

ROTC GATEWAY DETACHMENT

# Gateway Gazette

Fall 2020


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## Letter from the Cadet Battalion Commander



Cadets, Alumni, Family, and Friends of the Gateway Battalion,

I hope the Fall 2020 edition of the Gateway Gazette finds you and your loved ones safe, healthy, and hopeful. As we enter the New Year, I would like to extend congratulations to all our cadets for their hard work and adaptability throughout this last semester. Fall 2020 was truly unprecedented, but the commitment of our cadre and the innovation of our cadets empowered us to have a uniquely successful semester.

Over this past semester, our cadets, and everyone around the world, were truly living out history. Here at Gateway, we also made history: establishing a Covid Task Force, holding a safe in-person Fall Field Training Exercise amidst a global pandemic, planning Leadership Labs with consideration to CDC recommendations, and donning masks as part of our uniform.

To our new cadets: I am in awe of each of you. Not only did you enter college in a time of such uncertainty, you also began a thrilling, but sometimes terrifying, journey with the United States Army. You each bring such energy to our Battalion and remind us of the Personal Courage we all strive for. To the parents of our new cadets: you should be incredibly proud. Your daughters and sons are gritty, service-oriented, and beyond impressive. It has been a privilege to welcome them to our family. Please trust that we will continue to provide them thoughtful mentors, empathetic leaders, and top-notch training that always prioritizes safety.

In the ensuing pages you will find reflections on the challenges and opportunities Gateway Battalion encountered and the reflections of the cadets who experienced them. As you continue to relax and rejuvenate over the last week of winter break, I encourage you each to take the time to read and reflect on our cadet's stories. Take care, and enjoy!

Gateway -- to the West!  
Very Respectfully,  
Summer A. McKenna



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## Letter from the Editors



To our readers,

What a semester it has been. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this past fall at Gateway Battalion was unlike any other. From our Fall Field Training Exercise, classroom instruction, to Thursday labs, cadets and cadre both went above and beyond modifying operations to make it a safe and efficient learning environment. Every cadet played a role in maintaining the success of the program, and for that, you should be proud. We hope you enjoy reflecting on this past year as much as we did and gain valuable insight from the experiences of fellow cadets through the Gateway Gazette Fall 2020 Issue.

To our Gateway alumni, we would love to hear from you and learn what you are currently doing! If you have any interest in being an available contact, please let us know. We would like to provide the opportunity for cadets to have alumni resources. Please email Cadet Vogt at **[ryan.vogt@slu.edu](mailto:ryan.vogt@slu.edu)** if you are interested in getting involved.

To our Gateway friends and family, thank you for the continued support of our program! Without your generous donations and support toward our cadets, none of our training opportunities would be possible, and we wouldn't be able to accomplish everything we do.

Enjoy!

Very Respectfully,

CDT Llewellyn - Incoming Cadet Company Commander

CDT McCoy - Incoming Cadet S2 and Battalion Historian

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## **Newly Contracted Cadets**

Edison Brooks

John Fotouhi

Issac Jacquez

Joshua Lockamy

Tully McKenna

Jonathan McMahon

Claudia Murcia

Kaitlin Shepard

Tenzin Sherap

Richard Sims

Clifford Smith

Zane Watson

Leigha Whitney



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## **The 103<sup>rd</sup> Class of Gateway Commissioning Officers**

Kristin Brown  
Thomas Burtelow  
Curran Carter  
Geoff Davis  
Ellie Degroot  
Rose Flanagan  
Austin Greene  
Sean Hartke  
Thomas Kazmierczak  
Lydia Keipp  
Abby Kottmeyer  
Faith Llewellyn  
Matthew McCoy  
Summer McKenna  
Kristian Nilsen  
Paige Pratt  
Branden Roberts  
Kody Sims  
Tommy Sun  
Ryan Vogt  
Michael Welch



## Gateway's COVID Task Force

CDT Porter, Washington University

Every year, ROTC cadets gear up to face the same enemies: strenuous classes, sleep deprivation, bad dining hall food, and, most importantly, SAPA forces. This semester proved to be much more challenging, as a new enemy, an enemy that is still plaguing the world, arrived in St. Louis: COVID-19. Because the Army expects us to become adaptable and agile leaders, the Gateway Battalion recognized that this unprecedented public health crisis was not strong enough to halt our training schedule. To ensure that this semester's training met the Commander's Intent while prioritizing the health of our Cadets, the COVID Task Force (CTF) was created.

The CTF is composed of 7 cadets who stepped up to assist with all of the Battalion's COVID-related issues and shape the Task Force into what it is today. These cadets range from MSI to MSIV and attend 5 of the 9 universities that Gateway represents, which provides the Battalion with a very comprehensive understanding of how the vast majority of our cadets are impacted by this pandemic.

The CTF has been assigned a wide variety of responsibilities, the biggest being maintaining a situational understanding of the pandemic at all times. The Task Force does this by ensuring that all TF members have a solid understanding of their respective university's COVID situation and policies. This nuanced understanding of the policies that restrict and govern our cadets allows the CTF to keep higher leadership informed of the changing situation of our cadets. The CTF additionally disseminates this information and other pandemic-related facts and statistics through infographics to all members of the Battalion. Our prioritization of being informed and educated has enabled this Battalion to remain vigilant throughout the semester and easily overcome any COVID-related obstacle.

