In the Last Year...

By The Class of 2018

Within the last academic year, the Ram Battalion commissioned 33 new Second Lieutenants.

Watching these ceremonies were 24 juniors and three seniors who had spent their summer at Fort Knox, conquering the heat and humidity, thunderstorms and ticks, and numerous leadership challenges of Advanced and Basic Camps.

Four Rams earned the privilege of shadowing real life lieutenants throughout the Army at Fort Campbell, Fort Bragg, Germany and South Korea, while two Cadets travelled abroad as part of the Cultural Understanding and Leadership (CULP) program to Burkina Faso and Malawi. In addition, two cadets graduated from Airborne School and three earned the Air Assault School badge, thereby completing all summer training.

Once back on campus, the incoming freshmen cadets were initiated into the Ram Battalion with zero week activities, a fun three-day event with water challenges, rappelling and other team-building events.

Once the semester began, weekly tactical and training labs were conducted, whereby Cadets prepare for Advanced Camp with instruction in patrol base operations, setting an ambush and providing Tactical Combat Casualty Care, along with a host of other Soldier skills.

This training was supplemented with advanced scenarios at Jacks Valley Training Ground on the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. There, Cadets gained valuable experience in tactics, teamwork, leadership and how to best eat a delicious pork sausage MRE!

These events are part of our duties as seniors, as it’s our mission to carry the program forward, with everyone stepping up and giving 110%, so that we could leave the Ram Battalion better than we found it. Through a lot of blood, sweat, and tears, this mission was achieved.

We realize that there is a long and storied history of excellence and leadership for this program. We wanted to carry that spirit forward, hoping one day some freshman standing out on the plaza, with no idea of what their future looks like, may look at our legacy and decide that they want to be a part of something that is bigger than themselves and sign up to be a part of the Ram Battalion.
Bronze Boot Run
By CDT Nathan Anderson

The Bronze Boot Run is the opening ceremony for the annual gridiron Border War between Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming. The annual Slugfest is known as the longest continuous rivalry west of the Mississippi River, beginning in 1899. The Bronze Boot was added to this rivalry as a trophy in 1968 when former CSU ROTC instructor, Captain Dan J. Romero, had one of his combat boots from Vietnam, encased in bronze and turned into a trophy for the winner of the Border War.

Before the Border War game, ROTC members from CSU and Wyoming run the game ball from the visiting team’s stadium to the home team stadium. The run covers 58 miles of rolling hills and high plateaus which test the Cadet’s stamina and mental fortitude. At the state border line between Colorado and Wyoming, a ceremony is held as the game ball is transferred from one ROTC program to the other and the ball continues the long journey to the game day stadium.

During the game, the trophy is guarded on the field by members of the ROTC unit from the winning school the previous year. In the past, members of the winning team would drink beer from the boot after a victorious game, but this tradition was ended after several football players became ill due to the interior of the boot not being bronzed and harboring a great deal of bacteria.

Since the addition of the Bronze Boot trophy, Wyoming has 26 wins to Colorado State’s 24. CSU maintains the overall lead in the rivalry with 58 wins to Wyoming’s 46, along with five ties.

The next Border War takes place in fall 2018 where the Colorado State Rams will attempt to break the two-year winning streak of the Wyoming Cowboys.
Basic Training
By Charles Backurz

In the summer of 2015, I embarked upon a journey that took me to the sands of Fort Jackson, South Carolina for Basic Combat Training (BCT), an experience that changed my life forever.

Learning how to properly dig a foxhole, navigate by using a compass and map, and how to make a day’s worth of wet wipes last a whole week were only part of the Soldier skills taught to us by the ever-present drill sergeants. Most of these skills I expected to learn, however, I did not expect that I would learn so much about myself and how to overcome adversity.

When you first get to BCT you go to a reception battalion. That wasn’t a big deal. There you go through a bunch of medical tests and for the most part just sit around being quiet. No one is very comfortable, for some people it is their first time away from their family and it shows. The real wake up call for me came when we were bused to our training company. The first event is called the shark attack. It is when you run off the bus with drill sergeants screaming for you to get your bags and run to the drill pads. It is chaotic and stressful by design.

Once everyone got to the drill pad we sat down holding our bags in front of us. The CO gave a speech, the drill sergeants recited some creeds, but most importantly everyone was told not to move or look around. Some of the assistant drill sergeants were walking around the platoons waiting for people to look around or move. There was one, DS Stewart, who thought he could get me. He got maybe an inch away from my face and I could hear his breathing, but didn’t move, and didn’t blink, I just remained frozen in that moment for what seemed like an eternity. Eventually someone moved behind me and DS Stewart flew back and jumped that guy. That was by far the longest day.

I think that BCT teaches two valuable lessons from beginning to end, trust in yourself, and trust in others. From the beginning you are forced to go everywhere with a battle buddy. You take a battle buddy with you to talk to the drill sergeants, to get water, and even to the latrines. It forces you to create working relationships with people you might not otherwise have had to work with. Eventually trust forms through shared experience.

While cooperation is preached every day during BCT, so is individual readiness. Events like the confidence tower teach people to trust in themselves and to overcome obstacles. For me, the tower wasn’t so much about my own ability, but more so the equipment we were using. It was my first time hanging off of something with just a rope and it was a bit nerve racking. After I watched a few demonstrations though, I found the courage and pushed myself over the literal and metaphorical edge. I found the courage within myself to do what needed to be done.

