



The Personal Experiences of Our Cadets



by CDT Tyler Lindzy



CSU Army
ROTC
Frontline
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I remember getting to ROTC that first week in August. The excitement of something new and the nervousness about the tasks that lay ahead. I will always remember recognizing the black pair of wings adorning the chests of some of the upperclassmen. I immediately recognized those as Airborne wings. Becoming a paratrooper had always been something I had hoped to do one day. I wanted to follow in the footsteps of some of my childhood heroes who wore the same wings. I knew that was something I wanted to pursue while in ROTC and I was given a chance the summer after my Sophomore year. I was shipped off to Fort Benning to partake in an experience that I will hold close to my heart for the rest of my life.

Upon arriving at the Columbus airport, I met up with several other individuals dressed in Khakis and polos, rocking the high and tights (obviously all cadets) and hailed a cab. Now I've been in a few cabs and Ubers in my day and let me tell you; this was the most expensive cab ride I have ever been in for the distance that was covered. We entered Fort Benning and straight to the Battalion headquarters to go over paperwork. It is here I received my introduction into the bureaucracy of the Army. I came to Benning absent several documents necessary to enter the school. For the next few hours, I called all the cadre and played phone tag to recover the necessary documents. I was sent several copies and promptly went to the on-post library to print them out. After that was all taken care of and my heart had stop racing, I made the trek to the Bravo company barracks and settled in. The first week at Airborne school is ground week and begins with a PT test. I had heard of the infamous 41 club and was determined to not be a part of it. They brought out wooden boards that were to be placed underneath us to ensure our dog tags made a sound as we completed the "Perfect Push-up". I slammed my chest so hard into the ground on that first rep I elicited a small chuckle from the black hat grading me. Next was the sit-ups and the 2-mile run which was a breeze. We then sailed through the week learning about our parachutes and how to correctly don them. We also learned how to exit an aircraft. For those of you whom have been to Benning you know that the intense heat makes any training monotonous. We then moved on to exiting the 34-foot towers on zip lines which was a lot of fun, except for the part where I kept counting one thousand instead of the prescribed one thousand, two thousand... This required a few more attempts to break the habit. Next, we moved onto by far the most boring but important parts of ground week, the parachute landing fall. We would

spend hours in the gravel pits perfecting our PLFs from almost every conceivable position possible — all in hopes that we would be able to do that when we jumped. We also did two 5 mile runs during this week. I learned all about the airborne shuffle and got to tour the beautiful area around the Airborne school compound. After this week we were ready for a relaxing weekend which we would have off.

We took a tour of the National Infantry Museum and went into downtown Columbus, which in certain areas is excellent. After this weekend and the rest, I was ready and eager to get into the 2nd phase tower week. After a 5-mile run in the morning, we headed to see a demonstration at the iconic 250 ft towers. Upon this demonstration, I quickly realized I was lucky that I did not have to go off these towers because it seemed to endure a hard landing. We would spend the rest of the week on the 34-foot towers mastering mass exits, which would be complicated and much more uncomfortable with the ruck and weapons case. After another 5-mile run, we headed to the Swing Landing Trainer (SLT). This trainer is meant to help you master your PLF while coming in from a height and certain speed and is one of the more difficult things to master at Airborne school. However, I was lucky enough to pass in all configurations with all first-time goes. I quickly realized that being done before everyone else in the Army is not the same as in civilian life because I was quickly shuttled into several details. I also participated in the test for cadet honor graduate and was able to win it within my platoon. After our final 5-mile run on that Friday, we waited as we organized into sticks and chalks for jump week. We went into our final weekend with excitement and a little apprehension.

Week three is jump week and by far the most exciting out of the three. We rose early the first day and got into formation very tired. Upon accountability being taken, we began on the mile long run to the airfield. Here we practiced door exits, PLFs, and emergency landings before we would be allowed to go into the JMPI room. Upon entering, we were directed to wooden benches to sit down. We were given exact instructions and then told to get our chutes and reserves. We then donned the T-11 parachutes and reserve and waited several hours to be inspected. The inspection was thorough, and thankfully no deficiencies were found.



Airborne

by CDT Jason Powell



We then were told to get up and head out to the C-130. The C-130 was one of the coolest moments of the entire time, walking into the aircraft with the engines on and all my buddies ready to go. We took off and in what only felt like seconds began to receive the first jump commands. I was third in line to jump in the very first chalk of the week and was itching to go. They opened the door, and that is when I began to get a little nervous. I stood up and did the checks on everything and then was ready to go. The green light came on, and it was just muscle memory. I handed the static line off, took a sharp right turn and then a big step out of the aircraft. I remember the blast of the air and then the silence. All I could hear was myself counting to six thousand. Then my chute opened, and a wave of relief washed over me. I enjoyed my brief time descending before I could hear the black hats yelling to prepare for landing. I PLF'd, released my chute, and began to pack it up. I then began to run off the drop zone with the parachute on my back, only now realizing that as one of the first jumpers this meant I had the furthest to run to the collection point.

Airborne school was everything I thought it would be and more. I had the chance to meet some amazing people who I keep in contact with. I got an opportunity to learn from NCOs, meet some of the junior enlisted, and bond with some exceptional cadets. It is a great honor to have the wings and follow in the footsteps of those who came before me. Airborne is a tradition I hope lives on in the Army forever.



Bronze Boot

by CDT Courtney Therrien



Every fall, dating back to 1899, Colorado State and Wyoming have gone head to head for one of college football's oldest rivalries. Following the 1968 football game the winning team was awarded the Bronze Boot - the same boot worn by Dan Romero, an Assistant Professor of Military Science at CSU and a Vietnam Veteran. This began the now 50-year tradition of the Bronze Boot. The Boot has become the most recognized traveling trophy in the Rocky Mountain region.

To celebrate kicking off the game, CSU ROTC and Wyoming ROTC coordinate to run a football from the visiting team's location to the home team's location. This past fall



Wyoming ROTC ran the football 27 miles to the Colorado/Wyoming border, where they handed it off to CSU ROTC to run 40 miles from the border to the campus stadium. At the border there is a ceremony held to pass

off the football from one school to the next to continue the amazing experience.

