

SPRING 2021 ISSUE

GATEWAY GAZETTE

A group of soldiers in camouflage uniforms and face masks are standing in a field at sunset. The soldiers are arranged in a loose line, facing away from the camera. The background shows a line of trees and a warm, golden light from the setting sun.

GATEWAY BATTALION
ARMY ROTC

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CDT KAYLA GREENE



CDT MARIATERESA SIMON

A letter from the editors

HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE GATEWAY GAZETTE, SPRING 2021 EDITION!

This specific edition includes personal cadet reflections from multiple events that occurred this semester, as well as pieces dedicated to the daily operations of specific MS levels and extracurricular activities. We would not be Gateway without the important roles every cadet plays in the daily operations and their continuous effort and support! We hope all the readers enjoy this semester's reflections as much as we did and learn from their fellow cadet's experiences and advice through this semester's edition of the Gateway Gazette!

To our Gateway friends & family -

We want to personally thank you for your continued support of our individual cadets and program as a whole! Without your generosity and "helping hand" mentality, we would not be able to provide all the opportunities we have for cadets! Thank you again!

To our Gateway alumni -

If you are interested in staying involved with the Battalion or supporting our cadets as they continue down the road of discovering what their futures in the Army will look like, please reach out to our Alumni Relations Officer, CDT K. Greene, at kaylamgreene@wustl.edu. We look forward to connecting with you!

Enjoy!

CDT Kayla Greene - Alumni Relations Officer
CDT Mariateresa Simon - Public Affairs Officer & S6



Message from the Professor of Military Science

Dear Friends of the Gateway Battalion,

We are closing what we will remember as a fascinating year full of challenges, perseverance, and success for the Gateway Battalion. The collection of reflections by our Cadets in this edition of the Gateway Gazette help us to remember everything we accomplished, how much we will miss our departing class, and our appreciation of our Alumni.

Your Gateway Cadets from the Classes of 2021-24 thrust themselves head-on into a year that could have been defined by the ever-present worldwide COVID-19 Pandemic. Instead they proved that given grit and the will to carry on, the year was defined by innovation, and success. The Cadets sought new ways to maximize education and training, as evidenced by the implementation of our new "Gateway War Game" and the Virtual Battlefield Simulator (VBS) program into our development. Furthermore, the graduating class served as the "TM ST LOUIS" leaders to execute a rigorous, cadet-led Spring Training Exercise in Ft. Leonard Wood, MO. As a team, we are confident that the year has fully prepared the Class of 2022 to dominate at Advanced Camp this summer.

It is bittersweet that we must say farewell to the Class of 2021, but we carry on an Army tradition of saying "Until the Next Post!" It seemed that every month, I saw opportunities to push the class harder and harder in their management of the Gateway training cycle, expecting eventually to hear "Uncle!" On the contrary, the Class never faltered in planning, resourcing, synchronizing and executing a great training strategy for the Battalion. I am confident that this experience has better prepared each of them to take on the mantle of leadership as commissioned officers in the coming months.

Finally, as the Class of 2025 makes the transition from Cadet to Gateway Alumni, we are reminded that we stand on the shoulders of giants! The year included our first implementation of our 50-Year Affiliation Program, with one member from the Class of 1974 helping welcome our MSI class, and four members of the Class of 1971 join us for the End-of Year Barbeque. We also dedicated our new Gateway Alumni Hall of Fame this year thanks to the kind contributions from the family of recently deceased LTC(R) Conrad Kee (Gateway/WashU '84). These amazing gestures and assistance through WashU's University Advancement will continue to help the Gateway Battalion push beyond mere success and into the margins of excellence.

I cannot wait for a great time at Cadet Summer Training, and the return to another great year!

Gateway – To the West!
LTC Andrew Paul Betson
36th Professor of Military Science



Farewell from Outgoing Cadet Battalion Commander

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

I hope this Gateway Gazette finds you all feeling rejuvenated by the recent improvements across our country and looking forward to a return to the new normal. Throughout the past year, Gateway Battalion has proved its ability to not only adapt to, but thrive in an unprecedented and uncertain environment. We established our first (and hopefully last) COVID Task Force, became accustomed to donning masks with our uniform, and kept our social distance throughout Physical Training sessions and Leadership Labs. Most importantly, we continued to train.