To me the culmination of the two lessons was the buddy team live fire exercise. In this exercise, two Soldiers are paired together and have to complete an obstacle course, shooting live rounds down range while maneuvering alongside another soldier. You have to trust that other person will not only cover you while you move, but will pay enough attention not to shoot you. I was paired with a guy from Tennessee named Remmick. He was a crazy guy whom I would not have trusted to do something like this with before our training. But the miracle of BCT is that everyone trains to the same standard and forges relationships that build trust in weird ways.

We completed the exercise together crossing the finish line proud of what we had achieved. We had earned our berets, making us truly a part of the Army for the first time. Looking back there were so many memories and relationships created. The hardships and triumphs, both individual and collective, serve as reminders every day of what can be achieved in the face of the unknown with a little faith in yourself and some help from a friend.
Tactical Labs

By Joseph Doyle

In both spring and fall semesters, Cadets from CSU and UNC will set off to test their newfound skills as Army leaders against their peers in the mythical and mountainous terrain of Atropia. Tactical labs have a wide variety of missions that can vary from Closed Quarter Battles (CQB) at a squad-based level, to platoon operations ranging from ambushes to Key-Leader Engagements with Atropian and Arrianan village elders.

These various tasking’s reflect the ever-changing mission of the Army and the challenging environments in which America and her Allies face on a daily basis.

Our tactical labs prepare Cadets for future careers as platoon leaders in the United States Army. The goal of every tactical lab is to allow MSIV Cadets the opportunity to observe the leadership qualities of MSIII Cadets and prepare those Cadets for Advance Camp at Fort Knox, Kentucky. These objectives are achieved by various means, including the ability to become emotionally strong. The tactical labs and field-training exercises are designed to get Cadets out of their comfort zones. They develop a sense of being comfortable with discomfort and grasp the importance of promoting camaraderie among Cadets, each of whom is vital to mission accomplishment, from the MSI to the MSIV OTM overseeing the exercise. Cadets must learn to work together to accomplish a goal, even if that Cadet is not being evaluated for that exercise. Field craft and infantry platoon-based skills will provide a solid foundation for all Cadets no matter which branch they decide to pursue.

The emphasis on the tactical aspect of field training is a long-standing Army tradition, beginning with the first ROTC program in Norwich Military University and CSU’s Army training program, which predates the ROTC program as a whole!

Every branch of the Army spends some time in a field-type environment at in some point in the Officer’s career. These tactical labs help prepare Cadets for the duties and responsibilities as an Army Officer and sets the pace for the demanding careers these Cadets are pursuing.

For example, learning the rigors and stresses of leading an infantry platoon will directly translate into the ability to manage medical assets as a Medical Service Officer or 100,000’s of tax dollars as Finance Officer.
Cannon Crew
By Spens Cook

CSU Army ROTC’s Cannon Crew is the most well-known, oldest, and loudest tradition at Colorado State University.

Since 1920, our highly-motivated Cannon Crew has been making freshman students jump at the first game of every season. Our crew fires a French designed 75mm field gun named “Comatose” that was built in the United States in 1918. The crew fires and maintains the cannon at every home football game and the annual contest in Denver’s Mile High Stadium against the hated Buffaloes of Colorado.

Our MSIV and MSIII leadership guides the freshman and sophomore Cadets in operating the field gun. The MSI and MSII Cadets are the ones who fire the cannon every time our football team scores. For some Cadets, Comatose is the first weapon they have ever fired in their life.

This may also apply to our guest cannoneer(s), an individual(s) who have contributed significantly to CSU and are chosen by the President’s office. They fire a round as the national anthem gets to the “bombs bursting in air” sequence.

These guest cannoneers range from influential members of the community, to university officials, to distinguished veterans. Being a Land-Grant Institution, CSU has a rich military history. Firing Comatose at home football games reminds the students of that past and the future military service that our students will give to our nation. In conclusion, the Cannon Crew is one of the most well-known traditions at Colorado State that Army ROTC Cadets get the chance to be a part of.
Orienteering

By Aaron Gibbons

Orienteering is our land navigation club at Colorado State University Army ROTC program. We work with the Rocky Mountain Orienteering Club, who hosts our meets throughout Northern Colorado.

Orienteering is land navigation using only a map and a compass. A competitor will determine their location on the course by reading the map and the surrounding terrain features to determine their location. This is also how competitors will locate their points throughout the event.

This is a difficult task because of multiple terrain features, such as hills and water obstacles. The Cadet will then determine what point is next, based on many factors, including: elevation of the hill, slope of the land mass, as well as other features surrounding the area. Some of these courses are fairly challenging due to rocky terrain, forests and water hazards (lakes, rivers, streams), so it is not an easy task to complete these courses, especially not quickly.

During a competition there are seven different difficulties that a competitor could attempt: White, Yellow, Orange, Brown, Green, Red, Blue. This list goes from beginner level (White) to advanced (Blue), the higher course level the competitor attempts, the longer the course and the more difficult it is to find your point.

During a meet, each competitor is given a map and a compass and is sent out as either an individual or group. The competitors are then ranked based on how long it took them to complete the course.

During our last meet in October, we had a team place 5th, 8th and 12th attempting the Orange level course. Our club will typically compete in two meets throughout the year, one in the fall semester and one in the spring.

Our Orienteering club helps teach our Cadets a valuable skill that is dying in today’s society: How to read a map and find your way without technology. Orienteering may not be the most well-known club, but it truly is one of the most important.
Bataan Memorial Death March
By Torrence Hass

History is an intimate part of the military. We remember those that came before us, and what they did, so that we can honor them and learn from their actions. Most of the time, this respect for history comes in the form of readings and documentaries, places where history is relegated to the black and white pages of print or a series of images and accounts on a TV screen.

