



Summer Recap 2014

Army ROTC 'Fighting Illini' Battalion Bugle

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Life Shaping Summer Gives Way To Strong Kick-off

This summer was full of first time experiences for many of our Cadets and also the ROTC program as a whole. After many years of camp being held at Ft. Lewis, Cadet Command shifted to a more central location down the road from the University—Fort Knox, Kentucky. As imagined with any large shift, we experienced the growing pains, but the Cadets did not falter.

Overall, our evaluated juniors performed tremendously and have returned to the University with a new sense of confidence and motivation to shape the incoming classes.

Individually, we had ___ Cadets that had the opportunity to partake in other big Army events. Some of these included Air Assault, cultural missions overseas, and medical internships to Europe.

We invite you to connect with us through this newsletter as you read about the ways our future officers are being developed through experiences many of our alumni never had!



Contracting of Cadets at the Ice Arena



Newly pinned 2nd Lieutenants ready to take the field by force



Saturday Superlab OPORD

Join us at the "University of Illinois Army ROTC Alum" Facebook page for more current updates and photos!

PMS Corner

Greetings Fighting Illini Family and Friends!

Congratulations to our Cadets and Cadre for an outstanding semester of work, learning, and leadership development! This spring semester was packed full of training and developmental opportunities and I am very proud of the Corps of Cadets and how they rose to meet the challenges! I want to quickly congratulate our 15 newest graduates and commissioned 2LTs; they have completed the arduous journey of academic and leadership development over roughly four years and have demonstrated they have what it takes to be officers in our Army! They are now ready for their next step of attending their officer basic branch courses to further refine their leadership skills and learn the fundamentals of their awarded branches. We wish them well and look forward to hearing of their accomplishments in the future.

Our Battalion went above and beyond the standard this semester in designing, planning, and executing another first time event – the “Warrior Fitness Games”. The event hosted 14 –four person teams from around the area in a 4 person and individual military task/exercise competition to increase awareness of our program on campus, recruit potential new Cadets and raise money for the Center for the Wounded Veterans in Higher Education. Due to the hard work of our Cadre and Cadets the event was a smashing success and all participants and sponsors are eager for another iteration next spring having called it the

“most unusual, challenging, and exciting event” they’d ever been to. When we push ourselves in developing and executing these events we benefit our personal growth as leaders, our Battalion as a whole, and the community. I am proud of the Battalion’s achievements and how our Cadets are choosing to serve in the community as well. Cadets, have a great summer and use your time deliberately no matter what your agenda may be – training, school, work, vacation etc. Be safe and come back in the fall ready to “take the bull by the horns” and run with the mission!

This year marks the 100th year anniversary for the completion of the original Armory building on campus where we still work, learn, and train today. Festivities to celebrate this anniversary are in the works so stay tuned for details. Also, we are excited for another Hall of Fame ceremony this coming fall on 24 October. Keep checking the website for more details and contact the Battalion soon if you are planning to attend and need hotel reservations.

This summer is a busy schedule with multiple Cadre at Fort Knox to support Cadet Summer Training, multiple Cadets on CULP missions, internships, the MS3 class at CST at Knox, and on-going administrative and recruiting operations back at home station on campus. We all continue to proudly serve in the traditions of those who came before us and we continue to “forge the legacy!”

ILLINI!

LTC Eric W. Stetson

SMI Corner

Cadets, Alumni, and Friends of the Illini Battalion,

The semester has come to a close and this year’s MSIV class has finally commissioned as Second Lieutenants. It has been a great pleasure working with this year’s MSIV class and seeing them grow and develop as future leaders. There were many different obstacles and challenges this semester that they were able to face and overcome, which are crucial attributes for any Army leader. Their dedication to improving all aspects of their leadership abilities has left an impression on their subordinates, who will step up to take their place as MSIVs in the coming years.

