



**Community Service Opportunity on Page 2**

**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Lab - FTX ROC Drill	19 November 2020
Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX)	20-23 November 2020
Thanksgiving Holiday	26 November 2020
Aztec "Thanks-Cleaning"	28 November 2020
Fall Awards Ceremony	03 December 2020



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# Operation Agile Leader

**F**rom 22-26 October 2020, Cadets from San Diego State University (SDSU), California State University Fullerton (CSUF), and Claremont McKenna College (CMC) Army ROTC programs conducted their first Operation Agile Leader (OAL) Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Fort Irwin, California. To mitigate the effects of cancelling Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cadets are being trained at the regional level with nearby ROTC programs. OAL creates a complex, realistic training environment to evaluate Senior Cadets on essential leadership skills and meet commissioning requirements for the United States Army.

Operation Agile Leader FTX began on the evening of October 22<sup>nd</sup> with the Cadets from SDSU, CSUF, and CMC being split

into four different platoons to allow them the opportunity to train with Cadets and cadre from different schools. These four platoons remained together throughout the FTX at different locations to avoid large gatherings, and all Cadets wore masks to mitigate any COVID risks. The platoons then rotated to draw equipment, weapons, and Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) before moving to the location where they would sleep for the night.

The first two days of the Operation Agile Leader FTX consisted of the four platoons rotating through two different training events. The first training event was held at the Fort Irwin Zero and Qualification ranges where Cadets conducted Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) qualification. During

this training, Cadets had to group and zero their M4 rifle with eighteen rounds of ammunition on a 25-meter target. Once their weapons were zeroed, they moved to a different range to complete the Army rifle qualification test. The qualification consists of shooting a round from the standing position, then dropping to the prone unsupported position to shoot nine more rounds, reloading and shooting ten rounds from the prone supported position, reloading and shooting ten rounds from the kneeling position, and reloading one last time to shoot ten rounds from the standing position. Cadets must successfully hit a minimum of twenty three out of forty targets in order to pass.





# Operation Agile Leader (Continued)



CDT Walter prepares to engage his first set of targets at the M4 Qualification range

The second training event the Cadets rotated through was tactics and battle drills training with their platoons. The purpose of this event was to refresh on tactics and to allow Cadets the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Cadets from other schools before conducting platoon level Situational Training Exercises (STX) during the final two days of the FTX. Cadets from each school brought with them different knowledge and experiences, so rehearsing as a platoon was essential to ensuring

everyone was on the same page. Cadets spent the day practicing and executing missions with their platoons and creating Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) to make sure every member of the platoon understood how to execute the upcoming missions.

The final two days of Operation Agile Leader consisted of tactics where Cadets were evaluated on their ability to lead a platoon or squad through Ambush, Raid, Attack, Reconnaissance, or Patrol Base operations. Every Cadet rotated through one Platoon Leader or Platoon Sergeant Leadership position, and one Squad Leader position. In these leadership positions, Cadets were evaluated on their ability to Lead, Develop, and Achieve their subordinates through stressful and challenging situations. Every Cadet needed to receive at "Go" in each leadership position in order to successfully meet the Operation Agile Leader requirements and become one step closer to commissioning.

After a full four days of training, Operation Agile Leader came to an end for SDSU, CSUF, and CMC Cadets. They were physically and mentally challenged throughout the duration of the field training exercise and endured challenging weather conditions in the Fort Irwin Desert. The Cadets will get to do it all again next semester when the SDSU, CSUF, and CMC ROTC programs conduct the second OAL FTX to complete the remaining training require-

ments for MSIV Cadets. They are getting closer and closer to becoming Second Lieutenants in the United States Army. We look forward to executing another awesome training event with some of the best future leaders of the U.S. Army.

-- CDT Keith Tyser



CDT Jessica Hair mans the 240-B

Join us this month for a special **De-centralized**, COVID-19 friendly, volunteer event! Here is how it works:



1. Download the Marine Debris Tracker Application to your Phone
2. Select the San Diego County Surfrider Foundation List from the menu
3. Use the App to record what you collect.
4. Post a screen-shot of your results, and the location where you collected on our Facebook Page under the Event announcement! Throw in a few shots of your friends and family together!

(<https://www.facebook.com/SDArmyROTC>)

It's that SIMPLE!

WHO: All Past, Current, and Future Aztecs, friends, and family

What: "Thanks-Cleaning" Clean-up Event

When: Saturday, 28 November 2020

Where: Pick your favorite spot in the community (Beach, Park, School, etc)

Why: To give back to the communities that have given us so much. Let's get out there and see what kind of difference we can make together!



