



# Spring 2014

## Army ROTC 'Fighting Illini'

### Battalion Bugle

Battalion Bugle February 2014; Issue No.3

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## **W**elcome Back!

The Fighting Illini Battalion returns from winter break, ready to train and engage any challenges that may arise in the upcoming semester.

Learning from the previous semester, the new MSIV leadership rotation has developed a training plan using data gathered from sensing sessions, after action reviews, and pointers from cadre. MSIII cadets continue preparing for CST (LDAC), their training ranging from writing operations orders to patrolling. MSII

cadets advance their leadership abilities by leading their own platoons. MSI cadets continue to cement their basic military skills and knowledge in preparation for leadership roles.



*c/Clark donates a pint at the blood drive during the landslide Army victory*

#### Recent Events

The Fighting Illini Battalion kicked off the spring 2014 semester with a Town Hall meeting consisting of a check presentation to the Center for Wounded Veterans, a contracting ceremony, and an awards ceremony. The proceeds from the Dad's Day 5k Run were presented to Dr. Nicholas Osborne, the director of the Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education. In addition, the new MSIV leadership was introduced to the battalion.

Along with the intensive training you will read about in this issue, the Fighting Illini also took time to help the local community by holding a blood drive to assist the local blood bank. This event doubled as a tri-service competition between Army, Navy, and Air Force to see which branch could donate the most blood. At the end of the day, the Army donated the most blood in a landslide victory.

Other events include Ranger Buddy selection and the start up of Ruck Club. Finally, the renovation of the gym is at full speed and the Battalion is excited for a much needed improved fitness facility.



Contracting of Cadets Blaha and Clark



Presentation of proceeds to the Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education by the Cadet BC and LTC Stetson



MS1s & MS2s work the triangle patrol base on the Armory floor during the familiar sub-zero temperatures experienced this winter

## **PMS Corner**

**D**ear Fighting Illinois Cadets, Alumni, Cadre, Family and Friends,

After a healthy winter holiday break, we are off to a strong start this spring semester and we have some great events coming up. First, I want to thank MG Ret. Symanski for attending our Dining-In this past December and sharing some leadership insights with us. We always learn and benefit from the wisdom and experience of our distinguished alumni when they return to campus and his visit was no different! Along the same vein, a special thanks to MG Ret. Mukoyama for coming down from Chicago to visit and speak with our Valor Cadets. As one of our Hall of Fame inductees last year, it was great to have him back again. On that note, I must publically recognize and thank again all the Cadets and Cadre and a few others out there who were instrumental in organizing and executing our first Hall of Fame ceremony conducted back in October. This event was a superb success due to their hard work and we are already preparing for next Hall of Fame operation at Home-coming in the Fall! Visit our website to see what we did this past year and learn more about our Hall of Fame.

I am proud of our Battalion's effort to organize and execute a Blood Drive at the outset of the semester, getting the other two ROTC units involved and supporting our greater community. Congratulations are in order for Cadet Carmichael who earned a coveted slot for the Saratoga Fellowship program this summer at the John Jay Institute in Philadelphia, PA. This program selects only a handful of Cadets each year to attend and study leadership and service. Also, congratulations to newly commissioned 2LTs Lance

Geiken (MI) and Tara Littleton (QM)! Best of luck at BOLC-B; study hard!

I would be remiss in not mentioning that the MS4 class mission set 14 was very fortunate in branch assignments this year; all the Cadets selected for Active Duty received assignments to one of their top three branches selected and Cadets selected for National Guard and Reserve Duty have all been successfully accepted to their desired units—testament to the quality of the MS14 class. While our spring semester calendar is not as busy as the fall calendar was, we still have a number of opportunities and events to capitalize on. For our Alumni, I want to highlight April 4<sup>th</sup> when we conduct our Dining-Out and I hope to see as many of you there as possible! Our Cadets are preparing for Cadet Summer Training, formerly known as LDAC, for Ranger Buddy, Bataan, the combined FTX, and finally, to host the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual "Warrior Fitness Games" on May 3<sup>rd</sup> – an event that will raise proceeds for the Center for Wounded Veterans in Higher Education here at UIUC. Each of these events provides an opportunity for Cadets to excel and test their resiliency, in addition to preparing us for future service to the nation. In the end, that is what Army ROTC is about: developing Cadets to become leaders and commissioned officers, ready to serve the nation. While our military may or may not reduce in overall numbers, it will always require dedicated, competent, physically and mentally tough servant leaders. Our "Fighting Illini" mission stays the same!

