



Golden Gopher Battalion Commissioning - Spring 2023

Newly minted officers given honors by family and friends

Minneapolis, MN - May 2023 was a pivotal month for 14 Cadets of the Golden Gopher Battalion. It marked the end of their college education and training as Cadets, and the beginning of their Army careers as officers and leaders. Of these new Lieutenants, 4 will serve in the National Guard and 9 will go on to serve in the Active Duty force. The Commissioning

Ceremony for the class of 2023 was held on May 11th, 2023 at the International Market Square in Minneapolis. Family, friends, and fellow Cadets and Cadre gathered to honor and celebrate the achievements of the new LTs. The ceremony included a commissioning address provided by General (Ret.) Joseph Votel, the Oath of Office, and the rendering of the first salute. Though it

is just the beginning of their careers as young officers, this commissioning ceremony represented years of hard work, dedication to academics and military training, and their first major milestone as United States Army Officers. Congratulations to the new Second Lieutenants and good luck in all your future endeavors!

Gopher Strong! Dig Deep!



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U.S. Army Newest Second Lieutenants - Spring 2023

We would like to recognize the new Lieutenants of the 172nd Commissioning Class by Name, Degree, Branch and Army Component:

Sergio Almeida	Urban Studies	Ordnance Corps (EOD)	Active Duty
Michial Foy	Human Resources	Adjutant General	Army Reserve
Sarah E. Bissen	Marketing	Military intelligence	National Guard
Jacob Henriksen	Supply Chain Management	Military Intelligence	Active Duty
Rory K. King	Political Science	Field Artillery (MI)	Active Duty
Kaitlyn R. Kirby	Nursing	Army Nurse Corps	Active Duty
Makenna E. Larson	Nursing	Army Nurse Corps	Active Duty
Garrett Lyons	Ecology & Evolution	Quartermaster	National Guard
Shane Macdonald	Physics	Infantry (MI)	Active Duty
Jacob Michelizzi	Mechanical Engineering	Infantry	Active Duty
Logan O'Connell	Computer Engineering	Cyber	National Guard
Isaac Olson	Environmental Studies	Quartermaster	Active Duty
Travaris Ricks	History	Medical Services	National Guard
Benjamin H. Shreve	Civil Engineering	Corps of Engineers	Active Duty

Cadet Summer Training 2023 By Cadet Alyssa Abke



Cadets Rybachek, Ley, Riesing, Haefner, & Conn at CST graduation



Cadet Voigt & her squad in the field at Cadet Summer Training 2023

Fort Knox, KY - Each year thousands of Cadets from around the country attend training in Basic or Advanced Camps at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Basic Camp is a 32-day training with the focus of introducing new Cadets to the Army Profession. Basic Camp enables Cadets who complete the training opportunity to receive ROTC Military Science credit for those who decide to join an ROTC program later in their college career. Basic Camp is designed to help build the foundation for a future officer and assist Cadets in developing leadership capabilities. Advanced Camp, also known as Cadet Summer Training (CST), is the 35-day capstone that myself and all other Cadets between their third and fourth years attend with successful completion as an ROTC commissioning requirement. The purpose of CST is to train Cadets to Army standards and evaluate officer potential. In the first few days of CST, Cadets go through

in-processing and meet other members of their platoon. The start of camp is called the “garrison phase,” where Cadets stay in the barracks and complete training events like the Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT), weapons qualification, land navigation, gas chamber, and tactical combat casualty care. The garrison phase also serves as a great time for Cadets to get to know one another and create standard operating procedures before going to the field. The field training at CST is comprised of three phases (lasting three days with a rest day between each): wolverine, panther, and grizzly. Throughout each of these phases, Cadets each have a chance to show their leadership capabilities and are evaluated during missions as either a platoon leader, platoon sergeant, or squad leader. Cadets are tasked with leading different missions including an ambush, attack, raid, movement to contact, and defense. Field evaluations grade Ca-

det’s ability to make tactical and logical decisions. A 12-mile ruck march to the barracks marks the end of the field and the start of out-processing before heading home. CST is a different experience for each Cadet, but I think our Cadre and previous Cadets at the University of Minnesota did an exceptional job of preparing last year’s MSIII class to tackle and succeed at Advanced Camp. While nothing prepares someone from Minnesota for Kentucky’s one-of-a-kind humidity, you learn to “embrace the suck” quickly with the help of a few strangers, lots of water, staying motivated during missions, and having a positive attitude. My advice to Cadets next summer is to prepare your tactics throughout the school with lots of questions, be ready to ruck, and execute what you’ve trained. Advanced Camp is like anything else, it’s whatever you make of it. Be the Cadet people enjoy being around and take charge when it’s your turn.

