



Warrior Battalion Army ROTC Alumni Association Newsletter

October 2025

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Spring Semester 2025 & What's to Come

By CPT Balog / UH ROTC Alumni

The University of Hawaii Army ROTC program just wrapped up a busy Spring semester but is already back at it with the start of the Fall semester. The completion of multiple major training events, such as Ranger Challenge, Superlab, the Combat Water Survival Test (CWST), the Field Training Exercise (FTX), and the Commissioning Ceremony are in the books. The successful semester was one to be proud of, but now it's a fresh start for the Warrior Battalion's newest MSIVs and leadership rotations. The team will look to build upon the foundation that has been set and continue to lead by example for their fellow Cadets. The Warrior Battalion also looks forward to working along side the Alumni Association during the course of the upcoming academic year; in an effort to not only maintain community relationships, but to grow new ones and support each other along the way!



Alumni Association Newsletter

Message from the Top

By LTC Patrick Kelley / Professor of Military Science
& MSG Ricardo Maya / Senior Military Science Instructor



This is the first newsletter since taking over in May 2024. Since then, we have welcomed several new Cadre members. At the top is MSG Maya, the new Senior Military Science Instructor. Our goal during our time at UH is to bring the program closer to the Alumni, community, and our donors; repairing a relationship that COVID-19 distancing may have weakened. Since taking over, we have hosted two Alumni breakfasts, the 14th Fallen Warrior Golf Tournament, and a Spring Ball in an effort to bring Cadets and Alumni closer. This November 21-22 we are conducting a Field Training Exercise at the Marine Corps Training Area Bellows (MCTAB). I would like to invite all Alumni and

Donors to witness this event in person. We will have a VIP tent set up as well as the opportunity to witness Cadets in action while they conduct their squad tactics lanes in preparation for Cadet Summer Training this summer. MSG Maya and I look forward to meeting and interacting with all of you during our time in the Rainbow Warrior Battalion.

President Insights

By Sam Membrere / Association President



Aloha! Greetings from the Warrior Battalion Army ROTC Alumni Association! I would like to thank Mr. Allen Hoe, LTC Patrick Kelley, the UH Army ROTC Staff, and cadets for their outstanding leadership and dedication to our organization. The UH Army ROTC Program have achieved many milestones, raising funds for scholarships and awards, hosting successful reunions and events, and strengthening our ties with the ROTC program and the university.

I am committed to building on these achievements and taking our association to the next level. My vision is to make our association more visible, active, and relevant in the ROTC community and beyond. Some of my goals are to:

- Enhance our communication and outreach through social media, newsletters, and website updates.
- Expand our network and collaboration with other ROTC alumni chapters, military organizations, and community partners.
- Support and mentor the current cadets and recent graduates who are the future leaders of our Army and our nation.
- Recognize and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of our alumni in various fields and endeavors.
- Foster a culture of pride, loyalty, and camaraderie among our alumni and their families.

To achieve these goals, I need your help and involvement. I invite you to join me in making our association a vibrant and dynamic force that reflects the values and spirit of ROTC. Whether you are a recent graduate or a seasoned veteran, whether you live near or far, whether you have a lot or a little time to spare, there is a place for you in our association. You can volunteer for a committee, attend an event, donate to a cause, share your story, or simply stay in touch. Every action counts and makes a difference.

I look forward to working with you and hearing from you in the coming months. Please feel free to contact me at sam.membrere@icloud.com with any questions, suggestions, or feedback. Together, we can make our association a source of pride and inspiration for ourselves and others.

Guess Who?

BG (Ret) James Hirai UH ROTC Class of 1973

By Sonny Rosales / Association Vice-President



For 31 years, James (Jim) Hirai served in the U.S. Army in a range of leadership positions. As the special assistant to the Commander, Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan, he worked in the Office of Security Cooperation – Afghanistan leading the external support to the Afghan Ministry of Defense and National Army.