Cadet Platoon Leader and Platoon Sergeant create the plan after receiving the operation order to begin their tactical scenario



# Foreign Area Officer



## Your Journey Begins At Commissioning

Are you interested in foreign languages, different cultures, and international travel? Do you thrive in challenging environments where you have the latitude to succeed or fail? If so, then the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) functional area is the perfect fit for you! The Army defines FAOs as the premier regional and country experts who provide time-sensitive situational awareness to senior decision makers. FAOs are experts on regional military capabilities and work with foreign military leaders and government officials to build partner capacity in support of U.S. strategic goals and objectives. FAOs serve around the globe in U.S. Embassies as one of a few Department of Defense officials operating in the country. They serve as political-military officers, security cooperation officers, and defense attaches.

Army basic branch officers have the opportunity to transition to the FAO functional area after completing their branch key development positions. This typically occurs between an officer's 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> year of service. Once selected for accession to become a FAO, the officer will complete an intensive three-year training pipeline. It begins with 9-16 months of foreign language training at the DoD's premier language training facility, the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California followed by a year of in-region training based on the officer's regional specialization. During that year, the officer will be assigned to the DoD element within a particular Embassy and create their own program of instruction and research travel to enhance their knowledge of military capabilities, culture, and regional expertise. Finally, the officer will attend a graduate program of their choosing to earn an advanced international relations degree.



If this functional area aligns with your personal and professional interest than you should start now to prepare for this future field. Becoming a FAO is highly competitive and depends on your previous performance as an Army officer and your future potential. You will need to perform well at all levels of responsibility; platoon leader, staff officer, and company commander in order to secure your accession to the program. Your current performance and coursework as part of the Aztec Battalion is also crucial. Study hard to maintain a high GPA and begin learning a foreign language (or languages) now if you haven't already done so. Your performance as a Cadet will determine your initial branch assignment as well as build your reputation for success early. While planning for this exciting future opportunity, you must remain focused on the task at hand, being the best Cadet and student possible in order to be a professional, and capable, leader that your Soldiers deserve. -- MAJ Lance Garnett

Major Lance Garnett is an Army Foreign Area Officer specializing in Latin America. He previously served nine years as an aviation officer including assignments to Afghanistan, Honduras, Fort Rucker Alabama, and Germany. He is a qualified pilot in command and instructor pilot in the CH-47D/F chinook and LUH-72 Lakotah helicopters. After accessing into FAO Branch he received Spanish language training at the Defense Language Institute, conducted in-region training at the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City, Mexico, and is now completing his Masters Degree at UC-San Diego's School of Global Policy and Strategy. Major Garnett was a simultaneous membership Cadet and the 2009 distinguished military graduate from Marshall University's Army ROTC program in Huntington, West Virginia.



# Celebrating the Big Moments Together!

**T**he month of October was full of many ceremonies for the Aztec Army ROTC program. It can be difficult to keep track of them all, so we wanted to take this opportunity to recognize all of the amazing accomplishments our Cadets and Cadre have achieved.



**Congratulations to MSG (Ret) Martin Reinhardt. Thank you for your service and sacrifice.**

Congratulations to our former Senior Military Science Instructor MSG Martin Reinhardt for retiring after 24 years of

honorable service in the United States Army. We are grateful for the mentorship, experience, and knowledge you brought to our program. We wish you the best on your next adventure.

Congratulations to our current Senior Military Science Instructor Master Sergeant Chris Brown on his promotion. We are grateful for the expertise and experiences you bring to our program, and we look forward to what else you will contribute to the Aztec Battalion.

Congratulations to our newest Cadre member, Daniella Alvarado on her promotion to Captain. CPT Alvarado arrived from Japan to assist our program with recruiting operations.

Finally, congratulations to following Cadets for contracting into the United States Army:

- Cadet Hannah Gillies
- Cadet Jacob Garcia
- Cadet Chivas Powers
- Cadet Raphael Sanvictores
- Cadet Thomas Keefe
- Cadet Brandon Bavongkhoun

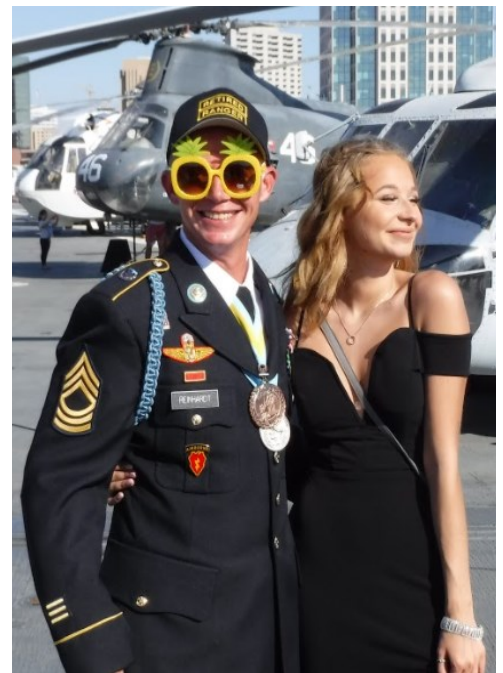
We are extremely proud of your commitment and can't wait to see the amazing things you will do as leaders!



