From LTC Dean Ray

Panthers,

It is that time of year again with commissioning, advance camp, basic camp and lots of other good Army training getting ready to kick off. The Panther Battalion was pleased to commission six cadets from the University of Dubuque on April 28 and five UNI cadets on May 13. Both ceremonies were well attended by family, friends, staff and supporters of the program.

This past spring semester was chalked full with lab training, an annual staff ride for the seniors which took us to the Battle of Westport, the combined spring FTX with Iowa and Iowa State, and the Panther Battalion Military Ball and Hall of Fame Induction.

This year’s Hall of Fame honorees were alumnus COL Thomas Duncan (Class of 1991) and key contributor COL (Ret) Dan Kamiller (University of Dubuque). This also coincided with Dan’s retirement after twenty years of support to the Panther Battalion. Well-deserved for both individuals and their families.

As we move into summer, the new leadership within the cadet ranks has been established and the Battalion staff is busy working on plans for the upcoming fall semester. Some of the key events include zero week, fall FTX, Ranger Challenge, Homecoming and the Veterans game celebration. We invite all alumni, supporters, family and friends of the program out to help us enjoy the Homecoming and Veterans game day festivities this year. We will honor two selected Battalion Hall of Fame inductees during Homecoming weekend, with an open house and alumni get together. More to follow, so please look out for an email from Deb with all the good information.

I would fall short if I did not thank the cadre and staff who keep everything moving here on a daily basis. We will be saying goodbye to three individuals and their families through retirement and PCS this summer. MAJ Bert Flather (UNI) and CPT Andrew Feske (UD) will both be officially retiring at the end of the summer with over twenty years of active service. We want to thank Bert and Andrew for their service and wish them both well into retirement. MSG Jamie Stien (UNI) will be PCSing to Ft. Bragg, NC where we wish him and his family the best on their next Army adventure.

The door is always open around here and the cadets, cadre and staff would love to see you and spend some time with you. I look forward to the next update in the fall and I hope everyone can come out and visit, either at Homecoming or the Veterans game day this fall. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.
Retiring from UNI’s ROTC Department is Major Bert Flather, a Field Artillery Officer with a career that spans 23 years of service in the Army. Bert came to the program from Fort Stewart, GA in 2018 as an Assistant Professor of Military Science and never looked back. He has served multiple different positions in the department including: Operations Officer, Recruiting Operations Officer, Freshman Instructor, Military History Instructor, CSBS Senator, and Executive Committee Member. Bert looks forward to remaining in Cedar Falls and enjoying time with his family, including his wife Kate, 4-year-old son Quinn, and now 5-month-old daughter Eleanor.

After 20 years of service, CPT Feske is retiring from the UNI/UD ROTC program. CPT Feske served as a Cannon Crew Member (13B) before becoming a Field Artillery Officer. He served for three years as an Assistant Professor of Military Science at the University of Dubuque ROTC program. CPT Feske has enjoyed his time at UNI/UD, and is excited for the direction being taken by LTC Ray. After retiring, CPT Feske will travel with his wife Vy and his son Johnathan while remaining in Dubuque, IA.

Master Sergeant (MSG) Jamie L. Stien reported for duty at the University of Northern Iowa on July 31, 2018. His duties included Military Science Instructor level (MSI I), the MS II Instructor, Military Survival Instructor, Color Guard and Ranger Challenge coach. In the summer of 2020, MSG Stien assumed the duties and responsibilities as Senior Military Science Instructor (SMSI) and MS III instructor. MSG Stien has been in the army for 20 years – serving as an infantryman – and is on assignment to report to the 82nd Airborne division to be a Company Rifle First Sergeant. He reports for duty at Fort Bragg on Jul 10th 2022. He is married to Allison (Henneman) Stien and has four children, Genevieve (9), Vivian (7), Benedict (4) and Abraham (2).
Sabalauski Air Assault School is located on Fort Campbell in Kentucky as a training unit in the 101st Airbourne Division. Their mission is to train soldiers to perform air assault operations, sling load operations and rappelling. This is where I spent part of my winter break.

My name is Aaron Burger and I am a cadet in the sophomore class. This January I graduated from Sabalauski Air Assault School.

This 10-day course consists of 3 phases, Aircraft Academics, sling load operations and rappelling. Before you become a student at the school, also known as an “Air Assault” you must pass Day Zero. Day Zero consists of a strict layout of a given packing list. Then an obstacle course consisting of 9 events including rope climbing, low crawling and the confidence climb. The day ends with a 2-mile run. Failure to complete any of these to the standard will result in an immediate drop from the course before even starting. This was the most physically exerting day of the course and I know that is the intent.