His experience in the Asia-Pacific region includes serving as commander of U.S. Army Alaska; chief of staff of U.S. Army Pacific; commander of the U. S. Army Garrison, Hawaii; commander of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 25th Infantry Division (Light); and two tours on the Commander U.S. Pacific Command staff. He also served as Deputy Commandant, U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and six years with Army Rangers.

His career included tours with Army units in Washington, Texas, Kentucky, and Germany as an infantryman in Air Assault, Airborne Ranger, Mechanized and Light units. His military awards and decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit fifth award, Bronze Star Medal, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Expert Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and the Ranger Tab.

After military retirement, Jim Hirai served as the deputy director of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS). DKI APCSS is a Department of Defense executive education center that conducts in-residence and outreach activities designed to enhance effective and accountable security sector governance in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. He retired from DKI APCSS in 2024.

Jim supports organizations that perpetuate the legacy of Japanese-American World War II veterans and he promotes the work of the Pan-Pacific American Leaders and Mentors. He received his BEd from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and was a Distinguished Military Graduate from the Army ROTC program. He earned a master's degree in education from Troy State University and is a graduate of many military courses including the Infantry Officers Basic and Advanced Courses, the Armed Forces Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College.



-What inspired you to join Army ROTC at the University of Hawaii? I was inspired to join Army ROTC at UHM because of the four-year scholarship I was fortunate to receive. Until a high school counselor asked me how I intended to pay for college, I was not focused on the cost of a college education. I had an older brother already at UHM and two younger sisters, so at the counselor's suggestion, I applied for an Army scholarship to address some of the costs for our educations. Although the Vietnam War was ongoing, the example of the Nisei soldiers in WWII and local units in the Korean Conflict made military service a 'normal' part of path ahead.

-Can you share a defining moment or memory from your time in the program? There are at least two 'defining moments' of my time in the program, not including Advanced Camp and Airborne School which were 'outside' the UH program. One was my first ROTC field training to Schofield Barracks where Captain Davis' terrain walk along Higgin's Road turned the classroom map reading class into reality and the flat, paper map into actual terrain features. The other was the series of athletic matches between the Army and Air Force ROTC. This brought us into closer connection not only with our year group classmates, but the upper and later underclassmen teammates.

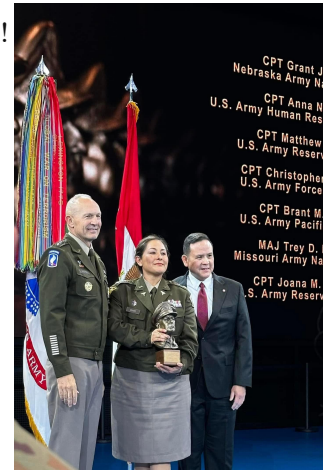
Alumni Updates & Highlights



The Esafe Ohana

The Esafe's are proud members of the UH Alumni family! MAJ Fiorella Esafe of Lima, Peru (Class of 2012) is a Medical Service Officer, currently doing resident ILE at Fort Benning; Fun fact, the class is being conducted fully in Spanish, with participation from multiple international partner countries. Prior to ILE, she deployed to Kuwait and went into the AGR Program in 2019. MAJ Esafe holds multiple Medical Service certifications, to include 70H, 70K and 70F. She is supported by her husband, Nathan (Class of 2008) who recently retired after a successful 24 year career, and their four year old son, Julian.

She is a recipient of the GEN Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award!



CPT Dustin Balog

CPT Balog is another proud member of the UH Alumni Family! CPT Dustin Balog (Class of 2018) of Elyria, Ohio is a Medical Service Officer. He currently serves with the 25th Infantry Division on Schofield Barracks, HI and works closely with the UH program; serving as a link to the partnership between the two organizations. CPT Balog has served in countless positions throughout his 18 year career, but his time as the Company Commander of "Charlie Med" stands out as the highlight of all his positions. He is supported by his wife, Felicia and his two daughters, Ava and Aubrey.