From the Professor of Military Science By Lieutenant Colonel John Nguyen

Welcome back to another action-packed year at the Armory! First and foremost, we would like to extend a warm welcome to our new cadets and their families. We are honored to have you join our program and look forward to witnessing the continued growth and development of future United States Army leaders. Your decision to support them is commendable, and we are honored to be a part of every Cadet's journey. For our returning cadets, welcome back! We are incredibly proud of your accomplishments thus far and cannot wait to see what you will achieve in the coming months. Your hard work, discipline, and perseverance serve as an inspiration to all of us. Together, we will continue to push boundaries and strive for excellence. While most college students enjoyed a relaxing summer, many of our Cadets excelled at the Basic Airborne Course, Air Assault School, various internships, and, most impressively – Cadet Summer Training (CST.) For those unfamiliar with CST- it is a formative leadership experience held every year at Fort Knox, Kentucky, used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of our rising MSIV Cadets. At this thirty-eight-day assessment, Cadets are provided valuable feedback to assist the Army and Cadets in matching the suitable component and branch upon graduation. Following CST, many Cadets continue to negotiate additional training with active duty units, a unique opportunity to gain early insights into the exciting world of platoon-level leadership. While CST is an annual event, this year was different! **This past summer, our rising Seniors (MSIVs) proved to be the most successful cohort of Gopher Cadets in over 20 years!** While their individual successes are truly noteworthy, it is a testament to the quality of instruction they received from Captain Travis McNew and Sergeant First Class Travis Baldrige – two outstanding professionals! The MSIII teaching team from last year mentored and coached this rising class, with 91% achieving an Excellent or higher rating, eight of which earned an overall Outstanding rating at CST. This cohort led the way by producing four RECONDO graduates, up from just one last year. This year, we have an exciting lineup of events, training exercises, and educational opportunities planned

for everyone, whether it be rappelling, fieldcraft, and tactical training, or developing into future junior officers by learning how to manage training, counsel subordinates, and lead others – the comprehensive leadership exposure at the Armory will absolutely be worth the time and effort. **It's no wonder that we have also been recognized by the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) as the best large program in the nation for the second year in a row!** While we prepare for this busy semester, our MSIVs are hungry to take on a more aggressive role in training and leading their fellow Cadets. Fresh from CST, MSIVs have spent the last several weeks planning for the upcoming semester and building on the program's culture to make our MSIIIs successful next summer. Just as our Cadets have transitioned to roles of increased responsibility, the Cadre has also assumed broader and more expansive roles. Notably, Captain McNew will continue to coach and mentor his former MSIIIs as an Assistant MSIV instructor while ensuring the MSIIIs are prepared to assume the mantel roles and responsibilities of a Squad Leader within this rapidly growing program. SFC Gerald Cramer will add to his duties as an MSII instructor and serve as our Senior Military Science Instructor (SMSI), a position charged with looking out for the health and welfare of our program of 200 + Cadets (and growing!) Transitions aren't ever easy; they come with the anxiety of the unknown, but I know that any hesitations are buffered by the boundless energy of our highly qualified and dedicated Cadre. As personnel moves around within the organization, we would be remiss if we didn't welcome our new MSIII teaching team, Captain Jamieson Barnes, and SFC Ivan Krestyn. The MSIII teaching team has come from the Military Intelligence School and Infantry Initial Entry Training, respectively. Both of our MSIII instructors come highly recommended and have already hit the ground running by leading orientation week activities. From leadership development workshops to physical fitness training, we are committed to equipping Cadets with the skills necessary to excel in military and civilian life. In addition to our rigorous training program, we understand the importance

of fostering a supportive and inclusive community. We encourage you to engage with your fellow cadets, build lasting friendships, and lean on one another for support. The bonds you form here will enhance your college experience and serve as a strong foundation for your future military careers – and, more importantly, lifelong friendships. We want to express our gratitude to our parents and loved ones for your unwavering support. We understand that sending your Cadet to college can be exciting and nerve-wracking. Rest assured, we are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment for your sons and daughters; we will build on your foundations of discipline, dignity, and respect. We value your partnership and encourage you to stay involved in their journey. Your guidance and encouragement are invaluable to their success. As we navigate through the challenges of the upcoming year, let us remember the core values that define Army ROTC cadets: loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values will guide us in our pursuit of excellence and will shape us into the leaders our nation needs. Let us make this year one filled with growth, camaraderie, and unforgettable memories. Last year, I sought to increase the connection between the past and the present Cadets, and I remain inspired by James Kerr's book *Legacy: What The All Blacks Rugby Team Can Teach Us About Life*. In this phenomenal book on teamwork, Kerr outlines the critical concept of "Whakapapa," a Maori concept with a modern-day call for loyalty and teamwork. Kerr highlights the concept of Whakapapa by challenging all teammates to "leave the jersey in a better place" and, more importantly, to be a good ancestor. Instead of trying to invent another inspiring theme for this year, I'd like us to continue investing in last year's. Seeing our MSIVs give up their free time to lay the groundwork of success for next year's CST attendees gives me hope that this cultural tradition will continue. Into this new school year, I repeat --- **Whakapapa --- leave the jersey in a better place --- and be a good ancestor!**

Lets get to work!

From the Commandants of Cadets By Sergeant First Class Gerald Cramer

Welcome back, Golden Gopher Battalion Cadets! This summer has been quite eventful, with our Cadets successfully completing Cadet Troop Leader Training (CTLT) at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I had the opportunity to speak to several of our Cadets throughout their experience, and aside from enduring some rigorous weather, the Gopher Battalion did not fail to impress with several Cadets chosen to honor their companies during their graduation ceremony. The Golden Gopher Battalion Cadets have continued to extend their leadership influence over the summer by volunteering to participate in Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) Cadet Leadership Challenge Camps for Cretin-Derham Hall High School and Bemidji High School. I want to thank Cadets Rybachek, Puntillo, Ley,

