with this semester, the new Block I Shield (our new ROTC Patch when the Chief departed) will replace the Column “I” found on the current polo shirts. The new design is shown on the right:



“The Store” will continue to provide an opportunity to fulfill requests of alumni, assist in marketing our program through our supporters, and providing the Cadets a small 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.



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.

Also, we often have alumni that see in the Millini one of the shirts the Cadets are wearing for training and ask to purchase one of these shirts. Some of these items are available too. Contact Eric Ashworth as well for these requests.

Summer Training Highlights

My Basic Camp Experience at Fort Knox

By Cadet Allison Duncan

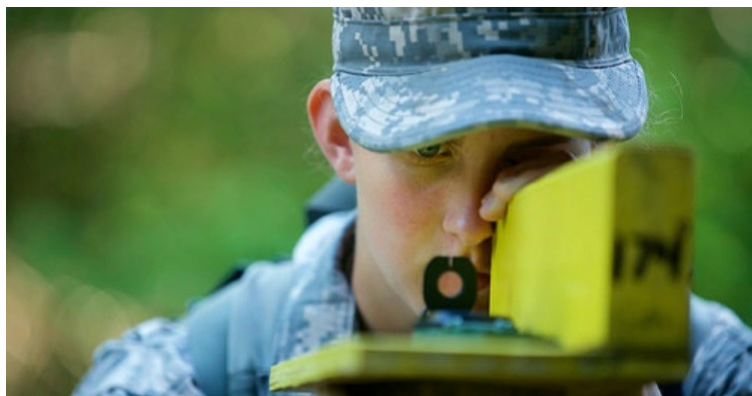
At basic camp this summer, I had the opportunity to strengthen my skills in tasks that I was familiar with as well as learn new things. My favorite thing about camp was the Field Training Exercise (FTX) at the end. We were in the field only five days. Three nights were spent in tent city and one in the field in a patrol base. I enjoyed this part of camp because we had the opportunity to be squad leaders and practiced leading squads through the battle drills we had learned throughout the year and then again at camp. I feel as though I have a much stronger understanding of the battle drills. There was also a lane that tested our departure briefings from our patrol bases, known as a GOTWA. Half the squad left the patrol base on a mission, and the other half was tested on how they reacted to the away team being ambushed.

Something new that we did was night land navigation. At the University of Illinois, we have done land navigation for some time, but we had never done night land nav. It was a challenge, much harder than I thought that it would be. We went out in teams of three to find the points. I think that it helped having seen the terrain in the daylight, because we knew somewhat where everything was. Just to find one point we had to overcome so many obstacles and work together as a team. We found one point, and then we ended up lost in the woods. Also, there were a lot of sink holes around, which were amazing to look at, though I did almost fall into one.

We also had some fun while we were at camp. We spent a day at a ropes obstacle course, climbing and overcoming fears, fears we didn't even know that we had. One morning we did an obstacle course, in the rain and mud, competing against other squads in our company. We had what we called Drill Sergeant time, which was basically time for the Drill Sergeants to do what ever they wanted with us. Sometimes they smoked us (requiring us to do a lot of physical fitness), other times they taught us things that were not part of the standard training. One night, Cadets were given the opportunity to do impressions of the Drill Sergeants. We also went through the gas chamber, which teaches us to trust our equipment and how to survive a chemical attack.

We learned tasks that are not taught to us at school, such as how to properly make a bed, how to stand in the chow line, and how to stay awake during a two-hour brief on little sleep.

It was a very challenging experience and I was tested in different ways. Physically I was tested every day as the Drill Sergeants pushed us to become stronger. Mentally I was tested to think on my feet and apply everything I had learned. At camp, I made connections that I had never considered before. I felt as though everything became just a little more clear. It was a great experience and I am so grateful I was able to attend.



Cadet Duncan orienting her compass during Land Navigation.

Summer Training Highlights

My Basic Camp Experience

By Cadet Steven Irace

After the successful completion of my first full year of Army ROTC, I knew I wanted to find a way to continue my training and to refine the skills that I had learned, so I volunteered to attend Basic Camp this past summer at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I learned so much from everyone I met while at Cadet Summer Training which included the many volunteer speakers at our briefings, the new Army Second Lieutenants in charge of our platoons, the Drill Sergeants that were our subject matter experts, the MS-III trainers preparing for Advanced Camp, and all the other Cadets from around the country that were there with me to learn how to be successful leaders in the United States Army.

Some of the most beneficial training came from the various confidence courses that we trained on throughout the summer; my two favorite being the high ropes obstacle course and the gas chamber. The high ropes obstacle course included rock climbing walls that prepared you for the main ropes course. The main course hung forty feet high in the air, requiring each Cadet to traverse each section of ropes with the specific techniques taught to us by the Sergeants and officer Cadre while battling any fears of heights a Cadet might have. This course taught us to trust our battle buddies who controlled the belays and to trust ourselves that we can complete any and every task assigned to us. The gas chamber course taught us how to utilize and be comfortable with our gas masks and Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) suits for missions in nuclear, biological, or chemical environments. After learning how to use our gear, we entered the gas chamber and removed our masks to experience the symptoms of an irritant known as CS gas. This course helped us to trust our equipment and our confidence to work in an environment that was extremely uncomfortable.



Cadet Steven Irace (back row) learning the basics of Drill & Ceremony.

The final phase of training during Basic Camp concludes with a large scale field training exercise which included two days of conducting battle drill lanes out of a patrol base with our squads. This was personally my favorite part of Cadet summer training. It required us to utilize everything we learned throughout our training to conduct patrol briefings and complete missions while developing our leadership styles at the same time.

Basic Camp was an invaluable experience to advance my knowledge as a Cadet and as a future Army officer. I would recommend every Cadet to attend Basic Camp if they are given the opportunity due to the vital skills that are taught and the confidence it builds as a follower and a leader. Although it stressed me mentally and physically, I learned so much about myself and it proved to me that this is the path in life that I want to follow. I can not wait to return to the University of Illinois for another great year of Army ROTC and to share my knowledge and experiences to advance the Fighting Illini program.

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Conquer Advanced Camp By MS-IV Cadets; Edited by Second Lieutenant Kurt Kuzur

Advanced Camp is a commissioning requirement for all ROTC students to attend before their MS-IV year. During this month long experience, Cadets from all over the country are assessed amongst their peers and graded by Cadre in determining their potential as future officers. Some examples of training consisted of first aid, rifle shooting, multiple ruck marches, and a 12-day field exercise. Below a few of our Cadets share their unique stories from Advanced Camp.

CDT Barsbold Darmabal—Camp Bonding Experience

As I reflect on the arduous journey of 31 days at Fort Knox in 5th regiment it has become increasingly apparent that through the heat, constant rain showers, dirt and other obstacles with a 50-lb ruck that human endurance goes a lot further than one might expect. Advanced Camp was a time of constant evaluation of the basic fundamentals of becoming a Second Lieutenant. I learned a significant amount of tactics but the things that stuck with me the most were the small lessons I learned. You learn the habit of arriving early and staying late and that things will never fit the timeline that you originally propose. The essential need to write everything down because you will never know what you will forget and what seems insignificant will come back to crush you if you didn't render it enough attention. But above all you are a team in which you should put forth 110% to support your leaders and to be responsible for your subordinates' failure or success. Overall I came out of advanced camp as a different individual where I realized that small things make the biggest differences and attention to detail can be the fine line for mission success.

