

# Texas Caissons Alumni Association

Dedicated to Serving The University of Texas Army ROTC Program

July 2005

[www.txcaissons.org](http://www.txcaissons.org)

Edition 2005-1

## CAISSONS + BBQ + UT FOOTBALL = November 12<sup>th</sup> 2005

The annual Caissons Barbeque meal and meeting with the UT Army ROTC cadets and cadre will happen on Saturday November 12, 2005. As we did last year, the Caissons will host active duty guests at the event. Our guests include soldiers from Ft Hood who have recently returned from Iraq and patients from Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC). Go ahead and reserve that day for the Caissons and UT; and we can give you the exact times as the TV gods settle on a game time. Lieutenant General Tom Metz, III Corps CG, is scheduled to be the guest speaker. LTG Metz will spend the Friday before speaking to students at the LBJ School and to the US Army graduate students studying at UT. The day will wrap up with the Texas vs. Kansas football game.

We will be hard pressed to top last year's event when we hosted soldiers from Ft Hood's 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the 1st Cav Division, and BAMC patients. The Guest of Honor was LTG Richard Sanchez, 7<sup>th</sup> Corps CG and recently the ground forces commander in Iraq. The food was great and the UT football game was exceptional, unless you had a weak heart, as Texas defeated Texas Tech, coming back from a 35 – 7 deficit at the half. It was the largest comeback in Texas football history.

## December 2004 Commissions

The December 2004 Commissioning was a first in UT AROTC history. We commissioned two new Lieutenants and they both were cross-enrolled students from St. Edwards University. The ceremony was held at St. Edwards University on December 11, 2004. Our newly commissioned U.S. Army officers are:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Degree</u>
2LT Aricel P. Guerrero(DMG)	Chemical Corps AD	Copperas Cove, TX	Liberal Arts
2LT Jerrick J. Hunter	Chemical Corps AD	Bastrop, TX	Criminal Justice

## May 2005 Commissions

On May 20<sup>th</sup> the University of Texas Army ROTC program commissioned six new lieutenants. Our new officers are 2LT Rosa A. Cavazos, 2LT Jonathan M.J. Detty, 2LT John E. Landry, 2LT Ahsan M. Nasar, 2LT Alan M. Vargo, and 2LT Jeffery V. Wright.

Advanced ROTC Camp at Ft Lewis, WA will see two new lieutenants are commissioned upon completion of the camp. These two officers are 2LT Jonathan Sry, a Chemistry major from Bailey, TX; and 2LT Jonathan Walker, a finance major from Austin, TX.

The summer of 2005 is a **milestone** for the Texas Caissons, as the UT AROTC will commission three new lieutenants who were previous recipients of a Texas Caissons Scholarship. Second Lieutenants Rosa A. Cavazos, Jonathan Sry, and Jonathan Walker were Texas Caissons Scholarship winners. The Caissons are proud to assist these new officers in their path to an undergraduate education and a US Army commission.

## Member Updates: email and locator data

We are trying to keep operational costs down by posting the Caissons Newsletters on our Caissons site, thus reducing postage costs. We can do this best if we have current email and USPS mail addresses. If you move or change email addresses, or know of a Longhorn who has/does, please send the updated information to the editor ([artfly2@satx.rr.com](mailto:artfly2@satx.rr.com)) or John Boswell ([jboswell@accdvm.accd.edu](mailto:jboswell@accdvm.accd.edu)).

## MAY 21<sup>st</sup> CAISSONS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

1. The BOD met on Saturday, May 21, 2005 in Austin Texas. The items below are of interest to the Caissons members.
2. The annual BBQ will be November 12<sup>th</sup>, three hours before the UT-Kansas Football game. As done in 2004, the Caissons will host Ft Hood recent Iraq returnees and combat patients from Brooke Army Medical

Center (BAMC) at Ft Sam Houston. The Caissons provide a significant subsidy for the UT cadets, patients and active duty folks. If you feel you would like to make a direct contribution to assist in our event support, send a check to the Texas Caissons, and in remarks note 2005 BBQ.

