

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

ARMY ROTC

ROTC Alumni Newsletter Spring 2022



Colonels' Pride! *By LTC Vincent Thomas*

Team Alumni, parents, friends, and Cadets of ECU Army ROTC,

What a great close-out to the Spring semester. This semester, Master Sergeant and I had the privilege of commissioning 5 Second Lieutenants from the University of the Cumberlands program, handed out some honorable awards to some very high-performing Cadets, and were able to commission fourteen more Second Lieutenants at ECU proper. It is truly a privilege to be able to do this each year.

You will see by the many stories encompassed in this newsletter that the Cadets are working hard and constantly busy. They are always prepping for the next level and never calling it quits. There is a lot of great talent in the Colonels' Battalion and I cannot wait to see how they impact Soldier's lives in the near future.

We look forward to the summer training coming up where most of the Cadre will be at Fort Knox leading other Cadets through Cadet Summer Training and looking forward to seeing how well our MSIII level Cadets perform during their ultimate test at Fort Knox.

Please continue to follow us on Facebook or Instagram (see the info on this newsletter). We are posting to both accounts weekly on all the great things our Cadets are doing. Please do not hesitate to reach out. We are always welcoming feedback and comments from Alumni of this fine program.

Again, thanks for all the support you show to this Battalion on a regular basis. Your support directly impacts the lives of these Cadets and the quality of their training.

Enjoy the summer! It will go by quick and hope everyone stays safe.

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Support the Colonels' Battalion

Your donation to ECU's Cadet Development Fund will help prepare the next generation of U.S. Army Officers. Give Now! For more on how you can support ECU's Military Science & Leadership Program, contact Claire Jennings at Claire.jennings@eku.edu or call 859-622-1205. Donate online at <https://armyrotc.eku.edu/> and click Donate Now!

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Military Ball *By Cadet Austin Garcia*

The 2022 Military ball was an amazing experience for all Cadets. I believe everyone enjoyed their time and it was a morale boost for the battalion. As the master of ceremonies, we worked hard for that week to make it a pleasurable ball for everyone. Our distinguished guests got to greet and converse with Cadets freely throughout the ceremony. The MS4s got the night they deserved during the announcement ceremony. After the introductions and the toasts, everyone participated in a silent tribute. Following a somber moment, Cadets got to hear retired LTG Keen speak about his experience with Eastern and learn about his history in the Army. He then went on to teach Cadets about the values of being a commissioned officer. Shortly after his speech, LTC Thomas said a few words before presenting a token of appreciation to LTG Keen.

After the ceremony, Cadets were able to socialize together. They enjoyed food and desserts before a night of dancing began. I was honored to be the Master of Ceremonies for the event. It not only helped me as an individual socially, but my voice made it enjoyable for my peers.



CWST *By Cadet Andrew Justice*

March 10th 2022 was the day MS3 Cadets in the battalion conducted CWST (Combat Water Survival Training). Cadets were tasked out to accomplish 3 specialized events: 5 minutes treading water, equipment don and ditch, and finally, the equipment swim where Cadets must swim 25 meters in full ACUs as they hold a rifle that must be kept above water. Each event would require proper form. During my first attempt last semester, I had failed the first event because upon entering the water, I did not expect the uniforms to absorb such a substantial amount of water, which created a challenge for me to overcome. It is important to remain calm and to understand the proper methods one must perform in each event, because if for instance the formulated plan were to fail, then the worst action to take is to swim violently to maintain your head above water. A few Cadets wanted to practice beforehand so they could get a general feel of what to do and what it would be like. The actual event was practiced at the rec pool, which allowed the utilization of uniforms in the pool. CWST is vital in allowing Cadets to learn the basic methods of swimming, so they don't struggle in performing operations near water in their future careers.



