

HOUSTON BATTALION



Photo of Houston Battalion at ERP for TCCC Lab

Welcome back, Houston Battalion! 🐾

This fall has been packed with momentum, and this edition of our newsletter captures it all. Meet our highlighted cadets, check out what our cadets were doing over the summer, and dive into photo moments from labs, events, and FTX—plus an alumni spotlight you won't want to miss.

Photos credit: CDT Lopez
Author: CDT Lopez & Ho

**Fall 2025 Battalion Commander:
Ayala, Anahi
"Finish the Fight!"**



Photo of Houston Battalion at Lab formation.

"This semester, my goal was to build a more cohesive and inclusive battalion atmosphere where every cadet felt valued and motivated. As well as to improve our fundraising efforts so we can better support esprit de corps events and strengthen our BN identity. Most importantly, I want our battalion to make a real impact in the Houston community. When we come together with purpose, there's no limit to what we can achieve."-BC



[https://www.uh.edu/
class/military-science/](https://www.uh.edu/class/military-science/)



@houston.bn.rotc



713-747-3883

HOUSTON BATTALION

FALL SEMESTER NEWSLETTER

HAPPY DECEMBER TO YOU, READER!

Coming to you in print is the Houston Battalion's first Newsletter of the year! What follows is the Houston Battalion captured in action at its most memorable. We begin the year with over 130 future officers, each looking to learn the science of warfare and develop the art of leadership. Each and every cadet faces a long and demanding road ahead. It's one marked by challenge, sacrifice, and, ultimately, personal growth. Before any of America's best can pin the coveted golden bar upon their uniform, they must carve out time to study, complete rigorous academic courses, and meet the high standards of military excellence – often while balancing the duties of civilian work.



Photo of Houston Battalion Banner



Photo of RC Cadets completing log PT

It's a tall order, reader, yet these cadets do not shy away from the climb. Through these issues, we aim to bring you a front-seat view of their journey: from the training that tests them, the camaraderie that sustains them, and the defining moments that shape America's leaders. We hope that these issues will give you, reader, a glimpse of this noble cause, and will leave you with no doubt in your mind that the future of this nation is secured – as much by strength as by intellect, as much by honor as by character.



Photo of Houston Battalion PMS, LTC Bradford

LIEUTENANT COLONEL TODD F. BRADFORD

Greetings Friends, Families, and Supporters of the Houston Army ROTC Cougar Battalion! Welcome to all the new and returning cadets, our new cadre, and the new friends, families, and supporters of our program. What an outstanding summer and Fall Semester we had, and which you will see in this newsletter. Since this past summer, our cadets have traveled the country completing Cadet Summer Training, Basic Camp, Airborne School, Air Assault School, and integrating into organizations they may find themselves in one day, thanks to the Cadet Troop Leading Training Program.

Our recruiting operations team, Mr. Quijas, Lieutenant Cooper, and cadet recruiters worked diligently over the summer, bringing in over thirty new cadets representing every one of our now seven campuses (Rice University will no longer be a part of our program).

Please join me in a great welcome to our newest teammates – Major Kate Williams and Sergeant First Class Kozak. Kate joins us from JBLM, and SFC Kozak from Fort Hood. We are glad to have you and your families on board the Cougar Battalion!

In a bittersweet time, this past summer, Major Eddie Olvera moved on to bigger and better things in Germany, Sergeant First Class Moen retired after 22 years of outstanding service to our country, and Mr. Thomas took his talents to Sam Houston State. They always have a place here in Houston and will be greatly missed. We truly wish you and your families all the best in your new adventures!

So very proud of our Cadets in completing a successful summer and Fall Semester of leadership, academics, extra-curriculars, tactical training, and great memories. Finally, congratulations to our 10 commissionees in December!! If there is ever anything my team or I can do for you, please contact me at tfbradfo@central.UH.edu

OUTSTANDING CADETS

THIS SECTION RECOGNIZES TWO OUTSTANDING CADETS WHO WERE ACKNOWLEDGED FOR THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS THIS SEMESTER

CADET VALDEZ

AWARD FOR COMPLETING BASIC CAMP

Valdez: "My name is Cadet Valdez, a junior at the University of Houston-Downtown, and I completed basic camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky, which was one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences of my ROTC journey. I joined the ROTC program unexpectedly, not knowing how much it would push my limits both physically and mentally. Through long days of training, obstacle courses, and leadership exercises, I learned the true meaning of perseverance and teamwork. The experience pushed me to grow stronger and more confident, forming lasting friendships with fellow cadets who shared the same drive and determination. I am grateful for the challenges basic camp presented, as they shaped me into a better leader, and I am excited to continue my ROTC journey with a deeper appreciation for resilience, discipline, and camaraderie."



Photo of CDT Valdez receiving her basic camp award



Photo of CDT Benavides receiving highest female AFT award

CADET BENAVIDES

AWARD FOR HIGHEST FEMALE AFT

Cadet Benavides, our current Public Affairs Officer (PAO), has recently received two well-deserved recognitions – one for successfully completing Basic Camp and another for earning the highest female score on the Army Fitness Test (AFT). Cadet Benavides continues to demonstrate excellence and proudly represents our female cadets through her hard work and dedication.



Photo of CDT Garza receiving internship award

SUMMER INTERNSHIP!

CADET GARZA

“This summer, I had the privilege of interning with the U.S. Army Research Laboratory through the VICEROY Scholars cyber program, facilitated by the Griffiss Institute.

