A Very Important Visit
Major General Peggy C. Combs comes to the Buckeye Battalion
A Brief Introduction
BY ADAM MANGEN

The Buckeye Battalion

Today’s students, tomorrow’s leaders

The students of The Ohio State University Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program make up the Buckeye Battalion. These Cadets come from many different backgrounds and study many different degree programs but all have the same desire; to become a future leader of the United States Army. While completing their degree program as a normal college student, these Cadets simultaneously participate in military science classes, physical training, and leadership labs designed to enhance Soldier skills. The Buckeye Battalion has over 100 Cadets enrolled and consistently performs above ROTC standards and outcompetes many of the other Army ROTC programs in the country; academically and physically.

These Cadets will graduate with a degree in the field of their choice and, on the same day, commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. These new Lieutenants will go on to perform a vast array of jobs for the army from Quartermaster to Military Intelligence to Infantry and Nurses. These future lieutenants wear their scarlet and grey with pride and, while graduating from one of the top universities in the country, they realize they are a part of one of the top ROTC programs in the country as well and continue to uphold the prestige of this storied organization.

What is that screaming running mob on campus in the morning? Who are those students in fatigues outside of Converse Hall? Here’s where you can find out.

The Future Cadet Mentorship Team

Leader mentors instilling confidence and service in future Soldiers

The Future Cadet Mentorship Team is a new face in the Buckeye Battalion. As an advocate for community involvement, student mentorship, and building confident leaders, the Future Cadet Mentorship Team (FCMT) has created a new direction for Cadet leadership. While engaging members in service and mentor opportunities, this organization focuses heavily on building confident future leaders. Interpersonal communication and public speaking ability are important characteristics for any successful military officer. Cadets do not get enough practice in these aspects through their regular curriculum and that is where the FCMT comes in. Although new, this organization has a bright future and will continue to further the cause of the Buckeye Battalion and area youth and community service organizations.
A Very Important Visit

BY ADAM MANGEN AND SETH LAMP

Last week the Buckeye Battalion had the honor of hosting Major General Peggy C. Combs, the Commanding General of the Army ROTC Cadet Command out of Fort Knox, Kentucky. Major General Combs graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor of Science and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant into the United States Army Chemical Corps in 1985. She went on to earn a Master of Science from Saint Mary’s College, study at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and earn a Master of Strategic Arts degree from the U.S. Army War College. In her 29 years of service, she has served in many leadership and staff positions at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

Major General Combs has received many awards and decorations including the Army Legion of Merit, the Army Commendation Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Parachutist Badge, and the Air Assault Badge. She was recently at U.S. Army Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and served as the Commanding General at the U.S. Army Training Center. She also served as the Chief of Staff for the Iraq Training and Advisory Mission in Baghdad, Iraq. In March 2014, she was promoted from Deputy General of the Cadet Command to Commanding General, and since then has been hard at work remodeling Cadet Command to suit the needs of the changing Army. Major General Combs came to The Ohio State University to observe both the Army ROTC program and the National Championship winning campus. On 20 February 2015, Major General Combs took the time to sit down with Cadets, as well as Cadre, to field questions and discuss changes to the ROTC Curriculum and Training.

Cadets have known for some time now that the Army is moving towards an “Army of the Future.” This new Army, outlined by General Robert W. Cone of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command in 2012, and incorporated by Cadet Command, is an Army of preparation, with a focus on training and leader development. Where much of the ROTC curriculum in the past has been tactics-based training and preparation for the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC), the new training program will have an increased focus on ethics and leadership.

Major General Combs led a small classroom conference with select cadets on Friday morning, and later held a luncheon to outline the sweeping changes coming to the process of educating and evaluating cadets. Some of the changes and ensuing ramifications for cadets are:

- LDAC will be replaced with the Cadet Leadership Course (CLC). While
this course will still evaluate tactical knowledge, its primary focus will be on ethical leadership, critical thinking and problem solving. This will equally benefit cadets interested in combat arms branches and those interested in a combat (service) support branch.

- Within the next few years, Cadets will be required to take a foreign language as part of their curriculum to expand their cultural awareness and specialized knowledge.

- Order of Merit List (OML) points will no longer be awarded to Cadets for volunteering and recruiting efforts. Instead, points will be given for writing and speaking achievements, and can be earned by publishing articles or engaging in structured presentations or speeches.

While an important reason for Major General Combs’ visit to the university was to discuss some of these changes, she was more invested in providing advice to Cadets for their careers as future Officers. With the gusto that is typical in her interactions with Cadets, Major General Combs offered some points of wisdom for becoming a successful Officer.

She explained that success begins with building relationships. For a platoon leader, the most important relationships to build are those between your Commanding Officer, your Platoon Sergeant, and yourself. Regularly ask for feedback, while never hiding from or blaming your mistakes on others. Major General Combs makes it clear that no one is truly born a leader. Building relationships and developing leadership skills are difficult for everyone. While some people are born with natural abilities that make them more apt to future leadership roles, or increasingly predisposed to physical or mental prowess, she notes that it takes hard work and experience to become an effective and competent leader. Those who display superior motivation and perseverance can ultimately become better leaders than those who rely primarily on their natural abilities.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Major General Combs bid us to do what’s right. The ROTC curriculum and training are refocusing to highlight critical decision-making and ethical leadership skills, while moving away from by-the-manual regurgitation of tactics. As a leader, Major Combs says, you must worry more about what is morally right than what is technically correct. You can fix errors in planning and execution but you often cannot fix errors in moral or ethical guidance.

Major General Combs’ visit to the Buckeye Battalion was a meaningful and humbling experience for all the Cadets here. The Battalion is honored to have hosted her and will always remember her final words on the night of February 24th at the Ohio Union:

“You all are the Future and the Future is NOW!”

Maj. Gen. Combs holding Archie Griffin’s Heisman Trophy during a visit to the Woody Hayes Football Facility
New Opportunities for Female Soldiers

BY MADISON LAMBKIN

Two hundred and eighty-nine years ago, the United States Army was built to fulfill the need for a fighting force to defend the rights of the people and the nation. The mission of the Army was then, and still is, is to fight and win the Nation’s wars through prompt and sustained combat as part of the Joint Forces of the United States of America. Having boots on the ground overseas has continually influenced wars and conflicts surrounding the land domain, allowing for American success. But to whom do these boots belong? Is it to a 6’1” male willing to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemy? Or is it a 5’4” female willing to do the same?

As of 1948, women were allowed to join the Armed Forces of the United States of America as more than civilian launders and nurses, and in 1976 the first females were accepted into the U.S. Military Academy. Ever since, women have been making impressive impacts within multiple branches- none however, that fall under combat forces. In 1994, the Department of Defense passed a law barring female Soldiers from being assigned to Combat Branches below the Brigade level, and instituted a co-location restriction that prevented female Soldiers from being located with a Combat Unit, regardless of their MOS. Recently, the United States Military, and the Army more specifically, has made progressive leaps toward the “Soldier of 2020”. The new ideal focuses on physical standards that are equal across the board, regardless of gender, as well as on leadership, on professional bearing, and on creating a stronger Army to defend our Nation.

Field Artillery, a Combat Arms branch currently open to women, limits specific MOS’s that women can occupy. It is projected that by the second quarter of the 2015 fiscal year, all Field Artillery MOS’s will be open to women. Maj. Gen. Howard Bromberg stated in a 2013 briefing that the Army plans to open all branches and MOS’s by 2016, “across the entire force.” However, it seems as though this may happen even sooner than expected.

On May 14th, the Army will begin implementing a new Department of Defense policy. Women will be placed in 9 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) across 37 battalions with 6 combat MOS’s opening for female placement. These MOS’s include Multiple Launch Rocket System crewmember (13M), M1 Abrams tank systems maintainer (91A), and Bradley Fighting Vehicle system maintainer (91M), as well as several others. The logistics of this transition will require changes to male barracks, as well as the placement of female drill sergeants at combat branch focused locations.

Along with new MOS’s, the Army is reversing the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule that prohibits the co-location of women with certain Combat Units. Women are now allowed to serve in their respective MOS’s in combat locations that were previously restricted.

Many worry that standards will be relaxed for females entering these branches, but Col. Kevin MacWatters assures us that the standards will be upheld for all genders. “The overall mission is, we look at it as a transformation of volunteers into disciplined and competent mechanics, ready to contribute to their units. spots will open to women who are interested in one of the Army’s most physically and mentally challenging assessment courses for the first time in history. Before being accepted into the two-month Ranger School program, candidates, male and female alike, must pass the pre-Ranger course. This includes a menagerie of physical training and assessments, such as 5-mile run with a 40-minute time limit.

With combat MOS’s and branches opening to women, and the historical opening of Ranger School to female candidates, it seems as though the Army is waking up to the abilities of female Soldiers around the nation. Over the next year, the Army will assess the impacts of branch openings for women and determine steps for the future.
Out of Afghanistan?

BY CLARISSA MICHAUD

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter made his first international trip to Afghanistan. The aim of the visit was to determine, in part, whether U.S. withdrawal plans would compromise Afghan security and to determine if troop withdrawals from Afghanistan should be delayed. Secretary Carter first visited Kabul to speak with Afghan leaders and American Military Commanders, and then flew to Kandahar airfield, the regional hub for the U.S. mission. U.S. forces currently number at 10,000 in country, and President Obama hopes to reduce that number to 5,000 personnel by the end of 2015, with the goal of having only an Embassy presence by 2016. At the peak of U.S. troop involvement in Afghanistan just four years ago, there were 100,000 troops on the ground. In December 2014, the U.S. ended its main combat mission in Afghanistan and has now transitioned to provide training, advising, and assistance to the Afghan National Security Force as well as carrying out joint counterterrorism operations.

According to Secretary Carter, U.S. troops have improved the competence and professionalism of Afghan soldiers, who are now stronger and better prepared to prevail over the Taliban in the future. Under the current withdrawal plan, U.S. troops would leave Kandahar this year, but impending changes to the plan could involve keeping Kandahar open longer. President Obama has many options to consider, as a slowing of the pace of withdrawal would provide stronger support to Afghan forces. His options include altering the timeline for the troop withdrawal and reconsidering when and in what order to close bases.

According to Army General John Campbell, the commander of all American and international forces in Afghanistan participating in Operation Resolute Support, significant numbers of U.S. troops are not likely to remain in Afghanistan past 2015 or 2016. Although troop numbers may be adjusted, an increase in troops is highly unlikely. Instead, planners hope to use the forces that are currently deployed to advise and train Afghan soldiers more efficiently. Operation Resolute Support aims to assist Afghan efforts to defeat the Taliban, while targeting remnants of al-Qaida and preventing the Islamic State militant group from intervening in Afghanistan.

The U.S. is cooperating closely with Afghan President Ghani, who has appointed his political rival Abdullah Abdullah to a high-level government position in a gesture of bi-partisan unity. President Ghani’s cooperation with U.S. involvement is a dramatic turnaround from former Afghan President Karzai and has greatly increased the potential for progress. The stabilization is evident as security forces have been able to plan and execute complex military operations, including the major offensive in Helmand province previously mentioned. General Campbell is closely monitoring Islamic State recruiting efforts in Afghanistan to avoid allowing ISIS to gain the influence and power that it has in Iraq. Although the cooperation of the Afghan government means the situation is very different from that in Iraq, the main concern about withdrawing troops from Afghanistan has stemmed from events occurring in Iraq. After the U.S. withdrew, the Islamic State group rapidly routed the Iraqi Army, raising concerns that similar events could occur in Afghanistan if the American troops withdrawal too rapidly. The U.S. does not want to reverse the significant progress that has been made in Afghanistan, especially considering the 2,300 American service members who have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001. Options for the withdrawal process and the future of the counterterrorism fight in Afghanistan will be discussed when President Ghani visits the White House in March.

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter makes a trip to Afghanistan to determine withdrawal plans for troops
Leading the Leaders

BY PATRICK NJERU

1. Sir, did you commission from ROTC? Which program did you commission from?
I did commission from ROTC, I graduated from Frostburg State University. We were a satellite school of West Virginia University. So I actually commissioned from West Virginia University in Morgantown but I did all my labs and classes at Frostburg in Western Maryland.

2. Sir, how many years have you been in the Army? What has been your experience so far?
17 years. It has been the best experience ever. I never planned on making this a career, as a young lieutenant my plan was to do four years, pay back my scholarship and go find employment in the corporate world, I was a business major so I wanted to do something in business but 9/11 happened when I was a young Captain and after that everything changed and I knew I had a purpose bigger than me so I stuck around and made this a career.

3. Sir, what has been your experience at the Buckeye Battalion so far?
It is truly the best job I have ever had in my career. I have had a lot of great jobs in the military. Every day I wake up and I am excited to come to work, I am excited to get up to do PT, I am excited to be around the Cadets, it is a dream job for me. I am here because I want to be here and I want to make a difference to the future of the Army. Cadets are the future.

4. Sir, is this your first assignment in a TRADOC/training environment?
It’s my second assignment in TRADOC; the first one was with the Mission Command Training Program where I travelled around the country and around the world training Brigades that were getting ready to deploy. We trained them on battle command, mission command, different seminars and we also did War Fighter exercises or UEs. This is a little different; this is my first time with Cadets.

5. Sir, you recently introduced Cadets Against Sexual Harassment/Assault (CASH/A) to the Buckeye Battalion. What is your vision for the program?
I think one of the biggest challenges the Army faces right now is sexual assault/harassment. I think that if we cannot protect our own men and women in uniform from other soldiers who are not living the Army values and sexually assaulting or harassing their fellow comrades, then we are failing. If we can’t protect them then how can we protect the United States? How can we protect the country that we are charged to protect. I feel that if we can’t solve this problem we will lose the trust of the American people, and if we lose the trust of the American people then we’ve truly lost.

6. Sir, so the CASH/A program expands way beyond the boundaries of the military?
Absolutely. I think in order to solve the problem of sexual assault and harassment in the military there needs to be a change of culture and you can’t change a culture from the highest ranks, you need to change the culture from the lowest level; the Cadets, the soon to be officers and the Initial Entry Soldiers (IET), they are the ones who can solve the problem.

7. Sir, a recent web article mentioned that some law makers were calling for the disbanding of service academies (West Point among them.) Their argument was that ROTC programs produce similar and sometimes better officers for the Army at a much lower cost to the tax payer. What is your personal take on this?
My opinion is that all three commissioning sources (Academies, ROTC, and OCS) produce quality officers. I don’t think that any avenue produces a better officer, it just produces an officer with a different experience to get to the commissioning. There are great West Point officers, phenomenal OCS officers, and great ROTC officers and reversely there is also West Point, OCS, and ROTC officers that are not so good.

8. Sir, a follow on to that question, over the years there has been discussions on the difference between officers who graduated from service academies and officers who graduate from ROTC/OCS. The argument is that academy graduates are trained to deal with situations from a strategic point of view and the other commissioning sources are more suited for situations at the direct and organizational level. Is this assessment accurate?
I don’t agree with that assessment. Our curriculum in ROTC for the senior class is exactly the same as West Point so the seniors at ROTC are also receiving the strategic level education. They are exposed to strategic level discussion and talking points. I think they are both similar and they make for a well-rounded officer. All commissioning sources do.

9. Sir, the Cadet Command Division commander recently paid a visit to the Buckeye Battalion. What were her thoughts and reactions about the Cadets, Cadre, and the Battalion in general?
She was very impressed with the Buckeye Battalion. She was very impressed with the amount of initiatives, not only the Cadets initiative but university initiatives and as well as Cadre initiatives. She is impressed with everything we are doing, very impressed with the Future Cadet Mentorship Team (FCMT) which is right in line with her intent for organizations and clubs. She is very impressed with our interaction with the university.

10. Sir, lastly, do you have anything to add for the Battalion?
Throughout this year, I think you guys have seen one common theme from all our guest speakers, lectures, and Cadre; and that is to care about your soldiers, care about what you are doing. If you truly care about your soldiers and the mission, then everything else will take care of itself.
In each newsletter, the Buckeye Battalion selects one Cadet to share their story. The goal of this testimonial is to help readers learn more about Cadets within the Buckeye Battalion and show that they are everyday college students. This week’s article features Cadet Patrick Brito. Cadet Brito is an MSIII majoring in International Studies. Cadet Brito also participates in Pershing Rifles, Converse Guard, Ranger Force, and Ranger Challenge. Upon commissioning, Cadet Brito would like to branch either Aviation or Infantry.

1) In high school, what swayed your decision to join ROTC and seek a career as an Army Officer? To be completely honest, I did not know I wanted to do ROTC until my senior year of high school. I had submitted all of my college applications, and it dawned on me that I really did not have a plan beyond college, and I did not have a way to pay for school without the help of my parents. I never really knew what I wanted to do, so I went with what I knew best: the Army. Growing up as an Army brat, I knew exactly what I was getting myself into, and the more I thought about making that decision, the more fun and rewarding it looked, and here I am today.

2) What do you look forward to the most as you near becoming an Officer? As commissioning nears, I look forward to being challenged mentally, physically, and emotionally more than anything. I truly believe that being challenged in those ways teaches you more about yourself than anything else. I also look forward to moving around and maybe even running into childhood friends from around the country. I’m truly excited to be in front of a group of motivated men and women and see what I’m made of.

3) After spending 3 years as a Cadet at OSU, would you have chosen a different path? I actually have considered what I would do if I weren’t a Cadet, and I really do not know, nor can I see myself doing anything else. Obviously, some of the early mornings suck, but I really have not had a bad day in ROTC yet. I’ve made some of my best friends, and had experiences that I will not forget anytime soon. Whether it was traveling to Spain for CULP, or competing in the Army Ten Miler, the Buckeye Battalion has opened so many doors for me; I would not have it any other way.
In the Battalion

1. 12MAR15: the Buckeye Battalion will host the 2015 Spring Awards and Hall of Fame Dinner at the Fawcett Center
2. 20MAR15 and 22MAR15: Cadets will attend the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament at Nationwide Arena
3. Weekend of 27MAR15: the Battalion will send a team of Cadets to compete for the German Armed Forces Badge at Indiana University. The Cadets will be put through a series of physical and tactical tests, including the flexed arm hang, a 11x10 meter sprint test, a 1000 meter sprint, a 100 meter swim, a 12 kilometer foot-march, a pistol marksmanship event, a CBRN test, and a First Aid Course. Cadets who earn an overall Gold rating will receive a badge to display on their uniforms.
4. 28MAR2015: Cadets will participate in the Patriot Project Road March, an eight mile road march, at Ohio Veteran Memorial Park

In the Lab

Each week all Companies in the Buckeye Battalion undergo practical training that develop the skills and knowledge needed to be a successful Officer in the United States Army.

Focus recently has been on sexual harassment and assault; a critical issue that Soldiers must be prepared to deal with. During the week of 1 March 2015, the Battalion will conduct DA Got Your Back Training. The intent of this program is to increase the effectiveness of bystander intervention.

In the Army ROTC Organizations

Scabbard and Blade
Scabbard and Blade will conduct a paintball Field Training Exercise and host a lecture with MSG Clifton.

Pershing Rifles
The organization has been training intensely for the National Rifle Drill Convention in Richmond, Virginia.

Ranger Force
Members of Ranger Force will conduct a weekly tactical training lab on Sunday, as well as physical training on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Officers’ Christian Fellowship (OCF)
On 25 March 2015 at 1900, O.C.F. will host a movie night for Cadets and Midshipmen.