Phase 1 involved learning about the combat assault operations and the capabilities of the aircraft. We spent time outside the classroom learning the hand and arm signals required to guide aircraft to landing. Inside the classroom, we covered aircraft such as the UH-60 Blackhawk, the CH-47 Chinook, and the Apache Attack Helicopter. I spent many hours studying flashcards with other students. The academics test and the hand/arm signal test conclude phase 1 and bring us onto the sling loads.

Sling load operations are the focus of phase 2 with both the academics and the practical test centered around it. Sling loads are used for the rapid deployment of equipment, supplies, or vehicles to units in the field. The loads we are tested on are the most common ones seen in air assault units. This includes the 5k cargo net, the high-mobility trailer, the A-22 cargo bag, and the M1151A1 Humvee. Finding deficiencies/issues with the loads is a timed event that drops many students of the school.

The 3rd and final phase of Sabalauski is rappelling. This is traditionally the phase that everyone looks forward to. I did a practice rappel off of a ramped wall to learn the procedures. Then we were tested on our ability to tie the swiss seats, rappelling seats. We were given 90 seconds to prepare ourselves for the tower. Those who passed inspection were given instruction to get in line to rappel off the tower. I remember trying to be first so that I could get out of the 40-degree rain and under the shelter. I remember feeling a sense of control when I was locked into the rope on the top of the tower. I had confidence in my equipment and my skills. When he said go, I jumped as far as I could. My training came through and I brought myself to the ground. This left a single graduation requirement, the 12-mile ruck. Those 12 miles in 13 degrees were some of the coldest miles I have ever done. I finished the ruck and was ahead of much of the class. I finished 6th out of the 107 that started that dark early morning.

Class 10-22 graduated at 1100 that day. Air assault school is known as one of the most physically challenging 10 days in the Army. We started the class with 307 soldiers and graduated 105 air assault soldiers. I held the guide on proudly as my instructor pinned the badge on my uniform. That is how I graduated from The Sabaluski Air Assault School.
In March, the Panther Battalion hosted members of the Defense Attaché from the Embassy of Germany in Washington, D.C. to certify the testing for the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (GAFPB) in Cedar Falls.

CDT Payton Hart began working with UNI cadre in July of 2021 to bring this unique opportunity to UNI ROTC cadets. After months of preparation, over 50 participants from the University of Northern Iowa, the University of Dubuque, Iowa State University, and the University of Central Missouri, as well as several National Guard and Reserve soldiers, participated and earned their badges. The GAFPB is one of few foreign awards that U.S service members are authorized to wear on their service uniforms. There are three categories of the award: Gold, Silver and Bronze. As it is a foreign award, the GAFPB is a highly sought-after award and in order to earn the badge participants completed the following events: 100-meter swim (in uniform), 12 km ruck march with 35 lbs., the German physical fitness test (shuttle sprint, flexed-arm hang, and 1,000-meter run), and a pistol qualification.

Prior to their arrival in Cedar Falls, all participants completed combat life savers and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear training. At the end of the weekend LTC Ben Schleider, GAF, Air Attaché Liaison presented the badges to the participants that successfully completed all events.

The Panther Battalion would like to thank HHC, 1-33 IN BN, 2/34 IBCT for their continued support of UNI ROTC by allowing the use of their new M17s for the pistol qualification.
Congratulations to our new 2nd Lieutenants

**2LT AUSTIN CHARLES COX** was raised in Garwin, Iowa. He is the son of Amy and Brad Cox. LT Cox enlisted into the Iowa National Guard in January 2019 as a 92F Petroleum Specialist. He contracted with UNI ROTC in Spring of 2020. 2LT Cox commissions today as an Adjutant General Officer in the Iowa National Guard with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree in Psychology and minors in Mental Health and Advanced Leadership Techniques and certificates in both Industrial/Organizational and Military Psychology.

**2LT LINDSEY BREANN FULLER** was raised in Denver, Iowa. She is the daughter of Nicola and Scott Fuller. 2LT Fuller joined ROTC in January of 2019 and contracted in September of 2019. 2LT Fuller commissioned as a Military Police Officer into the Iowa National Guard with a Bachelor degree in Psychology and minor in Advanced Leadership Techniques.