For the first seven weeks in Adelphi, Maryland at the U.S. Army DEVCOM Army Research Laboratory(ARL), I gained hands-on experience with cloud infrastructure, completed AWS training modules, and had the opportunity to meet and learn from senior Army officers about their journeys, their roles in the cyber field, and how cadets can stand out when pursuing a career in cyber. I also explored several cutting-edge ARL labs, including robotics, UAS, and quantum computing, and supported preparations for the Cyber Fortress exercise. One of the highlights of this time was touring the Pentagon, where I not only learned about its history but also observed the offices of some of the nation’s top military leaders and spoke with Army officers stationed there, gaining valuable perspective, advice, and connections. The final three weeks were spent in Virginia Beach at Cyber Fortress 2025. There, I helped instruct DEVCOM Network & Binary Analysis to more than 250 personnel and served on the Red Team, simulating cyberattacks on critical infrastructure in a realistic cloud environment.

I’d like to extend a special thank you to Andre Slonopas, who served as both a mentor and advisor throughout this program. His guidance and stories gave me a perspective I’ll carry forward. I am also grateful to Rusty McGuire, David Garner, and Gerald Mazur for taking the time to share their insights and advice with us interns.

This internship strengthened my technical skills, broadened my understanding of military and civilian collaboration, and deepened my passion for the intersection of cybersecurity and national defense. I look forward to carrying these lessons with me as I begin a new semester back at school and continue pursuing opportunities in this field.”- CDT Garza.



Photos of CDT Bajwa at the NOAA conference with UH engineering faculty.



SUMMER INTERNSHIP!

CADET BAJWA

Cadet Cyrus Bajwa traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana to present a poster on signal propagation under vegetative canopy at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Conference, an international forum of 25,000+ attendees that brought together senior researchers, graduate students, retired military officers, and industry leaders from organizations such as Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), Esri, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE), NOAA Commissioned Corps, the U.S. Department of Energy, the National Society of Professional Surveyors, etc. The research was conducted alongside Dr. Craig Glennie, Dr. Juan Fernández, and Dr. Hyongki Lee from the University of Houston, with direct relevance to national security, geospatial intelligence, and operational decision-making.

EACH SUMMER, OUR MS3 CADETS TRANSITIONING INTO MS4S PARTICIPATE IN CADET SUMMER TRAINING (CST). THIS SECTION HIGHLIGHTS TWO EXCEPTIONAL CADETS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES DURING CST.

CADET OUEDRAOGO

My name is Cadet Ouedraogo, a senior at the University of Houston Battalion ROTC, and completing Cadet Summer Training (CST) was one of the most rewarding milestones in my ROTC journey. Over the course of 37 days, we were pushed beyond our limits as we steadily built confidence, leadership, and technical skills through hands-on soldiering tasks and realistic training scenarios. From navigating obstacle courses and completing the M4 live fire range to leading our squads through high-stress battle drills, CST challenged us to grow both as individuals and as teammates. Most importantly, it taught us that success in the Army stems not only from personal resilience but from trust, communication, and cohesion within the team—lessons every cadet should embrace early in their journey.



Photo of CDT Ouedraogo and CDT Wade at CST with Houston Battalion Alumni, 2nd Lieutenant Marquez.



Photo of CDT Rodriguez attempting an obstacle course at CST

CADET RODRIGUEZ

My name is CDT Rodriguez from the University of Houston, and I had the privilege of going to Cadet Summer Training (CST) in Ft.Knox, KY this summer. Through 3 years of hard work and dedication, I was able to be successful through all 35 days of camp. My biggest take away from my experience would be that no matter how hard you are working, understand that there are 5,000+ other cadets around the nation working just as hard, if not harder. If you want to be the best, you need to be able to perform the best amongst the best, and it all starts with discipline and setting the standard for yourself and your peers day in and day out.

DURING THE SUMMER, MS2 & MS1 CADETS CAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ARMY SCHOOLS AND EARN THEIR COVETED BADGES AND THEY CAN WEAR THOSE BADGES ON THEIR UNIFORMS FOR THE REST OF THEIR CAREERS.



Photos of CDT Sanchez with at his Air Assault Graduation class and Rappel Tower.

CADET SANCHEZ

AIR ASSAULT!

Air Assault was a fun and rewarding experience. Getting to interact with a variety of soldiers from all walks of the army was a big motivator (SF guys, WO 5's, Air Force Sergeants, foreign army Officers, Cadets and PFC's). When we were tasked with a difficult problem, you had soldiers willing to contribute their expertise. When someone fell behind, a senior would pick them back up. All of the teachings at TSAAS are meant to build discipline and motivation. The school is often seen as difficult due to its low passing rates and smoke sessions, but as long as you're trying your hardest, it'll be an easy hurdle to overcome. The moto our instructors told us was "3 miles, 3 feet, 3 inches," meaning that as long as your moving, regardless of the distance or how long it takes, you will pass, whether the distance is big or small. As long as you try your best, you'll go far.

"Class 27-25: Slingin' loads and droppin' ropes, Air Assault!"

DURING THE SUMMER, MS2 & MS1 CADETS CAN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ARMY SCHOOLS AND EARN THEIR COVETED BADGES AND THEY CAN WEAR THOSE BADGES ON THEIR UNIFORMS FOR THE REST OF THEIR CAREERS.



Photos of CDT Kadi at Airborne School

AIRBORNE, ALL THE WAY!

