After a successful fall semester, including events of Run to Dallas, and The Navy Marine Corps Birthday Ball, we are all ready for a nice long winter break. But first we wanted to share our semester accomplishments with you!

Believe it or not, the fall 2012 semester is already over! The Battalion started the semester with one of the largest freshmen classes in years. All of us have enjoyed getting to know them and watch as they made the transition from high school graduates to true college students! Besides getting used to being away from home and the rigors of college courses, they each had to endure many early morning wake-ups while their civilian counterparts slept safe and sound. It’s not an easy transition to make, but they did it admirably. I look forward to seeing them at the finish line with a degree and commission!

Several major events were accomplished again this fall: the annual Run-to-Dallas, the NROTC Alumni Weekend/BBQ, and the Navy/Marine Corps Birthday Ball. As the new CO, I was proud to see how well each event was professionally executed. The Midshipmen really stepped up to make the experience for all truly grand. The Run-to-Dallas event was once again kicked off by Coach Mac Brown delivering the game ball to the Battalion CO, MIDN 1/C Shirley at the Torchlight Parade. The midshipmen then proceeded to run 170 miles, a new record, all the way to the Cotton Bowl. I am proud to say that the flag football game between Oklahoma and Texas midshipmen was much closer than the game at the Cotton Bowl!! Next was the Alumni weekend festivities which included a Friday Night Awards Dinner, Saturday Alumni Scholarship Ceremony and post-meeting BBQ. Our gracious Alumni provided over $38,000 in scholarships! I cannot thank enough the Alumni and NROTC supporters for their superb generosity and mentorship to our future military leaders. We were also honored to have as our guests Admiral William McRaven and James Mulva to make the event truly special.

Lastly, and by far not least, we moved into our new spaces in the recently completed College of Liberal Arts building. All three ROTC units (Army, Air Force, Navy/Marine) now occupy the top floor! Without the generous donations and influence of our Alumni this would not have been possible. I would especially like to thank James Mulva and his wife Miriam for their generous support in giving ROTC a prominent, and permanent, location in the center of campus. Their dream enabled the reality.

If you have not come by to visit, please do! Our door is always open and with the new midshipmen lounge and computer lab, you are bound to find a midshipman to impart a good sea story!

--CO
XO’s Corner:
New Home

Commander Vernon “Butch” Neuenschwander

Happy New Year! Since we survived the end of the Mayan calendar, it is back to work at UT. After we completed a terrific fall semester and before we left on holiday break, the staff made a quick dash across campus to our new facility. We are located on the very ground where the old ROTC building once stood. The new facility is called the College of Liberal Arts building and we are located on the top floor. Army and Air Force ROTC have joined us and it is good to have all the services back together again in the same building.

It is a fantastic facility and even though they are still completing minor details, we would like to invite you to come by and take a tour. We are humbled and honored that our alumni’s generosity made the entire thing possible.

The fall semester saw another round of successful events highlighted by the Run to Dallas, the Navy/Marine Corps Birthday Ball and the commissioning of two students into the Navy. The Spring semester will feature our annual Dining In and Commissioning ceremonies. There is another event that will not affect the students but will have the staff very busy the first two months of the semester. Every ROTC unit is inspected every three years by the Admiral’s staff to ensure they are following guidelines and maintaining high standards.

My message this semester would be to heed the saying “He who hesitates is lost”. Students can’t afford slow starts and need to settle quickly into productive study habits and time management. One of the biggest heartaches I have is when a student approaches mid-semester to notify us they are having difficulties. I am fairly sure it did not take 2 months to notice an impending problem. The longer a student waits to notify us, whether it is academics, financial, or life in general, the more difficult it is for us to get them timely help.

I have said it many times. The staff is not in the business of “weeding out” students. Our mission is to help every student achieve a commission and be ready to enter the fleet as an Ensign or 2nd Lieutenant. Mission success relies heavily on students keeping us informed early and often. It is a team effort and that “team” consists of the student, their family and the unit staff.

