

The MILLINI



A publication from
THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of Military Science

THE STORE

Fighting Illini Battalion Hoodie: \$37



Battalion Polo Unisex/Ladies Cut: \$35



Ranger Buddy Hoodie: \$35



The Fighting Illini Battalion store has been updated with some of the Cadet designs from the past year. However, the internet site we have used in the past is no longer operational. If you are interested in any of these items, please email what product you are interested in and your size to arotc@illinois.edu and we will place the order for you. You will still receive your order straight from the vendor. If you have questions about any of these items, please contact Eric Ashworth at eashwort@illinois.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Inside this issue:

Fighting Illini Battalion Store	2
Message from the Professor of Military Science	4
Message from the Senior Military instructor	5
MS-I Class Update	6
MS-II Class Update	7-8
MS-III Class Update	9
MS-IV Class Commissioning	10-11
US Army Reserve & National Guard Opportunities	12-13
Cadet Spotlights	14-21
Fighting Illini Social Media Update	12-23
Battalion Training Events	24-28
Keeping in Touch with the Fighting Illini Battalion	29



Fighting Illini Battalion Cadets teach a Cub Scout Troop about flag folding ceremonies; in 10 years, we look forward to having these young patriots join our ranks!



The Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion
Forging Strong Leaders Since 1868
 Army ROTC: (217) 244-1407 arotc@illinois.edu Armory, Room 113



Message from the Professor of Military Science

by MAJ Daniel Johnson

Greetings Fighting Illini! The Spring semester was a unique experience for every Cadet and Cadre member. One continuity throughout this unprecedented semester, however, was that the Fighting Illini Battalion continued to develop leaders for our Nation.

The Fighting Illini Battalion began the semester welcoming our newest Cadets into the program and then ended with the sendoff of 14 commissioned officers to serve as leaders in the Profession of Arms.

The semester started with the induction of our newest Cadets into the program during our winter version of the Cadet Orientation Program (COP). It wasn't long after COP that the Fighting Illini Battalion shifted into high gear and conducted challenging leadership training. The program incorporated several new training events into the semester's training calendar. Those events included Saturday labs for MS-III Cadets, the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), and a combined Field Training Exercise with three other universities. The Fighting Illini Battalion was training hard and executing first class training events throughout the first half of the semester, which was a sight to behold. Unfortunately, COVID-19 became an obstacle that disrupted the program's ability to develop leaders through traditional means. The COVID-19 adversity, however, brought out the best in the Fighting Illini Battalion. Due to the Cadets' resiliency and creativity, the Fighting Illini Battalion planned and conducted several virtual events that were initially thought to be impossible. In the second half of the (virtual) semester, the Fighting Illini Battalion utilized platforms such as Zoom to conduct virtual classes and leadership labs, a virtual Day in the Life of a Cadet, virtual FIB formations, virtual commissioning ceremonies and virtual contracting events. In the face of the COVID-19 adversity, the Fighting Illini Battalion's Cadets proved they will always accomplish the mission.

I could not be more proud of a group of Cadets than this past semester's MS-IVs. The Cadre challenged them and demanded they use the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and Operations Orders (OPORDs) as they led the program – and the MS-IVs exceeded our expectations and demonstrated excellence in their efforts. This year's MS-IVs left their mark on the program as they set an incredible leadership example for emerging Cadets to emulate. I am encouraged knowing that these talented and motivated MS-IVs will be joining the Army Team as commissioned officers.

Most of us cannot wait to put the "COVID-19" semester behind us and get back to some sense of normalcy in the upcoming fall semester. While the Spring semester was a difficult time, the Fighting Illini Battalion's Cadets and Cadre learned a great deal about themselves. I am confident those lessons learned will enhance the program's capability to develop leaders for the Profession of Arms. I am extremely proud of the way the Fighting Illini Battalion's Cadets navigated through the turbulent Spring semester and I look forward to watching their continued leadership growth in the future.



ILLINI!



Message from the Senior Military Instructor

by **MSG Timothy Collier**

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor once said “There are uses to adversity, and they don’t reveal themselves until tested. Whether it’s serious illness, financial hardship, or the simple constraint of parents who speak limited English, difficulty can tap unexpected strengths.” I personally find it comforting during times of crisis or adversity, to reach into the past and leverage the advice of those who came before us. While the current COVID-19 crisis we are facing is unprecedented in our lifetime, it certainly is not the first time humans have had to endure a crisis on a global scale. The Spring 2020 semester for the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) has been a trying time, but it has also presented an opportunity. I can tell you, from my foxhole at least, the Cadre and Cadets of the FIB have accepted the unique challenges with open arms, and I am confident that we will all come out the other side of this pandemic better Cadets, Soldiers, and Leaders.



I would venture to guess, that unless somebody was especially prescient, not one cadre member or Cadet could have posited a scenario where the entire Battalion would not return to school after Spring Break. It has been a Herculean effort on the part of Cadets and Cadre alike to ensure that despite the limitations inherent to distance learning, this Battalion continues to train the highest quality leaders of tomorrow. I would like to especially highlight the efforts of Mrs. Emily Brown who has been relentless in ensuring that every Cadet has their academic and administrative needs met. Thank you Emily.

I see the inability to interact with each other face-to-face as the number one challenge we have faced. The day-to-day interactions that happen among Cadets and Cadre have traditionally served as the lynchpin of leader development. Organized PRT, daily formations, and formal and informal professional discussions have been a mainstay of how the Army and ROTC programs build teams, instill discipline, and foster esprit de corps. The restrictions in place have severely limited our ability to conduct business as usual. However, this has served as a forcing function that ultimately led our Battalion to begin fully utilizing some of the systems and technology that may have been neglected in the past. It has also highlighted the resilient nature of our Cadre and Cadets, a character trait that is key to every good leader. The adversity we are currently facing has also spurred a bit of creativity. Cadre have had to transition to online delivery methods such as Blackboard and Zoom. This has forced cadre instructors to discover new ways to encourage collaboration and facilitate discussion. Microsoft Teams (a program I honestly did not even know existed before this) has become a platform to conduct our cadre sync meetings. Our traditional Day in the Life of a Cadet was done remotely through Zoom. The Professor of Military Science is using Zoom to have a virtual Battalion formation so that we can “gather” the entire Battalion together again. The Cadet staff has had to use virtual means to conduct planning and run the Battalion. These are just a small sampling of the myriad ways in which Cadets and Cadre have had to adjust the way our Battalion operates.

Ultimately, the FIB will come out of this experience much stronger and resilient. I continue to be impressed every day by the quality of leaders that our program is producing and by the professionalism of our Cadre. In the immortal words of every Infantryman ever, we must embrace the suck. However, I would like to leave you with a quote from Walt Disney that is a bit more articulate than that: “All the adversity I’ve had in my life, all my troubles and obstacles, have strengthened me.. You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.” I, for one, take solace in those words. Stay safe. Stay healthy.



ARMY ROTC

FIGHTING ILLINI!



MS-I Class Update

A Life Changing Experience

By Cadet Jay Hatkar, MS-I Cadet

There was a time in my life I told myself, “I would never join the military”. A lot has changed since then. After my first semester at the University of Illinois (UIUC), I realized I needed to do something to change my life, and chase my true passions that I was too afraid to ever admit. As I found out more about what ROTC was and had a few conversations with Mr. Ashworth, I made my decision. I decided to join ROTC my second semester here at UIUC, and it forever changed my life.

Arriving for my first day of the Cadet Orientation Program (COP), I was all out of sorts. From accidentally wearing earrings to PT to terribly long hair, I looked like a complete mess. After tightening up the hair and removing the jewelry, I soon began to learn the nuances of what we do in ROTC, such as Drill & Ceremony, warm-up drills prior to Physical Readiness Training (PRT) and a lot more, all thrown at me quite quickly with little time to process. After one week, I felt all over the place: excited, but overwhelmed.

By the end of COP week, as we left to grab our stuff after final formation, someone randomly mentioned “You want to join Ranger Club?”, which was followed immediately by four different people warning me of the tough time commitment it presents, which immediately intrigued me. After conversations with Cadet Irace, I joined Ranger Club, and my journey began.

