Welcome to the Green Mountain Battalion Fall 2013 Newsletter. On behalf of all the cadets, I want to thank the families for their involvement, the alumni for their continued support, and the Cadre who are the driving force behind all of our training. This past summer was very eventful for our battalion. We had 46 sophomore and junior cadets attend military training and specialty schools, specifically: Air Assault School, Airborne School, Army Mountain Warfare School, Cultural Understanding and Leadership Program (CULP), Cadet Troop Leader Training, Leader’s Training Course (CLLT), and the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC).

We have started this semester off strong with our annual Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX) at which cadets, with the assistance from the Mountain Warfare School and the Vermont National Guard, got the chance to rappel off of a cliff face, shoot an M16A2, learn land navigation skills, and familiarize themselves with a UH-60 Black Hawk while conducting critical first-aid training. Pictures from this event can be seen at the beginning and end of the newsletter. As a Battalion, we ran in the Vermont Remembers 11K, hosted an Alumni Reception, and attend training labs each week to enhance our warrior skills and develop our ability to lead Soldiers. We also recently completed the semester’s capstone event: a full day Squad Tactical Exercise (STX) Lab. On 7 November we sent 12 cadets down to Fort Dix, NJ to compete in a grueling two-day military skills competition called Ranger Challenge.

To see how the Ranger Challenge team did, and to follow our training events and social occasions more closely you can find us on Facebook at "UVM Army ROTC" as well as UVM ROTC’s Cadet News Section on the UVM ROTC webpage. -BC John Helme
A huge aspect of the Army’s cadet only Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency (CULP) program is teaching English as a second language. When I received my orders that my mission was to teach English in the Republic of South Korea I had no idea what to expect. I had never travelled in Asia, so I was incredibly excited to explore a new portion of the globe so drastically different from what I’ve seen before. What I didn’t expect was to touch the lives of so many children and Soldiers and experience such a rich and ancient culture as celebrated by the South Koreans.

My mission worked incredibly closely, day in and day out, with the South Korean military. We taught English to Soldiers, their spouses, and their children on a Korean military base. We spent the majority of our time working with children grades 1-6; I found this to be the most rewarding aspect of the trip. The kids really got a lot out of the lessons we had for them and the time we spent getting to know each other. After being with Army cadets all summer, they were truly sad to see us leave and I know they will remember us as the “fun American teachers.” Those children are the future of South Korea and it is important that the U.S. reaches out and builds bridges for future cooperation.

A few Korean officers were in charge of us the entire trip, acting as our guides and interpreters while showing us the best Korea has to offer. We visited a number of culturally significant sites around the country. We were lucky enough to tour the De-Militarized Zone, Independence Hall, the capital of Seoul, the coastal city of Busan, visit the mud festival in Boryeong, and experience a Buddhist temple; and of course we got to sample a variety of traditional Korean cuisine over the course of the trip.

This trip was a once in a lifetime experience. Working and touring a country through the military was a completely different kind of travel than I had ever done. I certainly got a taste of what it’s like to be stationed in another country which will certainly help me out in the years to come. I think every cadet should apply for a CULP trip because nowhere else could you gain such a great military and cultural experience at the same time.

-Rachael Bassett

Watch the YouTube video:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSE3Bwt3Q2c
Apply for CULP 2014:
http://www.cadetcommand.army.mil/culp/
This Summer I had the pleasure of attending the Army Mountain Warfare School (AMWS) in Jericho, Vermont. AMWS itself is a small school where soldiers come to learn how to successfully operate in mountainous terrain. This course is particularly beneficial in today’s Army due to the mountainous operating environments that soldiers face in places like Afghanistan.

The course is designed to be both physically and mentally demanding. For two weeks, students carry 45-65 lbs. of equipment in their ruck sack, and are expected to master basic knots and rope systems. This is where the military adage, “Slow is smooth, smooth is fast,” becomes an essential part of training. It is vital to take your time and get things right; rushing is a risk you cannot afford. Fortunately they provide blocks of time to practice newly obtained skills and instructors provide one-on-one instruction in order to ensure skill retention.

