

# THE HOUSTON BATTALION

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARMY ROTC • HOUSTON, TEXAS • VOL. 2 • SPRING 2026

## APRIL NEWSLETTER EDITION !

### From author

Hello and welcome! My name is Adamaris Lopez, your newsletter author, and I'm excited to share our program newsletter with you. Happy April! We're pleased to share highlights of what our cadets were involved in throughout the month of April and March, along with a preview of what's ahead in May. We hope you enjoy this edition and stay connected as we continue to showcase our cadets' accomplishments and experiences.

### IN BRIEF

- **Labs & Physical Training:** Pictures of our training
- **Cadet of the month:** Highlighting an outstanding cadet
- **Selfless service:** Highlights of the cadets volunteering and demonstrating one of the army values
- **Meet the HBLO Staff:** Introducing our staff and their roles



Strength, stamina, and spirit: Physical training is at the heart of everything we do. Whether it's conquering the Obstacle Course (O-Course) or mastering the Combat Water Survival Test (CWST), our cadets are always mission-ready. Check out these highlights from our recent training rotations to see how we're building the leaders of tomorrow.



## OBSTACLE COURSE TRAINING

On February 26, our battalion had the opportunity to collaborate with Cullen Military Academy middle school. By using their O-Course, 100 UH cadets sharpened the physical skills necessary for Cadet Summer Training (CST). Beyond the training, it was a privilege to mentor the middle school students, future cadets themselves, giving them a firsthand look at the discipline and camaraderie that define cadet life.

## COMBAT WATER SURVIVAL TRAINING

As a core requirement of cadet training, our program recently conducted Combat Water Survival Training (CWST). We would like to extend a huge thank you to our sister school, Texas Southern University, for allowing us to utilize their swimming pool facilities for this event. Under the expert guidance of our cadre, cadets learned the technical standards for water survival and practiced proper execution in a controlled environment. The cadre's presence ensured that every participant remained safe while successfully attempting each requirement. It was a productive day of training that built both confidence and essential skills!



From left to right: **SFC Kozak, CPT Wivell, 2LT Germany, CPT Nelson, SFC Yaw, LTC Bradford, SFC Gatlin, and MAJ Williams** being Cadre safeties at CWST

DURING THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, SAME HOSTED SPECIAL GUESTS AND EXPERIENCED MEMORABLE MOMENTS THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU.

## Guest Speaker: LTC BRADFORD



On February 10th, the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) had the honor of hosting a special guest, Engineer Officer and PMS of the Houston Battalion Lieutenant Colonel Bradford, who joined our members and cadets for an engaging and informative session. During the visit, attendees were allowed to ask in-depth questions about LTC Bradford's military career, leadership experiences, and the challenges he has faced throughout his service. The discussion also opened the floor for general questions, allowing cadets to gain valuable insight, advice, and mentorship directly from a seasoned officer. The event provided a meaningful learning experience and left many participants feeling inspired and motivated to continue pursuing their professional and military goals.

**Gift of Appreciation: Former UH-SAME President (1st), Cyrus Bajwa, presenting UH-SAME Engineer Hard Hat to LTC Bradford.**

## SAME CHAPTER LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Another highlight in February for the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) was a brief address by the former National SAME Chapter 100<sup>th</sup> President, Retired LTC Wendell L. "Buddy" Barnes, who shared a few words before the official change of presidents of the UH-SAME Chapter. During the meeting, **Donny Ho** was inaugurated as the new president of the University of Houston SAME chapter. This marked the start of a new term and continued leadership for the organization.



**Swear in & Oath of the SAME President: Former National Chapter President, Buddy Barnes, swearing in, Donny Ho, as the new UH-SAME Chapter President.**

## SPOTLIGHT CORNER

# RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING CADETS

## March Spotlight Cadet: CDT Gabriel Maziel



Service at all levels: **CDT Maziel at the Texas-Mexico Border serving as part of the TTBF.**

In this newsletter, we proudly highlight Cadet Gabriel Maziel, a dedicated and driven member of the University of Houston ROTC program. CDT Maziel is currently attending the University of Houston main campus and serves in the Texas Army National Guard as a 92F assigned to Delta Company, 536th Brigade Support Battalion, within the distribution platoon. Since enlisting in June 2021, he has demonstrated exceptional commitment to service, having been activated three times in support of operations along the Texas-Mexico border with the Texas Tactical Border Force (TTBF).