CADET KADI

My name is CDT Kadi, and I earned the opportunity to attend the Airborne School at Ft Benning, Georgia the summer after my MS2 year. Airborne School was the most important and rewarding experience of my time as a cadet. Training alongside soldiers from across the US and foreign militaries and building friendships through shared challenges made the experience unforgettable. I'll never forget being the first jumper out the door. Being alone 1,250 feet in the air with only my training to rely on forced me to fully trust myself and my NCOs' instruction. Beyond earning jump wings, Airborne School gave me motivation and a glance of the Big Army that reinforced why I chose this path and where I want my career to go. Class 22-25, B Co, 1-507 PIR.

MS1 & MS2 HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE AN EARLY LOOK INTO CST BY BEING SELECTED TO BE OPFOR FOR THE MS3 CADETS AT FORT KNOX TO GIVE THE MS3 A REALISTIC EXPERIENCE TO THEIR STX LANE EVALUATIONS.

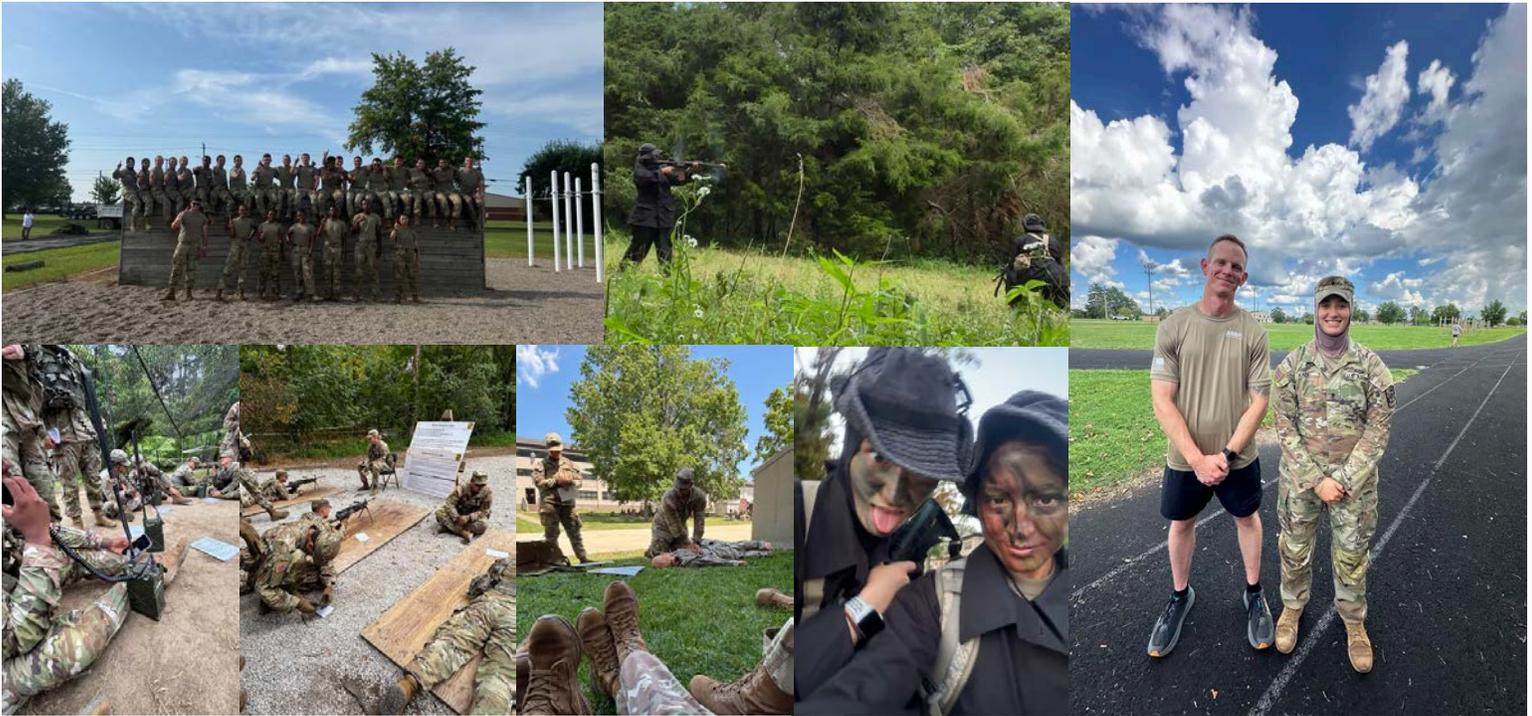


Photo from CDT Kadi and Benavides from their time as OPFOR at Ft. Knox

OPFOR

CADET KADI & BENAVIDES

One month as opposing forces (OPFOR) at Fort Knox was an enjoyable and informative experience that helped me build stronger bonds with many of my peers. Being in the field every day and working closely created experiences that strengthened our teamwork and friendships. During this time, getting to go to the range, conduct land navigation, and train on grenades, TCCC, and CFF reinforced my fundamental skills and increased my confidence that I'd succeed come Advanced Camp. The role gave me valuable insight into how Advanced Camp is structured and how lanes are run. Working alongside lane instructors and seeing the process from behind the scenes helped me develop my tactical skills and better understand what goes into evaluating and executing lanes.