The Bataan Memorial Death March, however, is a place where one can reach back and touch history with their own hand and see with their own eyes the marks of history that surround us every day.

I had the honor and privilege of participating in the Bataan Memorial Death March three times, while a member of the Ram Battalion. This race is a ruck marathon that honors the victims of the Bataan Death March of 1942 on the Bataan Peninsula of the Philippines. It was there that thousands of American and Filipino troops, left behind to defend the island nation from the mighty onslaught of the Empire of Japan, were captured and forced to march 65 miles over three days. If they fell out, they were murdered, if they were lucky to survive the march, they went on to face years in the notorious Japanese POW camps. This nightmare would become known as the Bataan Death March and treated as a war crime by the victorious Allies.

If you’ve never heard of the Bataan Death March, you are not alone. Very little American history, much less military history, is taught in secondary schools and universities these days. That’s why the Memorial March was created – to honor our comrades who perished and the survivors who dealt with unspeakable atrocities. As a participant, you head down to the White Sands Missile Range near Las Cruces, New Mexico. There, you will get up early for the 06:00 start to the event and march 26.2 miles through the desert and mountains of southern New Mexico, where you will be thankful that you don’t have to do 65 miles over the next three days, and that there is no Japanese officer on horseback breathing down your neck threatening to kill you if you don’t pick up your pace.

When you cross the finish line, you will have a renewed appreciation for the poem that is read at the beginning of the race by Frank Hewlett:

“We’re the Battling Bastards of Bataan; No mama, no papa, no Uncle Sam. No aunts, no uncles, no cousins, no nieces, no pills, no planes, no artillery pieces. And nobody gives a damn.”
Scabbard & Blade

By Alden Woodard

Service is a crucial element that makes up an Army officer. Whether that service is focused towards one’s Soldiers, or to the nation’s people, it is imperative that future leaders have this trait instilled deeply into their character.

One organization within Colorado State’s Army ROTC program focuses solely on developing a Cadet’s desire to serve is the Scabbard and Blade club. The premier community service club within the ROTC program, Scabbard and Blade is a non-profit association that Cadets can join that focuses on aiding the Fort Collins community and its veterans. Founded in 1904, the National Society of Scabbard and Blade has installed chapters in many ROTC programs around the nation.

The organization serves to develop aspiring and current military officers, while fostering strong joint-service relationships.

Unique to only a few other clubs, Scabbard and Blade contains Cadets from both the Army and Air Force ROTC programs, where they meet monthly to discuss upcoming events, as well as pitch ideas for new volunteer activities.

Participating in multiple events each month, Cadets have the opportunity to better the Fort Collins community through events such as Habitat for Humanity, during which volunteers help build homes for needing families, or through fundraising for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

Working closely with the veteran community in Fort Collins, Cadets in the Scabbard and Blade club have the privilege of aiding military veteran organizations such as Honor Flight, or the Adult Learner and Veteran Services at Colorado State.

The desire to serve one’s community greatly reflects one’s aspiration to serve their nation. Recognizing the importance of the Seven Army Values, specifically selfless service, Cadets in the Scabbard and Blade club embody an important part of what defines an Army leader.
Airborne School
By Quinn Malone

Before I made the smart decision of pursuing the US Army route, I was considering joining the Marines, then made a mind-blowing realization that the Marines don’t have paratroopers and the Army does. So, with this knowledge in mind, I decided on the Army route.

Sure enough, I had the chance of becoming a paratrooper by attending the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. This three week course taught me how to jump out of a perfectly good airplane with a piece of cloth above my head keeping me from plummeting to my death. Also, it taught me how to not break my legs when I hit the ground. Let’s just say… I loved it!

Week one, named Ground Week, started with learning how to hit the ground with style. However, I had to pass an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) first, with 53 perfect sit-ups, 42 perfect push-ups, and a sub 15:56 two mile run. Also, I had to conduct a flexed arm hang (holding the top of a chin-up position) for 20 seconds. After the physical requirements were out of the way, there was no wasting time in jumping straight into Airborne training. We learned how to conduct a Parachute Landing Fall (PLF) in gravel pits for hours upon hours, which was important, as doing these correctly kept us from breaking our bodies when we land after parachuting to the earth. Along with PLFs, we also learned how to exit an aircraft correctly, practicing in a mock airplane chassis. It was tedious, but very important.

After a weekend off, week two consists of jumping out of 34-foot towers while attached to zip lines, thus called Tower Week. I had a blast, hardly believing that I was getting paid to zip line, while learning Airborne basics at the same time.

Along with these towers, we practiced Airborne techniques in a swing landing trainer (SLT). This apparatus had us rigged up in a suspended harness while we were dropped from a swing to practice more PLFs. Tower week also consisted of three five-mile runs with our class group (we also had two runs in week one). After the week was over, we spent another weekend resting and preparing ourselves in anticipation, because the next week was the big week.

Week three was Jump Week. We would wake up at the wee hours each morning to run down to the airstrip to get rigged up in our packed parachutes to finally jump out of airplanes. The anticipation was killer before the first jump. Unfortunately, the weather was bad all week, so our instructors had to squeeze us into weather openings as quickly as possible, resulting in long wait times, because without five jumps, we couldn’t graduate!

But have no fear, we made every jump. I can remember exiting the C-17 Globemaster aircraft on my first jump. At 1,250 feet, I exited the aircraft to then get sucked away by the rushing air and engine blast. My adrenaline was running faster than Forest Gump in Vietnam. But, when the chaos of the exit suddenly stopped at roughly six seconds of falling, I looked up to see my square T-11 parachute peacefully open above me. It was serene.