The COVID-TF has recently taken on many of the logistical elements associated with a global pandemic as well. The seven members of this group work one-on-one with cadets who contract the virus to conduct thorough contact tracing for the Brigade's situational awareness, create gradual and personalized "Return to PT" plans for those who have recovered, and support cadets in the process of being medically cleared to receive their commission. In the near future, the Task Force will be working with the MSIV class to assist in planning COVID mitigation efforts in preparation for Spring FTX to ensure that we can safely and successfully prepare our MSIII class for Cadet Summer Training (CST), planning to begin in May 2021.

With the Spring semester quickly approaching and no end in sight for this pandemic, the COVID Task Force will continue to support our Battalion in the fight against this deadly virus. We will prioritize education, prevention, and compliance with the nation's top health advisors' recommendations to continue training safely and effectively. Above all, we will continue to recognize that our Battalion leaves no Soldier or Cadet behind, whether it be in an academic, fitness, or training environment. We are a team and will get through this pandemic by acting like one. Look out for your Battle Buddies, and do your part to end this pandemic for us all.



## MSI Fall 2020 Reflection

CDT Seely, Missouri Baptist University

Freshman year of college is meant to be difficult. This past semester, however, was a tad bit crazier than most of us would have thought it would be. No one could have predicted the world would shut down from a pandemic. While the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic was ever-present throughout our classes, ROTC, sports, and even just our living spaces, Gateway battalion has managed to trudge through with minimal damage, ready to face next semester. By week four, I realized that this semester was far from normal, but luckily for us MSIs, we didn't have to make decisions regarding the change. We just needed to listen to our comrades and instructors.



The classes being online presented more of a struggle than I originally anticipated, but it also allowed more organization because all of my tasks, assignments, and study material were all in one place. Military science class was a great way for me to experiment with my organization tactics because I was able to speak with the instructor more than I'd speak with my other professors, and I was able to test which way would be most beneficial toward online learning. Outside of academics, the environment ROTC displayed was welcoming. I found myself happy to wake up at ridiculously early times for PT because I had

formed a schedule around it. I would wake up at 0430 and get ready using my flashlight, careful not to wake my roommate. As I would leave, I'd grab a piece of fruit or granola bar and an energy drink or coffee, and my water. On the drive, I would sip my liquids, eat my food, and listen to some music to pump me up. Seeing the platoon was always great, no matter how little sleep I had gotten the night before. Even when I got injured or COVID restrictions made it where I couldn't go to PT, my team leader, squad leader, and fellow MSI's reached out to keep me informed and connected. The Cadre were always willing to work with me when I had conflicts with my academic, wrestling, and later rehab schedule. As long as I was willing to work, they were willing to help me continue to do so. When FTX rolled around, I was very excited to be able to put the things into practice that I had been learning. Some things were difficult like making sure I had everything prepared to go, but once we were out there in the field it was like everyone fell into a rhythm together and everyone was in sync. The field was pure because everything was focused on teamwork, accountability, and comradery. The labs were always fun to be at, whether we were outside moving and bustling, or sat at a table taking notes of a projector. That's what links everything and everyone together in ROTC, we are always together, reaching out, helping and laughing with each other.



## MSII Fall 2020 Reflection

CDT Wright, Saint Louis University

I discovered ROTC in the spring of 2020, in my second semester of college. Like so many new cadets, I immediately felt the sense of belonging that comes with the lifestyle, community, and purpose of the program. Just as I began to settle into cadet life, the pandemic put a swift end to all the events I was looking forward to. No more Spring FTX at Fort Leonard Wood or Ranger Buddy Challenge competition, no more fellowship to be had in the frigid delirium of an early spring PT session.

At the start of this past semester, my mood turned hopeful despite Covid-19. The cadre and MSIV class did everything in their power to allow cadets to continue training in a safe, virus-free environment. Leadership handled the occasional exposure or positive test with consideration and tact. A month of PT, labs, and my compressed Military Science schedule passed and I found myself lucky enough to be able to attend it all in person. I even had the opportunity to experience my first FTX that took place in the field.

A few short days later I came home from class to the news that my roommate had tested positive. Thankfully my result was negative, but I was still anxious about how quarantine would impact my friendships and participation in ROTC. I was relieved to find that my Military Science professors still actively engaged with me over Zoom and helped me continue to train in tactical and leadership skills. My squad kept in contact with me over the phone to check in on my mental health and keep me accountable for PT. The captain of Ranger Challenge, CDT Brett Morgan, went out of his way to host one-on-one Zoom meetings with me so that I could continue the train-up for the competition. I still missed seeing my battle buddies face to face, and towards the end of my quarantine, I even felt nostalgic for the spasms of nervous energy that ran down my spine any time I realized LTC Betson was watching me perform a skill. But 14 days came and went and I was back on campus in no time and able to finish the semester strong.

