This past Summer 2019, our Cadets were scattered across the globe, gaining some valuable knowledge, skills, and experience in a variety of ways. This semester’s newsletter will highlight just a few of the many Cadets who spent parts of their summer bettering their Army careers and individual futures.

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**Nurse Summer Training Program**  
— CDT Claire O’Melveney (Boston College)

**Fort Irwin**

Fort Irwin is the National Training Center in Southern California where many armored units go to be evaluated before a deployment. Two years ago, a brand new hospital was built on post, which has 27 inpatient beds including bassinets. Over the summer, I was sent to the Weed Army Community Hospital in Fort Irwin and completed 120 clinical hours. I shadowed different preceptors in a few different specialties, including labor and delivery, Post Anesthesia Care Unit, women’s health, troop clinics, and ER. During the month I was there I learned many new skills and got to practice the skills I had already learned at school.

**Clinical Hours**

**Javier Villanueva Troop Medical Clinic:** The JVTMC is a clinic on post where Soldiers who are currently training can go when they are in need of medical attention. I had the opportunity to place IVs, complete blood draws, and perform patient assessments.

**Emergency Room:** In the ER, I saw patients who had many different diagnoses. We saw patients who were as young as months old and as old as 90 years old.

**Mother Baby Unit:** On the maternity ward I witnessed three successful deliveries. I gave the newborn babies their vaccines as well as physical assessments.

**The Box:** The Box is where the units at Fort Irwin conduct training. The box was created to mimic Afghanistan’s landscape and environment. In the clinic I sutured a few Soldiers’ hands, gave IVs for hydration, and treated other heat related injuries.

**Other Activities:** We drove amputee actors into the Box and evaluated medical units as they performed first aid on these role players. We flew on a Blackhawk to simulate a medical emergency in which a patient needed to be flown to a nearby hospital for more advanced treatment.
This October, Liberty Battalion participated in the 2nd Brigade Ranger Challenge competition at Fort Dix, NJ. There, a group of 12 cadets, including at least one from each MS class and 3 female cadets, competed against other ROTC programs from around the Northeast. At the competition, teams compete in different Army skills, and are scored on their performance. The competition kicked off Friday, October 18th, with a physical fitness event where they earned a top 10 score. Saturday morning began with a land navigation event, where the team was given a map, protractor, and grid coordinates and had to find as many points as they could in two hours.

Following this, the team moved to a weapons proficiency event where they assembled different weapons systems the Army uses as fast as they could. From there, they built a One Rope Bridge, completed an obstacle course, treated and evacuated a casualty, threw mock grenades on a grenade course, and ended Saturday with a tug-of-war event. Sunday morning the team completed a six-mile ruck march, and then moved right into the “Burden,” where the team collectively had to move over 500 pounds of gear close to a half-kilometer, again as fast as they could.

The Liberty Battalion team performed very well in all these events, placing 17th overall out of 46 different teams, and placed 3rd overall in the land navigation event. We’re all very proud of their performance and can’t wait to see how they improve next year!

The team comprised of Tommy O’Rourke, Simon Chin Lee, Jack Matthews, Caleb Herskind, Mary Jane Wilkerson, Sam Harmon, Nicole Kraemer, Will Ganim, Kevin Krivda, Scott Etchechury, and Elizabeth Ergil.

Advanced Camp — CDT Lexi Gawron (Emmanuel College)

I arrived in Fort Knox, KY in the early afternoon of June 12, 2019. As I looked out the bus window I saw a large group of Cadets staged under a pavilion dumping their gear, awaiting inspection. I could hear dozens of Cadre yelling “Hurry up Cadet!” I nervously sat on the bus waiting for further instruction on what to do while simultaneously wondering what the next five weeks had in store for me. In the mixture of all the nerves, I was also excited because I knew that this was the next step for me in furthering my Army career. Although I was nervous, I had complete faith that Liberty Battalion had provided me with ample amounts of training that would assist me in excelling at camp.
Despite being a little apprehensive when being put in a leadership position, I felt eminently prepared in running a lane because the Cadre at Liberty Battalion are very insightful when it comes to tactics, and they had taught us everything we needed to know.