THE BORDER WAR



Tactical Labs

By CDT Keegan Parker



The scope of the learning opportunities within Army ROTC is extensive and while all of them are good, there is one that stands out. What I'm referring to are the tactical labs that happen every Thursday. These labs are the bread and butter of ROTC and are where we get the opportunity to put all our training into practice. During this time, we join the fight on terror against the Atropian Army.

The focus on these labs is to increase our tactical proficiency in a hands-on way. As a freshman, you play the role of a private within a platoon. While this isn't always the most glamorous job, it allows one to view things through the lens of the soldiers that we'll eventually be leading. As we progress through the years, we'll get the opportunity

to begin leading our peers as team leaders, squad leaders, and platoon leaders.

Every Thursday, we are pushed physically and mentally. It's not always easy work, but rarely have I left a tactical lab without a sense of accomplishment. Every Thursday, I am reminded about why I am in ROTC and what I hope to obtain out of my future with the Army.



Dining In

by CDT Taylor Duffy



Every semester we come together as a battalion to share a meal and spend time together. In the fall semester the Dining In ceremony is hosted by the University of Northern Colorado's Bravo Company prior to the semester's field training exercise. This evening's events are centered around camaraderie and team building. The evening begins with a social hour, where the battalion can mingle and spend casual time together prior to the evening's events. The beginning of the ceremony starts with the invocation, which is given by a Senior in the program. We then make formal toasts, honoring the United States Army, each company that makes up our battalion, and lastly the prisoner of war/ missing in action (POW/MIA) table. This tradition allows us to take a moment to remember and honor those who never come home. Once all the toasts are made, the battalion enjoys a three-course meal.

After dinner, the tradition of the Grog Bowl begins. This is the culminating event of the night where several ingredients are placed into a giant punch bowl. Each ingredient represents a unique aspect of the Colorado State University Army ROTC program. Coffee grounds, water, spinach, apple cider vinegar were just a few ingredients that were consumed by the Ram Battalion cadets. Once the Grog is completed, the Master of the Grog receives the first taste, and the "Points of Order" begin. The "Points of Order" consists of cadets calling out their fellow cadets for faults and failures throughout the semester. Each accused

cadet can defend themselves prior to receiving their punishment. Mr. Vice distributes the punishments with a final say from the Bravo Company Commander. Once all the "Points of Order" are complete, a slideshow is presented to the battalion to end the evening. Additionally, each class makes a parody video, mocking the class above them.

Dining In is full of fun and enjoyment which lasts throughout the entire night. The camaraderie that is built during this evening allows cadets to flow into our field training exercise smoothly.



CULP



BY: CDT COLE BUSCHBACHER



After contracting in my Freshman year, I was selected for the Cultural Understanding and Language Program (CULP). My destination for this cultural training was Rwanda, a country which had been unfamiliar to me. This trip greatly expanded my knowledge of the country and its people, as well as my social, professional and cultural experience within the U.S. Army. The interpersonal relationships that I developed within my Cadet Team and with the people of Rwanda helped to reinforce the respect I have for my superiors, peers and the locals alike. I believe that this respect and cooperative spirit was the single greatest factor of our Cadet Team's enthusiastic success in working together, setting goals, accomplishing tasks, and meeting the challenges we faced in Rwanda.

One of the many experiences that resonated with me was one in which another Cadet and I were tasked to lead the cleanup and restoration effort of a Catholic primary / secondary school in the town of Nyamata. Despite having severely limited supplies, we not only thoroughly cleaned and quickly restored the school to proper order, we even added a new basketball hoop for the students. This important success was only possible through the cooperation and coordination between our team, the locals and the US Embassy. It was especially humbling to notice the appreciation that the local children had for our help.



Simultaneous Membership Program



by Nathan Buttry

The Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) is a program that allows people to be a part of both the National Guard/Reserve and your college's ROTC program. Your job as an SMP Cadet is to shadow a Lieutenant and learn the skills necessary to be an effective leader in the Army. While you are an SMP Cadet, you will receive monthly drill pay along with a handful of benefits. While in high school, I knew I wanted to join the Army, but I did not know in what facet. I had the opportunity to learn more about the differences between enlisted soldiers and officers at my local recruiting office. After talking to recruiters and family, I knew I wanted to be an officer in the United States Army.

While looking at different universities around the country, I was not just looking for a university with Army ROTC, I was looking for a university with good academics, my major, cross country and track. After getting to campus, I knew I wanted to be an Army National Guard Officer. I started to look at my options in terms of scholarships to apply for and I received a scholarship from the Colorado Army National Guard.

After receiving my scholarship and contracting, I was able to be an SMP cadet and drill with a National Guard Unit. This is when I got to shadow Lieutenants and Captains. Being an SMP Cadet has not only grown my Army knowledge, but it has given me experience that my peers do not get. I can practice and learn how to be an effective officer before I even commission. It is a great opportunity for me to be able to apply my classroom training to the "real world" in my Guard Unit and apply my Guard experiences in the classroom.



Cannon Crew



by Luke Stobbe

Since 1920, a special crew of cadets in Army ROTC have been providing support by fire for the Colorado State University football team. Our current cannon, "Comatose," was built in 1918 in France for use during the first world war. In its original form, the cannon was mounted on a wagon chassis and was drawn by 6 draft horses. After the war, during the buildup to World War II, Comatose was mounted onto the current M2 chassis allowing it to be transported by truck. It did not see action during the war but was used as a training piece. After the war, the cannon was donated to CSU by the U.S. 5th Army in 1952, and a select group of cadets has had the opportunity to fire and maintain this French 75mm Howitzer at every home game since.



We also have the unique opportunity to bring the cannon down to Denver's Mile High Stadium to fire in support of CSU during the historic Rocky Mountain Showdown vs. CU. Cannon Crew also has the unique opportunity to fire Comatose at the Colorado-Wyoming border in preparation for the CO-WY rivalry "Border War" game. At all our events the 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. But cadets are not the only ones who get the unique privilege of firing this historic artillery piece at home games. For the national anthem of every home football game we have a guest cannoneer fire the round during "bombs bursting in air." 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 CSU's long-lasting military history and the future military service that our students will give to our nation. In conclusion, the Cannon Crew is one the most well-known tradition at Colorado state that Army ROTC Cadets get the chance to be a part of.





Color Guard



by CDT Melanie Vasina

The presentation of the nation's colors is a long-standing tradition and honor in all branches of the military. Color Guard teams are assigned to protect and present our nation's colors at various events and traditions in and out of military life in order to honor our country and our flag. This responsibility and honor have been taken up by the CSU Army ROTC program and has become ingrained in our program's history.

