Welcome, from the Commander and Senior Instructor

by LTC Kurt Robinson and MSG Al Francis

On behalf of the Houston Battalion, greetings from Hofheinz Pavilion! The following pages highlight past and upcoming accomplishments of our Cadets. They continue to impress us every day. Of note, we had nine graduates from the Leader Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) at Fort Lewis, WA. Moreover, we sent four Cadets to Airborne School and three to Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) this past summer.

This is the first of many newsletters to come. Please also visit our new, public Facebook fan page, where you can follow Cadets’ progress through status updates, pictures, and notes.

Further, our Battalion website has been updated with recent highlights and media. On this site, you will also find a PayPal account, which allows our supporters to donate directly to Cadet activities. For those of you who remember what it’s like to be a broke college student, every dollar that goes toward Battalion events like the Military Ball or Bataan Death March makes a difference. Our Cadets appreciate your support!

With respect to the Cadre, we have assembled a talented, diverse, and experienced team of professionals dedicated to producing trained, adaptive leaders of character. They are committed to service and to developing the next generation of leaders.

We look forward to another exciting year!

Charting a New Course: Land Navigation comes to Houston

by SFC David Briseno, Training NCOIC

The first advanced military land navigation course has come to Houston! This past summer, UH ROTC partnered with the Lake Houston State Park to install over 30 points, with room for growth. The course is designed to meet the needs of all levels—from Cub Scouts learning about compasses to advanced orienteering groups. The terrain is generally flat, with intermittent streams and dense vegetation. Cadets will use this course for the Fall FTX in October. For more information or to use the course, contact Lake Houston Manager Paul Hendrix at 281-354-6881.
LDAC Teaches Teamwork, Challenges Cadets

by Cadet Zach Grindle, MSIV

LDAC is the culmination of the first three years of the ROTC program. It is a 29-day evaluation of everything a Cadet learned during his MS I-III years. LDAC is conducted in Ft Lewis, Washington, and brings together Army ROTC Cadets from universities across the nation. A Cadet’s performance at LDAC is the second largest portion of his assessment, affecting his ability to go active duty or get his branch of choice. In addition to an evaluation, LDAC includes hands-on training. CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear) training is particularly memorable. Cadets learn about the equipment they will need if engaged in a CBRN attack. Cadets are taught how to properly wear MOPP (Mission Oriented Protective Posture) suits, and how to use a gas mask. That day’s training ends in a trip to the gas chamber. This tests Cadets’ faith in their equipment and ensures they applied everything they learned during the day, making the gas chamber as painless as possible.

Another training included a day dedicated to First Aid and battlefield care. Cadets were trained on everything from how to properly evaluate a casualty and transport them, to how to perform a “needle chest decompression on a tension pneumothorax”!

The evaluation portion of LDAC is the most important to a Cadet’s assessment. They must know all the jobs at the Company level and be able to perform any of them during their training. Arguably the most fun evaluation comes from the Field Leadership Reaction Course (FLRC). This is a large, squad-sized puzzle in which Cadets are presented with a unique challenge involving limited resources. Cadets are required to maneuver through the obstacles using the leadership process taught in class.

The final three evaluations come from squad-level and patrol-level tactics. In these evaluations, Cadets maneuver through lanes to execute an ambush, attack, or recon mission. Through these missions, the Cadet is evaluated on his ability and potential as a leader. Those seven days of tactics are also the longest and hardest days—imagine twelve hours a day on your feet with a rucksack on your back. Yet after that week, the hardest part is behind you and the light is at the end of the tunnel.

My experience at LDAC was a very good one. I had a competent platoon, and we were able to work well together. Our platoon was awarded the “Best Platoon” streamer and was clearly leading from the front all 29 days. LDAC has many challenging aspects, but the hardest challenge was being able to maintain yourself when situations become stressful, and more importantly, to maintain a positive attitude throughout. When people are hungry, tired, cold, and wet, morale takes a nose dive. In those hard moments, it is extremely important to maintain group cohesion. In the end, it is these rough spots that bring a group together. I have a few life-long friends because of that. We will undoubtedly stay in touch throughout our military careers and hopefully be able to help one another out if need be.

My class of MSIIIIs that went to LDAC this summer was one of the most successful in many years for UH. I believe that we have a unique advantage, in both sharing our knowledge and functioning as a tight-knit group, just like my squad at LDAC. The next year will be full of challenges, but the new senior class is now very capable of making the next class even more successful than ours was.

Cadet Grindle was ranked #1 in his Platoon at LDAC and received an overall “Excellent” rating.

Congratulations, LDAC Graduates!