As the weeks continued, my life had completely shifted, instead of odd hours of sleep where you’d be up until 4:00am and in bed until noon, I was sleeping early and getting up by 5:00am, getting a bright start to the day. With my commitments in Ranger Club, along with getting to know the Battalion more and more, I started to feel part of something special, a large family all with a common goal. As a new MS-I Cadet, I slowly began to find my place within the group, along with learning bits from my peers and superiors about life in ROTC and beyond. My curious nature must’ve grown increasingly annoying, but was still met with extreme positivity whenever I had questions about the simplest things, regarding ROTC and life in general. That was the most rewarding part of the Battalion, everyone’s willingness to help each other learn and grow together.

While the weeks flew by, I was also preparing to submit my scholarship application to the March Board to potentially receive a federal scholarship with ROTC. With the help of Ms. Brown, Mr. Ashworth and my fellow Cadets guiding me in the right direction, I was lucky enough to receive a 3-Year Federal Scholarship with the Battalion. The moment I was accepted by the board, I knew this was the start of something special. I knew all the weeks I spent with the program, either working out & learning from MS-IV Cadet Roy Kim the keys to getting stronger, or my time with Ranger Club and the Battalion, learning about the Army, I knew I was genuinely committed to this program, and surely enough, I was recognized for it.

This program turned my life around. From being a kid who had no clue where I wanted my life to go, not even confident in my choice of college, to being part of the Fighting Illini Battalion and knowing I want to serve my country, I finally found my passion and understood what exactly I want to do with my life. Without ROTC, I have no idea what my life would be like, nor do I want to think of what my life would even be like. Illinois Army ROTC gave me my purpose, the Fighting Illini Battalion gave me my family, and I am forever grateful.



Cadet Jay Hatkar (right) receives his Fighting Illini Battalion PRT shirt

MS-II Class Update

Challenges and Growth in a New Year

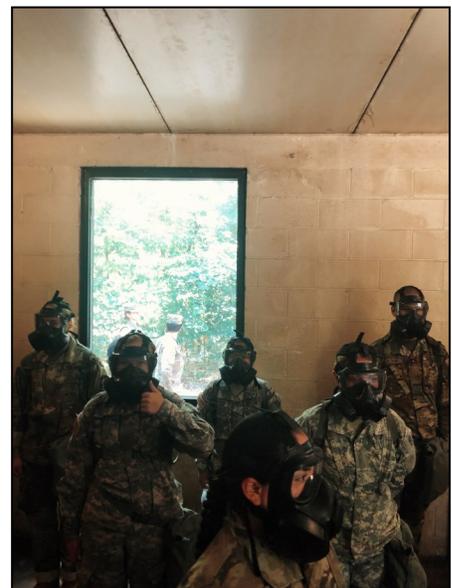
By Cadet Heidi Kirchen, MS-II Cadet

Although it was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic now challenging us all, my MS-II year was filled with new and exciting experiences in the Fighting Illini Battalion. After graduating from Basic Camp last summer, I was eager to come back to school and the ROTC program with a better understanding of the different skills I had learned over the 30 days I had spent at Fort Knox. I set different goals that I desired to accomplish over my MS-II year such as gaining confidence, becoming more physically fit for the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), and lastly, getting into Nursing school.

First semester was filled with a ton of different training opportunities that introduced the MS-I Cadets to so many different skills. The Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) was a great event that allowed Cadets in each class to test their knowledge and push themselves physically and mentally. The Leader's Reaction Course (LRC), the Confidence Course and the rappel tower challenged me in so many different ways during the three days we were at Camp Atterbury. However, during our FTX, I bonded with my squad so much more and got the chance to meet new Cadets that I never talked to before. Seeing how hard everyone pushed themselves during that weekend motivated me to continue doing my best at the FTX and as a MS-II for the remainder of the year. As the semester ended, I was inspired by the Fighting Illini Battalion Hall of Fame Ceremony as well as the award ceremony for the accomplishments of Cadets this semester which made me look forward to the spring 2020 semester even more.

When I got the news over winter break that I was going to be a class section leader and a Squad Leader for the spring semester, I was really nervous to go back to school. It took some time to adjust to the new responsibilities I was given, but the members of my squad and my platoon leadership made it a lot more enjoyable and not as hard as I had expected. I really enjoyed being a Squad Leader and am glad that I had the opportunity to do so. I have gained so much more confidence in myself as a leader because of the Cadets and Cadre that supported me within the program this year. Thanks to the encouragement of my peers and Cadre, I was accepted into the University of Illinois Nursing program for Fall 2021!

I was looking forward to continuing my time as a MS-II for the rest of the spring semester, especially since there were so many events to look forward to. When I got the news that school was going to be online for the rest of the year I was pretty upset, just like I'm sure every other college student was. However, being a leader and an Army Officer requires you to adjust to change and to keep yourself and others motivated. Seeing how proactive the Fighting Illini Battalion is during this pandemic made me realize how great this program and the people within it are. I am so grateful for the time and opportunities I had as a MS-II Cadet at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign this year.



Cadet Heidi Kirchen braves the CBRN Chamber alongside her fellow MS II Cadets during the 2019 Summer Basic Camp.

MS-II Class Update, cont.

Marching Onward and Growing Stronger!

By Cadet Carla LeClercq, MS-II Cadet

My decision to join the Army ROTC program was, contrary to most, a rather spontaneous one. I was informed of the program and everything it had to offer in the morning, and was enrolled as a Cadet by that very afternoon. Having no previous military knowledge of any sort, I was nervous about being behind my classmates, but I also soon realized that everyone was there to support and help each other become the best they could be. The ROTC training on top of a college student workload was challenging, but I came to love the feeling of starting my day before everyone else and doing more than most were capable of.

Fast forward to my MS-II year, due to the guidance from supportive Cadre members and more experienced Cadets, I saw significant improvement in my abilities as a Cadet; my fitness scores increased, I had a better understanding of Army core concepts, and built friendships with many classmates. Along with other MS-II Cadets, we started to understand our role in the battalion and jumped into leadership roles whenever necessary. I was given a Squad Leader position, which allowed me to practice my leadership skills and help newer Cadets properly execute what was asked of them. I also competed in Ranger Challenge, which although mentally and physically grueling, looking back at it was one of the best experiences of my life. I highly encourage motivated Cadets to give Ranger Club a try, as it has allowed me and many Cadets to take our training up a notch, and enhance our skills in areas we were lacking. At the start of my ROTC career, a 3-mile ruck was reason enough for tears, but thanks to Ranger club I can now proudly ruck over 10 miles without crying. Finally, towards the end of my MS-II year, I was honored to receive a 2-Year Army ROTC scholarship.

Looking forward, I am eager to become an MS-III and take my training to another level. I battled with a lot of uncertainty on whether to contract with the Army my MS-II year, but realized I couldn't imagine my college life without a program as great as this one. I realize next year will be filled with the challenges of newfound leadership positions and assessments of our competencies as Army Cadets. I have no doubt we will all continue to learn and improve in preparation to become officers in the military.



Cadet Carla LeClercq and her battle buddies post during the Range Challenge competition this fall



Cadet Joseph Lim takes a photo of Cadet Carla LeClercq and her Range Challenge teammates

MS-III Class Update

Overcoming Obstacles and Adversity

By Cadets Gabriel Cross & Baylie Mabbett, MS-III Cadets

For Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Cadets, the MS-III year is notorious for bringing new challenges, responsibilities and opportunities to Cadets. Chief of these opportunities are the new positions in the Battalion that MS-IIIs are able to hold: Squad Leader (SL), Platoon Sergeant (PSG), Platoon Leader (PL) and First Sergeant (1SG). These new leadership positions require MS-III Cadets to shift their mindsets regarding their role in the Battalion. Throughout their MS-I and MS-II years, Cadets are responsible for learning what it means to be a Cadet in ROTC and refining their basic Soldiering skills. However, once a Cadet begins their MS-III year, they are put in leadership positions throughout the Battalion. This means they could be in charge of anywhere from 6 Cadets as an SL or nearly 40 Cadets as a 1SG.