The culmination event for the summer phase of the mountain course is a one-day Squad Tactical Exercise (STX), where the class works together to accomplish missions using the knots and rope systems taught during the course.

AMWS was a great experience that allowed me to see how the Army works outside of ROTC. My experience there was invaluable and it is one that I highly recommend to anyone that can procure a slot.

-CDT Michael Hanks

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.
Joining ROTC my sophomore year, I knew I would have to play catch-up with my peers in regard to my military development. Therefore, I decided to volunteer to go to basic training for 14 weeks. Regular basic training is nine weeks, followed by training at your specific specialty school or AIT (Advanced Individual Training). However, I attended the Infantry’s basic course at Fort Benning. It combines with AIT to form “One Station Unit Training” (OSUT). During OSUT you will be transformed from a civilian to an Infantryman. You learn the tactics of the Infantry, discipline, and what hard work really means. OSUT is broken down into five phases, each lasting roughly three weeks. The first three phases are basic training and the last two constitute the AIT portion. No matter the phase, the training will always push your limits and you will realize what your body is capable of. It was the most rewarding summer of my life.

I learned so much down at Ft. Benning and feel so much more mature. After what I’ve gone through, I now have the confidence in myself to better lead and help others. It is a great feeling to have people depend on you, knowing that whatever they ask for, that you will get it done for them. I take extreme pride in what I do, and I never lose my military bearing because of the discipline instilled in me. Discipline is one of the things ingrained in Soldiers at OSUT, but the most profound thing that OSUT instilled in me are the Seven Army Values: Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. I feel like a completely different person; in a positive sense. OSUT changed my life and has helped me realize what I want to do going forward. It gave me a direction towards my goals and motivation to achieve them.

I was excited for OSUT, but I learned quickly that I was not ready. My training challenged me unlike anything had before. They call it a “transformation process” because they are taking people off of the streets and turning them into Infantrymen. They give us the basic knowledge and training to be able to fight our enemies overseas. I learned how to operate multiple weapon systems including the M249 machine gun, the 240B machine gun, and the M4 carbine assault rifle. I now know how to patrol, set up an ambush, react to enemy fire, and call in a medical evacuation on the radio; skills that I will use for the rest of my Army career.

On the day before graduation, we had a “Turning Blue Ceremony” where we received our blue cords for our dress uniforms. Blue is the color of the infantry dating back to the 1800s. It is an honor to wear the blue cord, joining the extensive history of the Infantry and what they have done for our country over the last 200 years. You wear it with pride, and you have pride in yourself once you earn that blue cord. You can look back on your summer and realize your accomplishments, the limits to which you pushed your body, and the mental toughness you developed to become a part of the Queen of Battle, the Infantry!

-CDT William Briand
The CULP journey began at Ft. Knox, KY. Like all US Soldiers travelling abroad on military orders, CULP cadets must complete the Soldier Readiness Program (SRP) before being allowed to leave the country. This is a day long series of medical tests, vaccinations, and briefings all designed to make the Soldier as safe as possible while overseas. As future leaders, the experience of going through SRP as cadets is a valuable one, as it may enable us to help our Soldiers going through it for their first time when we are officers.

After completing SRP our group of 18 cadets, about half from the Green Mountain Battalion and the rest from universities all across the United States, and two cadre members embarked on a series of long plane rides which took us across the Atlantic, to Vienna, and eventually to Skopje, the Capital city of Macedonia. We were met at the Alexander the Great Airport by UVM ROTC’s own MAJ Robert Monette.

The city of Skopje, while only roughly the size of Burlington, VT was beautiful. About half of our group had the opportunity to tour Camp Bondsteel in Kosovo on a day trip. The American and NATO allied troops there guided us through what was, for most of us, the first active Forward Operating Base (FOB) we had ever been on. We also had several days to spend getting acquainted with Skopje and the local culture.