**2LT SAMUEL JAMES GINGRICH** was raised in Marion, Iowa. He is the son of Kyle and Melissa Gingrich. 2LT Gingrich joined ROTC as a participant his freshman year before enlisting in the Iowa National Guard in December 2020 as a 09R Cadet. 2LT Gingrich commissioned as a Quartermaster Officer in the Iowa National Guard with a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and minor in Advanced Leadership Techniques.

**2LT NICOLE MAXINE MILLER** was raised in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She is the daughter of Ken and Tricia Miller. 2LT Miller enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard in 2019 as a 68W, Combat Medic. In the fall of 2020 2LT Miller joined ROTC and commissioned as a Medical Services Officer in the Iowa National Guard with two Bachelor’s degrees in Biology and Athletic Training with a minor in Advanced Leadership Techniques.

**2LT CELENA QUIRK** was raised in New Hampton, Iowa. She is the daughter of Anita & Brian Quirk. 2LT Quirk enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 2017 as a 68W, Combat Medic. In the spring of 2019 2LT Quirk joined ROTC and commissioned as a Transportation Officer in the Tennessee National Guard with a Bachelor degree in Biology with a minor in Advanced Leadership Techniques.

**2LT DYLIAN JACKSON** is from Carrollton, Georgia. He is the son of Scott and Tami Jackson. 2LT Jackson joined the ROTC department in the fall of 2018 and commissioned as an Active Duty Infantry Officer with a Bachelor’s of Science in Computer Information Technology and a minor in Military Science. 2LT Jackson was selected as a distinguished honor graduate, placing in the top 10% of all Cadets.

**2LT NATHAN FERNANDEZ** is from Richlands, North Caroline. He is the son of Fred and Emelou Fernandez. 2LT Fernandez joined the ROTC department in the fall of 2018 and commissioned as an Active Duty Ordinance Officer (EOD Select) with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Criminal Justice and a minor in Military Science. 2LT Fernandez was selected as a distinguished honor graduate, placing in the top 10% of all Cadets.

**2LT JUSTIN DRENNAN** is from Richlands, North Caroline. He is the son of David and Holly Drennan. 2LT Drennan joined the ROTC department in the fall of 2020 and commissioned as an Active Duty Armor Officer with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Liberal Studies and a minor in Military Science.

**2LT SCOTT CHERRYHOLMES** is from Davenport, Iowa. He is a husband to Aleasha and father to Halo, Kinnick, and Gavin Cherryholmes. 2LT Cherryholmes joined the ROTC department in the fall of 2020 and commissioned as an Active Duty Quartermaster Officer with a Master’s of Arts in General Psychology and a minor in Military Science. 2LT Cherryholmes was selected as a distinguished honor graduate, placing in the top 10% of all Cadets.

**2LT ETHAN WOOSTER** was raised in Mukwanago, Wisconsin. He is a married to his wife Samantha Wooster. 2LT Wooster enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard in 2021 as a 09R, ROTC Candidate. In the fall of 2018 2LT Wooster joined ROTC and commissioned as a Transportation Officer in the Iowa National Guard with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Political Science and a minor in Military Science.

**2LT TY CHRISMAN** is from Lena, Illinois. He is the son of Brent and Holly Chrisman. 2LT Chrisman joined the ROTC department in the fall of 2018 and commissioned as an Active Duty Infantry Officer with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Aviation Management and a minor in Military Science. 2LT Chrisman was selected as a distinguished honor graduate, placing in the top 10% of all Cadets.
Commissioning 2022
Military Ball

The 2022 Military Ball was held 26 March 2022 at the Grand Harbor Resort in Dubuque, Iowa.

**COLONEL (RETIRED) THOMAS (TOM) A. DUNCAN** was inducted into the UNI-UD ROTC Hall of Fame.

He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant from the University of Northern Iowa in December 1991. He earned a Master of Science from Webster University in Environmental Management, a Masters in Security Studies from Kansas State University and a Masters of Military Arts and Science from the Command and General Staff College. He is also certified as a Project Management Professional through the Project Management Institute.

Also inducted into the Hall of Fame, for his service and contributions as an Army Officer, was **COLONEL (RETIRED) DANIEL (DAN) KAMMILLER**.

He enlisted February 14, 1972 as a combat engineer and commissioned in June 1977, retiring after 33.5 years of service. In August 2005, he began working full time with the ROTC program at University of Dubuque until his retirement in January 2022.
Annual Giving

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