

AZTEC ARMY ROTC

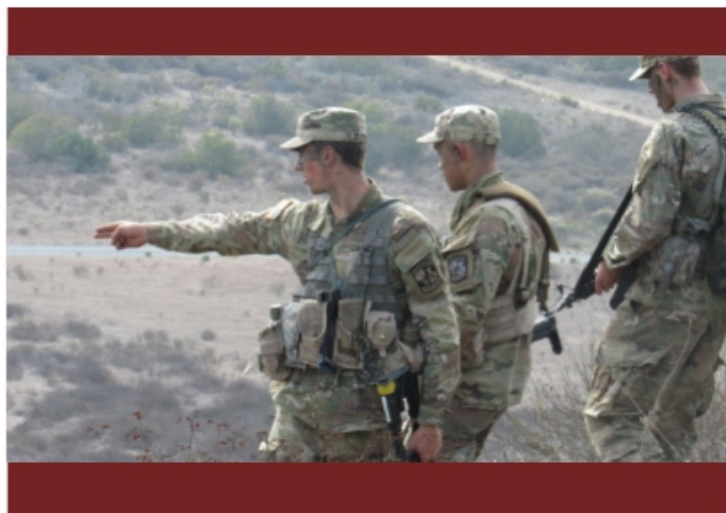
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



Important Dates to Remember

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| 08 DEC2021 | Last day of ROTC classes |
| 10-16 DEC2021 | Finals Week (No classes) |
| 15 DEC2021 | AUSA Holiday Party |
| 17DEC-09JAN2022 | Winter Break |
| 10-14 JAN2022 | MSIV & Cadre Zero Week |
| 26-30 JAN 2022 | 8th BDE Ranger Challenge Competition |
| 19 FEB 2022 | M4 Range (Fort Irwin) |
| 28 FEB 2022 | MS23 Initial Branch Preferences due in Talent Based Branching |

ENJOY YOUR BREAK!



THE RESULTS ARE IN



On December 1st the MSIV Cadets who were competing for Active Duty received their branch assignments!

This day was a culmination of years of dedication, evaluations and assessments. For most, it began 3.5 years ago as MSI's where Cadets were first introduced to the ROTC lifestyle. From the moment they started until the moment they commission these Cadets have been competing against one another on a national OML (Order of Merit List) in order to be assessed into their desired branch. The work for these Cadets only increased as they entered their MSIII year where they began receiving assessments from Cadre and Senior Cadets on their performance as a PL, PSG, or SL during STX Lanes or Patrol Base Operations, Towards the latter half of their MSIII year, Cadets logged onto TBB (Talent Based Branching) where they completed assessments, and filled out surveys / questionnaires on themselves in order to give branches an inside look at them as an individual. The process only continued throughout summer at CST as well as online interviews Cadets did with branches they were interested in. At the end of summer the anxiety for Cadets set in as they submitted their first official branch preferences. This was where Cadets ranked all the branches in the order that they would prefer to be assessed into. MSIV Cadets then received their branch feedback, where based on their interviews and TBB packets, the branches rated Cadets Most Preferred, Preferred, and Least Preferred. Once the feedback was received, Cadets submitted a final branch preference list and awaited the results. December 1st finally came and MSIV Cadets went to the ROTC Office where they received a letter that sealed their fate.

ACTIVE DUTY BRANCHING

CDT Porter - Adjutant General Corps,
Branch Detail: Armor

CDT Lennard - Air Defense Artillery

CDT Watson - Engineer Corps (EOD)

CDT Andrews - Field Artillery

CDT Hashimoto - Field Artillery

CDT Garland - Infantry

CDT Hallmark - Infantry

CDT Nicoloff - Infantry

CDT O'Brien - Infantry

CDT Hernandez - Infantry

CDT Adams - Military Intelligence,
Branch Detail: Infantry

CDT Sanchez - Quartermaster Corps



RANGER CHALLENGE

On November 5 - 7, 11 Cadets traveled to Fort Irwin, CA to compete against other schools in the region in a grueling competition. As all the hard work and dedication would testify, the Aztec Battalion prevailed and took 1st place!

Ranger Challenge is a volunteer based program within Army ROTC where the most physically fit Cadets train together in order to compete against other schools in competitions across the country. The competitions consist of a variety of physical and mental challenges from obstacle courses to land navigation, which are specifically designed to test the Cadet's resiliency, leadership, and teamwork.

Training for the competition starts early...very early. Initially Cadets in the Aztec Battalion were invited out to the multi-day tryouts where Cadets were tested on their physical and mental capabilities in order to select the top individuals for the team. The tryouts consisted of a ruck march, a land navigation test, and a modified Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT).

Once the team was selected, it was all gas and no breaks. Team Captains CDT Hallmark and CDT Nicoloff had their team up in the morning 5 days a week ready to train. Focusing on endurance, strength and small unit tactics, the Ranger Challenge team came together.

After a home-run win at Fort Irwin, CA these Cadets are only training harder for the upcoming Brigade-level competition where Aztec's Ranger Challenge Team will compete against the two other West-Coast winners where only the top team will continue on to compete at Sandhurst.



FTX

Over the weekend of November 19 - 21 Cadets from Aztec Battalion headed out into the field. During this Fall Semester, Cadets were split into squad level units and were expected to conduct STX Lanes while developing their small unit tactics.

During this time, MSIII Cadets were expected to take control and lead their squad during their rotation on 1 of 4 different lanes: Ambush, Assault, Recon or Patrol Base.

At the beginning of the lane, the Squad Leader is briefed a short OPORD that they have to take and disseminate to their squad. From there, MSIIIs are expected to plan and conduct their mission with their squad.