Arguably the biggest hurdle of the fall semester in ROTC is the Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). Fall FTX is a weekend of training that allows Cadets to be familiarized with a variety of tasks and challenges that they are likely to face in the future as Cadets. For the Fall 2019 FTX, we were both PSGs. This meant that the FTX was a training event that allowed us to get comfortable with being in front of a Platoon (about 20 Cadets) and leading them through the events throughout the weekend. This caused our FTX experiences to be vastly different from any of the years before. Rather than being concerned with only how we perform throughout the weekend, we were responsible for the wellbeing of our Platoons. Even though this caused some stress and headaches, for all the MS-III Cadets, that weekend was undoubtedly the most beneficial FTX for our MS-III class and set the stage for the rest of the year.

Second semester was more tactically focused for the MS-III Cadets. We were getting closer and closer to advanced camp, so we were really fine-tuning and testing our abilities. One thing that helped us was briefing missions given by mock Operation Orders (OPORDs) in our military science class. We would get a Fragmentation Order (FRAGO) about a week in advance, and brief an OPORD with our Terrain Model Kits (TMKs) to cadre and our classmates the following week. This really helped us build our confidence, organizational skills, and tactical mindset. Our class constantly improved our fitness to prepare for camp. We had a mandatory 12-mile ruck assessment which made a lot of us realize we need to ruck more. Thankfully, clubs like Ranger Club and Ruck Club allow us to do just that.

Sadly, our spring semester was cut short due to COVID-19. We missed out on a lot of our spring activities such as Spring FTX, Honors Ceremony and Dining-In. Our class has definitely learned to be patient as we waited for the decision on Cadet Summer Training, which was eventually cancelled this year. Additionally, we have three Cadets that earned a specialty school slot this summer: Cadet Cross, Cadet Irace and Cadet Feldhaus. These opportunities include supporting the Special Forces 'Robin Sage' exercise and attending either Air Assault School or Airborne School. Unfortunately, these schools have been canceled for our MS-III Cadets that earned them. Even though quarantine has brought a laundry list of hurdles to the MS-III Cadets (and all other Army ROTC Cadets), it has also taught us the necessity of being able to train and improve independently. When we are Officers, we will need to be ready physically and mentally at all times—even if there is a quarantine that requires us to brief missions through video conferences or get creative with our workouts.

MS-IV Class Update

Congratulations to Our Newest Lieutenants!

By CPT Michael Drabowicz, Assistant Professor of Military Science

On May 19, 2020, the Fighting Illini Army ROTC Program proudly commissioned fourteen Cadets into the U.S. Army. Despite the constraints of our current environment, our team was able to celebrate the great achievements of these leaders alongside their friends and families through a virtual commissioning ceremony. And finally, a special thank you to State of Illinois Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) John Moulton for your remarks as our guest speaker. Our program is immensely proud to announce the following Second Lieutenant UIUC alumni have joined our Army's Officer Corps:

2LT Terrell Baker

Component: Illinois National Guard

Branch: Quartermaster

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Technical Systems Management



2LT Cordelia Grob

Component: Illinois National Guard

Branch: Military Intelligence

Degree: Masters of Science in Library and Information Science



2LT John Hamman

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Medical Services

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Community Health



2LT Molly Hein

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Aviation

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Materials Science and Engineering



2LT Thomas Jackson

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Infantry

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in History



2LT Jaime Jew

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Armor

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in Political Science



MS-IV Class Update

2LT Austin Kim

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Quartermaster

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Communications



2LT Joy Kim

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Engineer

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in Economics



2LT Roy Kim

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Infantry

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Psychology



2LT Cullen O'Connor

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Infantry

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in Global Studies

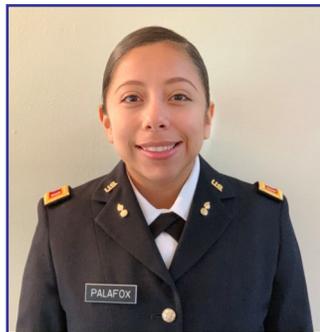


2LT Maritza Palafox

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Ordnance

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in Latin American Studies



2LT Jesse Park

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Signal

Degree: Bachelors of Arts in East Asian Languages and Cultures

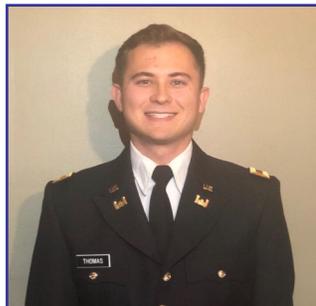


2LT Edward Thomas

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Engineering

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Materials Science and Engineering

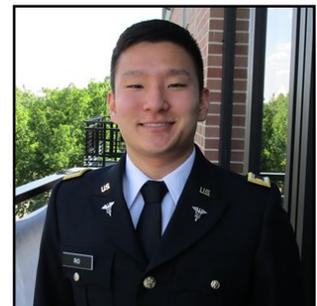


2LT Eugene Ro

Component: Active Duty Army

Branch: Medical Services

Degree: Bachelors of Science in Integrated Biology



Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG) Opportunities

A Great Place to Start... A Great Place to Transition... The ILARNG!

By MAJ Joseph Bright, ILARNG Officer Strength Manager

The Illinois Army National Guard has opportunities at every stage of your career. Whether you are a Cadet entering the Simultaneous Membership Program to bolster your hands-on experience before commissioning, you are commissioning into one of our four Illinois Army National Guard brigades, or you are a current Active Duty officer looking to transition at the end of your Mandatory Service Obligation (MSO), there are a lot of opportunities here within our organization.

The Illinois Army National Guard has a variety of full-time employment opportunities as well as our traditional Guard/Reserve component opportunities. Full-time employment positions include Active Guard Reserve (AGR) where you serve on Title 32 Active Duty; Federal Technician Title 32 (which are civilian dual-status jobs tied to continuing Guard reserve component performance) and Title 5 civilian positions. Additionally, we have Department of Military Affairs (DMA) and State employee positions. Check our current career opportunities at www.il.ngb.army.mil under the Employment Opportunities tab. Our traditional Guard/Reserve component opportunities cover a myriad of branches and include 18 Battalion command and 4 Brigade command billets, as well as 3 General Officer billets.

There are a multitude of benefits available to you as an Illinois Army National Guard Soldier. TRICARE Reserve Select is a great healthcare option with prices well below what civilians pay on the open market or through their civilian employers. We have several Illinois Guard Educational Benefits available to you in addition to the GI Bill and Tuition Assistance so you can continue your education. You can also keep more of your military pay in your pocket in Illinois – Illinois residents are not subject to state income tax on Active Duty pay, Guard drill pay or annual training military pay. Visit our 'IL Guard' smart-phone app to learn about more of the benefits of serving here in the Illinois Army National Guard.

The Illinois Army National Guard continues to conduct full spectrum operations here on the homefront and in locations outside the continental United States (OCONUS). So far in 2020, the Governor has Illinois Guard Soldiers engaged locally in the Strategic National Stockpile distribution and testing site establishment and operations for COVID-19, flood duty and supporting law enforcement activities to protect citizens and property. Deployments outside the continental United States include multiple Europe, Africa and Middle East mission sets. As an added benefit, if you're transitioning off of Active Duty to focus on family or your civilian career, we do have a stabilization policy that allows you to take a break from the deployment cycle. Overall, there are great opportunities here to serve to meet everyone's intent!

For prospective Cadets interested in joining the Illinois Army National Guard through the Army ROTC Program, Staff Sergeant Joshua Smith at joshua.a.smith233.mil@mail.mil or Mr. Eric Ashworth at eashwort@illinois.edu are available to answer any questions you may have.

For Active Duty officers considering a switch to the ILARNG, you can reach our Officer Strength Manager section at ng.il.ilarng.list.osm@mail.mil for support answering any questions about transitioning into the Illinois Army National Guard.



