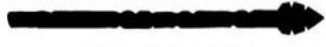


## AZTECS



ARMY ROTC



## SPRING FTX

The Cadet's Time to Shine

### What is FTX?

For every Cadet across the United States, twice every school year Cadets gather to conduct a Field Training Exercise (FTX) at their local military installation. Putting their learned tactics and leadership skills to practice in a few days of continuous operations, the FTX is the time for people to show their mettle, their ability to perform in an austere environment, and to work as part of a team.

For us here at the Aztec Battalion, we have just completed our Spring '21 FTX (April 15th-18th), and it was the first combined FTX with another University. For many of our Cadets this was also their first experience with an FTX.

### CSU Fullerton x SDSU

Unlike FTXs conducted in the past, this was a combined collaboration with California State University Fullerton's program, another great ROTC battalion up in the Orange County Area. The Titan Battalion is made up of a number of schools (CSU Fullerton, UC Irvine, Vanguard University, just to name a few) much like our own Aztec Battalion. This combined aspect allowed for all Cadets to have experience working with other Cadets they do not know and are unfamiliar with. At Cadet Summer Training (CST) and other Cadet training programs, there will also be Cadets from other programs who our Cadets will not know and have never worked with before.



The combined aspect also came with a bunch of other benefits. The larger number of Cadets allowed for platoons to be full size Infantry line platoons, giving the platoon leadership more flexibility to conduct their operations. Previous FTXs always saw our platoons at platoon minus sizes, restricting the platoon's effectiveness. Cadets also made new friends. One of the common sights during the weapons cleaning portion of reverse RSOI was seeing the Fullerton and SDSU Cadets swapping social media handles and contact information.

For the MS4s, the combined FTX was an opportunity for them to reconnect with friends they made at the Task Force level Operation Agile Leader FTX at Fort Irwin during October 2020. Many were paired up again, working in the Tactical Operations Center (TOC), walking as Cadet evaluators, or working the platoon lanes as the Opposing Force (OPFOR).

The FTX began on Thursday, with the setup of the TOC and distribution of equipment to the platoons. The day consisted of getting to know each other and creating Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the platoon in preparation for the platoon lanes over the next three days.

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## What About the Training?

The lanes consisted of four different scenarios, each building on one another to create an immersive narrative for the Cadets.

1. Platoon Attack - taking place on the tallest ridgeline on Camp Elliot's training ground, this small enemy encampment is manned by a full rifle squad of OPFOR MS4s.
2. Movement to Contact - suspected enemy forces are in the area, and a platoon is tasked to move into enemy territory to regain contact with the enemy.
3. Recon - an enemy team has been reported stashing equipment and weapons in a specific area, and a platoon is tasked with confirming or denying the existence of the enemy and their cache.
4. Ambush - A mounted force of enemy has been reported moving along a road at a specific time, and a platoon is tasked to ambush them.

Each of the three platoons went through all lanes over a three-day period, building their confidence as the weekend went on.

In the end, the Cadets all learned a great deal, regardless of their individual position or experience level. Many came away with new lessons learned, and new friends as well. The Army is a people business after all. As Major Foor says, "it is not really about what you know, it is all about who you know."



## Army National Guard and Reserve Commissioning Lieutenant's Branches and Components

CDT Bartolome - Signal, Army Reserves  
CDT Castillo del Muro - Infantry, Army National Guard  
CDT Depaolo - Ordnance, Army National Guard  
CDT Guthmann - Military Intelligence, Army Reserves  
CDT Lee - Infantry, Army National Guard  
CDT Nadong - Signal, Army Reserves  
CDT Navarro - Engineers, Army National Guard  
CDT Padilla - Engineers, Army National Guard  
CDT Schnieder - Engineers, Army National Guard  
CDT Tyser - Cyber, Army National Guard  
CDT Vuong - Medical Services, Army National Guard  
CDT Walter - Finance, Army Reserves



# SUMMERTIME

## The Busiest Time of Year



Aztecs have been gearing up all year to prepare for Advanced Camp at Ft. Knox this summer!

### What do Summers look like in ROTC?

Now that the Summer is fast approaching, college students all over San Diego are making their summer plans. After the year-long Coronavirus crisis, many students are looking forward to going on vacation, taking summer classes, participating in internships, or working to gain some capital for the next school year's costs.

Whatever their plans, our Cadets are getting ready for the next step in their Army careers. For some, that may be attending different forms of Army training, or learning more about their field of study with civilian internships or work experience. Unlike most college students, our Cadets have extremely busy summers, trying to juggle civilian and military obligations while also trying to have some fun.