Let’s have another great semester and HOOK ‘EM !!!
As the fall semester closes and a new year begins so does the last minute touches to our nation’s next batch of officers. We will graduate seven Marine Officers and more than a dozen new officers in all this May. Before they take their oath each will celebrate their last Mess Night as Longhorns. They will coordinate the annual JROTC Round-up, the Spring Awards Ceremony, Spring Change of Command, attend leadership conferences at Notre Dame, the Naval Academy, UT, and Texas A&M. They will plan and execute the Spring Field Training Exercise, compete at the Memphis Drill Meet, take their last physical fitness tests and plan this summer’s new student Orientation as well as nominate their successors for the fall leadership positions. As they have been reminded many times their charge as officers will be to leave an organization and its people better than when they “found them.” This semester is their last opportunity to leave their mark before embarking on new and exciting challenges. Like all other seniors they will still need to complete their last semester of academics but also prepare for the challenge of a lifetime. One year from now many of them will find themselves forward deployed and truly leading our nation’s finest resource...our sailors and Marines. It is with this in mind that our graduating seniors need to maintain an intense focus on accomplishing these tasks yet have a perspective on the step that they have been preparing four years to take...that of commissioning. It is like getting married...it only happens once. Leadership by example is required.....not requested. It’s time to put into practice all that they have learned and been exposed to during this journey. This is the beginning of their professional reputations. This will be my last semester as their MOI, and I wish them the very best that life has to offer.

God bless and Semper Fidelis!

Battalion Members of the Month (BATMOM)

Every month the BN Staff picks a MIDN that they believe has shown great dedication and hard work around the unit.

MIDN Baugh received the award for the month of September. MIDN McKinney received the award for the month of October. MIDN Slavin received the award for the month of November.
October 2012 marks the 30th year that the UT NROTC has run the game ball from Austin to Dallas for the Red River Rivalry football game between OU and UT. As the Run to Dallas tradition goes, UT NROTC receives a game ball for the Red River Shootout from the head football coach at the Torchlight Pep Rally, and then runs it in a relay style all the way from Austin to Dallas. Once in Dallas, they meet up with the University of Oklahoma’s NROTC, and the two units run together through the Texas State fairgrounds, and up the steps of the Cotton Bowl.

The event started with the upperclassmen midshipmen running on Monday to Wednesday evenings, which was followed by the Torch Lighting Parade and Pep Rally on Wednesday night. At the pep rally, Coach Mac Brown tossed the Battalion Commander, MIDN 1/C Shirley the game ball. On Thursday morning, the freshmen boarded the bus to continue running the game ball and were divided into three run groups; the groups would take shifts, each running six miles total per shift. The groups ran all day on Thursday, only stopping to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. We checked into the hotel in Dallas late on Thursday night and rested up for the eventful day to come. On Friday everyone was up early and back on the bus to the Texas State Fair to meet up with the OU NROTC. Once outside the gates, the two NROTC formed into columns of two, and began the run in cadence through the fairgrounds and up to the Cotton Bowl steps with their horns up, getting many cheers of approval from the people at the fair. After the photo shoot at the Cotton Bowl, the two NROTC units, packed up their stuff, and met up again on the flag football field. After the flag football game, the midshipmen returned to Austin and a game-watching party was held at Wingzup Bar the following day.

In all, the event was a huge success thanks to the careful planning of OC Adams and OC Perez that allowed the midshipmen to bond together while continuing a 30-year NROTC tradition.
Dronet Challenge

By: MIDN 3/C Birdsall

On the weekend of October fifth through the seventh the UT NROTC Endurance Team traveled to our neighboring state of Louisiana to the city of Baton Rouge to compete in the 6th annual Dronet Challenge. The challenge was named after fallen Marine and graduate of Southern University 1st LT Brandon R. Dronet, whom passed in a helicopter crash during Operation Enduring Freedom in 2006.

The competition itself consisted of nine tremendously physically grueling events and relays such as max push-ups, a water jug relay, a fireman carry relay, full Marine CFT relay, etc. Each school could bring anywhere from ten to twenty-five competitors, two of which had to be female. We took fifteen competitors, three of which were female, and went over there to bring home a trophy. Although we did not place as high as we had hoped, the Endurance Team placed fourth overall. We are incredibly proud of how well our team did do, and how well the team came together under the pressure of competition after being together less than two months.

Apart from the competition, we still managed to have a lot of fun out on liberty in Baton Rouge. We visited the Mall of Louisiana for a few hours Friday night. After the competition on Saturday we were let loose around LSU’s campus for a few hours to get chow and watch a couple football games. Thankfully we have responsible Midshipmen who don’t like finding trouble!

All in all, it was a fantastic experience to get to lead the Endurance Team a few hundred miles away to show off our stuff to the state of Louisiana, and hope to get to do something similar again soon. The team performed great and the comradery was inspiring.

