



SDSU ARMY ROTC FEB '21 NEWSLETTER

COVID-19. WHAT CHANGED?

How has COVID affected your own personal development as future Army leaders?

- (Hallmark): It made me rethink my plans, as well as forced me to adapt to the current circumstances. Yes, in person events had been closed, but that did not mean it would stop my development. Resources like the Ranger Handbook and previous products ensured that I could still learn and review doctrine and tactics.
- (Keefe): It is strange, because I did do one semester in person. However, the quality of training was not hindered due to the lack of in person training, and the alternative was still very helpful.



CDT KEEFE

- A native Californian hailing from the Bakersfield area, CDT Keefe began his ROTC career in the fall of 2019. A national scholarship Cadet, CDT Keefe has spent much of his career in a COVID training environment.

What has COVID taught you in terms of the Army's ability to adapt, as well as your own ability to do the same?

- (Hallmark): Despite the situation at hand, the quick transition to in person training surprised me. Not only did it happen throughout Cadet Command, but also the big Army, and despite the entire world shutting down, I was impressed with how the Army's mission continued.
- (Keefe): It was crazy how fast the active Army, the National Guard, and Cadet Command were able to adapt to the current situation by adapting their training methods to fit within the CDC guidelines. It was impressive and really good to see, as our training as leaders is really important.

What do you miss most about training in a COVID-free environment?

- (Hallmark): Of course not being able to see my fellow Cadets definitely was difficult, the lack of available gyms was also difficult. Despite the lockdown, I managed to snag weights for use at home. Once gyms started to open back up outdoors, I did my best to continue to train as close to I was doing before. Fortunately, there are gyms close to where I live that are open for business.
- (Keefe): Though I was only in the program for one semester prior to the COVID lockdown, I missed seeing everyone on a regular basis. The social aspect of the Army is one thing I really do enjoy, and not being able to see my friends and hangout with them during PT and lab was a little bit of a downer especially since I was just starting to get to know everyone better.

What is the biggest lesson COVID has taught you not only as a soldier but as a human being?

- (Hallmark): Adaptability is key. Despite the current situation it is important to continue living your life as normally as possible while conforming to the current situation. Sitting down and remaining stagnant in a situation like this only makes it more difficult down the road to return to normal life.
- (Keefe): Being able to be resistant to change is important. Breaking one's routine is detrimental and it is important to maintain one's normal life and continue to train and live despite the situation at hand. COVID taught me to continue to keep working and living despite the current situation.

CDT HALLMARK

- A Colorado native, CDT Hallmark started in the Aztec AROTC program in the Fall of 2018. A national scholarship awardee, CDT Hallmark has been able to train in both a COVID free environment as well as the reality we live in today.



Want to Know what's coming up?

San Diego State Army ROTC

Register Today!

Our New Alumni Database is LIVE!

Register today by going to the link below:

https://armyrotc.sdsu.edu/alumni/stay_connected

ARMY ROTC

Sign up to learn about what's going on in the program and volunteer to mentor the next generation of Aztec Leaders!

THE 79th IBCT:
SAN DIEGO'S
OWN.



The distinctive shoulder insignia of the 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team; the lightning bolt design has given it the nickname "Gatorade Brigade" due to its similarity to the Gatorade logo.

Many of the Cadets in the San Diego State Army ROTC program are also Cadets within the National Guard's 79th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. Cadets Lee, Castillo, Padilla, and others all wear the 79th's lightning bolt patch as members of the National Guard's Simultaneous Membership Program. Falling underneath the 40th Infantry Division, many of the battalions that make up the 79th IBCT have fought in some of the most influential battles in our nation's history. Currently made up of the 65th Infantry, 184th Infantry, 160th Infantry, 578th Engineers, and the 18th Cavalry, the battalions of the 79th all have rich histories.

Today the 79th is a modern light infantry brigade equipped to fight the nation's battles. However, the 79th has had a long and illustrious history dating back to 1881.

At the start of the Civil War, 17,000 men from California volunteered to form the 7th California Volunteer Infantry, which later became the 160th Infantry Regiment.

Moving onto WWI, the 184th Infantry Regiment and 160th Infantry regiment (who later formed the 79th IBCT) mobilized to the Western front as part of the 40th infantry division. Captain Nelson Holderman of the 160th Infantry was awarded the Medal of Honor during the Meuse-Argonne offensives on September 1918.

From 1941-1945 the 40th Infantry Division would fight in WWII, serving her nation proudly in some of the fiercest battles in the wars. Mostly fighting in the Pacific front, the 184th and 160th Infantry battalions faced fierce opposition from the Japanese forces. During that time, the division (and the 79th) was manned by Californian natives only. Units that make up the 79th today fought in the battles of Leyte and Okinawa. The 79th Infantry Brigade was formed up as we know it today during the 2007 Army's restructuring program.

