

# The MILLINI



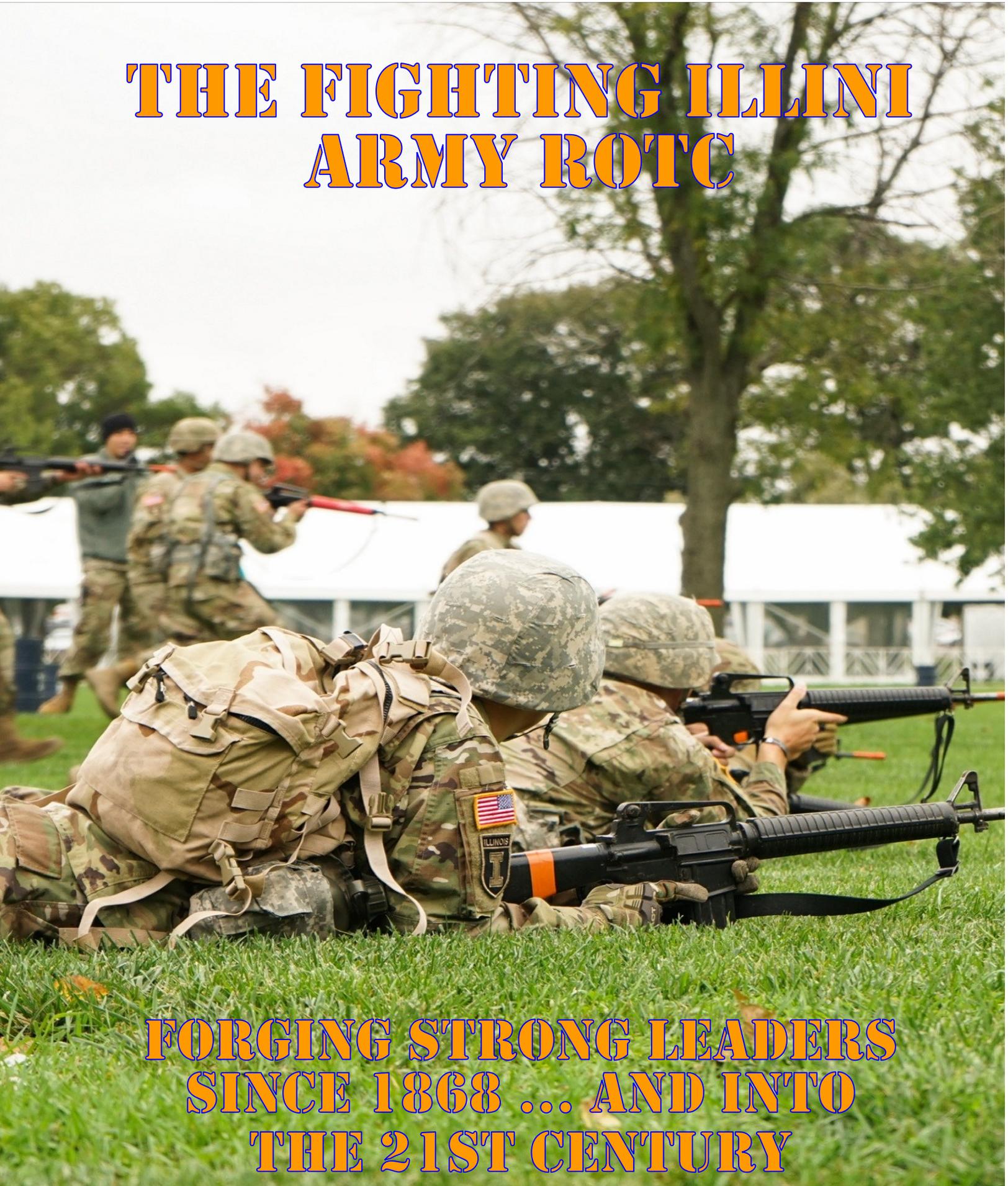
A publication from  
**THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC**



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Department of Military Science



# THE FIGHTING ILLINI ARMY ROTC



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

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*The Fighting Illini Army ROTC Battalion  
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**ARMY ROTC**

## Message from the Professor of Military Science

by LTC Daniel Johnson

Greetings Fighting Illini!

We wrapped up another academic year for this historic ROTC program. These past two semesters were filled with exceptional achievements by the Fighting Illini Battalion Cadets. Unlike past years, we decided to combine both semesters into an end of the school year MILLINI, as a test run. The annual MILLINI allowed for more time to consolidate Cadet articles and pictures - It was our intent to use this time to enhance the MILLINI with more in-depth content that accurately highlights the program's accomplishments over the past academic year. Your feedback is welcomed.

This year, program commissioned 14 Army officers with more scheduled to commission by the end of the summer. There is no doubt that these brand new Second Lieutenants will contribute to our Nation's Army and represent the Fighting Illini Battalion extremely well. Additionally, we are sending over 24 Cadets to the Cadet Summer Training's 35-day Advance Camp on Fort Knox, KY. Many of these rising MS-IV cadets will attend follow on training/opportunities, which include Cadet Troop Leading Time (CTLT), Air Assault, Sage Eagle, and various internships, etc. Once back on campus towards the end of the summer – these exceptionally trained leaders will lead the Fighting Illini Battalion program next academic year as MS-IV cadets.



The Fighting Illini Battalion conducted many training events and activities throughout the school year. There are many that you will read about in this MILLINI, but I will highlight a few. First, the program executed another Fighting Illini Battalion Army ROTC Hall of Fame ceremony on 6 May. Congratulations to Retired Colonel Bennet Hart and Retired Captain Fred Ranck on their inductions into this prestigious program's Hall of Fame! Thank you to General Mark Alessia for serving as the ceremony's guest speaker. Following the program's Hall of Fame ceremony – the Fighting Illini Battalion hosted a Dining-Out (first military ball in over two years due to COVID-19). The Fighting Illini Battalion's Dining-Out was phenomenal and demonstrated to the newer Cadets some of the Army's finest traditions and customs. A special thanks to those Fighting Illini Battalion Hall of Fame alum in attendance – Retired General Mike Symanski (our guest speaker), Retired Colonel Debbie Read, Retired Lieutenant Colonel Tina Wolfram. The last event to highlight is the Tri-Service Honors Day ceremony. The last University of Illinois' Tri-Service Honors Day ceremony was in April 2019, due to COVID-19 restrictions. This year's ceremony took place on 14 April in Foellinger Auditorium. Over 200 Cadets and Midshipmen took part in the ceremony as over 20 representatives from various organizations and groups presented awards for excellence in ROTC and University of Illinois academics. Thank you to Retired Captain Fred Ranck for serving as the ceremony's guest speaker.

The Fighting Illini Battalion also welcomed two new cadre this past year. Mr. John Kuhn (an Infantry officer in the Illinois Army National Guard (ILARNG)) joined the program over the summer and served as a MS-II instructor. Mr. Kuhn did an outstanding job and will move up to serve as the primary MS-III instructor for the upcoming academic year. Captain (CPT) Christine Boyd (active duty officer coming out of company command at Fort Hood) also joined the program. CPT Boyd did a brilliant job as the Operations officer and also spent time as a guest instructor for the MS-II cadets. CPT Boyd will continue as the Operations officer and transition to a primary instructor role for the upcoming academic year.

Finally, we will unfortunately say goodbye to four remarkable cadre members. Master Sergeant (MSG) Robert Whilden served as the Military Science Instructor (and as a MS-I instructor) will depart for Fort Bliss this summer and take over as a First Sergeant for an ADA Battery. MSG Whilden's contributions to the Fighting Illini Battalion were significant and will positively shape the officers coming out of this program, for several years. MSG Tim Collier served as the Senior Military Science Instructor (and as the primary MS-III instructor) for the past three years. MSG Collier is also heading to Fort Bliss this summer and attend the US Army's Sergeant Major Academy. CPT Jessica Carr served as an Assistant Professor of Military Science (and as the primary MS-II instructor) for the past year. CPT Carr was selected for promotion to Major and will attend the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth this summer. Major Jen Soderlind served as an Assistant Professor of Military Science (and as a primary instructor for the MS-I and MS-II cadets during her time) over the past three years. She will finish out her assignment for the ILARNG this August and transition to her next endeavor. We appreciate their commitment and service to the program and we wish them well in their next assignments



ILLINI!

LTC Daniel Johnson



## Message from the Senior Military Instructor

by *MSG Timothy Collier*



Andrew Bernard, aka the “Nard Dog”, from The Office once said, “I wish there was a way to know you’re in the good old days before you’ve actually left them.” As I transition out of my position as the Senior Military Science Instructor for the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB), I am acutely aware that I have been living in the good old days since I arrived in Champaign-Urbana almost three years ago.

I had the incredible privilege of serving as the MS-III Instructor during my entire tenure here. I watched cadets enter their MS-III year unsure of themselves, unsure what to expect during the school year or at Advanced Camp, and still learning to be leaders. I watched these same cadets excel academically, perform exceptionally well at Advanced Camp, serve as tremendous Staff Sections for the FIB, and ultimately commission as Officers in the United States Army. I consider my time here working with cadets and developing leaders to be the greatest honor of my military career, along with my time as a Battery First Sergeant. These cadets... these LEADERS have left an indelible mark on me that I will remember forever.

In addition to the cadets that left such a lasting impression on me, the outstanding team of cadre here at the FIB have served as my comrades, friends, and support system. I would like to recognize them all and thank them from the bottom of my heart for making this chapter of my career so special. They are, in no particular order, SFC Ramiro Silva, MSG Bobby Whilden, CPT Michael Drabowicz, MAJ Jennifer Soderlind, CPT Jessica Carr, CPT Christine Boyd, Mr. John Kuhn, Mr. Michael Birchfield, Mrs. Emily Brown, Ms. Sharon Jackson, Mr. Dorian Neang, Mr. Todd Gannon, Mr. Eric Ashworth, Mrs. Jenny Bateman, and Mr. Mark Larsen. I feel like I am forgetting ... oh yeah! LTC Daniel Johnson. It has been so rewarding to work for a Professor of Military Science that cares so much, and is so passionate about developing the leaders of tomorrow. Thank you so much to all those that have helped and supported me.

I would also like to recognize some of our alumni that support the FIB so passionately, and swell with Illini pride. COL (R) Deborah Read, who along with her husband LTC (R) Richard Read ( a graduate of “The West Point of the East”) has been omnipresent at every significant event the FIB has hosted to include Hall of Fame Inductions, Dining’s Out, Commissioning ceremonies, and Salute to Veteran’s Football games. LTC (R) Christine (Wolfram) McGuffey, BG Mark Alessia, and MG (R) Michael Symanski have all been huge supporters of the FIB, as well as serving as guest speakers and staunch advocates for our cadets at all times. I would also like to thank Mr. Daniel Jones. While not a FIB alumni, he always came through with the Pop Tarts and spiritual guidance for our cadets.