The MSIII class has been preparing all year for the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) this summer. I wish them luck as they head to the summer heat of Ft. Knox, the new location for LDAC this year. I would like to remind you that if any alumni have memorabilia they would like to contribute to the Battalion, we would be pleased to share your pieces in the Armory display cases. Additionally, we are finalizing the Hall of Fame nominees for this fall’s celebration. If you wish to make a nomination, please contact LTC Stetson or me immediately. As we deepen our alumni relations, we could desperately use the support of an alumnus to head the relations process or manage the website. If you can give back to the program in this manner, we would be greatly appreciative.

Finally, this summer marks the last year that MAJ Seth Hible serves our Battalion as the XO. I wish him well as he moves on to serve in positions of even greater responsibility. He has done a tremendous job for this unit and especially in shaping the lives of our future officers!

Illini 7



LTC Eric Stetson



MSG Jason Staub

Cadets Intern In Germany

Leading The Way With Junior ROTC

Summer 2014 has definitely been one of the most memorable summers in my life. After my Cadet Summer Training in Ft. Knox, I immediately attended a medical internship in the Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. I had the opportunity to be in Europe for a month while shadowing a Speech Pathologist where I worked at the ICU with patients with swallowing disorders, and in the Speech and Hearing Science clinic with adults and children with speech, voice, and language disorders, and children on the autism spectrum. My time in the hospital assured me that Speech Pathology is a career that I will enjoy and put my heart in. Within my month in the hospital, I was able to develop relationships with my patients and that was truly rewarding as a professional. My internship also helped me make a decision in regards to my branching choice- I want to branch Medical Service Corps. I greatly look forward to my civilian and Army career as I experience the exciting directions it

will take me.

-Cadet Villagomez is serving as the Battalion XO this fall semester. She was one of two Cadets from the Fighting Illini chosen to partake in the internship. Only ___ Cadets in the nation were selected for this opportunity.



c/ Villagomez and c/ Chubb overlooking Germany

Cadet Marquis Jackson is a junior from _____ studying _____

This summer I served as an assistant instructor at the Junior Cadet Leadership Challenge (JCLC) in Minnesota, a program designed to develop high school cadets as leaders. These cadets came from very diverse backgrounds and it was exceptionally rewarding to see them come together as a team to test and develop their leadership skills. Through various leadership challenges, whether leading PT, obstacle courses, or other squad events, many of the cadets were operating in a position of responsibility they had never experienced. What was most encouraging, however, was how all the cadets always gave 100% effort.

During JCLC I saw a remarkable amount of teamwork from the each of the junior cadets and they left a lasting impression on me. I can only hope I was able to make a similar impression on them. This opportunity taught me much about being a leader and the importance of doing the little things right.

Upfront Training At West Point

MS3 c/ Paul Kim shares about his unique experience of training at West Point

The University of Illinois Army ROTC program has often been referred to as the West Point of the West due to its history of raising fine leaders and it has been an honor to serve in the program. Fortunately, this summer I had the opportunity to serve and train at West Point for an entire month in their Cadet Field Training Exercise. Together, with over 50 other ROTC and the 1000 plus West Point Cadets, we trained in the mountains of New York at Camp Buckner.

While there, I conducted training that I would probably never experience in ROTC. From dismounting Black Hawks in a hot LZ to hanging mortars, there was always something exciting to do each day. Starting with some grueling Recondo challenge events like water confidence courses, zip lines,

assault pack runs, and combined obstacle courses with runs, we moved on to the artillery ranges and launched 80mm mortars and 105mm howitzer shells, not to mention a pretty neat demonstration with a live scenario hip shoot. Transitioning quickly to infantry tactics and battle drills like room clearing with paint simulation rounds,



we honed our skills as Soldiers and leaders in the field.

The West Point Cadets I served alongside with were absolutely outstanding and I am excited to serve with them as fellow officers. As a whole, I met some of the best officers in the world at this training and some of the best Cadets as well. My rare opportunity to train at West Point is going to be an experience I will never forget and I look forward to putting these skills into practice here at the University.

Cadets dismount on a hot landing zone as part of the Camp Buckner training

Polish Partnership

c/Chandler Wiegand, MS4 TAC, shares about his CULP experience with the Polish Military Academy.