Fighting Illini Cadets, keep focused in your mission and your task and purpose, and watch out for your battle buddy! Once again, I am proud of the work you have done and look forward to the rest of the Spring semester as we collectively lead, train, and "Forge the Legacy"!

ILLINI!

## **SMI Corner**

Cadets, Alumni, and Friends of the Illini Battalion,

We have started the spring semester off at a double time. We have successfully transitioned the Cadet senior leadership positions with little turmoil. This is a reflection on the quality of Cadet we currently have in our program. This has given the Cadets a better perspective on one of the great aspects of American military and civilian institutions—the ability to transition authority and responsibility without violence or total chaos. Over the past several weeks, the Cadets have demonstrated great improvement in the conduct and enforcement of the Army's Physical Readiness Training program. They should all be applauded for their dedication to improving their health and fitness. I would also like to wish MSG Bobby Edmon well, whose official retirement was effective in February. He honorably served this Army and Nation for 27 years with the last four of those in support of this Battalion.

We have much to look forward to in the remainder of the semester. I look forward to seeing many of the families and alumni at the Dining-Out. I would like to thank those alumni who have shared historical items and pictures for our display cases as well. You have contributed greatly to our ability to tell the story of the Illini Battalion. If there are any desiring to contribute memorabilia to the Battalion, we would be pleased to share your pieces in the Armory.

Illini 7

LTC Eric Stetson  
Professor of Military Science



MSG Jason Staub  
Senior Military Instructor





# The Cadet Voice

## **CADET COMMANDER**



CDT Daniel Brankin  
Spring Semester Cadet Battalion Commander

*Cadet Daniel Brankin serves as the Cadet Battalion Commander this semester. Brankin commissions this May with a degree in finance. He is branching infantry and hopes to be stationed at Fort Bragg, NC.*

The spring semester brings new challenges and a shift of focus for the Fighting Illini Battalion. Our training is becoming more intense, especially for the MSIII class as they prepare for the spring combined field training exercise (CFTX) and polish up their tactics one last time before LDAC.

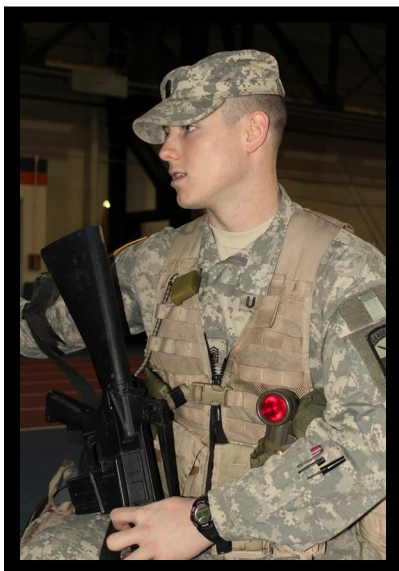
The MSIV class has taken experiences from LDAC and lessons learned in past semesters and turned it into world class training. We are conducting two extended leadership labs this semester, both on Saturday for about five hours. This extended training block provides us

an opportunity to mimic conditions and situations the younger classes will experience at the CFTX and LDAC. The “Superlabs,” in conjunction with our regular labs, will leave the MSIII class confident in their abilities and ready to tackle challenges this summer.

The Fighting Illini is also hosting the first annual Army themed fitness competition, the Warrior Fitness Games. Our stellar MSIV class is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing the event which will feature over 140 competitors fighting for the title of “fittest foursome in Champaign-Urbana.”

The morale of the Battalion is high and we are excited for the new semester and the opportunities for success that it brings.