I will close by once again conveying my eternal gratitude for the immense honor I had to serve as the Senior Military Science Instructor for such an incredible University and Battalion. I have had the fortune to work with some incredible cadets/leaders and cadre during my time here. Thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone. I report to Fort Bliss 18 July, but I will continue to monitor the great things our cadets and cadre do through our robust social media presence. Those who know me know that I love a good movie/television quote. In continuing that theme from my introduction paragraph I would like to quote Jon Snow of The Night’s Watch and say that “my watch has ended.” And as Dewey Cox so eloquently wrote in his final song that summed up his entire life, my time in the FIB has been a

“Beautiful Ride.” Until we meet again... FIGHTING ILLINI!



*FIB Cadets and Cadre pose with the Brigade Commander and CSM after PRT*



**ARMY ROTC**



# Spring Incoming Cadet Welcome Week

By Cadet Francisco Cornejo

Starting college as an incoming freshman in the Spring semester is less than ideal and an intimidating thought. The weather outside is horrendous, most entry level classes are not offered, and the majority of freshmen have already made their friends and cliques. I knew that finding my place at U of I was not going to be an easy endeavor. Luckily within days of my arrival I was welcomed by the cadets of the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB), whose guidance spanned from first to fourth-year students. I was instantly provided with advice and support and felt an enormous curtain of anxiety lifted. In

many ways I felt welcomed into the Battalion as a new family member would be received. The students in this program value the success of the group in addition to their own success. The FIB is a family, we all strive to push each other to become the best version of ourselves.



*Cadets Francisco Cornejo and Megan Distelhorst pose together before the start of the Ranger Buddy Competition.*

This thoughtful and genuine experience to make cadets work smarter, become stronger and be more self-disciplined can be found in all the leadership and clubs ROTC offers. Because I personally value more candid relationships with others, I am grateful for all the guidance this program has offered me. I make ROTC an active part of my life. With the amount of support and opportunity for growth in the program, there is no limit to what you can do. One of my favorite aspects of the program is that the path to self improvement never stops. You can always be a smarter, more fit, and more confident aspiring warrior leader.



*Cadet Nina Shearril demonstrates the proper way to hold an M4 prior to the Smokeless Range station during ICW2.*



*Cadet Francisco Cornejo poses in front of a MEDEVAC vehicle.*

# Northern Warfare Challenge

*By Cadet Nicholas Talley*

This spring semester as an MS-I cadet has been an incredible time. When Ranger Challenge ended last semester, Northern Warfare Challenge (NWC) began, and I was convinced by MS-III Cadet Neel Khattri to try out for it. Originally, I did not plan to compete, I was just going to participate in the workouts and continue to learn as much as I could. But as the semester ended, I found myself continually motivated to make it as far as I could. Winter break was an opportunity to relax, but also to work and continue to improve myself.



*FIB cadets practice securing a casualty prior to Northern Warfare Challenge.*

My spring semester began with the NWC assessment early in our first weekend back from break. It was long and challenging, but we all rose to it. When the results came out, I was happy to see I had qualified to be an alternate with Cadet Brady Moran. We continued training and preparing with the team and helping them as much as we could. However, in the last week before the competition the unexpected happened. One of our 5 competitors, Cadet Ben Busby, was injured and could no longer compete. With first alternate Cadet Moran recovering from a knee injury, I now found myself as a competitor for the team. I had a lot of doubts about myself and what I was capable of, but Cadet Neel Khattri and my fellow teammates motivated and inspired me. I had not expected to need to be in a competitive mindset, but with all my teammates around me, it wasn't hard to get into. When the day came and we arrived at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, we once again rose to every

challenge. NWC was the greatest physical challenge I have ever undertaken, and it was incredibly satisfying to complete it in its entirety. It truly showed the spirit of teamwork and comradery as we uplifted and carried each other through it. To ruck all 16 miles up and throughout the gorgeous Wisconsin bluffs was an experience I will never forget and never take for granted.

After the end of NWC, I decided I would not train or compete with Ranger Buddy. But as a member of tactics club I was looking forward to the spring super-labs and seeing tactics in action. My first super-lab went about as I expected, I was very confused. But as each super-lab progressed and the super-labs continued it all really started to settle in. We practiced Patrol bases, engaging the enemy, being ambushed, leader's recon, taking prisoners and so much more. They were a great opportunity to apply tactics in the flesh for the very first time. Through all this time I really grew close to so many people in the Fighting Illini battalion. From the Ranger Challenge detachment, my own MS class and all the others, it really started to become a family. So many awesome opportunities and experiences this semester I'll always remember. Forming up with 1st Platoon of Alpha Company for morning PRT, weekly tactics club and Valor meetings, and the traditional post Thursday lab dinner at Newman Hall, I am grateful for all my friends and fellow cadets in the battalion. Now as the semester is winding down and we look towards CFTX, dining out and commissioning of our MS-IV class, I look back gratefully on an amazing semester with the Fighting Illini Battalion.



*Cadet Nicholas Talley receives an award from the PMS, LTC Johnson.*

# MS-I Class Update

## *The Meaning of Duty*

*By Cadet Max Daichendt*

Coming into your first year as a new cadet can be anxiety-inducing. Balancing classes in your civilian life and balancing courses and training in your cadet life can, and will, leave you feeling lost if you are not prepared. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) has taught me that you eventually will have to step into the real world and figure out how to balance your work life with your educational endeavors and your recreational interests. However, the greatest value that Army ROTC has taught me is the value of Duty.

Duty can be interpreted as something you are supposed to do or something that you believe you must do; however, duty can have multiple meanings that can be used in different settings. Duty could be defined as defending and protecting the constitution and the American way of life. In addition to this, duty could also mean following orders, winning wars, and following through with the mission. Albeit



*Cadet Max Daichendt performs push up with his ICW2 squad after completing land navigation. Cadet Daichendt took charge and also counted out the push ups.*

there are settings other than the military that use the personal value of duty in everyday life.

husband, wife, to do these duties for the benefit of not only yourself but others as well.

Here on campus, I have seen other students study for hours on end just to get a decent score on their exam that had nothing to do with the information they learned in lecture. Even though most students wish to not work so hard to get a good grade, it is their duty to achieve good grades. It usually appears as a momentary pain or stress; however, the benefit surely outweighs the process. A student's drive to continue working is their duty to themselves to work hard and work well to succeed. I have worked hard to get good grades, however, sometimes it proves challenging to continue working, yet I still work on.

In civilian life, duty can correspond to your duty to attend class, your duty to complete assignments, and even a duty that is bigger than yourself. The military preaches that the mission comes first and must be completed with a victory at that. This mentality can be reflected in civilian life as it is your duty to complete a task whether it is finishing your chores or finishing a design for a new space toilet that can work in both microgravity and planetary gravity (yes, I have designed a space toilet). The tasks may prove difficult, but it is your obligation as a worker, student,

## MS-I Class Update

### *Tri-Service Competition*

*By Cadet Delaina Sigman*

The Tri-Service Competition between Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC cadets tests their capabilities regarding strength, speed, endurance, and agility through specified events. Each cadet who participated in an event was chosen in accordance with their participation in the ROTC program during that same semester. I, Cadet Sigman, received the opportunity to compete in one of the many individual events, the deadlift. Alongside me were two fellow Army ROTC cadets, Cadet Jay Hatkar and Cadet Graham Kessler. As every single one of us stepped up to perform, the rest of our battalion stepped up with us. They were in every corner cheering, yelling, chanting, and clapping. The energy I felt in that room was more than words can describe. Not only did each branch cheer amongst themselves, but amongst other branches. The comradery that brewed from these tri-service events was outstanding.



*Army Cadets beat the Air Force, Navy/Marine Corps ROTC with a final event of tug of war. Here we see the Cadets giving their all on this last pull to victory.*

In addition to the deadlift, I also participated in Tug of War. Now this one was more of a team effort requiring communication and being able to move as one mechanism. Many other team-oriented events needed these same skills to achieve success. For



*Cadet Sigman performs a maximum effort conventional deadlift as a part of the Tri-Service Competition.*

example, the ranger event required a team of very fit cadets to maneuver through many obstacles as one unit. In other words, no man left behind. The competitiveness of every branch was phenomenal and certainly entertaining. That day everyone got a taste of success and failure. ROTC prepares each individual to think and perform under pressure, which is what this competition tested. How well can you do with all eyes on you? By the end of the day, I spoke to many individuals who were inspired to do better just by watching their peers perform. Cadets were able to create new friendships as well as build upon old ones. The Tri-Service Competition is one of those days that will stick with me for a very long time and I am looking forward to more experiences like this.

## MS-II Class Update

### *Platoon Competitions*

*By Cadet Lauren Leonard*

Platoon competitions have been a “fan favorite” amongst the MS-II class this semester. Whether racing around the Armory track with kettlebells in hand or tackling a Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) lane as a platoon, the platoon competitions that have been implemented into labs and PRT sessions never fail to spark the competitive spirit within my fellow cadets and me. My personal favorite platoon competition transpired at lab on March 10th. On this day, at 1600 hours sharp, the MS-II class patiently waited at Lot 31 for Cadet Kyle Villamayor’s signal to begin the competition.

The competition would consist of a TCCC station, a Drill and Ceremony (D&C) station, a sprint-drag-carry station, and a grenade target practice station. Once Cadet Villamayor broke the platoons loose, Alpha 1 headed over to the TCCC station, Alpha 2 to the D&C station, Bravo 1 to the sprint-drag-carry station, and Bravo 2 to the grenade target practice station. Upon arrival at the TCCC station, we were expected to tactically move a casualty through a winding course, perform TCCC on the said casualty, and then call up a 9-line MEDEVAC. The D&C station put our marching abilities to the test; we were asked to make turns, salute, and move in a crisp and clean manner. The “gasser” of the station, the sprint-drag-carry, put our physical fitness to the test. Moving as quickly as we could, we tried to get as many sprint-drag-carry rounds completed as possible. Immediately after completing the sprint-drag-carry station, we had to fire up our throwing arms so that we could accurately throw a grenade into the established target area.



*Cadet Joshua Nam is strapped to a litter during the TCCC lane of a Platoon Tactical Competition.*



Cadets perform Individual Movement Techniques for time during a platoon competition.

