



Check out our Army Nurse Spotlight on Page 2!



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Labor Day	07 September 2020
Sunset Cliffs Clean-Up	12 September 2020
Lab 3 - MCAS Miramar (FLRC)	10 September 2020
Record APFT (MS IV Cadets)	14 September 2020
Lab 4 - Camp Elliot (Land Nav 1)	17 September 2020
Lab 5 - Camp Elliot (Land Nav 2)	24 September 2020



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# AZTEC COMMUNITY SERVICE

## “One Project at a Time”

The Aztecs completed our first beach clean-up this month, removing over 50 gallons of trash from Mission Beach, and preventing it from spilling into our oceans. We reached out to our local Surfrider Foundation and received some helpful tips to improve our future projects. Expressing their appreciation for the Aztecs’ effort, Surfrider donated several buckets, collection sticks, and gloves to the program. We are officially outfitted with improved tools and tracking mechanisms to make upcoming clean-ups a success. We’ll be out at Sunset Cliffs this month (details on page 3) if you’d like to pitch in and join us. We look forward to seeing you there!

Beach Clean-Up



Over 50 gallons of trash removed from Mission Beach

Hey Aztec Battalion,

I am Cadet Lee, your battalion commander for the first semester of this year. First off I would like to apologize for not being with you during the first week due to participating in the National Guard’s annual field training which bled into the school year. Due to COVID, we have had to adapt and overcome in terms of mitigating the risk and still achieving our mission of training future lieutenants. I would just like to put out there I am always available to help or talk to any one of you, and I will do anything in my power to make sure you are taken care of, in and out of uniform. I am looking forward to a great year of training, and I look forward to meeting and working with you all.

-- CDT Lee





# Meet Our Future Nurses!



**CDT Carmen Vejar-Preece:**

My junior year of high school I took an Anatomy class where my interest in nursing began. My grandfather was a Nurse in the Navy and I decided to look into the profession. I was accepted into an internship that summer that exposed me to the healthcare field better. After that internship, I decided I wanted to commit to becoming a nurse and I started researching more and volunteering at hospitals.

I volunteered at Sharp Mary Birch for two years while attending community college. Those same years I was also enrolled at CSUSM ROTC. I transferred into Point Loma Nursing School and also began at a different company for ROTC. Transferring in the middle of college was something I had to adjust to because I was living in a new area of San Diego and I was going to classes where everyone else had already known each other for two years. However, my peers and now very good friends were very helpful. CDT Kolby Makuuchi, CDT Sean Datu and CDT Phi Vuong quickly became my best friends, study buddies and biggest supporters. We spent most of our days together.

The first year of nursing at PLNU is known to be the most difficult. Throughout that year I remember prepping the different uniforms I would need for one day which would include my PT uniform, nursing scrubs, OCPs and normal clothes for classes. Most of our days were hectic and stressful; we would wake up and meet at 0530 to carpool to PT and then quickly rush to class that started at 0730. We would go to other classes before meeting again. CDT Datu, Vuong and myself would carpool to SDSU to attend MILS class and after, we would drive together to Chula Vista to go to the hospital in order to gather the information we needed to provide the best care to our patients. We would get back to campus around 2000 and then sometimes eat together and study and prepare for the next day.

In between gaps, CDT Makucchi and I would attend tutoring about three to four hours a week. There were several long nights where we had to support and help each other. In these moments it is where I realized that Army Nursing was something I would enjoy. I appreciated and enjoyed the bonds we made and the lifelong friendships we will have. In the future I want to pursue something similar where I am in a team environment.

I now work for Scripps Healthcare as a Nurse Assistant and will graduate in June 2021. The Emergency Room or Intensive Care Unit is what currently catches my attention. I appreciate what I have learned while being enrolled in both ROTC and nursing and I am excited to work with other Army Nurses in the future.