In the CSU Army ROTC program, our Color guard team takes the task as seriously as any as we present the United States flag and the Colorado state flag at a multitude of CSU and Fort Collins events. Most commonly, our team is seen at most of the Colorado State's sporting events, including football, basketball, volleyball, and soccer games. Additionally, we can present at national conventions, Veterans Day events, and other major activities around the northern Colorado.

The 2018-2019 Color guard team was led by Officer in Charge CDT Vasina and operated by the Non-Commissioned Officers in Charge CDT Rauchfuss and CDT Jurgens. The team is consistently aided by other cadets who have been trained in the drills, commands, and appearance to help keep the Color guard as sharp as can be.

The CSU Army ROTC Color Guard team is the face of many of CSU's sporting events and is consistently working to show off the hard work of our cadets in this fantastic organization.





Ram Town

by CDT Randi Ferido

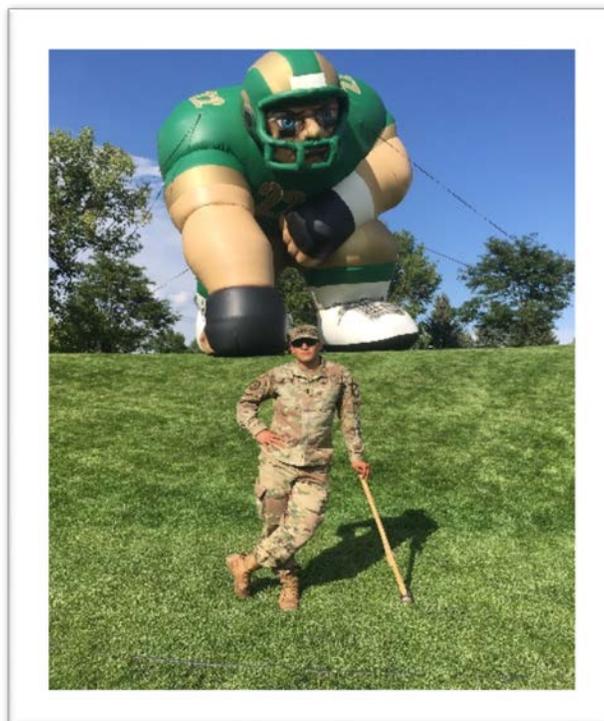


As cadets of an ROTC program on a college campus, we are afforded a rare opportunity to live almost double lives; as cadets and as members of an extraordinary college campus. While the Military Academies are prestigious in their regard, the cadets of the Ram Battalion can engage and interact with the community of Fort Collins and Northern Colorado, and one of the most notable of these engagements is at football games.

The Army ROTC Department at Colorado State has a substantial presence during the football games; with Comatose, the 75mm Howitzer that goes off for every CSU touchdown scored, the Pushup Crew, that executes the same number of pushups reflected on the scoreboard. We have high visibility during the football season, and that is just inside the stadium. Outside the stadium, volunteers of the Ram Battalion take time out of their busy schedules to help man the six or seven inflatable play equipment that is set up for football game attendees and their families to use.

While the Cannon and Pushup Crew both offer high visibility for cadets and the Battalion at large, Ram Town allows cadets to interact and engage with the community, doing anything from answering questions about the program to giving directions on campus. Not only do cadets come out for Ram Town during the regular season football games, but we also travel down to Denver once a year for the infamous Rocky Mountain Showdown, the rival game held in Sports Authority stadium against University of Colorado at Boulder. In addition to the Rocky Mountain Showdown, Ram Town also plays an integral part in the Homecoming celebrations mid-October, setting up the play equipment and the inflatable football player, affectionately called "Bubba", on the Oval for the Homecoming Parade.

The Army ROTC program offers many opportunities for young cadets but engaging the community has been one of the more rewarding takeaways from the program that I've had in my years at CSU. Although it is only within the realm of Fort Collins, the influence I've had and the people I've engaged over the years has reminded me, and so many other cadets, of the real reason why we join the Armed Services; to make a difference.





Supporting JROTC

by Cody Marvin

A part of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps' (ROTC) mission is to develop citizens of character for a lifetime of commitment and service to the nation, it is important that we stay closely connected to JROTC programs in Northern Colorado and the surrounding area. The Indian Battalion, primarily located at Loveland High School, is one program that we directly support.

Throughout the year, we have a Liaison that stays in contact with the JROTC programs. The Liaison goes to the training meetings of the Indian Battalion and supports their functions whenever requested. Due to this position, I personally was able to attend the Military Ball for Loveland High School and act as the guest speaker for the 13 high schools that attend the Denver Area Military Ball.

We also can support larger events. For example, this year we helped execute the Indian Battalion's Skills Meet. The Skills Meet is primarily a physical fitness challenge where schools from around the region compete against each other. The Ram Battalion gives support by offering judges for the event. During the meet, we were able to interact with younger cadets and answer any questions they had about college or ROTC.

The Ram Battalion does everything it can to be involved in JROTC and help develop the future leaders of the Army. One of the largest events that we host is an annual regional Drill Meet. This year, 12 high schools came from across Colorado and Wyoming. This event was a high caliber competition where only the best team from each school competed in each event. There was a total of six team events and one individual event. Supporting the drill meet requires help from the entire Ram Battalion due to the number of schools and hundreds of cadets brought in to compete.

We support JROTC as not only a part of our mission, but also to develop the future leaders of America. Many JROTC cadets ever join the military, but the skills they learn from their instructors and interaction with senior ROTC cadets allows them to enter the workforce as competent leaders.