Larson, and Lauer for professionally representing the Gopher Battalion and providing essential training to develop leadership, discipline, teamwork, and self-confidence in JROTC Cadets. Our Battalion also supported the annual Folds of Honor Summer Concert. This nonprofit organization provides educational scholarships to family members of deceased or disabled veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces. I could not be more satisfied with the selfless service exhibited by Cadets Upham, Detloff, Knoohuizen, Haefner, Odeen, Frattalone, and Jilek for dedicating their personal time to a worthy cause. Throughout the past few months, Cadre and Cadets have continuously strived to better the program with collective efforts focused on improving our organizational climate. Specific focus

areas will be physical training, Army tactics, techniques and procedures, and the Army Leadership Requirement Model. Additionally, the program has exponentially grown, as we will welcome many new Cadets to the Gopher Battalion. We will heavily rely on the experience and mentorship of our recent Cadet Summer Training graduates as we continue to elevate training to new standards. The primary training events we will focus on this semester include several Lead Labs and our Fall Field Training Exercise that will undoubtedly prepare and develop Cadets into future leaders within the United States Army. This semester will provide new leadership challenges to the Gopher Battalion that we will embrace as we broaden the limits of our leadership attributes and competencies. **Gopher Strong, Dig Deep!**

"Embracing Adversity" By Cadet Emily Macakanja

When I searched for the term "adversity" online, I found that it typically refers to difficult, unfortunate, and unlucky situations. Many may agree with this definition, but it is unlikely that we understand the power of this concept. While difficulties that come with adversity are often inconvenient, I would not consider them to be unlucky or unfortunate. However unpleasant - I am grateful for the adversity I have faced because it has made me stronger and more resilient. I have learned that I grow the most when faced with a challenge and need to make a change, especially when I am part of a team. I first learned about the concept of adversity in my MS class this year, and it immediately recalled my personal experiences where I was met with obstacles as a student. The challenges I have faced as a Cadet are completely different. Every day, I am forced to figure out my next meal, work on group projects, and make countless small decisions that shape who I am. In the ROTC context, I face adversity during morning PT, ruck marches, and conflicting events, among other things. With these challenges come valuable lessons and insights that will help me reflect on and navigate similar problems in the future. It is difficult to summarize everything I have learned about adversity as a

Cadet, but at its core, it is about digging deep and working toward a bigger goal. My best example of this would be rucking, something I have grown to value. Rucking consists of putting one foot in front of the other while carrying weight on my shoulders until the finish line. The concept is simple but rucking sometimes feels like a never-ending marathon. Because of this, I used to mentally dread rucks weeks before they happened. They seemed long, heavy, demanding, and impossible, to say the least. On my most recent ruck, I made the decision to change my approach to them. Instead of going in fear, I would embrace the "suck" and use my energy to get through it. I planned to better prepare for them with what I ate and drank, how I packed, and my presence. I followed through with my plan, and suddenly it did not seem so bad. To my surprise, I was able to complete my goal time and have long-lasting confidence in my abilities. That ruck demonstrated my own adversity better than any other challenge in my past. I actively put myself past my obstacles to change the experience. Through this, I learned that what is most important about adversity is that I stick to a challenge, especially when it seems impossible. While it is much easier to quit in difficult scenarios, pushing through them creates a mental state of extreme toughness. This means that whenever I fight through something in-

stead of avoiding it, I am growing stronger and more confident. Using this approach has benefited me in many ways. I enjoy things that others dread, like a tough PT session. I value hard scenarios, like a chilly and wet weekend up at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). I approach my weaknesses, planking or jogging, as opportunities to advance. I have discovered that this approach helps me and can spread to my battle buddies. The impossible I typically face suddenly seems possible by empowering this can-do energy. This idea applies to not only known difficulties but also changes. I am an individual who likes to have a plan in hand, so I do not always appreciate adjustments to my expectations. That being said, my new approach helps me surpass the idea of change and welcome the challenge of it. So, when a PT plan changes, or my team does something differently, I embrace it and hold my head high. This makes me a better team member because I function well in a planned or unknown environment. What I have learned about adversity sums up one main idea: it is hard but worth it. Picking the challenging path means sometimes going alone or anticipating the worst but hoping the benefits outweigh those of the easier path. ROTC has taught me the value of always facing adversity despite the potential struggle, and I am grateful for the lessons it has taught me.

Cadet Battalion Commander By ZLT Jacob Henriksen



University of St. Thomas - The Gopher Battalion has closed the chapter for this Spring Semester, 2023, and the school year 2022-2023. We accomplished a great deal this semester including combined field training exercises with other ROTC programs, putting on and participating in the Norwegian foot march, and competing in multiple competitions. We did all this while being full-time students and taking on further

responsibilities. No matter what level a cadet is in our program, they learned more about our honored profession while developing themselves and every other cadet. We can all walk from campus knowing that we have come a long way in this last semester and year. Whether that Gopher Cadet is attending Cadet Summer training in Fort Knox this summer, attending a specialty school like Air Assault, or working an internship, they can be proud. All these different events will bring challenges, but we have prepared for this and can face these challenges together. Spring Semester always

goes by faster, in my opinion at least, than the Fall. Seniors like myself can take a breath now and reflect on our time as a Cadet before we commission into the Army with the active, guard, or reserve component. I truly enjoyed my time in the Gopher Battalion, especially as the Battalion Commander. Serving with and for my fellow cadets was a rewarding experience. I look forward to seeing how everyone does after commissioning and how the Gopher Battalion continues to progress while remaining one of the best ROTC programs in the country. Gopher Strong!

