Welcome to the Green Mountain Battalion Summer and Fall 2012 Newsletter. On behalf of all the cadets, I want to thank the families for their loyalty, the alumni for their unwavering support and the Cadre who are the driving force behind all our training. We had many sophomore and junior cadets attend training over the summer, including various schools such as Air Assault and Army Mountain Warfare School. We welcome back the seniors from Warrior Forge and any other follow on training they have completed.

We started the semester off strong with our annual Fall Field Training Exercise, where cadets got the chance to ride in a Black Hawk while conducting critical first aid training. As a Battalion, we ran in the Vermont Remembers 11K, and each week, cadets attended training labs to enhance their warrior skills and develop their ability to lead Soldiers. We had an exciting semester for our cadets including social events, labs, and the Ranger Challenge competition that the team diligently prepared for.

To follow our training events and social occasions more closely you can follow our Facebook group, "UVM Army ROTC" as well as UVM ROTC's Cadet News Section.

-c/BC Andrea Swett
This Summer I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the Army Mountain Warfare School and a Project Go study abroad program in Beijing, China. Mountain Warfare consisted of two weeks of all aspects of mountaineering training.

The first phase consisted of Land Navigation and basic knot tying. Additionally, there was a notable amount of classroom time during which we were trained on how to identify altitude ailments, identify and anticipate weather patterns, and filter water from less than clean sources. The first phase concluded with a land navigation and knot test, which notably thinned out our class, originally consisting of 65 students. After the knot test came the first round of rope systems testing. In all we learned 8 different rope systems and were tested on each of them; failing any of the systems would result in being released from the course.

Finally, 12 days after arrival came graduation. It felt great to graduate and I was proud to represent the Green Mountain Battalion and be one of the comparatively few cadets to complete the course. Then came Project GO.

Project Global Officer (Project Go) is a unique study abroad opportunity open to cadets from all branches of the military. It provides and funds language immersion programs to countries where such deemed "strategic languages" are used. This summer, after applying and being accepted, I attended a Project Go 8 week program based in Beijing, China. Participation on this trip was one of the most rewarding, yet challenging experiences I've had to date. Prior to arrival I had only taken one year of Chinese Language classes. Understandably, I felt very underprepared when it came to communicating. Regardless, during the Project Go program all instruction was only taught in Chinese and students were forbidden from using English anytime within proximity of our academic building. It was quite the struggle at first, as I not only was having a great deal of frustration just trying to understand what was going on but additionally I was experiencing a good amount of culture shock. With the equivalent of 6 and a half hours of class each day, and the countless hours of studying that would take place after that significant improvement was inevitable.

After 3 weeks I was able to understand everything my teachers were saying to me in class, meet and socialize with some Chinese friends, and even engage in some heated bargaining exchanges at the markets in Beijing. Project Go was incredibly rewarding, and was an evolutionary experience. It has provided me with a broader lens with which to view the world; looking back the eight weeks I spent on the Project GO program was the most rewarding two months of my life. I would strongly recommend the Project Go program to all cadets.

http://www.rotcprojectgo.org/

-CDT Jeffrey Edmonds
This past summer I had the privilege of attending the Army Mountain Warfare School held in Jericho, Vermont. It was a fourteen-day course that focused on realistic and hands-on training used in Army warfare today. Some of the skills we learned were a variety of load-bearing knots, hauling and CASEVAC systems, cache retrieval methods, high-angle rifle marksmanship, small unit operations, and rappelling. The students in this course are not “smoked” the way they do at Air Assault School, etc.; here, the physical grind we endure is rucking everywhere we go in high temperatures. Of the approximately sixty-five students we started with, forty-seven graduated. There were eight tests throughout the two weeks, and you could not advance without passing each test. If you failed the first time, you got a retrain, a retest, and from there either a go or no-go. My favorite part of the course was the rappelling and climbing days, along with the high-angle range rifle marksmanship. Being so high up and overlooking Vermont during rappelling was amazing and shooting at such far distances with the M4 Rifle (with your spotter telling you where to shoot or adjust) was exhilarating. I would recommend this course to any one of our cadets and if there are any questions, feel free to ask.