Ranger Challenge

by CDT William Powell

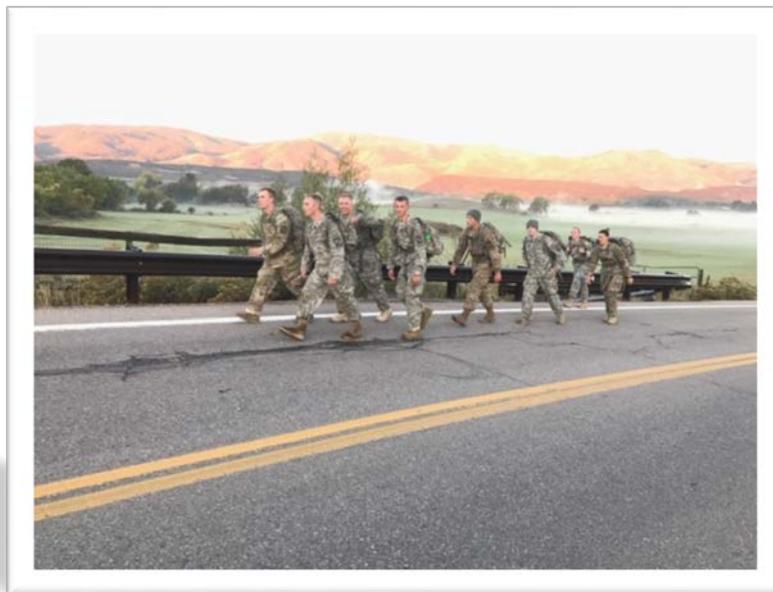


Ranger Challenge is a competition held in the fall semester of every academic year and is a series of physical and mental challenges completed by a 9-person team against other schools in our brigade over two days. This year I was the OIC, which is the Officer in Charge of the event. I was assigned to lead the team in training prior and during the competition. We had a 9-person team with two alternate members from all four academic years. The actual competition itself usually consists of a shoot (M4 or M9), a ruck usually starting at 12 miles minimum, a land navigation event, and multiple Ranger tasks like call for fire, first aid, knot tying, one rope bridges, and hand grenade employment.

This year we were fortunate to have the competition in our backyard with the competition occurring at different locations around Fort Collins. The competition opened with a stress shoot, with a rifle zero to start, 10 minutes of rigorous exercise, followed by an attempted qual with either the M4 or M9. Following the stress shoot, we moved to the Fort Collins national guard armory where we staged for the night land Nav event. At 1900 we were dropped off at the Lory state park gate from which we rucked a mile to the Land Nav start point and received our 4 points.

We began moving up into the mountains to find our points with our rucks on, using light discipline until we got close to our point. We found our 4 points with some marked difficulty due to the steep forested terrain, and the fact that we were moving through the mountains at night. Despite these difficulties, the team was able to perform well and push through to get us off the land Nav course in about 3.5 hours. After the course, we made the 8-mile ruck back to the armory, where we were able to get about 4 hours of sleep before moving onto the next event.

The next day started with a 0600 wake up and a Raft race at Horsetooth reservoir. We were able to win the race despite one of my team members falling into the water and having to recover him. Following the race, we ran to the top of the A and completed a call for fire lane. After Call for fire we completed a weapons disassembly/assembly lane, a functional fitness lane, a first aid lane, and a CBRN lane. The last event of the day was a 6-mile Ruck to campus. The team performed exceptionally well showing mental and physical grit and agility. For their hard work throughout the season, and six days a week of early workouts, the team earned a well-deserved second place out of 16 teams.





Air Assault School



by CDT William Powell

I attended the Sabalauski Air Assault School at Fort Campbell Kentucky in the summer of 2017. In the Army, Air Assault School is known as the 10 hardest days in the army, and the first couple of days lived up to that. Air Assault started with a grueling Day Zero. We Started at 0430 with PRT immediately followed by a 2 mile run. After the 2 miles we went straight into a grueling workout "smoke Session" for another hour and a half. After that, we moved to the Air Assault obstacle course where you must pass all nine obstacles, two primary and two minors, with workouts in between stations. After the O-course we had another quick workout, and an MRE lunch followed by Aircraft familiarization classes for the rest of the day to wrap up day zero.

After Day Zero, the three-day Phase One started with layouts, where we had to lay out all our required packing list in a specific way, and with all gear precisely folded to avoid being dropped from the course for a major infraction, or collecting negative points with a minor infraction. I had no significant infractions but did receive ten negative points from an undone button, and uneven tape on my canteen. After passing, I moved onto three days of morning PT and daytime classes over air assault operations, pathfinder operations, hand and arm signals, aircraft familiarization, aircraft safety, and aero-medevac operations. We even got a 15 min familiarization flight on a UH-60 Lima to get us used to the flight of the aircraft. On the last day of Phase One, we had our test (a 50 question MC test, and a practical exam over air assault hand and arm signals) which I passed and moved on to Phase Two.



Phase Two, is a three-day Sling Loading phase and was probably the most challenging phase for me during the course. The Sling load phase is all about learning how to correctly rig up and attach pieces of equipment "sling loads" to the bottom of helicopters for transport. Throughout the phase, we learned how to correctly prep the equipment for the sling loading and then how to attach it to the aircraft. We practiced rigging up loads on the M101A1 Howitzer, M998 HMMWV, 5,000 lb. or 10,000 lb. Cargo Nets, A-22 Cargo Bag, and Multi-Fuel Blivits. We also were able to attach a rigged-up A-22 cargo bag to the bottom of a Blackhawk, which was a very cool experience. The Phase culminated with a 6-mile morning ruck, and a Phase Two 50 question MC test, and a sling load practical. The practical was the most challenging because you had to look at 4 rigged up "dirty" loads and pointed out 3 out of 4 of the deficiencies on those loads. The hardest piece of equipment to find deficiencies on was the A-22 cargo bag, due to its many possible insufficiency's that could be present, and the fact that a dirty load looked very similar to a clean one. Fortunately, I was able to pass both tests and moved on to phase 3.

Phase Three, was a 3-day phase and is known as the rappelling phase. It was by far the most fun, here we received instructions on Basic Rappelling. We performed a PT session, and a 4-mile formation run. We also learned how to rig up Swiss Seats, which are used as rappelling harnesses in the army, and repelled off a 12-foot incline tower, the first day, and off a 30 ft open and walled tower on day 2 and 3. We rappelled both Hollywood (without gear) and with an IOTV (plate carrier) and assault pack. On day three we were also able to fast rope off the tower, after rappelling off the 15 ft with gear and no gear, and with a J-hook stop. Fast Roping was the most fun part of the phase for me because it was almost like a free fall down a rope. At the end of the phase, we had our swiss seat test where you must correctly tie your swiss seat within a minute thirty and then we had our Hollywood, and gear open side rappels, with a belay test at the bottom. These tests were more enjoyable than hard, but our last test a helicopter rappel was scratched due to lack of available aircraft.