US Army Reserves Opportunities

Part Time Service—Full Time Success

By CPT Joseph Murray, Central IL Recruiting Company Commander

Within the Army Reserves, we have opportunities for Soldiers to operate within Homeland Security, Engineering, Information Technology, Bio-Hazard Protection, Logistics, Civil Affairs, Military Information Support Operations, and Medical Services.

The Army Reserve allows you to pursue a civilian career or attend college full-time and still have the opportunity to serve your community and country. The Reserves provides you the flexibility to move across the United States, receive medical benefits for you and your family, educational benefits, tuition assistance, enhancing of your resume, and build for retirement. In other words, in the Army Reserve, you can continue your career or education while training close to home and standing ready to serve with your valuable job skills. Federal law prohibits employers and schools penalizing Reserve Soldiers while at training or serving on Active Duty. If you are called to serve full time, you will receive full time pay and benefits for that period and can return to your normal job or school work when complete.



The flexibility of the Army Reserves does not end stateside. All across the globe, there are civilian GS employees & private sector professionals who serve part time in Reserve units abroad in locations such as Germany, Italy or South Korea.

As an Army Reserve Soldier, you will spend one weekend a month on duty and two weeks a year training (36 days total). World events may create the need for you to be called to serve full time in support of missions throughout the United States and overseas. Whether you're living stateside or overseas, the Army Reserves also offers temporary Active Duty opportunities and, for those interested in serving permanently within our ranks, we have Active Guard Reserve opportunities that will allow you to serve all across the globe, just like an Active Duty component officer.

For college students serving in the U.S. Army Reserves, there are scholarships available that'll pay the university your tuition and fee costs while directly paying you \$600 per semester for books in addition to a \$420 a month stipend. If you are not able to earn a U.S. Army Reserve Scholarship, signing a non-scholarship contract through Army ROTC allows you the opportunity to compete for an Active Duty commission while still providing the additional \$420 a month stipend. All of this is above your normal drill pay and any GI Bill benefits you may have earned from successfully completing Advanced Individual Training.

If you are interested in becoming an officer and you do not already have a degree, the Army ROTC Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign provides an excellent path into our great organization; Mr. Eric Ashworth, the UIUC Recruiting Operations Officer, is available to answer any questions you may have at eashwort@illinois.edu.

For those transitioning from the Active Duty Army into the Army Reserves, you can obtain the following benefits in addition to those above: Training close to home, 24-month deployment stabilization (non-deployable for 2 years), Officer Training, MOS reclassification and service obligation reductions (where you can have your contract requirements waived). Whatever your current situation the Army Reserves offers outstanding flexibility for you; I'm available at joseph.w.murray6.mil@mail.mil for more information & to answer any questions you may have.

Cadet Spotlights

Illinois National Guard Joint Force Headquarters Visit

By Cadet Nathan Ruxlow, MS-IV Cadet

On February 28, 2020, Cadets from the Fighting Illini Battalion loaded up a few vans and headed to the Joint Forces Headquarters in Springfield, IL for a National Guard information session and branch meet-and-greet day. This was the first event of this type organized by the Illinois National Guard specifically for the University of Illinois Army ROTC program. It was an excellent opportunity for freshman through senior Cadets to explore the opportunities the Illinois Army National Guard has to offer.

The day started out with a tour of the Illinois State Military Museum, which features numerous exhibits displaying the heroism and history of members of the Illinois National Guard. This really opened our eyes to all the historic events guardsman from our home state were apart of and gave us a sense of pride.

Next we had lunch with several officers that serviced in the different branches within the ILARNG. We were given the freedom to visit any branch table we were interested in and speak with the officer representatives to ask any questions we had. This was an extremely useful and unique experience comparable to the Branch Day we had at Cadet Summer Training. It is rare we get an opportunity to speak with officers from multiple branches in a relaxed Q&A type environment.

The final event was a briefing from the different shops in the brigade staff. This gave us a look at what the branching process in the National Guard looks like and how the Illinois National Guard operates on a state level. For these high-ranking officers to take the time out of their day to brief and interact with us really was an honor and revealed to us the importance they place on the future of the Illinois National Guard.

Some of the other Cadets who attended the visit had this to say about their experiences:

- “I thought the visit was very valuable because we had the opportunity to talk to young officers one-on-one from almost all of the branches, which is not something we get to do often. We also had a brief from the JFHQ staff, which was a great opportunity to hear more about how the branching works in the National Guard and the different opportunities we may encounter in our future military careers.” -Cadet Keegan O’Donnell (MS-III Cadet)
- “As an MS-III, it was a great opportunity to meet with officers to talk about the different branches, the different types of training, and what they have learned so far as leaders in their units.” -Cadet Steven Irace (MS-III Cadet)
- “It cleared up a lot of questions I had about the National Guard, which was helpful because we are about to choose between active duty or guard and reserve components.” -Cadet Quinn Beckman (MS-IV Cadet)
- “I thought it was a humbling experience to meet all of the senior officers that run the Illinois National Guard and put a face on some of the people that could be my future leaders. It was highly educational in that I have a much better grasp on the different ways I could extend my army career with the different schools and processes of ranking up within the Guard. The best of all was having a face-to-face interview with Army leaders that serve in the branches of my preference. It answered a lot of questions I had about particular jobs and gave me a much more transparent opinion of the different careers in the Army.” -Cadet Gabe Frausto (MS-III Cadet)

Overall, this event was very informative and a great networking opportunity. We met many officers that we could potentially be working with in the near future. It gave us a better understanding of what we might expect as officers and opened our eyes to the multiple opportunities the Illinois National Guard has to offer.



Cadet Spotlights

The Student-Athlete Challenge

By Cadet Brian Keyes, MS-II Cadet

Like most 19-year-olds in college, I had no clue what I wanted to do with life when I first came here to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I chose to come here due to my athletic abilities, which allowed me to compete at the next level as a Big Ten thrower, and that was all that was my priority. I have since then realized that I was extremely lucky since this university offered me so many other benefits that I never realized I had when I committed as a dumb high school senior. My host when I came for my visit here had informed me of the ROTC program and it sounded very exciting to me. I still had no idea what I wanted to do in the future so I decided to take a leap of faith in the idea and join the program while also training as a student-athlete. Since then I have realized how extremely blessed I am to have taken advantage of the opportunities that were presented to me and how ROTC and athletics have helped me become a better person.



Cadet Brian Keyes practices his craft as a track-and-field athlete .

After looking back on my first year, I felt I had wasted its potential. I was not attacking my training in ROTC or with track and was constantly negative. I told myself over the summer between my freshman and sophomore year that the coming fall would be my last semester of ROTC. That Fall Semester was when everything changed for the better. I told my coach I wanted to double my training schedule because I was so unhappy with my previous year and wanted to be the best I could in every aspect of what I was doing. I went from working on throwing 8-10 hours a week to nearly 20, I attacked all of my workouts in the weight room with a purpose and by doing so dropped four percent off my body fat while gaining five pounds of body weight. I had plenty of other gains made on the ROTC side of things due to my attitude change. I decided to dedicate time to my training on the ROTC side of things by studying the Ranger Handbook and stepping up as a leader whenever the opportunity was presented. I tried to bring a competitive and fun attitude to our Physical Readiness Training sessions to hopefully spread it to other Cadets. I hate losing in anything and with the many competitions that we would have during PRT, I felt that I made this trait evident to the other Cadets. I was having more fun and made plenty of friends inside the program which was huge for me and left me feeling like I had two families now with my track team and my fellow Cadets.

One of my biggest takeaways from being both a Cadet and a student-athlete is that life is all about what you make it. For a long time, I was putting myself in such a bad position by feeling sorry for myself and waking up with a negative attitude. This affected my life more than I ever understood. Being involved in these two programs has shown me how to find the positive in every situation and how to attack life with a purpose and these are traits that people aren't born with but they are traits that people earn with their hard work and continuous grind. Along with that I have learned to become a self-proclaimed master of time management and perfected the art of body recovery.

Overall, the Fighting Illini Battalion has helped me become the man that I am today in more ways than just helping me do 70 pushups or knowing how to disassemble an M240B Machine Gun. ROTC has helped me find a future career path that I had never considered, taught me leadership skills and helped me use them, and most importantly left me with countless memories, experiences and a group of people I am proud to call my family.