CDT Madison Jolley— AC Camp Experience

Once I had completed my CULP mission, it was time for Advanced Camp, the second-half of my summer training. This 31-day training event is designed to assess a Cadet's leadership potential to serve as a commissioned officer, by evaluating their ability to lead at the Squad and Platoon levels, both in garrison and tactical settings. Throughout my time at Ft. Knox I was tested on land navigation, marksmanship, rappelling, and other basic officer leadership tasks. As a Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) Cadet in the Illinois National Guard, several of the training events we completed were a refresher for me and provided me the opportunity to assist others in my platoon who had never shot an M4 Rifle or repelled off an 80-foot tower.

For me, the most challenging part of Advanced Camp was being evaluated constantly by the commissioned and non-commissioned officers attached to my platoon. From the first day of camp, Cadets are split into their platoons, Army leaders are assigned, and the evaluations begin. Lucky for me, I got the first Platoon Leader slot for the first two days of camp, which I believe gave me the opportunity to stand out from my peers and get to know my Cadre early on. From then on, I was given several opportunities to lead in garrison and during the 12-days of FTX of camp, where we received two missions a day and would have plan, brief, and execute a platoon-sized operation.

For me, my favorite memory of Advanced Camp was the day we completed the Confidence Course. While I had seen this obstacle course before, I was not able to complete all the obstacles when I went through Basic Combat Training in 2015, specifically the rope climb and weaver, but this time around with the motivation from my squad I was able to complete all the events and even help motivate some of my peers who were struggling.



Cadet Darmabal and Advanced Camp peers.

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Overcome Advanced Camp (Continued)

CDT Michael Alexander—Advanced Camp Experience

My advanced camp experience was an excellent point of learning. I greatly appreciated the opportunity to both show the skill and proficiency I possessed and the areas of growth and focus I need to continue to improve upon. From the very beginning of the exercise I appreciated the tactical training I had received in my MS2 and MS-III years and especially the assistance I received from Ft. Bragg's 3rd Brigade and the staff of Camp Mackall, as this had immediate impact in my ability to help group and teach others to prepare them for the field. Physically, ruck training and Cadet Troop Leaders Training (CTLT) for leadership and small unit training at Ft. Bragg greatly assisted the reduction of the physical and mental toll. Yet even with all training, the heat took time to acclimate to; when there was a breeze you really appreciated it! In retrospect, I would do more exercise and training in the early afternoon, the hottest time of the day, and practice movement and critical thinking past exhaustion. I would also prepare myself to think quickly and critically with little sleep and prepare to sleep in any and all conditions. I look forward to using the lessons received as steps to reach greater heights on my road to success.



Cadet Michael Alexander (Bottom Left) with Advanced Camp Platoon and Cadre.

CDT Daniel Lee— Conquering Advanced Camp

Advanced Camp is, in my eyes, doable to any prospective Officer of the Army. Although Fighting Illini Cadets were in peak condition, there were Cadets from other programs who were not in the best shape, both physically and mentally, who still managed to graduate. Passing the requirements to graduate wasn't the challenge I faced at Advanced Camp; I had already done them all and more when I was an 11B recruit during OSUT training. The challenge for me was competing against 39 other Cadets vying for the approval and good assessments from the Cadre. When it boils down to it, Advanced Camp is one big show. When the Cadre are observing you, it is imperative that you are focused and decisive, or at least appear to be. A quote that I heard during my time at Fort Knox that rang especially true was "Perception is reality." If at the critical moments you appear indecisive or incompetent, that will dictate your Cadre's perception of your character and abilities. This was especially obvious when the rankings were revealed. Of course, people who performed well consistently and deserved top marks received a high ranking. However, there were also people who did not possess good character and abilities that received higher ranking due to Cadre's positive perception of them. If I were to give any advice to an incoming MS-III Cadets for Advanced Camp, it would be to play the game. Not necessarily to be so called "spotlight Rangers", but ensure that you don't give the Cadre any reason to think negatively of you. Decisiveness and sound judgment is key during the evaluated positions. Good perception supplemented with good objective scores (PT, BRM, etc.) will ensure that you are successful at Advanced Camp.

Summer Training Highlights

The Cultural Understanding & Language Proficiency Program *By Fighting Illini Cadets; Edited by Second Lieutenant Kurt Kuzur*

The Army recognizes the need for young leaders to develop more cultural awareness and foreign language proficiency skills. CULP, or the Cultural Understanding & Language Proficiency program allow for Cadets from all over the nation to immerse themselves and experience military-to-military exchanges, humanitarian service efforts, and receive education on social, cultural and historical aspects of the country they are visiting. For three weeks, hundreds of U.S. Army Cadets live and train with Cadets from our allied and partnership countries. This Summer, **Cadets Daniel Lasota, Madison Jolley, and Jack Hamman** were selected from UIUC to participate in this program and we are excited to have them share their experience.

CDT Daniel Lasota— Poland

This summer I went to Poland with the Army ROTC's CULP Program. My time in Poland was truly one of the most extraordinary experiences I have had with ROTC and the military in general. Our mission while in country was to establish rapport with the host country's civilians and military personnel while also enhancing our leadership attributes and competencies. Fortunately for us, a majority of the Poles have a strong liking for Americans and our military. In between military engagements our mission required us to visit key cultural points of interest in order to develop a better overall cultural understanding of our host country.

Our military engagements consisted of a few days at the Polish Cadet training brigade which is Poland's equivalent of United States' West Point Academy. Although we only spent a few days here, this was my favorite and most interesting part of our mission. The Polish Cadets gave briefs and tours of their facilities to us while we taught them a little bit about American culture and our ROTC program. In this short time we made strong connections with the Polish soldiers and after a night out on the town square with them there were some emotional goodbyes. From there we were received at the Polish Multinational Brigade which consisted of military forces from Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine. At the Brigade we received briefings and shop tours from all countries present and learned a great deal about their military. Interacting with the Ukrainian soldiers was the most interesting part as they had a great deal to share in regards to the conflict in Crimea with Russia.

Finally, in between all the mil-to-mil interaction there were plenty of spectacular cultural sites we visited. My favorite part of this was visiting all of the historic churches as the Catholic Church holds a special place in the heart of the Poles. The food was also great everywhere we went. My time in Poland was an extremely rewarding experience that I recommend to any Cadet who has the opportunity to do so.



Cadet Daniel Lasota with a Polish Cadet and fellow CULP Cadet Member

Summer Training Highlights

The Cultural Understanding Language Program (Continued)

CDT Madison Jolley—Traveling in Poland



Cadet Madison Jolley touring Lask Air Force Base in Lodz, Poland pictured with a MiG-29 Jet Fighter Aircraft.

A week after the spring semester of my MS-III year, I was off to Ft. Knox, KY to participate in the Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program (CULP) which I had applied for last fall. Every year Cadets are selected to travel overseas on a variety of missions, spending up to three weeks immersed into a different culture; I had the opportunity to travel to Poland on a mil-to-mil mission where I learned the history of Poland by visiting all major cities across the country, including Warsaw, Krakow, and Wroclaw. The most memorable moment of my CULP mission was visiting one of the most important historical

places in Poland's history, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, the site of the largest Nazi death camps in Europe. While this was a very tragic and devastating part of Poland's history, I am grateful for the opportunity to witness something few can say they have.