A Year in Review By ZLT Kaitlyn Kirby

When I enrolled in ROTC, I never expected it to be the best decision I have made in my 22 years of life. This decision, however, came with challenges. Luckily, challenges make life interesting, and overcoming them makes life meaningful. Ten months ago - I wrote a letter to myself before leaving for Cadet Summer Training (CST) and sealed in a note to myself that read, "Open if I feel like dying." At the time, the anxieties and expectations of Cadet life seemingly made my survival at CST more of a fantasy than a legitimate reality. This letter was meant to motivate me during the hard times I encountered. While that letter would never leave my side for the first five days of CST. 28 days later, on the second to last day of CST, its utility was a fleeting moment, and as I was packing my bags, having completed what I set out to accomplish at Fort Knox. I found that letter still in its envelope, crumpled up in the bottom of my overstuffed duffle bag. I had forgotten all about it and once viewed it as necessary for my survival at CST. I am not saying I did not

struggle at CST because I did. However, my entire platoon struggled together, and the bonds I had created motivated me a hundred times more than a letter I had written to myself ever could have. A part of me was sad to leave Fort Knox because it was time to say goodbye to the makeshift, unconventional family that had gotten me through the 35 days of camp. Walking around with a letter sealed in an envelope with "open if I feel like dying" written on it might sound a little dramatic. But leading to CST, I had been on a failing streak. I did not pass the PT test, Land Nav. Or the rifle qual. I accidentally killed my entire squad on an STX lane. And I am still probably forgetting something I messed up on. I would say 90% of my worst performances in life have all come from ROTC. I am not the strongest cadet, but ROTC has pushed me in ways I never expected, and I desperately wanted to succeed in ROTC. Looking back over the last year, I have realized I put too much pressure on myself to do well in ROTC, which prevented me from

having a clear mindset. To this very day, my biggest challenge in ROTC is that I still stress myself out and overcomplicate things. This has led me to second-guess myself and not have as much confidence as I should. The best advice I was given came from a Cadet a year older who told me to focus on having a good time - encouraging me not to stress out about the graded events. Like all good advice, it helped me gain perspective, and CST ended up being a great time with me successfully passing every event the first time. I was dumbfounded multiple times because the most confusing things suddenly became simple. However, when ROTC started again in the fall, I often caught myself putting too much pressure on myself to succeed - again, which led me to overcomplicate things and lose confidence. When I encountered stress this year, I reflected on CST to help reinforce that I do not need to stress myself out and focus on having a good time; it will be alright!

Mega Leadership Laboratory By 2LT Rory King

Arden Hills, MN - University of Minnesota Army ROTC Cadets participated in a Mega Lead Lab conducted at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). The two-day long exercise focused on platoon-level situational training exercise (STX) lanes to prepare MSIII Cadets for Cadet Summer Training (CST) this upcoming summer. All of them were evaluated on their leadership in the position of platoon leader, platoon sergeant, and squad leader. The MSIIIs also received an in-depth class on patrol base operations as well as sharpening their night land navigation skills with a few repetitions. Being in Minnesota, conditions were wet and cold, but all Cadets remained positive throughout training and felt comradery with their peers as they practiced executing missions.



Physical Training & Joint Military Athletic Competition By 2LT Makenna Larson

Minneapolis, MN - The Gopher Battalion stayed very busy with all our physical training sessions and a revamp of Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT) instruction and training. At the beginning of the semester, the entire battalion received in-depth instruction and training on preparing for the ACFT and correctly grading each event. This new program was implemented to reduce PT and ACFT-related injuries by educating Cadets on how to exercise with proper form and how to build their own workout plans to achieve a higher score. Another big change to the PT regime is using a skill-level tier system. The tier system places Cadets in groups or tiers based on their physical abilities, which are

measured by their ACFT scores so they can PT with Cadets with similar capabilities. Throughout the semester, aside from the ACFT, we also executed events like the Combat Water Survival Training (CWST) and The Joint Military Athletic Competition (JMAC). JMAC took place this February, where Cadets and Midshipmen from Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC competed against each other in various sports events to determine who was the best. It was a great opportunity to build camaraderie between branches. The Gopher Battalion also conducted a 6- and 8-mile ruck to prepare Cadets for summer leadership training and enhance physical fitness. At the end of the semester, a 12-mile ruck was executed at Arden Hills

Army Training Site for MSIs and MSIIIs to get familiar with rucking and MSIIIs to prepare them for Advanced Camp. We conducted one official ACFT this semester. Everyone performed phenomenally with the new PT system in place and achieved great results.



Cadet during the new Combat Fitness Test (ACFT)

The Power of Empathy as a Leader By Cadet Maggie Fliszar

Leadership Excellence in practice looks like humbling oneself to recognize the importance of being a lifelong learner in all aspects of the Army. When leaders approach their roles with a positive, eager-to-learn attitude, it sets an example for their team members and creates a culture of continuous improvement. Throughout my two years as a Cadet at the University of Minnesota Gopher Battalion, I have seen my fellow cadets exhibit a wide range of leadership styles, all unique in their characteristics but united by the common thread of fostering an environment of creativity and growth. Genuine

leadership excellence is not about having all the answers but rather about being willing to learn and grow, ultimately benefiting the team and the organization as a whole. When I arrived at the Armory on a hot day in August, a week before starting my Freshman Year of college, I wondered if I had made the right decision. There was so much to learn about ROTC that I was unsure if I was the right candidate for the program. However, as I continued to learn more about the program and its beliefs during the first few weeks of school, I became increasingly convinced that I had made the right

decision, and my passion for ROTC started to take root. ROTC provides the structure necessary to remain productive throughout the semester's seemingly endless slew of classes and homework. As I begin my day every day surrounded by other students seeking to improve themselves, I am inspired to work harder. There have been moments when I've felt unmotivated or hesitant to step out of my comfort zone. Still, when I see the determination and effort on the faces of my fellow cadets, it serves as a reminder of how fortunate I am to have the opportunity to improve myself every single day.

