

FEB, 2021

SAN DIEGO STATE ARMY ROTC FEBRUARY NEWS LETTER



(CDT Tobia shoots at pop-up targets with his M4 Rifle during the 8th Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition)

Welcome Back AZTECS

We are so excited to welcome all of you back for the Spring Semester! This Semester is going to be jam packed with exercises, training events, PT and so much more! So strap in and see what we've accomplished so far and what is yet to come!

Calendar for January-February

- 1/10-1/14: Zero Week
- 1/17: Beginning of the Semester
- 1/28-1/30: 8th BDE Ranger Challenge Competition
- 2/7: Begin In-Person Classes
- 2/15: CDT Garland George C. Marshall Seminar recognition
- 2/26: Range Day at FT Irwin
- 2/11 CDT Watson and CDT Hallmark German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB) participation at USC



(The Ranger Challenge team carries a 200 pound life-sized mannequin while wearing their gas masks)

Editors: CDT Joshua Adams (S-9) and
CDT Rachel Fong (Assistant S-9)

8th Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition

This past week, January 26-30th our Ranger Challenge team competed in the 8th Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition held at Joint Base Lewis McChord, (JBLM) located in Washington State. The competition took place over two days that started with an arduous 16 mile Ruck March at 0600. During this Ruck March we stopped at different stations to complete different tasks. The first station consisted of us administering medical aid to a wounded Rescue Randy (a 200 pound mannequin) and then proceeding to carry the 200 pound Rescue Randy for an entire mile while we wore our gas masks.

The second event involved us loading the 200 pound Rescue Randy into an armored vehicle. After this task we rucked nearly four miles to the M4 qualification range where we shot at 40 pop-up targets.

Next, our team rucked another mile to the M17 (nine millimeter pistol) range to shoot paper targets



(The Ranger Challenge team pushes their Zodiac into a lake as they race the clock trying to get the fastest paddle time)

with 20 rounds.

After, we hiked just over a mile to a lake where our team jumped into a zodiac and paddled out to a red buoy and back covering a total of approximately half to three quarters of a mile.

Following this, we hiked another two miles to the M320 (Grenade Launcher) Range where our team engaged targets using chalk rounds. We then put our packs back on and completed the remainder of the 16 mile ruck march.

Next, our team was bussed to the land navigation course where we completed individual land navigation written exams. After the written exams, we were split into three groups of three and sent out

into the woods to find 18 potential land navigation points.

Our team completed land navigation in the dark at 1730 and then spent the rest of our evening cleaning our weapons, repacking our rucks, and eating. We went to bed at 2400 and woke up at 0430 on Saturday January 29th.

The first event of Saturday morning was a 50 meter swim relay race in a pool and a simultaneous circuit workout that was conducted in shallow water. The circuit workout consisted of push ups, squats, flutter kicks, and arm raises. It was exhausting but the fun had not yet come to an end. Though exhausted, our team went on to do a round robin of three events.

First, we ran a standard Army obstacle course - made more difficult because the obstacles were slippery due to the frost. Next, we brought our old buddy 200 pound Rescue Randy along as we carried him through another obstacle course while wearing our gas masks. Our final event for the round robin was a two person call-for-fire lane that was



(The Ranger Challenge team giving their old buddy Rescue Randy a lift as they traverse a tricky obstacle held inside a call-for-fire simulator.)

Our tired, sore but motivated team completed all of these events with flying colors. We were told that our final event would be the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). The soaring spirits and high morale of our exhausted team helped us to crush the ACFT, with a handful of us maxing events such as the leg tucks, pushups and run.

The 2 mile run of the ACFT lead us to the 8th Brigade Headquarters where our scores were tallied and where the award ceremony was held.

San Diego State Aztec Battalion tied for First Place with the University of Hawaii. Our team came first in multiple events including the last event the ACFT! The tie breaker was decided by the 16 mile ruck times. Hawaii edged us out by 4 minutes. We wound up taking 2nd place and are moving on to compete in the national finals. The national finals, also known as Sandhurst, will be held at the United States Military Academy (West Point) in April!

This is the first time in our program's history that we are going to West Point! Wish our team luck as we train and get ready for what will be a very memorable and awesome event! Tip of the Spear!