Once each platoon had completed every station, we got into formation and anxiously awaited the competition results, where we waited to see which platoon would be the one to acquire the glorious golden canteen! After a few minutes had passed, Cadet Villamayor announced that Alpha 1 was the winner; they were the platoon to complete every station most successfully. Alpha 1 roared in excitement after hearing this news! After a final call to formation, we were dismissed from lab. This lab was by far the best lab we’ve had this semester; not only were we able to put our military knowledge and skills to the test, but we were also able to bond as platoons. Motivation was high and comradery higher! After all, everyone loves friendly competition!

# MS-II Class Update

## ***Weapons Lab***

***By Cadet Joshua Nam***

On October 14th, cadets got hands-on training with the M249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW), M240B Medium Machine Gun, and M4 Carbine during lab. Using weapon systems acquired from the Army National Guard Armory, cadets learned about each weapon system from disassembly to assembly, functions checks, and the nomenclature of each component of the weapon system. The intent of this lab was to familiarize every cadet with all three weapon systems. MS-III cadets will also get the chance to use them during their summer training at Fort Knox. Cadet Summer Training is considered the largest annual training exercise conducted by the US Army.

My platoon and I started at the M249 SAW station led by Cadets Jacob Jung and David Seo. They taught us how to disassemble and assemble the M249 SAW to standard. After each cadet got a chance to test the knowledge they had learned, Cadet Jung and Cadet Seo held a competition to see who could disassemble and reassemble the SAW the fastest.



*Cadet Josh Nam learns how to disassemble and reassemble M249 SAW.*



*Cadet Joseph Lim instructs Cadet Estefanie Rendon on how to clear a M240B Machine Gun.*

Afterward, we moved to the M240B station led by Cadet Kyle Villamayor. We learned how to disassemble and reassemble the M240Bs with an additional lesson on functions check and immediate actions for weapons malfunctions. Assembly was very similar to the M249 SAW, with little difference between the two weapon systems. Our platoon had another competition at the end of our allocated time block to see who could clear, disassemble, reassemble, and perform a functions check in the shortest amount of time. I got the fastest time of 59 seconds which I have only seen from experienced soldiers on Active Duty.

The final station our platoon received was instructions on the M4 Carbine, the stand service rifle of the US Army. We relearned basic rifle marksmanship, assembly and disassembly, the functions check to EIB (Expert Infantryman Badge) standards during this block of instructions, and immediate actions for malfunctions. The block of instructions was straightforward, and afterward, our platoon had a chance to practice everything we had learned. All in all, this lab was pretty cut and dry with the intent of exposing cadets to various equipment utilized by the Army.

# MS-II Cadet Update

## **Medical Tasks and IMT Lab**

*By Cadet Estefanie Rendon*



*Cadet Perez covers his battle buddy while performing IMTs.*

The Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) every semester conducted a Lab. on tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) and calling 9-Line medevacs (9-Line) in preparation for Cadet Summer Training. This specific lab was conducted on October 7, 2021. TCCC is the United States military guidelines for trauma life support in prehospital combat medicine. These guidelines are designed to reduce preventable deaths while maintaining operation success. A 9-Line is a military term that soldiers use for requesting a medical helicopter to remove a combat injury. Since combat is stressful and sometimes a hectic situation, a 9-Line is the best way to calmly and accurately report that a soldier needs medical attention. The MS-I and MS-II cadets were taught the importance of these vital skills by the MS-IV classmates. This training consisted of individual lanes that the cadets would rotate through. The lanes were a TCCC station,

treatment for bleeds station, treatment for shock, broken bones, and burns, and finally how to call for a medical evacuation. Cadets rotated every 25 minutes. This gave each cadet enough time to learn the vital skill that was being taught during the lab. Simultaneously, the MS-III cadets were learning how TCCC, 9-Lines, and Casualty Collection Points (CCP) are used during combat. After this short medical refresher, they were evaluated on a Go/No Go test similar to what they should expect during Advanced Camp.

This specific lab is one of the most important labs taught this semester since it teaches life-saving skills that are important for any good soldier to know in a time of combat. The FIB also included a Individual Movement Technique (IMT) lane into the lab. The main purpose of these labs was to make sure cadets were confident with movement techniques/formations, squad-level tactics and executing these tasks to standard while under pressure to prepare them for Spring FTX and CST 2022. IMTs are the most basic tactics that are employed at the fire-team, squad, section, or platoon level. They are similar in most modern armies, but the U.S. Army focuses on the three individual movement techniques of high crawl, low crawl, and 3-5 second rush. These Individual movement techniques are typically taught to all soldiers in basic training and during a typical training year to ensure soldiers can move effectively when facing the enemy. This lab began with MS-I/MS-II cadets receiving demonstrations and instruction on IMTs. The MS-III class split to receive instruction on and conduct Squad and Platoon movement techniques along with a class on actions on the objective. Halfway through the lab, Cadet Jacob Jung provided a safety brief to the MS-I/MS-II cadets before having them complete an IMT practical exercise. Then the MS-III class concluded the lab by executing the first iteration of a situational training exercise ( STX) lane similar to what they will participate in at Advanced Camp .

# MS-III Class Update

## ***Movement to Contact Lab***

*By Cadet Jay Hatkar*

On Thursday, October 21st, the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) conducted a lab to better understand IMTs and Squad/Platoon level tactics, which included reacting to contact. The lab utilized paintball guns as a way to simulate contact. This was another lab where the MS-III cadets were separated from the MS-I/MS-II classes. While the MS-I/MS-II cadets were learning the basics of IMTs, the MS-III cadets were focused more on the tactics necessary for camp, such as react to contact.

During this lab, we first took instructions from Cadet Skander Boudabbous, along with the help of Cadets Kyle Villamayor and Jacob Jung. We reviewed the movement techniques of (1) traveling, (2) traveling overwatch, and (3) bounding overwatch, and when to use each. We learned these techniques in both a squad and platoon sized elements. Then we moved into squad level react to contact. The premise of this involved understanding the steps each fire-team has to take, the roles of each team leader, and what the squad leader would do in these situations. The squad was aligned in a squad column, and the instant the Alpha or Bravo fire-team took enemy fire, everyone would drop down immediately into the prone position, and the team that initially took fire would yell out the distance, direction, and description (3Ds) of the enemy. After that, the Alpha team got on line to continue to return fire, and depending on factors of METT-TC and the discretion of the squad leader (SL), the team not in contact would either flank or suppress the enemy. But if the enemy element is too large, techniques such as bounding back from the enemy would be utilized in order to minimize casualties.



*MS-III Cadets bound together during Movement to Contact Practical Exercise*

After the block of instruction, we continued into the practical portion of the lab. Conducting this lab in Lot 31, we utilized large trash cans to simulate cover from which the enemy would initiate contact, and it would be up to the SL to direct his two fire-teams to react to contact in the way the SL saw best. Cadet Villamayor was in charge of creating the situation for contact. During this portion of the lab, I was simply a soldier of a fire-team, so my role was support the squad as the SL directed. But my fellow MS-III cadets did a great job as SLs and Alpha/Bravo TLs, making sound, quick decisions and following the necessary steps to properly react to enemy contact. We all yelled out the 3Ds when taking fire, and we followed the lead of the SL & TLs to successfully conduct the lab and get the practice needed for Advanced Camp this coming summer.

From this lab, and generally labs from MS-III year, things have been a lot different. While the MS-I/MS-II cadets had basic instruction and utilized the paintball guns during their lab to gain a better understanding of IMTs, the MS-III cadets took a more in-depth approach, as all labs this year are geared towards Platoon level tactics to prepare us for camp. This was a great lab, engaging and fun due to the practical exercises to get the necessary skills to excel at camp. This training will allow us to go into greater detail during the scheduled Super Labs in mid-February and early March, where the weather will be cold, but we will need to be at our best to execute these big missions for camp. Labs like this are vital to get the practice needed to be successful going forward.

## MS-III Class Update

### ***Ranger Challenge***

***By Cadet Neel Khattri***

This past fall, the Fighting Illini Battalion had the privilege to compete at the Task Force Marseilles Ranger Challenge in both the 9 and 5-person teams. Both teams placed 4th in their respective categories. The Ranger Challenge competition is a physically tough and mentally grueling competition where teams execute a 10+ mile foot march along with several Expert Infantryman's Badge tasks including TC3 (tactical combat casualty care), a tactical Situational Training Exercise (STX) lane, land navigation, one rope bridge, and more. I had the privilege of leading the 5-person team which included Cadet's Lauren Leonard, Emma Lin, Brady Moran, Virginia Larsen and our alternates- Nolan Hull and Delaina Sigman. It was fun, but also a tough time, and my favorite lane was the stress shoot because I got to handle the Army's new M17 pistol. One of the tougher lanes for me was the functional fitness lane because it involved a lot of back to back smoker workouts which mentally pushed my team and I to our limits. However, we ended up getting first in this lane because of our commitment to each other as we constantly worked each other to our limits.

This was my third year competing in the Ranger Challenge competition, and every year there's always new lanes that make us work on our feet. Handling the M17 was a new skill I acquired, while also improving my leadership in tough times. In addition to that, my team/fellow cadets improved a lot too, pushing their mental and physical boundaries. Our MVP this year was Cadet Emma Lin because of her perseverance through the competition and having a never-quit attitude.

Cadet Brady Moran also got his first experience at the competition, and absolutely crushed it! He was excellent at rucking, but more importantly a great teammate and utilized his skills from Basic Camp to help out on the lanes. Cadet Virginia Larsen kept a strong morale and esprit de corps of the team through her Army Cadences. Cadet Lauren Leonard was a beast throughout the competition both through her physical fitness, but also her mental endurance by pushing her limits. Cadet Nolan Hull and Delaina Sigman, though alternates, were as valuable to the team as if they were competitors. Both of them helped the rest of the team at all times, from giving the other cadets their extra water, or helping out with their rucks. Overall, this year's 5-person team had such varying abilities, but a desire to be the best to each other, and it was my privilege to lead them.

The Ranger Challenge competition is always a fun but tough event where it bonds teammates/cadets, but also pushes them past what they believed they could do. After competing for three years, I feel I've grown more confident in the tasks, but I have also become more mentally tough, while forging bonds with other cadets through adversity. I recommend to everyone that they participate at least once in Ranger Challenge to see what it's like!



*Cadet Neel Khattri Performs a Hex-Bar Deadlift while his teammates wait for their turn during the fitness portion of Ranger Challenge Competition.*

# MS-III Class Update

## *Saturday Super Labs*

*By Cadet Mary Pelzer*

On three Saturdays beginning in February, the MS-III class along with MSI-II volunteers conducted Super Labs in preparation for Cadet Summer Training (CST). Each day at 0800, we formed up at the South Arboretum Woods (SAW) to receive our task organization and mission. For each Super Lab we ran through three iterations of different missions including raid, movement to contact, attack, and area defense.