-CDT Ryan O’Leary

Army Mountain Warfare School provides tactical and technical training for mountain warfare and cold weather operations. The school is located in our very own Jericho, Vermont at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site (CEATS)- a site that our ROTC Battalion is very familiar with from past training.
Last fall, I got the chance to apply for CULP, the Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program. I took up this opportunity, and was notified in January that I would be heading to Angola, Africa. Due to a mission change however, my final destination was Sibiu, Romania. We were assigned the task of teaching the American language and culture to the cadets at the ‘Nicolae Balcescu’ Land Forces Academy, Romania’s West Point equivalent. My mission started at Fort Knox, Kentucky, where we spent a week going through pre-deployment briefs and processes. I met the 9 other cadets from around the country whom I would be traveling with, and the lieutenant colonel that would be in charge of us, at the airport on the first day. Each of us was assigned certain officer jobs, and I received the job of Public Affairs officer. I was in charge of picture taking, posting blogs, and reporting back to Cadet Command about how our mission was going through pictures and letters to help promote the CULP program. After all pre-deployment training was completed; we traveled 17 hours and landed in Sibiu, Romania.

On the first day, we sat down and were briefed on what to expect by the Colonel and the PMS of the Academy. We had a pretty rigid schedule while we were there. We woke up at 0530 every morning for PT. PT was either run by the squad leader for that week, or we met up with the Romanian cadets to learn/teach sports, such as handball and football. From 0800 to 1200 we taught a group of their best 30 first year students. We taught grammar, played movies about American culture, exposed them to MRE’s, taught them drill and ceremony, and led small group discussions. After that we spent the afternoons getting exposed to Romanian culture. The let us participate in their fitness classes, such as Judo or Karate, they took us to their salt lakes, or we did sightseeing. For the weekends we planned excursions. We visited Dracula’s castle, went to the Black Sea, and went on a 12-mile hike with Romanian officers and cadets. One of the most notable parts of the trip was on the day of the Academy’s 90th anniversary. A 3-star general came to the academy in a Blackhawk and there was a huge ceremony where the minister of defense was present. Although it was all done in Romanian, it was still so interesting to see their drill and ceremony and meet the minister of defense. After spending three weeks in Romania, we traveled back to Kentucky and went through the post-deployment process before going our separate ways. All in all, this experience made a huge impact on myself and on my future officer career and taught me a lot about parts of the military I don’t necessarily get to experience in our ROTC program. I also grew very close with the cadets who went with me, and am still in touch with most of them. The CULP program is an experience that I would recommend to anyone who gets the chance.

- CDT Leigh McNeil
My sophomore year I applied and was selected to attend CULP, or the Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency program. I was to travel to Laos with nine other ROTC cadets from universities across the nation and spend three weeks in-country. Pre-deployment readiness took place at Fort Knox, Kentucky where we underwent security, medical, cultural awareness preparations. On June 22, we departed from Fort Knox. Two days later, we landed in Vientiane, Laos.

Our mission was to conduct English language lessons for Lao college students in order to increase their English language proficiency and build positive relations. We worked through the American Embassy, and had the opportunity to meet and interact with the Ambassador, Karen B. Stewart and her staff. Daily, we held English lessons at the Embassy and were able to share experiences with the Lao students. We were also granted the opportunity to conduct English language lessons at the PSI clinic in Vientiane. PSI, or Population Services International, is a non-government organization that works to improve reproductive health using commercial marketing strategies. Being able to work with both the American Embassy and a non-government organization was extremely rewarding.

We received an invitation to the Ambassador’s house to celebrate the 4th of July. Being able to be at the Ambassador’s house for this celebration was truly an honor. We were given the chance to meet many Lao officials and converse with them. It was a proud moment for my fellow cadets and me to represent the United States Army on Independence Day in Laos.

CULP presented me with the unique opportunity to be culturally immersed in a foreign country. I would whole-heartedly encourage other cadets to be proactive in gaining cultural awareness experience through CULP.