3. The BOD decided to award four (4) scholarships to UT AROTC cadets this year. The forth scholarship will be named for CPT Orlando A. Bonilla who was killed in Iraq in January 2005. Captain Bonilla was a Distinguished Military Graduate and commissioned in the Aviation Branch in December 1999.
4. The Board authorized the transfer of \$3,000 from our operational funds to the Caissons Scholarship endowment fund. This move is made possible to reduced costs for distribution of the Caissons Newsletter, now predominately by email and the Caissons web page, and other operations.

**NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** Saturday, August 13 in Farmers Branch, Texas, hosted by the Caissons President, LTC George Soriano, and his lovely bride, Cynthia. If you are in the area and would like to visit the Board meeting, contact LTC Soriano at (972)-620-5745 or email at [george@sorianos.us](mailto:george@sorianos.us), for more information

### **DEPLOYED LONGHORNS**

**MAJ Kathleen (Kat) Meihlan UT '90.** After a tour in the Gulf flying C-130's and a 6-month TDY tour in El Salvador at the US Embassy, Kat is settling into the life of a graduate student at American University in the Washington DC area. You may be able to catch her between studies at [km9243a@american.edu](mailto:km9243a@american.edu). Her local contact info is: 2001 47th St. NW #4, Washington, DC 20016, (206) 388-6243. The photo of Kat with the UT flag, on the left, was taken at Al Udeid AB, Qatar



**MAJ Micki McCassey UT '89 – [michelle.mccassey@us.army.mil](mailto:michelle.mccassey@us.army.mil)**

Hook'em Horns from Mosul, Iraq! I hope this note finds my fellow Longhorns well. I've been in theater for nine plus months serving as the Support Operations Officer for the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. There have been several memorable moments during this deployment which I'm sure most of you saw on the news, including the FOB Marez DFAC bombing and the first free elections in Iraq in over 50 years. Just four days after the bombing, we were able to coordinate a merited Christmas meal at two locations for the 5000+ personnel on FOB Marez. Planning and executing the elections support made January a very long month, but the reward was seeing how many people came out to vote. I attended the Theater Elections AAR in mid-February in Baghdad. It was very humbling to sit in a room with Coalition representatives from across the country as well as United Nations representatives and discuss how the elections process worked in the different parts of the country. We learned that certain agencies did not send



representatives to our area because it was considered "too dangerous" but on the other hand, our province had one of the highest voter turnouts. We hope that our efforts continue to enable the people of Iraq to stand up on their own. I attended our first redeployment conference in Kuwait a few weeks ago so at least there are now signs that this deployment does have an end. The goal now is to keep everyone focused to complete the mission so we can all return home safely back to our families and friends. Only a few more months to go and we'll be back at Fort Lewis, WA. Working in the Stryker Brigade has been a constant learning experience. The vehicles themselves are wonderful engineering feats. We continue to be busier than ever ensuring the Brigade task force gets all of the logistical support possible. I never cease to be amazed at what soldiers can do! Thoughts of family and friends definitely keep me going when times are

trying. Hope this finds you well! Micki

**Captain Brett Jackson UT'95** was lost in e-space for a while because we could not find a mail address (E or snail); but he has checked back into the Caissons net. Brett is at Ft Campbell and flying with the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR (A), "The Night Stalkers". Brett's email is [jacksonb@soar.army.mil](mailto:jacksonb@soar.army.mil). Our apologies and thanks, Brett. Drop Brett a line or two and remember to let the Caisson have your new email and snail mail address when you make changes or move.

## **LTG MAGRUDER'S GENERALLY SPEAKING**

*(This is the first several articles contributed by LTG (Ret) Lawson Magruder, UT '69, from his personal files. -Ed)*

This month I will review the highlights of a study I conducted with three peers in 1985-1986 when we were lieutenant colonels attending the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The primary objective of the study was to identify the common organizational characteristics of the truly excellent brigades (units with anywhere from 2000-3500 soldiers) in our Army. Our study yielded eight "pillars of excellence": Focusing on Mission, Power down, Teamwork, High Standards and Discipline, Caring, Consistent Excellent Performance, Winning Spirit, and Positive Command Climate. Today's focus is on Winning Spirit.