Bataan Memorial Death March/Marathon By ZLT Makenna Larson



White Sands, NM - The Gopher Battalion sent 17 Cadets to compete in the annual Death March at the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico this semester. Two five-man light teams were sent, one representing the Gopher Battalion and the other sponsored by the Vessey Chapter. A five-man heavy team and two Cadets who participated in the honorary half were also sent this year. The five-man heavy team

consisted of 4 Army Cadets and one Marine option Midshipman from the University of Minnesota ROTC programs. The light and heavy teams completed 26.2 miles in the desert of New Mexico, and the heavy team carried 35 lbs. The light A-team finished in first place for the military light team division, with a few team members finishing first in their individual age groups. The light B-team also finished first for their respective category of civilian light, with a few of their members finishing first for

their age groups. Overall, it was an amazing opportunity to go down and participate in such a meaningful race. Hopefully, next year we can bring home first place again!



Ranger Buddy Competition By Cadet Aislin Rogers



Lawrence, KS - University of Minnesota Army ROTC Ranger Buddy team competed at the 28th Annual Ranger Buddy Competition hosted by Kansas University and won the Best Battalion Award for distinguishing themselves as the most proficiently and physically talented team in the 3rd Brigade, U.S. Army Cadet Command. The competition

consisted of a 15-kilometer ruck, 12 Expert Infantry Badge (EIB) skill lanes, one physical mystery event, and a 5-kilometer run. Last year was the first time in history that the Gopher Battalion won the Ranger Buddy Competition's Best Battalion Award. They did it again for the second consecutive year in a row this year. We had two male, two female, and two co

-ed teams travel to Kansas to compete in this challenging competition. By winning Best Battalion, the team earned one Airborne School slot. The buddy ranger team can attribute their success to physically challenging training, in-depth practice for skills lanes, and Cadets willing to show up every day to work hard towards a common goal.

The Northern Warfare Challenge By Captain Stephen McNew



La Crosse, WI - The 3rd Army ROTC Brigade annually hosts the Northern Warfare Challenge. This occurred on February 24th-25th at Grandad Bluff in La Crosse, Wisconsin. This year the Gopher Battalion sent two teams to compete in some of the worst winter conditions the north offers. They were tested on survival and soldiering skills using cold-weather-related skills

and practical exercises in harsh winter conditions. On the first day of the competition, Cadets were tested on their rifle marksmanship, cold weather first aid, knot tying, and fire testing. On the second day, they braved the snowy terrain on a 16-mile ruck where, for a large portion of the time, they had to drag a weighted sked through the deep snow to simulate a casualty. The snow-covered trails cover over 3500 feet of elevation, with the finish

line at Grandad's Bluff. It is safe to say that the teams were challenged, from cold, wet feet to having no water source because it froze solid; the Cadets dug deep and rose to the occasion. Northern Warfare Challenge is deemed "The Hardest Race in ROTC," and it almost was for the Cadets from the Gopher Battalion. Upon completing the event, Cadets better understood winter survival skills and bettered themselves mentally and physically.

Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX) By 2LT Rory King

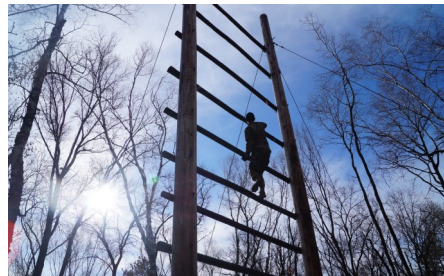


Camp Ripley, MN - Gopher Battalion conducted their annual three-day CFTX this April at Camp Ripley, Minnesota along with cadets from UND, NDSU, MSU, and SJU. This was a great opportunity for first year to senior Cadets to train with other schools and prepare for Cadet Summer Training (the culminating event for ROTC Cadets).



Obstacle Course

Basic Course Cadets completed an obstacle course while the Juniors were on the rifle qualification range. The obstacle course consisted of squads working together to get through a series of events that are



both physically and mentally challenging. Squads competed against each other in a time race to see which squad could get through the course the fastest. This event built confidence and created team cohesion.

Land Navigation



Cadets closed out the weekend with a challenging land navigation course. Land Navigation consists of using a map and compass to traverse through the woods and find points. MSIII's ran the course individually to build confidence before this summer when they travel to summer training in Fort Knox, KY. Fresh-

man and sophomore Cadets conducted the course in buddy team pairs to practice teamwork and build practical experience on land nav.



Basic Rifle Marksmanship

Junior Cadets spent Monday at the M4 Rifle zero and qualification ranges. Cadets honed their marksmanship skills getting a tight grouping and successfully zeroing their



weapons before moving on to the qualification range where most received multiple opportunities to hone their skills prior to Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, KY.

STX Lanes



Squad Tactical Exercise (STX) lanes which was the main event of the weekend, consisted of platoons comprised of cadets from all different schools working together and completing missions such as ambushes, attack, and recons. Cadets began STX lanes with a ride by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters to

their starting points. Cadets then traversed through the cold and snowy terrain completing the missions given. Third year Cadets led the platoons in great fashion and now better prepared to succeed this summer at Cadet Summer Training.