## **CADET COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR**



CDT Andrew Mix  
Cadet Command Sergeant Major

*Cadet Andrew Mix serves as the Cadet Command Sergeant Major this semester. Mix commissions this May with a degree in economics. He is currently slated to a RSTA Cavalry unit with the Georgia National Guard.*

As Cadet Command Sergeant Major of the Fighting Illini Battalion, it is my responsibility to enforce all the standards put out by the Battalion Commander. My other main responsibility is to create the Physical Readiness Training (PRT) plans for the Battalion and ensure training is completed to standard. If Cadets do not complete tasks to standard, or fail to conduct themselves properly while in uniform, the Battalion has systems in place to provide corrective action for those individuals. Additionally, I am developing Cadets, especially the MSIIIs, by implementing a new development training program where they have a chance to plan and lead the Battalion during PRT sessions.

My expectations from the younger Cadet classes are to always attend events, whether it is PRT or Lab, with high levels of motivation. They should always put forth their best effort and always come willing to learn. The freshmen and sophomores need to keep up the great work and continue to learn and acclimate themselves to the Army lifestyle. The MSIIIs needs to step it up and start pushing themselves harder so they will be prepared for the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC) during the summer at Ft. Knox.

From this experience of being Cadet Command Sergeant Major, I expect to improve my skills in both planning and executing training, as well as leading the Battalion for the semester. I look forward to learning and teaching the Army's PRT. Stay motivated and let's have a great semester!

# The Cadet Voice

## FRESHMEN

*Cadet Corey Maisch, freshman studying Civil & Environmental Engineering from Macomb, IL. Maisch participated in Ranger Challenge in the fall and continues to compete in Ranger Buddy, Rifle Team, and Valor.*

As Army Cadets, we have more than the average student's amount of work and sleep significantly fewer hours, but the payoff for these sacrifices is priceless. What I have learned and what I hope to continue to learn is worth every bit of my invested time and effort.

Besides the continual sub-zero weather, there is much I am looking forward to this semester. I am most excited about the spring CFTX. One of the main reasons I joined the Army instead of the other branches was because of the amount of hands on learning we do. I especially enjoy getting out in the field, getting dirty, working hard, and learning new military skills. Rumor has it we will

even have some fun with paintball guns this semester!

One thing I enjoyed last semester, apart from the FTX, was Dining In. The various military traditions and ceremonies have always interested me and I enjoy taking part in them. So this semester, I am very much looking forward to Dining Out. Having a good time with cadets and invited friends and family (not to mention my girlfriend who is flying from Alabama just for this event) will be a great morale booster towards the end of the semester.

Speaking of expectations, there are a few general goals I hope to accomplish this semester. First and foremost, I want to become a better cadet. This includes improving my fitness and gaining knowledge about military tactics, drill, and procedures. Other goals are learning react to contact, platoon leadership procedures, and night patrolling. And, while I understand the

importance and applicability of everything we learn, I expect to have fun. Having a little fun helps to keep camaraderie and moral high, and makes training much more enjoyable.

In conclusion, I know this semester has much in store for every Cadet in the Battalion and we all look forward to bettering ourselves and enjoying these next months!



*Cadet Corey Maisch takes aim during a Platoon Attack lab*

*In my two semesters of college thus far, ROTC has provided the most rewarding experiences.*

## SOPHOMORES

*Cadet Evan Ellsworth is a senior in sports management from Champaign, IL. He attends grad school in the fall as he enters his MSIII year.*



As we start this new semester, there are many things I look forward to. I expect to learn a lot more on the OPORD process, the practical aspect of patrolling, and being able to set up ambushes and conduct combat missions. We have already begun to discuss several of these exciting topics in class, but what I look forward to the most is the hands-on marksmanship aspect of class. Additionally, we are learning more advanced land navigation techniques. The neat thing about land navigation is that these concepts can easily be used as in the civilian sector. ROTC places a huge emphasis on teaching leadership, making it a great class for regular students to take because they will be able to apply lessons learned when they become managers or CEOs of their prospective companies.

Being a Cadet in the Army ROTC program here at Illinois is also great for physical fitness. I received my first taste of tough fitness in the fall as a member of our Ranger Challenge team, competing against other universities across the country. Now that the competition is over, we attend PRT three days a week in order to achieve combat readiness. PRT is very fun and I thoroughly enjoy going despite the early hours.