Excellence:
Zachary Grindle
Olivia Haigler

RECONDO:
Melanie Smith

Graduates:
Dustin Aly
Solomon Cook
Christopher Durham
Wayne Lange
Ira LeRoy
Dymond Mosley
Jeffery Parmer
Four Houston Cadets become Paratroopers

by Cadet Steony Borromeo, MSII

When I first learned about Airborne School and considered making combat jumps out of airplanes, I immediately closed my mind to the idea. But as I became more involved in the Battalion this past year, I opened up to the possibility of going. My friends and the Cadre were encouraging, assuring me that I could do it.

My experience at Airborne School is something I will never forget. I was able to experience the real Army, interact with its Soldiers, and meet people from other militaries and branches, which all made it more enjoyable. Despite the Georgian heat and the hours spent waiting in line to make the final jumps, it was all worth it in the end!

The following Houston Cadets earned their jump wings this past summer:
- Steony Borromeo
- Jared Niehl
- Matthew Travieso
- Joel Van Note

The Houston Battalion

Cadets Relive History, One Mile at a Time

by Cadet Lisseth Jasso, MSIV

The Bataan Memorial Death March is a challenging march through the high desert terrain of White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, conducted in honor of the heroic service members who defended the Philippine Islands during World War II.

Six other Cadets and I trained for the march this past winter with 35-pound rucksacks on our backs. Our practices consisted of marching between eight and 26 miles every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for five months.

Finally, on March 25th, the team drove 12 hours to El Paso and stayed for the night. March 26th was our rest day. On the 27th, we woke up at 0230 to get ready and drive to the race site. The race itself was challenging, given the length, temperature, and hilly terrain. Our team remained strong and stuck together, however, motivating each other the entire way. A highlight was meeting with Bataan survivors when we crossed the finish line.

We plan to begin training again this winter, and are hoping to achieve an even faster time in March 2012.

2011 Bataan Team:
- Jashay Bingham
- Steony Borromeo
- Olivia Haigler
- Lisseth Jasso
- Wayne Lange
- Melanie Smith
- Randy Webb

Learning to Lead at CTLT

by Cadet Wayne Lange, MSIV

For my Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) assignment, I was stationed at Ft. Stewart, Georgia. I was attached to 1-64 Armor, 2nd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division. 1-64 Armor (Desert Rouges) is a heavy armor battalion currently equipped with the M1-A2 Abrams tank, and only the second unit to receive this next generation of tank. During my stay at Ft. Stewart, I was the Platoon Leader for 1st Platoon (Red) in D Company (Death Knights) for 1-64 armor. During this time the company was undergoing training in preparation for Gunnery on the week of 15 August 2011. With that said, I had many opportunities to familiarize myself with the CROWS system, the

“I feel that I could confidently lead a platoon today with the knowledge and lessons I have taken from CTLT.”
- Cadet Lange
The Houston Battalion

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M1A2 Abrams tank, 240C 
&.50 Cal crew serve
weapons systems, 40mm
tank rounds, enemy
vehicle systems, and
many other subjects
associated with tank
warfare.

My time as a
platoon leader provided
me with a lot of
experience that can be
directly applied to both
the real Army and ROTC.
As a platoon leader I was
not only responsible for
managing the platoon,
but also mentoring the
Soldiers and assisting
them with their lives.

There are many aspects
about living, and life
lessons that “Private Joe”
has not yet experienced.
As a result it’s the platoon
leader and the platoon
sergeant’s job to assist
them. With that said, the
PL and the PSG have a
very unique relationship.
Some would say that
there is “NCO business”
and there is “Officer
business” in reference to
the management of the
platoon. This is untrue.
There is leadership
business, which is
inclusive of both the NCO
and the Officer. They
must work in unison for
the advancement of the
platoon. As the officer,
the decisions were mine
to make, but I never
advanced without first
consulting the PSG. One
learns quickly that they
are the subject matter
experts. I feel that I could
confidently lead a platoon
today with the knowledge
and lessons I have taken
from CTLT. Above all I
hope I can share these
lessons with my fellow
Cadets, so that they may
also be prepared to lead.

Ranger Challenge Team Seeks to Defend Trophy

The UH Ranger Challenge Teams have been training all summer, and will compete against other schools this
October 21-23 at Camp Bullis. This year’s events include marksmanship, an APFT, a road march, land navigation, and
more. Follow the team’s progress at

The Face of the Battalion: UH Color Guard Team

by MSG Al Francis, Senior
Military Instructor

Color Guard is a
science. It demands
precise execution. It is
history, reflecting the past
and the future. Color
Guard requires
commitment and sacrifice.
It is a responsibility. We
carry our Country’s
highest form of honor,
respect, and expressions
of a grateful Nation.
The Cadets who
wear the prestigious Tab
and Cord of the Color
Guard live out these
values. In the past
several months, they
have carried the Colors at
UH football games, the
Houston Rodeo,
fundraisers for Homes for
Troops, and others.
Cadet Jasso is the
outgoing Color Guard
Cadet Commander, and
Cadet Lange will lead the
team in the 2011-2012
school year. We
appreciate your support!