CDT Maziel currently serves as the Ranger Challenge Commander for the Houston Battalion, where he leads, trains, and develops cadets to compete at a high level. Outside of his military responsibilities, he has trained in mixed martial arts for the past four years and plans to compete again this summer. In addition, CDT Maziel balances his responsibilities by working as a server at a restaurant in Spring, Texas, demonstrating strong work ethic and discipline both in and out of uniform.



# HBLO

## MEET THE HBLO STAFF



**President**

Cadet Ritchie is an Accounting student at the University of Houston - Downtown, who founded HBLO in order to foster a connection between past and present.



**Vice President**

Cadet Ho is an Industrial Engineering major at the University of Houston who joined HBLO to preserve unit history and connect Houston Battalion alumni.



**Secretary**

Cadet Lopez attends TSU, majoring in aviation. She serves as the PAO NCOIC and is on the TSU's executive board for Women in Aviation, where she travels and connects with female pilots worldwide. She joined HBLO due to her passion for organization and creativity, contributing as the author of the HBLO newsletter and supporting members.



**Treasurer**

Cadet Hall is a Finance major in the Personal Financial Plan (PFP) track at UH, LEAD Chair of Sigma Nu (Zeta Chi), member of the Cougar Financial Planning Society, and competes in intramurals and global fitness events including HYROX and marathons, with plans for an Ironman.



**Communication & Outreach**

Cadet Garza is a Computer Science Major at the University of Houston. He strives to connect our minds with the best of our Houston Battalion alumni.

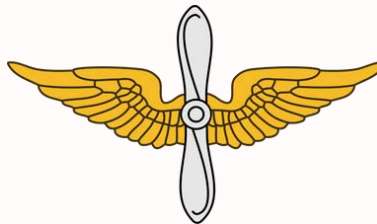
**Motto: "Preserving the Heritage of Houston Battalion, Connecting the Past, Present, and Future Cadets of Houston Battalion, and Stewardship of the Unit."**





# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## 1LT EMME JENNINGS



My name is 1LT Emme Jennings, I commissioned in May 2024 into the Aviation Branch. I graduated from University of Houston – Downtown with my Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and am now a graduate student at Angelo State University where I am working on my Master of Science in Criminal Justice.

I am currently assigned to Fort Rucker, Alabama for Aviation BOLC and will be going to Fort Wainwright, Alaska upon graduation from flight school as an Apache pilot. I have finished the Initial Entry Rotary Wing course in the UH-72 Lakota and am now waiting for the AH-64E Apache course. Flight School has been an exciting and challenging experience so far, and learning to fly has been worth every minute. Even before I joined ROTC, I knew I wanted to be an Apache pilot, so it has been an absolute honor to have been selected for the airframe, and I am so grateful for everyone who has supported me on my journey.

I am currently working as a Protocol Casual Duty Officer for the U.S. Army Aviation Center of Excellence while I am waiting for the AH-64E Apache course, which I will start this summer. This has been an amazing opportunity as I have gotten to work on many high-profile events and get to interact with some of the top leaders in Army Aviation daily.

I was a cadet in the Houston BN from 2021–2024 where during those years I served as the Assistant PAO, PSG, Color Guard Commander, Battalion Commander, and PMS Initiative Group. I greatly enjoyed my time in the program, especially getting to do outreach and color guard events. I had an incredible group of cadets and cadre surrounding me who made my time there great, and I am forever grateful for them.