12 Mile Ruck March *By Cadet Stephen Burger*



On 11MAR22, our MS3's conducted a 12-mile ruck march in order to prepare themselves for Advanced Camp. The intent behind the ruck is for cadre to validate that the MS3's can meet the CST ruck standard before they leave. In order to successfully be considered a "Go" for the 12-mile ruck, Cadets must have a 35lb ruck, and wear OCP's, FLC, ACH, and carry a dummy weapon. The ruck must be completed to standard, meaning under four hours. This year, 18 MS3's stepped off at 0400 on a cold Friday morning. The route included rolling hills, and two checkpoints. There are many logistical parts to conducting a 12-mile ruck. Some of these logistics included notifying the Richmond Police Department we would be carrying dummy weapons, having water cans out on the course, and having cadre out there to ensure the safety of the Cadets conducting the ruck. During the ruck, MS3's are not allowed to listen to music or utilize headphones. This is because of two reasons: number one, being that we are in uniform, and number two, being that we cannot listen to music when we conduct the ruck at Advanced Camp. My overall experience with the ruck was fun. I enjoyed getting the chance to talk with my fellow Cadets and pushing myself to get a good time (2h:41 minutes). During the ruck, I also got the opportunity to stop and take a picture with a little kid that wanted to join the Army when he was older. Overall, all MS3's were able to successfully complete the ruck to standard, and no Cadets were injured.

Land Navigation *By Cadet Chloe Hampson*

As part of the Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX), Cadets were tasked with completing the land navigation course at Wendell H. Ford Training Center on 02APR2022. Prior to going out on the course, MS1/2s were paired up and given five points to plot on a map and find. Cadets were then able to start finding their points at 1630. The Cadets were given three hours to complete this task, and many of them were able to do so in a shorter amount of time. After each pair finished the course, they were given a short break, as they waited for the sun to set.

Once it was completely dark, the MS1/2s were to complete the land navigation course again, but this time at night.



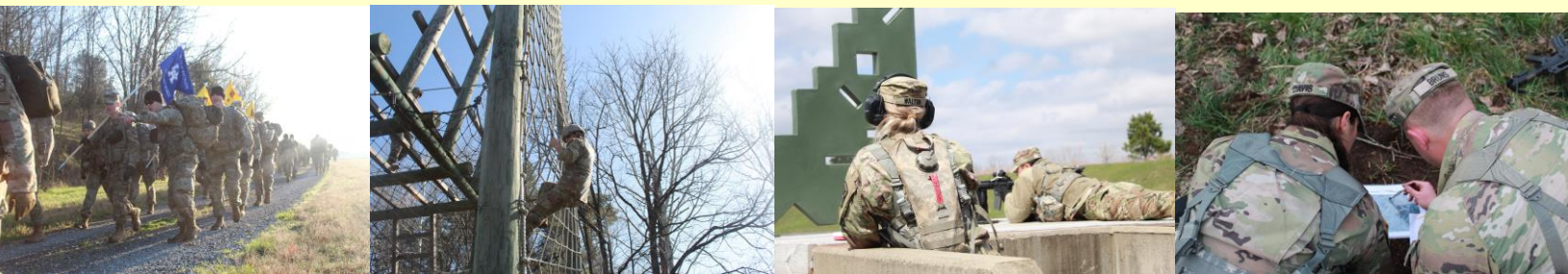
They were given five new points and set out to find them starting at 2015 and once again had three hours to find their points. The dark did prove to be challenging as many Cadets had difficulty finding their points, but none were discouraged from the challenge.

As a result, these Cadets gained not only insight into what they may come across during Cadet Summer Training (CST) as MS3s, but they also learned valuable skills. Perseverance was mandatory, for the completion of the course. While it may not have been as crucial during the day, it was necessary at night, as it was much more difficult and time-consuming. These Cadets will remember this experience and understand to keep going in future challenges.

JFTX By CDT Joe Creech

On 01 April 2022, Cadets from EKU, MSU, UC, and UK set forth on their second field training exercise of the year. The Spring FTX is seen as the final test for MS3's to refine their leadership skills as they prepare for Advanced Camp in the summer. The spring FTX for the MS1's and MS2's that choose to attend provides an opportunity to see first-hand what a typical mission might look like at the platoon level, in a much more inclusive and in-depth way than what Cadets typically have at their disposal at a weekly lab. Finally, for the MS4's, this is a chance for them to gain experience in planning and leading a large training event to subordinates that are not as experienced as they are.

The weekend for the EKU & UC Cadets began with a departure from Richmond as the company traveled to Western Kentucky to the Greenville area where the training was conducted. Once everyone arrived, the Cadets were split up as the MS3's headed to the zero range and eventually to the weapon's qualification portion of the weekend. Meanwhile the MS1s and MS2s were taken to the land navigation course and split into platoons. This gave the opportunity for some of the underclassmen to be placed in leadership roles that they would not have had otherwise.