In the 21st century, the 79th IBCT deployed to Kosovo and the Middle East, serving proudly in Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2013 the brigade was deployed to Kandahar province in Afghanistan, one of the most kinetic sectors of the country.

Today, the 79th has most recently deployed elements to Jordan and Kosovo, as well as state missions to Los Angeles and Sacramento to aid local civil authorities.

Many of our National Guard component seniors are commissioning into the 79th, ensuring the legacy of the brigade will be taken up by some of our best.

CONTRACTING SPOTLIGHT!

Congratulations to the following cadets for contracting in the past few weeks:

- **CDT Hernandez, SDSU**
- **CDT. Reza, SDSU**

Welcome to the best Army in the world!



Infantrymen from the 79th's 184th Infantry Regiment fight in Leyte, 1944



Cpt. Holderman, Medal of Honor recipient

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:

- **20 FEB Ft. Irwin M4 qual.**
- **TBD MAR Blessing leadership panel.**
- **18-21 MAR Spring FTX**

**Alumni Spotlight:
1st LT Christian Payumo**

Intro: A Guam native, 1LT Payumo is an SDSU grad, class of 2016. An officer in the CA Army National Guard, 1LT Payumo has been in the Army for five years.

What was your major and what was your favorite part of SDSU?

My major was in political science, and I graduated in December of 2016. The social life at SDSU was very special, and I truly enjoyed being able to network and create lasting friendships with people from varied walks of life, and from all over the world and all over the country. Coming from Guam, being at SDSU was truly a wonderful introduction to social life in California.

What is your branch and what made you choose it?

I went to Armor BOLC and returned to the CA National Guard as an Cavalry Officer in the 79th IBCT. I chose Armor because I wanted to be a combat arms officer and experience the mounted platforms the Army had to offer. Being able to operate and command Abrams, Strykers, and other armored vehicles at BOLC was really exciting and a dream come true.

What tips would you give any new 2LT out of BOLC knowing what you know now?

Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Realize that no matter how perfect or prepared you may be, you will make mistakes in the opening years of your career. Just be prepared to learn and grow from your mistakes. Your worst mistake to make is to not learn as much as you can during your formative years. Secondly, platoon command is one of the best years in your Army career. It goes by much faster than you would think, and it's important to cherish that time when you can.

What is your favorite Army memory?

Definitely being able to deploy right after BOLC was a great memory. Being a Platoon Leader deployed to the Middle East was not only a rewarding experience, but a very fun experience as well. Being able to live, train, and grow with other Soldiers from different nations was extremely fun, and experiencing the culture of the Middle East was definitely an eye opening experience as well.



SMSI CORNER

Aztecs,

We are off and running with our Spring Semester and continually gaining steam! With two virtual and our two face-to-face labs behind us, you have taken every curve ball thrown your way in stride. I couldn't be happier with our training progression and the work that you all have put in to maximize every opportunity. Even with all of the adaptations that we experienced within our current environment, I am proud of the resiliency that you have shown in your pursuit of excellence.

We have some great training opportunities on the horizon to include our M4 qualification range at Ft. Irwin (for MSIIIs and MSIVs), more Platoon operations, Rappelling, additional land navigation training, and our Spring FTX in April. Continue to be a sponge and absorb all that you can at every available opportunity. Your Battalion staff has been hard at work ensuring that each lab continues to challenge you and build upon your existing knowledge and experiences.

Ensure that you maintain a healthy balance between your academics, ROTC, work, and valuable personal time. Physical and mental health are paramount in these trying times and each of these areas deserves attention in order to be a well-rounded student, Cadet, and future Army Officer. Look for opportunities beyond the minimum requirements to excel and set yourself up for success. Our expectations of you are high because you have proven that you are more than capable of achieving them and we want nothing but the very best for you.

Expect the best from yourself and continue to set high yet attainable goals. Strive to prove to everyone what makes an Aztec Cadet a cut above the rest by setting the example for others to follow. Your enthusiasm, dedication and commitment motivate me every day. Take care of yourselves and take care of each other while maintaining your sights set clearly on the target. Keep up the great work!"

-MSG Brown
RLTW!



Our Newest Officers!

**CONGRATULATIONS!
San Diego State Army ROTC**

- 2LT Matthew Areola, Infantry**
- 2LT Brendan Carroll, Aviation**
- 2LT Jeremiah Ibarra, Medical Service**
- 2LT Brady Phillips, Signal Corps**
- 2LT Sean Wheeler, Chemical Corps**

"TIP OF THE SPEAR"