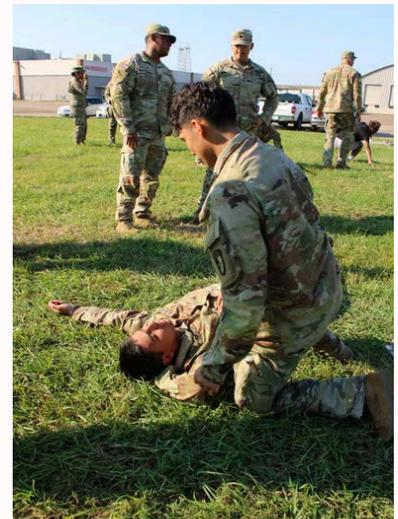
This fall has been a full-throttle season for our cadets! Over the past several weeks, they pushed through a packed lineup of training labs designed to sharpen both their tactical skills and their confidence as future leaders. From hands-on TCCC practice and precision-focused drill and ceremony sessions, to MPI, movement techniques like the high crawl and low crawl, and detailed weapon assembly and disassembly—each lab brought its own challenges, lessons, and moments of growth. Our cadets showed up with determination, teamwork, and a drive to get better every single week. Whether they were navigating movement drills in the field, learning new procedures, or mastering essential soldier tasks, their effort and dedication stood out at every turn. Take a look at the moments we captured—our cadets bringing their training to life this semester, one lab at a time.

Photos from UH ROTC Labs of TCCC, IMTs, and PMI

LAB PICTURES

LAB PICTURES

LAB PICTURES



FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE

The greatest test of all came in November, when the grim ranks Houston Battalion rode out for its semester Field Training Exercise. For those

preparing for Cadet Summer Training, this was a momentous occasion: day by day, night by night MS3's rotated through the various leadership

roles in an infantry platoon; simulating the pressure and uncertainty of Fort Knox. Those MS4's tasked with making this an excellent training held nothing back late into the night, several times a night, patrol bases were challenged, and the nerves of leaders were strained as they applied lessons learned in the classroom to a trial-by-fire... almost literally. On the back of these trials came hours of instruction and practice in the warrior skills learned during lab most memorably for all, land navigation where the sleepless warriors of tomorrow learned the meaning of "Mission First.



From top left to right then bottom left to right. Cadet Szladewski, Nguyen (B), Yong, Nguyen (A), Quy, Levya, and Medina after their time on the Range



Cadet Cohea, former 75th Ranger, preparing for the range

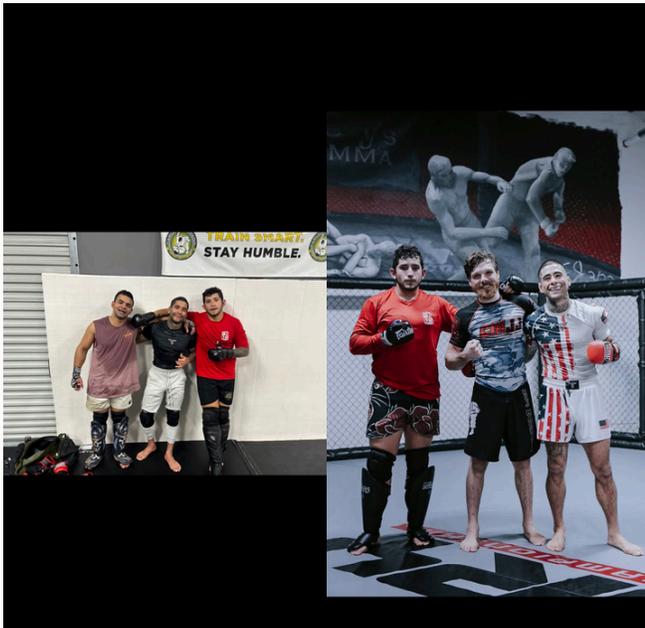
TOO LOW, AND TOO FAR TO THE RIGHT, CADET!

A welcome reprieve for these future leaders came in the form of a firing range and cadre to patiently and kindly instruct them in the finer points of marksmanship. The cadets of Houston Battalion learned to shoot from some of the best soldiers in the US Army, which we modestly refrain from (rightfully) addressing as the best soldiers in the world, and, judging by some of the talented shooters' scores, will undoubtedly carry on the fabled title.

THE HOUSTON BATTALION ENCOURAGES CADETS TO PURSUE ACTIVITIES BEYOND ROTC. ALLOWING DIVERSE EXPERIENCES THAT ENRICH AND ENHANCE THE HOUSTON BATTALION. HERE IN THE HOUSTON BATTALION, ROTC IS **PART** OF YOUR LIFE, NOT YOUR WHOLE LIFE.



Cadet Hall is the treasurer for the Sigma Nu fraternity at the University of Houston. Cadet Hall is an individual who is committed to service. He was able to organize a Bike Trek for the Wounded Warriors Project to TCU & OSU, delivering the game ball and raising \$10k for veterans. Representing the Houston BN, UH, and Sigma Nu.



Cadet Maizel (in red BN shirt) practices MMA or Mixed Martial Arts. MMA is a combat & fighting sport that incorporates multiple martial arts like boxing, Muay Thai, wrestling, etc into its own martial art. Cadet Maizel actively participates in matches both representing his MMA club and Houston BN.



Cadet Ibrahim currently works at Amazon. During the summer, Cadet Ibrahim was sent on a leadership and robotics assignment to an Amazon Mississippi location to improve their sustainability and process efficiency, he would overhaul their process using robotics and leadership practices and would turn a failing site into a successful one. Representing the Houston Battalion & UH of their history of excellence.

VOLUNTEERING & RECRUITING



Push Up Team on the field



Flag Team holding the US Flag during UH vs Arizona game



Recruiting Team at UH tailgate



MAJ Williams holding US flag to rush out with the UH Cougars football team.