While many ROTC programs on the West coast were unable to conduct in-person training, our cadet leadership began planning early to ensure we were prepared to lead the battalion through a global pandemic. Rather than being stifled by the never-ending lists of unknowns, the cadet leadership rose to the occasion; and less than a month after cadets arrived to campus, Gateway hosted a safe and successful battalion-wide Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). Though buses were filled only to 50% capacity, masks were part of the uniform, and cadets formed up at six foot intervals, training quality remained top notch. As COVID cases rose nationwide, we continued to march on thanks to the work of our COVID Task Force. The Task Force provided internal contact tracing for cadets from six universities and thoughtfully checked-in on quarantined cadets in isolation. Additionally, MSIV cadets coordinated virtual contingency training for any quarantined cadets, planning and executing each Leadership Lab on both virtual and in-person platforms. The initiative of our leadership and the discipline of our cadets empowered us to close out a successful fall semester and return ready for an even better spring semester.

Keeping the momentum, Gateway Battalion braved through winter weather to conduct outdoor tactical labs 30 minutes outside of St. Louis. At these labs, cadets were exposed to the complexities of maneuvering a platoon through tough terrain while MSIII cadets were tested on their leadership abilities in a stressful tactical environment. After months of intense planning and preparation, the MSIV team then put on an efficient and effective four-day event for three ROTC programs. Cadets pulled security under the stars and engaged in days of missions with teammates from SIUE and SIUC. The JFTX proved to be the culminating event of the year: MSI cadets leaned into the hardships that make Army training so memorable; MSII cadets stepped up as mentors, showing their eagerness to serve in platoon-level leadership; MSIII cadets displayed their readiness to succeed at camp and lead the battalion; and the MSIV team applied our lessons from four years of ROTC to undertake a team-size operation.

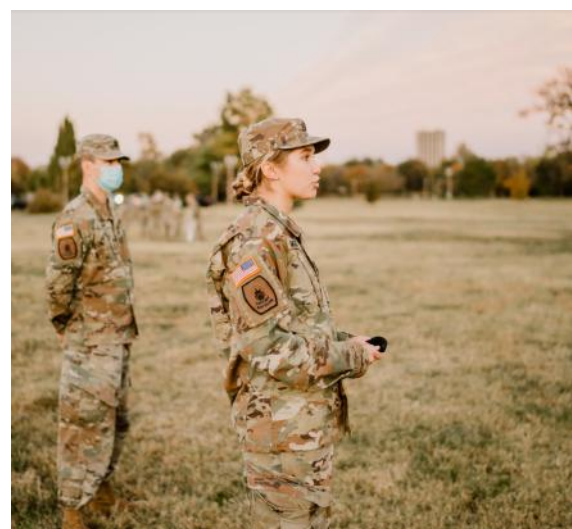
To the outgoing MSIV leadership: I cannot thank you enough for your commitment to bettering Gateway. Though it may have felt that your hours of work went unnoticed, I believe, with full confidence, that we left a remarkable impact on Gateway Battalion. From our inaugural Wargaming Lab to an incredibly synchronized JFTX, we, as a team, have raised the standard for the cadet leadership to come. You each are a vital part of our legacy because of the time and energy you spent developing our younger cadets.