I got to enjoy my brief fall before I hit the ground like a bag of bricks. I then got up with a smile on my face stretched from ear to ear. I was ready to do it again - and again I did. Four more times I jumped out of a C-130 aircraft, sometimes being the first one out the door. Each time I felt the blast of wind, peace of falling, and the solid crash of not breaking my legs while hitting the ground. After my fifth jump and earning the coveted Airborne badge, I was addicted, and therefore decided this was what I wanted to do in the Army.
Simultaneous Membership Program
By Jordan Sims

The Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) is designed to allow participation in ROTC, while also serving in the Army Reserve/National Guard. The best way to think of it is like an internship, as you learn more about the Army from the enlisted side, while training to be an Officer. By doing this you can receive tuition assistance, longevity credit towards retirement, and extra opportunities to learn/practice leadership.

I decided to start the program to learn about the enlisted side of the Army. When I first started ROTC, the realization hit that as a platoon leader, I could be put in charge of 30 soldiers. How can I lead 30 soldiers without knowing much about being a Soldier?

So after my freshman year of ROTC, I enlisted in the US Army Reserve as a 12W Carpenter/Mason. I started my training in January of 2014 and attended Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Once completed, I went back to college in the fall of 2014. This introduction proved beneficial, so I completed the first year and signed a contract and became a SMP Cadet.

As an SMP Cadet, I was placed underneath a Platoon Leader (the job I would likely have after graduation) and began to learn how to lead a platoon. After six months of learning from my Platoon Leader he left and put me in charge, since we didn’t have a replacement at the time.

I sat in as the Platoon Leader for almost a full year, until a new PL came to replace me, although I actually more experience than he does. Today, I’m still serving underneath this PL, learning more about leading every day.

Becoming a SMP Cadet was the best decision I’ve made in my Army Career. I’ve learned a great deal about how the Army operates and how to do my job when I graduate.

Secondly, learning how the Soldiers operate has given me a better perspective on being an Officer and will hopefully make me a better Officer than others, who haven’t experienced the same type of learning that I have.

Looking at things now, I definitely made the right decision. Being an SMP Cadet is invaluable and has only set me up for success.
Supporting JROTC

By Alexander Bailey

As a part of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) mission to “support local JROTC programs by influencing the future leaders of America by instilling citizenship and pride,” it is important that we stay closely connected to Northern Colorado’s JROTC Programs. The Indian Battalion, primarily located at Loveland High School is the program that we directly support.

Throughout the year, we have a liaison that stays in contact with the JROTC programs. The liaison for the area goes to the Training Meetings of the Indian Battalion and supports their functions whenever requested.

For example, this year we have supported the Indian Battalion’s Raider Challenge meet and their Drill Team meet. Raider Challenge is a physical fitness challenge where schools from around the region compete against each other. Our Ram Battalion gives support by offering judges for the event.

Another big event we help is the Drill Team meet. Drill Team is important as it instills the dedication, discipline, and pride that we look for in future leaders of the Army. Again, we support this as a Battalion by offering judges that help the event.

Our Ram Battalion is very involved in JROTC, with the biggest event, the regional Drill Meet, is held every January. This year, 13 schools from all over Colorado and Wyoming participated. This annual event continues to grow and features a number of events for the various teams to participate in.

This year, we had a very large number of competitors, where the highest caliber teams from each school competed against each other for first-place trophies in each event, which required participation from a large contingent of the Ram Battalion.

Supporting the local JROTC is not only a part of our mission, but also developing the future leaders of not just the Army, but also of America. As seen in recent events, these JROTC Cadets have demonstrated a lot of critical thinking skills that live up to, and surpass the standard set for them.
Push Up Crew

By Michael Cascio

Being a part of the Colorado State Army ROTC Ram Battalion comes with a lot of great traditions that not many programs have the opportunity to be a part of. In my case, serving as the NCOIC and OIC of the Push-up crew was my calling.

The Push-up crew along with two other unique clubs in our organization, is a club that attends every home football game. The club involves being positioned in the “best seat in the house” right on the outlines of the south end zone of the field. Every time the Rams score, the Push-up crew shows remarkable enthusiasm and discipline, by conducting push-ups for each point on the board.

This club may sound very basic, but allows the Ram Battalion to put a good image out to the university and all in attendance of what the Ram Battalion is and who we are as people. The Push-up crew conducts this with our brothers and sisters in the Air Force ROTC program and their push-up crew, allowing for a unique bonding experience between two branches that doesn’t occur often.

Of course, our high-scoring Rams offense can really put up the points sometimes, as evidenced by one game in which we did over 400 push-ups – quite an experience for myself and the other Cadets – one we will never forget.

I’ve been very proud to have led the push-up crew over the past couple of years and enjoyed the camaraderie of the Cadets who have participated.

Many alumni from our school have asked me about the Push-up crew and never cease to tell us how good of a job the Ram Battalion Cadets are doing.

This is a unique opportunity to be able to interact with alumni and the students and staff that attend our university. The Push-up crew, alongside the cannon crew and Ram Towners, are the face of the Ram Battalion on game day, and we determined to show our support for the mighty Rams and the Cadets who make it possible.
Color Guard

By David Schlagel

At T - 30 seconds before the big basketball game, the crowd became silent, the lights are out except for the spotlight focused on center court. All eyes are on the American flag followed by the Colorado flag carried by the Cadet Color Guard of the Ram Battalion. The command of present arms is given and the National Anthem is underway.