I hope to share the patriotism and excitement for the Army that I have grown to enjoy with the MS1 class in order to develop them into great military leaders who are exceptional in their Warrior tasks and will have the "compassion and judgment to win in battle."



# The Cadet Voice

## JUNIORS

*Cadet Frank Jozefczak, junior in psychology and pre-med, discusses expectations for this spring semester. Jozefczak participates in Ruck Club and volunteers at Carle Hospital*

A great aspect about being an MS3 in the spring semester is the focus on preparation for LDAC. From the start, the MS3s are separated from the MS1s and MS2s into our own platoon, and we have MS4s who guide and mentor us throughout the semester. In the lab portion of ROTC, we focus on developing our OPORD briefing skills and mastering development of terrain models. However, this just scratches the surface of what is happening and what will happen this semester.

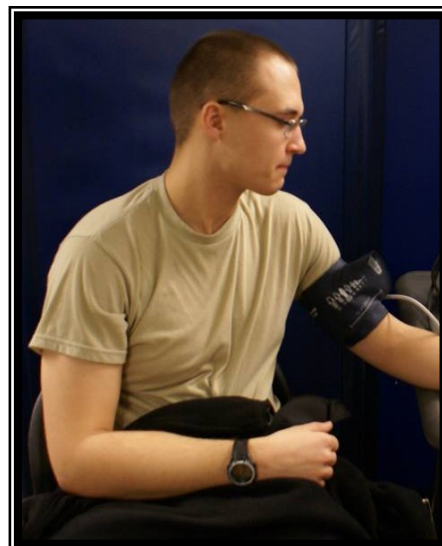
One of the expectations for this semester is the refinement of a variety of skills; for example, briefing an OPORD, achieving 290 (or surpassing 300!) on the APFT, and leading our peers and subordinates. On top of all this, we enjoy further

developing ourselves outside of the mandatory events through squad bonding sessions. However, most important is developing our skills for LDAC. I am looking forward to having the confidence of leading MS3s from around the country, to being able to lead any of my present or future group of peers in the future on any project, and being able to lead any number of subordinates. I expect all of this development will occur throughout the semester, and be guided by my squad TAC as well.

Another expectation I personally have for this semester is to fully secure all finances for the Warrior Fitness Games in May and the Dad's Day 5k race in November. The Dad's Day race last September was a huge success, and with the marketing team starting to obtain sponsors nine months before the event, I expect to have even more sponsors and participants. I expect the Warrior Fitness Games to be a challenge, but I am excited to learn through the sponsorship process and develop my

resilience as a leader. With sponsors willing to fund the Games, we will be able to raise more funds for the Battalion, thereby opening up more opportunities for the Battalion to participate in.

I anticipate that this semester is going to be a challenging yet fulfilling semester, and I am looking forward to it!



*Cadet Jozefczak participated in the Tri-Service blood drive and was the acting Company Commander at the time, responsible for collecting over 50 pints of blood!*

***...this semester is going to be a challenging yet fulfilling semester...***

***-Cadet Jozefczak***

## SENIORS



*Cadet Brydon Albers, senior in economics, commissions this May into Quartermaster branch. He is eagerly hoping to be stationed at Ft. Carson. Albers is serving as an MS3 TAC this semester.*

As I enter my final semester, I feel the pressure of graduation and commissioning looming in the future. While my academics continue to be important, I also realize this will be my last opportunity to grow and develop as an Army leader within the relative safety of these historic Armory walls. I look forward to learning more about what I can expect upon taking charge of a platoon, what some of my responsibilities will entail, and what more I can do to give my Soldiers the leader they deserve. Each time I step inside this historic building, I feel the eagerness inside that tells me I must exit knowing more than I did when I entered. I am fortunate in that UIUC Army ROTC has assembled an incredible cast of cadre, all with valuable information to share.

