

February

THE HOUSTON BATTALION

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ARMY ROTC • HOUSTON, TEXAS • VOL. 1 • SPRING 2026

WELCOME BACK, HOUSTON BATTALION!

NEW YEAR, NEW SEMESTER, NEW GOALS FOR CADETS

IN BRIEF

- **Holiday Service:** Cadets volunteer and give back to the community
- **Meet the New Cadet staff:** Introducing our command and staff for the semester
- **Cadet Achievements:** Highlights of the cadets winter break activities
- **Goals for the term:** Plans and priorities for the upcoming semester

Author: CDT Lopez



Editors: CDT Perez
& Ho

Classes are officially back in session, and we are proud to welcome you to the start of a new semester. This is Cadet Lopez, newsletter author. Our editorial team returns focused, disciplined, and committed to delivering a high-quality February newsletter that reflects the professionalism and excellence of our program. As we enter a new year, we also enter a new phase of growth. Our objective for the spring semester is to establish a consistent monthly newsletter, made possible through the continued support of our readership.

This edition provides a comprehensive look into the development of our cadets as future Second Lieutenants, both within ROTC and beyond. Featured content includes volunteer and community engagement efforts, recognition of cadets who continue to exceed standards, the introduction of our new cadet chain of command, and an overview of their operational goals for the semester.

These highlights reflect the discipline, leadership, and commitment that define our battalion. We appreciate your continued support and engagement. We look forward to keeping you informed and connected as we move forward this semester. Stay engaged and follow us for future updates and upcoming newsletters.

MEET THE BATTALION COMMAND AND STAFF

BATTALION COMMANDER, CADET LIEUTENANT COLONEL ISRAEL OUDRAGO



Staff picture taken by CDT Lopez

*“Hello I currently serve as the **Cadet Battalion CO** and am a **Green to Gold Active Duty Option Cadet**. I joined the United States Army **seven years ago** as a 68W Combat Medic, an experience that **shaped my leadership** style and commitment to service. My **active-duty service** began with the **44th Medical Brigade at Fort Bragg**, where I served as an **ambulance driver** and later as a **healthcare NCO**. I later transitioned to the **541st Forward Resuscitative Surgical Detachment**, serving as the **Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS) NCOIC**. In these roles, I **learned** the value of **discipline, teamwork, and calm leadership under pressure**—lessons that continue to guide me today. In December 2024, I was honored to be **selected for the Green to Gold program**. I am currently pursuing a **Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies** with a focus on Biology, aligning my academic goals with my background in medicine and leadership. As Battalion Commander, my goal is to build a culture where **Cadets strive for excellence, take ownership** of their development, and **never settle for the minimum standard**. I want every Cadet to leave this **program confident, disciplined, and prepared to lead Soldiers with integrity, purpose, and pride**. Together, we will **raise the standard, lead from the front, and build a battalion worthy of the Soldiers we will one day serve.**” – CDT Ouedraogo BC*

CADET COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR JONAE RICHARDSON

*“Hi, my name is **Jonae Richardson**, an **MS4 cadet** and the current **CSM of our battalion**. When I’m not in ROTC, I’m **running track** and keeping up with **college life**. I’m excited to **commission into the Medical Services branch** and pursue my dream of becoming a **clinical psychologist**. This semester, my goal for the battalion is to **foster pride** in our unit and help **shape every cadet into the best future Lieutenants** they can be, **ready to lead with confidence and integrity.**”- CSM*



Staff picture taken by CDT Lopez

EXECUTIVE OFFICER CADET MAJOR KIEN NGUYEN

*“Hello, my name is **Kien Nguyen**, I am the **Battalion XO** for this semester. I am majoring in **Biology and Psychology**. I hope to be commissioned as an **Armor Officer**. My goal for the BN this semester is to **prepare our MS3** to the best of our ability **so they can succeed** at CST and the rest of their Army career.” - XO*