A traditional Color Guard detail is made up of three to eight Soldiers, usually NCOs. The senior member carries the National Colors and commands the Color Guard, known as the Colors Sergeant. The Color Sergeant gives the necessary commands for the movements and for rendering honors.

Being a member of the Color Guard requires intense training and performance, which includes precision in drills, manual of arms, customs and courtesies and wear and appearance of uniforms and insignia according to ARs 600-25, 670-1 and 840-10 and FM 22-5.

The Colorado State University Army ROTC Color Guard has the responsibility and honor of presenting the colors at various community events. This past year, the Color Guard has presented honors before every home football, basketball, soccer, and volleyball game at CSU.

Additionally, the team has rendered honors at various veteran’s events such as the semi-annual veterans honor flight, flag raising for Veterans’ 5K, inauguration of the new of campus stadium and Veteran’s Day activities.

The team is led by the Officer-in-Charge, CDT Schlagel and operated by the NCOIC (non-commissioned officer in charge, CDT Buschbacker). The rest of the team is made up of qualified contracted Cadets that will change from event to event.

The Color Guard is the face of the Ram Battalion to the CSU campus and local community. If you wish to see the team in action come to any CSU athletic event.
Bravo Company (UNC)

By Angel Rivas

Being a student in ROTC is an adventure, but being a student at a smaller satellite school is even more so. In my opinion, being at the smaller program was the best possible decision!

When I first got into the ROTC program with Bravo Company, I noticed how tightly knit of a program I had walked into. Yes, the once a week drive to CSU took a toll on some of us throughout the year, but that drive is what brought us all closer together. I remember as an MSII sitting around a table after every lab at Bistro, our on-campus dining area, eating and just letting loose with my fellow classmates from the freshman level all the way to the senior level, a tradition that has held together even now as a senior.

My experience throughout ROTC would be drastically different if it was not for the great Cadets with Bravo Company. Since we are a smaller program, leadership is vastly different at the Company level, and looking down my career path now as a senior, I have seen the challenges of leading at all levels of the program. On the smaller scale, problems stick out more readily than if we had a larger program, but this makes it better since we are smaller and tight-knit.

This allows for the fast identification of problems and equally quick solutions, just because the bond that we develop over the time.

What I have found unique about that bond is the semester just doesn’t end, we have a multitude of tasking’s and training throughout the summer.

As the seniors take off on their adventures as second lieutenants in the U.S. Army and the brand new freshman embark on their new journey, they are immediately welcomed into the family and not a beat is skipped.

With all of this in hand, being a satellite Cadet has been the best part of being in ROTC. The bond I have formed with the Cadets from above and below will always be strong because of that family aspect we work so hard to build with each other. My ROTC experience would be very different if it wasn’t for the support and motivation I get from Bravo Company. Without that support, I would not have made it as far in the program as I have.
Cadet Troop Leader Training

By Hannah Uhlig

Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) is a program designed to give Cadet’s in between their Junior and Senior year the experience of shadowing a Second Lieutenant on Active Duty for three weeks. Generally, CDTs are paired with a Platoon Leader in any unit, both CONUS and OCONUS. They spend time observing the 2LT to learn the aspects of their job. After a week or two, the CDT takes over as the platoon leader under supervision of the 2LT.

I learned a great deal about the operations of an active duty unit that I would not see in ROTC. Because I was not paired with a Platoon leader, my CTLT experience was a bit different as the XO couldn’t hand over his job to me, so he assigned me specific tasks. During my first Week, I designed a new system to issue and keep track of gas masks (in Korea every soldier and dependent is issued a gas mask). The company is still using the system I designed.

The XO then directed research on North Korean tanks and to prepare a brief outlining the threats they pose to the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army and US Army. I gave the brief to NCOs and officers. These NCOs and officers frequently give military briefings, so they gave me constructive criticism on my presentation skills which I will apply throughout my career as an officer.

Last summer, after advanced camp, I traveled to Camp Carroll in South Korea to shadow an Executive Officer (XO) of a Military Intelligence Company. Upon arrival at my company, I attended the Change of Command ceremony for the Company Commander (CO).

During my time in ROTC, I have learned a great deal about being a military leader, but at CTLT, I learned specifically about what it means to be an Active Duty officer in the Army.

I brought this experience back to CSU and have shared it with my colleagues. This experience made me a better MSIV, as I had a more thorough understanding of the responsibilities of an officer.

I also had the added bonus of bringing back cultural awareness of South Korea. Many Soldiers are being sent to South Korea as the situation with North Korea develops. I’ve been talking with CDTs in all the classes about a Permanent Change of Station (PCS) in Korea and what they could expect. I’m very fortunate to have this opportunity to experience another culture and learn how to lead as an officer.
Ranger Challenge

By Christopher Carroll

Ranger Challenge is a unique opportunity offered by Colorado State Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC).

It is a regional model, based on the training event “Sandhurst”, conducted by West Point military academy Cadets. Ranger Challenge is a leadership development and technical tool used to develop leaders and new Second Lieutenants to enter the Army.

Unlike the regular curriculum of ROTC, Ranger Challenge provides the technical skills that are needed in a Combat Arms positions, as well as a platform to provide Cadets with the experience to lead soldiers in a simulated, “high stress” environment. The combination of the ROTC curriculum, leadership development, and skills learned as a member of the Ranger Challenge team, produce highly developed, and skilled leaders for the United States Army.