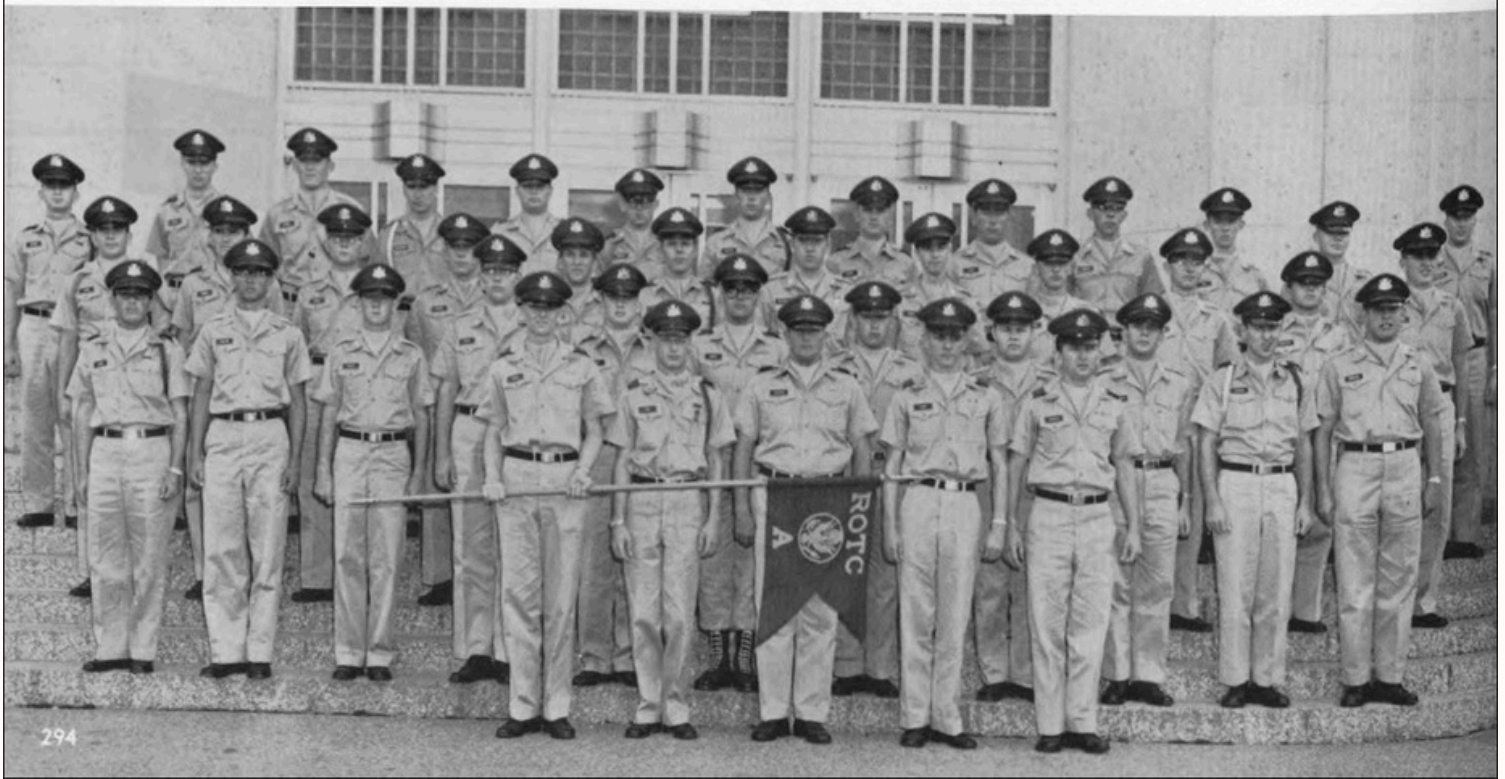
Some lessons I have learned are, if you have a dream, be willing to put in the hard work now for it, but don't forget to enjoy the journey too. Surround yourself with people who will support you and be there to support them as well. For the future Aviators, learn to study and learn to love it!