Through below-freezing weather, snow, and ice, we practiced leading other cadets on missions. MS-I and MS-II cadets had the

opportunity to master the basics such as establishing Objective Rally Points (ORPs) and patrol bases, maintaining noise and light discipline, using cover and concealment properly, and drawing sector sketches. MS-III leaders were able to practice briefing OPORDs, leading elements ranging from team to platoon size, and reacting to real time complications in the mission.



*Cadets conduct a security halt in the snow while moving to their patrol base during the first Super Lab.*



*MS-III Cadets gather around and brief their mission plan during a Saturday Super Lab iteration.*

For every leadership position, MS-IV cadets provided feedback through blue card evaluations. Meeting to go over these evaluations played a vital part in allowing cadets to improve their leadership methods and avoid repeating their mistakes. Prior to Super Labs, we had spent a significant amount of time in class and lab reviewing tactics. Once we were actually crawling through the woods with rucksacks, uncomfortable weather, and live opposing forces, it all felt very different. Every leader made mistakes, and every leader learned from those mistakes. After being able to improve throughout the Super Labs, all cadets ended up more confident and prepared for Cadet Summer Training (CST).

# MS-IV Class Update

## ***OPFOR Paintball FTX***

*By Cadet Donovan Spann*

During the Fall 2021 Field Training Exercise (FTX) for the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB), we were able to take time between the required training events and allow for the FIB to have some fun for the semester. With the planning and support from our Cadre, The MS-IV cadets were able to prepare and execute a paintball lane for the FIB. This portion of the FTX was a welcomed change from the expected and required Land Navigation, Marksmanship, Patrol Base Ops, and other associated tasks. Though paintball was a welcomed diversion from standard instruction, we were still able to generate training value with it. All the cadets were able to apply their room clearing knowledge, STX lanes, and tactical competencies they learned throughout this FTX while playing paintball.

The most impactful training that came from paintball was allowing the MS-I and MS-II classes to learn and receive practical application of room clearing. This was led by Cadet Christopher Flores as he showed proper techniques through “glass house” demonstrations and ultimately helped developed an understanding of teamwork and squad tactics. This training was further enhanced using model buildings within the training area that allowed for the teams to better see what it is like to clear a room. The squads were also able to build cohesion and trust between each other while moving through the urban terrain.

After this training and a rest period, the FIB was able to give some well-earned time for fun! The MS-I and MS-II cadets were able to play games like “team-deathmatch” and capture the flag. Cadets were able to show their newly improved teamwork and tactics in their games and other scenarios.

Shortly after wrapping up with our MS-I/MS-II cadets, the MS-III cadets made their way over from their Patrol Base Operations class and were also given a chance to relieve some stress. After a short familiarization session, the MS-III cadets were given their turn and ended up walking away with renewed energy for their last day at the Sparta Training Area. With paintballs and gas left, the rest of the cadets and cadre cheered the MSIV class on to have some fun during a final round.

After this fun outing, the cadet battalion moved with a new sense of motivation towards chow and Night Land Nav. Many of our cadets learned and refined their room clearing and teamwork while others learned the importance of bringing the requested number of spare uniforms to the field!



*Cadets are briefed on their mission prior to completing a paintball STX lane mission.*



*Cadet aims around a corner to help protect their teams flag.*

# MS-IV Class Update

## Open House

By Cadet Christopher Flores



*Cadet Ameer Samy belays a UIUC student on the rock wall during open house.*

Hello, I am a MS-IV cadet in the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) and I had the privilege to be the Officer in-Charge for the Open House Lab. This lab is like a Super Bowl event for ROTC and I feel the battalion executed this lab excellently. Due to weather, there were many curve balls thrown at the planners, but the cadets adjusted and the lab came out great. We planned for the Open House to be outside on the Main Quad of campus. The goal is to allow students to participate in some of the training you do in Army ROTC. Due to rain, we had to make a last minute change to move the operation into the Armory Building. This forced many messages, stories, and flyers posted across campus and all across social media to get be adjusted to direct students to the new location. This event is one of the biggest recruiting efforts for the FIB and displays what the program has to offer. It is our opportunity to show students here at the university the many opportunities cadets get and the amount of knowledge one gains by simply trying out the program.

Having the Open House in the Armory did have some advantages. Prior to the open house, we were able to coordinate with the Army National Guard and get a M249 Squad Automatic Weapon to show interested students. I also added a few fun events that would still attract plenty of college students to our event. We had a scavenger hunt in the Armory that showed all the military history that lies inside the Armory Building and we were able to use the rock wall within the FIB Gym. The students also got the chance to wear military uniforms, handled equipment cadets get to use, visited the different exclusive spaces available for cadets like our computer lab, cadet lounge and gym. They even had the chance to use our new smokeless range to practice shooting a rifle. This tour really emphasizes all the cool things we get to use in our everyday life just by being cadets in the FIB. Once finished, our visitors were able to earn cool FIB swag!

Most importantly, the takeaway of this lab was the information Mr. Ashworth had to offer our guests on what it takes to be a cadet. He provided information about scholarships, jobs within the military, the courses that need to be taken and importantly, stating the importance of what it means to commission and start their life after college as an officer in the military.

Overall, I believe this lab was very important to be part of because as for myself, I was able to talk to prospective cadets and tell them my personal experience. Talking to students our own age can be really helpful in getting a perspective of managing regular school courses and still being part of a program bigger than themselves. I am so happy with the outcome of this event and proud of how much work the FIB put into each semester's Open House.



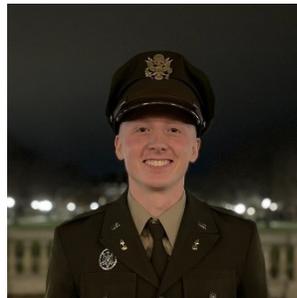
*Cadets welcome students in as they come to check out open house in the Armory Building.*

# MS-IV Class Update



**2LT Skander Bouddabous**

Component: Illinois Army National Guard  
Branch: Corps of Engineers  
Degree: Mechanical Engineering  
Duty Station: Joliet, IL



**2LT Gabriel Cross**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Ordnance  
Degree: Mechanical Engineering  
Duty Station: Fort Hood, TX



**2LT Henry Feldhaus**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Field Artillery  
Degree: Mechanical Engineering  
Duty Station: Fort Stewart, GA



**2LT Christopher Flores**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Infantry  
Degree: Political Science  
Duty Station: Schofield Barracks, HI



**2LT Connor Forrest**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Field Artillery  
Degree: Accountancy  
Duty Station: Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA



**2LT Raven Jo**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Infantry  
Degree: Political Science  
Duty Station: TBD



**2LT Grant Jobe**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Infantry  
Degree: Political Science  
Duty Station: TBD



**2LT Jacob Jung**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Corps of Engineers  
Degree: Technical Systems Management  
Duty Station: TBD

# MS-IV Class Update



**2LT Heidi Kirchen**

Component: Army Reserves  
Branch: Nurse Corps  
Degree: Nursing  
Duty Station: Madison, WI



**2LT Youngmin Lee**

Component: Illinois Army National Guard  
Branch: Medical Services  
Degree: Integrative Biology  
Duty Station: North Riverside, IL



**2LT Joseph Lim**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Military Intelligence  
Degree: Finance  
Duty Station: Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA



**2LT Darren Novak**

Component: Illinois Army National Guard  
Branch: Field Artillery  
Degree: Technical Systems Management  
Duty Station: TBD



**2LT David Seo**

Component: Army Reserves  
Branch: Transportation  
Degree: Middle Grade Education  
Duty Station: Elwood, IL



**2LT Donovan Spann**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Military Intelligence  
Degree: Consumer Economics and Finance  
Duty Station: Hunter Army Airfield, GA



**2LT Kyle Villamayor**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Field Artillery  
Degree: Technical Systems Management  
Duty Station: Joint Base Lewis McChord, WA



**2LT Julio Zacarias**

Component: Active Duty  
Branch: Adjutant General  
Degree: Masters of Education Policy, Organization & Leadership  
Duty Station: Schofield Barracks, HI

# Ranger Club Spotlight

## *Task Force Marseilles Ranger Challenge*

*By Cadet Graham Kessler*

At the end of the Spring 2021 semester, cadets planning to return to the Ranger Club and wanting to compete in the Fall 2021 Ranger Challenge were provided with weekly workouts to improve their physical fitness. This would allow the club to focus on knowledge and tactics more heavily and only need to maintain the fitness built up over the summer. I was one of those cadets and later was selected as the team captain. Living close to campus allowed me to provide the team's cadets the opportunity to get extra practice with specific lanes normally tested during the ranger challenge. The grenade toss event was a weak area that needed improvement if we were going to be competitive.

With the Ranger Challenge competition taking place in mid-October, participants had a short twelve weeks to fully prepare. Unlike the previous year, I only planned Ranger Club meetings during the week. The previous six to seven days per week training schedule left many of the club participants burnt out from training and unmotivated to do their best during training each day. However, this meant that cadets had to focus and train hard by only meeting five days per week, which went considerably well. Each week consisted of multiple workouts and knowledge days on a rotation. This provided a well rounded training plan to maintain high levels of fitness and get several repetitions on technical tasks required of cadets at the Ranger Challenge.

At the first day of the competition, team captains are briefed on the specifics of each lane, along with any altered standards to build their plan for competition day. The final formal task of the night is the written test. This determined the staggered step off order of all teams in the competition. With our heavy emphasis on knowledge during training, we were able to get the top score on the exam and be the first team to step off the next morning. The lanes at the

competition consisted of (1) functional fitness, (2) grenade toss, (3) a stress shoot and weapons assembly/disassembly, (4) tactical combat casualty care, and a (5) critical thinking station. All of these required land navigation skills to plot the coordinates of each lane on the map and plan a route to each one.

After Ranger Challenge each year, the club gets together to go over things that went well to keep for the following year, along with any changes or improvements that need to be implemented. This year, our competitors greatly appreciated the five-day training plan and felt confident in their abilities regarding tactical knowledge. Additionally, the METCON (CrossFit) style workouts provided by Cadet Ilya Ahmad were very popular. The main improvements for next year will be more time spent rucking while preventing any injuries, and finding places to get more practice shooting and executing the obstacle courses.