**CDT Garcia and CDT Powers recite the oath of enlistment following leadership lab at Camp Elliot**



**Contracting from Afar, CDT Hannah Gillies took her oath over Zoom from her home in Oregon with her family present to witness**

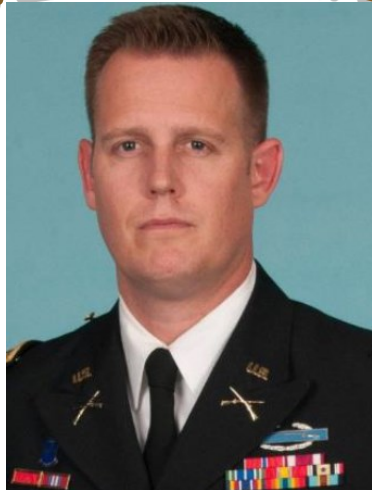


**MSG Reinhardt enjoys a moment of celebration with his daughter Lexi, culminating a career of service and sacrifice together as they prepared to embark on their next adventure .**

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## LTC Brandon Hill - Class of 2004

**"AZTEC FOR LIFE"**



LTC Brandon Hill is a LTC in the California Army National Guard. Earning his BA in International Security and Conflict Resolution, and MS in Homeland Security through San Diego State University, LTC Hill is currently serving as the Chief of Current Operations at Joint Force Headquarters in the State of California. He recently returned from the Ukraine where he served as the Bilateral Affairs Officer in the Office of Defense Cooperation at the United States Embassy in Kyiv. LTC Hill served two tours in Iraq with the 101st Airborne Division from 2005 to 2006, and 2007 to 2008 prior to transitioning to the California Army National Guard.

ever next career field awaited me. By maintaining my commission and status as an Army Officer, I knew I would be a more well-rounded candidate in the civilian job market over my peers. I ended up being offered full time employment with the CA Army National Guard and continue to serve today. The SMP program is an excellent opportunity to gain that real Army experience as a ROTC Cadet. By serving in a local unit, a SMP Cadet gets direct experience in a Reserve or National Guard unit during drill weekends. You can't buy that real world experience or see it at the ROTC program.

**5. What was your favorite training event as a Cadet in the program?**

Spring FTX, where we were able to test our skills during Squad STX lanes. It was a culminating event for us every year.

**6. Where was your favorite place to hang out in San Diego as a student?** Monty's Pub, but I think it no longer exists.

**1. What were your top three branches that you considered as Cadet?** Infantry, Military Intelligence, Aviation

**2. What advice do you have for Cadets in their final year of preparation prior to receiving their commission?** Ask as many questions as possible to the full time Cadre who have years of experience before your commission. Take in as much knowledge from their experiences in the Regular Army, Reserves, or National Guard while you can. Lastly, start developing your leadership and management style. Your leadership style should be distinctive and will grow with your experiences. However, you can emulate those traits or leadership attributes of your superiors, peers, and even subordinates that you believe are effective and fit your style.

**3. What do you remember most about the moment you met your platoon for the first time?**

I reported to D Co, 1-502nd IN, 101st Airborne DIV (AASLT) in June, 2005. I was wearing highly polished black combat boots and the old Army Battle Dress Uniform. My entire Infantry platoon was wearing the newly issued ACUs, desert boots, and most of them had combat patches and CIBs. To say I was a little nervous was an understatement since I stuck out more than ever. With that said, being uncomfortable in a new environment is not only challenging, but more importantly critical in your professional development throughout your career.

**4. What factors influenced you to continue your service in the National Guard? Do you have advice for our Cadets in the simultaneous membership program that you've learned through your service in the Guard?**

After 5 years of service in the Regular Army, consisting of two combat deployments to Iraq (OIF 05-06, OIF 07-08) with the same Battalion, I wanted to have the opportunity to attend graduate school and use my Post 9/11 GI Bill at the earliest possibility and not wait to earn a master's degree. I decided to continue my service with the CA Army National Guard and go to grad school full time. Not only did I want to retain my benefits (SGLI, Tricare, VA benefits) I also wanted to remain competitive in what-

### SMSI CORNER



**Aztecs,**  
As many of you can begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the holiday season fast approaching, I challenge you to approach these next few weeks with the same ferocity that have lead us to this point. You've learned and accomplished a lot since the start of the semester back in August and I am proud of where we're at. Don't let your foot off the gas just yet. I'm looking forward to getting back out in the field with you for our upcoming FTX on November 20-22 which comes just in time before a well-deserved Thanksgiving break and preparation for finals to close out the semester. Remember to always keep yourself mentally alert, physically strong and morally straight in your pursuit to achieve the highest standards in everything that you do. In the words of General Norman Schwarzkopf, "The truth is that you always know the right thing to do. The tough part is doing it."

MSG Brown  
RLTW!