Staff picture taken by CDT Lopez

MEET THE BATTALION COMMAND AND STAFF

S-1

Personal/Administration

OIC: C/CPT Puente

NCOIC: CDT Le



Staff picture taken by CDT Lopez

S-2

Intelligence & Security

OIC: C/CPT Ayala

NCOIC: CDT Ibrahim



Staff picture taken by CDT PAO

S-3

Operations

OIC: C/MAJ Munden

NCOIC: CDT Jiang



Staff picture taken by CDT PAO



S-4

Logistics

OIC: C/CPT Miller

NCOIC: CDT Clayton



S-5

Civil/ Public affairs

OIC: C/CPT Pearson

NCOIC: CDT Lopez
& Pham



S-6

Communications

OIC: C/CPT Fotie

NCOIC: CDT Slaughter

Winter Break

COMPLETING THE GAFPB

Over the break, several cadets had the opportunity to complete the GAFB. The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB) is a highly prestigious, physically demanding decoration awarded by the German military to allied soldiers, including American Soldiers. It tests mental toughness and physical fitness through a rigorous two-day, multi-event assessment, including a swim, ruck march, and marksmanship. In this edition, we are proud to recognize two outstanding cadets from different MS levels and share insight into their experiences.



From left to right, pictures of Cadets Clayton, Arellano, Yong, and Ingham receiving their GAFPB certificates

CADET ALEX YONG

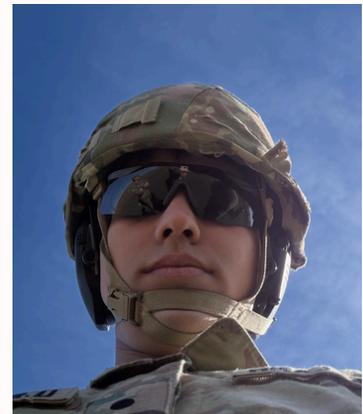
“My name is Cadet Yong from the University of Houston, and I had the opportunity to assess for the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (GAFpB) over winter break. It was an outstanding experience competing alongside other motivated soldiers and provided a valuable glimpse into how our allied partners train and evaluate their forces. I especially appreciated that the GAFPB is not simply another physical fitness test but a comprehensive assessment of soldiering skills, including marksmanship, tactical medicine, and water survival. For those preparing to assess for the GAFPB in the future, I would recommend prioritizing explosiveness and short-burst running performance during your training. Additionally, candidates should ensure that they can confidently swim at least 100 meters without becoming exhausted and dedicate focused time at the range to develop proficiency with a handgun from distances of 5 to 25 meters. From what I saw, the swimming and marksmanship events accounted for the majority of disqualifications among otherwise physically strong competitors who performed well in all other aspects.” - Yong



Pictures of German Instructor awarding Cadet Yong at the GAFPB

CADET DANTE ARELLANO

“My experience during the 2026 German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge was exemplary. I got to go out and enjoy two days of events with my ROTC peers and meet a lot of senior NCOs and Commission Officers, who shared their tips and tricks on what to expect throughout my career in the Army. During the GAFPB, my mindset going into the events was to achieve the Gold badge, and though I came up short on the very last event, I still managed to earn the Bronze badge. Now I know what I need to work on, and next time I’ll get that gold badge!” - Arellano



Picture taken by Cadet Arellano

Recognition

SPACE CITY SOLDIERS

VOLUNTEERING AND DONATIONS



President & Founder

CDT Alexandra Gomez

CDT Gomez, President and Founder of Space City Soldiers, exemplifies the Army Value of Selfless Service. Over the academic break, CDT Gomez and her team dedicated their time and efforts to giving back to the local community by partnering with Amazon to donate toys, food, and other essential items throughout the holiday season. Their commitment to service reflects the organization's mission to make a meaningful impact beyond campus and strengthen community relations.

Picture taken by CDT Lopez



Space city soldiers volunteering and preparing donated items for delivery to community partners

Space City Spotlight: Cadet Youssef Ibrahim



This month, we proudly highlight : Cadet Youssef Ibrahim

for his exceptional initiative and dedication to community service. Through his networking efforts, Cade successfully connected our organization with Amazon, allowing us to coordinate and deliver large-scale donations to those in need. Without his support and leadership, this opportunity would not have been possible.