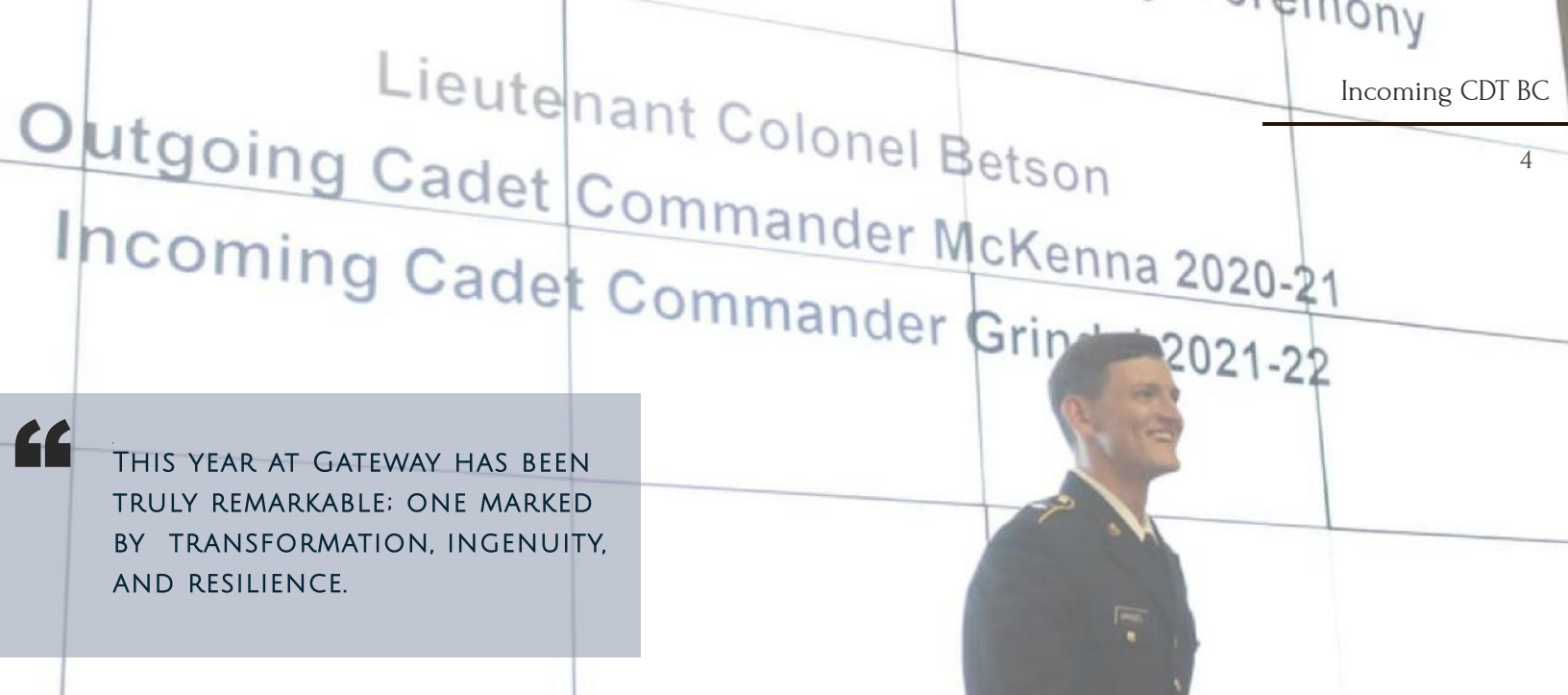
To the incoming MSIV leadership: the weight of leading the battalion now falls on your shoulders. You all have proved that you are ready. You each are tactically competent, interpersonally aware, and invested in building up others. Go dominate at Cadet Summer Training and return ready to work as a cohesive team that prioritizes the training of the battalion and the welfare of its cadets.

To the alumni, families, and friends of Gateway: thank you for your continued support of our program. It is your contributions and your care that empower us to continue paving the path from cadet to officer.

Lastly, to all the Gateway cadets: thank you for enriching my college years with lifelong camaraderie and unforgettable memories. You all are the reason that Gateway is such a special program. I will forever cherish my time as a Gateway cadet because I was surrounded by such a driven, impressive, and comedic bunch of cadets. Even the rainy nights in the field and the 0500 12-mile rucks were enjoyable because you all were by my side. I look forward to the days when our paths will cross again.

Gateway — to the West!
Summer A. McKenna
 Outgoing Cadet Battalion Commander





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THIS YEAR AT GATEWAY HAS BEEN TRULY REMARKABLE; ONE MARKED BY TRANSFORMATION, INGENUITY, AND RESILIENCE.