The evening of day one ended with a short ruck march to the site for night land navigation and then another ruck march to where they performed their missions the following day. Saturday was spent almost entirely "running lanes" through different battle drills. Leadership was rotated at each lane and the entire operation was led by the MS4s. The MS3s in leadership roles were given "Blue Cards" for their performance as graded by the MS4s leading the groups.

This continued for the duration of the day and the Cadet's retired to their patrol bases just before 2200 after a long and hard day on the lanes. The following morning Cadets were marched to a final training site where they conducted a series of obstacle courses in order to build confidence in their own skills.

FLRC By Cadet Tristian Harp



During the Field Leadership Reaction Course (FLRC) Cadets are placed in charge of a squad size element with their peers, and given a specific mission, scenario, and a time limit in which to complete their task. The task involves moving their whole squad over, around, or through an obstacle without losing any equipment and maintaining command and control of their squad. Through these exercises, Cadets learn how to communicate effectively and work together as a team. At the end of an FLRC event, each squad leader has their leadership evaluated. The Cadets are then given feedback by either cadre or upper-level Cadets. Through these evaluations and the FLRC event, each Cadet learns his/her strengths and weaknesses and is better prepared to go out and succeed in various leadership positions.

Staff Ride *By Cadet Felicia Jarrett*



Eastern Kentucky and University of the Cumberland’s Cadets drove out to Perryville, Kentucky on 08April to attend a staff ride that is required to commission. All the MS3s and MS4s participated and were broken down into groups of three. One Cadet briefed the situation while the other two briefed about a leader from their assigned station. Together they stood in front of everyone at their lane marker and informed them what took place in the battle and pointed out significant land features or obstacles.

The staff ride is a valuable tool for teaching military history and promoting leadership development. It links historical events with the actual ground upon which they occurred, providing an emotional and intellectual experience. Before Cadets went to Perryville, they had a vast number of resources to get their information from including the Perryville staff ride handbook. The handbook serves to facilitate military staff rides to Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site in Kentucky. It is a tool to assist in applying the US Army’s staff ride methodology to this battlefield. It provides a means of interpreting and understanding the battle of Perryville. This handbook assists small-group instructors in organizing and conducting a staff ride that focuses on relevant training objectives. In the process, awareness of the national military heritage is promoted.

University of the Cumberlands

University of the Cumberlands (UC) commissioned the first five 2LTs since the program was disbanded in 2014 and subsequently re- established in 2019. The Program at UC continues to grow and we are looking forward to contracting our rising MSII class in the Fall. This summer three MS III Cadets and Cadet Zalon Reynolds (MS IV) will attend Cadet Summer Training. Upon successful completion of the training the MS IIIs will be fully prepared to finish their final year of ROTC and receive a commission as a 2LT, Cadet Reynolds will be an end of camp commissionee. In addition to these exemplary upperclassmen, Cadet Carlson (MS II) will attend Cadet Command Basic Camp and we are extremely excited to announce that Cadet Reed (MS II) will be attending Air Assault training at the United State Military Academy at West Point. Cadets McCullough and Seabrooks will attend Basic Training as part of their enlistment in the KY Army National Guard and will meet contracting requirements along with Cadets Min and Dunaway for the fall. This summer we will focus on getting a new class of motivated MS I’s into to program and preparing for a great Fall Semester.



The Semester in Pictures



Force on Force Paintball Battle



Spring 2022 Newley Contracted CDTs



CDTs Campbell and Scott as OPFOR during FTX



Wendell H. Ford Challenge Course



CDT Jessee Qualifying with his M-4 and becoming the top MS3 Shooter



CDTs Morgan, Hawthorne, Campbell, and Dixon at Mill Ball

Valor *By Daniel Green*

Valor is Christian ministry for Cadets that meets weekly to discuss spiritual matters and to grow in knowledge of the Lord and His plan for Cadets and future officers in the United States Army. This program is Cadet led and managed by staff from the campus ministry Cru. The mission of Valor is to grow spiritually and to foster fellowship within the Battalion.



The main focus of this semester’s Valor meetings was learning how to have spiritual conversations with fellow Cadets and learning how to apply the principles and morals of Christianity to Cadet leadership positions and eventually to positions within the Army. This is important because spiritual fitness is just as important as physical fitness or mental agility. As officers in the United States Army, we shoulder the responsibilities of being accountable for the soldiers underneath us, whether that be a Platoon, Company, Battalion, or higher. And if those soldiers don’t believe they can come to their superiors about spiritual problems, that is a failure of leadership. The program is great because it enhances discipline, integrity, devotion, and resiliency in Cadets. The lessons are taught in a discussion-based setting that encourages cohesion and personal relationships.