Advanced Camp was a great experience overall. The training I underwent helped me identify my strong points as a leader while concurrently pinpointing what aspects I need to focus on to become a better leader. I went into camp with a set goal, and I wholeheartedly believe that I was able to accomplish that goal. My experience helped me realize that there is not always going to be a right decision, so do not worry about making the wrong decision all the time. Having this thought in my head made me the more confident and extroverted leader I desired.

**Interning with AFRICOM — CDT Kendall Smith (Suffolk University)**

This summer I had the pleasure of interning alongside 15 other Cadets from across the country at the Combatant Command headquarters of the United States Africa Command in Stuttgart, Germany. I was placed in the Public Affairs and Senior Leadership Engagement office for about eight weeks.

Being in the Public Affairs office, I was able to attend several events AFRICOM held on the installation. I assisted in covering the events in order to write an article and photograph or record the event for the AFRICOM webpage. I was able to attend the AFRICOM Special Operations Command change of command ceremony, the Public Affairs Symposium, the African Women’s Communication Symposium, the AFRICOM change of command ceremony, and a Humanitarian Assistance Response training course on disaster relief efforts.

During the course of the eight weeks, I was able to meet service members from all branches of the armed forces, diplomats and service members from other countries, and civilians who were all apart of the large team that makes up AFRICOM. I have lived in Stuttgart for nine years and have always had an interest in the inner workings of the Combatant Command that was quite literally next door. Working in the Public Affairs office allowed me to get a birds eye view of AFRICOM. It was an absolutely incredible experience.
From Cadet Summer Training in Kentucky to becoming a fill-in Platoon Leader in Hawaii — CDT Harrison Hahn (Northeastern University)

After the conclusion of the Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, I had the opportunity to attend Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where I was attached to a transportation company. As soon as I landed on island, I was met with a unique situation. My Lieutenant was recovering from a major surgery and he had asked me to take care of day to day operations as if I was truly the PL. I was excited to get my first crack at my soon-to-be role.

Just to add to the uniqueness of the situation, the Platoon Sergeant was moved to a different platoon, which left a squad leader filing in the role. It was comforting to not only have myself be the fresh Cadet taking a crack at leading Soldiers but also a SSG be a Platoon Sergeant for the first time. Throughout the three weeks, I helped in any capacity I could. I drafted direct risk assessment worksheets, helped create some training Concept of Operations (CONOPs) for when the platoon returned from Joint Readiness Training Center, attended company and maintenance meetings, and worked out with the platoon at PT. I had a ton of fun and it helped that my PL was trying to have me learn as much as possible in the short time I was there.

This experience in Hawaii was very helpful to my development as a leader because I went in wanting to learn not the tactics or the “cool things”, I wanted to learn the aspects that Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC) did not prepare us for and really take those experiences and use them as tools that I can later on use. For example, dealing with maintenance issues. Every week they have a maintenance meeting establishing which trucks are mission capable, then setting deadlines on when the truck will be functional. There are some parts take that longer than others and some vehicles are deadlined. These are aspects and obstacles that may be out of your control and it takes some time to get used to. I learned you must tweak your training plan for the platoon to allow for successful training to occur. Additionally, I learned how to properly fill out a variety of request forms.

While in Hawaii, I had the opportunity to visit Pearl Harbor and go out to see the USS Arizona. I became a frequent flyer at the beaches of the North Shore and a local food truck enthusiast. Other Cadets and I would always stop at every food truck we came across to see who had the best poke bowls. On the weekend I would meet up with other Cadets, pool some money together to rent a car and explore other parts of the island. We managed to hike up to the Lanikai Pillbox, and Koko Head. We walked around downtown Honolulu going into all the little shops where we all bought authentic Hawaiian shirts. We then walked in and out of the fancy hotels seeing all the honeymooners living lavishly. On a Sunday, we drove up to the North Shore to watch the skydivers and parasailers go out. Hawaii was an excellent training experience that has prepared me for what lies ahead while also allowing me to explore one of the most beautiful places on Earth.
Air Assault — CDT Mary Jane Wilkerson
(Northeastern University)