While I still have learning to do myself, this semester I have also been bestowed with the tremendous opportunity to mentor the MS3 class as a Training, Advising, and Counseling (TAC) officer. I feel as though it has been quite some time since I was in their shoes, but in reality it has only been a year. I've learned an incredible amount during that time, and look forward to working with this MS3 class to share what I have learned in order to ensure they have a successful summer at Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC).

All in all, my final semester as a student at the University of Illinois is shaping up to be one to remember, and I look forward to what lies ahead.

## **RUCK CLUB PREPARES FOR WHITE SANDS**

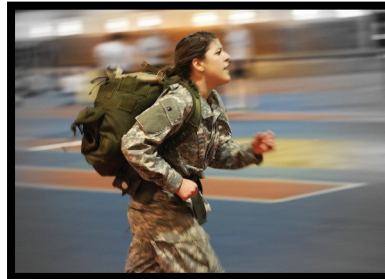
*c/Samuel Chubb, junior in anthropology from Marshall, IL, is the captain of Ruck Club. Here are his thoughts on this year's group...*

Since the beginning of the semester, ruck club has been training for the 25th annual Bataan Memorial Death March. This year there are 13 cadets attending the event as well as LTC Stetson. The group has completed training marches up to 12 miles and will complete a 15 mile ruck this weekend. With the event quickly approaching, the participants are focusing on injury mitigation, stretching, and maintaining a pace. The event which takes place on the 23rd of March, marks the second time many of the cadets have completed this event and the third time for *c/* Stronz. We look forward to a kicking off a great spring break with this 26.2 mile foot march!



*Ruck Club completes portions of their ruck march*

## **BEST RANGER BUDDY ASSESSMENT BEGINS**



*c/De Leo during a ruck assessment*

*Alex De Leo, sophomore in Linguistics from Glenwood Springs, CO, is the captain of the Ranger Buddy team. Below is a brief glimpse of her take on the current team:*

Ranger Buddy assessments were underway starting at the end of January. We had ten cadets tryout for slots to

attend the competition at the University of Kansas being held April 19th. The workouts have proved to be even more intense mentally and physically than Ranger Challenge was in the fall. At the same time, we're finding Cadets are rising to the occasion, fully knowing the competition is "not for the weak or faint hearted." Workouts are Monday through Friday with release runs on the weekend.

Sometimes, I wonder how we do it as cadets. What I have come to learn is that no one is trying out concerned with how hard the workouts are; we are simply motivated by desiring to be the best, desiring to push ourselves and our buddies to the limits, and then breaking through those limitations. CPT Nachowicz, cadre and '06 alumni, is the advisor for the group. He definitely pushes us past what we think we can bear, but has taken a holistic approach to ensure we are set up to be the best academically, physically (eating, working out, and resting) and mentally. With the effort everyone is putting into Ranger Buddy, I have no doubt in my mind that our teams will rank high in this national competition.

# **"NOT FOR THE WEAK OR FAINT HEARTED"**



*Doughboy "sweat angels" - the result of a high intensity PT session*



*Cadets sprinting with 70+ pound sandbags*



*Ranger Buddy competitors conducting a group workout*



**WORDS FROM ALUMNI**



Hello, Illini! It is good to be home. I am CPT AJ Hager, 2006 Alumni. My unit, B Co 2/238<sup>th</sup> GSAB, IL Army National Guard with a detachment from the SC National Guard, just returned home in December. We were mobilized for 11 months in support of OEF as a

separate, stand-alone company of 123 Soldiers and 13 CH-47Ds to augment the Active duty brigades from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. In this role, we deployed both the CH-47D Flight Company as well as the CH-47 repair section. This allowed us to be totally self-sustaining and independent. We were able to send sections to different FOBs and support whatever missions came our way during the course of the massive retrograde of RC-South. I served as both the Executive Officer and concurrently as one of the Flight Platoon Leaders. In addition, I was also a CH-47D Pilot in Command and Air Mission Commander.