**Motto: "Preserving the Heritage of Houston Battalion,  
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# HBCO

## BATTALION HISTORY THE GOLDEN AGE (1953-1969)



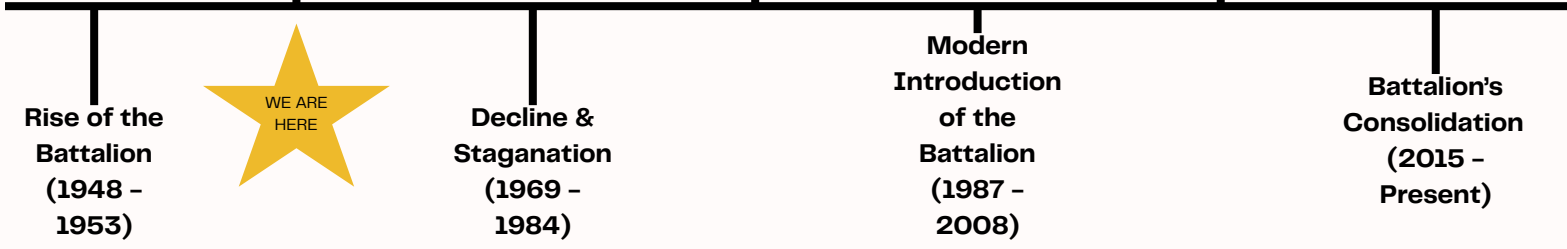
Credits: **The Houstonian 1961: UH Alpha Company Cadets at Ezekiel W. Cullen Building.**

### History Timeline: **77 years** of Excellence

**Golden Age  
of the  
Battalion  
(1953 -  
1969)**

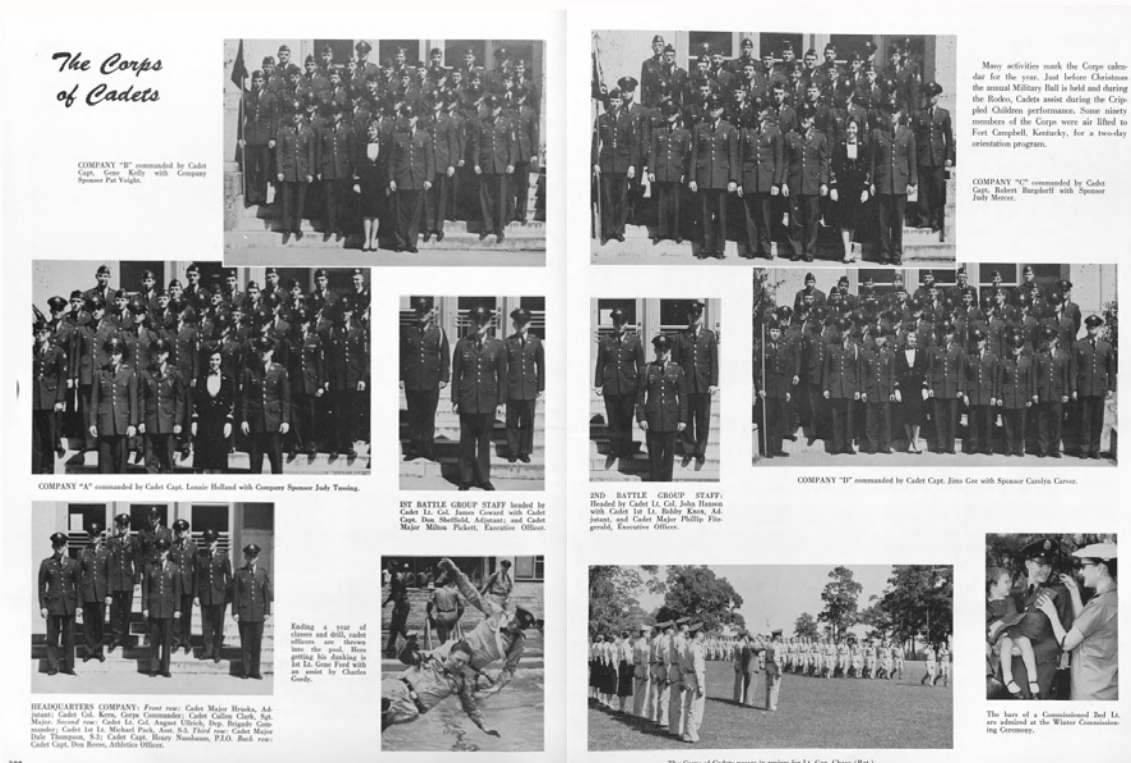
**Revival &  
Reconstruction  
of the Battalion  
(1984 - 1987)**