This past summer I was given the opportunity to attend Air Assault School at Fort Benning, Georgia. Air Assault is an Army school in which students spend ten days learning about the ins and outs of different helicopters, how to rig and inspect sling loads, and how to rappel. Before the course starts, students must pass Zero day, which consists of running 2 miles in under 18 minutes, physical training in the field, and ends upon the completion of the Air Assault Obstacle Course. I was able to successfully pass the events of Zero day, meaning I was able to move on to Phase 1 of the school.

Phase 1 was mostly classroom sessions throughout the day and physical training in the morning. We had to memorize the different weights, carrying capacities, characteristics and history of the AH-64 Apache, UH-60 Blackhawk, CH-47 Chinook and UH-72 Lakota. Phase 1 culminated with a written test on which you had to score a 70% or better to pass, pass a hand and arm signal test, and compare a 6 mile ruck march. Although it was tedious studying and learning all the material within three days, Phase 1 was definitely the easiest phase of the course.

Phase 2 was the hardest phase. This consisted of learning the proper ways to rig and inspect sling loads. Each day we were out on the field from sunrise to sunset learning how to rig an A22 Cargo bag, HMMWV, water trailer, and cargo net. Like the end of phase 1, there was a written test on all the material, but this time there was a practical test as well. You had to inspect all 4 sling loads and identify at least 3 of 4 deficiencies in under 2 minutes. Of the class of around 240 students, just under 100 had to retest at least one sling load. If you passed, you were given your rope and carabiner necessary for Phase 3: Rappelling.
Phase 3 was the most fun phase. It didn’t have any written tests; it was all about how to tie a swiss seat and how to rappel, and they pretty much threw you into it. We had a quick 30 minute lesson on how to hook in and how to belay before we were told to rappel off of the 64ft tower. We were taught two different types of rappelling, and had to perform each to the satisfaction of our Air Assault Sergeant grader.

There were two culminating events for phase 3 and the end of the course. One being that you had to rappel out of a UH-60 Blackhawk suspended 100ft in the air. I expected this to be an event that would make me very nervous, but I was too focused to realize that I was jumping that high out of a helicopter. The last thing you had to do before graduating was a 12 mile ruck march in under 3 hours. We woke up the morning of graduation at 1:30am, and started the 12 mile ruck at 2:15am. The final turn around item at the 9 mile marker was the air assault badge that would be pinned on your blouse at graduation.

After the ceremony I was beyond happy to have finally completed the course, and I was lucky enough to have a Liberty Battalion alumni who was in Fort Benning at the time come to my graduation ceremony to pin my wings. Going to Air Assault was a great opportunity; I got to learn a lot of material I wouldn’t have had exposure to otherwise. Not everyone can say they’ve rappelled out of a Blackhawk, so I’m very grateful for the experience that I had this past summer.
CU & LP: a “Once in a lifetime experience”

The Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program was created to develop cultural awareness, a key aspect in leadership. The overseas deployment to more than 20 countries is an experience that the classroom cannot teach. The types of missions available to cadets selected for CU & LP include military-to-military exchange, humanitarian service, and education on the culture and history of the country—all of which support Combatant Command security cooperation lines of effort.

