Minneapolis, MN - On May 9th, at Northrop Auditorium of the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, the graduating ROTC Class of 2024 started their new chapter in the United States Army. This spring, the Golden Gopher Battalion commissioned 27 new 2nd Lieutenants. Of these Lieutenants, almost half will serve in the Army National Guard in Minnesota, and the rest will serve in the Active Duty and Army Reserve. 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, new Lieutenants, and good luck with all future decisions and actions.

Golden Gopher Battalion Commissioning Class of 2024

We would like to recognize the new Lieutenants of the 173rd Commissioning Class by Name, Degree, Branch, and Army Component:

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Degree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alyssa Abke</td>
<td>Mortuary Science</td>
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<td>Madalyn McGarry</td>
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<td>Tony Ratshourmy</td>
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<td>Emma Voigt</td>
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<td>Adjutant General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Wimmer</td>
<td>Political Science &amp; History</td>
<td>Engineer EOD Detail</td>
<td>Active Duty</td>
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Reflecting on a great school year brings to mind countless memories of growth, learning, and camaraderie. This past academic year has been remarkable, marked by big and small achievements and a community that has grown stronger and more connected, particularly within our ROTC program. From the very first day, there was an unmistakable sense of excitement in the air as cadets returned from their summer break with eager minds, ready to complete their degrees and commissions or embark on the new journey of being an ROTC cadet. Our extracurricular activities flourished this year. Highlights include placing 1st at the Task Force and Brigade Ranger Challenge, with the team eventually earning an 11th place finish at the Sandhurst International Military School Competition held at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Other notable accomplishments include strong showings at the Bataan Memorial Death March, Norwegian Foot March, various Color Guard activities, and community engagement throughout the year. Community involvement has been another standout aspect of this school year. Cadets participated in numerous volunteer activities, from organizing food drives to mentoring our affiliated Junior ROTC cadets across Minneapolis. These efforts not only helped those in need but also instilled a sense of responsibility and empathy in our future leaders. Academically, our students have excelled as we continue to rank within the top 10% of ROTC programs nationwide. Over the summer, our cadets are participating in internships and training that will undoubtedly benefit the program upon their return. One cannot overlook the resilience shown by everyone in our program, notably the MSIIIs, as they endure tough training, a rigorous tempo, and the humbling heat at Cadet Summer Training at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Amid the classroom challenges, our juniors have been tested on their skills among a national cohort and have performed splendidly. Looking back, it is clear that this school year has been about more than just academic achievements. It has been a year of building character, fostering relationships, and creating a supportive environment where everyone can thrive. The bonds formed and lessons learned will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on all of us. As we grow to over 230+ cadets, we look forward to the challenges and blessings of this expansion while working diligently to foster growth in these future lieutenants. We look ahead with optimism, ready to embrace new challenges and opportunities. The foundation laid this year will continue to support our growth and success in the years to come. Here’s to celebrating a truly great school year, and looking forward to many more! My enduring challenge for everyone is to take on the Māori concept of "Whakapapa"—to be good ancestors and help us plant roots for future generations!

Golden Gopher Cadets weighing their Ruck Sacks during a 12-mile foot march at Arden Hills Army Training Site