Aside from visiting the beautiful cities and learning the history of Poland, I had the opportunity to spend ten days at the Polish Air Force Academy. While at the academy, my CULP team and I learned what it takes to become a Polish Air Force Officer, from the rigorous 5-year course load to the advanced flight simulators used to train their future military's officers. One afternoon, we visited a nearby Polish Air Force Base, where we toured and climbed aboard their most prestigious F-16s and MiG-29s fighter jets; our visit concluded with a personal flyover from the unit's Battalion Commander! While experiencing what the Polish Air Force is all about, we were lucky enough to build life-long friendships with our Polish counterparts. We did everything with their Cadets from playing sports, to learning Polish, to exploring the neighboring towns, ending with a gift exchange with the Polish Cadets which was a very humbling, yet sad experience, saying goodbye.



Cadet Madison Jolley and Polish Air Force Cadets pose for a picture at the Polish Air Force Academy.

Summer Training Highlights

The Cultural Understanding Language Program (Continued)

CDT Jack Hamman– Romania CULP Experience

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in the Army ROTC Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program by being a part of a cultural immersion trip to Romania. The goal of this program is to introduce Cadets to what it is like to operate in a different and sometimes uncomfortable environment, a skill that is often necessary to being a successful officer. During my trip I had the opportunity to train with Cadets at the Romanian Land Forces Academy in Sibiu, Romania. Throughout our time in Romania, my team and I had the opportunity to participate in various training events with these Cadets including mountain survival training, cultural comparison conversations, and various forms of physical training.



Cadet Jack Hamman and Romania Cadets participate in a Field Training Exercise.

Cultural conversations were some of the first interactions we had with our Romanian counterparts. These conversations allowed us to share our culture as we developed baseline relationships with the platoons we would be attached to during our time in Romania. Next we had the opportunity to participate in various athletic competitions during physical training. These competitions, which included basketball, soccer, and swimming, proved to be extremely competitive as well as fun for all involved. Finally, we were invited to attend a survival field training exercise in which we were tasked to work as a team with the Romanians in building a temporary shelter, building a fire, and securing food and water. This final training event put our cross-cultural competence to the test by seeing how well we could work together as a team with the Romanian Cadets. On the weekends we had the opportunity as a team to visit various important cultural sights in Romania including the Bran Castle, best known for being the inspiration for Dracula's castle. These castles were key to the defense of the Transylvania region in the medieval period. We also visited a spectacular salt mine that had been transformed into a tourist attraction. Visiting these sights taught us the history of Romania and how current cultural norms came about.

The weekends also gave us an opportunity to branch out from our location in Sibiu and witness the various micro-cultures within the country. The best part of the entire trip however was getting to know the various Romanians we spent time with over the course of the month. The combination of these various cultural immersions and military training activities resulted in one of the most memorable and exciting trips of my life that was just as enjoyable as it was educational. The trip taught me the importance of cross-cultural competency and how to perform it most effectively. At the same time I had an opportunity to explore another part of the world and build new friendships within both my U.S. team and the Romanian Land Forces Academy Cadets.

Summer Training Highlights

The Cultural Understanding Language Program (Continued)

CDT Michael Hill– Mozambique Team 1 CULP Experience

As leaders, we always look for ways in which we can hone the tools of our trade so that we may one day use them to develop others and create a steady flowing work environment. After all, the United States Army is a people business, and business was booming for Mozambique Team 1. Two other Cadets and I were part of the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) team, whose main job was to conduct photo operations and interact with key military leaders, civilian leaders, and the local populace. Together, the PAO team and I successfully produced a week-in-review PowerPoint slides for our time in country. Many of these captioned photos have been featured on U.S. Army Africa's Facebook page.

Our time in Mozambique was split between interactions with the local populace and the Mozambican military. The local populace taught me a tremendous amount about the strength and resilience of the Mozambican people. Something that had a lasting effect on me was the hustle of its citizens. Many hold informal jobs, essentially selling anything they can in order to provide for their family. Not once did I ever see a person begging for money. Whether it was selling cashews, goats, or sunglasses, the Mozambican people have a strong sense of work ethic in order to provide a living.

As for the military interactions, we had spent time with both their Officer Academy in Nampula as well as their Non-Commissioned Officer Academy in Maputo. Their military was very generous in hosting and showing us what their schools entailed and how their military was structured. One other big part that I noticed was their devotion to operational security, as they still held an air of mystery surrounding their capabilities - something I saw as important and respectable for a country which had been in a civil war from 1977 to 1992.

Taking the responsibility of a public affairs team gave me the opportunity to develop myself in the area of photography which may open doors for a future career as a United States Army public affairs officer. As a photographer observing and creating interactions, I discovered that a majority of the Mozambican populace enjoyed being in the spotlight. They enjoyed learning, teaching, playing sports, and for that reason, they enjoyed having photos taken of them because each photo had a story to complement it.

Cultivating human interactions and observing how the Mozambican people lived as opposed to American culture was beneficial to my experience at viewing the world from a different perspective. Allowing myself to look both inwardly and externally while in Mozambique aided me in understanding how different cultures can work together through both verbal and nonverbal communication; whether it be through an interpreter at a restaurant or a Portuguese phrasebook at a children's school. Communication skills and cultivating relationships to build a strong foundation for me as a leader may one day allow me to accomplish a task alongside a unit who speaks an unfamiliar language in an unfamiliar geographic location.



Cadet Michael Hill enjoying the beautiful scenery in Mozambique during his CULP experience.

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Participate in Cadet Troop Leadership Training

Edited by Second Lieutenant Kurt Kuzur

Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) is the Army's version of a summer internship that gives Cadets a chance to be assigned to a platoon leader position in an active duty unit for three weeks. Cadets are able to see how an active duty unit operates and work with real Soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and commissioned officers. This is a great opportunity for Cadets typically entering their senior year to gain a first hand experience of what life will be like as an officer. Below Cadets **Dylon Hopp**, **Molly Hein**, **Jarrett Kapusta**, **Edward Thomas**, and **Tim Wallace** share their experience.

CDT Dylon Hopp — My CTLT Experience 109th Military Intelligence (MI) Battalion — Fort Lewis McCord

At CTLT, I shadowed a Military Intelligence Officer and Platoon Leader of the 109th MI Battalion. While I was there, my platoon was operating at low manpower, due to live missions being conducted. While the missions are confidential and I could not learn everything about them, I experienced the role a Platoon Leader has with a MI Platoon. The most exciting event for me was inspecting and moving vehicles in a convoy formation that I commanded. One of the trucks was a Tactical Intelligence Ground Station, which was the Platoon's operational specialty.

While participating in CTLT, Cadets have opportunities to explore the post and the surrounding areas. Often, Cadets would go to the Warrior zone, an MWR (Morale, Welfare, and Recreation) center, to play games of Fortnite, enjoy a movie in the theatre, or challenge a battle buddy to a game of pool. A Cadet from my company and I also went to the Sam Adams Brew house for a social between ROTC and West Point Cadets, where we got to meet a two-star Army General.

I was fortunate enough to make it out to the neighboring cities of Seattle and Tacoma several times. In Seattle, I experienced the Space Needle with fellow Illini and MS-IV Cadets, Tom Jackson and Daniel Lee, which was out of this world. I also enjoyed eating freshly caught Salmon Burgers at Pike's Place Market.

CTLT has been a great opportunity to experience a month as an Active Duty Officer, and learn how the Army operates from day-to-day. I highly encourage any and all ROTC Cadets to attend CTLT for any branch they can, whether they are going Active, Guard, or Reserve. It opened my eyes specifically to what an Active Duty Component Intelligence Officer does, but more importantly, how to effectively lead Soldiers dealing with issues that we may not encounter at the Fighting Illini Battalion.