*Cadet Benjamin Busby practice assembling and M4 Carbine before Task Force Ranger Challenge*



*Cadets prepare for a ruck march assessment as part of Ranger Challenge Training.*

# Northern Warfare Challenge

By Cadet Nolan Hull



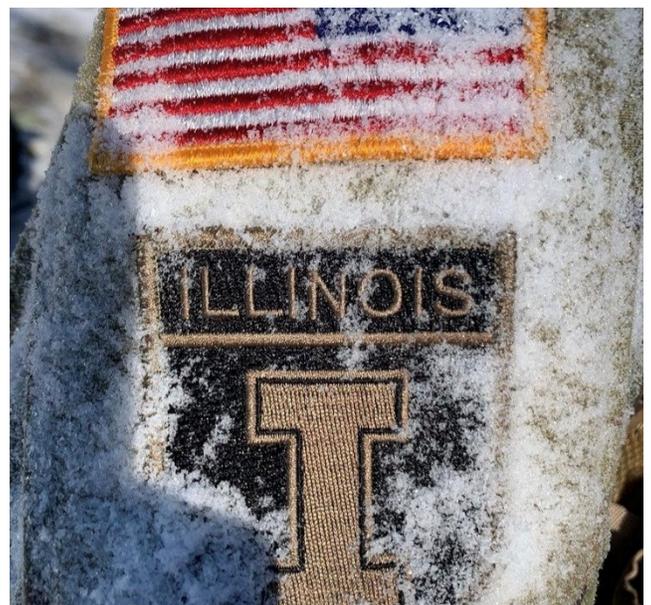
*NWC Team poses for a picture at the top of the Wisconsin bluffs after the completion of the “Hardest Race in ROTC”*

This was by far the most mentally, physically, and emotionally challenging event in my college career. Through 15 weeks of training, through bonding with the teammates, and through grueling determination, I was able to accomplish what some call the “Toughest Race in ROTC.” The memories made along the way were priceless, and it truly was an experience that brought me closer to cadets I knew little about and cadre who would help the team along the way.

Training started at the end of the 2021 fall semester, went into winter break, and continued throughout the beginning of the 2022 spring semester. Six days a week, with Saturdays off, the team was grinding through the workouts given by the captain to become physically fit for a competition which none of us knew what to expect. My fellow teammates, cadets Brendan Carter, Logan Yates, Neel Khattri, and Nicholas Talley got me through the 15 grueling and slow weeks of training. From jogging multiple miles to weighted rucks on Sundays, it was never easy but an experience and an accomplishment that I will never forget.

Arriving in Bluff, Wisconsin I was overcome with excitement, nervousness, and a competitive spirit. The atmosphere of the land, the chilly morning, and looking up to see these hills towering above me is what made me realize just how tough this race was going to be. All 30+ teams from across the nation started the 16-mile hike on a road curving around one large hill. From there for 16 miles straight, you’re making time cut-offs every 4 miles, while going up and down in elevation that is 3,000+ feet high. In the middle of the race came the “SKEDCO pull” in which a casualty, (two 45 lbs. weights), were placed in a casualty carrier nicknamed the SKEDCO, and dragged for roughly 2 miles. This part of the competition was extremely difficult due to the awkwardness of the weights pulling you while running up and down hills. At one point, I recall one team accidentally letting go of their SKEDCO which went tumbling down the hill at 15+ mph knocking the legs out from under other teams in the process.

The Northern Warfare Challenge is not an experience for the weak-hearted but if you have the self-motivation to put in the time to train properly, then finishing the Northern Warfare Challenge is an accomplishment you will be proud of for your entire life. Way to go Illini!



*Covered in snow and ice, members of the NWC team push farther into the Wisconsin bluffs.*

# Ranger Buddy

By Cadet Jay Hatkar

With the start of second semester, meant the beginning of the MS-III stress, the work needed to get ready for Cadet Summer Training, and of course, training for Ranger Buddy began. We had a small group to start the semester, totaling only around eight cadets, all ready for a tough semester ahead. Getting into the first couple weeks of training, we had a few people in and out of training, and eventually, thanks to Cadet Aditya Madduluri, we had new people every week asking to start training with Ranger Buddy. By the middle of February, we had a solid team of 14 of us training.

As the semester pushed through, MS-III responsibilities really started to kick in. From lab time at the Stock Pavilion, to Super Labs every weekend until Spring Break, training got turned upside down. Constantly handing off the training to other cadets, the Ranger Buddy teams took ownership and conducted themselves fantastically as leaders and competitors. Cadets Lauren Leonard and Aditya Madduluri were always willing to help out when my availability wasn't possible, leading many knowledge sessions, such as TCCC, medical evacuations, and Claymore setup exercises. They helped many of the MS-I/MS-II cadets understand the Expert Infantry Badge tasks and how to perform them to standard.



*Ranger buddy participants pose for a picture before the start of the competition.*

After weeks of training, came our first assessment. The Friday before Spring Break, at 0300, the team met inside the Armory, weighing rucks, getting ready to conduct a 6-mile ruck for time, a 2-mile run, in the snow, and knowledge lanes thereafter. Conditions weren't ideal, but every cadet came prepared to take on the challenge. Each and every member of the team performed fantastically and really showed they were ready to take on Ranger Buddy Competition.

After Spring Break, expanding our military knowledge became the priority. With three weeks left, everyone was training six days a week, sometimes twice in a day, to practice knowledge lanes, complete physical workouts, and continually prepare for Ranger Buddy. The team really worked together and became one big group, helping each other after training hours, meeting on their own to practice military tasks, or even making up workouts when schedules were conflicting. By the time competition week occurred everyone was ready and motivated.



*Male teams pose together after the competition while waiting for the other to finish.*

When we arrived at Kansas University, our teams were ready for the competition. Everyone came prepared mentally and physically. The competition was grueling, and many of us sustained injuries but the teams never quit. By the end, only one team, MS-I cadets Megan Distelhorst and Francisco Cornejo, were still competing through knowledge lanes, impressing the whole team, until they were not able to pass the knowledge lanes standards. We all may not have been satisfied with the final results, but the growth every single member of the team showed was tremendous, and by the end, every single one of them was a better trained cadet, individual, and leader. In all, Ranger Buddy as a club and competition was a huge success.

# Salute to Veterans Football Game

By Cadet Brian Keyes



*Push up crew stands tall at the beginning of an ILLINI football game for support.*

college football field before and even a few had never watched an Illini football game before.

I had the honor of being the games Celebrity Illini for this game along with Cadet Joe Braunagel and two Navy ROTC cadets for being student-athletes at the university as well as ROTC cadets. We were able to go out on the middle of the field at the start of the game in our OCP pants and Illini athletics gear on top and support the Illini Cheer team with the I-L-L chant. This was a very exciting moment for me and I was happy to be able to go out and represent Army ROTC in a good light. Our push-up crew was gifted the warm-up shirts that the football team was wearing for this game from the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics so we could match with them while doing push-ups on the field. I was not actually with the push-up crew during this game because the football team had asked me to speak with a couple of their recruits that had shown interest in ROTC. So I informed them of my experience with being a cadet and a student-athlete. Dad's weekend is a fun game because we allow cadets to bring their dads down on the field and go out and do push-ups with them as well. This is always an amazing experience for the cadets and I know this year there were quite a few dads out doing push-ups for the Illini.

The last game is one of the types of games the shows what push-up crew is about. It is always a hard game to get cadets to sign up for because it is the weekend over fall break and is generally pretty cold. This game was against our in-state rivals Northwestern University and it was definitely cold. Cadets Graham Kessler, Virginia Larsen, Jeffery Lee, Connor Forrest, and I were the only cadets there and this game also happened to be the highest-scoring game of the season. The Illini beat Northwestern 47-14 and capped off a great season for the push-up crew as we had to knockout a solid 200+ push-ups in support of this Illini win. This football season will be one that I will never forget and I am forever grateful to be able to share so many amazing memories with the cadets who decided to try out for the push-up crew this season.

I was lucky enough this semester to be able to captain the Push-Up Crew with Cadet Eugene Jang for the 2021 Illini Football season. I had been assigned the captain position last year but was unable to run the club due to Covid-19 restrictions that kept our club off the field during football games. That made this season extra special because we had many cadets in the program who had either never done push-up crew or for some, had never even heard of it and had no clue what it was. It was a great experience for me to be able to bring so many cadets out onto the field and let them present the military and our ROTC program in a positive light. Throughout the season we had over 30 different cadets try out the push-up crew at seven different home games. The club also gives many cadets new experiences, as almost every cadet had never been on a



*Our very own Cadet Brian Keyes kicks off the ILL-INI chant*

# My Experience as an SMP Cadet

By CDT Zullydiana Gomez  
Silver Disk Recruiter

Hello! My name is Cadet Gomez and I'll be a MS-III next semester. My past two years as a member of the Fighting Illini Battalion (FIB) have been the highlight of my college experience. I've gained great confidence in myself but also gained many of my friends I have today. I've been able to try out new things that I never would have seen myself doing but even learned to love Ruck Marches and shooting the M4 rifle. I know myself four years ago would not have expected me to take this new route in my life.

I was originally set on trying out ROTC prior to even thinking of enlisting. I had the opportunity to talk to my recruiter during Incoming Cadet Welcoming Week (ICW2) and get more information on what it takes to enlist and join the Illinois National Guard (ILARNG). I was informed of the many benefits one receives by simply becoming a Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) cadet. In the Fall semester of my Freshman year, I was able to enlist with the National Guard as a Motor Transport Operator (88M). While preparing to ship out to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in May, I was able to drill each month with the Recruit Sustainment Program (RSP) in Mattoon, Illinois. During RSP, I was able to learn the basic information needed to attend Basic Training such as drill and ceremony, basic rifle marksmanship and customs and courtesies. While also being a cadet with the FIB, I was able to use my knowledge from labs and military science classes to help out my battle buddies whenever they had questions. Not only did I feel well prepared from being in RSP, but being in ROTC held me to a higher standard than most.



*Cadet Gomez with her parents after Basic Training Graduation.*



*Cadet Gomez receives her Illinois patch after contracting with ROTC.*

After my completion of Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training, I was able to return to ROTC not only physically better but more tactically knowledgeable in ways that made me more confident and competent in the different tasks we performed during labs each week. Then, after contracting with ROTC, I was able to go into my unit as a Cadet and work with the Lieutenants. Not only are you expected to work efficiently but you are held at the same standards as other officers. There are many benefits of being an SMP cadet, including gaining leadership opportunities both in ROTC and in the National Guard and financial benefits. Once contracted as an SMP cadet, you immediately begin receiving E-5 (SGT) pay for drill weekends in addition to your monthly ROTC stipend of \$420 a month.