Cadet Garza at Army ROTC's Crack the Code event

The Houston Battalion has many opportunities to participate in the community. Volunteering and Recruiting are important functions for the Houston Battalion and are a way for cadets to gain exposure to their community and for the community to see Houston Battalion Cadets. This Semester, many cadets participated in UH & TSU Football games, volunteered at the Army ROTC event "Crack the Code", and attended a plethora of tailgating, recruiting, and volunteering events. Houston Battalion holds popular traditions for the UH Gameday experience: The Push Up Team and Flag Team. The Push Up does push up according to the amount of point on the scoreboard for the Houston Cougars. The Flag Team holds up a field US flag for the national anthem. These teams are the spirit and traditions organization for the University of Houston. Recently, the Houston Battalion has been working towards opening a TSU version of these teams as well.

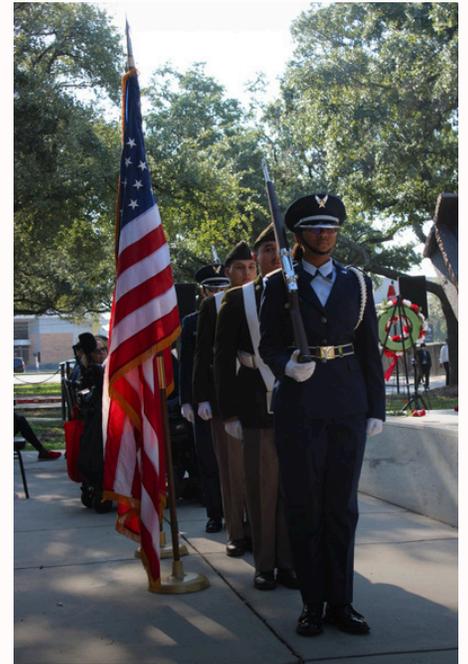
THE COLOR GUARD



Houston Battalion Color Guard at Memorial Event, now alumus 2nd Lt Jorski, Furtado, Payne, Barahona, and Slaughter.



Joint Force Color Guard at 9/11 event.



Joint Force Color Guard at 9/11 event.



Houston Battalion Wreath Placement. Now alumni, 2nd Lt Jennings.



Houston Battalion Color Guard Event. Now alumni, 2nd Lt Marion.

The Color Guard of the Houston Battalion is the premier drill & ceremonies group of the Houston Battalion that appear in presentation and posting of the colors functions. The Houston Battalion Color Guard in sharpen dress uniforms, rifles, and flags represent the Houston Battalion, University of Houston, US Army, State of Texas, and the United of America in these events. The Color Guard participate in memorial services like 9/11 and UH Remembrance Day, requested events like Houston Rodeo and athletic events, and school events like commencements. The Color Guard also in the Houston Corps of Cadet Joint Force Color Guard, a color guard detail that includes the Air Force and Naval programs, which operates and participate in similar functions.

CULLEN RIFLES RANGER CHALLENGE



Photos of Houston Battalion RC at Obstacle Course and RC Selection (Hell Weekend).

NON DUCOR, DUCO! (I AM NOT LED, I LEAD)

The Cullen Rifles – Ranger Challenge Team is the Houston Battalion elite competition team for the Army ROTC Ranger Challenge. The Ranger Challenge is the Army ROTC’s Varsity sports, putting teams from different universities in regional, brigade, and the Sandhurst national competitions. The Ranger Challenge is a military skills team competition testing physical fitness, a 12-mile ruck, rifle marksmanship, weapons (M4, M17, M249, M240), and equipment (ASIP) operations, obstacle course, 9-line medical evacuation, one rope bridge, TCCC, call for fire, and a gauntlet to test physical fitness, teamwork, mental fortitude, and skill expertise of the cadets. This year, Cullen Rifles would participate in the regional competition with a RPFA (Ranger Physical Fitness Assessment) and a 10 mile ruck.

While the Cullen Rifles – Ranger Challenge Team bears the same name as the historical Cullen Rifles, they are not the same. The Cullen Rifles of years past were an exclusive rifle marksmanship, drill, and ceremonies team. However, today’s Cullen Rifles modernize the purpose of the Cullen Rifles to the Ranger Challenge. Yet, the Cullen Rifles will continue the mission of being the hallmark of excellence and discipline of the Houston Battalion and staying true to its motto.

Non Ducor, Duco!

CULLEN RIFLES RANGER CHALLENGE

THE **CULLEN RIFLES** CREED

AS A CULLEN RIFLE, I WILL ENDEAVOR TO BE THE
STANDARD FOR WHICH ALL CADETS SHOULD STRIVE TO BE

LEADING IN ALL ASPECTS, INCLUDING PHYSICAL
TRAINING, ACADEMICS, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

WHILE MAINTAINING THE DEMEANOR, RESPECT, AND
ATTITUDE OF A SILENT PROFESSIONAL

AS A CULLEN RIFLE, INTEGRITY WILL BE THE FOUNDATION
ON WHICH I AM BUILT.

SERVICE WILL BE THE MISSION THAT I WILL PURSUE.
DISCIPLINE WILL BE PATH ON WHICH I WALK, AND
HONOR WILL BE THE COMPASS GUIDING MY WAY.