### What Programs Are Available?

For the MS1s and MS2s, the summer as a Cadet is a pretty uneventful affair unless they are slotted for Project GO (Global Officer), Basic Camp, or an Army School.

Project GO is a Department of Defense (DoD) sponsored program that allows Cadets of any level to learn a critical foreign language over the summer at one of several universities across the nation. The experience is fully funded, and participating Cadets earn a full semester's worth of college language credit upon completion. Prior to COVID-19, Cadets were even offered the opportunity to go to different countries to use their languages in the host nation.

Basic Camp is essentially an abridged form of Basic Combat Training tailored to Cadets. At a month long, Basic Camp is used to provide new Cadets (MS1s or lateral entry Cadets) a base of Army discipline and basic soldiering skills to build a successful ROTC career. Taking place in Fort Knox, Kentucky, Basic Camp Cadets are trained by ROTC cadre and Drill Sergeants from the National Guard and Army Reserves.

Army Schools (grouped into a program called Cadet Advanced Individual Training (CAIT)) are also open to high performing MS1s, MS2s, and MS3s. Cadets are able to attend high speed schools like Airborne, Air Assault, and other Army courses. Some of our own MS2s are going to the Air Assault School hosted by the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Best of luck to Cadets Hair, Keefe, and Van Houten!

### What is Cadet Summer Training?

Our MS3s however are in for a big summer this year. Due to COVID-19, the class of '21 was not able to attend Cadet Summer Training (CST) at Fort Knox, Kentucky, however US Army Cadet Command has been planning diligently to ensure the class of '22 can attend safely this summer. Cadet Summer Training evaluates the Cadet's ability to perform the basic Soldier tasks like marksmanship, land navigation, and road marches. In addition, these four weeks of fun in the Kentucky sun are used to grade the leadership ability of the MS3 cadets in both garrison and in the field.

The MS3s see CST as their Super Bowl; one of the most important milestones in their ROTC careers. Performing well at CST not only increases one's Order of Merit List (OML) score, but it also provides a sense of confidence and accomplishment for the next big step: commissioning.

MS3s are also afforded the opportunity over the summer to shadow Active Duty Lieutenants at Army bases around the world. This is a wonderful mentorship opportunity for the Cadets, and a great experience to get a taste of the Active Duty life.

Cadet Command tries to match Cadets with units from the branch they are interested in. This program is known as the Cadet Troop Leader Training program, or CTLT for short. Cadets can even attend CTLT at some of the most elite units in our military, like the 75th Ranger Regiment or the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

All in all, our Cadets will all have a productive summer, and come back even more prepared for the next step in their academic and ROTC careers.

## ***Congratulations to our Newly Contracted Cadets!***

- CDT Loaiza
- CDT Moy
- CDT Patteson
- CDT Rascon
- CDT Zhou



### **CPT Savage (A Co APMS) administers the oath to CDT Rascon.**

The BRC was first held in 1982, and open to only “Ranger” designated units. However, from 1984 and onwards the competition was opened to every unit in the Army, provided the competitors they sent were all Ranger qualified Soldiers. Today, around 50 teams compete each year, and the exact composition of the events change every year. However, marksmanship, road marches, physical fitness tests, and obstacle courses are always present in every BRC.

Units all over the Active Army will send multiple buddy teams to the BRC every year. Individual brigades like the 173rd Airborne Infantry and the 3rd Cavalry will send their own teams, whilst most divisions like the 82nd and 1st Cavalry will send three to four teams. Even units in the National Guard and TRADOC will send their own teams to the BRC. This year one of the top scoring teams was from the Maneuver Center of Excellence, the organization responsible for Infantry and Cavalry training.

### **BEST RANGER COMPETITION**



### **What is the Best Ranger Competition?**

Every year, units from across each of the different components of the Army send their best Ranger qualified personnel to Fort Benning, Georgia to take part in the Best Ranger Competition (BRC); a three day buddy team competition where various skills are assessed in order to determine the best Ranger buddy team across the United States Army. This year the best Ranger Competition took place from 16-18 April, after the 2020 competition was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Why is the BRC a big deal?**

Being selected to represent your unit at the BRC is a huge honor and many teams prepare for up to a year in advance. The

buddy teams will prepare constantly and rigorously at their home stations prior to even reaching Fort Benning for the competition. However, these Best Ranger athletes are not like professional athletes who drop everything to train and are supported by trainers, doctors, and specialists. The BRC buddy teams still continue to do their jobs, whether that be a Company XO within the 25th Infantry Division, or a Team Leader in the Ranger Battalions.