We flew a wide variety of missions to support the RC-S mission as well as backfilling for the lack of cargo assets in

RC-SW and RC-W. Flexibility was critical to mission accomplishment. We flew much of the supplies to include rations and mail to the small outlying FOBs. As well we ran Chinook Airlines for 2 months straight during the relief in place of the ground brigades as they were rotated in and out. During the same time period, RC-S retrograded over 2/3rds of its foot print which meant many long days of sling load operations. In addition to flying deliberate ops for the ground commander, we frequently found ourselves flying Command Group (VIP) missions. The huge variety of missions we were able to accomplish is a testament to the flexibility and dedication of the Flight Crews and Maintainers of these airframes.

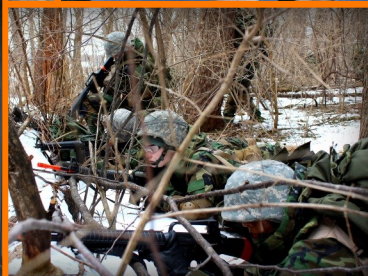
The most important thing that has stuck with me during my entire ten year career and during this



deployment that I learned in ROTC is to always take care of your people. I remember a lot of the lanes and leadership evaluations as a Cadet that were especially trying and often stress-filled. Then, as now, a simple, yet flexible plan that best managed your Soldiers was always the key to success. This was most apparent when we had long hours or were on a difficult mission – as long as the guys knew we were making every effort for them, they would always do the same for us. With that one principle always in mind, we never had a problem with mission accomplishment.

As always, stay safe out there. GO ILLINI!

**CADETS IN ACTION!**



Cadets volunteering at the local soup kitchen

Saturday Superlab—  
Waiting for the assault

Combat Water Survival Training

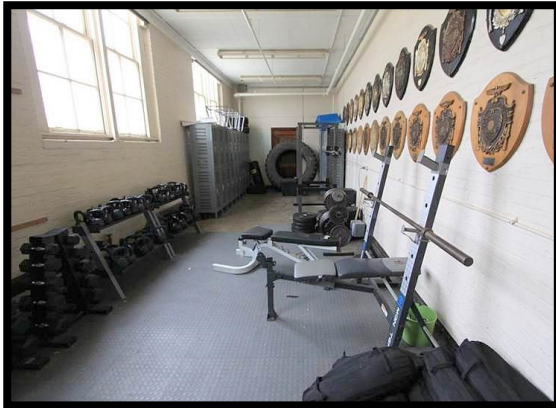
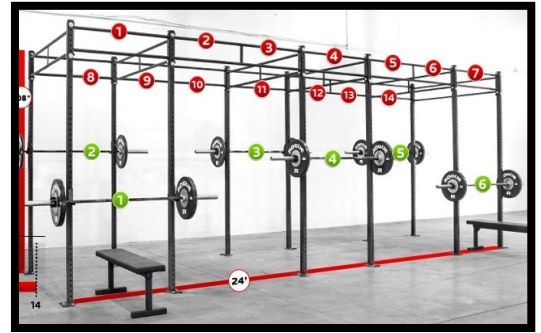
Battle-focused PT



## **REBUILDING THE CADET GYM**

After many years, our Battalion is finally able to remodel a lost corner of the Armory. At one time, this “slot-style” room was simply storage. Over the years through numerous scavenging and donations, Cadets and cadre of the past have slowly transitioned it into a small workout facility.

This year, however, marks an exciting change for our Cadets. As a result of a generous donation from Dr. Vacketta, class of 1963, we are applying funds to set new flooring, repaint, and purchase a 24 foot pullup/squat/bench rig. The cadets are eagerly anticipating this new facility as they integrate it into Rock PT, Ranger Buddy, Ranger Challenge, and personal fitness time.



*A view of the current gym setup. New rubber matting, a 24 foot infinity rig and new equipment will soon make this home.*

With the rig installation, Cadets will have plenty of access to strength and metabolic training. Additionally, we would be thrilled to host any visiting alumni to the area to view or train in the facility.

Future donations to the Cadet gym will be applied to new rowing and GHD machines planned for purchase in the fall semester. Please do not hesitate to contact us or visit the link below under Alumni Events if you are interested in becoming one of our unit level donors!