The Ranger Challenge team consists of nine members that are taught skills and develop as leaders throughout the duration of training for the Ranger Challenge competition. The skills learned consist of mental toughness, military nomenclature of equipment, disassembling and employing various weapon systems, knot tying, training with hand grenades, medical evaluation and treatment, radios, and other various Ranger Tasks. The training period of Ranger Challenge is a year round

commitment. Ranger Challenge members balance a tight schedule of regular ROTC leadership development, college classes, and an intense physical fitness regimen on a yearly basis.

This yearly training is necessary for the success at the competition. Colorado State placed second at the regional event, out of 15 teams for the last four years. The commitment and training is equivalent to a NCAA athlete competing in division one sports. The competition varies from year to year, but consists of technical, physical, and leadership events.

The events are based upon the various Ranger Tasks that the U.S Army uses in Ranger School. Each year the competition has a ruck march, marksmanship, obstacle courses, and weapon proficiency. Each lane is unlike the next, testing different skills, and mental agility.
German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge

By Matthew Last

The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (German: Abzeichen für Leistungen im Truppendienst) is a decoration of the Bundeswehr, the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The decoration can be awarded to all German and Allied Service members and any rank may be awarded and wear the badge.

In the United States Military, the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge is one of the few approved foreign awards, and it is one of the most sought after awards to achieve. This is our fifth year conducting the GAFPB at the CSU Army ROTC program, an honor that we have that many other schools do not receive. This year contracted Cadets from Colorado State University and University of Wyoming participated in many basic soldiering events in hopes of achieving the badge.

The GAFPB testing consists of a pistol qualification, Combat Life Saver (First Aid) training, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear suit training, the Bundeswehr basic physical fitness test (flexed arm hang, 1000M Sprint, 10 X 11 Shuttle sprint), 100M Uniformed swim, and 12KM ruck march.

Cadets work hard to achieve the badge designation based on differing proficiency levels; bronze, silver or gold. Both the CSU and UW Cadets have demonstrated a drive for the Gold and Silver badges this year, showing high proficiency in all events.

The GAFPB is open to all contracted Cadets, regardless of year in the program. I personally participated in the GAFPB my first year at CSU and was glad for the experience. I would recommend to anyone looking to participate in this program that you do it earlier rather than later because you will find that your time becomes more valuable the more senior you are.

The events in the GAFPB are far different from the U.S. Army's physical fitness test. The running events are far more focused on sprinting rather than the distance factor that we are accustomed to. We also utilize the pushup and situp to measure muscular endurance, whereas the German basic fitness test uses the flexed arm hang.

Other events include swimming, which I was not nearly as prepared for as I had believed. Having to swim 100M in uniform in less than four minutes seemed easier in my mind than when I was doing it. Being both a participant and the one in charge of the GAFPB, I will say that the most failed event is the swim.

Having the opportunity to participate in the GAFPB at CSU is a once in a lifetime opportunity for most Cadets. When you commission into the Army, very few people will have had the chance that we do. It is one of the few things you can do in ROTC that provides you with an award you can wear on your uniform when in the Army.
Cadet summer training in 2017 was far different than previous experiences. With the changeover of command from Major General Combs to Major General Hughes, Cadet summer training took on a new look from previous years. MG Hughes had a different vision for how the MS3 cadets were going to be tested this year at advanced camp. His vision was to get away from the more-friendly, softer approach and to replace it with the older structure of being harder on Cadets.

The structure change moved to an environment where Cadets were constantly tested on their basic officer leadership skills. No longer were Cadets able to easily pass by at advanced camp without fully trying. This year, we were required to pass all the events, to include; an APFT, marksmanship, first aid, land navigation, CBRN, call for fire, and the 12-mile ruck. These new events were added from previous years to help in challenging the Cadets both mentally and physically.

This year also saw the bringing back of the RECONDO badge for Cadets. To obtain this, Cadets had to receive an expert qualification at every event they were challenged with this summer. Overall, only 29 cadets out of the roughly 5500 who attended advanced camp received this badge. One Cadet from Colorado State University was one of the 29 to receive the RECONDO badge. Most Cadets who failed to obtain the RECONDO badge did so during marksmanship, failing to get at least 36/40 on the range.

However, Colorado State did see a great performance from the FY18 MS3 class that attended summer camp. A majority of the class were ranked within the top five of their platoons showing superior skills. The challenge will be on the class attending summer camp during 2018 to push through these challenges that lie ahead and to excel at them. This is the standard at Colorado State University Army ROTC - to excel at summer camp and to show the nation who we are as a program.
Field Training Exercises

By Reid Hobbs

Field Training Exercises are a crucial part of a Cadet’s training during their time in ROTC.

One weekend per semester, the Ram Battalion will take the whole weekend to go to a training site, whether it is Jack’s Valley at the Air Force Academy, Camp Guernsey in Wyoming, or Camp Red Devil at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs.

Leadership training Exercises are crucial to the training of Cadets because it exposes them to working and operating in a field environment more than the weekly labs.

Cadets will learn to brave the elements, work in rough terrain, work together to accomplish a mission, and learn to work in a much more stressful environment on very little sleep.

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One weekend per semester, the Ram Battalion will take the whole weekend to go to a training site, whether it is Jack’s Valley at the Air Force Academy, Camp Guernsey in Wyoming, or Camp Red Devil at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs.

Cadets will receive weapons training with the M4 rifle. They will learn the proper safety procedures with handling the weapon, learn to disassemble and reassemble the weapon, as well as practice shooting on a range. Proper breathing, trigger squeezes, and learning to utilize the sights on the rifle to make an accurate shot on the target are the top priorities of training.

The fall FTX is mostly about team building and getting new Cadets exposed to military training as well as getting Cadets who have been in the program used to their new leadership positions. The fall FTX consists of a leader’s reaction course where the Cadets will have to work together in order to solve a puzzle and get over a set of obstacles.