Cadet Lindsoe is writing Blue Cards, which is a performance evaluation of the MSIIIs after they have completed their tour of duty.
Another great school year in the books for the Gopher Battalion. It has been an honoring experience to see how much we have grown and developed over the course of two semesters. Throughout the academic school year, we have accomplished numerous training events to include labs, field training exercises and competitions that have magnified our Corps of Cadets dedication toward excellence. This year, seniors planned, resourced, and executed these training events. They have proven to be ready to lead the next generation of soldiers in the United States Army. In addition to this, they played a pivotal role in mentoring and coaching future leaders within our program by dedicating their time and experience in order to prepare our juniors for success as the enter Advanced Camp at Fort Knox, KY. Our junior class has been equally busy balancing their duties and responsibilities as platoon leaders and completing rigorous training throughout both semesters. Our specialty teams have conducted many events including the Army 10 Miler, Northern Warfare Challenge, Bataan Memorial Death March, Norwegian Ruck March, Task Force Ranger Challenge, Sandhurst Ranger Challenge, and Kansas University Buddy Ranger Challenge. The training and efforts of this year’s Ranger Challenge Detachment team captains solidified wins for numerous competitions. Our Buddy Ranger teams performed exceptionally well under the guidance of CDT Aislin Rogers. They managed to achieve first place finishes for the under-class coed team and upper-class coed team. The UMN-TC Ranger Challenge team outperformed numerous schools with the guidance of CDT John Cleary and CDT Michael Conn. Their competitive desire motivated others to perform to the best of their abilities earning first place finishes at Task Force Ripley Ranger Challenge and Brigade Ranger Challenge, overall placing themselves as one of top three ROTC Ranger Challenge Teams in the nation. A great effort by all of our specialty teams that speaks volumes to the character and dedication that our Cadets have toward being successful. As we conclude the semester with our commissioning ceremony, it is important for our seniors to reflect on their accomplishments throughout their time as a Gopher. 24 will walk the stage and receive their commission as second lieutenants (2LT). They have chosen to be something greater than themselves, and we are extremely proud to have assisted them achieve their goals of leading the next generation of troops. There is not a doubt in my mind that we have set our future leaders up for success. They will meet challenges and endeavors head-on and apply sound character and judgment to navigate their careers. Overall, we are proud of what you have done for our organization and encourage you to prepare for the next chapter, Basic Officer Leader Course. We look forward to the start of the Fall Semester and seeing the results from Cadet Summer Trainings, particularly with our MS III class as they compete for their branch assignments. Lastly, I would like to welcome some new members to our team Mr. Shane Fossan, CPT Brady Carroll and MSG Joseph Koval. Mr. Fossan will assume the duties of our Supply Specialist, ensuring our Cadets are equipped and prepared for training. CPT Carroll will assume the duties as the Assistant Professor of Military Science for the MSIII class. MSG Koval will assume the duties and responsibilities of the Senior Military Science Instructor. We are excited for the journey ahead and continuing to make this program the best in the nation. Congrats to our newly commissioned officers and too the rest of Corps of Cadets have a fun and safe summer, and we will see you in the fall!

I am an Army Cadet. Soon I will take an oath and become an Army Officer committed to defending the values which make this nation great. Honor is my touchstone. I understand mission first and people always.

I am the past – the spirit of those warriors who have made the final sacrifice.

I am the present – the scholar and apprentice soldier enhancing my skills in the science of warfare and the art of leadership.

But above all, I am the future – the future warrior leader of the United States Army. May God give me the compassion and judgment to lead and the gallantry in battle to win. I will do my duty.

What it all means

The Cadet Creed, in a few carefully selected words, explains what is expected of an Army cadet. The Cadet Creed is a key element in the traditions of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps. The following explanation, when appropriate, accompanies the reading of the Cadet Creed.
Cadet Battalion Commander  By 2LT Matthew McCormick

As we approach the end of a busy school year, I want to highlight the efforts of cadets this past semester. At lead lab one cadets learned about valuable patrolling skills like camouflage, range cards, call for fire, and ASIP radios. We then learned about tactical casualty combat care and evaluating casualties at lead lab two. We rounded out our soldier skills by training on weapon systems like the claymore and M240b at lead lab 3. After spring break our cadets rolled straight into mega lead lab, where MSIII’s executed hands on leadership training in preparation for CST by leading MSI’s and MSII’s through situational tactical exercises (STX Lanes). The Gopher Battalion MSIV’s and staff then hosted the annual Norwegian Foot March at the Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS). The hard work continued at CFTX with two days of STX lanes, M4 qualification, the obstacle course, land navigation, and the hand grenade assault course at CFTX. We finished off the semester strong with a 12-mile ruck march. Throughout the semester many of our cadets had great success in additional specialty teams including placing 1st overall at KU Buddy Ranger, 3rd place ROTC team at the Sandhurst Military teams competition, two teams placing 2nd in their respective categories at the Bat- taan Memorial Death March, and a strong team finish at the Northern Warfare Challenge. I am proud of the accomplishments of all the members of the Gopher Battalion this year and am grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Gopher Battalion Command- er. I encourage all members of the Gopher Battalion to continue their personal growth over summer break. I also want to wish the best of luck to all the cadets, staff, and cadre of the Gopher Battalion in their future endeavors.