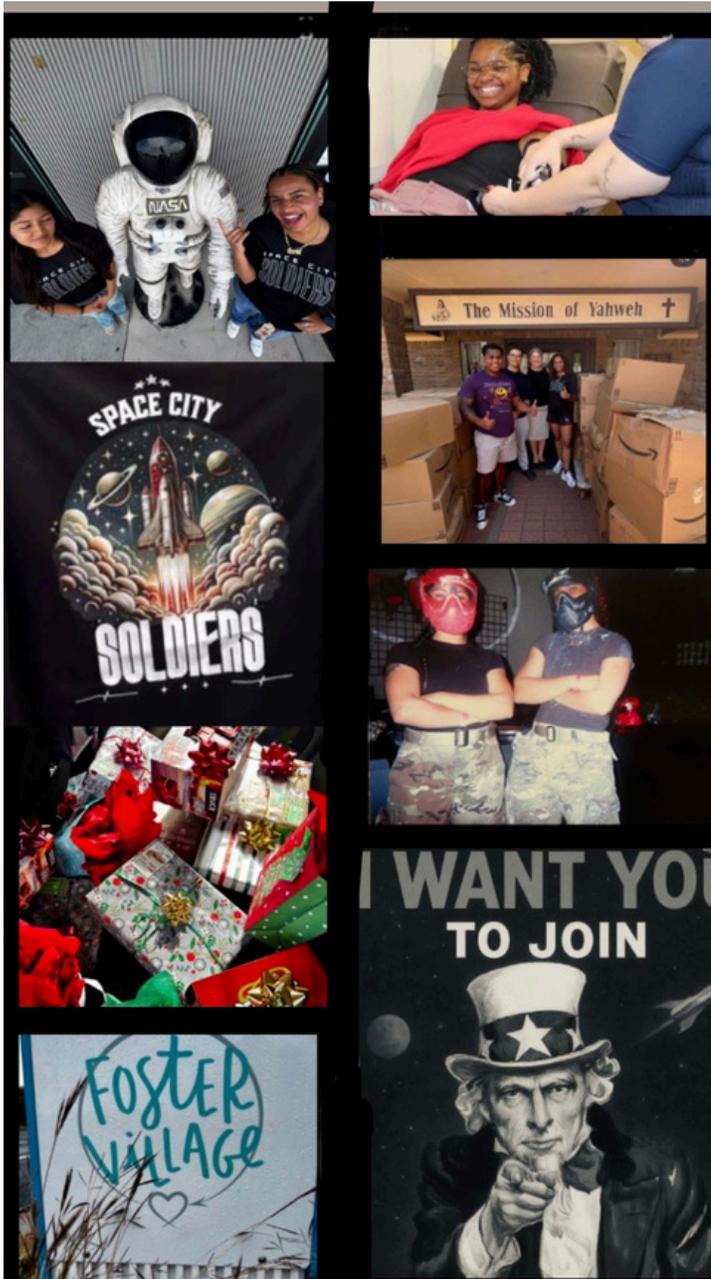
I WILL FACE THESE LABORS WITH CHARACTER, TAKING
FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS.

NEVER FAILING MY SCHOOL UNIT, OR FELLOW CADET

THIS IS WHAT I STRIVE TO BE, THIS IS WHAT I AM.

I AM A CULLEN RIFLE

SPACE CITY SOLDIERS



Space City Soldiers is a student-led nonprofit organization at the University of Houston dedicated to promoting selfless service, leadership, and community impact. The organization focuses on fundraising, and community outreach, by partnering with local homeless shelters, charities, and hosting blood drives to address real needs in the greater Houston area. Through organized volunteer initiatives, donation drives, and campus-wide events, Space City Soldiers brings students together to serve others. We build strong relationships, and create a meaningful change both on campus and beyond.

SPACE CITY SOLDIERS INSTAGRAM



MILITARY SCIENCE ASSOCIATION



MILITARY SCIENCE ASSOCIATION INSTAGRAM



The Military Science Association, or MSA is one of the many clubs within Houston Battalion. MSA exists to foster camaraderie and esprit de corps within the Battalion through organized social events. Particularly, MSA works with the University of Houston to established many core events within the Houston Battalion such as the annual Spring Dining, as well as the Commissioning Ceremony for our future leaders. Furthermore, MSA is the fundraising foundation for the cadets, which contributes to fostering experiences such as Shooting Competition, or Cadre's Pie in the Face.



SOCIETY OF AMERICAN MILITARY ENGINEERS (SAME)



The **Society of American Military Engineers (SAME)** is UH Student Chapter is a professional development, patriotic, and service driven club. Dedicated in developing STEM leaders and professionals that can contribute to company, community, and country. SAME is not an engineering major exclusive club and is open to all majors.

SAME has 7 values:

1. **Integrity:** Unwavering commitment to always do what is right, regardless of consequences.
2. **Patriotism:** Support our national ideals and take pride in our country.
3. **Public Service:** Recognize the critical contribution that public servants make in supporting the economic and environmental needs of the nation.
4. **National Security:** Recognize the dedication of our national security team, comprised of the uniformed services, civil service and contractors, in defending freedom.
5. **Technical Competence:** Deliver high-quality solutions.
6. **Excellence: Strive** for the highest standards of performance in all actions, both personal and professional.
7. **Environmental Stewardship:** Preserve, protect, conserve and restore our national resources through sustainable practices.

SAME is one of the many Houston Battalion adjacent clubs to help assist cadets pursuing STEM and promote cadets to pursue STEM.



SAME group photo with (Retired) Colonel Aguilar during SAME speaker meeting.



SAME Instagram



HOUSTON BATTALION LEGACY OUTREACH



Houston Battalion Legacy Outreach (HBLO) is a student-led and community-based organization focused on the preservation of the Houston BN heritage, promotion of the Houston BN, and the Battalion's development. This is the first year (August 24th, 2025) that the Houston Battalion Legacy Outreach begin operations. All alumnus from the Houston Battalion, no matter how old or young, all matter to the living history of this great Battalion and your support will means a lot to us.