CPT Balog's claim to fame is being the overall winner of the marathon he ran recently!



UH Army ROTC Program

Ranger Challenge

We are thrilled to announce that our Army ROTC Ranger Challenge team achieved an outstanding second-place finish at most recent Brigade level competition! This remarkable accomplishment reflects the team's hard work, dedication, and relentless spirit. The Warrior Battalion's Ranger Challenge had the opportunity to test their skills, relentless training, grit, and determination at the 8th Brigade South Ranger Challenge Competition. Congratulations to all the team members and cadre on this fantastic achievement.



Superlab & FTX

The Warrior Battalion conducted their Superlab and the culminating FTX over the course of the Spring semester. The Superlab allowed the Cadets showcase their skills in Day/Night Land Navigation and their ability to complete the Obstacle course. Cadets sharpened their skills in map reading, terrain association, and compass navigation in day and night iterations. This exercise was designed to test and prepare the Cadets for success during Cadet Summer Training (CST).

The Spring FTX put the focus on platoon level operations; testing Cadets' proficiency in platoon size unit tactics, land navigation, leadership development, and mission planning under simulated operational conditions. They went through Movement to Contact, Ambush, Raid, Recon, Patrol Base Operations, and React to Contact lanes that prepare Cadets for their upcoming summer training. The purpose of FTX is to provide cadets the opportunity to apply classroom instruction to practical field environments, strengthening their leadership, decision-making, and teamwork skills in preparation for future service as commissioned officers.



Join Us for the Fall FTX!!

We would like to extend an open invitation to all alumni, program donors, and guests to attend our Fall FTX at Bellows Air Force Base from 21-22 November. This will be a great opportunity for everyone to see the Cadet's hard work and dedication during the semester's culminating training event! Please reach out to Cadet BC, CDT Sawdy, at csawdy1@my.hpu.edu if you would like to attend at any point.

Spring Commissioning Ceremony

The Semester came to a close with the Spring 2025 Commissioning Ceremony. The Warrior Battalion proudly saw 32 MSIV Cadets take the Oath and walk off stage as Officers in the United States Army.



Warrior Cadets Crush CST

The Warrior Battalion's focus and pursuit of excellence paid off during Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox over the summer! 32 of the program's Cadets completed the rigorous month-long training, in which thousands of Cadets from across the nation are evaluated in various missions and tactical situations. CST is one of the final test for Cadets before they make the transition to becoming the leaders within the program and serve others as MS4s!

We had three of our Cadets go above and beyond the standards and achieve the elusive "Recondo Badge" which is awarded to Cadets who demonstrate superior performance throughout CST. A huge shout out to the following Cadets for their outstanding accomplishment:

CDT Wesley
CDT Dvorak
CDT Chavarria

Save The Dates!

Fall Commissioning Ceremony

When: Friday, December 19, 2025 at 12:00 p.m.
Where: Battleship Missouri Memorial
Guest Speaker: Mr. Brostrom

Spring Commissioning Ceremony

When: Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 1:00 p.m.
Where: The John F. Kennedy Theatre on UH Manoa



Warrior Battalion Calendar

October 2025	November 2025	December 2025
-CSM Challenge PT, 17 OCT -BN Blood Drive, 24 OCT -CWST & Contracting Ceremony, 27 OCT	-UH Football Military Appreciation Night, 8 NOV -ROTC Fall FTX, 21-23 NOV -Army ROTC vs Air Force ROTC Turkey Bowl, 26 NOV	-ROTC Awards Banquet & Branch Reveal (Ball), 4 DEC -Fall Commissioning Ceremony (USS Missouri), 19 DEC -Posthumous Commission of Seven Former UH Army ROTC Cadets, TBD

Golf Tournament



Register



Important Links

[UH ROTC Alumni Association Donations](#)

[Warrior Battalion Aloha Ranger Gear](#)

[Warrior Battalion Social Media](#)