Cadet Spotlights

Scabbard & Blade

By Cadet Joseph Lim, MS-II Cadet

The National Society of Scabbard and Blade is a military honor society open to members of university ROTC programs which focuses on future leaders developing their leadership potential by diversifying themselves in knowledge to become officers of Honor, Leadership, Professionalism, Officership and Unity (the five-star qualities). Our Scabbard and Blade program at the University of Illinois wrapped up the Fall semester with a very successful winter donation drive for a local American Legion post who serve homeless and at-risk veterans in the Champaign area. We collected over 100 items to donate!

To kick-start the Spring semester, the organization began a new community outreach program with a local elementary school, Stratton Academy of the Arts. Stratton is a magnet elementary school in the 4th Champaign school district that emphasizes art-integrated studies. The students partake and learn through various art studios daily to express themselves in nontraditional ways. Over the past two semesters, I worked closely with the volunteering coordinator, Mrs. Ann Brodsky, and the English as a second language (ESL) teacher, Mrs. Carmen Morales to create a plan for a 10-week after school program. The goal of this was to present an opportunity for the Cadets of the Fighting Illini Battalion to participate in philanthropic events every week and help ESL students learn and speak English better.

The relationship started with a group of Cadets and Major Soderlind speaking in front of a school assembly about the Army and answering some questions from fifth graders. Afterwards, I led a group of volunteers every Friday from 2:00PM-3:00PM to assist students from Kindergarten to Fifth grade. The activities varied weekly from ice breakers to math homework and, of course, lots of art projects!

Although the semester was cut short and we were not able to do the full 10 weeks of the planned curriculum, it was still a great opportunity for Cadets to unwind their busy week and do some good for the community! The great efforts of the Cadets were recognized by the appreciative children, who welcomed us every week with bright smiles and positive attitudes, and the school administration who sent numerous appreciation emails! Thank you to all who volunteered over the past semester and we look forward to you joining us next semester!



Cadet Joseph Lim assists a fifth grade student with a math workbook



Cadet Macy Nanda helps a third grade student with reading homework



Cadet JonBenet Gonzaga plays a math game with a first grade student

Cadet Spotlights

Hazelton Award Winner

By The Fighting Illini Battalion Cadre & Cadet Neel Khattri, MS-I Cadet

A long standing tradition in the Army ROTC Program at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the Hazelton Award has recognized the “Best Drilled First Year Cadet” since 1891. Created by First Lieutenant C.B. Hoppin, who was the Professor of Military Science at that time, the award received it’s name from W.G. Hazelton of Forrest Glen, Illinois, who donated twenty dollars for the purchase of the gold medal. W.G. Hazelton was a former Captain in the 8th U.S. Cavalry and his son, Cadet Major Hugh Hazelton was a member of the UIUC Class of 1890. Cadet James Pease Hubbel was the award’s first recipient in 1891. The hall way of the Army wing in the Armory Building is adorned with wooden plaques that depict each year’s winner.



This year’s selection process was a bit different than normal due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which precluded the annual Hazelton Competition. The 2020 Hazelton Award winner was determined by a voting process that included each Senior (MS IV) Cadet and the Army ROTC Cadre. In a close competition with many very impressive and deserving Cadets, Cadet Neel Khattri was the clear winner of this year’s Hazelton Award. We have asked Cadet Khattri to share a bit of his background.

Cadet Neel Khattri: I was born and raised in the heart of the Silicon Valley in Cupertino, California. Naturally being surrounded by technology, I later decided to major in Computer Engineering at Illinois. I came to the University of Illinois after a series of events that led me to joining Army ROTC a few weeks before school started. I never had any family that served in the Army, as my family immigrated from India, and I was the first to be born here in the United States. However, I’ve always wanted to give back to my community and to help others because they have done the same for me. After volunteering at my local Veterans’ Affairs Hospital, I knew I wanted to serve in the Army, which is why I joined ROTC.

After joining ROTC, I later joined Ranger Club and also a few others, but most of my time was devoted to Ranger Club. My whole life I’ve played soccer competitively and a lot of the aspects that I found in soccer, I found in Ranger Club and ROTC as well. From not only pushing your limits, but also to the bonds between people and teamwork are some of the similarities that I have noticed between both. I major in Computer Engineering so I study both the hardware and software of computers. During my free time, I like to workout and hangout with friends and watch classic movies like the Rocky Series. I’ve learned a lot about working out from fellow Cadets who have not only taught me several ways to hit the goals I want, but have also helped my dietary habits.

What I hope to get out of ROTC are not only leadership skills and development alongside great peers, but also to find out how far I can push myself to succeed, whether physically or mentally. ROTC has allowed me to grow and pushed me in way I never thought was possible, but it has also shown me that I can push myself further than I think I can. Being awarded the Hazelton Award helped show me I was on the right path. It proved to me that all the hard work and being up early everyday while going to bed late, was worth it. It was a validation of my work so far, but more importantly it encouraged me to push harder, fight harder, and work harder.



Cadet Neel Khattri (left) is pictured with MS-IV Cadet Terrell Baker after receiving their German Armed Forces Proficiency Badges this year.

Cadet Spotlights

An Engineer's Dream Opportunity, Opened by ROTC ***By Cadet Alexander Boudabbous, MS-II Cadet***

I am very grateful for the opportunity to be working full time in the Rolls Royce Cooperative Education program. Rolls-Royce engines are some of the most advanced machines ever designed and built, both for private industry and the military.

I hoped to enhance my engineering skills with military specific technologies and make a real impact early in my career. I requested to participate in this program in December 2018. With the help of the Fighting Illini Cadre, and the generous efforts of LTC Smith and Mrs. Brown, I submitted a migration packet that was approved by Cadet Command's 3rd Brigade at the end of Spring 2019. I went on a leave of absence from Fall 2019 to Spring 2020 to work at Rolls Royce's largest U.S. defense division in Indianapolis, Indiana, for just over eleven months in three sessions.

In my first session, I was a design engineer for helicopter turboshaft engines. Within the first week, my manager assigned me to lead an engine leakage root cause investigation. I was ecstatic to be assigned such an important position from the start and thankful that she trusted me with such a role. Three months later, I authorized my first engine production change to fix the leakage, changing the way every single M250 engine and variant thereof was manufactured (this is one of Rolls Royce's most popular engines).

In my second and current session, I am a performance engineer in Weapons and High-Speed Propulsion (WAHSP). This is a classified technology group that works on aircraft technology faster than the speed of sound including commercial/regional airlines, military aircraft, and missiles. My clearance through ROTC allowed me to join this group. I am creating a thermodynamic model for a project that is anticipated to win future defense contracts. I predict performance by looking at every part of the main engine and how air flows through it, then I package the results so that it can be sent to potential customers in a data packet or black box software. The bulk of my work is programming, so I am fortunate enough to be able to work remotely from home in Colorado during this quarantine. Four months after entering this role, including a full month of training and instruction in coding and gas turbine mechanics, the model is nearing completion.



Cadet Alexander Boudabbous posing for a picture at Rolls Royce's US Defense Division in Indianapolis, Indiana

Cadet Spotlights

Those were my main projects, but there were many smaller ones along the way like updating the afterburner model of the Adour engine, which powers the T-45 Goshawk (USN and USMC carrier-capable trainer jet), as well as presenting and justifying material transitions to new industry standards to the leadership team in Indy. My third rotation will be service engineering for the AE2100, which is the engine that powers the USAF C-130J. This role will allow me to interface directly with customers in the aftermarket, ensuring our engines generate maximum value and are operating as expected.

Initially, I was uncertain about this program because I would be delaying my graduation and ROTC curriculum by a year, graduating the same year as my younger brother and letting my MS-II class get a year ahead of me. However, I have realized the rewards outweigh what I gave up, and I have no regrets. I have had an awesome experience with the company and enjoyed networking with so many new people through team building events with my co-workers and all the professional development I underwent with the other co-ops. Looking back, I have been mentored by experts in the defense industry and become technically proficient in critical military technology that the Department of Defense contracts to the civilian sector. One thing I did not expect was the breadth of weapon systems and missiles that I became familiar with, and not just United States' capabilities, but of other nations as well.