Joint Service Review By 2LT Makenna Larson

Minneapolis, MN - This semester, the Gopher Battalion participated in the 64th annual Joint Service Review (JSR) ceremony. This parade and review is conducted by the Army, Air Force, and Navy/Marine ROTC programs from the University of Minnesota and its cross-town schools commemorate the annual tradition of “inspecting of troops” while celebrating the achievements and success of the Cadets and Midshipmen through the presentation of various awards. The Gopher Bat-

alion’s Color Guard and select Cadets who were chosen to be key personnel, trained bright and early to learn different drill and ceremonies techniques and movements. These movements included platoon movements, in-ranks inspection, rifle drill, and unique ceremonies. To prepare for this event Cadets and Midshipmen participated in numerous early morning practices and dress rehearsals to ensure that everyone was proficient in their drill and ceremony. The event took place at the University of

Minnesota Field House this year where friends and family of the Cadets and Midshipmen gathered to watch the review as well as celebrate their accomplishments together. This year, we were honored to hear what our guest speaker, Rear Admiral Eric Ver Hage, had to say and the advice he shared with the units. We attribute the success of the event through the great efforts of the students in all ROTC programs as well as the Cadre who provide us with great mentorship along the way.

Gopher Volunteer Team By 2LT Garrett Lyons



Minneapolis, MN - This semester, the Golden Gopher Battalion made its presence known by giving back to its community, and continuing military tradition by training upcoming leaders. This was only possible through the many hours our Cadets had invested. The first event of the semester was at the New York Giants vs Minnesota Vikings game on January 15th. Our Cadets participated in the pre-game American flag ceremony. Throughout the semester, The Gopher Battalion strengthened ties with Cretin-Derham Hall High School by assisting with various training

sessions, including drill and ceremony, as well as uniform inspections. Our Color Guard OIC Cadet Upham ensured participation from our Color Guard Team at these events. Additionally, to give back to our veterans and families, the Gopher Battalion volunteered at the Fishing for Life Gala. Here, our Cadets assisted by ensuring the event ran smoothly by overseeing events such as the silent auction, raffles, and various games. Following this, our Cadets helped to clean up after the buffet dinner. For the Gopher Battalions final volunteering event, our Cadets

pledged to spend 5 days at the JROTC Cadet Leadership Challenge (JCLC) at Camp Wilderness in Park Rapids. The basic duties and responsibilities for our cadets included overseeing a swim test, a “Mixed Platoon Team Building”, which was an opportunity for the JROTC Cadets from different schools to get to know one another. Furthermore, our Cadets were given the opportunity to plan and execute morning PT, practicing marches with cadences, and serve as mentors throughout the entire list of activities.

The Essay competition

This semester the University of Minnesota Army ROTC program held its first essay competition. It was a great opportunity for Cadets to reflect on what ROTC, the Army, their future service, and past endeavors

means to them. It was also a great way for Cadre to learn the perspectives of the Cadets. There were scholarship awards for different prompts. There were two prompts for freshman and sophomore Cadets and two

prompts for Junior and Senior Cadets. Throughout this newsletter there are essay submissions displayed in between articles. Below is a snippet of the \$1000 winning essay by Cadet Bailey Snidarich.

A Year in Review By Cadet Bailey Snidarich



Starting off the year a new Military Science level, with different peers, more responsibilities, and a newfound mindset can be quite the challenge. However, with challenge comes many lasting memories, and here are some of the ones that have made this year quite a memorable experience. The first highlight I would like to acknowledge is the Field Training Exercise (FTX) that happened within this fall. The event in itself is such a bonding experience with the members in the program, not only with the individuals within your MS level, but also your designated platoon. You interact with so many new people within the ROTC program, and it was interesting to be

on the teaching end of things this year, compared to the one being taught. Last year, I came into the program with big round eyes, scared of the whole new realm ROTC was to me, and now I am properly able to realize all the skills I have been taught within the past two years. For me personally, I experienced most of my conflict through internal battles. I started out the school year, very timid and not really involved within the program, which was very hard for me, as a social individual. I was scared to put myself out there, thinking that everyone else was better than me or knew more about the army lifestyle than I did. I think a lot of the struggles I had within the program was putting people on a higher pedestal than myself, and I ended up noticing this from a friendship I made within the program who pointed it out. After I was able to see that I did that, I made it a point to try to fix it. From that point on, I decided to try out for multiple specialty teams, challenge myself to communicate more with my peers, undertake leadership positions when offered, and attend volunteer events when applicable. By doing so I gained confidence, multiple friendships, and many fun experiences. Confidence has always been something I have

lacked throughout my life, but through the program I have slowly been able to gain and realize the true leader I can be. The help and support of my peers and cadres' words of encouragement, caused me to put myself out there and achieve my max potential. I now have the utmost confidence that I will become a great leader, and am now able to view a new career path for myself, one that will challenge me and test my limits daily, only this time, I know I am capable. For Future Cadets, my main advice would be to not be afraid to go outside of your comfort zone. It seems silly to say, but it is so true. The more you put yourself in uncomfortable situations the more you will see growth within yourself. Another word of advice is to try out things and put yourself out there, whether it be through specialty teams, volunteer events, leadership positions, or simply just hanging out at the armory, a simple moment or event can make a world of a difference. Part of the reason this ROTC program is so wonderful is that you truly do get to decide how involved you are in the program and the amount of time you dedicate to it. Within the program you get out what you put into it, and you never know what opportunity is waiting for you right around the corner.