## **TRAINING THROUGH GENERATIONS!**

Here is a quick glimpse of Cadets planning, training, and executing training through the years. Hopefully these photos help bring back fond memories from our alumni and you can identify a few familiar faces! If you have old photos you would like to share in future newsletters, please do not hesitate to email us at [uiucarmyrotc.alumni@gmail.com](mailto:uiucarmyrotc.alumni@gmail.com)





## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hall of Fame Nominations

Last fall marked our inaugural Hall of Fame Ceremony on Homecoming weekend. This event coupled with our alumni BBQ on the Armory floor was a huge success. Please visit the Hall of Fame tab at <https://sites.google.com/site/fightingilliniarmyrotc/> to view the event from last year. The time is now upon us to start evaluating our list of inductees for this upcoming fall's ceremony again taking place on OCT24, Homecoming weekend. Please review the criteria on the website and those already inducted, and then make your nominations for induction ASAP. It is critical that our Alumni assist in this program in order that we do not overlook any of our distinguished alumni who should be

inducted. You may send your nominations directly to me, LTC Eric Stetson, [estetson@illinois.edu](mailto:estetson@illinois.edu), or MSG Jason Staub, SMI [staub@illinois.edu](mailto:staub@illinois.edu) providing the alumnus' information to include full name, graduating class year, last or current rank, photograph, and a short justification. This year also marks the 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Armory Building itself and we intend to have a Tri-service and campus wide alumni BBQ on the Armory floor to celebrate the anniversary of the building. Stay tuned for details! I absolutely

appreciate the participation of our alumni and their support to this Battalion – it is invaluable to the program, directly impacting on the quality of the experience for those we are preparing to lead in battle! Thank you so much!



2013 Hall of Fame Inductees

### Upcoming Alumni Events:

We as a Battalion have accomplished so much in just the first month of the semester and yet the most exciting has yet to come. Some events we would like to invite you to partner with us are the following:

- Bataan Memorial Death March  
White Sands Missile Range, March 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Dining Out (All alumni & spouses invited) –  
Red Barn Banquet Center, Champaign, IL,  
April 4<sup>th</sup>
- Honors Day – Follinger Auditorium, April 5<sup>th</sup>
- Best Ranger Buddy Competition –  
University of Kansas, April 19<sup>th</sup>

For the long range calendar, we also have a few events we'd love to see you at come next fall:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Hall of Fame Ceremony – Armory,  
October 24<sup>th</sup>
- Homecoming Game and Tailgate – October 25<sup>th</sup>

We are always honored to have alumni return back to the campus and would be eager to host your visit to the Armory, enabling you to share your experiences with the Cadets. If you desire to share words of wisdom or your experiences but are unable to visit us in person, we would be equally excited to publish your email to the Cadets.

Much of what we accomplish in the Fighting Illini program to develop our Cadets' leadership and Army knowledge is not funded by the Army. Donations from Alumni directly impact on the quality of development and esprit de corps of the

Battalion. We are thankful for the support of our Alumni to the development of these young leaders. For example, we have sent multiple teams to the Ranger Buddy competition as a result of generous donations for numerous years from MAJ Thomas MacMillin, class of 1997. For those wishing to support any of the Cadet ventures through financial means, we would be honored to receive your gift and earmark it to your favorite project or club of choice. Visit <http://www.giving.illinois.edu> for the certified University link or call us at 217-333-0125. Some of our earmarked clubs and projects are the gym renovation, Hall of Fame, Rifle Team, Ruck Club, Dining-In/Out, Ranger Challenge, Ranger Buddy, or you may also contribute to the general fund.



**Platoon Level Donor: \$150**



**Company Level Donor: \$250**



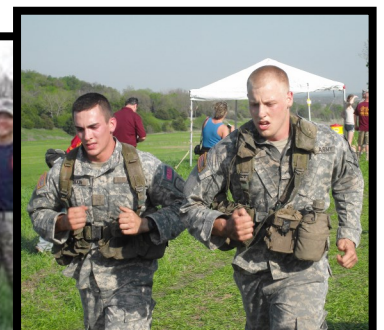
**Battalion Level Donor: \$500**



**Brigade Level Donor: \$1500**



**Division Level Donor: \$5000**



2012 Ranger Buddy competitors