In some ways, I'm thankful that I've experienced ROTC during the Covid-19 pandemic. The universal and seemingly unavoidable impact of the virus allowed me to witness the adaptability and resilience of the Gateway Battalion as an organization. Now more than ever, it's impossible to know what the future holds for me or anyone. But after this semester, I know that I'm lucky to have found ROTC through Gateway. I can't wait to get back to training with my friends in the new year.



## MSIII Fall 2020 Reflection

CDT Graham, University of Missouri St.Louis

What a semester to reflect on: the fall semester of 2020. For all of us, we are dealing with changes in the college environment and learning how to adapt. For myself, I had the additional challenge of reentering this learning environment since I graduated high school almost ten years ago. I am a prior service cadet with over nine years of active service before entering the Gateway Battalion ROTC Program this year. I know plenty about how the Army works, but I knew becoming a cadet and relinquishing who I am as an NCO would be a big challenge.

I was initially impressed with the drive and determination of most cadets that I met. My fellow MSIIIs demonstrated inherent leader qualities that honestly brought a smile to my face. I look forward to seeing what they will accomplish in their futures. This year is huge for us MSIIIs. It is the culmination of our three years to prep for camp this summer. Our performance there determines our future as Officers. During the Fall FTX, I quickly learned how much I didn't know about small unit tactics. Sure, I knew some basic tactics but not the proper particulars that my fellow cadets knew. However, when I didn't understand something or a subject was entirely new to me, they helped teach me the material, no questions asked. It was a humbling experience.

My personal and most favorite experience this year so far was being able to teach Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) to my platoon. It's a training that is near and dear to my heart. Before I joined ROTC, I was a medic. It is something that I have been passionate about since I joined the Army. It's also why I want to branch Medical Services so I can continue to assist in the training of future medics and medical platoons. I've had my fun, and now I look forward to ensuring that I can take care of fellow soldiers so they can focus on training.

I also have to give credit to our MSIVs who have put together our labs every Thursday. It's great to see them get the practice and experience in what it takes to put together training for their future Soldiers. I know that I have learned something new at almost every lab, so I'm sure the younger cadets are also learning a great deal. They have gone above and beyond with whatever lab assigned to them. They continue to find ways to encourage motivated learning amongst the cadets. It's a great way to bring everyone together and promote that sense of camaraderie and esprit-de-corps. Those two things can help create cohesive teams in the future as well as a positive work environment. I look forward to the upcoming semester. I was appointed as Company First Sergeant, and am excited to take on the challenges that come with this position. The whole of 2020 was a rather tumultuous year, but I have high hopes for Spring 2021 coming up for us all.



## Fall FTX 2020: MSII Perspective

CDT Seaman, Washington University

After joining Gateway Battalion in the Spring of 2020, my first semester as a cadet was cut short thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, I was left with a bitter taste in my mouth; no in-person Spring FTX, no Ranger Buddy Challenge, and no more of seeing my new friends in 2nd platoon. Additionally, I was left with several questions about my place in Gateway Battalion. With such a small sample size of experiences, I wasn't sure whether or not the program was for me. Nonetheless, when the Fall semester and along with it the reinstatement of ROTC activities arrived, it would have been an understatement to have said that I was excited to get my first taste of what I considered to be "real Army stuff" in the form of the 2020 Fall FTX. However, with so many of my questions from the first semester still left unanswered, I was also nervous. Would I enjoy this "real Army stuff"? If I didn't enjoy the Fall FTX, did that mean that ROTC and the Army wasn't for me? All of these emotions and questions circulated through my mind at a furious pace as we pulled up to the firing range at Fort Leonard Wood on the first morning of the Fall FTX.



From the moment we arrived at that firing range, each of my concerns was laid to rest, one after another. Between classroom instruction and attempting to qualify on the pop-up range, I gained confidence in disassembling, reassembling, cleaning, and firing a weapon in a timely and responsible manner. Following our trip to the range, I was able to test my physical prowess on the PECS course. Finally, filling the role of acting Platoon Sergeant for the night and being forced to practice my leadership and platoon-sized drill and ceremony gave me a baptism by fire of sorts. After just the first day of the Fall FTX, I was more confident in my choice to join the Gateway Battalion than I could have ever imagined. The opportunity for a hands-on experience that the Fall FTX provides allowed me to prove to myself that I was not only capable of performing the necessary skills of an Army soldier but that I was also capable of leading others. This simple fact of being capable of becoming an Army officer was enough to convince me that ROTC was the right choice because, while it may not be an easy road, it is a rewarding one and one that I now knew I was capable of traveling.

The rest of that weekend passed in a flash, as most enjoyable experiences do, and, before I knew it, I was on my way back to St. Louis. I was absolutely exhausted, physically and mentally, but I was content; I knew I had found a community that I belonged to and was capable of succeeding in, all thanks to the formative experiences of Fall FTX.