A reflection from the Cadet Battalion Commander

Cadets, alumni, families, and supporters of the Gateway Battalion,

I hope this letter finds you all safe and healthy as we close out another academic year and continue to overcome the pandemic. This year at Gateway has been truly remarkable; one marked by transformation, ingenuity, and resilience. With the onset of the school year, we all anxiously returned to campus. Although masked and six feet apart, it was great to see everyone's faces again. Frankly, we had no idea what this year was about to entail. Only one week into the semester, we experienced the beginning of our COVID-19 exposures. As all good leaders do, our MSIV team adapted, and our COVID Task Force was quickly formed. These motivated cadets spearheaded our information dissemination, training standards and contact tracing effort. Due to their hard work, we were able to safely conduct all of our in-person training, while supporting cadets impacted by the pandemic. Fast forward eight months, and we have now completed an entire year's worth of leadership labs, two extended field training exercises, a formal dine in, a weekend at the range for our MSIIIs, and many other fantastic training opportunities, all in-person. Although Gateway faced immense adversity, we refused to back down in the face of danger. We persevered and found a way to continue training, regardless of the situation. Transforming the entire Battalion to operate throughout a pandemic has proven to be a feat; one all of our cadets can be proud of.

To our MSI's, you made it; one year down, three to go. Your transition to college has truly been like no other. Despite the rigors of freshman year, made more stressful by COVID, you all have chosen to dedicate much of your time to Gateway, and for that I am grateful. I hope you have enjoyed your first taste of Army ROTC and are looking forward to all of the training that the future holds. I am excited to watch you all develop into mentors next year as MSII's.

To our MSII's, buckle up; MSIII year is around the corner. We have a great year lined up for you all. Be prepared to work hard and learn plenty. I am confident each and every one of you is prepared to grow as a leader and test yourself next year.

To our MSIII's, Cadet Summer Training is in sight. All of the hours studying and training for CST are about to come to fruition. I have faith every one of us will dominate Advanced Camp and make Gateway proud. I am excited to work with each of you closely next year and prepare to receive our commissions.

To our MSIV's, thank you. Speaking for the entire MSIII class, we are grateful for everything you have done for us. From the countless hours invested into the Spring Field Training Exercise, to all of our weekly labs or individual mentorship, you have truly set us up for success. We appreciate it immensely. I am looking forward to all of the great things you will accomplish in your respective careers. Congratulations and good luck.

Lastly, I want to extend a sincere thank you to all of the alumni, families and friends of Gateway. It is through your contributions and support that we are able to continue to train and develop our cadets. Thank you all for enabling us to create the next generation of leaders in the United States Army.

Gateway – To the West!

Patrick Grindel

Cadet Battalion Commander



CDT Reflections

MSI - MSIV YEAR IN REVIEWS



MSI Year in Review

"Cadet, where is your PC?" says Cadre that looks like there is a pair of thighs blazing out of his shoulders. Yes, this was me, a new MS1 cadet that was just placed as a TL, 4 weeks into ROTC, who didn't have his PC for final formation. Being an MS1 can start out as being a rather daunting experience. Rolling with cadets that have already been in the program for three years, worked out for three more years, and have three more years of ROTC experience than me. While still deciding whether or not I wanted to do ROTC a month prior to the school year starting, I went to family and relatives that have undergone the ROTC experience for advice and a common piece of advice I received was to "jump in with both feet." Coming into the year, my thought process was to just try it out but jump in with both feet and get involved as much as possible. This is exactly what I did. I pursued forward into the unknown, uncharted territory, potentially embarrassing myself or looking like a fool and that is exactly what I looked like when I had no idea how to ruck when I went on my first ruck for Ranger challenge, or when I misplaced my PC and didn't have it for final formation at Lab, but that is all part of the experience. The only way to learn, improve yourself, and get out there is to look like a fool sometimes. That's the beauty of being an MS1, you are allowed to look like a fool and you can get away with it. How amazing is that! Inevitably, through trial and error, making mistakes, and looking like a fool, you learn tips and tricks, right and wrongs, and you learn how things are done at Gateway.... And you learn to always put your PC in your ACU cargo pockets so you don't get confronted by a cadre that scares me to this day.