# Choosing a lifetime of service; In Their Words

**CDT Sean Datu and CDT Kolby Makuuchi**

## 1. What drew you to Nursing as a profession?



My time and experience as a 68w (combat medic) influenced my decision to pursue nursing. Before the Army, I did not know what sort of professional skill I wanted to develop, but I took a chance with being a combat medic. The selfless labor of caring for a person through a very meticulous and professional way is what drew me to nursing



Ever since high school I knew I wanted to be a nurse. As a high school sophomore, I joined the Mission Viejo Hospital Volunteer Program, where I volunteered at least four hours a week through my senior year. I assisted in the maternity ward restocking inventory and discharging patients with their newborn babies. I enjoyed the hospital setting and interacting with the nurses as I observed their job. While volunteering, not only did I notice and admire how hard the nurses work, I realized nursing is the career I want to pursue. I was so inspired I founded the Grey's Anatomy Club at my high school. Once a month I lead and instructed my club members to create cards thank you cards and goodie bags correlating with the season or holiday. We visited the hospital, gave nurses the cards and goodie bags, and decorated the nurse's stations for the holiday. My favorite part about the visits was seeing the nurses' faces light up. I loved leading my club and encouraging my members to join the hospital volunteer program. Leading high school students with similar interests who were considering a career in healthcare warmed my heart and made me want me to become a nurse even more. I decided I wanted to study nursing because I enjoy caring for others and making others happy. I have always seemed to care more for others than I do for myself.

## 2. Why did you decide to pursue nursing in the Army?



To be in the Army, one must exemplify a level of physical fitness and competency. To be a nurse, one would have to show intellectual competency through technical and theoretical knowledge. I chose to pursue nursing in the Army because it is a melding of both cultures that holds one accountable physically and mentally. More so, it is motivating to know that my physical and mental agility is to the benefit of my brothers and sisters since they will be my patient one day.



I decided to join nursing in the Army because of all the opportunities it provides. I also wanted to be able to study what I love and end school without debt and loans. I joined the ROTC program to maintain discipline and keep me focused on my education, career, physical and well-being. I thrive in a structured environment and am far more organized and productive when I push the limits of a full schedule. I knew joining the ROTC program would surround me with people who will motivate me with their similar discipline and motivation. I joined ROTC to enable me to live my life to the fullest and for me to make a difference in the world.

## 3. What opportunities are you excited about as an Army Nurse Cadet and future Army Nurse?



I am currently excited about graduation. I have spent most of my time training and learning to be an officer and being a nurse. I am excited to really apply what I have learned to make a difference in the lives of whoever I serve. An opportunity I am excited about in the Army is the chance to earn the EFMB (expert field medical badge). This has always been one of my goals to achieve while I am in the Army.



As an Army Nurse Cadet and future Army Nurse I am excited to travel, continue my education and meet new people. The Army has a lot of opportunities to care for a variety of patients in multiple locations/ environments. I am looking forward to making relationships with my co-workers and patients.

## 4. What nursing disciplines are you interested in practicing?



Currently, I want to start off in a medical/ surgical unit to get my nursing skills solidified. After some experience, I would like to work eventually find myself in the intensive care unit because of the fast and technical delivery of care. After my time in the Army, I am also looking into being a pediatric nurse in a medical/ surgical unit.



I am currently unsure what I want to specialize in. However, I am interested in becoming an emergency room nurse or a public health nurse.



**Sunset Cliffs Clean - Up**

**Who:** Past, Current, and Future Aztecs, Bring your family and friends

**What:** Trash removal from Sunset Cliffs; Bring your mask and gloves, & wear a school shirt if you have one

**When:** 12 SEP 2020, 0630 - 0730

**Where:** Sunset Cliffs Park

**Why:** Taking care of our community and keeping our beaches clean

**Next Month: Oceanside**






# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## MAJ David Rodriguez - Class of 2005

**"AZTEC FOR LIFE"**



MAJ David Rodriguez commissioned into the Army as an Aviation Branch officer after graduating from San Diego State University in 2005. After completing flight school as a qualified CH-47 pilot he served in a variety of positions including platoon leader, assistant operations officer, and company commander while deploying to Afghanistan twice. In 2014, MAJ Rodriguez assessed into FA34 (Strategic Intelligence) and held a variety of joint positions within INDOPACOM J2, EUCOM J2, and currently serves in CENTCOM J2.