# Cadet Air Assault Experience

CDT Morgan, Saint Louis University



This winter, I had the opportunity to attend the United States Army's Sabalauski Air Assault School at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, home of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Air Assault school, often referred to as the ten toughest days in the Army, is a three-phase course that will physically and mentally challenge those who enter the school's grounds. Before you can even be considered, candidates must successfully complete "zero-day." On zero-day, Air Assault Sergeants conduct a strict gear layout where anything less than perfect is not accepted. Soldiers must have all required items on the packing list, and these items must be clean and serviceable. Any dirty items, torn, folded incorrectly, or forgotten will result in a soldier being dropped from the course. The physical readiness of the soldiers is tested by putting them through a rigorous physical training session which concludes a 2-mile run. Immediately following the run, soldiers must complete a confidence course with nine different obstacles to the standard that test the soldier's physical endurance and mental toughness. Only after completion of these tasks will a soldier be enrolled in the course.

**Phase I: Combat Assault.** In this phase, soldiers learn and are tested on basic aviation knowledge, including aircraft safety, aircraft orientation, aeromedical evacuation, pathfinder operations, hand and arm signals, close combat attacks, and combat assault operations. The phase concludes with a 50 question multiple-choice exam and a hands-on exam where soldiers must correctly perform ten hand and arm signals.

**Phase II: Sling load Operations.** Phase II starts with a 6-mile foot march with another gear layout after. During Phase II, soldiers receive instruction on various aspects of sling load operations. This portion includes understanding the capabilities, characteristics, and use of sling load equipment, familiarization with sling load theory, and hands-on training on how to properly rig and inspect external loads. These loads include the: M1151 HMMWV Humvee, M1101 High Mobility Trailer, M149A2 Water Trailer, A-22 Cargo Bag, Fuel Blivets, and the 5K/10K Cargo Net. Phase II concludes with another 50-question multiple-choice exam and a hands-on exam where students are tested on four of the six loads and must identify three out of four deficiencies within two minutes.

**Phase III: Rappelling Phase.** Phase III is by far the most fun phase at Air Assault School. During this phase, soldiers perform various rappels and learn hook-up and lock-in procedures. Soldiers are tested on how to tie a Swiss seat and conduct various styles of rappelling, including full combat rappelling. Phase three culminates with the 100 ft rappel from a hovering CH-47 Chinook helicopter. On graduation day, soldiers must wake up at 0200 to conduct a 12-mile foot march followed by another gear layout. Only after successful completion of all three phases and a 12-mile foot march will the soldier earn the coveted Air Assault Wings.



## Airborne School and Preparation

CDT Sims, Lindenwood University



The experiences at the Basic Airborne Course in Fort Benning, Georgia are some you will keep with you your whole life. The Basic Airborne course's purpose as stated by the school is:

*"To qualify the volunteer in the use of the parachute as a means of combat deployment and to develop leadership, self-confidence, and an aggressive spirit through mental and physical conditioning."*

The three week course is broken down into ground week, tower week, and jump week. Ground week you will learn the basics of exiting an aircraft and landing. Tower week you will exercise those landings with the 34ft tower and a 100ft tower. In jump week you will exercise five T-11 parachute jumps. A lack of preparation and not caring for yourself during Airborne can make the Airborne course grueling and detract from the vast amount you will experience.

Be sure you can effectively do ten pull-ups at any given moment. Upon return to the barracks in Charlie Company, you will do ten proper pull-ups to reenter the barracks. The ability to do pull-ups will be an indicator of your ability to pull your "slip" on the risers when landing. The slip will slow your drift and aid in executing a proper parachute landing fall. In addition, be sure you can easily pass the standard APFT and then conduct a 45 second flexed arm hang.

Be able to keep up during relatively fast formation PT runs. For an experienced runner, the Benning humidity and heat can be grueling. Leading to the next point, you must keep yourself hydrated constantly. After final formation, be sure to get Pedialyte or consume plenty of electrolytes. The difference can mean becoming a heat casualty or passing the course. Stay driven and motivated, and when the doors open up on the C-17, it will be worth it.

## Ranger Challenge Fall 2020

CDT Shepard, Washington University



Most people's weekend plans in late October consist of sleeping in, relaxing, and maybe going to a pumpkin patch. However, almost 100 ROTC cadets spent the last weekend of October pushing the limits of both body and mind in the 2020 Ranger Challenge Event. The weekend for these cadets starts off late Friday morning, first with an obstacle course, followed by the range for a weapons familiarization test that will add points for their team. The next morning began bright and early around 05:30, and cadet teams began rucking a 10k road course with weighted packs through the dark woods, almost assuredly getting lost, but that is part of the competition's allure. Just you and your team running against the rising sun, trying not to twist an ankle on the uneven road. If the teams accomplished this in the time allotted, congratulations! The prize is another 10k road march, but this time stopping to show the skills competitors have carefully cultivated every weekend leading up to the competition. After that, teams have a PT test the following morning, award ceremony, and cadets are sent home. It may seem overwhelming but the event goes by fast, and in the end, cadets feel extremely accomplished.

The Ranger Challenge competition isn't just great because of the amount of pride you feel upon completion, but you also get to meet cadets from other battalions and even get to know those in your own program a little bit better. It is a weekend where pushing yourself to the max is made bearable because you are with others that are going through the same thing, breeding a sense of camaraderie. Even though the other teams want to win just as badly as you do, everyone is still encouraging each other and being friendly throughout the event.