In addition to not knowing what you are doing, there are the days, nights, experiences, that you really want to just give up. A few key instances of that for me would be when I was OPFOR for the spring FTX. Me, as well as all the cadets at the FTX, sat out in the 40 degree weather, while it was raining rather hard. It appears this is a "classic Army day" and at these moments you have to learn to embrace the suck, cause that sucked. Another instance where I really wanted to give up was not too long ago when we did our last ACFT. Many of us cadets were still tired from the FTX and getting ready to wind down the semester. While these moments suck, they are also the most precious, where you learn to rise above adversity, push through it with your battle buddies, and learn to embrace the suck. Every moment, whether good or bad, all adds up to the perfect experience as an MS1 at Gateway. In light of this, MS1 year is a year where you are allowed to just sit back, be a sponge by absorbing everything and let you get your toes wet. On the contrary, it can also be a year where you jump right in rather than just dipping your toes in the Gateway water, not being afraid to make mistakes while learning from them all, embrace the good experiences, and prepare to crush it when your time comes to be an MS3.



MSII Year in Review

When I reflect on my year as an MS2, the word grateful comes to mind. This year has been challenging for every cadet in the Gateway Battalion. Between managing school from our bedrooms to the times that all we had to keep us warm was our woobie inside our bivy cover, I learned that I am grateful for these struggles. I am grateful for the 5am wakeups for PT. Grateful for the weekends we spent rucking around Forest Park to prepare for Ranger Challenge. Grateful for the time spent sleeping on the rocks for the Fall FTX in the 40 degrees September weather. Grateful for the 45-minute drive to a lab that exposes us only to a bit of radiation.

I am grateful for the rain pouring on us just to add to the insult of an April cold front at the Spring FTX. It was innumerable hardships like these that my peers and I faced every day as cadets, which has forged us into better men and women, students, soldiers, and leaders. These hardships were doubled by Covid-19, but I think that added to this year's beauty. Due to these hardships, everyone in the program grew leaps and bounds throughout the year. However, this was not accomplished on our own, which leads me to the thing I am genuinely grateful for. I was not just told what leadership is. I witnessed it daily.

Our soon-to-commission MS4's, who spent what seems like most waking hours working to make our training efficient and valuable, would take time out of their Friday afternoon to run an extra MS2 War Game. The MS3's, who will dominate camp this summer, taught me what it looks like to lead relationally with trust that inspires you to accomplish the mission. I learned from them that it is not always about being the most tactically brilliant, but it is about having the confidence to inspire someone to the finish line. I may have learned the most about resiliency from our MS1 class. They came into a highly foreign environment and learned to navigate it almost seamlessly through wave after wave of adversity. Their courage to do that amidst the pandemic is precisely why the Army attracted them.

Of course, I am most grateful for the lessons I learned from my closest peers, the MS2 class. They taught me that there is nothing more valuable than the help of a friend. My friends, next year is upon us. We are now MS3's. The challenge is set before us, and we have been shown the traits necessary to succeed. We must be resilient in the face of monumental tasks, as the MS1's showed us. We must espouse the confidence of the MS3's to lead our team to mission success. We must take on the mantle of sacrificed time as the MS4's did to make Gateway the best battalion on either side of the Mississippi. However, and most of all, we must continue to lend each other hand, and through that, we will meet every challenge that this next year throws at us.

Gateway - To the West!

CDT Richard Sims



“Of course, I am most grateful for the lessons I learned from my closest peers, the MS2 class. They taught me that there is nothing more valuable than the help of a friend.”