Space City Soldiers have been hard at work making a meaningful impact in our community. With the support of Amazon, we successfully donated over \$10,000 worth of essential items. These efforts included approximately \$3,000 in donations to Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP) and over \$5,000 worth of items delivered to Harmony Journey Residential, directly supporting individuals and families in need.

We are proud of the continued commitment our cadets show in serving the community and living out the values of selfless service.



SPACE CITY SOLDIERS INSTAGRAM

SPOTLIGHT CORNER

RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING CADETS

February Spotlight Cadet: CDT Andrew Nguyen



Picture taken by cadet Lopez during lab

In this February newsletter, we proudly highlight Cadet Andrew Nguyen, one of only two cadets to contract this semester. CDT Nguyen consistently demonstrates the qualities of a future Army officer through his dedication, leadership, and selfless service.

He is an integral member of the Ranger Challenge Team, where he plays a key role in supporting and strengthening his team. In addition, CDT Nguyen is a member of the Cullen Rifles and currently serves as the Bravo Company Executive Officer (XO). In this role, he is committed to mentoring his cadets, assisting with training, and ensuring they have the support they need to succeed.

Beyond ROTC, CDT Nguyen continues to excel. He has completed multiple marathons across the United States, earning seven medals for his achievements. He also brings his passion and discipline into his work as a sushi chef at a restaurant in Houston.

Please join us in congratulating CDT Andrew Nguyen, our February Spotlight Cadet, for his outstanding accomplishments both in and out of uniform.

Words from CDT Andrew Nguyen



Picture of Andrew running a marathon

“Hello everyone My name is CDT Andrew Nguyen, and I am currently serving as the Bravo Company Executive Officer. My major is microbiology. I attended Louisiana State University for five years and have spent the past two years at the University of Houston. Throughout this time, I have witnessed significant growth—not only as a cadet, but more importantly as a person. I am extremely grateful to the cadre and to everyone I have had the opportunity to work with during these seven years. Their mentorship and support have played a critical role in my development as a leader. I remain committed to continuing my growth, serving as a role model to younger cadets, and leading my peers with professionalism and integrity.” – CDT Nguyen



Picture of Cadet Nguyen patches



HOUSTON BATTALION LEGACY OUTREACH

Houston Battalion Legacy Outreach (HBLO) is honored to present the February Newsletter. What to expect for the next newsletter: upcoming battalion activities, including training labs, community service, and continued engagement with our alumnus and Cadet Corps. We encourage all readers to remain attentive to future announcements, as an official date for the Houston Battalion Military Ball will be released in the coming weeks. Those who stay connected will be among the first to receive details regarding registration and the process to secure attendance at this highly anticipated event. We appreciate your continued support and engagement as we uphold the legacy and mission of the Houston Battalion.

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**

Upcoming Feature Opportunity:

Are you an alumnus or alumna with a story to share? We invite you to be featured in an upcoming edition of our newsletter. Please scan the QR code or email us at HBLOROTC1948@gmail.com. Our team will follow up with additional details and next steps on how you can be included in the next newsletter edition.



HBLO CONTACT INFORMATION

EMAIL: HBLOROTC1948@GMAIL.COM

ADDRESS: 3875 HOLMAN ST, HOUSTON, TX 77204

BATTALION HISTORY

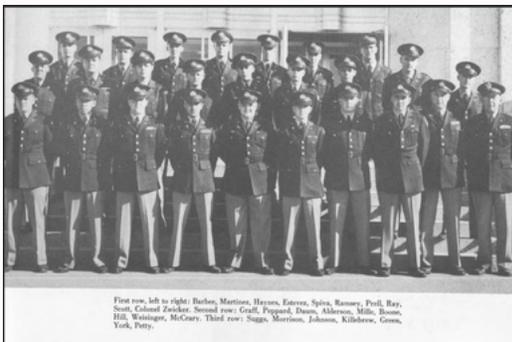
THE BEGINNING AND MILITARY BALL

The Beginning (1948 - 1953)