While in Poland, we participated in the Wroclaw military academy as if we were Polish Cadets and even participated in the Polish basic mountain training course. During the trip, there never was a “typical” day because we were doing something different everyday. One of the special activities we did was head to the mountains for four days to participate in the basic Polish mountain course. Being a country boy from southern IL, I was very excited to finally get out into the wilderness and learn the climbing techniques the Polish used. When we finally reached the mountains we jumped right into training beginning with a round robin that consisted of learning how to tie knots, rappelling, rock climbing, and sling loading equipment. Being in Ranger Challenge, I knew some knots that the Polish Cadets did not know so it was fun to be able to teach them something new. The following days consisted of perfecting our rappelling techniques with a final culmination rucking to the highest peak on the Czech Republic border. This training not only helped me to become a better mountaineer but it also gave me a chance to interact with the Polish Cadets on a more personal level.

CULP is a great program offered to Cadets to help create more culturally attuned, diverse officers. I am very blessed to have received the opportunity to go to Poland and experience all the different training and bases that the Polish military had to offer. The best part of the whole trip was living with foreign Cadets and embracing their culture while also educating them on ours. After my trip to Poland, I feel as though I have become more culturally aware and definitely would recommend this to any young officer.



Not “Just Another College Student”

Newly enrolled MS2, Kadeem Williams, shares his LTC experience

This summer, I spent 29 days at Ft. Knox and encountered many leadership opportunities and challenges. No longer desiring to be “just another college student,” I decided at the end of my sophomore year to join Army ROTC. Although I entered the University as a business communications major, I joined Army ROTC because serving my country is something I wanted to do since high school. My impression is that those who are in the military are positive role models and I desire nothing more than to be among the best of the best.

LTC was my first military experience, and through my training I met many great leaders and made friends with Cadets from across the nation. While many of the Cadets came to Ft. Knox for various reasons, in the end we had one common goal - to understand the military history, heritage and institution, and to become effective future leaders in the United States Army.

At LTC, we gained basic knowledge of the Army, learning customs and courtesies, drill & ceremony, and the importance of exercising critical thinking and patience. On top of these though, we still had events that were exciting and challenging., for example marksmanship and the gas chamber. I shot better than I expected and at least I can say I had clean sinuses after the chamber. Personally, I was challenged through the overall experience and grew in my confidence to make quick decisions. Through team exercises such as the LRC and obstacle course, I became more assertive and comfortable in decision making. Overall, the lessons learned, the ability to overcome challenges, and team building amongst Cadets made the program and lasting experience.

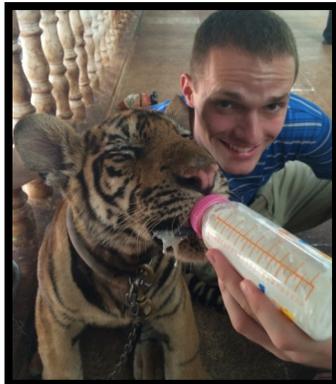
This experience taught me to be mindful and cautious of my surrounds and to be quick, calm, and precise. The conclusion of LTC convinced me that the Army is the place to be and I desire nothing more then to be an active duty Officer. My goal is to branch Infantry, Field Artillery, or Military Police and go through Airborne, Air Assault, and Ranger School. It’s a dream of mine to become a proud United States Army Ranger. Hopefully with a lot of hard work and dedication I will become a future warrior leader of the United States Army.



Combatives and Tigers

MS2, Corey Maisch, attended a military to military CULP training mission to Thailand.

My immersive CULP mission to Thailand was an exciting experience to say the least. From Ft. Knox, we traveled for 24 hours to Bangkok. In the city, the prominence of prostitution and sex trafficking was alarming, but the food and shopping were top notch. After a few days cultural immersion, we departed north to where the Thai Special Forces were headquartered.



Our mission was to work with the American Special Forces group in country to train the Thai Special Forces in small unit tactics. While some time was spent in a classroom, most of our time was spent in practical exercises and as OPFOR for the training. I enjoyed seeing and applying some of the tactics just learned in the classroom, and helping our countries train and work together. Being part of something bigger than me is always an awesome experience.