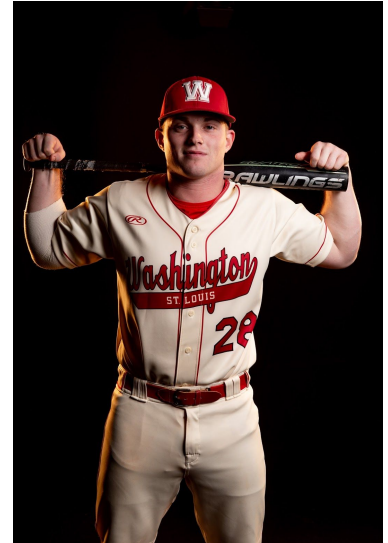
Even though the time commitment for Ranger Challenge is decently large due to the weeks of training you receive beforehand, you get a great experience out of it. Whether it be seeing the sunrise in Forest Park on a Saturday morning ruck, or getting to hang out with your fellow cadets at a skills lane, or sharing snacks during a break, it all culminates into something that I at least will never forget. If I could recommend one thing to do in the short time I have been part of the Gateway battalion, it is for cadets to participate in Ranger Challenge. The experience will help cadets realize that the difficult stuff usually turns out to be the most enjoyable.



# Varsity Athletics and ROTC - A Difficult Balance

CDT Styka, Washington University

The fall of 2020 was, well, a lot different than the previous two falls. Coming into college, I fully anticipated having it down to a science by the time I became a junior, or MS3. Juggling PT, morning lifts, extra baseball-specific work, additional time for knee tucks, going to school, etc., is very difficult... but this was my third go-around. After doing something for two years, you would think one would have a pretty good idea of how it would go. But things changed, and they changed a lot. I went from spending almost no time in my dorm room/apartment to rarely leaving. There was no more socializing with friends between classes, catching up for lunch, or any of that. ROTC activities, baseball activities, and classes would get moved from in-person to online, back to in-person, then back to online, all in the matter of an hour. It was hard. It was hard on me physically, mentally, emotionally, but I learned an awful lot from it, and for that, I am forever grateful. Below I have listed my three main takeaways from the fall semester.



1. Make a schedule, even if you do not have one, ESPECIALLY if you do not have one – In a typical fall, I have a very set routine. Every morning I am up at 515 for either PT or a baseball lift; I have class all day from 10-2, I have either lab, a lift, or practice from roughly 4-6, and then from 6 until bedtime, I do what I need to do to get ready for the next day. This past fall, I usually only had PT, practice, and 1 class at a specific time and place, and I could do all the other lectures, training, etc., whenever I wanted. In August, I thought this was a great gig! I had ALL DAY to get everything in order. After two weeks of school (and some subpar grades on my first few quizzes, but no need to get into the details), I learned very quickly that having a routine, especially when no one gives you one, is crucial to success. Time goes by faster when you waste it; schedules help make sure you do not.
2. Go to bed early and wake up early, even when you do not have to – When you are stuck inside for nearly every minute of the day, maximizing sunlight can make a world of difference. For me, when the sun starts to go down, I naturally get more relaxed. The day is over, and although I always have more work to do, I can feel my productivity levels drop. Because of that, I wake up early and get the reverse effect when the sun comes up. The first hours of sunshine are some of the most productive, and sleeping through them does no good. Going to bed just makes waking up early easier. Sleep is important.
3. ROTC in the morning, baseball in the afternoon – Far and wide, this was the golden rule for me this fall semester. PT is only three days a week, and I only had practice three days a week, but getting in extra work is necessary for success in either. The kicker is most people on the baseball team do not care much about their sprint drag carry time, and most people in ROTC do not care much about how quick their pop time is, and I care a great deal about both. I would do my PT in the morning, whether with 2PLT at Forest Park or Thursday morning with just myself in my backyard (we do not usually have PT on Thursdays) every day, and baseball-specific work in the afternoon every day. Training my body to work like this was very beneficial because my body clock expected specific workouts at certain times. I was able to get both activities in, stay mostly healthy, and not stress about when I would get either one done.

The fall semester was very different, and in a lot of ways, it has made being a student, a cadet, and an athlete more challenging. Still, thanks to understanding professors, incredible Cadre and MS4 leadership, and the best coaches I could ever ask for, I was able to grow and develop. I am excited for what the spring semester will bring and will continue to utilize the above points to put myself in a position to succeed.



## Working as a Nurse in the Midst of a Pandemic

CDT Kottmeyer, University of Missouri St. Louis



Virus. Such a charged word. It can bring up so many images of death and sadness, that it's often difficult to see the good that can take place in a medical setting. Virus. It is a word filled to the brim with sacrifice and unity - to healthcare workers donned in gowns, gloves, N95, surgical masks, and face shields. To the men and women working tirelessly to combat a threat that the world was ill-prepared to face. It has affected everyone.