On July 1st, 1948, the US Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet Command approved the establishment of an all-quartermaster ROTC unit under the command of **Colonel Michael H. Zwicker** (First PMS of the Houston BN) at the University of Houston. At this time, the Houston BN would have **175 cadets** and 6 companies (A → E and the Cullen Rifles). The Houston BN had humble beginnings, new and small in an equally new and small university (21 years since its establishment); however, it would not remain small for long. The Houston BN and UH would receive a massive benefactor named Hugh Roy Cullen, a Houston oil Industrialist and grandson of a Texas Statesman, Ezekiel Cullen, who donated **88 million dollars** to UH (**1.2 billion adjusted for inflation in 2026**). This massive donation allowed for the explosive growth of the University of Houston and the Houston BN. The Houston BN would assign an elite company called the “Cullen Rifles,” named in his honor for his support of developing military officers and a Corps of Cadets at the University of Houston. Cullen Family donations, combined with post-WW2 growth in the city of Houston, saw a massive influx of student enrollment and enrollment in the Houston BN. The work of Colonel Zwicker & staff and Cadet LTC Robert Hoppe & cadet staff established a Corps of Cadets culture throughout the entire university, receiving institutional support and becoming a cultural force at the University of Houston. Their work and efforts paid off, resulting in the BN growing from 175 cadets to **827 cadets** in 1953, making the Houston BN one of the **largest all-voluntary ROTC units in the State of Texas and the United States**. The Houston BN was unique because it was one of the largest ROTC units at a young school without the support of the **Morrill Land Grant Act**, which allowed states 30,000 acres per congressional delegate to fund schools in agriculture, engineering, and military tactics, like Texas A&M, LSU, and the University of Florida. From the beginning, the Houston BN was a cultural force throughout the city of Houston, State of Texas, and Army ROTC, and established a tradition of excellence and trailblazing that the Houston BN is proud to call its history.

The Military Ball

In 1950, the Houston BN had its first military ball, named “ROTC Sweetheart Ball” at the time. A Military Ball is a military social tradition that celebrates the unit’s history and achievements of that year. The Houston BN implemented the tradition due to the growing size and the effort to allow the cadets an opportunity to socialize with their fellow cadets, friends, and family outside of school and ROTC activities. The Houston BN continues this tradition today and will continue this great tradition in the foreseeable future.



BATTALION HISTORY

THE BEGINNING AND MILITARY BALL PICTURES

Staff & Companies of 48' 1949 Houstonian



ADMINISTRATION

Left to Right:
Seated: Col. Michael H. Zwicker, Lt. Col. S. D. Cocheu, Major Richard L. Nispel, Capt. Ellsworth T. MacIntyre.
Standing: 1st Sgt. James E. Freeman, Sgt. Monroe Beach, Warrant Officer Wade D. Clutter, Warrant Officer G. H. Schauer.

BATTALION STAFF

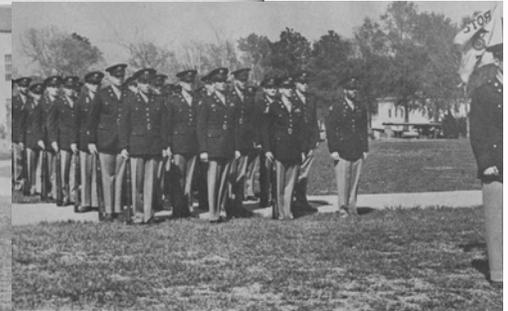
Battalion Commander	CADET LT. COL. ROBERT B. HOPPE
Battalion Executive Officer	CADET MAJOR MINOR PEOPLES
Battalion Adjutant	CADET CAPT. DONALD B. STRICKLER, JR.
Battalion Intelligence Officer	CADET FIRST LT. HARVY LEGGATE
Plans and Training Officer	CADET CAPT. THOMAS A. WATSON
Supply Officer	CADET ACTING OFFICER T. A. DABBS