Mission Statement: The mission of Houston Battalion Legacy Outreach is to create a living heritage of Houston Battalion Army Officers, cultural & historical appreciation of the Houston Battalion, and connect current Houston Army Cadets to Houston Battalion Alumnus and current Army officers. Facilitate mentorship between cadets and officers and create stewardship for the Houston Battalion and encourage philanthropic giving.

Motto: "Preserving the Heritage of Houston Battalion, Connect the past, present, and future cadets of Houston Battalion, and Stewardship of the unit."

**INTERESTED IN RECONNECTING AND SUPPORTING THE
HOUSTON BATTALION? SCAN THIS QR CODE TO INPUT
YOUR INFORMATION**



HBLO CONTACT INFORMATION

EMAIL: HBLOR0TC1948@GMAIL.COM

ADDRESS: 3875 HOLMAN ST, HOUSTON, TX 77204



HOUSTON ROTC ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT

LTC HOWARD CLAYTON (RET)

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Clayton began his journey with the University of Houston in 1998 as a participant in the U.S. Army's prestigious Green to Gold Program, marking the start of a distinguished career defined by leadership, adaptability, and lifelong learning. He commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 2000, branching into the Signal Corps, where he honed his technical expertise and communication skills before later transitioning to serve as a Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer. LTC Clayton fondly credits his time with the Cougar Battalion as a formative experience that shaped his leadership philosophy and professional trajectory. "The program expanded my perspective and challenged me to grow beyond what I thought possible," he reflected. "It provided not just military training, but a foundation of discipline, resilience, and strategic thinking that I've carried with me throughout my life." Across more than 23 years of active service, LTC Clayton's career spanned both domestic and international assignments — from the halls of the Pentagon to the fields of Afghanistan — where he led with distinction and embodied the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, and integrity. His service record stands as a testament to his unwavering commitment to the mission, his Soldiers, and the Nation. Today, LTC Clayton continues to exemplify these same principles in civilian life as a Houston-based entrepreneur, bringing the leadership, problem-solving, and organizational skills forged in uniform to the business world. Beyond his professional endeavors, he remains deeply connected to the University of Houston and the ROTC community, supporting the next generation of cadets as they prepare to lead in an increasingly complex world. His story serves as a powerful reminder of how the lessons learned within the Cougar Battalion extend far beyond the classroom and the field — shaping leaders who continue to serve, inspire, and lead wherever life takes them.

HISTORY OF THE HOUSTON BATTALION

On July 1, 1948, the University of Houston Army ROTC was officially activated as a voluntary officer commissioning source for the United States Army. UH Army ROTC in 1948-1953 was an all-quartermaster ROTC unit that exclusively produced officers for the US Army Quartermaster Corps.

In 1948, UH ROTC had 175 cadets, one-third being WW2 veterans. UH ROTC would have a large presence and substantial cultural impact on UH. In 1953, the UH Army ROTC became a general-purpose ROTC unit, and the UH Corps of Cadets grew to an astonishing **827 cadets**, comprising 9 companies, 1 band company, and the elite Cullen Rifles Company.

UH ROTC would remain unchanged until 1965, when UH ROTC would see the second-highest enrollment of 327 cadets in 1966 and the first casualties of War: MAJ Hendon (APMS) and CPT Walker (Class of '54). UH ROTC would also become a hallmark of excellence in rifle marksmanship & drill and ceremonies through the Cullen Rifles. The Cullen Rifles would win the 1966 and 1968 Southwest conference championships and 4 4th Army matches. The Rifle team would be ranked 1st in the nation in 1961 and 1971, and 3rd in 1972 and 1976. The Rifle team also produced two all-Americans, Jesse Reynolds (1966) and Senoid Legge (1972 & 1973). Cullen Rifles Drill Team in 1961 served as an honor guard escort for the **President of the United States, Dwight D. Eisenhower** during his tour of Houston, and in 1967 was rated number one for drill team from a non-compulsory military college in Texas. In 1967, Cullen Rifles placed **2nd nationally, 1st overall** in the 4th Army, Southwest Association, Oklahoma Invitational, and Central Texas championships, dominating teams like Texas Aggie Fish Drill Team and the Military Academies.

Despite historical success, UH Army ROTC would collapse due to anti-war sentiment in the 1960s and 1970s, and would experience the near disappearance of the ROTC unit, leaving only two platoons. UH ROTC would not rebound until 1983, but the damage was done, and the historical high during the "Golden Age of UH ROTC" was never seen again.

In 1970, the ROTC unit was relocated to Hofheinz Pavilion, later renovated and renamed "The Fertitta Center" in 2017, and housed the UH Army ROTC classes, activities, and equipment storage. In 2015, Energy Research Park (ERP), now "UH Technology Bridge", would become a lab training location for the ROTC unit and would be the primary location for physical fitness training.

Since the inception of UH Army ROTC, it has stood proud as the **only** ROTC commissioning source in the Greater Houston Area for the United States Army. In 1998, UH Army ROTC "Cougar Battalion" would expand into a host unit for all Universities in Houston, allowing students from Texas Southern University, Houston Christian University, Rice University (no longer partnering in 2025), Houston City College, University of St. Thomas, University of Houston- Downtown, and University of Houston - Clear Lake to enroll and participate in the UH Army ROTC program. At this time, the UH Army ROTC program would change its name from the Cougar Battalion to the **Houston Battalion** to signify that UH Army ROTC serves, not just UH, but all of Houston. The Houston Battalion, from its humble inception to historical highs to downfall to its resurgence, will continue the mission of producing high-quality, disciplined, and war-fighting officers for the United States Army.