So what do you do as a SMP cadet? Along with shadowing the unit's lieutenants, I have learned a lot from my senior Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO), and run some of the ranges during our Field Training at Camp Atterbury, IN. At one range, I had the opportunity to plan an entire operation. I worked with Camp Atterbury to get ammo for the range, secure a range that met our requirements for the weapon systems we used, and properly opened and closed the range. I also appointed a senior NCO, Officer In Charge (OIC), and range safety for the range to help me run it.

# My Experience as a Silver Disk Recruiter

By CDT Zullydiana Gomez



*Cadets Nick Chheung, Eugene Jang, and Zullydiana Gomez pose for a picture at the range during a drill weekend.*

As a member of the ILARNG, I had the opportunity as a SMP Cadet to work over the summer as a Silver Disk Recruiter. ILARNG provides the funds to hire a few SMP Cadets for two-week periods of time where your place of duty would be the Army ROTC Department. During this summer, I worked here at UIUC supporting the recruiting mission. It was an interesting duty as I had the opportunity to work alongside the UIUC's Gold Bar Recruiter, 2LT Jacob Jung.

What I learned was there is a lot of things that occur behind the scenes to ensure quality cadets are continuing to come to the FIB. I've been able to work with 2LT Jung and Mr. Ashworth on updating the pictures around the Armory to enhance the visual representation of what the FIB does during the school year. These photos help new prospects and their parents better understand the types of training our cadets receive

here at UIUC. It was very nice seeing all the pictures of the different MILS classes engaging in the different activities and I never realized all the interesting things that cadets do over one academic year. Army ROTC remained active even though COVID-19 restrictions limited many of the university's events. I also used my experience as a cadet to assist in updating the Cadet Handbook. This reference helps all our new cadets learn how things are done in the Fighting Illini Battalion. Finally, I worked on the editing of this edition of the MILLINI. When you realize that our program has over 1200 alumni, the MILLINI helps to keep these influencers updated on what UIUC Army ROTC is doing.

Alongside these updates and improvements, we have worked with future and incoming cadets by informing them about the different financial opportunities the program has to offer and the basic requirements needed to enroll in ROTC. I've had the opportunity to be part of different recruiting events in the past two weeks, including supporting the Boys State annual event at Eastern Illinois University (EIU).

Boy's State is an opportunity for high school juniors to gain a better appreciation of how their national government runs while meeting boys from other high schools with similar interests. Many of their events are focused on team-building and I was asked to run a lane of a Leadership Reaction Course (LRC). We use the LRC to practice leadership skills and these boys had an opportunity to work as a team through different lanes and really test out what it's like to be a leader. From climbing a rope to carrying a litter blind folded, I had the opportunity to be in charge of one of the events and be a leadership mentor. The LRC gave them a taste of what college-level ROTC is all about while doing competitive events and figuring out how to get through missions. Most importantly it's really impactful to talk to the boys on what they can expect as they prepare for attending college. To many of them, I could tell they hadn't really thought about all the details in transitioning to college. I was glad to be able to talk to them since people don't really know how great of a program we have here at UIUC unless we promote it, student to student.



*Cadet Gomez discusses how the event went after participants at Boys State completed a lane of the Leaders Reaction Course.*

# Incoming Cadet Welcome Week

By 2LT Jacob Jung  
Gold Bar Recruiter



*New Cadets complete CCFA during PRT.*

Incoming Cadet Welcome Week (ICW2), formerly Cadet Orientation Program (COP), is a 4-day program to introduce new cadets to the University of Illinois, and the Fighting Illini Battalion. Throughout the event, new cadets are introduced to the skills they will be learning and using during the time that they are in ROTC.

The first day is spent welcoming the cadets and their families to the program. This includes helping cadets move into their dorms, walking through the processes and differences of receiving a scholarship and contracting, cadre meet and greet, and equipment draw. The day ends with a barbeque for current cadets, new cadets, and their families.

The second day starts with the first Physical Readiness Training (PRT) session for the new cadets. Here they learn the basics of Army PRT including how to wear the PT uniform, as well as some of the basic movements and exercises that are used on a regular basis. After PRT and breakfast, cadets return to begin a round-robin event where they will be given classes on topics like Army Values, Customs and Courtesies, Unit and Rank Structure, and Drill and Ceremony, as well as many others. Day 2 ends with a scavenger hunt across campus to show cadets the main areas of campus and to get a feel for where classes and buildings are.

Day 3 starts with a PRT session in which the Cadet Command Fitness Assessment (CCFA) is administered. This test consists of one minute of push-ups, one minute of modified sit-ups, and a 1-mile run. The rest of the day is left open for new cadets to complete any remaining paperwork and participate in UIUC's sponsored welcome events.

Although not part of ICW2, Day 3 also is the day we conduct our MS-III Leadership Academy. During this training, our new MS-III cadets learn some of the duties and responsibilities of be a Squad Leader, Platoon Sergeant and Platoon Leader.

Day 4 is another day of round-robin competitions. The cadets meet on the Armory lawn and compete in events such as Field Leaders Reaction Course, One-Rope Bridge, Grenade toss, Marksmanship, and Drill and Ceremony. Points are awarded to the squads in each event. After the competition and scores are tallied, each cadet of the top squad earns a prize. At this time, new cadets are awarded their PT shirts with their names and are officially welcomed into the FIB Family.

ICW2 allows incoming new cadets to experience a little bit of what life will be like as a cadet as well as begin integrating into the University. It is a great way for the new cadets to meet their classmates and some of the returning cadets. Finally, it serves as the official welcome into ROTC and the Fighting Illini Battalion.



*Cadets learn to tie a Swiss Seat Harness and cross a One-Rope-Bridge as a team during ICW2.*

# Cadet Training Events



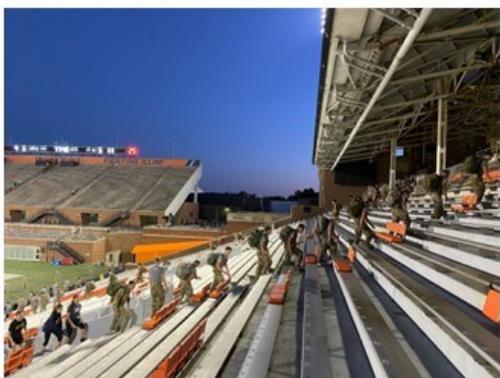
**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## 9/11 Memorial Stair Climb

9 September 2021

Cadets participate in the 9/11 stair climb to honor the fallen and to honor the first responders who went above and beyond to help people on this sad day in America. Cadets walked up 110 flights of stairs just like the first responders did in the World Trade Center with rucks weighing between 35 and 70 pounds. This was a joint event done with the Air Force and Navy ROTC branches as well. It was a great day for the Fighting Illini Battalion to pay their respects and push beyond their physical and mental capabilities just like the first responders did on 9/11.



*Left: Cadets climb stairs of Memorial Stadium during event.*



*Right: Platoon drops rucks and conducts cool down drills after completion of the stair climb.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Land Navigation

16 September 2021

During this lab, MS-III Cadets received a refresher on land navigation. This is a vital skill to any Cadet attending Advance Camp in the summer and after commissioning as Army officers. MS-I and MS-II Cadets also received a class that introduced them to land navigation. One of the strengths of the Cadet Battalion is our prior service and Simultaneous Membership Program Cadets who assisted their fellow cadets during this lab. It was rewarding to see cadets find their points during the practical exercise.



*Cadets Jared Fliggleman, Virginia Larson, and Maddy Szamocki plot their points during the land nav lab.*



*Cadet Jay Hatkar shoots an azimuth to his next point.*



*Cadet Annika Koester confirms her bearing before proceeding to her first point.*

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) Day 1

24 September 2021

The first day of FTX was spent at the range. MS-III Cadets were given the opportunity to conduct a group and zero on the M4 rifle and performed an ALT-C qualification. During this time, MS-I and MS-II Cadets were given refresher classes on shooting, land navigation, and fieldcraft. After the MS-III qualification, MSI-II cadets had the opportunity to conduct a familiarization fire with the M4.



*MSI-II cadets receive a class from Cadet Donovan Spann on how to pack a ruck.*



*Cadet Mary Pelzer fires her carbine from the kneeling position during ALT-C Qualification.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) Day 2

25 September 2021

Day Two of the FTX started with an early morning land navigation exercise. After land navigation, MS-I and MS-II Cadets moved to a small mock village to learn Close-Quarters Battle drills and then demonstrate what they learned during a paintball exercise. The MS-III Cadets began learning the basics of combat patrols. After dark, all Cadets returned to the land navigation course to conduct a night land navigation event.



*Cadets plot their points at the start of day land nav.*



*MS-I cadets prepare to enter and clear a building.*



*Cadets prepare for the paint ball battle.*



*Cadets take cover behind a building during paint ball practical.*

# Cadet Training Events



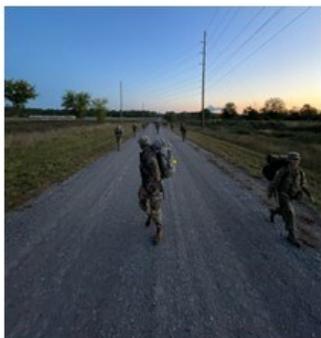
**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) Day 3

26 September 2021

Day 3 of FTX concluded our semester field exercise. It started with a ruck march to the High Ropes Course at the Sparta ILARNG training facility. Here cadets were given the opportunity to overcome any fears of heights they may have had and negotiate obstacles while suspended 30 feet in the air. All cadets successfully completed the event.



*Cadets conduct early morning ruck march to the high ropes course.*



*Cadets negotiated obstacles while suspended in the air to improve confidence and overcome fears.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC)

30 September 2021

In this lab, Cadets familiarized with several of the key skills of tactical combat casualty care. Cadets also received a class on the 9-line MEDEVAC format and then moved into the practical exercise portion of the lab. Finally, cadets were able to ask MS-IVs questions pertaining to their camp experiences relating to TCCC.



*MS-III cadets receive instruction on TCCC and applications at CST.*



*Cadet Ilya Ahmad is evaluated on his performance of TCCC.*



*Cadet Delaina Sigman performs TCCC on a battle buddy while other cadets provide security.*

# Cadet Training Events



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### Individual, Squad, and Platoon Movement Techniques

7 October 2021

MS-III cadets started their training of small unit tactics by learning Battle Drill 2 (React to Contact). Simultaneously, the MS-I and MS-II Cadets learned methods to cover their battle buddies and move to cover during an Individual Movement Techniques lab. This lab was a success as Cadets learned to take care of their battle buddies and maneuver against the enemy. MS-III Cadets were also able to go over tactical standard operating procedures (SOPs) that will assist them during next summer's Advance Camp.