Cadets Dylon Hopp, Daniel Lee, and Thomas Jackson visit Seattle during their CTLT Rotations

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Participate in Cadet Troop Leadership Training (Continued)

CDT Molly Hein - My CTLT Experience

This past summer, I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to attend Cadet Troop Leading Training (CTLT) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. I spent the majority of my time with the 8th Psychological Operations Group (Airborne), 5th Battalion, Bravo Company, but also visited the 127th Engineer Battalion (Airborne), Alpha Company for a few days. With Psychological Operations (PSYOP) being a part of Special Operations Forces (SOF), I shadowed a Captain instead of a Lieutenant due to the selection process involved in that specialty. The Officers kept reiterating to me that “big boy rules” apply in the SOF world, meaning that everyone trusts each other to get their work done and they are free to go when they finish. I did get to go to a range and up on a C-27 during a jump but most of my days were in the office with the other Officers and NCOs. I got to see a lot of what the day-to-day life in an Active Duty unit is like, which was really helpful for knowing what I could be doing after commissioning.

While getting to experience PSYOPS was great, I wanted to get a taste of the “Big Army” and what being a Platoon Leader was really like. I am interested in assessing into the Engineer branch so I asked around to see if there was an opportunity to get me with an engineering unit. Luckily, a Captain from a different company was able to connect me with an Engineer LT he knew. This meant *a lot* of running around, going back and forth between meetings, and long days. I also learned some Sapper basics about knot tying, explosives, and breaching techniques.

All of the nitty gritty Army stuff was fun and cool to see, but my favorite part about CTLT was being able to meet new people and talk to them about their experiences. I love to learn, so asking a lot of questions to each new person I met was really helpful and gave me a lot of lessons on how to be the best leader possible. Building that network now will only help me in the future and I am so thankful that the Fighting Illini Battalion was able to give me that chance.



Cadet Jarrett Kapusta relaxing while supporting CTLT in Hawaii.

CDT Jarrett Kapusta — One Cadet’s Experience at CTLT

Of all the U.S. military bases in the world, who would have thought that I’d be sent to the one in a literal paradise. When I think of the Island of Hawaii, hula dancers, tiki torches, and sunsets on the ocean all come to mind. It’s a place that may be a little too reliant on tourism, but still has a charm completely different than the rest of America. So for me, a Midwesterner from the big city, I couldn’t have been more excited to be part of CTLT in Hawaii.

Schofield Barracks has a great reputation amongst the army duty stations, and the 25 Infantry Division (ID) even more so. The Field Artillery (FA) attachment to the 25 ID that I was assigned to had just come back from the Lightning Force training exercise. This meant that now the Soldiers had to settle back into their regular work environments and catch up on everything they’d missed from the past month. This gave me some great insight on the daily life of a lieutenant. I learned exactly how much more paperwork is involved in an officer’s job than battle drills. So much so, that maybe we should be learning wrist exercises over patrol base operations in class.

That’s not to say my time there wasn’t exciting. 1LT Zeitvogel was phenomenal and I hope she is recognized in some way for it. Through her, I passed an FA Safety Test, learned about Property books, Financial Liability Investigation of Property Loss (FLIPL), NCO Evaluation Reports, and many other vital acronyms for the job of a Lieutenant. Not only was I immersed in army knowledge, she personally took me out on hikes and to cultural museums. A few other Cadets and I got to experience the island as locals would, rather than just what tourists see, Thanks to 1LT Zeitvogel.

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Participate in Cadet Troop Leadership Training (Continued)

CDT Edward Thomas– CTLT Experience Overseas



Cadet Edward Thomas learning the Blackhawk flight systems.

This summer I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to attend Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) following my MS-II year, an opportunity which is normally available to only MS-III Cadets. I was selected to participate in CTLT at Camp Buehring, Kuwait. I shadowed Signal Corps officer 1LT Andrew Thornquist, Executive Officer of the United States Army Network Enterprise Center – Kuwait (USANEC-K). USANEC-K provides strategic signal capabilities to U.S. CENTCOM in support of ongoing operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. This gave me a great chance to observe a unit conducting “real world” missions, as well as the day to day operations of an Army Company.

Seeing what a Lieutenant does every day gave me a much better idea of the responsibilities and expectations of a commissioned officer. While there I was able to brief during the numerous weekly meetings and assisted in the planning of a Company small arms range. The most valuable lessons I learned were the importance of the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps and the role of a Lieutenant in a platoon and company. It’s one thing to hear of these in ROTC, and it’s another to see them in practice in a real Army unit.

During my time in Kuwait, I was also able to observe and learn from the different branches represented on base such as: Engineers, Air Defense Artillery (ADA), Finance, Military Intelligence, Infantry, Logistics, and Aviation. Some of the other unit training I observed were helicopter maintenance, financial disbursement, the signal Regional Hub Node, and an air battle at an ADA site. On my last day in country, I was able to fly on a Black Hawk helicopter across country, something I have wanted to do since I was a little kid. Overall, CTLT was an excellent experience I would recommend to any Cadet and I am very excited for the future.



Cadet Edward Thomas getting a picture of Camp Buehring’s sign before entering the gates in Kuwait.

Summer Training Highlights

Fighting Illini Cadets Participate in Cadet Troop Leadership Training (Continued)

CDT Tim Wallace— Looking Back at CTLT

As a sophomore I was fortunate to attend CTLT and was stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, with Delta Battery, 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment. Once I arrived, I was immediately put to work. Delta Battery is a Patriot missile battery equipped to defend American assets from tactical ballistic missiles. The three lieutenants of the battery took turns supervising me. They always made sure I had something to do that would keep me on my toes. My Lieutenants would give me a task and the expected end state to achieve and then leave me to get it done with the Soldiers. The enlisted Soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the platoon were invaluable in getting me up to speed on everything that had to get done and the paperwork behind it all. My time at Fort Bliss familiarized me with the importance of the relationship between the platoon leader, his platoon sergeant and squad leaders.

Even though most days involved air defense training, there was a variety of training events for me to experience. I organized and led several convoys to ranges in New Mexico and Delta Battery ran a qualification range for their M249 squad automatic weapon which I got to help run. Later they even let me qualify on the weapon. One of the other Battalions conducted a live fire of four Patriot missiles. The live fire was an awesome sight that is rare to see even for air defense Soldiers. During CTLT, other lieutenants showed me infantry, ordnance and armor units. This gave me a broader look into the active duty Army. Throughout my time at CTLT, my lieutenants were fantastic mentors. If I ever had an issue when working with their platoons they were there to give me guidance. All of them were quick to answer any questions I had about being an Army Officer, graduating college, and moving out into the real world.



Cadet Tim Wallace at Ft. Bliss, Texas during CTLT



Cadet Tim Wallace poses for a picture with fellow Cadets and Army Officers assigned to Delta Battery.

My two biggest takeaways from CTLT were the experiences and the relationships. At Advanced Camp I will be able to draw from my experiences leading real soldiers day to day. Finally, the relationship I formed will last well beyond those three weeks. The Cadets I worked with were second to none. I will always look to the officers who guided me through my CTLT experience as mentors.

Summer Training Highlights

My Air Assault School Experience

The Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion had the privilege of sending **MS-III Cadet Roy Kim** to the U.S. Army Air Assault school in Fort Benning, GA. This school is a 10-day course designed to prepare Soldiers for insertion, evacuation, and pathfinder missions that call for the use of multipurpose transportation and assault helicopters. Air Assault training focuses on the mastery of rappelling techniques and sling load procedures, skills that involve intense concentration and a commitment to safety and preparation. **Cadet Roy Kim** shares his experience from Air Assault school.