I am honored to be among our healthcare workers who have spent the past 365 days fighting our nation's biggest battle, COVID-19. Each day we multiply the joys and divide the sorrows that the virus brings. 12 hour shifts are filled with holding the hands of patients in isolation, as they pass away without family permission to visit. But also celebrating the patients who have beat the odds. We are the ones tasked with delivering the most devastating, as well as the most wonderful, kind of news.

Yet each day, my coworkers show up for those who need them the most. They leave their families, knowing that merely walking the halls could make them a virus recipient. These men and women are sacrificing everything, even being with their loved ones, during a pandemic. Thankfully, my coworkers and I have become like a family. We lean on one another, to face the tragedies we see everyday, the sacrifices we make, and know that we are proud to serve. There is positivity spread throughout our wards, smiles hidden underneath layers of masks.

COVID-19 is a daily reminder why I chose to pursue a career in nursing. It's easy to look at the media and see COVID units as distressing, understaffed, and overrun by sick patients. While some of this is true, it fails to recognize the glimmer of hope we see in the faces of our patients. It's about the small joys - slowly being able to wean your patient off of oxygen, helping them take their first steps after being intubated, setting up phone calls with their family members so they don't have to spend the holidays alone...that's what working on the unit is about. Community. We're all in this together.



## Cadet Burtelow: Operation Agile Leadership Legend

CDT Burtelow, Lindenwood University

On the morning of August 7th, 2020, I was incredibly surprised to hear my name called out while in company formation. I was tired, felt disgusting, and just wanted to sleep. What caught me off guard at the calling of name was that first, I didn't expect it, and second, it was for noticing those cadets which performed exceptionally well during the nine days of camp –Operation Agile Leadership (OAL). What led up to this moment in the previous eight days was the ultimate test of our skills and leadership as cadets. I and roughly 80 other cadets were tested on those fundamental skills that must be known by every soldier and Army leader: Rifle Qualification, Land Navigation, Call for Fire, Tactical Combat Casualty Care, CBRN, and many others. Along with a test of our skills, we were also assessed on our leadership. Every cadet was evaluated as either Platoon Leader (PL) or Platoon Sergeant (PSG), and once as a Squad Leader (SL). What accompanied our roles as leaders was not only a test of our leadership abilities, but also those skills necessary for missions (i.e. LACE reports, accountability, OPORD briefs, TMK construction). Dealing with the many moving pieces that are present in every mission and synchronizing them in harmony, IOT execute and complete the task at hand, is the challenge which defines the various levels of leadership. Personally, I was given the position of PL for an area defense mission and thrice made SL across the FTX portion of OAL. My time as PL was the greatest challenge I have faced as a cadet. Suddenly, a mission, which you have an hour to prepare and brief your OPORD for, is thrown at you and it is your duty to see it successfully executed. At that moment, the scores of hours of training and preparation are finally actualized, and it is up to you to deal with the chaos and constant developments that accompany every mission.



Due to my performance across the various tests of skills administered at OAL, and my time in leadership as both PL and SL, I was among those seven cadets recognized for excellence at Fort Leonard wood's Advanced Camp 2020.

Unexpected to me, as the seven of us stood in a line facing the company, I was announced as the "top cadet of OAL". As a reward, I was given a unique leatherman multi-tool, etched on one side with "USAA", and I was also given the challenge coin of 3rd Brigade, Cadet Command. I most definitely went into OAL confident in my abilities; however, I certainly did not expect to be the best overall. All the training, hard work, and scores of hours of studying does pay off. Despite the mission, you're given, or skill you're tested on, the resources are all available to every cadet to make them competent and proficient in all necessary skills of a future Army leader. Working with your peers and those that have already gone through camp set any cadet up for success. I am beyond honored to have been chosen as the top cadet of OAL, but in reality, anyone could've gotten the award. Hard work, persistence, and clear-set goals set up anyone for success, and the same can be said for my experience at Operation Agile Leadership. If you're up for the challenge and willing to immerse yourself, you're on the right start. Have good interpersonal tact, know your skills and missions well, when in leadership, stay in your lane and be a flexible and competent leader, justify your chosen course of action, make as many contingency plans as necessary, and above all else, embrace the suck. To the West!

# Ranger to ROTC: Advice from a Green to Gold

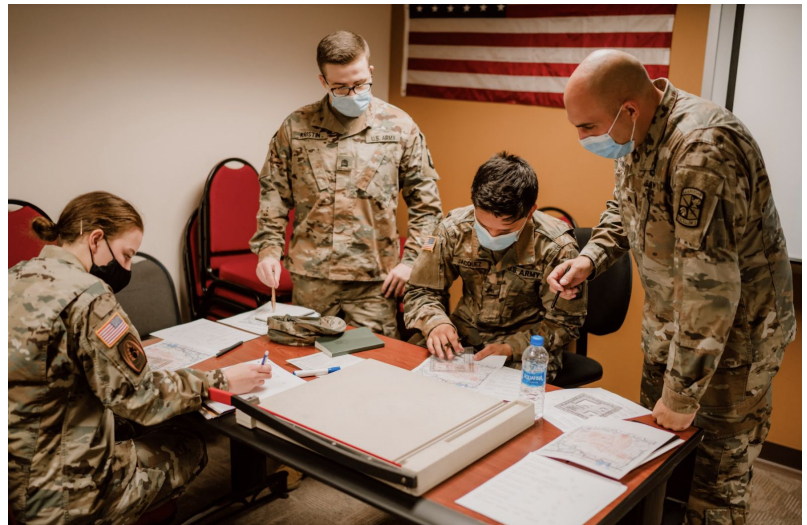
CDT Wakim, Webster University

## 1. *You're in this very unique position as a Green to Gold cadet. Can you give us some background in your journey so far within the Army?*