USS Texas Longhorn Presentation

By: MIDN 3/C Ibarra

On December 7, 2012, midshipman and members of the Greater Austin Council (GAC), Navy League of the United States, gathered at the Texas Capitol to present the USS Texas an authentic set of Texas longhorns with a 7-foot spread. Although CDR Hertel, USS Texas Commanding Officer, and his crew were aboard their ship in Pearl Harbor, the presentation was made possible through a video chat using Skype. December 7, 2012 marked the 72nd anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor and CDR Hertel dedicated a moment of silence to all those who were lost on that “day of infamy.” Shortly after, GAC President-Elect, Kathy Pillmore, along with the assistance of our future submariners, formally presented the USS Texas their own set of seven-foot longhorns. After the presentation our Unit Staff and midshipmen accepted the set of longhorns on behalf of the USS Texas and ensured their safe delivery to Pearl Harbor.
The NROTC Alumni Association held its annual Alumni Awards Ceremony and Bar-BQ this past semester on October 20, 2012. Many special guests were in attendance such as James Mulva, Admiral McRaven, University President Bill Powers, and a number of other alumni who greatly support the NROTC Unit at The University of Texas. This fall 2012 ceremony consisted of many inspirational and motivational discussions presented by these distinguished alumni along with the Commanding Officer, CAPT Eden. Many were acknowledged for their achievements such as Admiral McRaven, who was recognized as a distinguished alumnus and presented with an official certificate. The Naval classroom in the new Liberal Arts Building (CLA) was dedicated in his name as well. James Mulva was another alumnus from the NROTC battalion recognized that afternoon. His awe-inspiring donation to the new Liberal Arts Building not only was remarkable toward its construction, but granted 5th floor exclusivity for the Navy, Army and Air Force ROTC units. An award along with a standing ovation was presented to Mr. James Mulva. The Naval student lounge was dedicated to LCDR (SEAL) Jonas B. Kelsall, who was aboard the CH-47 Chinook helicopter that crashed in Afghanistan on August 11, 2011.

One of the most distinguishable things about the Longhorn NROTC Alumni Association is the incredible amount of additional scholarships they offer to the Midshipmen. This ceremony, the alumni allocated approximately $38,000 in scholarship money directly to deserving midshipmen. This money helps pay living expenses, student loans, or can be used for anything the awardee sees fit. These great incentives motivate Midshipmen to rise above and beyond the already significant expectations granted upon them in becoming Navy and Marine Corps Officers.

After the Awards ceremony, the Alumni held a Bar-BQ on Speedway outside of Welch Hall for the battalion. Midshipmen along with their families enjoyed a fine evening of great food and camaraderie with the Alumni and Unit Staff. The battalion is sincerely thankful for the unique and unrivaled support our Alumni foundation offers to our current Midshipmen in pursuit of a commission into the United States Navy and Marine Corps.
On November 3rd, 2012, the UT NROTC hosted their annual Navy and Marine Corps Birthday Ball. The Ball was held in the Texas Union Ballroom at Texas Student Union. This time old tradition is one of the biggest events of our semester, and is a formal celebration which brings service members of the past and present together to commemorate the founding of our beloved Navy and Marine Corps.

The Ball includes many traditions and ceremonies including the Sword Line, Cake Cutting ceremony, and an address by the Guest of Honor. The Sword Line was commanded by MIDN 3/C Scott Birdsall and included Midshipmen from every class as part of the detail. This year the Cake Cutting ceremony included representatives from both the Navy and Marine Corps. As the tradition goes, the cake is ceremoniously marched in by the Cake Detail, commanded by MIDN 3/C Jason Beck. The CO then cuts the cake, and the first piece is given to the Guest of Honor. The next piece is given to the oldest service member present who then passes their piece to the youngest member present, symbolizing the passing of history and traditions to the next generation. CAPT (Ret) Jack Ritter, former member of the United States Navy who was born in 1933, passed his piece of cake to the youngest Navy-Option, MIDN 4/C Diana Huaman who was born in 1995. Gen. Michael W. Hagee, former member of the United States Marine Corps who was born in 1944 also, passed his cake to MIDN 4/C Michael Zuccarrino, a Marine-Option who was also born in 1994. The evening’s ceremonies concluded with the address by our Guest of Honor, General Michael H a g e e , 3 3 r d Commandant of the Marine Corps.

After dinner and the ceremonies concluded, the real party got started on the dance floor. The Midshipman Officer In Charge, MIDN 2/C Taylor Poli, surprised the guests throughout the evening with a dance competition in which MAJ Kopke received a cash prize.