Cadet Roy Kim's Experience

In the summer of 2018 I was given the opportunity to attend U.S. Army's Air Assault School at the Warrior Training Center in Fort Benning. After In-Processing, I bunked in the barracks along with 270 other soldiers and began preparing for Day 0 where all attendees were required to complete a two-mile run, Confidence Course, and go through the fun events the Air Assault Instructors had thought up for us. Those who passed were rearranged into the barracks, now given the title of official students of the Air Assault school.

Phase 1 was relatively straight forward, starting our day as early as 0400 with physical training followed by a day of academic instruction on the workings of the different aircraft employed by the United States Military as well as hand and arm signals for guiding inbound aircraft. Phase 1 finished with a test on the material covered, a 6-mile ruck march, and an equipment inspection. Phase 2 was sling load training. By this point the school had fallen into a routine. We would wake up early in the morning and undergo physical training, rush back to the barracks for hygiene and chow, and head into a long day of instruction. When the day of testing for Phase 2 arrived, the tension in the air was palpable. Students had stayed up late the night before reviewing material and testing each other, yet the nerves kept the students tense and alert. At one point a Chaplain arrived to pray over the students, a rather novel but extremely welcome sight. Those who passed the testing were given ropes and rappelling gloves because preparation for the third and final phase had begun. Phase 3 was the most exciting part of Air Assault school, rappelling.

Instructors demonstrated how to tie a Swiss Seat, proper rappelling methodology, and belaying. Students were expected to know every small detail, and rightfully so as lives were now at stake. An incorrect knot or absent minded Soldier on belay could lead to serious injury or death.



Cadet Kim poses for a picture with one of his Air Assault classmates.

Summer Training Highlights

My Air Assault School Experience (Continued)

After two days of practicing on a sixty-foot rappel tower in which students executed the Hollywood rappel, half combat, and full combat rappel, the day came to rappel out of UH-60 Blackhawk. This was an unforgettable experience for me, not only was this the first time I had ever rode a helicopter, I was about to rappel down from it ninety feet in the air. After this rappel the school culminated with a 12-mile ruck march that had to be completed under 3 hours. After completing the ruck and passing inspection, students would go on to graduate to officially join the ranks of those fortunate enough to call themselves Air Assault Qualified Soldiers of the United States Army.

This experience was both an inspiring and humbling experience for me. Prior to the school I hadn't interacted with many Cadets from other schools. While attending the school I was fortunate enough to meet individuals that completely blew me away with their character, intelligence and physical capabilities. While it had been easy for me to become comfortable with where I was in my own battalion, seeing these fellow Cadets who were leagues ahead of me working their hardest, I was motivated to continue to push myself to grow in all aspects. It was a great inspiration to me to see other Cadets across the nation striving to better themselves every single day. It gives me hope and assurance that our great nation will always have those willing and dedicated to serve with all of their heart.

Of course, I would be remiss to not mention the support of my Cadre and fellow Cadets at the school. From arranging all the details of travel to inspecting all my gear to ensure it was ready for use, the Cadre of the Fighting Illini Battalion made this all possible. Cadets who were previous graduates of the Air Assault school gave not only constant encouragement but also advice on what to expect when attending the school.

In the end I am extremely grateful to have been given such an amazing opportunity and proud that I was able to represent myself and the Fighting Illini Battalion well. The lessons I learned and the people I met will continue to serve as inspiration to push myself harder and help those around me to greater heights.

Air Assault!



Summer Training Highlights

ILARNG Joint Readiness Training Center Rotations *By Fighting Illini Cadets; Edited by CDT Jaime Jew*

The Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) trains Soldiers and their leaders to deploy, fight, and win. Units participating at JRTC prepare, deploy, sustain, and redeploy better trained and ready to do their combat mission. The Center acts as a power projection platform to train all components to mobilize, validate, deploy, and redeploy. JRTC creates an Operational Environment that give soldiers the most realistic training across the full spectrum of conflict (existing and future). Below **Cadets Tyler Igunbor and Jaime Jew** from the Fighting Illini Battalion participated in this exercise with their Illinois Army National Guard units and offered to share their experiences.

CDT Tyler Igunbor—My Experience at JRTC with the ILARNG

This summer I had the opportunity to participate in the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at FT. Polk, Louisiana. I was able to go with fellow UIUC Cadet Keegan O’Donnell to accompany Bravo Company 634th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB) in this training. As officers, you will most likely participate at JRTC in your career at least once.

The exercise was 30 days long, in which 14 of those days were spent in the field. We arrived at the Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) and prepared our equipment and our vehicles for the field exercise. I was able to help a lot of the mechanics in my company with the repairing of High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs), Light Medium Tactical Vehicles (LMTVs), and even Strikers. As a Cadet, I was able to shadow the officers in my company to observe how they lead and get tasks accomplished. I watched a lot of the planning that occurred and was able to help the officers out by drafting Operations Orders (OPORDs).

When we were in the field, I was assigned to be a .50 caliber gunner on a Humvee. I was responsible for security and had the opportunity to issue a convoy brief at the beginning of some convoys. We were the security on convoys for medical evacuations and casualty transportation. Cadet O’Donnell and I also received the opportunity to have a couple classes on the FIM-92 Stingers. This is the primary individual fired air defense missile system in the Army. We were responsible for our company’s air defense, in which we would use the stinger to engage the enemy helicopters or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs).



Cadet Tyler Igunbor in full battle rattle ready to begin field training.

In our patrol base, our main responsibility was security. We maintained security by putting concertina wire around the ISB. We also dug foxholes and hasty firing positions to better defend ourselves from enemy forces. Our secondary mission was maintenance. The combat arms relied on us to do our jobs so that we could regenerate combat power so they could accomplish their mission. Overall, I really enjoyed this experience and learned a lot at JRTC. I look forward to sharing the knowledge I gained with the ROTC battalion in this upcoming semester.

Summer Training Highlights

ILARNG Joint Readiness Training Center Rotations (Continued)

CDT Jaime Jew—Annual Training at JRTC

As a Cadet in my 2nd year of ROTC at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (UIUC). I enlisted as an infantryman into the National Guard last year. This past summer for the Illinois National Guard, the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) had the opportunity to go to JRTC at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. As a Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) Cadet, I went with Alpha Troop 2-106 Cavalry Regiment.

The first week of JRTC took place in ISB Alexandria, Louisiana. Essentially the Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) acted as a Forward Operating Base (FOB) and staging ground to enter into the field training area A.K.A. “the box”. We spent five days unloading connexes, drawing equipment, conducting Pre-Combat Checks (PCCs) and Pre-Combat Inspections (PCIs), planning, drawing maps, and conducting rehearsals. From my experience at JRTC, the first week was brutal, the heat index reached between 100-110 degrees with 100% humidity throughout the week. It was hard getting used to the heat and being out in the sun constantly meant heat casualties were a big issue in the beginning of our rotation.

As an SMP, my responsibilities were more related to officer oriented tasks such as conducting Sensitive Inventory checks, reporting vehicle statuses to our Squadron CP (command post), setting up briefing areas using Terrain Model Kits (TMKs), preparing for OPORD briefs, and drafting sketch maps. Having to deal with not showering, eating Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs) for 3 weeks straight, operating with a significant lack of sleep, dealing with the difficult terrain and heat, and conducting common soldier tasks isn’t very glamorous, however, JRTC is incredibly valuable training to prepare soldiers for a deployment through its realistic training and simulations. We were thrown real life situations where we had to adapt and overcome hardships in order to accomplish the mission.