*Cadet Ethan Jones demonstrates a proper high crawl for his fellow cadets.*



*Squad prepares to move while another squad provides cover fire.*



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### Weapons and Communications

14 October 2021

Fighting Illini Cadets conducted weapons familiarization during this lab. All Cadets received hands-on training on the M240B and M249 machine guns and M4 rifle. Each cadets was able to disassemble, assemble, clear, and perform function checks on these weapons. With this knowledge, Cadets will be more prepared for the Spring FTX and Cadet Summer Training events.



*Cadet Ben Busby practices assembly and disassembly of M4 Carbine.*



*Cadets work as a team to clear, disassemble, reassemble, and functions check the M249 SAW.*



*Cadet Joseph Lim coaches Cadet Estefani Rendon on how to properly clear M240B.*

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Open House

28 October 2021

Informing the UIUC student body about Army ROTC is always important to keep growing the Cadet Battalion. During the Open House lab, Cadets allow UIUC students the opportunity to experience some of the training opportunities they have as a Cadet. Due to poor weather this Open House was held at the Armory and was supported by both the Illinois National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserves.



The Army ROTC Rock Climbing Wall in the Armory is always a big draw to current students participating in the Open House



Cadets stand in front of the Armory to talk to current students about opportunities in Army ROTC.



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Salute to Veterans Football Game

30 October 2021

An annual tradition has development between the Athletic Department and the ROTC Departments. During the home football game honoring Veterans and First Responders, The Army ROTC Cadets that have contracted during the year are invited to repeat their Loyal Oath to defend our country. The Cadets always receive a standing ovation. This event also coincided with Dad's Weekend so the Cadets invite their fathers to participate with the Push-Up Crew.



Army Push Up Crew poses with Navy ROTC Midshipmen



Dads join cadets on the field to perform push ups after an Illini touchdown.



Cadets and midshipmen prepare for the Oath of Enlistment during half-time.

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Tri-Service Competition

1 November 2021

The Tri-Service Competition is a fun fitness event where all of the University of Illinois ROTC Departments compete for bragging rights. With close to 300 cadets and midshipmen here at UIUC, this event determines which program has the most physically fit members. This helps cadets push their physical limits and builds esprit de corps within the ranks. Being a part of the Tri-Service Competition is a shared event that bonds each member of UIUC ROTC.



*Left: Cadet Grant Jobe performs a tire flip while Cadet Logan Yates prepares for his turn during the Tri-Service Competition.*



*Right: All 3 services compete to see who can perform the most pull-ups.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## PMI and Smokeless Range

4 November 2021

An new capability for the Fighting Illini Cadet Battalion is the smokeless range. This simulator provides a refresher of marksmanship instruction, weapons handling, practice of the steady hold factors and other fundamentals of marksmanship, and even give our cadets a chance to practice the rifle marksmanship qualification. This qualification is a key event each cadet will perform at Advance Camp.

*Rifle Team utilizes the Smokeless Range to improve skills for competition.*



*Cadets compete against one another to determine the best marksman at the Smokeless Range.*

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Fall Awards Ceremony

2 December 2021

Each semester the cadre awards cadets that have exhibited excellence at labs, within the academic studies and/or during military training events with other Army ROTC programs. The Fall Awards Ceremony recognize the cadets for all their hard work and efforts during the past semester. Even when faced with university COVID-19 restrictions, the cadets endured and many exceeded the standards to graduate and commission.



*Cadets Andrew Rodrigues and Delaina Sigman receive awards from Cadet Battalion Commander Donovan Spann and the Cadet CSM Jacob Jung for the highest ACFT scores in the MS-I Class.*



*Awardees gather for a group picture at the end of the ceremony.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Call for Fire / Drill and Ceremony

1 February 2022

The Fighting Illini Battalion conducted a drill and ceremony lab to introduce the MS-I and MS-II cadets to basic military marching and operating within a formation. These leadership skills are important to do well at Advance Camp and helps them gain confidence in leading platoon-sized elements. While this training was occurring, the MS-III cadets received training on the artillery Call For Fire in order to prepare for summer training. These cadets were introduced to the Target Number, Trigger, Location, Observer, Delivery System, Attack Guidance & Communication (TTLODAC) means of determining quality targets during fire planning. These skills will be accessed during their mission lanes at the upcoming field training exercise.



*MS-III Cadets practice Drill and Ceremony before going to CST.*



*Cadets work as a team to develop a Call for Fire script before a practical exercise.*

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



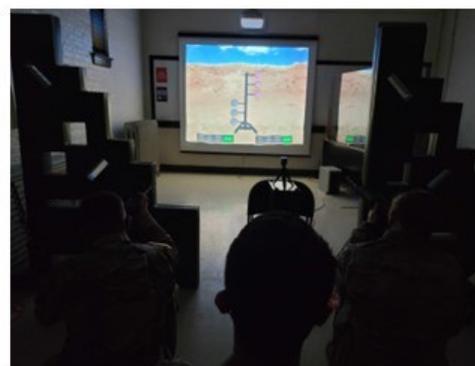
## Terrain Model Kit / Smokeless Range

10 February 2022

During this lab, MS-III Fighting Illini Battalion cadets received guidance on how to properly create and use a terrain model kit and what should be included in their leader's book for the field training exercise and summer training. MS-I and MS-II cadets conducted a Field Leader Reaction Course (FLRC) and a Smokeless Range lab in order to build teamwork and camaraderie among their squads and platoons. Cadets worked together to successfully complete the FLRC and to familiarize themselves with leading a platoon.



Left: MS-III Cadets work as a group to build a TMK and brief a mission.



Right: Two cadets compete at the smokeless range to see who the better marksman is.



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Recon / Tactical Combat Casualty Care

17 February 2022

The Fighting Illini Battalion MS-I and MS-II cadets were reintroduced to tactical combat casualty care (TCCC) and calling a 9-line MEDEVAC to evacuate a casualty by air. This is a key skill assessed at Cadet Summer Training. Cadets were given a refresher course on how to properly conduct TCCC and calling a 9-line medevac before being separated into their platoons to go through a TCCC platoon competition. Simultaneously, MS-III cadets were rehearsing leader's reconnaissance patrols and developing standard operating procedures for the super labs.



MS-II Cadet is evaluated on performance of TCCC by MS-IV Raven Jo.



MS-III cadets talk through a recon with MS-IV instructor Kyle Villamayor.

## Cadet Training Events



### Fighting Illini Battalion



#### Patrol Base and Recon Super Lab

19 February 2022

During their first super lab of the year, Fighting Illini Battalion MS-III cadets conducted patrol base operations and leader's reconnaissance patrols. These super labs are conducted to help MS-III cadets gain confidence in their leadership abilities and small unit tactical knowledge. Cadets switched leadership positions each iteration to allow as many cadets as possible to have a leadership role.



*Cadets move a simulated casualty back to the patrol base after tacking contact during a mission.*



*Cadets perform TCCC and prepare a medevac for a simulated casualty.*



### Fighting Illini Battalion



#### Movement to Contact / Room Clearing

24 February 2022

The Fighting Illini Battalion MS-I and MS-II cadets were introduced to room clearing in the Armory Building during this lab. They were taught how to properly enter a building and clear a room by MS-IV cadets. During this time, MS-III cadets were introduced to movement to contact in order to develop standard operating procedures as a class for their upcoming super lab, field training exercise and summer training.



*MSI-II receive classroom instruction on how to properly enter and clear a room before beginning the practical exercise in the Armory Building.*



*MS-III cadets discuss the movement to contact and conduct a walkthrough with MS-IV instructors at the UIUC Stock Pavilion.*

## Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



### Movement to Contact Super Lab

26 February 2022

During their second super lab of the year, MS-III cadets were put into leadership positions in order to be exposed on how to properly conduct a movement to contact and establishing a patrol base in their preparation for the upcoming Combined Field Training Exercise. Each evaluation helps the MS-III cadets better understand what to expect during Advance Camp this summer. Some MS-I and MS-II cadets volunteered which allowed them to be exposed to super lab training. The super labs focus on military skills that require more time than the standard 2-hour weekly lab.



*Left: Cadets Brian Keyes and Emmanuel Kim work together to plan a movement to contact.*



*Right: Cadet Lauren Leonard receives instruction on applying face paint during the super lab.*



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



### Raid, Defense, and Attack Super Lab

5 March 2022

During their final super lab of the semester, MS-III cadets went through three iterations of raid, defense, and attack missions. MS-III cadets were evaluated on their leadership abilities and knowledge regarding these battle drills. Since this was the final super lab for the MS-III cadets before the Combined Field Training Exercise, the expectations were high for this class. With super labs completed, MS-III cadets have a better understanding on how evaluations will occur at Advance Camp.



*MSIII Cadets work to improve defenses around their patrol base.*



*MS-IV Cadets conduct After-Action Reviews on patrol base operations during the MS-III leadership lab.*

# Cadet Training Events



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### MS-I Hazelton Competition

24 March 2022

Each spring semester since 1891, the FIB has conducted its annual Hazelton Competition. This event tests first year cadets on knowledge and skills learned throughout their first year in ROTC. The test includes general knowledge of Army ROTC history at the University of Illinois, basic Army knowledge and history, land navigation, Individual Movement Techniques, Tactical Combat Casualty Care and Grenade throws. MS-I Cadet Thomas Franklin was announced the winner during the Dining Out.



Cadet Thomas Franklin is awarded a plaque and certificate by the PMS for achieving the recognition as the top MS-I Cadet (Hazelton Award).



Cadets Carter Evans and Francisco Comejo take a break from the competition to pose for a picture.



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### M4 Live Fire Range

23 March 2022

The Fighting Illini Battalion MS-III cadets were able to conduct a M4 qualification live fire range at the Marseilles Training Center in order to have some practice before attending Advance Camp this summer. MS-III cadets were able to group and zero and then practice on the pop-up range as well in various shooting positions.



Cadet Jacob Fuss engages targets from behind cover.



Cadet Ryan Sanchez takes up the standing supported firing position.



Cadet Katelyn Boetel engages targets from the kneeling unsupported position.

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Ambush / Field Craft

31 March 2022

On March 31, The MS-III cadets conducted their last tactical lab where they learned the basics of conducting a hasty and deliberate ambush at the South Arboretum Woods. During this same time, the MS-I and MS-II cadets learned the basics of field craft including packing a ruck, applying camouflage and face paint, and setting up a field expedient shelter.