Cadet Command Sergeant Major  By 2LT Maya Thueue-Baillargeon

The Golden Gopher Battalion is in the home stretch to what has been an exceptionally accomplished semester. I have seen an incredible amount of drive in the battalion this semester, not only in new cadets pushing themselves to do things they have never done before, but also in returning cadets ensuring that everyone had the tools and knowledge they needed to be successful. We started off the semester with our Spring Mega Lead Lab, where cadets ran tactical missions, did land navigation, and conducted warrior task training. I enjoyed talking with OPFOR cadets I had not gotten to know yet and sharing knowledge from my years in ROTC and my Advanced Camp experiences. Amidst multiple labs, including training on Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) and rappelling off of our very own Armory’s tower, we conducted 6-mile, 8-mile, and 12-mile tactical ruck marches. Speaking of ruck marches, several of our cadets successfully completed the Norwegian Foot March, earning a foreign award that they will be able to wear on their AGSU dress uniform. Our final training was the Spring Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX), which proved to showcase further tactical improvement among the MSIII’s running missions, as they learned how to navigate extra challenges like working with people they had never met before, incorporating their fires plans into missions, and dealing with live EPWs! OPFOR was particularly enthusiastic for this training and provided valuable feedback and perspective. Throughout CFTX, I saw cadets of every MS level teaching each other needed skills, tactics, and encouraging one another. Lastly, I wanted to speak directly to the battalion. Thank you for always striving to do your best and be a good battle buddy. I saw a lot of great leadership this semester, which makes me excited to see the officers you will become and the great things you will accomplish.
Mega Leadership Laboratory  By Cadet Nicholas Gunstrom

Arden Hills, MN - University of Minnesota ROTC Cadets executed another successful Mega Lead for Spring 2024. From March 22nd to March 24th, Golden Gopher Cadets continued to build off the skills and training developed during Fall and Spring semester and refine many of the events exercised during Fall Mega Lead Lab. This training event took place at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS), and it is one of the many reasons the program continues to excel along with a motivated body of Cadets.

On Friday (March 22), UMN Cadets continued to refine land navigation skills. Utilizing a map, protractor, and compass, Cadets conducted land navigation training during both daylight hours and at night with limited visibility. On Saturday (March 23), Cadets got repetitions conducting missions and putting infantry tactics at the platoon level into practice. Finally, on Sunday (March 24), UMN Cadets were tested on a variety of individual soldiering skills and engaged in Warrior Task Training. These Warrior Tasks include skills on weapons proficiency on the M4 carbine to the 240B machine gun, knowledge of medical combat casualty care techniques, and a variety of other tactical skills and disciplines.

Cadet Summer Training (CST) Prep  By Cadet Charles Frattalone

Minneapolis, MN - In preparation for Cadet Summer Training (CST) in Fort Knox, KY, MSIII Cadets spent the Spring semester mastering their individual soldering skills. These tasks include Radio Procedures, Weapon Assembly and Disassembly with M4, M249, and M240B weapon systems, Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), 9-Line MEDEVAC Request, Range Cards, Camouflaging, and more. To develop proficiency, each MSIII Cadet were required to master at least one or two individual skills to develop others within the Gopher Battalion. During Wednesday afternoon Lead Labs, they had the opportunity to teach a class to the cadets from multiple MS levels on their respective skills. The culmination of the Lead Lab Classes and Mega Lead Lab tested MSIII Cadets on their soldering skills in a high-stakes environment, simulating the upcoming testing at CST. By doing so, the Gopher Battalion fostered subject matter expertise that ultimately built confidence in Cadets for not only CST, but also their future Army careers.
Bataan Memorial Death March/Marathon  By Cadet Bailey Snidarich

White Sands Missile Range, NM - In March of 2024, 16 University of Minnesota – Twin Cities ROTC cadets took on the tough and grueling, Bataan Memorial Death March. The Bataan Memorial Death March is an event that takes place annually in commemoration of the Bataan Death March, and take place at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. The cadets spend 6 months of hard work, dedication, and many long cold runs outside while combating the harsh weather in Minnesota to prepare for Bataan. This means, six days a week for six months, these cadets were outside training whether it be negative two degrees out or heavy rain, they were putting in the work.

The Bataan course is known to be one of the toughest Marathon courses in the United States, with an elevation gain of 1,939 feet throughout the course and constant rolling hills. This year we were able to have two Bataan light teams (26.2 miles without a rucksack), one Bataan heavy team (26.2 Miles with a 35lb rucksack), and one honorary half marathoner (14.2-mile run) compete. Upon completion, the UMN Army ROTC light team took 2nd overall for their division, the civilian co-ed light team took 2nd overall for their division as well, the heavy team took 10th overall for the ROTC heavy division, and lastly our Honorary Marcher took 18th overall.