Norwegian Foot March & Trail Run By Mr. Alberto DeJesus



Arden Hills, MN - Imagine 497 Soldiers, Cadets, and Civilians hiking 30 kilometers while carrying 25 pounds on your back. In partnership with the Norwegian consulate, the University of Minnesota Army ROTC, and the Association of United States Army, Vessey Chapter hosted the Annual Norwegian Foot March & Trail Run on 15 April 2023 in the trails

of Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). This event is an opportunity for U.S. Soldiers to earn the Norwegian Foot March Badge while at the same time loading their rucksacks with non-perishable food donations for Second Harvest Heartland. For the first time, the course featured a 5-kilometer and 30-kilometer Trail Run options, open to the public. The event also features music, food, a business expo, and a Leadership Forum presented by LTG

(R) Tom James - AUSA Leader Fellow. Proceeds from the event will benefit the AUSA Troops of Tomorrow initiative and military programs throughout Minnesota. The 2024 Norwegian Foot March & Trail Run date is set, and information on getting the next badge can be found online on the Norwegian Foot March & Trail Run website. This year's event was covered by NBC Kare 11 during their Saturday Morning Show. [Watch the Video Footage Here.](#)



LTG (R) James during the Expo Leadership Forum.



Emily Byrd placed 1st overall in the 30K Trail Run.



Fighting Saints Alumni Jake & Jennifer Lillehaug and LTG (R) James during the NFM Expo.

Save The Date



Saturday, April 13, 2024

Visit our website at UMNNorwegianFootMarch.com



Scan to register online

Congratulations to Awards & Scholarships Winners

Our Army ROTC Cadets are regularly recognized by prestigious University Alumni, Scholarship Foundations, and Department of Defense Agencies for their outstanding leadership potential and diligent efforts to better themselves and others. Whether it is a certificate of appreciation or full tuition and fees, these scholarships truly recognize the continued support and respect your choice to join our Profession of Arms and what it means to the community. We would like to congratulate the students who have been recipients of awards over this past semester and to those future Golden Gopher Battalion members who have won and accepted Army ROTC scholarship. We are looking forward to seeing you all in the 2023 Fall semester.

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2023 Awards Recipients

Military Officers’ Association of America: Cadet Alyssa Abke

General Society of the War of 1812: Cadet Isaiah Gutierrez

American Legion Military Excellence: Cadets Molly McNeely, Kayla Becker, Aislin Rogers, Kaitlyn Kirby

American Legion Scholastic Excellence: Cadets Trevor Cragoe, Charles Frattalone, Matthew McCormick, Noah Kreiling

American Legion ROTC Scholarship Award: Cadets Haley Wolff, Priscilla Wright

William T. Harris American Legion Leadership Award: Cadet Madalyn McGarry

Sons of the American Revolution: Cadet Samuel Palmer

Daughters of the American Revolution: Cadet Makenna Larson

Reserve Officers Association: Cadets Mason Knooihuizen, Leo Puntillo, Benjamin Shreve

George C. Marshall Leadership Award: Cadet Jacob Henriksen

Association of the U.S. Army Leadership Award: Cadet Benjamin VanBinsbergen

National Sojourners Award for Americanism: Cadet Raina Hoge

Veterans of Foreign Wars: Cadet Stafford Handlang

Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction: Cadet Zachary Upham

Department of the Army Superior Cadet: Cadets Simon Granberg, Margaret Fliszar, Anna Decker, Shane MacDonald

2023 Scholarship Recipients

National Scholarship Winners:

University of Minnesota: Bryce Commerford, Miles Mattes, William Moran, Eric Zauha

University of St. Thomas: Gretchen Olson, Vincent Volp

Spring 2023 Campus-Based Scholarship Winners:

University of Minnesota: Isaiah Gutierrez, Sihyun Thompson, Nicolas Karp, Nathan Kim, Seren Smore, Kristen Stauffer

University of Northwestern-St. Paul: Steven Begger

University of St. Thomas: Abdikadir Mohamed, Alia Rieger

2023 3-Year Advanced Designee Scholarship: Peter Ciaccio, Lily Kania, Aidan Lee, Andrew Lennox, Alexander Miller, Arnav Nagrecha

2023 Minuteman Scholarships

Army National Guard: Kade Arms-Regenold, William Arana, Matias Ayala, Kaitlyn Baker, Gavin Chow, Ashlyn Erickson, Hope Furdaus, Carolina Galas, Logan Giles, Christina Hoang, Evan Ledoux, Jack Loes, Aleka London, Alaina Morrow, AliceAnne Pegg, Ayden Reeves, Matthew Rothfork, Evan Shotzko

Army Reserve: Maxwell Osterkamp, Cadence Parker, Kamren Saffold, Dayton Smith, Alexander Torres, Andrew Torres

SY 23 -24 Scholarship Board Dates

Campus Based:

August 2023

September 2023

High School/National Boards:

17-21 October 2023

23-27 January 2024

Welcome New Cadets By 2LT Rory King



SFC Krestyn introduces basic Drill & Ceremony drills to the Gopher Battalion newest Cadets during the New Cadet Orientation.