"I joined the Army when I was 26. Right before I left I lived in St. Charles, MO. I completed Basic Combat Training at Fort Leonard Wood, and joined as a CBRN. I completed Airborne School. Went through RASP. Assigned to 1st BN down in Savannah at Hunter Army Airfield. I was there for about 3 years. Went to Afghanistan for 4 months. I had fun in Afghanistan. I barbecued a lot. In my third year, I applied to switch jobs to counterintelligence. It's an application MOS so you have to put a packet together and get interviewed by a Counterintelligence Agent. I was fortunate that I got selected. When I went to CISAC, it was 4 months. It was different from everything I had done because it wasn't as much of a physical challenge, it was more mental. A lot of writing, a lot of knowledge thrown at you left and right, to be able to pick it up. Then, low and behold Korea got me - I went to Korea for a year. I loved it, I was spoiled. I was in Seoul, a 5 minute walk from downtown. My job was great. My roommate was a friend of mine from CISAC. Right before I left for Korea, I dropped a packet for 160th. I figured if I would have to come back to the states, I wanted to come back to a place where I wanted to be. 6 months in, I got a phone call from 4th BN 160th at Joint Base Lewis-McCord Washington, asking if I was still interested in coming there. I had very little time to train up and I wasn't doing typical Army things in Korea. I wore a suit and tie everyday. I wasn't rucking or doing crazy stuff. I was going to work, talking to people. The training lasted 6 weeks - it was a lot better than RASP. They were more focused on the attention to detail education - but you still got smoked a lot. But I got through it successfully, then I went to Joint Base Lewis-McCord for 3 years. Which was the best place I've ever been in the Army. The organization as a whole is fantastic. I also had a lot of free time to go to schools, so in 2018 I was gone probably half the year going to Army schools. I've been to 2 different SERE courses. It was a cool experience. And when I was at Lewis-McCord, I actually finished my undergraduate degree in 2018."

## 2. *What was life like as a Ranger?*

"Life as a ranger...I have a lot of people ask me that question. Everyday is just another day of proving yourself. If you hear people talk about it, they'll say you have to prove that you deserve to be there. Everyday was a grind for 3 years. But it totally set me up for success moving forward. Pretty much everything in my Army career is rooted in the Rangers and that mentality. You're constantly proving yourself. You're supposed to be the best as a Ranger, that's what they tell everybody going through RASP when you're there. Give everything, always 100%, and that's kinda how I approached everything else in my military career."



## 3. *What made you decide to join ROTC?*

"I looked into it and thought it was kinda cool. I figured if I got accepted, I could stay active duty, I can go wherever I want for school, get my Master's and play cadet for a while. Which is a nice change of pace from constantly being gone. So I talked to my wife and said 'Hey I'm thinking about putting this in' and thought it would be good to have a couple years of downtime especially with my 2 youngest right now being 3 and 5. We figured the downtime would be nice. We decided right then that we would come back to St. Louis, where I'm from. We would

go home and be near family for a couple years, it'll be a nice break. 2 years of active duty to go to school? Why not."

**4. *What have you enjoyed the most about our program so far? What are you looking forward to?***

"From the personal aspect, I've loved the downtime of being a cadet. I had no clue what to expect with ROTC. So I'm coming in here, I'm 34 and I'm going back to college, but the average age of a college student is 20 years old. So I enjoy talking to other prior service cadets, like CDT Roberts. I've actually enjoyed just being that active duty guy with all the cadets because as a Staff Sergeant in the Army, my job is to teach and lead people. Even though I'm not a cadre or an MSIV, I've been able to give out a lot of information. A lot of cadets ask really good questions. One thing I've liked the most is being able to share a lot of knowledge about the Army and then being able to learn a lot of new stuff, I haven't learned in my eight years. Because I've been really focused on counterintelligence and Aviation. So going back to learn about what the Army is all about has been pretty cool."

**5. *What have been some of your most memorable experiences so far in the Army?***

"I got to go to New Zealand for a week to do a threat and vulnerability assessment for an exercise we were going to have. From an Army training or work perspective, I really enjoyed SERE school. It has both Army uses and real world uses. It taught me a lot about myself."

**6. *What are you currently studying and why?***

"My undergraduate degree is in Criminal justice - with a focus in homeland security. I am currently getting a Master's degree in International Relations. I was looking at it from an Army perspective because I'm going to stay in the Army for at least 20 years. It's the benefit of me getting to learn a lot about the world. Being in the Army right is heavily Middle East focused so I know a good amount about that region but not about the rest of the world. This is a degree where I can learn about something I actually want to learn about, that I find interesting, that I can also use in my career."