Sandhurst Military Skills Competition  By Cadet John Cleary

West Point, NY - On April 26-27th, a Ranger Challenge team of twelve Gopher Battalion Cadets competed for the first time in the 2024 Sandhurst Military Skills Competition at the United States Military Academy. They competed along 15 other ROTC teams from across the nation 17 international partner allies, and 15 service academy teams. The events tested the team's ability in a variety of military skills such as marksmanship, employing hand grenades, ruck marching, and a variety of physical tasks that also required an element of problem solving. The team after two days of competition and nearly 20 miles of rucking placed 11th out 48 teams and 3rd in the ROTC division. Along with the competition, the team was hosted for the week at West Point and was able to interact with Cadets from all corners of the globe.
**Ranger Buddy Competition**  
By Cadet Aislin Rogers

Fort Leavenworth, KS - This year, the University of Minnesota Gopher Battalion sent eight (8) teams to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to compete in the annual Ranger Buddy Competition. This competition consisted of three 4.5-mile laps of rucking, totaling over a half marathon, and 15 Expert Infantry Badge (EIB) skill lanes. The team earned four awards, with Cadets Gavin Chow and Adam McFall winning the Underclassmen Male category and the ruck with an overall time of 2 hours and 21 minutes. Cadets Nice Kwamboka and Samuel Palmer won the Underclassmen Female division, and Cadets Haley Wolff and Jared Benrud won the Upperclassmen Co-Ed division and the overall Co-Ed division. The University of Minnesota team also tied for second overall. The Ranger Buddy team can attribute their success to over five months of rigorous physical and skill training, including rucking weekly and attending weapons practices at Arden Hills Army Training Site (AHATS) on their own time.

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**The Northern Warfare Challenge**  
By Cadet Alexander Wimmer

La Crosse, WI - The 3rd Army ROTC Brigade annually hosts the Northern Warfare Challenge. Each year, the 3rd Brigade hosts the Northern Warfare Challenge in the scenic bluffs of La Crosse, Wisconsin. On February 24th this year, the University of Minnesota sent two teams to compete in the Hardest Race in ROTC. The first team consisted of Cadets Wimmer, Haefner, Handlang, Schotzko, and Lehmann, with Cadet Haefner as team Captain. The second team, led by Cadet Karp, consisted of Cadets Siv, Budd, Davie, and Lindsoe. For this competition, these cadets trained for four months, 5 to 6 days a week, to be fit enough. The training consisted of running, rucking, doing weighted calisthenics, and quite a lot of hill workouts. As for the competition, Northern Warfare is a two-day event comprised of a written test, skill lanes, and, to end it all, a grueling 16-mile ruck march that includes a couple of miles of dragging a 180lb dummy we affectionately call Randy to simulate a casualty. The written test asked cadets to learn how to survive in harsh, cold weather. Skill lanes consisted of creating a fire with a standard-issue elbow flashlight and a knot-tying lane. Both teams started quickly, however, the first team was medically disqualified due to injury while our second team finished in the top 10.
Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX)  By 2LT Emma Voigt

Camp Ripley, MN - The Gopher Battalion conducted a Combined Field Training Exercise (CFTX) this April alongside NDSU, UND, MSU, and SJU cadets. Throughout the four-day exercise, cadets across all five programs received valuable training by working with peers from other schools. This CFTX began with each program's arrival and cadets' introductions to their new platoons. Then, they were issued their "Road to War" brief and kicked off Squad Training Exercise lanes (STX) with a movement to contact and defense.

STX Lanes

Throughout the first three days of CFTX, the MSIIIs were put through the paces of receiving a fragmentary order (FRAGORD), flipping an Operations Order (OPORD), and running a successful operation in preparation for the training and evaluation they will receive at this year's Cadet Summer Training (CST) down at Ft. Knox. In total, the MSIIIs ran seven lanes against MSIV-led OPFOR teams trained to challenge their MSIII opponents. Each platoon conducted movement-to-contact missions, raids, ambushes, and attacks throughout the STX portion of the training. Strict timelines throughout tested the cadet's abilities to disseminate information and understand the overall intent of the mission.