I knew this year would be the most challenging of ROTC and college so far. No longer would I be sleeping in cozy b-huts during the Fall FTX and pulling security at the Spring FTX. Instead, I would be planning a patrol base and orchestrating missions in preparation for advanced camp. To get there would take a lot more tactics knowledge than I had in September. What I did not know, however, were the life lessons that come through learning battle tactics. **Here are the three biggest lessons I learned this year from ROTC.**

MSIII Year in Review

01 No one will represent you except yourself. Hard work speaks for itself and those around you will certainly notice. However, many others will likely miss out. So, the best person to vouch for your work is you. Captain Holliday hammered this lesson in the MS3 classroom. He said in evaluations, blue cards, and otherwise, you should (almost) always argue for the best grade. At first, I feared this would come across as an arrogant approach. But through blue card evaluations and at the Spring FTX, I gave Captain Holliday's idea a chance. Often, graders and other individuals are focused on their own duties and cannot witness every effort of your performance. By stating what you prioritized and displaying your efforts, they will likely learn a positive aspect of your performance they would have missed otherwise. This can apply to all tests in life. Do not let the evaluator focus only on what they saw. Show them why you deserve the best grade.

02 Help others now so they can help you later. At the FTX, each mission varied drastically. Perhaps you got the very first mission, where group cohesion was low, but morale was higher. Maybe you ran a mission on the last day, where people began to butt heads, but cohesion increased. Regardless of timing, I learned to treat each mission with the same attention as my own. During the FTX, a peer helped me accomplish the OPORD brief quicker than I could have done alone. Later, I assisted in their OPORD brief, improving both of our performances. I will be a team player and look out for others at camp and next year.

“What I did not know, however, were the life lessons that come through learning battle tactics.”



03 Things rarely go according to plan. Before a mission, my peers and I would plan out the most elaborate OPORD brief, culminating in a beautiful TMK demonstration. We had multiple contingency plans for every possible outcome. Yet, the missions always came with an outcome we had not prepared for, requiring a new plan on the spot. This year, I learned the importance of the 1/3rds 2/3rds rule. We leave more time for the actual mission because planning can only prepare you for so much. That does not mean to not plan at all. But it does mean that leadership will be tested, and decisions will be made on the fly. As we saw with the Coronavirus outbreak, things happen randomly, sometimes out of our control. Every American president of the past four terms has been judged based on a crisis which had not been expected prior to their time in office. Leadership means being able to handle these unexpected events and plan off this. At camp and as an MS4, I will accept the unexpected and pivot with the changes.

CDT Kyle Melles

MSIV Reflection

It's difficult to put into words how all the seniors feel at this moment in time but we are honored to reflect on the events of the past semester and the past year. The COVID-19 pandemic changed everything - from an operational and personal level - and the MSIV cadets faced obstacles solely unique to our class. Despite the many challenges we faced, Gateway managed to adapt to the unfortunate circumstances and finish another successful semester. Much of this success came from the lessons we MSIVs learned throughout our MSI-MSIII year and guidance given by our outstanding alumni. So, as part of this Spring 2021 reflection, all the MSIVs have gathered some advice we would like to share with the other Gateway cadets:

MSIs - First piece of advice: don't be afraid to ask questions. Some of you may have felt clueless this past semester, and that's completely normal. Remember that all the other cadets have been in the same position at some point, but excellent guidance and direction were given to them by their peers. (2) Always take notes and be proactive students! (Remember: A stands for academics). (3) You get out of training, what you put into training. So take these events seriously and continue to take opportunities to learn and grow as students and leaders.