The last day, graduation day was started with our last event the 12-mile ruck which started at 0130. The ruck was not that terrible because it was the only thing that stood in the way of graduation, and I finished in 2 hours and 15 min. I graduated at 1300 that day and earned the coveted Air Assault wings. This course was very beneficial in furthering my Army knowledge, as well as giving me specialized knowledge to help the Army accomplish its mission in unique ways. I was also lucky enough to meet and get to know many great enlisted soldiers and officers, as well as ten outstanding cadets.



Paintball Lab



by CDT Kyle Davern

In order to elevate the stress and consequence of training, CSU Cadets conduct one to two labs per year using paintball markers. These markers create an environment where decisions made have real, and sometimes painful repercussions. These serve as a potent reminder of what we are training for and provides an extra incentive for the Cadets to not compromise on tactical principles like security and violence of action.

When unable to use police training facilities, Cadets build a plywood "kill house" with which to conduct this lab, which is to train on Battle Drill 6: Enter and Clear a Room. Leading up to and during this lab, Cadets learn to act within and control team and squad sized elements while moving through hallways and rooms of various sizes.

Safety is a priority during this lab. Masks and Proper Protective Equipment are ensured to be worn by Cadre and Cadets running the lab. While paintballs hurt, serious injuries are entirely avoided through these measures. The welts, notional wounds, serve as an incentive for Cadets to not hesitate or make easy targets of themselves.





Push-Up Crew

by CDT Jason Powell



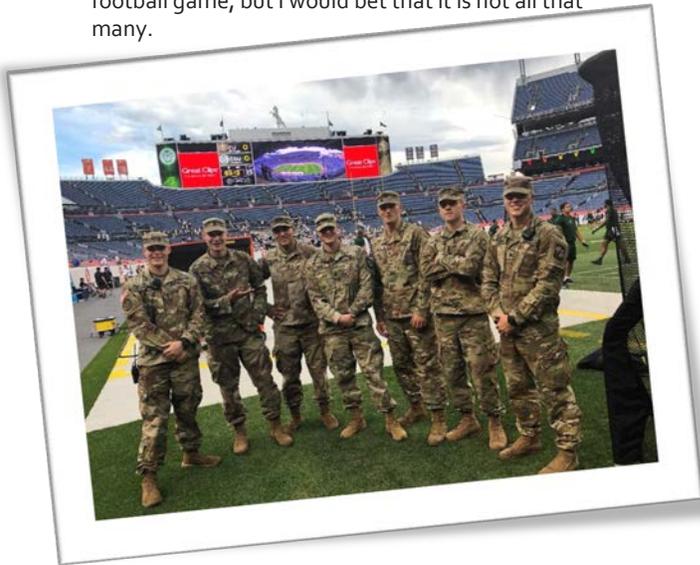
Growing up playing football in Texas. I always had a passion for the game. Whether it be stepping onto the turf myself or watching it from the stands, I always had a connection to the game. Upon coming to CSU, I was a little worried that I would not be able to enjoy the game I loved in the same way. Luckily for me, I was wrong. The push-up crew is one of the coolest traditions of any college gameday that I have seen (Yes, in my opinion, it is more relaxed than the cannon). You get to line up on the goal line and watch the game from arguably some of the best seats in the house.

I had the great honor of being the NCOIC, and OIC for this club and following in a long line of outstanding cadets and now current officers. As the NCOIC I was responsible for leading the pushups out in front of the formation. I remember my first game as the NCOIC was at the Rocky Mountain Showdown. This is one of the most attended CSU sporting events at CSU, and I could feel almost every eye in the stadium on me during the anthem. However, the game started with a thrill. Being on the sideline at a game like that was awesome. I am not sure how many people can say they have been on the field of an NFL stadium during a football game, but I would bet that it is not all that many.

As the OIC of the club, I was responsible for ensuring that we were correctly positioned during the games and that all the cadets were being taken care of and upholding the standard of the Ram Battalion. This past year, as I am sure you Ram alumni know, it was a little rough for us as a team. However, the one bright spot was our win over Arkansas, an SEC team who has been a powerhouse in recent years. I can honestly say that was one of my favorite experiences as a cadet. To be on the field in such a game and then to watch our team win, while enveloped in that energy, was one of the coolest experiences I have had in a football game playing or otherwise.

I also enjoy Push-up crew because it is one of the public faces of the battalion. We get fans to come over to our section to cheer us on almost every game and its always a nice feeling to have the kids reach their hands down for a high five. I have also had coaches from other teams come over to us and thank us. Another huge bonus is making the Air Force look bad as there is a noticeable difference in the push-up form between the two branches. My freshmen year we ended up doing nearly 400 push-ups in a game. So, let me tell you, the Air Force was hardly doing anything close to a push-up at the end while we were still hanging in there.

Push-up crew is one of the coolest things I had the opportunity to be a part of while being a cadet here. Also, I have attended every single home game since my freshmen year because of it. It furthered my love for football and this program. CSU game day would not be the same without the push-up crew, and I look forward to seeing it for years to come!





ROTC/Student Experience



by CDT Conner Pease

Army ROTC cadets, unlike military academy cadets, still experience a healthy college life when enrolled at a college or university. CSU Cadets specifically get to experience the campus life of a proud Ram and the many benefits of being a student at CSU.

ROTC commitments include on-campus indoor lecture classes on Tuesdays, and active labs Thursday evenings that builds on these lectures, moreover, puts into practice by placing all the cadets together in the Ram Battalion to work as a team, often outdoors in the foothills around the Horsetooth Reservoir when the weather is fair. These labs include activities like small unit tactics and land navigation, along with lessons and guest speakers involving leadership and planning. The Ram Battalion also works out together three mornings a week and holds optional club activities and meetings to get more involved, as shown in this newsletter's other sections. The required classes and labs are elective credits that are taken along with a cadet's average course load for their chosen major. We have cadets taking the normal spread of different majors, from Fine Art to Business to History to Bio-Mechanical Engineering. You will see around campus that cadets wear their military uniforms on Tuesdays and Thursdays on campus to help get familiar with military customs, appearance, and courtesies, but are also free to wear civilian clothing all other days

The bonds and comradery cadets experience from regularly seeing their peers throughout the week helps form friends and mentors to help in all parts of their college life. This acts as a support net when cadets struggle, while also cultivating friendships to help expand the college experience moving forward. Cadets will often find future roommates, get together to hang out outside of ROTC and at older ages find buddies to experience the Old Town scene together.