The Cadets will also run through an obstacle course, and eventually will be exposed to their first experiences with sleeping in the field and conducting missions as a squad.

The spring LTX is much more intense. Cadets are expected to have built trust with their teams and to work well together, because they will be conducting much more intense missions, and sometimes will conduct those missions with other ROTC programs from other schools.

This adds another level of complexity, because they will be expected to work with people they have never met and still complete a set of complicated missions and leadership tasks.
Basic Camp - Cadet Summer Training

By Justin Olson

Basic Camp is a unique experience that is structured similarly to Army Basic Training.

The training lasted 28 days in beautiful Fort Knox, Kentucky, during each summer and included Drill Sergeants, field training, a range day, and a lot of sweat. We started off by getting acquainted with the Drill Sergeants and running through some corrective action drills that are designed to help Cadets follow the rules more closely. From there Cadets were issued an M16 rifle that would become our best friend for the remainder of the training.

We were shuffled to the range where we conducted a Zero and Qualify day that sharpened our shooting skills. After the range, there was a ten-day FTX that included Cadre-led lanes that helped us to understand the operational realm and squad tactics, as well as test us under stress. Sleep was a rarity during the field training, and rain was the common theme throughout.

Nonetheless, we all made it to the tactical portion of the field where we became responsible for a platoon or squad on a recon, attack, or an ambush lane.

Cadre observed as we went through the Troop Leading Procedures, issued orders, and led our peers through the dense forest of Fort Knox. At the end of the month, although we were all exhausted, the knowledge, discipline, and values that we all took away from the training were well worth it.

Paint Ball Super Lab

By John Stoll

In order for the Cadets to get a more realistic response for actions in tactical situations and simulate live ammunition, the program has one lab a year that utilize paintball guns.

This new factor elevates the level of intensity and action that isn’t always present when using the rubber training aid M4s or M16s. While using the paintball guns can be an exhilarating experience compared to using the rubber weapons, it is not without its painful reminders that each decision can determine the success of a mission.

In the lab that uses paintball guns, the program has generally been granted the use of an empty decommissioned school building used for similar training events by local police departments. The lab is the physical learning portion for the tactical class of “enter and clearing” buildings/rooms. Cadets learn to move as a fast, fluid unit, proceeding through hallways, entering various sized rooms, and ensuring overall security.

During the lab, the program ensures that Cadets are safe - wearing face masks and gloves for protection. This does not guarantee, however, that Cadets will not come out with stinging welts and minor bruises. These “wounds” often result from the Cadets hesitating to make a decision and not moving fast enough - factors that can be of fatal consequences in a real-life tactical situations.
Air Assault School

By Bryce Strohecker

The Fort Hood Air Assault Course was conducted in three phases: combat assault operations, sling load operations and rappelling.

During day zero, candidates had to complete a two-mile run and a nine-event obstacle course. This normally serves as the ‘Drop Day’ as most of the dropouts occur during the first 24-hours.

This is due to the early morning smoke session before you attempt the Obstacle course. There are two major obstacles that you must pass on your first try.

The Tough One is where you rope climb up 16 feet then walk across wooden planks, then climbing up a log ladder, following a cargo net. If you do not pass this, you will go home no questions asked. The second mandatory event is the confidence climb, which is a log plank ladder 70 feet in the air.

Following the completion of the “O” course is your gear inspection. This, in my opinion, is the easiest part to fail the Fort Hood Air Assault Course. Black hats will have each Soldier lay all gear out, where every piece is inspected that you are supposed to have in your ruck.

If you are missing or have non-serviceable gear, you will be asked to leave the course. It could be something as simple as your batteries are dead in your flashlight.

After passing day zero, you go into a classroom setting to learn helicopter operations. Following all your written exams was a six-mile ruck march and a hand and arm signal test. Once I completed phase one, I was heading off into phase two.

Phase 2 is sling load operations where you memorize all the materials needed for sling loads and the practical hands-on exercises at the end of Phase two. Once you have passed Phase two the hard part is over.

Phase three is rappelling, where you rappel numerous times. Before you can rappel at all, you must pass a Swiss seat test. The Air Assault instructors will make sure you have tied a perfect seat to rappel from. The Final task you must complete on day 13 is your 12-mile ruck march. You must complete this under three hours, or you will be dropped.
Dining In & Mil Ball
By Cody Winston

Each year, Cadets in the Ram Battalion come together and partake in the Dining In ceremony.

The event is held during the fall semester, and gives the Cadets an opportunity to bond and build camaraderie before the semester’s field training exercise that takes place the following week.

Cadets called out their peers for various infractions that they had witnessed over the course of the semester. The Cadet being accused of the infraction was given an opportunity to make a rebuttal. After both sides had pleaded their case, the Cadet in charge of the ceremony, known as “Mr. Vice”, decided who must drink from the Grog.

After dinner, the “Grog” ceremony began. This special tradition consists of a wide variety of food and liquid items being mixed together. Each item represents a unique aspect of the Colorado State University Army ROTC program.

Milk, ketchup, chocolate syrup, candy, salt, and a coconut were just a few of the items tossed into the mix. The final concoction is simply known as “the Grog.”

With the Grog ready, “Points of Order” commenced.