**Modern  
Expansion of  
the Battalion  
(2008 -  
2015)**



# BATTALION HISTORY

## THE GOLDEN AGE (1953-1969)



**Credits: The Houstonian 1959: Houston Corps of Cadets Staff and Companies**

The University of Houston Army ROTC, "The Houston Battalion", would see its Golden Age from **1953 to 1969**. At this time, the Houston Battalion would see its largest enrollment of **827 cadets** and gain significant influence and reputation as an elite and premier ROTC unit throughout the city of Houston, the State of Texas, and the United States. The Houston Battalion was an all-volunteer ROTC unit that, at the time, made it unique and trailblazing because many universities required mandatory ROTC for a minimum of 1 year for all male students under the **Morrill Land-Grant Act**, and it was located in an urban center. This makes it more impressive that, at this time (1953), the Houston Battalion would **boast 11 companies** (A to I companies, Band Company, and Cullen Rifles Drill Company) composed entirely of volunteers, without government-directed institutional support from the **Morrill Land Grant**. This means the Houston Battalion created a sizeable "Corps of Cadets" through **only voluntary participation**, earned a reputation as the commissioning source of choice, and did not require compulsory participation from the general student population at any point of its existence. In 1955, the Houston Battalion commissioned **97 cadets** in one class as 2LTs into the US Army, an enormous feat for a voluntary unit at a civilian university. In 1966, the Houston Battalion would see its second-highest enrollment of **327 cadets**, and unfortunately, it would be the first time the Houston Battalion would see its **first confirmed alumni casualties of war - Captain Walker (Class '54) and APMS Major Hendon**. During the Golden Age of the Houston Battalion, the Houston Battalion will build a reputation of Drill & Ceremonies excellence, unparalleled Rifle marksmanship, historical moments, and an integral part of the University of Houston.

# UH

## BATTALION HISTORY

### THE GOLDEN AGE (1953-1969)



The "Cougar Rifles" Drill Team lines up for the Mardi Gras Parade, left. Below, Jim Norwood puts the "Mickey" hat on Tom Balfour at the Military Ball.



**Credits: The Houstonian 1968: Cullen or "Cougar" rifles preparing for Mardi Gras Parade and Cadet Norwood at Military Ball being donned a Mickey Mouse Hat**

#### Rifle Team Fires To League Title

Paced by the marksmanship of All-America shooter Jesse Reynolds, the UH varsity rifle team compiled a season record of ten wins and two seconds, to capture the Southwest Rifle Association championship. The Cougar marksmen took the loop title for the first time, beating Rice, Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, and Arlington State in order.

Reynolds became UH's first All-America marksman, when named to the second team by The American Rifleman, the Official publication of the National Rifle Association.

Varsity lettermen were Reynolds, James Fuquay, Fred King, Fred Peoples, and Russel Kachelmeier.



Varsity Rifle Team: FRONT ROW, Jim Fuquay, Jesse Reynolds, John Summerford; BACK ROW: Russel Kachelmeier, Jim Knobles, Larry Christoph, Sergeant William Saunders (coach), Kenneth Bowen, Mike Murphy, Robert Wilson.