Apart from these ROTC commitments, cadets spend time in other organizations and activities in and around CSU, such as sports, clubs, and jobs. This year we've had a cadet on the football team, cadets running in ASCSU (Associated Students of Colorado State University), cadets with on-campus jobs, including one helping out the ALVS (Adult Learner and Veteran Services) organization on campus, cadets working full-time jobs off campus, cadets in internships associated with their majors, and plenty of cadets forming intramural sports teams and participating in Greek life, clubs and other activities. Time management is a crucial skill learned by cadets who decided to participate in ROTC clubs and other student activities on top of their studies.

Scabbard and Blade

by CDT Eric Umans

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 focused 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 can 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.

This year alone Scabbard & Blade raised over \$9000 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Cadets this year have once again been working closely with the Veteran community in Fort Collins. Cadets had the opportunity to meet with veterans from World War II and Korea over breakfast to show their support and gratitude! This year Scabbard & Blade partnered with the Adult Learner and Veteran Services at Colorado State to bring awareness to the suicide and mental health issues that many veterans are currently facing. 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 a vital part of what defines an Army leader. We hope to strive for excellence continually and to make the community of Fort Collins, Colorado, and the United States a better place for all.





German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge



by CDT Nick Bopp

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. All German Soldiers can be awarded this badge. Allied Soldiers of all ranks may also be awarded 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 year signifies our sixth year of conducting the GAFPB at the CSU Army ROTC program. Not all programs have this opportunity to compete for this unique award. During this 2019 spring semester, cadets from Colorado State University and the University of Wyoming had the chance to participate.

The GAFPB events consist of a Pistol Qualification, Combat Life Saver (First Aid) Training, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Suit Training (CBRN), the Bundeswehr Basic Physical Fitness Test (Flexed Arm Hang, 1000 Meter Sprint, 10 X 11 Shuttle Sprint), 100 Meter Uniformed Swim, and 12 Kilometer Ruck March. Cadets from both schools worked hard in each event and based on their performance, and they were either aiming for Gold, Silver or Bronze. Both the CSU and UW cadets have demonstrated high proficiency in all events.

The GAFPB is open to contracted cadets as well as active, reserve, or guard soldiers. I participated in the GAFPB my third year at CSU. After receiving Gold, it was an honor to plan and coordinate this unique competition. I would recommend this competition to any Cadet or Soldier and to take it earlier rather than later because you will find that your time becomes more valuable the more senior you become. Each event in the GAFPB is unique and different when compared to the U.S. Army Physical Fitness Test. The running events are far more focused on sprinting than Army Soldiers are accustomed to. We also utilize the pushups and sit-ups to measure muscular endurance, whereas the German basic fitness test uses the flexed arm hang.

Each event had its difficulties, especially during the swimming event. Having to swim 100 meters in uniform in less than 4 minutes was far more complicated than I expected. Since being the Officer in Charge and a participant in the GAFPB, 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. There is only a small chance when we commission into the Army to have the ability to participate in a competition like this again. After receiving the award, we receive the medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and, fortunately, we can wear this award on our Army Service Uniform for the rest of our career.





Bravo Company UNC



by CDT Conner Jennings

When a prospective cadet begins their journey towards joining an ROTC program, they likely experience a wide range of emotions. These emotions often range from some level of doubt to sheer excitement. There are various reasons for these emotions, but one thing is certain: the size of the program has a lot to do with the experiences one will face. Joining a satellite school such as ours is no difficult decision; we are a family that welcomes recruits with open arms eager to help develop and prepare one another. You will not be pushed aside and forgotten, in fact with so few numbers you will be forced into inclusion.

I would argue that being a student at a smaller satellite school of a midsized ROTC program is beneficial to the development of our future leaders. When joining the University of Northern Colorado's ROTC program that is Bravo Company, it is extremely evident how tightly knit the program is. Joining our program make you part of a family, a family that's strength reaches far beyond the confines of its classroom doors. We are made up of students from many diverse areas of study, and our reaches range from members of our athletic teams to members of Greek life and everywhere in between.

With a small but reliable family of twenty some cadets we have the fortune of knowing each one of our fellow cadets by name and personality alike. We dare not let the size of our Company define us; we demand the respect we ought to be given by our peers in Alpha Company. Mediocre leadership is not tolerated, and toxic behavior cannot be hidden within our ranks: our size allows us to see any problems and fix them in an instant. When Bravo Company is challenged, we stand fast together defending each other, until we reach mission success.





Advanced Camp



by CDT Jace Weiss

Every summer, ROTC programs across the nation send all their MSIII cadets to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for a month-long training event known as Advanced Camp. The purpose of Advanced Camp is to evaluate how MSIII cadets lead and solve problems, as well as further their military knowledge and skills.

This year's Advanced Camp cycle began with regiments traveling and arriving at the Louisville Airport, where they would then bus us to Fort Knox. As soon as the cadets arrive at their barracks, they are told to empty all of their gear from their duffel bags and rucks so that cadre can ensure they have all the gear they need to the next month or to make sure none of the cadets have any contraband. Once this is over, cadets find out which barracks room they will be staying in, as well as who they will be spending the next month with.

The next few days after the initial shakedown consist of much waiting, paperwork, and other administrative tasks, but once that was all over cadets quickly began to be hit with many tests and evaluations. This last summer, the very first thing we tested on was land navigation and map reading; cadets were given a map and protractor and then asked questions on distances from point to point, direction from point to point, and finding points with nothing but the grid number.

The next event was the Army Physical Fitness Test where cadets are required to do 2 minutes of push-ups and sit-ups, as well as partake in a two-mile run. Cadets are required to do a minimum number of push-ups and sit-ups and run below a certain time for a two-mile, in which standards and minimums vary depending on age and gender.

Cadets are evaluated in many other events such as calling for fire, qualifying while shooting, land navigation and timed rucks. However, the most important of all the events at Advanced Camp would be the field training exercises. A field training exercise, or FTX, consists of cadets going to the field and facing scenarios in which they will have to conduct typical Army missions and work together as if they were in an actual combat zone. A few weeks into camp, after the cadets have already been tested on so much and have partaken in so many physical activities, they are then sent into the field for three FTX's over 12 days. Each FTX was three days long, with a day for refit in between each one. The first FTX was very basic, and cadre controlled what we were doing and helped us solve the field problems we were facing. The next FTX was meant for cadre to have minimum control over the cadets, letting them have more freedom in solving field problems with the knowledge they learned from the first FTX and other events at camp.