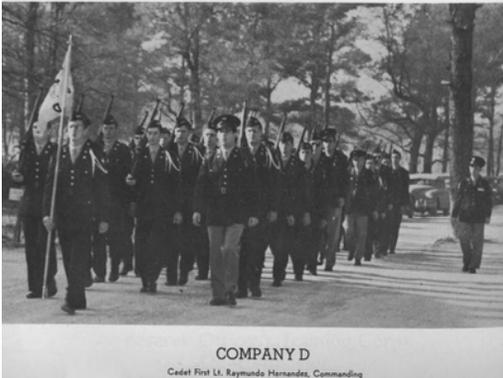
COMPANY A
Cadet Capt. Mark Kary, Commanding



COMPANY B
Cadet First Lt. Cliff Horn, Commanding



COMPANY C
Cadet Capt. Robert B. Rutledge, Commanding



COMPANY D
Cadet First Lt. Raymundo Hernandez, Commanding



COMPANY E
Cadet Capt. Matthew Richard, Commanding



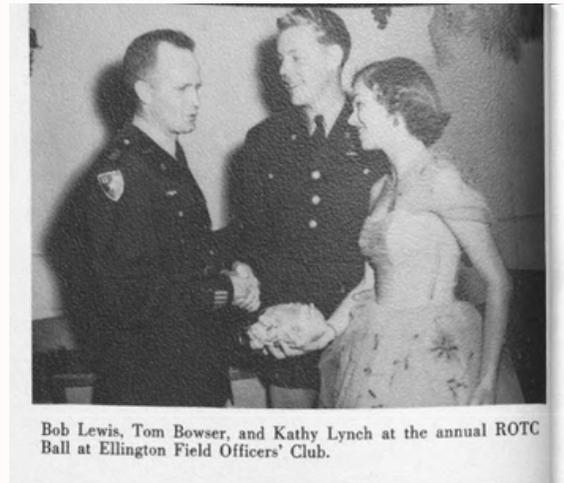
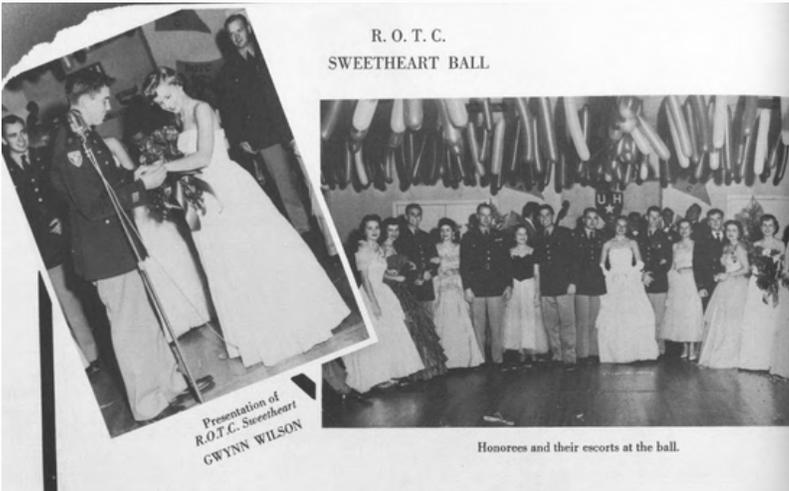
CULLEN RIFLES
Cadet Second Lt. Jack B. Harper, Commanding

BATTALION HISTORY

THE BEGINNING AND MILITARY BALL PICTURES

1950-1954 (The Houstonians)

Military Balls



HOUSTON BATTALION SOCIAL MEDIA

HOUSTON BATTALION INSTAGRAM



HOUSTON BATTALION FACEBOOK



UH RANGER CHALLENGE INSTAGRAM



UH COLOR GUARD INSTAGRAM





University
of Houston
Clear Lake



UNIVERSITY OF
ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY



HOUSTON
CITY COLLEGE

TRAIN HARD LEAD STRONG!