Though it was tough, I have to say that I had the opportunity to do a lot of HOOAH stuff, meaning I took part in clearing buildings, providing security as a truck gunner for convoys, conducting night operations, and supporting zone and route recons. When we were in “the box” it was game on. Full combat equipment, known as Full Battle Rattle, with Observer-Controllers (OCs) observing everything you do, from a tactical perspective. There were common safety things the OCs were killing people for, such as not having seat belts on, not having eye protection, or even taking off our Kevlar Helmets. They ensure the missions are done to standard and provide feedback once the mission is completed.

Overall, it was a major learning experience. I was attached to Delta Company for a week, which allowed me to observe how distribution, logistics, and transportation operate. I also worked with our CAV Squadron Personnel Officer (S-1) and Brigade headquarters, providing me with a wide view on how the 33rd IBCT operates at the Company and Battalion level. This allowed me to see how different units synchronize with each other. I also met a lot of great leaders from my unit and other units and I appreciate how all of them were invested in developing me as a future officer.



CDT Jaime Jew next to one of the M-1 tanks of A Troop, 2-106 CAV

Summer Training Highlights

Project GO

By MS-III Cadets; Edited by Second Lieutenant Kurt Kuzur

Project Global Officer (Project GO) is a Department of Defense initiative aimed at improving the language skills, provide regional expertise, and intercultural communication skills of future military officers. This program offers institutional grants to U.S schools with large ROTC student enrollment and connects students from all over the world with institutions that provide language and cultural training at no cost. This year **Cadets Maritza Palafox, Ginny Fulk, and Cullen O’Connor** from the Fighting Illini Battalion were fortunate to have this opportunity and gladly agreed to share their experience.



Cadet Ginny Fulk with classmates take a tour visiting Little Italy in San Diego during their free time.

friends and I would go to local beaches, eat downtown, go hiking, and go to San Diego Padres games. There were endless things to do in the city, so we were never bored. It was also really neat to be in such a military city. We got to see the USS Midway and visit the Naval bases around the city.

Project Global Officer is a very competitive program, and I am very thankful to have such supportive Cadre and professors at the University of Illinois who wrote me letters of recommendation and supported me along the way. The skills I gained in this program will be very valuable in my future career as an Army officer and has opened even more opportunities to me, such as being an Army Foreign Area Officer. I am looking forward to this upcoming semester to continue my Arabic studies and be back working with my fellow Cadets!

CDT Ginny Fulk– Exploring the Arabic Culture

This summer, I was fortunate enough to take part in the Project Global Officer program; a Department of Defense program with the goal of teaching Cadets critical language skills. I spent my summer living in San Diego, California studying Arabic language and culture.

A typical day of Project GO started with class from 9AM to 2PM. Twice a week, we had cultural excursions until 5PM. We went on various trips around the city to practice our language skills and learn more about Arab culture. We ate at Arabic restaurants, attended Friday prayer at a Mosque, and learned Arabic dances.

Outside of class, our time was our own (if you got all your homework done) to explore San Diego! My Project GO



Cadet Ginny Fulk and classmates attending Friday prayer at the local mosque.

Summer Training Highlights

Project GO (Continued)

CDT Maritza Palafox— Sunny Days in San Diego

This past summer, I was fortunate enough to travel to San Diego, California on a Project GO scholarship through Army ROTC. Project GO is an organization that helps Cadets in every branch learn a new language and culture through different Universities that are partnered with them. During the application process, I applied to many languages but Portuguese stood out the most to me. When I got the “Congratulations!” email, I knew that this summer was going to be the best one yet.

This was my first time traveling to California and learning a new language other than Spanish. As a first generation Latina, culture has a special place in my heart. The classes consisted of 18 credit hours in just three months. Going to class five days a week from nine in the morning until three o’clock in the afternoon made it seem as if those three months were going to be long. However, in just three months, my classmates and I learned about the beautiful culture and language of Brazil. Despite the fact that we were all excited about living in Sunny San Diego, we were excited about being able to speak a completely different language. As we advanced from Beginning Portuguese to Intermediate Portuguese, we realized the amount of progress we made from month to month. We all took Portuguese very seriously because we wanted to excel in the Oral Proficiency Exam that we had to take towards the end of the Program. Despite the fact that everyone wanted to do well individually, we also wanted to help each other out. We went to multiple Brazilian Steakhouses, ordered our food in Portuguese, listened to popular Brazilian music and even started to think in Portuguese.

I recall my Brazilian Professor constantly telling my class that we will speak so much in Portuguese that we will eventually hate it. Although he was right, my classmates and I loved the fact that we were able to speak a whole different language in just a short amount of time. I was amazed on how much we have learned and I realized how crucial it is for everyone to emphasize culture and language. As future Army Officers, we will have a variety of soldiers that we will be taking care of. These are soldiers that speak different languages and have different cultural backgrounds. It is important to know their holidays, religious practices and mannerisms in order for one to understand and relate to them personally. As an Officer, caring for these soldiers is and should always be emphasized, and learning other cultures and languages is a strong symbol of caring. Despite the fact that I now confuse three languages when I speak, I can also personally say that I made friendships that will last a lifetime and opened my mind to an amazing and beautiful culture.



Cadet Maritza Palafox and classmates visiting the Cabrillo National Monument.



Cadet Maritza Palafox and classmates celebrate finishing their last day of Portuguese classes.

Summer Training Highlights

Project GO (Continued)

CDT Cullen O'Connor—Nizman, Oman



Cadet Cullen O'Connor in Birkat Al-Mouz exploring the surrounding wadis. These mountain goats belonged to local farmers but roamed freely through the desert.

This past summer, I was blessed with the opportunity to learn Modern Standard Arabic (FusHa) through the University of Nizwa, located in the Sultanate of Oman. This opportunity was presented through Project GO (Global Officer), which is a Department of Defense initiative to have future Army officers travel the world to develop understandings of critical languages. Project GO gives full scholarships to Cadets to study a critical language of their choice. Cadets are able to choose between studying domestically or internationally. For Arabic, those who applied to travel internationally had the option of traveling to Morocco, Jordan, or Oman.

I lived in Nizwa for nine weeks out of the summer and attended the University of Nizwa from 8AM-5PM, Sunday through Thursday. It was an intensive and immersive program that challenged each and every student. The schooling was long and tiring at times, but every beginner student was able to form an incredible base of Arabic knowledge by the end of

the nine weeks. During our school days, we were taught formal Arabic for three hours of the day, Omani dialect for one hour of the day, and had the remaining hours to practice our speaking skills with designated one-on-one language partners. I was able to meet many local Omanis who were willing to help improve my vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. I had many awesome opportunities to travel the country with the natives and to attend dinners, religious ceremonies, and even weddings. In the end, we were able to learn in nine weeks what students typically learn in one year and I have obtained a deep understanding of Omani culture.

This program has done much more for my education than just establishing a fundamental understanding of Arabic. It has taught me how to adapt to new environments, how to quickly adjust to foreign cultures, and has helped create everlasting friendships. I will continue my Arabic education here at the University of Illinois and am enrolled in Intermediate Arabic for this fall semester. I am now extremely confident in my capabilities and have set goals to reach fluency in the coming years. I hope to return to Oman to visit those who have made this learning experience all possible.



Cadet Cullen O'Connor in al-Hamra with his Tutor Nasser al-Said. Nasser was his conversationalist during his entire stay.