Once the FTX period was over, the culminating event for the cadets was a 12-mile ruck march back to the barracks. Once the ruck march was over, it was easy to see how relieved all the cadets were, knowing that they had completed the most challenging parts of camp and were only a mere few days away from seeing their families and graduating.





National Guard

by CDT Collin Gahmnakos



Joining the Colorado National Guard dramatically adds to the cadet experience. Typically, a cadet who is in the guard will work directly underneath platoon leaders and executive officers for a unit. National Guard recruiters can often work with your branch preferences to place you into a unit that interests you. For example, if you want to be an engineering officer, they will try to find you a slot in an engineering unit so you can see if it is a good fit for you. No matter what sort of unit you are in, you will gain valuable experience planning unit training, interacting with officers and enlisted soldiers, and potentially leading a platoon if the company commander finds you fit to lead. You are not committed to the National Guard upon commissioning however; so even if you want to be an Active Duty officer, the National Guard is an option while you complete ROTC.

As a cadet in the National Guard, you also benefit financially. You are paid at the level of an E-5. You can opt-in for Tri-Care Reserve health insurance, which is a small fraction of the cost that you would pay for university's health insurance.

You can start contributing to your retirement fund. If you wish to remain in the National Guard after commissioning, you are eligible for various scholarships including the Minuteman Scholarship and the GRFD Scholarships, which can pay for 100% of your tuition and supplement your income.

Many public universities in Colorado will even accept state and federal tuition assistance from the National Guard after commissioning to continue education after you graduate. Lastly, joining the guard allows you to begin your time in service long before your peers do. If you enlist into the guard and complete basic training before you begin your freshman year of college, you will commission with four years of experience in an actual unit that most of your ROTC peers do not have. These additional years of experience can lead to a larger base-pay upon commissioning as a 2nd Lieutenant and will already contribute time towards your retirement from the Regular Army, Reserves, or National Guard.

As someone who has been both on Active Duty and in the National Guard while in ROTC, I cannot recommend the National Guard enough for both initial-entry cadets and prior service cadets. Whether you want to go into the Regular Army, Reserves, or remain in the guard, joining the National Guard while in ROTC is a great way to familiarize yourself with how a functioning unit operates and prepare yourself to be an officer.



CWST

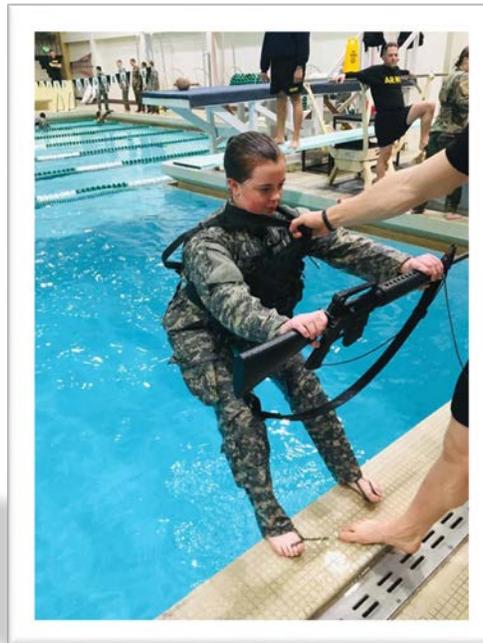


by CDT Tom Rudloff

While swimming is not the first skill to jump to mind when thinking about the Army, we still recognize the importance of being able to survive in the water. The Combat Water Survival Test, CWST for short, ensures each soldier has a basic level of swimming ability and can survive should they be put in the water.

The test consists of five events. First, cadets are to swim for 10 minutes consecutively without touching the walls or bottom of the pool wearing their uniforms. The ten-minute swim tests their ability to move through the water for an extended length of time, made harder by the heavy uniform soaking up water. Then, they tread water for 5 minutes, again in their uniform. The five-minute tread probably gives people the most trouble, as treading for that long is a challenge without the addition of the uniform on. After passing the first two events, they move on to a 15-meter swim, adding more gear. They wear their field load carrier, which would usually carry gear in combat, and a training rifle. Then they move on to a 10-meter blindfolded high dive. While blindfolded and holding a training rifle, they are gently pushed off the high dive to build confidence in the water. Our tradition in the Ram Battalion is to sound off with what branch they hope to commission into after graduation. They must swim from under the diving board to the wall without losing their rifle, or they will be tested again. Finally, they move onto a gear ditch event. They again dawn their field load carrier and a training rifle and fall into the pool backward. Before they return to the surface, cadets must take off the field load carrier.

While a breeze for some, others struggle in the water. Everyone takes the test once a semester in order to practice the events, as passing is mandatory to commission into the Army. All these events ensure that cadets have essential competencies in the water. In the, albeit unlikely, event they are put in that situation, they can survive. Being able to remove the heavy gear that would drag a soldier underwater and being able to swim with a uniform still on makes them more confident in their abilities.



Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) is a program designed to give a Cadet between their Junior and Senior year the experience and knowledge of a Platoon Leader (PL) in a functioning unit. The program begins with the Cadet arriving and meeting with their Platoon Leader, they will shadow the PL for the first week or two. After the PL has instructed the Cadet adequately on their daily duties, the Cadet takes over as the Platoon Leader and develops experience leading a Platoon under the supervision of the LT.

Last summer after Advanced Camp, I traveled to Ft. Polk, Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), to shadow a PL in a MEDEVAC Aviation unit. The first day I was with the unit I got to fly in a UH-60 Blackhawk, and I saw how the pilots prep the helicopter for flight. The PL showed me how the different systems work together to give the helicopter flight and how their mission differed from the regular Aviators. Because they were MEDEVAC, they did real world missions almost every day. Over the next few weeks, I went on dozens of flights, and I learned about the different missions that aviators support and the basics of leading a platoon of Army Aviators. By the second week, the PL had me creating the flight schedule, ensuring that each pilot got enough hours and that each aircraft was flown with the proper number of hours. Over my three weeks at Ft. Polk I flew in three different aircraft and flew many different missions.