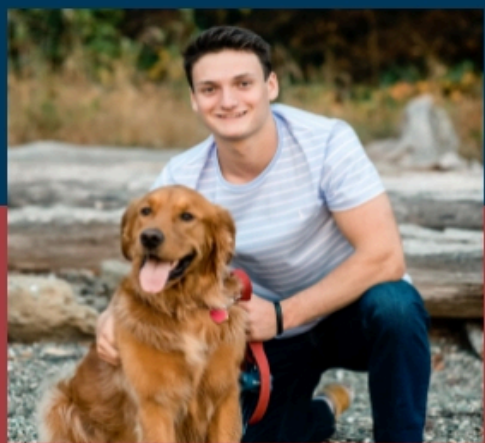
Cadet of the Month

This Month's Cadet of the Month is Cadet (CDT) Tucker Grow from Alpha Company. CDT Grow goes to San Diego State University (SDSU) and is studying Construction Management. CDT Grow is one of the most motivated CDTs in the Battalion and shows up to every volunteer event, Lab and PT.

CDT Grow was one of three freshmen to make the Ranger Challenge Starting Team this school year and competed with the team in both the Task Force South and 8th Brigade Ranger Challenge Competitions. He will be going with the team to West Point this April to compete in the Ranger Challenge nationals also known as Sandhurst.

CDT Grow is also a part of our Battalion Color Guard Team and has helped present the National colors during the SDSU Army Appreciation Game last October.

On top of all this, CDT Grow maintains a high level of physical fitness. CDT Grow earned a score of 590 out of 600 on his last Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). For those who do not know, the ACFT is a six



(CDT Grow poses with his dog in the outdoors) event test that measures multiple aspects of strength and endurance and is far from easy. His score is the 2nd highest score in the entire Aztec Battalion!

CDT Grow also carried the M240B machine gun for the entire two and a half days of our program's fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). Being the M240B gunner is important to any squad or platoon sized element because it provides suppressive fire that keeps the opposing forces heads' down while the rest of your unit can flank and maneuver. CDT Grow performed his duties as the M240B gunner effectively and helped his squad accomplish their missions during Fall FTX.

Finally, CDT Grow always shows up with a positive attitude and willingness to learn. He strives to improve himself each and everyday and is a role model for other CDTs. He is always willing to help fellow CDTs and it is

hard to stay down when he is in your squad. This is why we chose CDT Grow as February's CDT of the Month.

I also asked CDT Grow some questions about why he joined ROTC, who he looks up to, his hobbies and what gets him out of bed in the morning.

Why did you join Army ROTC?

I knew I wanted to join the military for the majority of my life, especially after hearing about my dad's time as an Army Officer and how much my sister enjoys Air Force ROTC. Army ROTC gave me the opportunity to continue my family's history of military service and pursue a degree at the same time. This led me to apply for the Army ROTC Scholarship during high school and join the Aztec Battalion at SDSU a year later.



(CDT Grow smiling after winning the Task Force South Ranger Challenge Competition)

What/Who motivates you as a leader?

Throughout my life, many role models have shown me what it means to be a leader, from parents and coaches to fellow cadets. Although my time as a cadet has been short, the older, more experienced cadets taught me the importance of refining my leadership skills in preparation to lead as an Army Officer.

What do you want to branch or if you are not sure, what branches interest you?

I plan on branching infantry.

What Hobbies do you do in your free time?

In my free time I enjoy playing sports, spending time on the lake with friends and family, and riding my dirt bike.

What gets you up in the morning?

My alarm.

Let's Congratulate CDT Grow for his awesome accomplishments and many more to come!

Alumni Spotlight

This Month's Alumni Spotlight is on 1LT Ben Zora (Class of 2019) who graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University into the Field Artillery. I asked him a couple of questions about his Army career, his future plans, and what he does outside of the Army.

1. What was the first unit you joined after BOLC?

After BOLC I joined 2nd Battalion 4th Field Artillery Regiment at Fort Sill, Oklahoma . 2-4 FAR is part of the very few Field Artillery Brigades in the Army (75th FAB). 2-4 is a rocket artillery battalion that in large scale combat resides at the division and corps levels. Our Battalion's mission is to provide timely and accurate strike, counter-fire and SEAD (suppression of enemy air defense) fires. We conducted a routine nine month rotation to Camp Casey , South Korea to deter North Korean aggression. Now that we have returned our battalion has assumed an immediate response force mission status, meaning we are expected to deploy in a ten day window anywhere around the world (peacetime or wartime missions).

2. What positions have you held in your Army Career?

I've served in three positions while in my first unit:

-Liaison Officer: LNOs serve inside the Battalion (BN) 3 shop. Their function in training and in war is to be attached to higher units and advise higher ranking officers the capabilities and desired effects of our artillery guns to meet the Commander's (CDR) intent. In this position I served many functions for the unit. The



(1LT Zora hunting in Oklahoma)

day to day functions involved assisting in publishing the BN CDR's quarterly training guidances, tasking orders, and training meeting slides. I also had the opportunity to represent the BN in 2nd Infantry Division's warfighter exercise by advising General Gilland on our BN's capabilities in the Korean battle space.