**7. *What are your current aspirations following graduation?***

"Hopefully I can stay within military intelligence. I've done it for 5 years, so I would like to stay in MI. Ideally, if I could, I would like to work back to the 160th for some of my LT time. Because it's a good organization to go with. You're going to get valuable experience. I always try to push myself with the Army. I don't really know where I'm gonna end up, but I'll constantly try to move forward toward the next challenge."

**8. *What advice do you wish to give future Army officers within our program?***

"So the first piece of advice is to know your job. Whatever it is. Because people won't have confidence in you if you show up and you don't know necessary information. Number one: be the expert in your job. Number two would be don't try to take over. The Army has been pushing civilian education for the past 4-5 years so sometimes the only difference between ranks is how each person entered the Army. As a platoon leader you're going to work with a platoon sergeant (E7 or E6), and that Staff Sergeant or SFC could have between 7-12 years experience in the Army. As an officer the best thing you can do is make your platoon sergeant's life easier, work with them and don't try to take over. Use your position in command to help them as much as you can."

**9. *The last two (and dare I say, the most important questions): What's your favorite MRE? And what is your favorite PT exercise?***

"Chicken pesto, I think, is very underrated. Usually comes with pudding, and MRE pudding is actually pretty good. Also the beef patty is not bad, you can make it taste like a barbecue bacon cheeseburger. In terms of training for PT, in my personal life, I do a lot of circuit style training. I run because I have to, but I prefer training that allows me to incorporate cardio into my workout."



## MSIV Branch Night

CDT McCoy, Saint Louis University

It's not often that you can point to a moment in your life and say, "That is where my life was sent down the track it's on now." Fortunately for us MSIV Cadets at Gateway, we have something that is just that. Branch Night was when every cadet entering the Active Service found out which branch they would be entering (except for those joining the Nurse Corps, who knew which branch they would be entering back when they first registered for the Nursing Major at their universities). Given that we find ourselves in the middle of the Plague time, the priority of Branch Night was to prevent turning the party into a super spreader event. The Pizza was handed out a slice at a time by the excellent event organizer CDT Keipp to reduce cross-contamination from everyone touching the same box, and I was in charge of the distribution of the Toasted Rav for similar reasons. And, of course, everyone wore a mask. Despite the restrictions imposed by the circumstances, everyone was excited, even the Cadets joining the reserves and the nurses who decided to attend to support their fellow Cadets. It was previously decided that reading our assignments off of a list lacked suitable drama, so our assigned branches were written on the underside of a red solo cup filled with (root)beer. To find out our fate, we would have to throw a ping pong ball into our cup from across a table and then drink the drink inside, revealing our branches to the other cadets in the room before we got the chance to see. I thought that this game favored the cadets who played drinking games regularly and left those who did not like me at a disadvantage. That is until I nailed my cup on the third throw and a cadet who had spent the hours before the party began practicing had to have the distance shortened to increase the chance that they would hit the thing before everyone had to leave. The seconds after hitting the target and trying not to choke and die on the drink were a thrilling experience, as the crowd of gathered cadets cheered for the result. I will admit that I was somewhat terrified for what I would get, but when the room erupted into applause, I knew it couldn't be that bad. I had been slotted into the Armor Branch, my number two choice. Everyone had a fun time at branch night, and I could not think of a better way to kick off our time as Officers in the United States Army.





## Detachment Information

### How Do You Get Involved at Gateway ROTC?

*Whether you're a prospective Cadet, a parent interested in what your child does in the ROTC, an alumni wanting to look back into the program, or wanting to give back, we are here to help.*

**Gateway Battalion website:** [rotc.wustl.edu](http://rotc.wustl.edu)

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GatewayROTC>

Follow us on Instagram:

[https://instagram.com/gateway\\_rotc?igshid=ypwq5nuuyoig](https://instagram.com/gateway_rotc?igshid=ypwq5nuuyoig)



**I'm a prospective Cadet and would like to observe some of your training events or classes. Who should I contact to schedule this?**

Mr. Lee Rogriguez in the Gateway Recruiting Office can help you schedule an appointment. His contact details are: (314) 935-5521 and [lee.e.rodriquez@wustl.edu](mailto:lee.e.rodriquez@wustl.edu)

**In the National Guard or Reserves. How do I get involved with ROTC?**

Mr. Gary Lee is the Program Coordinator and has many years of experience helping cadets achieve their goals. His contact details are: (314) 935-5546 and [glee.wustl.edu](mailto:glee.wustl.edu)

### How Can You Support the Gateway Battalion?

**Donations in support of the Gateway Battalion which are made through Washington University are fully tax deductible:**

You can make checks payable to: "Washington University - Department of Military Science"  
Memo: Acct# 11-2051-94990

**Mail to:**

Washington University Campus Box 1082  
One Brookings Drive  
Saint Louis, MO 63130

**Online:** Go to [gifts.wustl.edu/giftform.aspx](http://gifts.wustl.edu/giftform.aspx)

Click "select giving areas". Then, check "Other" and enter "Department of Military Science" and Acct# 11-2051-94990