-CDT Lindsey Moore

What is CULP?
The Cultural Understanding and Language Program- CULP is the complete immersion into foreign cultures. This exposes Cadets to the realities of other countries with vastly different lifestyles, economic standing and world perspective. In CULP, Cadets travel in small groups led by senior leader cadre around the globe- these trips typically incorporate approximately 20 Cadets and a cadre member working with a civilian agency or non-governmental agency. The program typically lasts three weeks, which encompasses the "deployment", as well as a five-day Soldier readiness process. CULP slots are awarded on a competitive basis based on GPA, physical fitness, an essay, and other pertinent selection criteria.
Over the summer I had the opportunity to attend a pair of Army schools, one of which was an awesome specialty school called “Air Assault School.” I got to go to the Army National Guard Warrior Training Center’s Air Assault School at Fort Benning, Georgia. They call AAS “the toughest twelve days in the Army,” and while I am extremely skeptical of that moniker, it was certainly a great gut check for me. AAS is broken into three phases, Phase I deals with Pathfinder Operations, Phase II deals with “sling-loads” (meaning cargo that is externally carried by a helicopter), and Phase III, the fun phase, deals with rappelling. Before an AAS student can get to any of that though, he or she must pass “Zero Day.” Zero Day is a marathon day consisting of an obstacle course, a two-mile run, a gear inspection, and a liberal amount of screaming Air Assault Sergeants offering you “bonus PT.” I was nervous going in but once the day started and the adrenaline started pumping, I had a good time with it. I got through Zero Day just fine and in-processed into AAS with no problems.

After that, my remaining classmates and I started Phase I. Phase I consisted of long hours in the classroom with intermittent “smoke sessions” that were designed more to wake us up than to punish us. It was during Phase I that we learned practical helicopter pertinent stuff, such as the specs and capabilities of several US Army helicopters, how to set up a Landing Zone, and lots of rotary-wing aviation vocabulary. We also learned 14 hand and arm signals that are used to direct helicopter pilots that are trying to hook up a sling load. At the end of the three-day phase there is a written and a hands on test. If a student fails either test a re-test is offered. If the test is failed a second time, the student is sent home.

Phase II was the intimidating phase. Going in, everyone knows that the sling-load test is “the highest casualty-producer,” meaning that it causes the most failures of any other event. Phase II training meant long, long days outside getting hands-on experience with the loads. There was one day of “clean load” training, meaning that all of the equipment was configured properly, and there was one day of “dirty-load training,” meaning that there were deficiencies rigged into the loads that we were expected to be able to identify on the test. In the evenings of both days, after chow, students had the opportunity to go down on the loads and work with them and with the Air Assault Sergeants in a slightly more relaxed atmosphere. I was on the loads both evenings until they kicked me off. I noticed that the majority of the kids that passed on test-day were out there until lights out with me. The Phase II testing also had a written and hands on portion. The written test was not difficult; it was the hands on test, the actual sling load inspection that worried people. You are tested on four loads, each one having four deficiencies rigged into it. To receive a GO, a student needed to find at least three deficiencies in two minutes. I first time GO’ed all four loads, which meant I got to go back to the barracks at about 1030 with orders to just hang out until 1700. Needless to say I have fond memories of Phase II testing. I slept the day away.

Phase III was just awesome. By that time, the “smokings” have pretty much stopped. The AA Sergeants are almost friendly, certainly more playful. Phase III is not academically very challenging; it simply requires you to keep a cool head and perform simple tasks. Students spend most of every day waiting in a long line for their turn to rappel off the 90-foot tower. We learned a number of rappel methods and rappelled in a number of equipment configurations, including “Hollywood (no equipment),” “Semi-Combat (Weapon and LBV),” and “Full Combat
(continued)

(Weapon, LBV, Ruck).” The culminating event of Phase III and of AAS generally was the helicopter rappel. On the second to last day of AAS I actually got to go about 100-feet in the air in a UH-60L Black Hawk helicopter, and rappel out of it. It was one of the coolest things that I have ever done in my life. All in all AAS was a great experience with something beyond ROTC and a lot of fun. I would highly recommend it to anyone that gets a slot.

-CDT John Hart

Cadet Sergeant
Major Closing Remarks

Once again I would like to thank all the alumni, cadre and families for their support and guidance for the Green Mountain Battalion as we start our way down this upcoming year. These summer experiences, cultural opportunities, schools and trainings have provided and will continue to provide our Battalion members vital roots in our future military careers. The heat is just being turned up- the outcome will be awesome. Catamounts lead the way!