Cadets watched a series of videos created by each military science (MS) class. Each class makes a video that pokes fun at the Cadets in the MS class above them. Once the videos concluded, Cadets were dismissed for the evening.
Cultural Understanding Language Proficiency

By Nicolas Abraham

The Cultural Understanding and Language Program (CULP) is a unique opportunity for contracted Cadets in the Army Reserve Officers Training Corps. Developed to give future military officers a greater understanding of what different cultures around the world are like and how they operate, CULP envelops Cadets for a month in a US-backed country that will help to teach these future leaders the importance of being able to characterize with people from all walks of life.

In my particular experience, I was fortunate to have received an assignment to Burkina Faso in the North-Western part of Africa. Prior to receiving the assignment, I did not know that this was a country, which helps to show how misunderstood we are about many foreign affairs and societies.

This was a tremendous opportunity because not only did I not know much about the people of Africa or the cultures that they represented, but a large part of my assignment was at the local military academy, where they trained future infantry officers from over ten different African nations.

The military experience received while studying at the local military academy was unbelievable, as I learned everything from African tactics and techniques, to bases of survival that played a large part of the way in which they operated.

I made great friends throughout this process, and was able to share unique meals with, and exchange understandings from both our cultures. It is incredible to see how willing everyone is to learn from each other, and while at first the language barrier made this difficult, by the end of my time there, we were all able to communicate quite well. Being surrounded by individuals from so many different walks of life made this experience unforgettable.

Beyond the military academy, we were able to pursue a few humanitarian initiatives while working under the US Ambassador of Burkina Faso. This included everything from helping to build a brand new orphanage, bringing food and supplies to a local monastery, to working directly with USAID on their current diplomatic initiatives within the country.

In addition, we were able to meet different tribal elders who spoke with us about current political and humanitarian affairs, and through our Army attaché, we made plans for the future prosperity of the tribal groups in the area.

While the trip only lasted a total of twenty-seven days, this was one of the most influential experiences in my life. Not only did I make some of the greatest friends imaginable, but I was able to learn about a culture and a lifestyle that I would not have had the opportunity to do.

I would highly recommend this experience to anyone that is curious about how other cultures operate, while being a part of a tremendous incursion able to make a difference in communities all around the world.
In the Ram Battalion, there is an emphasis placed on service to the local community.

Of the many events that Cadets orchestrate and attend, few are more rewarding and well-known as Ramtown. Taking place during Colorado State University’s home football games, Cadet volunteers assemble and oversee inflatables for Ram fans to enjoy before kickoff. These include a bounce house, football kick, obstacle course, giant slide, and a twenty-foot tall football player affectionately named ‘Bubba’.

This interactive play equipment attracts both the young and the young-at-heart, giving Cadets the opportunity to connect with a diverse array of people from all over the state. The Fall semester of 2018 marked the first Ramtown season at the new on-campus stadium. The move to a different location this year gave many logistical challenges, but the ROTC Cadets worked hard to ensure that the pre-game experience met and exceeded that of previous years – and it did, by all measures. These Cadets positively represented not only the Army ROTC program, but CSU as a whole.

In addition to home football games, Ramtown also participates in several other University events. One such occasion is the Rocky Mountain Showdown at the Mile High Stadium, where Cadets bring Ram pride to Denver in the form of the Inflatable Bubba. In this way ROTC shows its support for CSU against rival school UC Boulder.

Ramtown is also integral in CSU’s homecoming celebrations. ROTC volunteers setup and run all of the staple inflatables on the Oval at the termination of the parade route. Families can come and enjoy a Friday with food, fun and ROTC Cadets, ready to cheer on the home football team the following day. These extra events provide the ROTC program with the opportunity to interact with people from within and outside of the local community that may not attend Saturday home games.

One of the most important aspects of Ramtown is what Cadets gain from the experience. It allows them to enjoy being more involved in the program, working with their fellow Cadets in the service of others.

Volunteers acquire experience discussing the military with interested civilians and curious kids. This skill is one that they will employ the rest of their military careers. The work the Cadets do for Ramtown also funds enjoyable events later in the semester including Paintball lab, Dining In and Military Ball.

Lower level Cadets are given the opportunity to take charge of their assigned tasks and gain invaluable leadership experience. Overall, Ramtown is an organization that benefits everyone involved. It is much more than a football event, it is Army ROTC’s bridge to the community that we serve.
2017-2018 Commissionees

September 2017

William Bakemeyer - Corps of Engineers

Colton Hernandez - Army Reserve, Corps of Engineers

Geoffrey Ledon - Signal Corps

December 2017

Maria Aragon - Army Reserve, Quartermaster Corps

Alexandra Elison - Military Police

Brandon King - Medical Services Corps

Anthony Prater - Armor

Mykaela Smyser - Chemical Corps

Ryan Weinerth - Army Reserve, Ordnance

May 2018

Nathan Anderson - Medical Services Corps

Charles Backurz - Ordnance

Christopher Carroll - Armor

Michael Cascio - Armor

Connor Cattolica - Army Reserve, Medical Corps

Spens Cook - Armor
Samuel Fleshman - Corps of Engineers
Andrew Harris - Transportation Corps
Torrence Hass - Corps of Engineers
Reid Hobbs - Transportation Corps
Andrew Holm - Military Police
Lyndsey Kirkorian - Educational delay, Cornell University College of Vet. Medicine
Matthew Last - Cyber Corps
Quinn Malone - Infantry
Jacob Martin - Air Defense Artillery
Justin Olson - Medical Services Corps
David Schlagel - Air Defense Artillery
Kendall Skelly - Field Artillery
John Stoll - Signal Corps
Bryce Strohecker - Ordnance
Hannah Uhlig - Field Artillery
Cody Winston - Signal Corps
Alden Woodard - Armor

June 2018

Kayleigh Yarbrough - Chemical Corps