### What events make up the BRC?

A grueling event, the competition this year had 20 different events, ranging from a mortar and Carl Gustav range to the Darby Mile obstacle course. Like Ranger School, the BRC had the competitors running off of very little sleep and rest. A true test of grit and endurance, the BRC winners are highly regarded throughout the Army. Those who end up winning the BRC have their names placed in the Best Ranger Monument, and bring the trophy back to their units. This year, two first lieutenants from the 75th Ranger Battalion were the winners of the 2021 BRC. Congratulations to First Lieutenants Paikowskis and Keys!

## April: Month of the Military Child

Army Children have unique upbringings and sacrifices

CDT Twiss' father was on active duty, and as a result he grew up as a military child.



How long has your parent(s) been in the military?

**Twiss:** My father was in the military for 21 years. He retired in 2016, which is the year I went to university.

Where have you lived, and where is your favorite place you have lived?

**Twiss:** I have lived in Wurzburg, Germany, Fort Irwin, CA, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Fort Hood, TX, Camp Yongsan, South Korea, and Fort Campbell, KY. Fort Campbell would have to be my favorite because of the friends and connections I made. However, South Korea was definitely the most interesting.

How has your parent(s) career influenced your own decisions to join?

**Twiss:** I like to think my influence to join the military is separate from my father. However, it is undeniable that he helped me figure things out as I progressed to and through ROTC.

What is the best part about being a military child?

**Twiss:** The best part is the change to new locations. Meeting new people and seeing new places has transformed the kind of person I am.

What is the most difficult part about being a military child?

**Twiss:** The change is also the most difficult part. It is challenging to say goodbye to friends, not have a hometown, or even be overseas. But it undoubtedly makes people adaptable and ready for change.

# Senior Military Science Instructor Corner

Aztecs,

As the light grows at the end of the tunnel with the semester coming to a close, be proud of the outstanding work that you have done and all that you have accomplished in such a short period of time. We began in January with many uncertainties as to what challenges remain in a COVID driven environment and although we remained, for the most part, virtual, you rose to the occasion and maximized each available opportunity. Beginning with zero week and the parallel planning efforts for both virtual and face to face training options, we introduced PLT level tactics, executed a 60 mph sand-blasted M4 range at Ft. Irwin, rappelled from windows, towers, and a UH- 1 mockup at Stu Segal Studios, flawlessly executed a physically and mentally demanding



Spring FTX, recognized your outstanding achievements at our awards ceremony, held multiple contracting ceremonies, and will soon cap things off by commissioning the future leaders of our Army on June 5th.

As most of you close out the semester with finals and prepare for a much-needed and well-deserved summer break, remember to remain focused on your personal goals and keep yourselves physically and mentally prepared to hit the ground running for the fall 2021 semester. While things may appear a bit different with multiple departures of current Cadre and arrivals of their replacements, the goals of the program remain the same; to train and develop each other to become the most competent and professional Army Officers charged with leading the sons and daughters of this great nation. Good luck to our MSIIIs as you head off to Advanced Camp at Ft. Knox, KY this summer. I have the upmost confidence in your abilities to set the standard and always lead from the front. I know that you will exceed our expectations and make the program proud.

Congratulations to our soon-to-be commissioned Second Lieutenants. You all have made tremendous contributions to the betterment of the program and have established a solid foundation for your fellow classmates to build upon. Good luck in all your future endeavors. I hope to come across some of you leading Soldiers in formations down the Road.

Unfortunately, my time in the program is coming to a close a bit sooner that I had anticipated or would have liked. It feels like just yesterday that I was introducing myself as the weapons familiarization lab at Admiral Baker. I cherish my time spent in the classroom instructing the MSIIIs, navigating the terrain of Camp Elliot, watching faces with visible concern for your safety as you rappelled from a tower for the first time, and the numerous conversations that we had discussing tactics, leadership, and professional development. I can only hope that my time spent in this exceptional program has been as impactful for you as it has been for me. In the future, if any of you find yourselves at Ft. Benning, or need anything at all, please do not hesitate to reach out. Tip of the Spear and Rangers Lead the Way!

- MSG Brown, Aztec 7

We bid a fond farewell to the following Cadre, departing over the summer. Thank you for all that you've done for our future Army leaders!

**MAJ Foor**

**MSG Brown**

**CPT Savage**

**CPT Alvarado**

**SFC Reyes**



**Mr. Marcelli**