### 1. What led you to pursue Aviation in the Army?

As a cadet, I really enjoyed all the challenging infantry events we practiced and I believed for a little while Infantry might be the direction I would go. However, during the course of the program I realized that there were cadets that were far more suited to long hikes with heavy packs than I was. Additionally, I wanted to fly helicopters for as long as I could remember. Growing up I watched all the TV shows and documentaries that included helicopters and I was amazed by their capabilities. I decided that if I wasn't going to branch Infantry then I would do the next best thing by supporting those hardcore infantry soldiers that I respect so much by becoming an aviator. The ability to fly low, slow, hover, and take soldiers and supplies anywhere on the battlefield is an awesome combat capability and after two deployments to Afghanistan I couldn't be happier with the decision I made.

### 2. What advice do you have for cadets considering Aviation in their top 3 branches?

Dedicated and determined. You must have a drive for Aviation if you are considering it as your top selection. If you list Aviation as your second or third preference then that likely will demonstrate you are not committed to a branch that will make a substantial investment in you. Flight school requires a significant amount of hard work and long days of studying. I don't consider myself any smarter than anyone else but I do consider myself to be a harder worker than most and that certainly contributed to my success at flight school. The payoff is worth it as you'll find yourself flying in some incredible places with amazing views while working with the best pilots in the world.

### 3. Tell us about your most memorable assignment?

My most memorable assignment occurred fairly recently when I had the opportunity to lead a phenomenal team of military, government civilian, and contract intelligence analysts while working at EUCOM. Several years ago, the US government started experiencing significant challenges working with a particular state and I happened to lead the largest team in the Defense Intelligence Enterprise with analytic depth on this country. My team helped inform senior decision makers within EUCOM, the Joint Staff, and even the White House through multiple crises. Prior to this assignment I, like most soldiers in the Army, had a very tactical perspective and did not influence much outside of my battalion. The hours were long and the work was hard but the job satisfaction likely won't be matched.

### 4. What do you wish you understood better as a cadet, about your future role as an officer in the United States Army?

Early in my career I had the habit of taking on too much myself. When we are young we want to be successful so we often attempt to eliminate or limit potential areas of risk. This results in us doing everything ourselves, however, this is not practical. It took me too long to realize how much more we can accomplish by delegating tasks. You've got to trust your subordinates and colleagues to do what is expected of them and hold them accountable if they fail.

### 5. What's your favorite Aztec memory from your time at San Diego State?

I only spent 2 years in the Aztec Battalion but every off-campus ROTC event we had was extremely memorable and I cannot pick just one. I enjoyed every opportunity we had to get outside and practically apply the knowledge and skills we discussed and learned in the classroom. Those days outside with my classmates where we learned from the cadre and each other and it didn't matter if we were at the MCRD pool or a land nav course at Camp Pendleton. At the time I was just having fun but later on I realized how applicable those events and challenges would be to help me during my career.



## SMSI CORNER

Aztec,

Welcome back! We're officially off and running with the Fall 2020 semester. Although we remain in a primarily virtual learning environment, I hope that you all are as excited as I am to get back to work. For those who I have not had the opportunity to meet or those who know me as the (previous) Bravo Company NCOIC, my name is SFC (P) Chris Brown and I am the new Senior Military Science Instructor here at SDSU. I feel extremely fortunate to have this tremendous opportunity and couldn't imagine a better way to fulfill the Army Values than helping to train, develop, and mentor the future Army Leaders of this great nation.

I have a total of 14 years of experience in the Army, most of which were spent with 2d Battalion, 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA. I have been deployed for a total of 9 times (3x Iraq & 6x Afghanistan). I am looking forward to using my experiences to help create relative and comprehensive training opportunities that will prepare you for CST and to become an Army Officer. Though the situation that we currently find ourselves in is a bit different than we are accustomed to, our standards, expectations, and goals are not. Listed below are just a few that I expect from you:

- 1. Prioritize your Academics.** You are a student first and your accessions depends on it. Your efforts now will pay off later.
- 2. Remain Physically Fit.** The minimum is not the standard, it is the minimum. Always aim to exceed the standard.
- 3. Be a Leader, support each other, and treat everybody with dignity and respect.** We are a team and we rely on each other.
- 4. Maintain the highest standards and hold each other to the same accountable.** You not only represent the program, but the Army as well.
- 5. Take initiative and be proactive.** What can you do at your level to improve yourself, your peers, and the program?
- 6. Be ready to learn, work hard, and arguably just as important as all other things...have some fun!**

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at our first fact-to-face Leadership Lab next week, Thursday 10 September and training together throughout the semester.

SFC Brown RLW!