My goal is to serve as an Army Engineering Officer and nothing could have prepared me more than a fusion of Army ROTC and employment for one of the top defense contractors with the U.S. Federal Government for a year before I even graduate. I have learned maybe a little too much about engines, but I have certainly learned how to rationally approach highly complex problems and been exposed to concepts and ideas beyond my engineering curriculum. It is especially empowering to be in an organization that truly cares about the well-being of its subordinates and effectively collaborates under strong leadership. As an Army officer, I hope to transfer that experience to those under me, and I believe that this program I participated in has enhanced my ability to solve the challenging and unique tasks that I will face.



Cadet Alexander Boudabbous' experience at this pro-military company has been a truly outstanding experience— and proof of what doors Army ROTC can open!

Cadet Spotlights

Fighting Illini Battalion Conquers Virtual Recruiting during COVID-19

By Brenadine Humphrey & Lindsay Grant

(US Army Cadet Command Headquarters)

The Fighting Illini Battalion's recruiting efforts during COVID-19 were featured on army.mil via an article written by Ms. Brenadine Humphrey & Ms. Lindsay Grant from the US Army Cadet Command Headquarters. Our entire team is extremely grateful for this coverage! The article follows below, and can also be accessed via this link: https://www.army.mil/article/235165/fighting_illini_battalion_conquers_virtual_recruiting_during_covid_19

While Army ROTC battalions around the nation continue to adjust the way curriculum is taught and physical fitness is maintained due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they are also expected to keep up recruiting efforts. The Fighting Illini Battalion at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was not thrilled to sacrifice their annual recruiting event in which interested high school students can shadow a Cadet for a day. However, Cadets and cadre managed to put together a virtual interactive information session they hope will be just as effective as their traditional recruiting tools.

"What we found was over 80% of the students that attended these [shadowing] events decided to come to our university and enroll in military science classes," said Eric Ashworth, Assistant Professor of Military Science and scholarships and enrollment officer. He credits the Cadets as being the battalion's best recruiters, just from sharing their personal experiences with transitioning to life as a college student and a future Army officer. When their day of shadowing was effectively cancelled due to the pandemic, the Fighting Illini Battalion had to find a creative approach to convince recruits to commit to their university.

MS-IV Cadet Jack Hamman noted that he was inspired by the way his military science classes were being conducted, and he hoped by employing the same techniques that they could overcome the recruiting challenge, "We have brought in numerous individuals with real world experience to discuss different topics as subject matter experts. This would not be possible under typical circumstances, but has been made possible through the utilization of these technologies."

Thus, "A Day in the Life of an Army ROTC Cadet" was born. The battalion quickly settled on using Zoom to conduct an interactive information session that would cover a variety of topics surrounding what is consistently most important to recruits, the transition between high school and college, and what day-to-day life of a Cadet consists of.

The battalion reached out to high school students that were already lined up to shadow a Cadet in the spring semester, as well as students that had already committed to Army ROTC at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. They also connected with local high school guidance counselors to send information about the Zoom session to students who had expressed interest in joining the military after graduation. When all was said and done, enough high school students were expected that the battalion scheduled three information sessions, with five Cadet panelists for each session.

"We have great Cadets that work well as a team and are happy to help students with an interest in serving in the military. I had to turn away volunteers to help us with this project," said Ashworth.

Cadet Spotlights

Cadet Hamman moderated the discussions while Cadet panelists discussed how they personally transitioned into college life and how Army ROTC had been influential in their collegiate success. Topics ranged from ideal places to live on campus and how to select a good roommate to balancing obligations as a student and an ROTC Cadet. Panelists were chosen to deliberately showcase the medley of interests of Fighting Illini Cadets, and what potential students could look forward to being involved in should they choose to attend the University of Illinois.

Overall, battalion staff believe the event provided a great opportunity to reach out to a wider variety of students who are still exploring their options, or perhaps didn't have the confidence to otherwise make a visit for a day of shadowing.

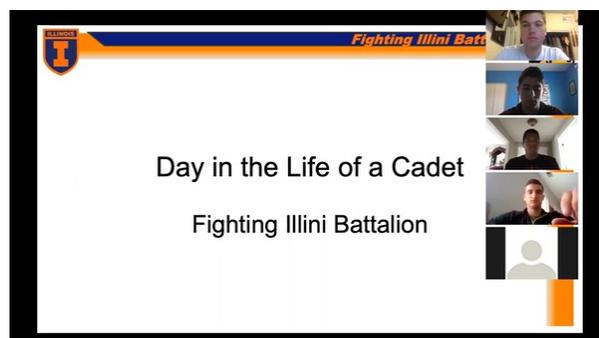
"[Zoom] allowed prospective Cadets to be as social or reserved as they wanted to be. [It] gives individuals options such as enabling their cameras or audio so that they could talk and interact with us or, if they wanted to just watch and listen, they could keep these features off and ask private questions in the chat," said Hamman. Battalion leadership see the event as a success so far, but are unsure of the need for virtual information sessions of such a caliber past the time of social distancing.

"This was an experiment, so we planned to assess the interest and adjust from it. If the campus reopens in the fall, we plan to go back to allowing the interested high school students to shadow our Cadets, but I can see the value of making a copy of this Zoom session, linking it to our social media pages and allowing students the chance to observe our Cadets at their leisure," said Ashworth.

"Virtual interactions with students or virtual tours do help democratize the process of exploring college options. For individuals who may not have the means to visit a school that is far away or inaccessible to them, this can be a great alternative moving forward to give them a taste of campus, and cadet life in order to assist them in making their decision," said Hamman.

A piece of advice Ashworth likes to pass on to Army ROTC Cadets is to continuously practice public speaking and being prepared for engagements with the public, "As a military leader, you must be prepared at all times to represent your unit, and the Army, to a curious public."

In letting Cadets take the helm on this virtual recruiting project, the Fighting Illini Battalion not only got to practice public speaking and representing the Army, but also adapting to unprecedented obstacles that may come their way.



The full 'Day in the Life of an Army Cadet' video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/6VYRBUQHrtw>

Social Media Highlight

Social Media: A Powerful Tool for our Cadet S-5 (Public Affairs) Shop ***By 2LT Molly Hein, former MS-IV Cadet***

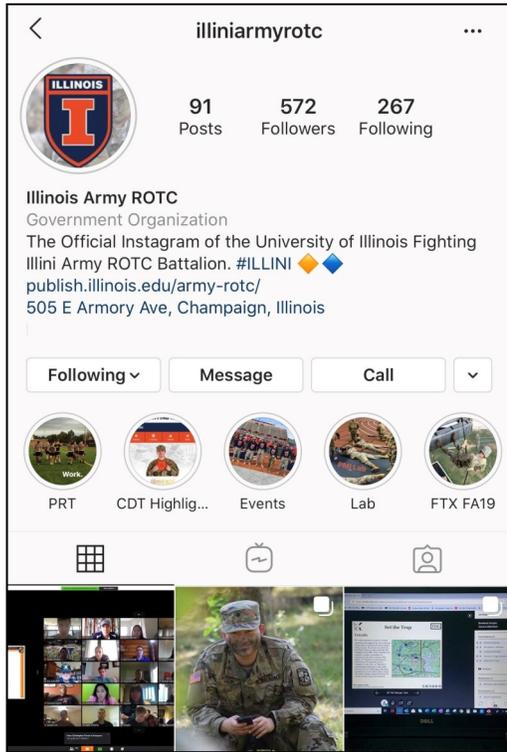
In a technology and media saturated world, the power of social media is constantly evolving and many organizations are only scratching the surface of using it as an asset. People known as “influencers” are now able to earn a living solely through posting on social media and promoting various products; a concept that would have seemed outrageous five or ten years ago. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube all provide a platform for raw, real and instant content that has the ability to reach millions of viewers and connect people across the world. Utilizing social media in the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) has shown to be incredibly valuable for the program’s visibility to the University and U.S. Army Cadet Command, the recognition of current Cadets’ achievements, and in the recruiting of prospective Cadets.