Minneapolis, MN- Welcome to the Gopher Battalion! New cadets you are beginning your journey into a distinguished Corps of Cadets who will motivate and support you to better yourself. We have a storied history dating back to when the University of Minnesota was designated a land-grant institution and the Army ROTC program was created. Our program will give you the tools, training, and experiences that will help you succeed in any competitive environment. On August 28th and 29th 2023, the Army ROTC Gopher Battalion hosted the annual New Cadet Orientation. During this two-day event, the new Cadets received information which helped to set them up for success in ROTC. Cadre and Cadet leadership answered questions and gave presen-

tations on ROTC and the military lifestyle. Cadets completed the Army Combat Fitness Test in preparation for contracting and received their standard issue of Army ROTC gear. Of course, we also provided time for the Cadets to socialize and get to know their Chain of Command and fellow classmates. The University of Minnesota's fall semester will begin on September 6th, 2023. We plan to welcome approximately 91 new Cadets for School Year 2023-2024. Of those, we anticipate over 35 Cadets will join ROTC with a scholarship offer already in hand. These Cadets join us from hometowns across the nation while they attend schools throughout the Twin Cities metro area, including the University of Saint Thomas, Bethel University, Hamline University, the

University of Northwestern, Metropolitan State University, and the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Within this group of new Cadets, we also expect that we will have one of the largest populations of SMP Cadets (those currently serving in the Army Reserve or Minnesota Army National Guard) that we've seen in several years. We are excited to welcome them into our ranks. After a busy summer of recruiting and summer training for Cadets and Cadre. We are eager to return to classes and field training. We have been very impressed with the quality of new Cadets and have every confidence that all will serve as excellent additions to the Gopher Battalion as they work toward the ultimate goal of becoming the future leaders of the U.S. Army!

What Does Leadership Excellence Mean? By Cadet Ben VanBinsbergen

This fall, I have been given the opportunity and the **privilege** of being the Cadet Battalion Commander. This is a role that I have been hoping to achieve since my freshman year, and I am honored to be able to help develop so many future leaders throughout the course of the next semester. I, and the rest of the cadet command team and staff, have big shoes to fill following the MSIVs who have now moved into the next chapter of their careers. That being said, there are a few things that I hope to see in the fall. The first is a growing sense of inclusion that we

really began to see throughout this last year. Using a mentorship program, specialty teams, and our training events, we want everybody to be able to find their place in this program. Trust cannot be built if you do not feel included, and every great team has a strong foundation of trust. The second thing I would like to see this fall is training that is more specifically catered to each MS level. By doing this, we can maximize the benefit we receive from these events. We all have a lot on our plates, and sometimes we may not have enough free time outside of class and ROTC to study the material that we are learning. Building that specific knowledge

further during our Lead Labs, MLL, and FTX events, can help all cadets in the program grow. The last thing I want to see in the fall is for everybody to enjoy their time in ROTC truly. We are all here to learn, build connections, and grow as leaders. Sometimes we forget to take a step back and enjoy this experience. Take the time to join a specialty team, make memories with your peers, and, most importantly, have fun. I encourage every cadet to be involved because I know that some of my best memories in this program are from competitions and volunteer events where you get to build that sense of comradery with your peers.

Sights from Spring 2023



Bataan Marathon team at White Sands Missile Range, NM



Cadets at Arden Hills Training Site during a Mega Lead Lab



Cadet Detloff at Camp Ripley, Mn during the Combines Field Training Exercise



Cadet Fox receiving an award at the Joint Service Review



Cadets VanBinsbergen and Conn during an 8-mile ruck march

Sights from Spring 2023



Cadet Haefner during a Leadership Laboratory



Luncheon with the 3rd Brigade Commander—COL Lewis



Cadet Reising during Engagement Skills Training



Cadets competing during the Joint Military Athletic Competition



Cadets Macdonald and Kreiling at Mega Lead Lab



Senior Cadets during the Annual Joint Service Review

Sights from Spring 2023



Cadets Riewer and Theune during Tactical Combat Casualty Care



Cadets Hoge and Rogers during Call for Fire training



Golden Gopher Cadets executing the pass and review during Annual Joint Service Review



Cadets Voigt & Hoge completing a functions check on a M240B Machine Gun



Cadets McCormick, Cleary, & Decker during a team building event



University of Minnesota Army ROTC

Gopher Strong!

Army Reserve Officer Training Corps

15 Church Street S.E. ,
 Minneapolis MN, 55455
 Armory Building Room 101
 Golden Gopher Battalion

Phone: 612-386-8491
 E-mail: arotc@umn.edu

If you know someone who has the potential to be an Army officer, tell them about us! They don't have to be from Minnesota! We have great opportunities for high school and in-college scholarships. Current enlisted Army National Guard and Reserves enrolled at the University of Minnesota are also eligible to participate in Army ROTC and may be eligible for additional scholarship and DoD programs. Call (612) 386-8491 or email arotc@umn.edu for more information.

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AUSA– Voice of the Army

Consider joining the Golden Gopher Subchapter of AUSA. Since 1957, the Association of the U.S. Army has worked to support all aspects of national security while advancing the interests of America's Army and the men and women who serve. AUSA is a private, non-profit educational organization that supports America's Army—Active, National Guard, Reserve, Civil-

ians, Retirees and family members. AUSA provides our Cadets numerous Professional Development Opportunities at a variety of events both local and national. All new Cadets are qualified for 2-year complimentary membership. Visit the General Vessey Chapter's website at <https://vesseychapter.org/> or call Mr. Alberto DeJesús at (612) 386-8491 to learn more.



If you are interested in making a donation please contact (612) 624-3080 or send to Attn: Campus Life Program Cadets Fund, 15 Church St. SE, Minneapolis,