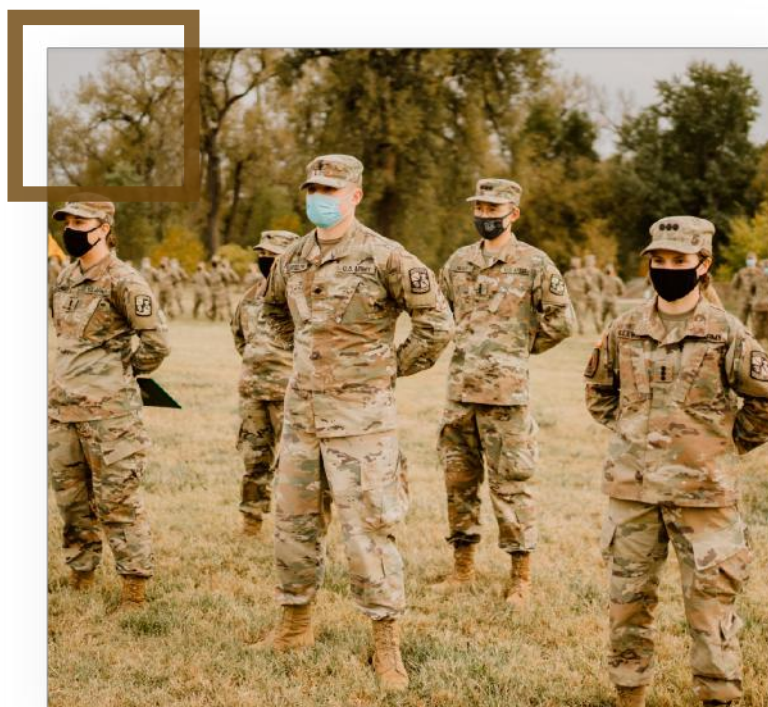
MSIIs - As that foundational knowledge in military science continues to grow, and with your MSIII quickly approaching soon, you must remain attentive, organized, and disciplined. Most MSIVs will say they wished they had pursued more leadership opportunities and extra training events during their MSII year to better prepare themselves as an MSIII and for CST. Continue to reach out to junior/senior cadets and cadre, train hard, ask a ton of questions and have fun!! Make the most of your time by continuing to get more involved and preparing for the coming year.

MSIIIs - Each of you has experienced an immeasurable amount of growth in the past semester- in your leadership skills, confidence, and knowledge of military science. You have been tested and counseled dozens of times - all of which will help you all absolutely dominate CST. Amidst all the chaos and studying, don't forget to take the time to reflect and think about what you want for your future in the Army. This will help better prepare you for choosing your component, branch, and the start of your career as a 2LT.

Many of us MSIVs still remember our first PT session, first Thursday lab, and Fall/Spring FTX weekend event. These memories you'll take with you for the remaining four years. The final piece of advice: Don't take the time you have with your battle buddies for granted. Gateway will introduce you to some of the most ambitious, intelligent, and kind individuals you will ever encounter. Enjoy the time spent with each other.

And finally, on behalf of all the MSIVs: Thank you. Thank you to Gateway's marvelous personnel: to our cadre for being wonderful leaders, teachers, and mentors, and to our administrative and supply staff: Mr. Clerk, Ms. Forrest, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Rodriguez. Thank you all for the countless hours each of you has put into ensuring the success of cadets in the program. We are forever grateful for your support.