Upon the conclusion of the event, MIDN 2/C Poli had this to say: “The committee put in a lot of hard work into this event and at the end of the day the event all their hardwork paid off. The event could not have gone any smoother.”
The University of Texas Naval ROTC Color Guard was headed by junior Color Guard Commander Midshipman 2/C Dinmore during the Fall 2012 semester. Those serving on the Color Guard with Midshipman Dinmore included MIDN 1/C Cahoon, Culpepper, and Wright; MIDN 3/C Stoop, along with several new additions, including MIDN 4/C Aung-Myint, Conaghan, Ledesma, McLauchlan, Schlemmer, Slavin, Sneed and Thompson. The year began with several presentations of the colors for the University of Texas women’s soccer team. The Naval ROTC Color Guard finished out the month of October with an enriching community event at Highland Park Baptist Church, where they taught young Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts the proper etiquette and handling of the colors. November’s NROTC Alumni Weekend, spread over three days, brought back the Battalion’s past alumni for an obstacle course dedication, awards dinner, and a scholarship presentation for outstanding midshipmen. The Color Guard performed at the scholarship presentation, and also at two dinners for Admiral McRaven and the Navy League respectively. On Veteran’s Day, the Naval ROTC Color Guard joined with the Army and Air Force ROTC’s for a joint ceremony at the Main Mall. In early November, the Color Guard performed at the annual Navy and Marine Corps Ball, a night of celebration for midshipmen, officers, alumni and family. This year we were honored with the chance to have the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Hagee, attend as the guest speaker. On Veteran’s day, the Color Guards from Navy, Air Force and Army collaborated to conduct a ceremony in honor of those who has served in defense of our country. The three groups coordinated to lower and fold a 10’ by 19’ flag in remembrance of our nation’s heroes. The semester finished with the Longhorns’ Thanksgiving football game against Texas Christian University in a joint Color Guard to cap off a successful 11 event semester for the University of Texas Naval ROTC Color Guard. It was highly encouraging to see the amount of participation and professionalism displayed by the new freshman class.
Winter Commissioning 2012

By: ENS Tim Garrett

The conclusion of the Fall 2012 semester sparked the beginning of a new chapter in the lives of 2 University of Texas Naval ROTC battalion members. Officer Candidate Joshua Phillips and Midshipman Tim Garrett were both commissioned into the United States Navy on December 21, 2012. While in the battalion, these to individuals performed excellently and helped to foster an excellent learning environment for their peers. They each held multiple billets during their time at the University of Texas and influenced many of the midshipmen around them. With the experience and knowledge gained from NROTC program, these two individuals will go on to encounter obstacles throughout their careers, and they will surely overcome these new challenges.

Ensign Phillips is a prior enlisted Chief Petty Officer. He is now attending Flight School in Pensacola, Florida as a Naval Flight Officer. Ensign Garrett will be spending a short period of time the UT NROTC Unit before heading to Charleston, South Carolina for Nuclear Power School. The commissioning ceremony was held in the Senate Chamber of Texas State Capital. Commander Butch Neuenschwander, the unit’s executive officer, administered the Oath of Office for Ensign Phillips. Ensign Garrett was given the oath by his father, Colonel Michael Garrett, USMC.

Congratulations to Ensign Garrett and Ensign Phillips. The United States Navy is proud to accept you into the fleet.
On 24 January 2013, the ROTC units at UT had the pleasure of showcasing their floor in their new building, the College of Liberal Arts building (CLA). It had been under construction for about 3 years, replacing Russell A. Steindam Hall (RAS). The new facility will allow current Midshipmen their own place on campus. In memory of Alumni, fallen shipmates, or contributors, the NROTC named each room in honor of one or more people. Some rooms to mention are, the classroom named after Admiral William H. McRaven who is an Alumni of the unit, as well as, the current Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command. The Midshipman’s Lounge named after the late LCDR Jonas B. Kelsall, who is an Alumni and was KIA during operations in Afghanistan. He was a member of SEAL Team 7. The Commanding Officer’s office is dedicated to Capt. John Clark Hurst, UT alumni, who was killed in combat while conducting a close air support mission.

All of the ROTC units share the fifth deck, which would not have been possible if not for Mr. James Mulva’s gracious donation. Mr. Mulva is an Alumni and former Navy Officer and served the Chairman and CEO of ConcoPhillips.

On the same night, Alumni, family and friends enjoyed a dinner in the University of Texas Club in the DKR stadium before venturing over to view the new building. While mansing the fifth deck, current Midshipmen had the pleasure of meeting Alumni and hear stories of the previous RAS building, which CLA is built on the site where RAS once stood. As Alumni toured the facility some ventured into the library and viewed old yearbooks of the unit, some even found pictures of themselves as young Midshipmen. Some in attendance were the Mulva family, the family and friends of the late LCDR Kelsall, and Mr. Bob Brown. All in all, it was a wonderful gathering and for some, a reunion with old classmates. The Midshipman give their thanks to all those who have helped make these new facilities possible and for those who took the time to come commemorate the new building.