Personally, I have grown in my faith and leadership abilities through this position while also teaching and helping other Cadets along in their faith journeys. I have learned that accountability is a two-way street and while I’ve been holding the Valor attendees accountable for their faith, they’ve held me accountable for mine which translates hugely to the future role as a platoon leader. Next year, we are hoping to have even more Cadets attend the meetings and really impact the Colonel’s Battalion.

National Guard Media Program *By Cadet Jacob Kinman*

This semester I had the opportunity to do a profile story for a couple students from the Broadcasting & Electronic Media program, on what it’s like to be a student and National Guard member. Christian Robinson and Tanner Gilmore were doing this as part of a class project for their major. We recorded the interview and then they followed me around campus for a day to see what my class schedule and daily routine was like. This included attending classes, a tour of the ROTC building, and they even came out to our Tactics Lab. The interview and video shots we got were put together by Christian and Tanner. It was published and posted for the media program and shared with others. While this was primarily focused on the KYARNG this offered me a great opportunity to spotlight the program and show others on campus what we do.



Mountain Man By Cadet Christian Geer



My name is Christian Geer and I am a freshman (MS1) Cadet here at ECU and I have volunteered to participate in the Mountain Man Memorial March (MMMM). The event is conducted in Gatlinburg, Tennessee to honor the fallen soldiers that fought for our nation. MMMM has been a tough, yet rewarding challenge to participate in. We began training in February starting with 4 miles to ruck through campus and around downtown Richmond. Every Tuesday and Friday we would arrive at the Weaver building or the Van Hoose lot at 0545 and begin rucking at 0600. We began picking up the mileage up to 6 miles, 10 miles, and 12 miles. In March, we made 6 miles the new average distance we ruck on Tuesdays.

When I arrived in Gatlinburg with the team, I had a sense of comradery and duty to complete the event with my peers. We spent the night before the event and woke up bright and early for the ruck march. When we got downtown at Mynatt Park, we set up at the basketball court and began stretching and mentally preparing to embark on a difficult journey. When the countdown began, a sense of excitement rushed through me that I was about to begin an event that was going to physically challenge me and make me push myself. During the ruck, I felt immense pain with blisters, joint aches, shoulder muscle knots, sunburn, and exhaustion. I was constantly thinking that although we feel pain during and after this march, it's incomparable to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice overseas. After we crossed the finish line, we all gathered as a team and the few who did outstanding received their individual awards. Catron received 1st, Rodgers received 2nd, and Blanton received 3rd place. I am proud of each and every one of our team members for completing a challenging marathon and coming back to school with pride and honor in completing this ruck march. Excellent job mountain man team, may we never forget the fallen who gave their lives for us.

The Army's Newest Lieutenants!

Congratulations to the below, former Cadets on their successful commission.

- 2LT Al-Darraj, Active Duty, Transportation Corps
- 2LT Betts, KY Army National Guard, Signal
- 2LT Blanton, Active Duty, Medical Services
- 2LT Campbell, KY Army National Guard, Field Artillery
- 2LT Catron, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Coffey, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Dixon, Active Duty, Air Defense Artillery
- 2LT Edwards, KY Army National Guard, Infantry
- 2LT Hawthorne, Active Duty, Field Artillery
- 2LT James, Active Duty, Field Artillery
- 2LT Mitchell, KY Army National Guard, Adjutant General
- 2LT Morgan, Active Duty, Air Defense Artillery

- 2LT Nelson, Active Duty, Medical Services
- 2LT O'Connor, KY Army National Guard, Adjutant General
- 2LT Ochsenbein, KY Army National Guard, Military Intelligence
- 2LT Rein, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Scott, Active Duty, Air Defense Artillery
- 2LT Skeens, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Salas, KY Army National Guard, Infantry

Fall 2022 ARMY ROTC EVENTS

August 7th-9th 2022- Colonels Challenge
EKU, Richmond

September 10th 2022- Cadet Stakes
EKU, Richmond

October 21st-22nd 2022- Homecoming weekend
EKU, Richmond

November 11th 2022- Veterans Day Ceremony
EKU, Richmond

December 1st 2022 Commissioning Ceremony
EKU, Richmond