In the excellent brigades we visited, there was a super charged electricity in the air. We called it a "winning spirit". There was a level of confidence in the ability to do anything "against all odds", and soldiers would openly tell you "we are the best." How did this attitude come to be? Our study revealed some key factors that were present in the four brigades we visited. I'd like to briefly share them with you:

Units did a lot of things together. We found that subordinate units (battalions) in the brigades trained together quite frequently and looked for opportunities to cross-talk and share ideas at every level. There were brigade-sponsored events like social and sporting events and brigade sponsored training events that threw units together. They would periodically run together as a brigade and would share ideas and experiences at various noncommissioned and officer professional development forums. Soldiers were also imbued with the brigade's history, its accomplishments in combat, and its heroes and what they had done.

There was a reputation to be upheld. Unit reputation was extremely important to soldiers in these high performing outfits. The current and past reputation of the brigade represented a standard which had to be maintained. Success breeds success was recognized by soldiers. Everywhere we went we saw an impressive array of visible symbols of success in all the units. Huge trophy cases and entire walls were dedicated to unit and individual accomplishments. Soldiers and visitors could not look at all these visible indicators of success without feeling an obligation to uphold the standards, sweat a little more and even shed blood to uphold the reputation of the unit. Demanding training that pushes soldiers to the extreme was important. Several junior soldiers said they liked the physical and mental demands that realistic training placed on them. Standards in training were clearly defined in advance so that when a training event concluded, the soldiers knew whether they had individually and collectively succeeded; and if they hadn't, what they needed to do to succeed. Training to a very high standard was a clear focus within these great brigades.

Looking for a better way. Soldiers at every level were involved in looking for a better way to accomplish a task or mission. After action reviews after each event were spirited affairs with input from every soldier valued by senior leadership. "Ownership" was at every level to improve processes, tactics, techniques and procedures. It was also noted that these units sought and actively recruited and retained the best people. There was a tremendous energy, both potential and kinetic, noticeable throughout. Leaders were competent and assertive and soldiers were too. It was no wonder with this focus and energy that things were done well which further reinforced confidence.

Pride was the most important factor. After reviewing all the tangible and intangible factors that contributed to a "winning spirit" in these excellent brigades, the most important factor was pride. Everywhere we went we talked to soldiers who believed there was nothing they couldn't do. It was evident that senior leaders missed no opportunities to build the feeling of success in both the individual and his group. This translated in an immense feeling of pride and a "winning spirit" throughout the organization. Soldiers felt their units were almost invincible.

As I look back on my personal experience in the military and now the business world, the Winning Spirit is probably the most desired characteristic for an organization that wants to succeed. It clearly starts with the most senior leader in the outfit and then will normally permeate quickly down through the organization. The senior leader must "walk the walk" in his daily life and demeanor. He must be competent, exude confidence, possess a positive attitude regardless of the surrounding conditions and must daily look for ways to recognize outstanding performers and build organizational pride. It's a tall order but can be done. I saw it time and again in the Army as a new leader would transform an average unit into a winning team overnight. It was these "turnarounds" by one of my subordinate leaders that brought me the most satisfaction are the memories I cherish most as I look in my "rear view mirror" of my career.

Next month I will wrap up my review of our study on excellent brigades with Positive Command Climate-the umbrella characteristic for all other pillars of excellence.

**LTC Taylor Extends.** The current UT AROTC PMS, LTC Kathleen J. Taylor has extended her tour through the 2005 – 2006 academic year. LTC Taylor is completing her PhD program and looking forward to a possible follow on assignment to West Point.

**LIFE MEMBERS.** Our Honor Roll continues to grow. If you are not yet a Caissons Life Member, please consider making that commitment.