Obstacle Course

This portion of training fosters a friendly and competitive environment where cadets from each school challenge each other to traverse the course the fastest. During this time, the MSI and MSIIIs also received instruction and practice on the Hand Grenade Assault Course (HGAC). Here, cadets learned how to properly deploy a hand grenade from seven different positions and were tested on their accuracy. They were also given a class on identifying different hand grenades, a fun and essential skill!

Basic Rifle Marksmanship

Next, the MSIIIIs moved on to the shooting qualification where they got to try to qualify with Iron Sights, a new requirement at their year’s CST. Cadets started at the M4 Rifle zero range, where they honed their sights in preparation for tables V and VI of the M4 qualification. Once their groupings were tight and their weapons zeroed, the cadets moved on to the qualification range, where most received multiple opportunities to hone their skills before CST this summer.

Land Navigation

The cadets closed out the weekend with some daytime land navigation training. MSI and MSIIIs executed buddy team land navigation on the B7 course, while the MSIIIIs got to work on the more arduous A11 course in preparation for CST this summer. The day and training ended with a visit from the 3rd Brigade Commander Colonel Austin Cruz and Command Sergeant Major Kyle Keenan, where they had the opportunity to address the task force about the importance of leadership at all levels and how to maintain the example for cadets to come.
Norwegian Foot March & Trail Run

By 2LT Matthew Long

Arden Hills, MN - The University of Minnesota Army ROTC hosted its 6th Annual Norwegian Foot March (Marsjmerkt) on April 13th. The event consisted of both an 18.6-mile ruck and a trail run. For cadets and other service members to earn a foreign award badge for this event, they must complete the 18.6 mile (30 kilometers) ruck march with a 25 lb ruck within the time standard according to their gender and age. The Norwegian Foot March started in 1915 to test the marching endurance of soldiers in the Norwegian military as they were preparing for World War I. The Norwegian Foot March's strategic goal was to move a high number of troops over a far distance at a quick pace. The Golden Gopher Battalion was honored to host this event and is thankful for all the ROTC programs, service members, and civilians who helped and participated. Our cadets pushed themselves, and our very own Cadet McFall was the first male to finish with a time of 2 hours and 53 minutes! This year's event has been the largest this program has ever seen, with nearly 600 partaking in either the march or the trail run, with many coming from across the country. Congratulations to all our finishers!

Gopher Volunteer Team

By Cadet Carolyn Kearns

On Sunday, April 7th, Bataan Memorial Death March team members volunteered for the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV). Cadets helped inventory and arrange donated supplies to make distribution easier. These supplies go towards creating sustainable housing opportunities for veterans and their families. Volunteering with this organization allows us to foster community in the Twin Cities area and among our fellow service members and veterans. It’s important to give back and help those who have come before us. This event wasn’t the typical setting for our team to spend time together; it was very different from our physical training and labs, so it was a great team bonding experience.
Sights from Spring 2024

Cadet Johnson rappelling off the Armory tower

Cadet Bertrand during the 12-mile ruck

Cadet Budd during the ball toss on the ACFT

Cadet Wolff teaching a class during the weapons Lead Lab

MSIs and MSIsIs reviewing how to climb a rope
Sights from Spring 2024

MSI and MSII pairs preparing routes for land navigation at CFTX

Cadet Larsen showing how to properly set up a claymore

MSII cadets after completing Norwegian Foot March

Cadet Moeller walking through weapon assembly and disassembly

Cadets Karp and Lindsoe before stepping off for Northern Warfare Challenge
Sights from Spring 2023

Cadets Gunstrom and Haefner running the 15-Meter Swim event during CWST

Cadets Siv and Riewer compete during Cadet of the Month

Cadet Wildenberg shooting at Sandhurst

CDT Rieger zeroing during CFTX

Cadets Vandekamp and Eberle rucking together

Cadets Hoge and Upham making sure cadets stay hydrated at their water point
Tell them about us if you know someone with the potential to be an Army officer! 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 can participate in Army ROTC and may be eligible for additional scholarships and DoD programs. Call (612) 386-8491 or email arotc@umn.edu for more information.

AUSA– Voice of the Army

Consider joining the Golden Gopher Sub-chapter 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, Civilians, Retirees, and family members. AUSA provides our Cadets with numerous Professional Development Opportunities at various local and national events. All new Cadets are qualified for a 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.

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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,