Fall Preview

Fighting Illini Battalion Looks Ahead to an Event-Filled Semester

By Cadet Battalion Commander Patrick Reynolds

This fall, the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion will enter its 151st school year of training and commissioning excellent Army Officers. In keeping with this proud history, the program is already looking forward to an exceptional semester. MS-IV Cadets are hard at work planning all of the semester's events and training opportunities, and are eager to witness the MS-I, MS-II, and MS-III cadets executing these tasks. Events include COP, Leadership Labs, the Ranger Challenge Competition, and the Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). All occur within the first six weeks of the semester, ensuring the Cadets will be off and running from the very start of the year.

The Battalion's first event, the Cadet Orientation Program (COP), occurs a week before the semester begins. This challenging four-day course is designed to be an opportunity for incoming freshman Cadets to be introduced to the Army, while offering returning sophomore and Junior Cadets a chance to hone in on their leadership skills. Incoming Cadets will be taught how to properly salute, march, and conduct Physical Readiness Training (PRT), while also building friendships and bonds through scavenger hunts and squad competitions.

Immediately following COP, Cadets will begin conducting weekly Leadership Labs in order to practice critical Army skills that they are taught during their Military Science courses. During the month of September, Cadets will be taught how to properly use a map and compass during the Land Navigation labs, how to lead Cadets through ambushes during Battle Drill labs, and how to properly produce Operations Orders in the field during Troop Leading Procedures Labs. These labs are cumulative, meaning that by the end of the semester the Cadets will be fully prepared to execute a full length mission that utilizes all of these skills at once.

The majority of Cadets of the Battalion opt to participate in voluntary clubs, too. One such club is the Ranger Club, a physically and mentally demanding program which prepares Cadets for the competitive Ranger Challenge Competition every Fall. Through Ranger Club, Cadets further study Battle Drills, Troop Leading Procedures, and weapons knowledge while also participating in rigorous PRT sessions six days a week. Another popular club is the demanding Ruck Club that boasts a roster of over 40 Cadets. The Ruck club serves to prepare Cadets not only for FTX and Advanced Camp, but also for the Norwegian Foot March which occurs in November. This 18.7-mile ruck is one of the most challenging feats that a Cadet may face, but thanks to a sound practice schedule the club boasts a 100% completion rate for several years straight.

All of this training culminates during the Fall FTX at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. For four days in late September, Cadets apply the skills they have learned and practice Land Navigation, ruck marching, and the Field Leadership Reaction Course, in order to better prepare them for Advanced Camp, as well as honing in on their leadership abilities.

All in all, the Fighting Illini will be busy this semester, but I am more than confident that they will not only meet but exceed expectations. Thanks to Cadre and MS-IV Cadets planning, strong MS-III Cadet leadership, and faithful execution, the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion will excel at any challenge it may face.



Alumni Update

The U.S. Army and Nutritional Biochemistry *By Colonel (Retired) Wayne Askew; Edited by Mr. Eric Ashworth*

Working with the Millini, it is exciting to read about the history of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Program and the people that filled its ranks. Every once and awhile, an alumnus is kind enough to share his or her experiences with us. In this edition, I would like to share a summary of a letter we received from Wayne Askew, UIUC class of 1964, and retired Colonel of the U.S. Army. All cadets reading Wayne's letter will gain a better understanding on just how big the Army is and how the Army needs many skill sets to carry out the missions our country asks of us. Enjoy:

Cadets,

My career experience has been quite a bit different from what most ROTC graduates would experience as they transition to a career in the military and later civilian life after their initial ROTC obligation. No heroics or valor here, no combat stories, just an unusual alternative military career route taken as choices unfolded along the way from ROTC at the University of Illinois to the US Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (USARIEM), Natick, MA.

So how does one end up with a Ph.D. in Nutritional Biochemistry and a Colonel in the Medical Service Corps when he originally started out commissioning from ROTC as an Air Defense Artillery Officer? Well, I can thank my academic advisor at the University of Illinois, Dr. Kenneth Harshbarger, Department of Animal Nutrition, who was a LTC in the Reserves at the time, who offered me a graduate research assistantship if I would request an active duty deferral and earn my Master's degree first. That seemed to be a good idea at the time, so I applied for and received the deferment. Upon completing my Master's degree, I found I was becoming quite interested in research in Nutrition and Biochemistry, so I applied for a further deferment to work on my Ph.D. at Michigan State University. I received my Ph.D. in 1969.

I requested a branch transfer to the Medical Service Corps prior to reporting to Ft Sam Houston for Officer basic training. Branch transfer was granted, assigning me as a 68C Research Biochemist to the U. S. Army Medical Research & Nutrition Laboratory (USAMRNL). As the Vietnam War was winding down, I was assigned to work on aspects of nutritional augmentation of military performance and assist in discharging a Surgeon General of the Army responsibility to conduct nutrition adequacy surveys of military populations. Before arriving, I inquired about first going to Airborne training but was told "...the Army doesn't need airborne biochemists" or something to the effect that biochemists were "chair-borne not airborne". Probably both good and bad advice; jump school was never a qualification for any of my duty assignments, but the badge would have probably helped navigating promotion boards. I thought I was going to remain



Alumni Update

The U.S. Army and Nutritional Biochemistry (Continued)

Captain forever due to the large number of company grade officers in the ranks following Vietnam, not a whole lot of officer turnover was going on at that time.

I finally was selected for promotion to Major and became Radiation Protection (RPO) for Letterman Army Research Institute, Presidio of San Francisco. Next, the Army sent me to Tripler Army Medical Center to be Assistant Chief of Clinical Investigation and helped my beleaguered Medical Corps boss pass an IG inspection of a previously rather haphazardly run research clinic. Prior to departing Tripler I was promoted to LTC and helped organize two field research studies of soldier performance at altitude. We conducted these at the summit of Mauna Kea with base operations at the Pohakuloa Training Area on the Big Island. Following the Clinical Investigation assignment, I was sent to USARIEM to be Chief of Military Nutrition Research for the Army. While at USARIEM, our unit coordinated aspects of ration development with the Quartermaster Corps Food Engineering and Development activity at Natick Laboratories. Our responsibility was to provide, on behalf of the Surgeon General, nutritional input for ration formulation and to conduct field tests of new rations to establish adequacy and safety. Love Army field rations or hate them, I had a small part in the development of the MRE, Ration Cold Weather, Ration Lightweight 30 days, Long Range Patrol Ration as well as being involved in testing and evaluating nutritional adequacy during Ranger and Special Forces training. Our research and clinical measurements resulted in an increase in calories provided during Ranger training school. We established that the rigors of Ranger School training and inherent caloric restriction compromised the soldier's ability to maintain body core temperature. The combination of sleep deprivation and food restriction blunted the thermoregulatory response to cold exposure putting them at risk of hypothermia under certain operational situations. Our recommendation to add a small amount of additional calories to the training program reduced medical risk to participants without altering the scope and objectives of the training program. I was promoted to COL at USARIEM in 1992 and, as I approached 25 years of active duty, began looking for possibilities for a "second career" after the Army.

I retired from the Army in 1994 and became Chair of the Division of Nutrition, College of Health, at the University of Utah where I supervised graduate training in nutrition and dietetics, taught human nutrition and sports performance and conducted further research on nutrition for environmental extremes. I retired from academia in 2014 and was appointed Professor Emeritus. I found both my civilian academic training and active duty military experience very useful in my University "second career" and have no regrets in following this rather unusual career path that was professionally satisfying as a Military Officer as well as a University Professor. The organizational, decision making and research skills I learned in the Army were very useful (with a few modifications) in leading a University Academic Department. I wish you the best in your careers.