When we weren't working on the weekends, we were able to partake in some nearby sightseeing. I was able to ride elephants, slide down waterfalls, and pet tigers. I also found the Thai people to be very friendly. Despite living in conditions we in America would consider "substandard," they were perfectly content and eager to share all they had. Having the opportunity to experience and relate to a new culture was a life changing experience.

The training experience, atmosphere of people, the beauty of the countryside, and the exotic food were all worth the 110 degree heat and 120% humidity. I learned a lot about the culture and about representing the United States well in foreign countries, and look forward to applying these lessons learned when I



AIR ASSAULT!

MS3 Christian Brutlag successfully completed Air Assault in June.

Air Assault was a great, demanding ten day experience that taught me a lot. Physical fitness was one aspect, but not the most important. It was mostly mental. Actually the most important things were quite simple: Pay attention to detail and do things the way the Air Assault Sergeants instruct how to do something. Motivation was also important. The heat and long days sucked, which is why high motivation and enthusiasm were needed to get through the course.

Phase 1 consisted of time in the classroom learning how Air Assault Operations were conducted. The next phase was sling load operations—inspecting a load of equipment so it can be safely transported by helicopter via a sling. This is where attention to detail is key, because we only had 2 minutes to inspect a variety of loads (e.g. a Humvee or water trailer). Finally in phase 3 we learned how to rappel properly from a tower in various ways, culminating in a rappel from a Blackhawk helicopter. When it was my turn, I eagerly went down the rope as fast as I could without braking and before I knew it my descent was over. Darn.

The final day was graduation, but I first had to complete a 12 mile road march with my rucksack. Stepping off at 0300, I maintained a good pace, received my wings at the six mile point, and carried them with me the rest of the way to graduation to be pinned on. Once my wings were pinned, a wave of euphoria washed over me, knowing now I could go home with something to show for it. AIR ASSAULT!



Commander's Camp Experience



I was given two unique opportunities this summer. The first was the opportunity to participate in the Army CULP program in Poland, followed by participating in the first LDAC at Fort Knox, KY. There are a variety of things I learned from my experiences this summer: I learned the values and downfalls of competition in the Army. I gained an understanding of just how far reaching the effects of culture are on an organization, and last but not least, I learned that every member of our Army can contribute something of value when given the chance.

Lesson 1: Competition should be healthy, not obtrusive. It's a fact that in the Army, competition is a way of life. Whether competing as a cadet for rank position on the Order of Merit List or

simply for bragging rights for the highest APFT score in ones' unit, competition drives our Army to be the best trained, and most professional Army in the world. The problem with competition arises when Soldiers, and cadets begin competing selfishly for their own success, instead of serving selflessly for the betterment of the unit. I personally witnessed many cadets this summer who would attempt to sabotage other's patrol lanes because they felt threatened by the superior performance of fellow cadets. These observations enlightened me on the importance of always living the Army Values and as a future leader to be careful when encouraging competition to draw the line between competing to get better as a unit and competing to be better than others in my unit.

Lesson 2: Culture is everything. The culture that a leader displays and enforces to his organization determines everything from the demeanor of his unit to the individual actions that his subordinates take when he is not watching. A question this lesson initiated in my mind was does deploying to Afghanistan with the unit motto being, "Shoot them in the Face!" create an attitude tailored towards helping the Afghans improve their nation and showing them an example of why American democracy is beneficial to their society, or does it

foster an attitude of aggression and violence that leads to events like the Maywand district killings? This simple example shows how crucial as a leader it is to foster a cultural environment in our units of professionalism and understanding at all times.