<b>LIFE MEMBER HONOR ROLL</b>		
PMS Robert P. Higley	1966 BG (Ret) Robert L. Herndon	1974 Brian Shivers
PMS David Sain	1967 Keith Maxie	1976 Ernest Banasau, Jr.
PMS LTC Brian Cooper	1967 Edwin Dorn	1976 Charles P. Busbey
PMS Cadre LTC Matt Faddis	1967 Bob Binder	1977 Phillip Umphres
<b>PMS LTC Andrew C. Yee 2001-2002</b>	1968 Preston C. Hunt	1980 COL Robert Roach, Jr.
1951 James Sutton	1968 Greg Choban	1980 George Soriano, Jr.
1952 Bob Hallmark	1969 Charles Baker	1985 Albert Lara
1952 Ross Blumentritt	1969 Gary Gosdin	1988 MAJ Rene Rodriguez
1955 Robert A. Bell	1969 Bruce G. Luna	1988 C. Wayne Marotto
1955 Frank Moody	1969 LTG (Ret) Lawson Magruder III	1989 MAJ Micki McCassey
1955 Jack Painter	1969 Michael Moran	1989 MAJ James L. Wilmeth IV
1957 Gary Hite	1969 James Shaw	1990 MAJ Kathleen Meilahn
1958 Andy Hebert	1969 James A. Smith	1991 Katherine Graef
1958 Donald L. Carmichael	1969 Robert P. Smylie	1992 David S. Dougherty
1962 Thomas Knapp	1970 Joe Gonzales	1994 CPT Sherri Shadrock
1964 W. Keith Setzer	1970 Manuel Nunes	1995 CPT Brett Jackson
1964 Gregory Wene	1971 William Knox	1995 Steve Sin
1964 MG (Ret) Frank Henderson	1972 Wayne and Tina Thompson *	2002 LT Jennifer Rossie
1964 Herbert Evans	1972 Philip Winnsborough	2002 Liv K. Medrano
1965 John Seawell	1972 MG Raymond Barrett	2002 Raul Medrano
1966 Carroll Kirkpatrick	1974 Dr. Wesley Stafford	COL (Ret) Frank H. Novier
	*Family Membership	<b>New</b>

### **CAISSONS DUES**

**PayPal.** For those of you who want to use the Internet for more than email, PayPal is now available to pay your Caissons membership dues and / or make a contribution to the Caissons Operations Fund. Under our Caissons Web Page at <http://www.txcaissons.org/>, go to the xlink “How To Join”. Scroll down and you can select the type of membership that applies to you. I paid my 2005 dues with three clicks! Make it easy on yourself to pay or upgrade your Caissons membership. PayPal is a completely secure means of electronically paying bills through your credit card or bank account. **Make the leap!** Go over to the Caissons web site now ([www.txcaissons.org](http://www.txcaissons.org/)) and make that payment.

**Contributions to the Texas Caissons Scholarship** should still be made by check, **payable to The University of Texas**, annotated for the Texas Caissons Scholarship in remarks, and mailed to the **Texas Exes**, The Ex-Students Association, Attn: Scholarships, P.O. Box 7278, Austin, TX 78713-7278. This also makes the contribution tax deductible **and** eligible for corporate matching funds, if your firm has that great program.

# Texas Caissons Alumni Association Membership/Scholarship Form

Here is your opportunity to join and help. Please complete and return with your payment to the Texas Caissons address below.

To: The Texas Caissons Alumni Association, Inc.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 First Name                      MI                      Last Name                      SSAN

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address                      City                      State                      Zip

(    )                      (    )  
 Work Phone                      Home Phone                      E-mail                      UT Class year

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature                      Date

\*\*\*\*\*

## Caissons Scholarship Fund

I will help:    Caissons Scholarship Contribution                      \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

**Scholarship checks payable to "The University of Texas".**  
 Corporate Matching Funds form attached (if applicable)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Caissons Membership Dues (2005)

### Caissons dues payable to The Texas Caissons.

Caissons Life Membership	\$ 250.00	_____
Caissons Family Life Membership	\$ 400.00	_____
Caissons Annual Membership dues	\$ 25.00	_____
Caissons 3 for 2 Dues Membership through 2007	\$ 50.00	_____

Please check one.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**The Texas Caissons Alumni Association Inc.**  
**The University of Texas at Austin – Military Science**  
**1 University Station C3603**  
**Austin, Texas 78712-0315**

**The Texas Caissons Alumni Association Inc.  
The University of Texas at Austin – Military Science  
1 University Station C3603  
Austin, Texas 78712-0315**



**TO:**

PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD. ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED