The you, they will select you to go

The Aviation lab we were able to have last semester was oneof the most exciting things we've ever done in the Buckeye Battalion.

Besidesgetting a pretty exclusive ride over the city of Columbus, we cadets were alsofortunate enough to be exposed to some new information from the Aviatorsthemselves. The thought of branching Aviation has come across more than a fewminds. The problem is, a lot of people don't know enough about it. What does anAviation officer do? What kind of training goes into it? How can I get to thispoint from where I am now? LT Dixon was kind enough to give some of this infoduring the lab, but in case you may have forgotten it, below is some basics ofwhat you need to know about Army Aviation. What to know aboutbranching Aviation: You have a few options, but the most common is eitherbranching Active Duty or branching into the Ohio National Guard.

Branching intothe Reserves is possible, but no one in the Battalion has a whole lot of experiencewith it. To branch ActiveDuty: As you can imagine, it's a highly competitive field. The biggestthing you can do is try to stay as high on the OML as possible. Just like theother branches, you won't really know that you have it until Draft Day comes. You will also need to take the SIFT and have a flight physical done beforesubmitting Aviation as your preference. Preferably, this should be before theend of your MS III year.

To branch into theOhio National Guard: This is the route I personally am taking, so I cantell you a lot more information about this. When it came to deciding betweenActive Duty and Guard/Reserves, I felt that the constant relocation aspect ofActive Duty was not what I wanted. When I decided to

join the Guard uponcommissioning, I learned that the route to Aviation also became easier.

Aftermeeting and speaking with LT Dixon at the Aviation lab, I found that theprocess would be relatively fast and painless. If you are interested in this, you will go through a board that consists of some Warrant Officers andCommissioned Officers from the Ohio Aviation Unit interviewing you. If theylike you, they will select you to go to flight training and become an officerwithin their unit. And bam, just like that, you have your branch. There’s nowaiting around and uncertainty like there is with Active Duty. By going thisroute, I knew my branch by my Junior year, instead of having to wait until thefall of my Senior year. No more stress about the OML, no more pressure ofrankings, no more anxiety about your future. The board happens 4 times every year.

Prior to arriving atthe board, there are some things that have to be done first. The main item isyour board packet. This is a compilation of pretty much everything about it. Your point of contact (LT Dixon) would send you all the specifics, but itessentially consists of your resume, cover letter, PT scores, any formalevaluations, copy of your transcript, some other administrative forms, andletters of recommendation. You will have 2-5 LORs. One will come from yourCeMAT, one will come from LTC Bunyak, and the others will be from whomever elseyou want.

They recommend you have at least one from an Aviator. I personallychose my supervisor from my summer internship, my percussion director fromMarching Band, and a family friend/long-time pilot. All you have to do

isgather the paperwork and email it over to LT Dixon, he does all of theorganizing and submitting of the packet. The other important item is your SIFTscore. What is the SIFT? The Selection Instrument Flight Test is a 3-hour test that is required toqualify you for flight training.

You get a score out of 80, but the mostimportant thing is to pass. Passing score is 40. The unique thing about thistest is you only get one to two opportunities to take it. The first time youtake it, if you pass, you are not able to take the test again. Whatever yourscore is, that’s the score you will always have.

If you fail the first time youtake the SIFT, you may take it one more time 6 months later. If you pass, thisis the score you will always have. If you fail again, you cannot take it againand you will not become an Aviator. It seems very intimidating, but if you prepare for it, youwill be fine.

There are multiple study guides to help. The test itself has 7 sections. Section 1: SD (Simple Drawings): This requires you torapidly identify the ‘ odd one out’ in a series of simple graphics.

Theidentification isn’t the challenging aspect – it’s the speed at which thissection must be completed. There are 100 questions to answer in 120 seconds. Section 2: HF (Hidden Figures): Requires you to identify animage which is hidden behind other lines and images. There are 50 questions toanswer in 5 minutes. Section 3: AAIT (Army Aviation Information Test): A mixtureof questions on different aspects of Army Aviation. These can relate to basicflight principles, the types of aircraft used by the army, flight controls, andthe physical components of an aircraft. There are 40 questions

to answer in 30minutes. Section 4: SAT (Spatial Apperception Test): Requirescandidates to envision the view from an aircraft cockpit depending upon theposition of the craft in relation to external geography.

This is the SIFTsection most closely related to practical flight. There are 25 questions toanswer in 10 minutes. Section 5: RCT (Reading Comprehension Test): Candidates arepresented with short textual passages. They must then choose a sentence whichaccurately refers to the text. All sentences may seem possible but only one isfully accurate. There are 20 questions to answer in 30 minutes. Section 6: MST (Math Skills Test): The first adaptivesection, meaning the number and type of questions may vary. Topics includeorder of operations, algebra, geometry and logic.

The number of questionsvaries to be answered in 40 minutes. Section 7: MCT (Mechanical Comprehension Test): The secondadaptive SIFT section. Although it has a fifteen-minute time limit, the MCT iswidely regarded as one of the harder SIFT sections.

Candidates are tested onphysical and mechanical principles. The number of questions varies to beanswered in 15 minutes. Flight Training: Flight Training is anywhere from 15-18 months at Ft. Rucker, Alabama. BOLCAviation Branch officers will attend Junior OfficerProfessional Development Course (JOPD) and Aviation Basic Officer LeaderCourses (AVO-BOLC). This is the Leadership and Aviation-specific BranchTraining section of BOLC. In Leadership Training, you’ll train primarily in afield environment, undergoing a series of drills based on real-life scenariosand focusing on small-unit leadership and tactics.

In the Aviation Branch Training section, you'll learn thespecialized skills, tactics, techniques and doctrine of your chosen branch, andprepare for success as a future platoon leader. THE USAACE SURVIVAL ESCAPE RESISTANCE AND EVASION (SERE-C)COURSE (3WEEKS)For information about Survival, Evasion, Resistance andEscape training, to include course information, the SERE Survival Booklet, theSERE Captivity Book List, and the SERE Cultural Book List, please visit theSERE Division's website on Army Knowledge Online. HOST – HELICOPTER OVERWATER SURVIVAL TRAINING (DUNKERTRAINING) (3 DAYS)Helicopter Overwater Survival Training prepares aircrew memberand their passengers to successfully exit an aircraft in an overwater ditchingemergency in both day and night conditions. Instructors are experienced, skilled and dedicated to ensuring students receive the finest in water survivalinstruction. Upon completion of this phase of Flight School XXI trainingstudents will be much better prepared for an aircraft ditching. INITIAL ENTRY ROTARY WING FLIGHT TRAINING (40-42 WEEKS)The traditional initial entry rotary-wing flight trainingmodel is 40-42 weeks (dependent on airframe) and consists of: Two weeks of preflight instruction, providing students withknowledge of basic flight control relationships, aerodynamics, weather andstart-up procedures. Primary (Common Core) consisting of ten weeks and 50 flighthours in the TH-67 or UH-72 training helicopter, is the primary phase.

In thisphase, students learn the basic fundamentals of flight, make their first soloflights, and learn to perform approaches and basic stage field maneuvers. Students then progress to more complex emergency procedure training, slopes andconfined area operations. Instruments is eight weeks of

instrument training, including30 hours in the flight simulator on the main post and 20 hours in the TH-67 orUH-72. The student progresses from basic instrument procedures to navigation onfederal airways using FAA en route controlling agencies. Upon successfulcompletion of this phase, the students are instrument qualified and receive ahelicopter instrument rating upon graduation.

Basic Warfighter Skills Training (BWS) is the combat skillsand dual track phase. It is combat-mission oriented and trains the studentpilot in the OH-58 A/C or UH-72 as an aeroscout helicopter pilot. The 1-212thAviation Battalion teaches both tracks that include extensive night visiongoggles training and tactical night operations. Students will also completetheir specialized training to become qualified in the CH-47F or UH-60M.

Thebalance of the training will be conducted in the student pilot’s “ Go toWar” aircraft, better preparing them for the field and giving commandersin the field aviators who are better trained after arriving from flight school. Your designated aircraft will be largely influenced by yourassigned facility. Soldiers assigned to AASF 2 (Columbus) will be assigned theUH-60M Black Hawk helicopter. Soldiers assigned to AASF 1 (Akron-Canton) willbe assigned the CH-47F Chinook, the LUH-72 Lakota, or the UH-60A/L Black Hawk(Medevac). Soldiers interested in flying specific airframes are encouraged tosubmit their request but will be subject to operational requirements of theorganization.

The State of Ohio also possesses a small VIP Fixed-WingDetachment based out of Rickenbacker ANGB, Columbus, Ohio utilizing the C-26EMetroliner

Aircraft. Selection for Fixed-Wing is a post-graduate process andupon service in the state as a Rotary-Wing Aviator, may be selected to join theunit. The helicopters we flew in that day at lab were UH-60 BlackHawks and CH-47 Chinook.

The Black Hawk was intended to serve in utility, airassault, medivac, command and control, and reconnaissance roles. The UH-60 isequipped with troop accommodations for eight, which can be removed toaccommodate four full-sized medical litters. The Black Hawk can transport 11fully equipped combat soldiers in an assault ready configuration, or 14 in amaximum capacity situation. Maximum troop carrying capacity is 20 lightlyequipped personnel. The dedicated medivac variant of the Black Hawk canaccommodate 6 litters. While not equipped with any dedicated weapon systems, the UH-60A is equipped with two pintle mounts (one each located on either sideof the airframe aft of the flight deck.) These pintles are capable of acceptinga variety of weapons, to include the M-60 GP 7. 62mm machine gun, the M-2407.

62mm machine gun, the . 50 caliber GAU-19/A machine gun, as well as theGeneral Electric M134 7. 62mm 6-barreled minigun. Utilizing the ESSS system, theUH-60A can equip up to 16 Hellfire missiles, as well as 2. 75″ FFAR(folding fin aerial rocket) rocket pods, FIM-92 Stinger anti-air missiles, aswell as aerial mine delivery systems, such as the volcano and the M56 mine deliverysystem. The CH-47D Chinook is the U.

S. Army’s primary heavy troopand supply transport aircraft. The now updated version of the rotocraft cancarry a 19, 500 lb load – nearly twice the

Chinook’s original lift capacity. Threemachine guns can be mounted on the helicopter, two in the crew door on thestarboard side and one window-mounted on the port side. Additionally, thehelicopter is equipped with a suite of countermeasure systems, which couldinclude one or more of the following: a missile approach warner, jammers, radarwarner, and chaff and flare dispensers. Don’t let it’s size fool you though, this baby has speed, too.

Just wanna attack stuff? Then the AH-64 Apache is for you. TheAH-64 Apache is the Army’s heavy division/corps attack helicopter. It conductsrear, close, and shaping missions including deep precision strike. Conductsdistributed operations, precision strikes against relocatable targets, andprovides armed reconnaissance when required in day, night, obscured battlefieldand adverse weather conditions.

The UH-72A Lakota is a light utility helicopter specificallydesigned to meet the requirements of US Army. UH-72A Lakota helicopters wereacquired to replace the UH-1H Iroquois and OH-58 A/C Kiowa helicopters. THEUH-72A serves the army principally for logistics and support missions withinthe US. It is also used by the Army National Guard for homeland security anddisaster-response missions and medical evacuations. For ambulance and medicalevacuation missions, the cabin can accommodate two stretchers, plus one crewchief (who is qualified to operate the hoist and other aircraft equipment) andone medical attendant. The helicopter has an externally mounted rescue electrichoist, The hoist is mounted on a boom and support assembly that allows it to bepositioned in an arc of up to 63° from the aircraft fuselage centreline formaximum operational flexibility. The hoist is stowed in line with the fuselageduring flight.