No matter the conditions and environment set upon them, the Houston Battalion will

FINISH THE FIGHT!



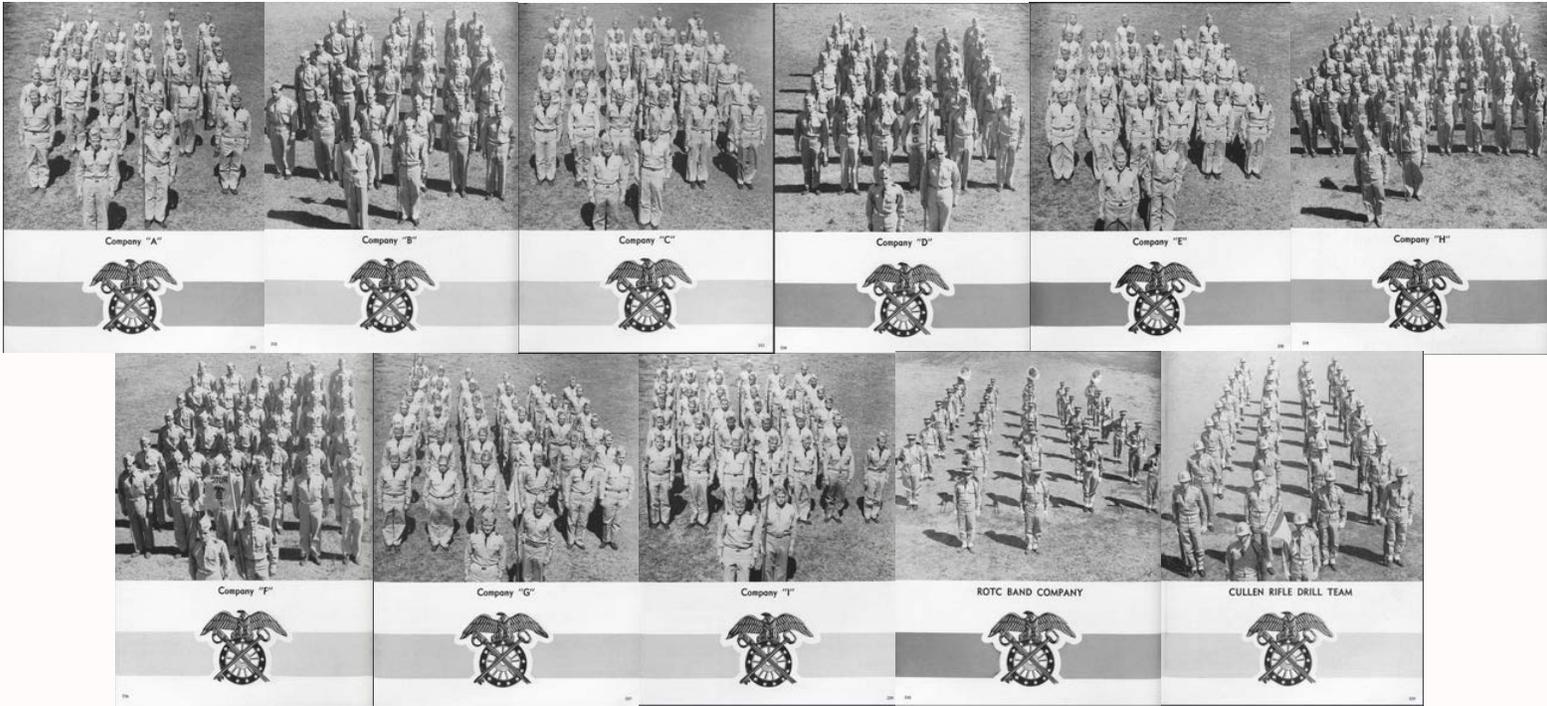
The U. of H. Color Guard at the January review.



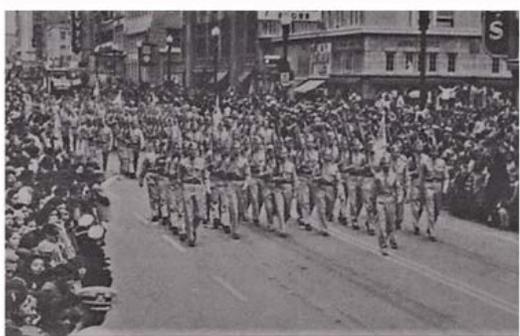
Houston Battalion conducting uniform inspections

THE HOUSTON BATTALION PICTURES (40S - 60S)

COMPANIES OF 53' 1954 HOUSTONIAN YEARBOOK



Corps Day at the Texas Tech game.



1948 Armistice Day Parade



President Eisenhower walking up the steps of E Cullen with the Cullen Rifles behind him



The ROTC rifle team.



Graduating cadet, John Metzler gets pitched into the Reflection Pool by the lowerclassmen.



Even the underclassmen get thrown in if they aren't quick enough.

Second Lieutenant Howard Clapp got dunked during his graduation last January when it was so cold.

HOUSTON BATTALION SOCIAL MEDIA

HOUSTON BATTALION INSTAGRAM



HOUSTON BATTALION FACEBOOK



UH RANGER CHALLENGE INSTAGRAM



UH COLOR GUARD INSTAGRAM





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