- Firing Platoon Leader (PL): By far the most rewarding position I served in was as a PL. As a firing PL, I oversaw five sections (four launcher crews, one Fire

Direction Center). It contained a lot of challenges but helped me understand the importance of maintenance, logistical tracking, and how your attitude can directly affect the platoon.

- Battery Operations Officer (BTRY XO): As the BTRY XO, I've had an amazing opportunity to shape the culture of the battery from a more behind the scenes approach. In this position I'm able to help provide solutions I identified as a PL and advise the BTRY CDR on important decisions he has to make. The BTRY XO also serves as the BTRY Fire Direction Officer.

-Battery XO (future): In April I start my next position as a BTRY XO in an Advanced Individual training Brigade here at Fort Sill. I was selected for this position by utilizing the Army's new AIM Marketplace. The Marketplace places more influence on the location of an officer's next duty assignment. It provides officers with an online platform to apply for different positions across the army.

3) What personal info, hobbies, and or future plans do you want to share with the Aztec Battalion?

- Mackenzie (wife) and I married on 9JUN19, a few weeks after commissioning. She is currently in her doctorate Optometry program at NSU OK and recently



(1LT Ben Zora poses with his wife US Air Force 2LT Mackenzie Zora)

commissioned into the Air Force as a 2LT.
- We have stayed busy in our time here in Oklahoma. My current interests are hunting, shooting, rock climbing, kayaking and camping.

- In my next position, I plan to further my artillery knowledge by attending the Weaponeering, Joint Fires Observer, and Joint Fire Power schools. After Field Artillery Captains Career Course, my wife and I plan to be stationed at JBLM or Fort Wainwright to be closer to family. My future plans outside the Army include receiving a masters in fire ecology and restarting my career in the US Forest Service as a wildland firefighter.

If you have questions for 1LT Zora email us at sdarotc@sandiego.edu and we will get you in contact with him.

Cadre Corner



of April to compete at Sandhurst! This is the first time since 1991 that the team has made it to the Brigade level and the first in Aztec Battalion history that the team has advanced to Sandhurst! What an accomplishment! Our team dominated at the Brigade competition at the end of January (despite the 23 degree weather!) to earn their spot as one of only 16 Army ROTC teams (from 273 programs across the

Happy 2022 and welcome back Aztec Battalion! We certainly didn't anticipate starting the Spring semester "virtually" however, the good news is that it's only temporary, with a full return to in-person classes starting on 7 February. We look forward to another fun and challenging semester, much of which will be dedicated to preparing the MSIII Cadets to excel at Advanced Camp this summer.



(CDTs Grow and Gomez practice loading and aiming the M320 grenade launcher in preparation for the grenade launcher event)

country) to advance to Sandhurst, which is often considered the "Olympics" of Army skills competitions. Congratulations to our Dream Team of Cadets: Adams, Davis, Deutscher Garland, Gomez, Grow, Hallmark (team co-Captain), Nicoloff (team co-Captain), Tobia and Van Houten (as well as our Task Force-level competitors Zhou and Golding).

Keep working hard Aztecs. Stay the course! With your enthusiastic participation, dedication and a positive attitude we will have an incredible Spring semester. And as cliché as it might sound, teamwork makes the dream work (just ask our Ranger Challenge team)!

Tip of the Spear!

Lieutenant Colonel Parlette

Professor of Military Science



(CDT Deutscher takes aim with the M17 while shooting a paper target during the Ranger Challenge Competition)

This semester's training will be extremely beneficial for Cadets at all levels, as we step it up a notch and build upon the skills covered last Fall.

Our calendar is already filling up with great training and fun events, including an M4 range, rappel lab, community service and recruiting events, an FTX, color guard, a beach BBQ, Commander's Cup challenges, notable veterans speaking to our Military History students, junior officer and mentorship panels, and a joint dining in with our Air Force counterparts. A German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge event is also in the works. I encourage you to stay plugged in through your Cadet leadership and social media to know what's going on.

Over the next couple of months, we will announce the names of Cadets selected to attend Airborne and Air Assault Schools, other specialty schools, Cadet Troop Leadership Training and Project Global Officer (language training) this summer. Our ability to obtain several of these highly competitive slots speaks volumes of our Cadets, their accomplishments, drive and continued efforts to live up to our motto, "Tip of the Spear!"

Perhaps the most exciting event of the semester will be our Ranger Challenge team traveling to West Point at the end



(CDT Adams takes aim while zeroing his rifle the day before the Ranger Challenge Competition)