Each night, Cadets are lead into a Patrol Base where they work on the "priorities of work" including pulling security, conducting personal hygiene, and sleeping. On the final day, Cadets conduct their final road march out of the AO back to the Fire Station where they clean their issued weapons.



ALUMNI CORNER

2LT MCCORMICK

Former Aztec Battalion Alumni, 2LT McCormick who commissioned in 2020 into the Quartermaster Corps now serves as a Maintenance Officer in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg.

2LT McCormick was asked to share what he had been up to since he left the Aztecs and his thoughts about his new career as an Officer.

"Where to start? When many think of being prepared, at least what first comes to my mind, is being prepared for those jobs that you know are coming. Everyone understands that at some point they will be called to execute the jobs they are trained for. In my case, this was both true and untrue at the same time. As the situation deteriorated at the Kabul International Airport and my maintenance team was conducting support missions to enable 1st Brigade Combat Team's (BCT) deployment, a notification went out across the 82nd Airborne Division that those individuals with specialty skills may be called upon to support in Afghanistan. I received this notification directly from my Forward Support Company Commander and went home that weekend to prepare my gear and let my family know the situation. By Monday, I was on the phone with my S3 and my commander explaining my level of proficiency in a language that I thought I would never use again. I was actually in the process of my annual recertification. You see, I had maintained my language on my own after leaving my Army Linguist days behind. This was some three years prior. Without any refresher training (non-linguists are not afforded this opportunity) I toiled the best I could to maintain my language and the language pay I had grown accustomed to. Following that weekend, I was in Afghanistan as part of a 7-man crew of linguists and prior linguists to provide translation and interpretation support to 1st BCT".

"Despite the abruptness of this deployment, I took the time to reach back and thank my ROTC Cadre for some of the training I had received. One such training was the familiarization of loading into a Blackhawk. I was expected to load into one on the spot as we flew out of Simmons Air Force Base to link up with the rest of 1st BCT staging at Joint Base Charleston. However, this was only a small part of the training that I received that prepared me for the rapid deployment".

"To prepare for these types of interactions, I recommend high stress situations with people you have never met be a regular occurrence. Get out of your comfort zone. In addition, always have your 'bags packed." If someone told you that you're going to deploy in seven hours, would you be ready? If the answer is no, then you need to think about preparation. I found out at 1700 that I was deploying and was on a bird at 0100 flying out. Prepare yourselves and your Families because the day will come. Do not let the reason you cannot execute your mission be because you were not prepared".

"On another note, there are still things that you will not be prepared for no matter how hard you try. Not everyone at the Kabul International Airport was able to pass through the gate. I had to be the one to tell some of those people that they have to go back toward the Taliban and face whatever that situation may bring. I would rather not discuss what happened to those people but your imagination will do a sufficient job filling in the blanks. The biggest regret I had when I came back was that I did not do enough or save enough people. I kept thinking 'what if my language skills were better' or 'what if I would have slept one less hour'. Would it have made a difference? Maybe? I say this not to burden you with things that will be on my mind for the rest of my life, but I say this to help you understand the pressure and stress you will be under as leaders. You will come home and everyone will think you are a hero, but all you can remember are the faces of those you turned away. How did I get through it? I had to reach out to my Family. The Army Family and my Family at home. I had to keep talking about it. This is part of the preparation you must make for yourselves. Do not face these things alone. Do not forget that the Soldiers to your left and right need you on the team too".

"In summary, be prepared. Whatever form this takes is determined by your mission, unit, yourselves. Stay mobile. Be flexible. Do the easy stuff now (prepping gear, self-development, etc.) when you have the time. Do not waste a minute. Also, don't forget to spend time with loved ones because you never know when you will be headed out the door".



2LT MCCORMICK CONT.

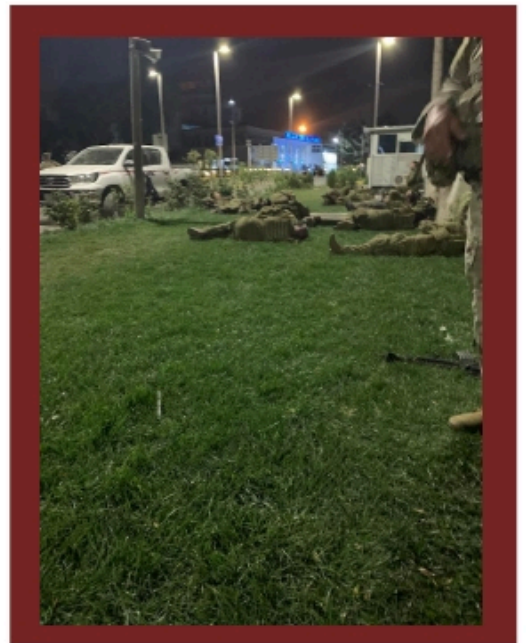
"Most recent Weapons Qual shot Expert 36/40"



"After returning home my Maintenance Platoon, Hellhounds Forward Support Company, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 82nd ABN DIV"



"Myself, fellow linguist SGT Omar and 1st BCT Paratroopers taking sleep shifts behind cover at South Gate. Straight ahead is Civilian Terminal at HKIA."



"Working for a Low Level Voice Intercept Team (LLVI) in HKIA to provide threat protection for 1st BCT. Was trained on this back in the enlisted days. All these guys hold my old MOS of either 35N or 35P".

"South Gate, Taliban are across the street working gate on their side while 1st BCT operated the airport side. Numerous KLE engagements happened here spear headed by our native linguist on the team, myself and other non-native linguist focused on crowd control and translating trip tickets required for Taliban to allow vehicle access for incoming Afghans".