Cadets Gabriella Guerra and Benjamin Beebe relax after setting up a field shelter.



Cadets Virginia Larson and Cole Thompson pull security while the platoon sets up an ambush.



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Open House and Day in the Life of an Army ROTC Cadet

7 April 2022

The Fighting Illini Battalion conducted an open house in the Armory building to introduce UIUC students to Army ROTC and the benefits and opportunities ROTC has to offer. Cadets showed interested students various training events that are conducted during the year. On the same day, the Battalion also conducted its “Day in the Life of an Army Cadet” (DILARC) where cadets escorted high school seniors interested in Army ROTC cadets to experience a typical day of a cadet studying at the University of Illinois. Each student was able to participate in all the activities of the Open House as well as conduct a physical fitness session with current cadets.



Cadets Lauren Leonard, Megan Distelhorst and Jasmine Lyes staff the information table during the Spring Semester Open House.



Cadet Ali Burianek discusses details of the M998 HMMWV Army Vehicle to a visiting student during the Open House.



Current cadets complete a workout with prospective cadets in the Armory Gym during DILARC.

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Honors Day

14 April 2022

The Honors Day ceremony was a Tri-Service event this year. All ROTC Departments were recognized for achievements accomplished this semester. The Army ROTC also awarded several scholarships from alumni of the Army ROTC program. The ceremony was held at the Foellinger Auditorium where family and friends were welcome to attend. The guest speaker was Captain (Retired) Fred Ranck, one of this year's new inductees into the Army ROTC Hall of Fame.



Cadet Nimotalahi Lawal with Ellie (daughter of Colonel Dimitri Shimkin) and Gary Sorock, this year's winner and the sponsors of the Shimkin Scholarship.



Distinguished Military Graduates pose with CPT (R) Fred Ranck. (Left to Right: Donovan Spann, Jacob Jung, Fred Ranck, Connor Forrest, Joseph Lim)



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX)

20-24 April 2022

Contracted MS-I and MS-II cadets attended a combined FTX at Fort Knox, KY. During the CFTX, cadets conducted day and night land navigation, grenade assault course, combat water survival training, confidence course, field leader reaction course, and learned the basics of platoon patrolling. Mastering each of these events is critical for doing well at the Advance Camp.



Contracted MS-I and MS-II cadets gather for a group picture after the completion of CFTX.



Cadet Ameer Samy leads his squad through the Field Leaders Reaction Course at Fort Knox during CFTX.

# Cadet Training Events



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### MSIII Combined FTX

20-24 April 2022

MS-III cadets attended the combined field training exercise with seven other Illinois Army ROTC Programs at Fort Knox, KY. Cadets conducted day-land navigation followed by three days of evaluated tactical Situational Tactical Exercise (STX) lanes. For the majority of these cadets, this was the final rehearsal prior to departing for Advance Camp.



7<sup>th</sup> Platoon poses for a picture after the completion of graded STX lanes during CFTX.



MS-III cadets from different schools discuss their mission plan during STX lanes at Fort Knox.



## Fighting Illini Battalion



### MS-IV Civil War Museum Visit

29 April 2022

In April, the Fighting Illini Battalion MS-IV cadets visited the Jefferson Barracks Civil War museum in St. Louis, Missouri. This Professional Military Education requirement introduced the cadets to the history of one of the military installations in the local area. This museum is now a Civil War museum and a U.S. Army Reserve facility. The cadets toured the museum and were given a detailed presentation on the equipment, documents, and artifacts from the war.



MS-IV cadets and cadre pose in front of the Jefferson Barracks Civil War Museum with the U of I Banner.



The Dueling Sword of Abe Lincoln can be found at Jefferson Barracks, MO.



MS-IV cadets and the Sherman Tank at Jefferson Barracks, MO.

# Cadet Training Events



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Hall of Fame Induction / Dining Out

6 May 2022

The Fighting Illini Cadet Battalion (FIB) inducted two new members into our Hall of Fame in May. The ceremony was followed by the first Dining-Out we have had in the past 2.5 years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. UIUC Alumni Retired Captain Fred Ranck, and Retired Colonel Bennet Hart were inducted into the Hall of Fame. Later that evening, the FIB hosted a Dining Out and awards ceremony at the iHotel.



Members of the Army ROTC Hall of Fame gather in front of the Hall of Fame Wall (Left to Right: COL(R) Bennet Hart, CPT(R) Fred Ranck, LTC(R) Tina McGuffey, MG(R) Michael Symanski, COL(R) Debbie Read, and BG Mark Alessia)



MS-IV Class presents cadre with a token of appreciation for their teaching, wisdom, and mentorship over the years.



**Fighting Illini Battalion**



## Spring Commissioning Ceremony

16 May 2022

The Tri-Service Commission Ceremony was held in the Foellinger Auditorium at the end of the 2022 academic year. 11 new Second Lieutenants were commissioned into the Army. With the three earlier commissions and two more scheduled to commission in August, UIUC produced 16 more quality officers for our Army. Including the other ROTC departments, this ceremony added 41 Second Lieutenants and Ensigns into the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force.



New Second Lieutenants take the Oath of Office during Tri-Service Commissioning. (Left to Right: 2LT Kyle Villamayor, 2LT Donovan Spann, 2LT David Seo, 2LT Joseph Lim, 2LT Heidi Kirchen, 2LT Jacob Jung, 2LT Grant Jobe, 2LT Raven Jo, 2LT Conner Forrest, 2LT Christopher Flores, 2LT Henry Feldhaus)

# Fighting Illini Alumni Update

## *Two New Members in the Hall of Fame*

*By Mr. Eric Ashworth, Alumni Outreach*

Our alumni continue to support the Army ROTC Department and the Cadet Battalion in many ways. One of the more recent efforts was the purchase and installation of a touch-screen monitor for our Hall of Fame Wall. With wall space becoming more and more difficult to find within the Armory, this monitor allows visitors to the Army ROTC portion of the building to review the accomplishments of several of our distinguished alumni. The funding we received came at a perfect time as it allowed us to induct two new members this spring. On May 6, 2022, the Fighting Illini Cadet Battalion inducted Retired Colonel Bennett Hart and Retired Captain Fred Ranck into the UIUC Army ROTC Hall of Fame. Both gentlemen, along with some of their family members, were able to attend the ceremony and the Dining-Out later that evening. Both served this country admirably and the current cadets enjoyed the opportunity to meet these great Americans. Here is a summary of their accomplishments.

Retired Colonel Bennett Hart was commissioned as an Infantry Officer into the U.S. Army in 1968 from our university but served primarily in the Military Intelligence branch until he left the active duty in 1972. He continued to serve in the U.S. Army Reserves for another 26 years before reaching his military retirement in 1998. He has commanded at the company, battalion and brigade levels of the U.S. Army Reserves. He has also served as the Deputy Director of the U.S. Army Intelligence Agency during Desert Shield/Desert Storm and supported the development of the Army's Force XXI that equipped Blue Force Tracking into command and control of combat operations. Later he served over 15 years in the Senior Executive Service aiding the Intelligence and National Security efforts of the Department of Defense. In total, Colonel Hart has over 50 years of service supporting the defense of our nation. Colonel Hart has also served his community as a Vice President of the Boy Scouts National Capital Council and as a Freemason of his Masonic Lodge.

Retired Captain Fred Ranck commissioned as an Infantry Officer into the U.S. Army in

1967 and served with distinction as a platoon leader and company commander in the 101st Airborne Division during the Vietnam War. He served a second tour as an advisor to the 1st Army of the Republic Vietnam. During the war he earned 16 decorations including two Silver Stars, three Bronze Star with "V" device for valor, four Purple Heart medals for combat wounds, two Air Medals and two Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry. After being medically discharged in 1972, he earned a Master's Degree from the University of Illinois and spent the remainder of his working years as a highway safety engineer for the Federal Highway Administration. He led the effort in developing highway safety standards for the State of Illinois. Captain Ranck has also served his community as a Boy Scout Scoutmaster and he is a lifetime member in the 101st Airborne Division Association where he has served as the Vice President and later President.

Thank you alumni of the Fighting Illini Battalion. Although you all may not be Hall of Fame members, we are proud of all of you and salute your contributions to our nation. I hope you are able to return to the Armory Building one day to update us on what you are doing.



*Hall of Fame goes High-Tech with the installation of touch screen monitor.*



*Members of the Fighting Illini Hall of Fame gather in front of the newly revealed frames.*



*PMS LTC Johnson speaks prior to the unveiling of the new Hall of Fame plaques.*

**Hall of Fame:** The next Induction Ceremony into the Fighting Illini Cadet Battalion Hall of Fame will not occur until the fall semester of 2023 or spring semester of 2024. However, it is never too early to submit your nominations. For applicants that were nominated but were not selected, they will also to reviewed so addition information can be sent to make an even stronger file before the Hall of Fame Board. Nominations for the next board must be received by October 2023 to ensure inductees selected will be notified in time for the ceremony. Listed below is the application form that must accompany each nomination.

## Fighting Illini Battalion Army ROTC Hall of Fame

### Nomination Form

1. Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Best time to call: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOMINEE INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Graduated UIUC (if alumnus): \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s) Achieved at UIUC (or other University): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will this award be Posthumously? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, do you have contact info for Nominee’s Family: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate sheet of paper, please TYPE a brief military biography listing the awards the nominee received during service along with a summary on why the nominee should be considered for the Hall of Fame (e.g., the categories that all applications are reviewed for are military contributions, public service contributions, academic achievements, and business achievements.) Rarely do candidates have all categories covered but having multiple categories does provide for a stronger nomination.

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

Return this form with a nomination biography to [arotc@illinois.edu](mailto:arotc@illinois.edu) by 31 October 2023 for consideration for the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Thank you.





# 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:

- Alumni Mentor. All of our MS-IV Cadets have received their component and branch choices by December and there is an opportunity to connect with and mentor a current Fighting Illini cadet every spring semester 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 Jessica Carr or Mr. Eric Ashworth (contact info below).

There are other endowments that support the Army ROTC cadets. All of this tax-deductible support goes through the University of Illinois Foundation. In 2020, the Class of 1970 created an Army ROTC Scholarship. It is listed on the Foundation's website as the **Army ROTC Scholarship Fund** (11776233). There are two endowments, the **Army ROTC Cadet Endowment Fund** (11774561) which provides funding each year to supplement annual cadet training and the **Army ROTC Alumni Fund** (11330418) that supports specific requests by our cadets throughout the year. All of these funds directly help cadets and we wish to thank all of you that have donated to any of these funds in the past.

## Contacting the "Fighting Illini" Cadre

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