The wonderful thing about social media is how instantly it is able to reach a large audience. A picture posted on Instagram is seen by the 500+ followers the official FIB account has, but can also be exposed to thousands more once others begin reposting it to their own personal accounts. This spreads the name “Fighting Illini Army ROTC” to far more people than would have been possible before social media existed. It provides the FIB with the ability to impact a younger audience due to the sheer volume of late middle-school/early high-school aged students present on these platforms. This is powerful because they can, at an earlier age, learn about the opportunities present at UIUC and within ROTC without having to even step foot on campus. Additionally, the commanding Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) at U.S. Army Cadet Command are very easily able to see what Cadets are accomplishing on a daily basis, which leaves strong impression of the program and the quality of training occurring. The FIB has been able to greatly expand its sphere of influence simply through gaining a following on these social media sites and showcasing what is happening within the program.

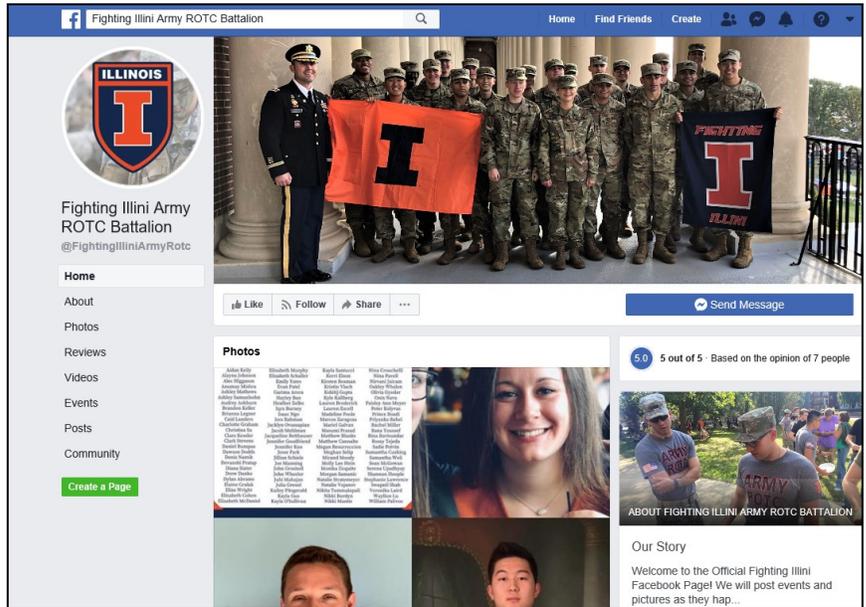
Social media appearance is something that the younger generations tend see as very important. Generating a personal social media presence means a lot to many young people and having the ability to add to that is very valuable for an organization. As the Cadet S5 (Public Affairs) staff head, I understand that my fellow Cadets are extremely proud to be in ROTC and want to show off what they are doing to all of their followers. Tagging them in a Facebook post, putting them on the Instagram story, or including them in a YouTube video allows them to share the cool things they are up to and feel good about it. It is easy for me to say that the best part of running all of the social media with the rest of the S5 shop has definitely been seeing the reactions of the underclassmen when they make it on our social media pages.

This year has been filled with discovery about the ins and outs of social media and what attracts the most attention. The S5 team is consistently working to update all platforms and give our audience content to follow. During the unprecedented times brought on by COVID-19, the FIB social media pages have allowed us all to stay active, motivated, and most importantly, connected. All of the lessons learned this year have set a strong foundation for the future social media success of the Fighting Illini Battalion, and we are looking forward to seeing where it goes!

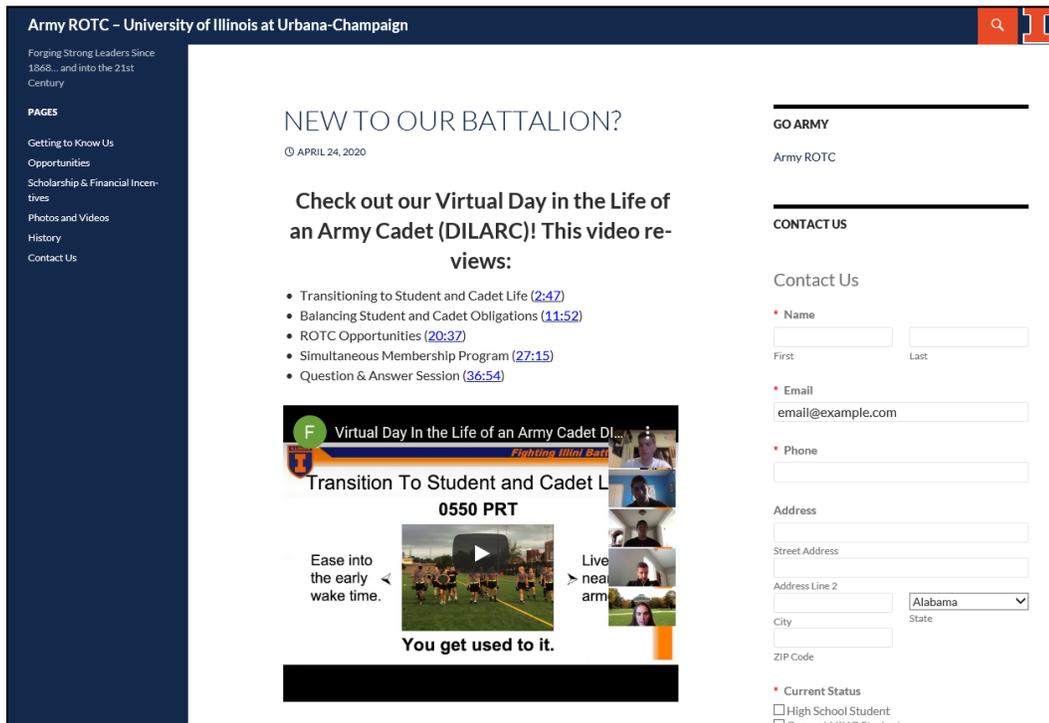
Social Media Highlight



Please feel free to follow our Program's Instagram (illiniarmyrotc) account for regular posts & stories!



Our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/FightingIlliniArmyROTC/ serves as another great resource for keeping our community plugged in with everything that we do!



Our new website at <http://publish.illinois.edu/army-rotc/> provides a full platform for interacting with alumni, prospective teammates, their families & our community.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Spring Semester Cadet Orientation Program (COP)

Senior Cadets from the Fighting Illini Battalion helped integrate new Cadets into the program during the Cadet Orientation Program (COP). COP includes a mentor/mentee pairing, a gear draw, a classroom portion lecture and a practical exercise; altogether, its designed to ensure new Cadets not only are properly in-processed into Army ROTC but feel welcome as new members of the Fighting Illini Battalion family.



New Cadets learn stretches and cool-downs for Physical Readiness Training (PRT).



New Cadets are introduced to Drill & Ceremony (D&C)



Cadet Cordelia Grob fixes the salute of a new Army ROTC Cadet.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Best Break Fitness Competition

The Best Break Fitness competition served to assess how well the MS-I and MS-II Cadets maintained or even improved their fitness levels over the four week Winter Break. Cadets competed in fitness events that tested their muscular endurance, muscular strength, aerobic conditioning, anaerobic conditioning and mental perseverance.

As always, the Fighting Illini Cadets strove for healthy competition among their peers to push themselves towards their absolute best!



Cadet Ella Demers encouraging her battle buddy through a set of sit-ups.



Cadet Michael Nelson and Cadet Joshua Nam race to complete a 25 yard 90-lb drag.



Cadet Kyle Kallberg takes off on the 50 yard sprint.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Leaders Recon Walkthrough

After we brought in our new Cadets through the Cadet Orientation Program & assessed who had pushed themselves over the winter break, it was time to begin the training for the semester.