For ten days of the trip, US cadets worked with cadets of the Macedonian Military Academy, as well as cadets from England, Kosovo, Bulgaria, and Montenegro. This provided an excellent opportunity to observe how foreign armies operate both in garrison and field settings. The cadets we met were extremely friendly, most speaking impressively good English, and many of us have continued to stay in touch months later. As one might expect, the American and British cadets in particular became close friends. The “summer campus” as the Macedonians call it, culminated in a simulated raid on an enemy camp, utilizing skills involved in mounted operations, air assault, riot control, and various other tasks on which we had trained for the last ten days.

After taking the weekend as a much needed rest, we began working with American Corners. This is a program run by the American Embassy that focuses on providing a resource for people in foreign countries, particularly youths, who want to learn more about the United States or who are considering travel or schooling in the U.S. The last week of our trip was probably the most rewarding part as we worked with and got to know the wonderful people involved with American Corners. We were constantly humbled by the hospitality and warmth we were shown and learned more than we could have hoped to learn, in such a short time, about the various peoples and cultures of the Balkan region.

By placing young future officers on the front lines of military and cultural diplomacy in the Balkans, CULP strengthened the bonds between allied nations and built friendships between cadets that will last for years to come.

-CDT Thomas Clements
Donna Matrician
Leader’s Training Course

This summer I had the opportunity to attend the Leader’s Training Course (LTC) at Fort Knox, Kentucky. It is designed to be a type of crash course of the MSI and MSII years crammed into 28 days. Each platoon was assigned Drill Sergeants and newly commissioned Second Lieutenants to teach and oversee the cadets. At first the cadre are very intimidating, particularly the NCO’s. In the first phase of LTC, we were treated more like Privates at boot camp than officer cadets. There was a lot of yelling and “corrective training” (smoke sessions) that was designed to bring us closer together as a unit. While all of that was going on, we were taught basic courtesies, rank structure, the Soldier’s Creed, the Army Values, the Army’s core leader competencies, the 17 Cadet Command Leadership Dimensions, fundamentals of Drill and Ceremony, and were familiarized with Army Physical Training (PT).

The following weeks transitioned from an emphasis on the individual to whole unit development. Leadership from the team leader up to the company level was handed off from the Drill Sergeants to the cadets themselves. Every twenty-four hours, garrison leadership changed and an entirely new cadet chain of command would relieve the previous one. The stress of being in Company and Platoon level leadership for the first time was a unique challenge for me. The actual training during this phase focused on Land Navigation, Marksmanship and STX lanes. In between, we also had the opportunity to partake in waterborne operations, the Combat Water Survival Test, high ropes courses, rappelling, an obstacle course, and grenade and assault courses.

Our very last physical challenge was the 10k Ruck March, conducted on my 21st birthday at 0300. The March was concluded with a “Rite of Passage Ceremony” which was one of the most emotional experiences I’ve ever had. Though LTC was tough and seemingly never ending at times, the training is indispensable and I will never forget the people I had the chance to meet. The NCO’s were truly inspiring and I’m glad I had the opportunity to learn from them. I would encourage anyone with the opportunity to definitely attend.

-CDT Donna Matrician
I would like to thank our Alumni for their unwavering support. With their help, the Green Mountain Battalion has been able to execute rigorous training that has allowed our cadets to exceed the standard. I would like to thank our Cadre for their guidance and encouragement. They provide us with the professional image that we must strive to emulate. I would like to thank the families of our cadets. Family is what makes the Army strong. With love and support from our families we have become a unified battalion with great esprit de corps. I wish all of the cadets the best of luck this year as they face the challenge of developing into future Army leaders with the lofty standard of performance that is demanded here in the Green Mountain Battalion. I anticipate much more success for our battalion. Catamounts lead the way!

-CDT Lindsey Moore