Through ROTC I have learned how to be a leader, but I have never put leadership into action as I did during CTLT. The experience that I received during CTLT encouraged me to pursue aviation as my Army Career. I also had a unique experience I could bring back to CSU and help people understand how aviation and how a military post works and the different aspects to leading a Platoon.





Basic Camp



by CDT Alex Ayers

Entry into Army ROTC was intimidating, especially when I had absolutely no intentions of joining ROTC upon acceptance into college. However, after I decided to try out ROTC, I still was entirely lost in the overwhelming information wave that made up my first two semesters. When summer came, I understood that I had been tasked to attend Basic Camp in Fort Knox, KY. However, I vastly underestimated how much it would force me to reflect, actualize, and determine who I was and what kind of leader I wanted to be.

Basic Camp consisted of 28 days in hot, muggy, and beautiful Fort Knox. The first few days allowed myself to get acquainted with my squad mates, learn a few more basic Drill and Ceremony skills, complete the required paperwork, and attend all the briefings about what to expect and what resources were available for us during our time there. On the 3rd day, every single Cadet had a rude awakening as Drill Sergeants made their early morning formal introduction to us. Shock and awe both described the Drill Sergeants tactics and the Cadets conscience.

The next few days were admittedly quite a blur. Learning the standard and Drill Sergeant expectations ensured that there were plenty of 'corrective measures' that are assigned platoon had to take part in. After the first ten days, we began preparations for our ten-day Field Training Exercise. Drill Sergeants and lane cadre taught us the dynamics of small unit tactics, including setting up and executing attacks, ambushes, and effective reconnaissance's. There was very little sleep to be had, and rain and heat were the predominant features of the weather. After a long ruck back to the barracks, we were introduced to more leadership-oriented classes that made up the rest of our time at Fort Knox.

The dominant aspect of Fort Knox, which I have learned to appreciate tremendously, was the Drill Sergeants. This professional corps of Non-Commissioned Officers were tasked with training a generation of future Army leaders, and they executed their role with significant effect. They ensured that there would be no slip-ups, mishaps, or mistakes. They taught us that our issued M-16s were now our best friends and an extension of our body. They taught us about respect and humility, and to admit when we were wrong and to own up to the mistakes that we made. On top of all that, they ensured that we knew the correct standard to uphold. While Basic Camp certainly is not as immersive as the traditional Basic Combat Training, lessons learned from my time there will stay with me for years to come.



Bataan Death March



by CDT Charles LeBaron

During WWII, on April 9, 1942, 75,000 United States and Filipino soldiers surrendered to Japanese forces after months of battling in extreme climate conditions. These soldiers were deprived of food, water, and medical attention, and were forced to march 65 miles to confinement camps throughout the Philippines. This long and painstaking march is known as the Bataan Death March, in which 10,000 soldiers died. Of those men, 1,000 were American, and 9,000 were Filipino. The Bataan Memorial Death March in White Sands Missile Range is a competition that brings together over 8,000 participants from all over the globe that honors the service members that were forced to march back in April of 1942.

Life in the military is grounded in tradition, where much of our progress in America, and in our military, has been built upon the backs of those before us. For Colorado State University Army ROTC students, participating in this race builds each of the team members in physical strength and mental fortitude. Breaking through these physical and mental barriers of pain is a tangible way to honor the veterans who suffered greatly to uphold the unalienable rights we hold dear. Although this marathon is only a portion of what the American prisoners of war suffered, it still captures a glimpse of the determination and will that those soldiers demonstrated.

The past year was a very successful year for the CSU ROTC Teams. Three teams, 5 cadets each, participated in the Heavy division of the race which consisted of wearing a 35- pound rucksack in full uniform. All 15 cadets finished the race with Alpha team finishing at 7 hours 54 minutes, Bravo team at 8 hours 4 minutes and Charlie team dispersed between Alpha and Bravo. Each year the CSU ROTC Bataan teams continue to improve; beating out the previous year by 40 minutes for Alpha team, and 1 hour for Bravo team.

The race itself starts with a formation at 0530 and step off at 0715. Cadets then march 26.2 miles through the desert and mountains of southern New Mexico. When cadets finally cross the finish line, they 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. Nobody gives a damn." However, CSU Army ROTC cadets do give a damn. It is the number one reason every year, cadets from our program compete in the race; to honor those 10,000 soldiers that died that god-awful day on April 9, 1942.





Basic Combat Training



by CDT Colleen VanDyke

I attended BCT at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in the summer of 2016 and it was one of the best experiences of my life. While not always the most fun, I learned a lot about myself, leadership, and teamwork. Basic training is one of those unique environments where you get to struggle and grow with a very diverse group of people that you would have never in your wildest dreams picked to work with. I think that the group dynamic alone is why you get so much out of basic training. Working with people is hard in any situation but in basic training you are with these individuals 24/7 and the mistake of one is the mistake of all. Over the course of the 10 weeks you are together, and pretty much every intra-personal conflict that you could possibly imagine will surface somewhere within the group. This especially happens as people start to get tired and grumpy. The beauty of the way that basic training is structured is that you need each other to succeed, and the drill sergeants will not tolerate any fighting or group dissent even if that means you get a nice smoke session.

Personally, one of my favorite days in primary started as punishment because we were fighting about fireguard. The senior drill sergeant told us that he was tired of our bickering, so he instructed the entire company that we had 1 hour to remove every bunk and wall locker from the barracks and re-assemble everything outside on the platoon lines dress right dress. So, we set to work, and at first, it was chaos. The stairwells were barricaded up as people were trying to go up and down. Naturally, leadership emerged. We set teams in each room disassembling the bunks. We decided to send wall lockers down the enormous main stairwell in an assembly line. We sent mattresses down the north stairwell where we tasked the weak people. Also, we sent bunk frames down the west stairs. We had another team reassembling the bunks and lockers outside, and a rotating relief team to give the guys a break who was sweating in the stairwell. Once we established a system, we started singing cadence and having a great time. While we did not meet our time hack, the drill sergeants left us alone until we had completed the task and we were formed back up, and every single one of us had a smile on our face. That was teamwork.

I think this is a great metaphor that sums up my experience in basic training. I learned the importance of teamwork, the importance of leadership, the importance of taking control of the situation, the importance of recognizing the strengths and weaknesses in others and putting them in roles that will optimize their skills.