**Credits: The Houstonian 1966: Cullen Rifles team with Houston Battalion's own, All-American Cadet Jesse Reynolds.**

The Houston Battalion would be a force to be reckoned with in Drill & Ceremonies and Rifle marksmanship, all thanks to the UH Cullen Rifles or "Cougar Rifles". In the 1950s and 1960s, the Cullen Rifles regularly performed in parades such as Mardi Gras, the Houston Rodeo, Armistice Day, and Houston Cougar Football games. The Cullen Rifles would prove their excellence when competing against other schools, William "Bill" Taylor, former UH Cullen Rifles, said: "The Rifles excelled at beating Texas A&M's rival drill team, the Aggies' Fish drill team in particular, who the Rifles reportedly 'beat... like a drum pretty regularly.'" The Cullen Rifles would win first place at the NRA International meet in 1965 and the 4th Army Southeastern Conference in 1966. As the UH varsity rifle team, the Rifles finished the 1966 season with ten first-place victories and two second-place victories, resulting in a win at the Southwest Rifle Association championship. That same year, Cadet Jesse Reynolds became "UH's first All-American marksman." In 1960, the Cullen Rifles would also make history as one of the very few non-SMC or non-military academy schools to have ever served as a ceremonial & security escort for a United States President, namely Dwight D. Eisenhower. (Cullen Rifles History | College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences | (n.d). <https://www.uh.edu/class/military-science/website-folder/about/cullen-rifles-history.php>).

# BATTALION HISTORY

## THE GOLDEN AGE (1953-1969)

MILITARY

### Group Strives to Serve Corps

Service toward the university, the training corps and the nation is the aim of Scabbard and Blade, national military honor society. It strives to raise the standard of military education, to unite the military department and to promote friendship among cadet officers.

Local chapters have been installed in 160 colleges and universities where Reserve Officers Training Corps have been established. Members are chosen from the outstanding juniors and seniors in the ROTC program.

Sponsorship of a high school drill team competition for area schools is one activity of the local chapter.

Top social of the year is the Military Ball.

### Scabbard and Blade



MEMBERS: Seated: Herbert Fritche, vice pres; Capt. Don Smith; William Strecker, pres; James A. Harris, trass. Standing: Lewis Schweencker; Jim Findley; Hans Reneker; Gerald Williams; Bill Duster; Glenn Cross; Luther Lever; Robert Kothwitz; Jack O'Waine.



### ROTC uni

ROTC service projects included helping 2,500 crippled and underprivileged children enjoy the sights and sounds of the annual Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Also, in November the ROTC participated in the second annual Wendy MacEachern Memorial Blood Drive. Students, faculty, and staff received blood from the drive.

Cheryl Diane Harvey, biology junior, was elected ROTC Scabbard and Blade sweetheart at a meeting of the military fraternity.

At the ROTC Annual Review and Commissioning Ceremony in the spring, 35 cadets were commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the U.S. Army Reserve. Awards were also presented to outstanding cadets in the corps.

ROTC cadets aid crippled children during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Sgt. Julia Kahanoy presents his defense to military meet court, right.

**Credits: The Houstonian 1969: UH Cadets helping disable children.**

**Credits: The Houstonian 1963: 1963 UH Cadet Scabbard and Blade Chapter.**



**Credits: The Houstonian 1965: UH Cadets at a field training with a machine gun.**

Aside from the Cullen Rifles, the Houston Battalion or "Houston Corps of Cadets", 1953-1969, would become an integral part of life at the University of Houston. The Houston Battalion would maintain its band company, open a Scabbard and Blade National Honor Society chapter, conduct field trainings, large Military Balls, acts of service, and pass-in-reviews at the University of Houston Campus.

The Houston Battalion is proud to call this part of its history. A history of excellence and trailblazing, and a unit that exemplifies the culture of Houston and proudly represents the city of Houston and all Houston universities. Staying true to the current Battalion Motto:

**"TRAIN HARD, LEAD STRONG!"**

**HOUSTON BATTALION SOCIAL MEDIA**

**HOUSTON BATTALION INSTAGRAM**



**HOUSTON BATTALION FACEBOOK**



**UH RANGER CHALLENGE INSTAGRAM**



**UH COLOR GUARD INSTAGRAM**



Photo Credits: 1957  
Houstonian: UH ROTC Color  
Guard In front of the Ezekiel  
W. Cullen Building at UH



# HOUSTON BATTALION

ARMY ROTC

MILITARY BALL

Thursday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Nino's Social Events Hall

1800 - 2200

Free Admission

Register

Attire: AGSUs, Service  
Uniforms, Business  
professional, or Dress





University  
of Houston  
Clear Lake



UNIVERSITY OF  
ST. THOMAS  
HOUSTON



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY



**HOUSTON**  
CITY COLLEGE

***TRAIN HARD LEAD STRONG!***