The Philippines – CDT Kyle Gonzalez (Northeastern University)

I spent 22 hours traveling to the opposite side of the globe with about 35 other Cadets that I had just met a couple of days prior. That trek alone would be the sole low point of my adventure to the Philippines. In country, the team experienced so much: we met and spoke with many government officials, to which included the Philippines equivalent of the U.S. Secretary of State; we had befriended and competed against Filipino Cadets in a special edition of their annual competition The Ultimate ROTC Challenge; we trained with the Philippines Army Reserve Command, having participated in their Warfighter’s Competency Program, where we focused on the basics of Soldiering with minimal resources; and, of course, we indulged ourselves in Filipino food and culture. If it weren’t for CU & LP, no one would have had this amazing experience.
It is said that, “a wise person learns from his mistakes. A wiser one learns from others’ mistakes.” To learn from the example set by past American military leaders, Liberty Battalion’s MSIV class conducted their staff ride in Gettysburg, PA. Staff Ride is a commissioning requirement for ROTC, where MSIV Cadets study a significant battle in American history and analyze a leader in depth using the frameworks they have been studying in their Military Science Class. Visiting Gettysburg itself provided each Cadet an opportunity to brief their peers on their leader while being able to see where it actually happened.

Staff ride began on Friday, October 11th with a visit to USAHEC, the US Army Heritage and Education Center, the primary historical research and archival facility for the Army and the War College. Our MS IVs received a brief on the establishment and mission of USAHEC, then a guided tour throughout the facility where they saw archived materials dating back to the Revolutionary War. They also had an opportunity to peruse the Army Heritage Museum which specifically aims to capture the experience of the American Soldier throughout our nation’s conflicts.

On Saturday, October 12th, the Cadets made their way out to the Gettysburg National Military Park, which encompasses the historical battlefield. There they met COL (ret.) Fred Wieners, a retired Air Force Colonel that works at the Gettysburg National Military Park as a certified battlefield guide. He led the tour between multiple stops in the park that were chosen for their significance to a leader at the Battle of Gettysburg. Between the stops, COL Wieners provided an in-depth brief on what was happening surrounding that moment of the battle. Then, at each stop, two Cadets briefed the class on their chosen leader.

Each Cadet, once assigned a General, was required to analyze them based on three frameworks. The first is the Army Leadership Requirements Model, which describes the attributes and competencies needed for effective Army Leaders.
This is the same framework used to grade MSIIIs at their weekly Leadership Labs and to assess Cadets at Advanced Camp. The second is principles of Mission Command, the philosophy and framework that guides Army commanders. Mission Command emphasizes a centralized Commander’s Intent with decentralized execution by subordinates. The third is the principles of war that guide leaders towards conducting effective operations.

Although the tactics and operations of the US Army today changed significantly since the Civil War, lessons learned from Civil War leaders are still quite relevant.

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Model United Nations – CDT Jackson Dyal
(Northeastern University)

Throughout the last 18 months, I have applied the knowledge I learned through the Army ROTC program to a variety of other activities - my personal favorite is our Northeastern International Relations Council, the organization that competes in Model United Nations, NATO, and Arab League simulations, conducts outreach events throughout Boston to advance the goals of the United Nations, and brings students together in a policy-oriented environment to draft creative solutions to the world’s problems. Through a selection process, any student (or Cadet) can be selected to compete in a number of conferences in Boston, Washington D.C., Montreal, New York, or elsewhere.

This spring, I was lucky enough to be selected for the team competing at the International Model NATO conference hosted in Virginia.

With a view of the Pentagon, myself and 13 other Northeastern students dealt with crises of Russian aggression, drafted resolutions designed to combat cyber- and bioterrorism, and met with the defense counsels of various NATO member states across D.C. Because of the Army ROTC program, I was able to offer a unique and often overlooked perspective to the discussion; by bringing knowledge of tactics, weapons systems, and military terminology to the committees, our team quickly became the go-to for any prospective resolutions.

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Aside from success in competition, I’ve successfully run for election as the Vice President of Administration for the club – overseeing communications, organization, and event planning for a group of nearly 80 people – and am currently sitting on both the Executive Board and the Board of Directors. I didn’t really think about it until the responsibilities kicked in, but the abstract and concrete skills that the Military Science classes teach, translate from managing a platoon to running a civilian organization extremely well.

The experience in leadership outside of a military structure has provided a valuable perspective, especially in demonstrating the gap between written policies and resulting actions. I feel as though I’ll be a much better 2LT because of my experiences in the IRC.