GO ILLINI!

Wayne Askew

COL, USA RET

University of Illinois ROTC Class of 1964

Alumni & Cadre Update

Alumni and Cadre In The News

Colonel Mark Alessia, current commander of the Illinois National Guard 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT), led approximately 4,500 Soldiers in a month of combat training exercises at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana. Several of his soldiers were Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) Cadets from UIUC. Below is a link to an interview with *The State Journal-Register* detailing the planning and effort that went into the successful completion of this training event:

<http://www.sj-r.com/news/20180722/someone-to-know-col-mark-alessia-leads-massive-military-training-exercise>

New Cadre Arrive to Support the Fighting Illini

The Fighting Illini have been operating for some time with personnel shortages. Fortunately for us, several new cadre members arrived at the beginning of the fall semester to provide badly needed support to the Cadet Battalion. We would like to introduce our newest cadre members:

Major Jennifer Soderlind arrives to the ROTC program after nine years as an Active Army Finance Officer (2006-2015) and three years with the Illinois Army National Guard as an Acquisitions Officer (2015-2018). She received a BS in Chemistry and her active duty commission in 2006 from the United States Military Academy. She developed her passion for teaching as an instructor for the Finance Basic Officer Leader's Course at Fort Jackson, SC and throughout her career as an Army Master Resilience Trainer. MAJ Soderlind is a Mahomet, IL native, and she currently resides there with her husband, Mike, and their two children (Knox and Hollie).



Mr. Jerry Stocker is an intelligence Officer (captain) in the U.S. Army Reserves and is currently assigned to the 649th Regional Support Group (RSG) in Cedar Rapids, IA. Jerry commissioned in 2012 from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) where he received an M.S. in Applied Statistics. He started his career with the 325th expeditionary Military Intelligence Battalion (e-MIB) out of Fort Devens, MA. There, he served as a Platoon Leader, Battalion Personnel Officer (S-1), and Company Commander for a Human Intelligence (HUMINT) Company. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2017 as a Detachment Commander. Mr. Stocker has experience in the world of education, having taught mathematics at New York Military Academy from 2014 to 2017.



Mr. Frankie Exum arrives after 16 years in United States Army Recruiting Command as an Brigade Master Trainer and Senior Guidance Counselor (1997-2013) and 12 years as an Active Army Administrative Specialist (1983-1996). He received a BS in Administration while on Active Duty. He taught as a Brigade Master Trainer for the 3rd Recruiting Brigade at Fort Knox, KY and throughout his career as an Company Trainer and Guidance Counselor in the Chicago Recruiting Battalion. Mr. Exum is from Washington, DC, where he plans on returning to retire one day. Frank will support the Cadets as our Human Resource Assistant.



Mr. Marlon McSwyne arrives to the ROTC program with a solid knowledge base of the U.S. Army with 22 years of service to his country. He entered service in 1993 as a vehicle mechanic and would eventually change his MOS to a unit supply NCO where he served in multiple Active and Reserve units. He served as a recruiter in USAREC with the mission of putting young men and women in uniform for this great country. He ended his active duty service as a career counselor/retention. Marlon will support the Cadet Battalion as our Supply Technician.

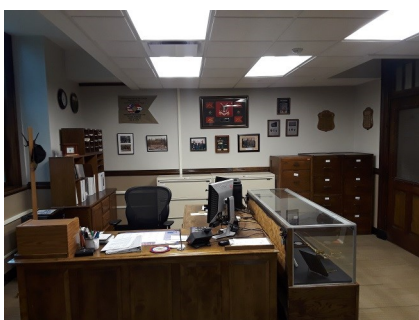


Army ROTC Department Update

The Army ROTC Department Renovation is Complete & a New Military Science Course is Offered

By Mr. Eric Ashworth

In August, the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Department returned to the first floor of the Armory. This 15-month renovation project modernized the south-side of the Armory and it was completed in time to return prior to the fall semester starting. New lighting and carpeting were found in each room, centralized heating and cooling were installed, double-paned windows replaced older windows, a new lift was added, walls were repainted and woodwork was stained. We hope you stop by and check out our “new look” the next time you are on campus.



The renovated Scholarship and Enrollment Office



The Cadet Lounge



The renovated Conference Room

This fall, the Military Science 120 Course was offered to all University of Illinois students for the first time. This course titled, *Introduction to the United States Armed Forces*, is a joint effort between the Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC Departments and summarizes why the nation has a military, how it interacts with government, what are the historic events that shaped the military we have today and what key issues face our military forces today. The course filled to capacity prior to the first class. Interest in the military is high as over two-thirds of the students participating in the class are not associated with any of the ROTC Departments.

Finally, thanks again to all of our donors to the **Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund** and the current operating fund, known today as the **Army ROTC Alumni Fund**. These donations support Cadet Training and allow us to continue to provide exciting training opportunities to our Cadets. In 2018, we fielded several Ranger Buddy teams and their travel and lodging expenses were paid for by our donors. We also sent 26 Cadets to the Bataan Memorial Ruck March. All of them completed the tough 26.2-mile ruck march. This training would not be possible without your donations so thank you for your generosity. This year we have a Norwegian Ruck March competition, the Ranger Buddy Competition, a return to Bataan and fielding a rifle team in the works. There is even discussion about returning the Pershing Rifles to the ROTC Department. So your efforts are not wasted or sitting idle. Should you wish to continue to support, please 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 (11774561)** or **Army ROTC Alumni Fund (11330418)**. Thank you for your time, your financial support and your interest in the Fighting Illini Battalion.



MILS-120 students participate in a military-style war game to better understand the concept of the “Fog of War.”

Hall of Fame Nomination

One of the biggest honors of the Cadet Battalion is to be selected to the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Hall of Fame. Currently there are 28 members of our Hall of Fame and a summary of their individual accomplishments can be found at the southeast entrance of the Armory Building. We always accept nominations and hold a board every other year. The next board will be held in the fall of 2019 with a planned induction ceremony during the spring 2020 semester. If you know of someone worthy of this recognition, please submit a nomination packet using the following form:

UIUC Army ROTC Hall of Fame Nomination Form

1. Your Name: _____
2. Your Email: _____
3. Your Phone Number: _____ Best time to call: _____

NOMINEE INFORMATION:

Name: _____

Date Graduated UIUC (if alumnus): _____

Degree(s) Achieved at UIUC (or other University): _____

Will this award be Posthumously? _____ Yes _____ No

If no, do you have contact info for Nominee (Address, City, Zip and/or email/phone):

If yes, do you have contact info for Nominee's Family: _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please provide any info you may have (Family member's name, address to include city and zip/email/phone number):

On a separate sheet of paper, please TYPE a brief military biography listing the awards the nominee received during service along with a short story on why the nominee should be considered for the Hall of Fame (e.g., contributions to the community where the nominee may have retired, significant contributions to the US Army and/or significant contributions to the University of Illinois).

If the nominee is selected, you may be contacted to provide a picture (recent or historical) of the nominee or for direction to where a picture may be found of the nominee.

Please return this form with the nomination biography to arotc@illinois.edu.



Support The Fighting Illini Battalion

University of
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Recruiting, Donations
Visits, Expertise

Fighting Illini Army ROTC has strong roots, dating back to the founding of the University under the Morrill Land-Grant Act. This current academic year, 2018 marks 150 years of military training at the University of Illinois. We hope you have enjoyed our small part of the great history of the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion.



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THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



FORGING STRONG LEADERS SINCE 1868