For their first lab of the 2020 Spring semester, Fighting Illini Battalion MS-III Cadets learned the purpose and importance of the Leader’s Recon when conducting platoon missions. Cadets received a class on the basic information as well as a general guideline they can use in their tactics labs to come! This lab laid the foundation for the tactical skills our Cadets would develop for the remainder of the semester. After the classroom portion, Cadets headed outside to put what they had learned to the test with practical exercises, developing their confidence and leadership abilities along the way. It was a great way to begin the semester!



Cadets head outside for their first iteration of Leader’s Recon practical exercises.



MS-III Cadets review their notes and assign leadership positions as they begin the practical exercises.



Fighting Illini Battalion



Cold Care and Squad Class

For Week 2, the freshman and sophomore Cadets received instruction on how to properly train and survive in the cold weather. Illinois gets chilly in the winter months but training doesn’t stop! Cadets were taught how to properly employ their cold weather clothing system and sleeping bags to stay warm. Later, Cadets learned the dangers of cold weather injuries as well as how to prevent frostbite and hypothermia. At the end of the lab, sophomore Cadets were given time for practical, hip pocket exercises with their squads teams.



Cadet Christopher Flores and Donovan Spann take place in a practical casualty care exercise



Cadets learn about the prevention of hypothermia



Cadet Joy Kim teaches about cold weather equipment



Fighting Illini Battalion



Movement to Contact

On January 30th, 2020, the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted a Movement to Contact patrol lab. The MS-III Cadets were taught how to conduct this patrol from a platoon leadership role and of its importance as a part of a larger mission. This lab was conducted in a classroom environment at the University of Illinois Armory Building in order to prepare the MS-III Cadets to lead their own Movement to Contact mission in a tactical training environment at their first Lane Day lab.



Cadet Roy Kim leads the MS-III Cadets through a practical walkthrough of a movement to contact patrol



Cadet Jazmin House and her classmates receive instruction from MS-IV Cadets



Cadets maintain security while preparing to begin their mission



Fighting Illini Battalion



CBRN Training

Cadets from the Fighting Illini Battalion conducted CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) training in order to ensure to be ready in case there is a chemical attack or hazard. Cadets trained in properly putting on the masks and learned the importance of CBRN training. As future commissioned Army Officers, near-peer adversaries using CBRN attacks is a very real possibility– this training helped build a foundational set of knowledge they will absolutely use in their careers!



Cadet Timothy Song oversaw the CBRN Training and ensured it was executed to a high standard



Cadet Neel Khattri stands tall after successfully reacting to CBRN-attack reaction drills with his pro-mask



Our Cadets ensured their pro-masks properly sealed during the CBRN training



Fighting Illini Battalion



Mountaineering

On February 6th, 2020, Freshmen and Sophomore Cadets from the Fighting Illini Battalion had the opportunity to train a variety set of specialized skills to aid them in the future. Cadets learned basic CBRN and Military Mountaineering tasks including how to tie a “swiss seat” used in Air Assault operations, how to equip and clear an M50 gas mask used for protection in CBRN environments, and how to tie basic knots used in mountaineering operations.



Cadet Maddy Szamocki confirms her swiss-seat is correctly done after being checked by senior Cadets



Cadet Tim Easton teaches Cadet Ali Burianek how to tie a bowline used in mountaineering rope systems



Cadet Tucker Petersen teaches the MS-I & II Cadets how to pack a ruck for high incline movement



Fighting Illini Battalion



MS-III’s First ‘Lane Day’

The Lane Day training marked the first of a new training event type for the Fighting Illini Battalion during the Spring Semester. Lane Days offer a larger block of time to teach MS-II and MS-III Cadets about squad and platoon tactics. Cadets conducted two movement to contact missions at the UIUC Arboretum in their first Lane Day. The training taught Cadets valuable lessons about leadership and decision making in tactical environments.



Cadet JonBenet Gonzaga briefs her terrain model for the operation



Fighting Illini Cadets travel towards their objective through the frigid Illinois snow



Cadet Henry Feldhaus verifies grid coordinates for the mission



Attack and Raid Instruction

The Fighting Illini Battalion’s MS-III’s receive instruction on how to conduct Platoon Attack and Raid in preparation for their Army Careers. Over the course of the semester, MS-III Cadets were taught the fundamentals of Platoon-level Infantry tactics. Classroom instruction is the first phase of learning these missions before they lead in the field!



Cadet Donald Argueta begins his quiz that tests upon the information he just received.



Cadets Jazmin House and JonBenet Gonzaga double check their notes to verify their information with each other.



Cadet Tim Easton leads instruction from the front



Call for Fire

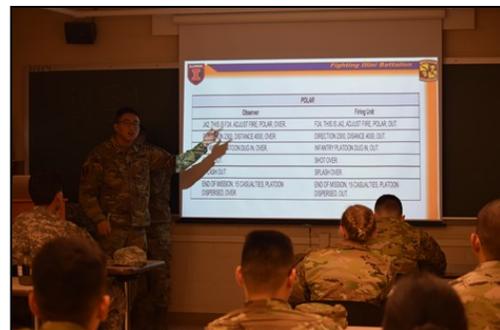
On February 13th, 2020, MS-I and MS-II Cadets were introduced to Call for Fire. Three classroom portions took place involving with MS-IV Cadets instructing classes on Successive Bracketing, Calling for Fire, Five Rules of Direction and the Six Elements of Call for Fire. Following the classes on Call for Fire, the MS-I and MS-II Cadets brushed up on Drill and Ceremony (D&C).



Cadet Joseph Lee takes part in Successive Bracketing



Cadets Tim Wallace & Joy Kim teach MS-I and MS-II Successive Bracketing and 5 Rules of Direction



Cadet Timothy Song teaches MS-I and MS-IIs on Method of Engagement



Staying in Touch with The Fighting Illini Battalion

University of Illinois
Foundation
Recruiting, Donations
Visits, Expertise

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. During the week of 17-22 August 2020, we will welcome the newest members in the Fighting Illini Battalion as new Cadets attend the Cadet Orientation Program. This three day orientation provides our new Cadets with a better understanding of what occurs in their Army ROTC classes and labs. During this same time, MS-IV Cadets will learn how to operate as a battalion staff and the MS-III Cadets will receive instruction on leadership at the platoon and squad levels of command. Each year, guest speakers assist by providing personal experiences to the Cadets.
- Alumni Mentor. All of our MS-IV Cadets have received their component and branch choices by now and there is now the opportunity to connect with and mentor a current Fighting Illini Cadet as they prepare for their transition into the Army. Alumni are an incredible resource as your experience can assist them understand what to expect.
- 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.
- Career Highlights. Alumni sharing their career highlights has a powerful impact on our Cadets as they see the phenomenal opportunities and experiences a career in our Army may lead to.

For more information on any of these support opportunities, please contact CPT Michael Drabowicz or Mr. Eric Ashworth (contact info below).

Contacting the “Fighting Illini” Cadre

Professor of Military Science: MAJ Daniel Johnson

(217) 300-3056

Email: dwj34@illinois.edu

Senior Military Instructor: MSG Timothy Collier

(217) 300-3269

Email: tsc6@illinois.edu

Training/Supply Sergeant: SFC Ramiro Silva

(630) 465-3758

Email: ramiro3@illinois.edu

Recruiting Operations Officer: Mr. Eric Ashworth

(217) 265-6857

Email: eashwort@illinois.edu

Enrollment Eligibility Officer: Ms. Emily Brown

(217) 244-1407

Email: ebrown@illinois.edu

Asst. Prof. of Military Science: MAJ Jennifer Soderlind

(217) 300-9455

Email: js40@illinois.edu

Asst. Prof. of Military Science: CPT Michael Drabowicz

(217) 244-6984

Email: md34@illinois.edu

Asst. Prof. of Military Science: Mr. Michael Birchfield

(217) 300-3719

Email: mcb14@illinois.edu

Human Resources Assistant: Mr. Dorian Neang

(217) 300-0196

Email: dneang@illinois.edu

Supply Technician Mr. Todd Gannon

(217) 300-9955

Email: tgannon@illinois.edu

GO FIGHTING ILLINI !!!!

THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



**FORGING STRONG LEADERS
SINCE 1868 ... AND INTO
THE 21ST CENTURY**