Lesson 3: Even a Chihuahua descended from a Wolf. Entering this summer's training, I had a very egotistical attitude towards the other Cadets in ROTC. I've always been told that I am "high speed" or hard working. This caused me to subconsciously look down on cadets who struggled with tactics or domain knowledge and be quick to dismiss the guy who couldn't quite pass his PT Test. Are these qualities important to have? Absolutely! Are they the definitive indicator of a person's worth? Absolutely not! As my summer training progressed, I began seeing these cadets who at first impression seemed to struggle, contributing valuably in every aspect of training. The lesson here is that everyone, no matter how small, feeble, or weak on first sight has unique, valuable, and special experiences and talents that are invaluable to a leader.

This summer was an absolute blast! I learned a lot about myself, my peers, and my superiors in the Army. I learned what qualities make a fantastic leader and a fantastic unit

**GYM REMODELED! FACTORY
CREATES LIVING MACHINES!**

Shortly into the summer, our gym was completed thanks to the generous donation from Dr. Carl Vaketta, class of _____. Complete with squat and bench press racks, over 15 pull up spots, bumper weights, kettle bells, and dumb bells, the Cadets have been receiving their fair share of self-inflicted pain and sweat. We invite you to join us for a workout if you are in the area!

**RANGER CHALLENGE, RUCK CLUB, &
RIFLE TEAM KICK OFF**

2nd Annual Hall of Fame

Any of our Alumni who were able to attend last fall's inaugural Hall of Fame Ceremony on Homecoming weekend will agree that the Battalion put on a truly phenomenal, first class event! That said, we are excited to host an even greater event and turnout this fall on October 24th. In order for that to happen, we need you to join us both to experience this outstanding event and also to honor our own. We are seeking nominations for the Hall of Fame and are always honored to recognize the tremendous accomplishments of our Alumni, whether in civilian sector or in the military.

This fall, we are in for an extra exciting opportunity as we pair the ceremony with the 100th year anniversary of the Army.



Immediately following the Hall of Fame, we are inviting everyone to a catered luncheon on the Armory floor. More details will be published in August but save the date! Be sure to check out what you missed from last year's event: <https://sites.google.com/site/fightingilliniarmyrotc/> and click on the "Hall of Fame" tab.

This Battalion would not be what it is today without the vital partnership of Alumni like you. Your on-going contribution to these Cadets is making a huge difference in the lives of our next generation of officers!

Upcoming Alumni Events:

The upcoming 2014-2015 academic year is full of awesome opportunities to reconnect with the Battalion and fellow Alumni.

- 2nd Annual Hall of Fame Ceremony – Armory, October 24th
- Homecoming Game and Tailgate – October 25th
- Dad's Day 5km Run to benefit the Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education — November 16th

We are continuing to develop our Alumni rosters and photo compilations. If you have photos of your time in the program, we would love to share those in our next newsletter. Many thanks to our Alumni who also shared insight on their leadership experiences through the military. The Cadets have enjoyed learning from our Alumni experiences.

Additionally, our Alumni outreach would benefit greatly if an individual was willing to accept the role as Coordinator for Alumni Relations. *If any of our Alumni are willing and eager to step into this role, we all would greatly appreciate the dedication and its positive impact on the program.*

Much of what we accomplish in the Fighting Illini program to develop our Cadets' leadership and Army knowledge is not funded by the Army. Donations from Alumni directly impact on the quality of development and esprit de corps of the Battalion. We are thankful for the support of our Alumni to the development of these young leaders. From supporting Alumni, we were able to raise \$1,500 this semester to help fund various Cadet clubs and activities. This was on top of a \$500 donation from Rocky Tactical Boots! Again, a huge thanks to our

Alumni and veterans who made donations this semester.

For those wishing to support any of the Cadet ventures through financial means, we would be honored to receive your gift and earmark it to your favorite project or club of choice. Visit <http://www.giving.illinois.edu/> for the certified University link or call us at 217-333-0125. Some of our earmarked clubs and projects are the gym renovation, Hall of Fame, Rifle Team, Ruck Club, Dining-In/Out, Ranger Challenge, Ranger Buddy, or you may also contribute to the general fund.



Platoon Level Donor: \$150



Company Level Donor: \$250



Battalion Level Donor: \$500



Brigade Level Donor: \$1500



Division Level Donor: \$5000