Gateway....To the West!
CDT Faith Llewellyn



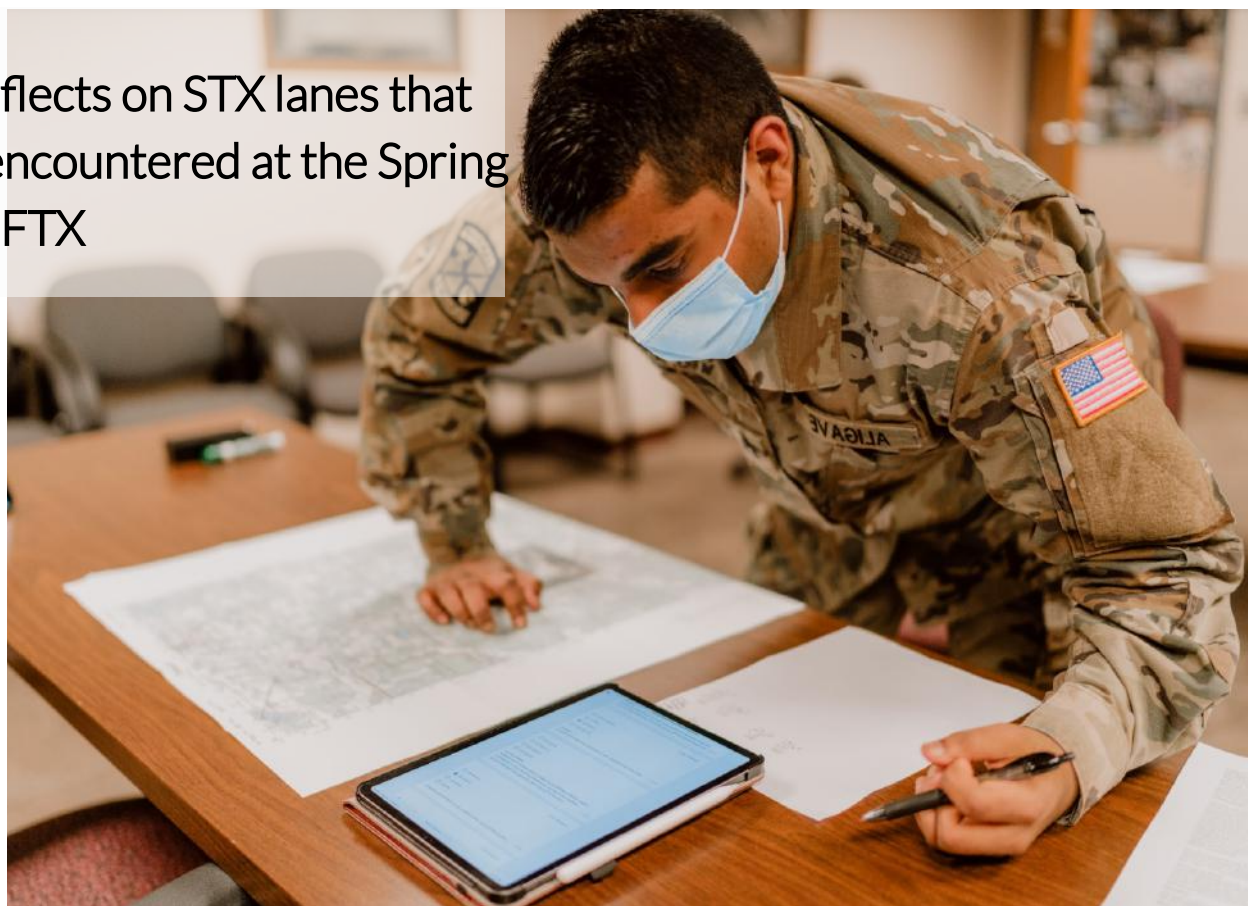


CDT Reflections

JOINT SPRING FTX

M

SIII reflects on STX lanes that they encountered at the Spring 2021 FTX



As the pouring rain drips from the brim of my cover onto my paper that I am using to plan the mission, I stare hard into the map, trying to decipher the best route to take in order to attack the enemy. It's barely 6 AM, and as the sun slowly rises, I brief my squad leaders on the mission, making sure that everyone understands their respective tasks. Before stepping off, we conduct last-minute gear and radio checks to ensure that we have what we need in order to be successful.

At first the terrain is relatively flat and open with some trees, allowing us to quickly cover the distance to the enemy. Once I find a suitable area to stop, I set up my platoon in a hasty defensive position while I take my key leaders on a recon to decide how we want to take on the enemy. Now moving through more dense vegetation and larger elevation changes, it's becoming harder to differentiate between enemy and tree trunks, and we stop multiple times thinking that we spotted the enemy when we had only come across shadows. After arriving at the area of where we thought the enemy would be, we set up an observation team to continue watching the area, while the rest of us headed back to grab the platoon.

Retracing our steps, we were able to reach our platoon quickly and prepared to move towards the enemy. Little did we know, our radios had been running on high power since last night and had run out of battery as we were coming back to platoon. Without functioning radios, I had no way to contact the observation team nor the rest of the smaller elements I was about to create. In that moment, I decided to move the platoon as a whole in order to maintain as much control as I could.

Now on the move back to the objective, we had navigation issues due to a miscalculated azimuth, and we found ourselves lost in the woods with only the surrounding terrain to orient ourselves. Taking a moment with my pointman, we are able to roughly find out where we are in relation to the expected enemy area, and we create a new route to the objective. As we get closer, I am able to hear hushed voices and see black enemy uniforms through the green foliage, and I know now that we are close enough to strike. I instruct my platoon sergeant to set up the machine guns on a support by fire line and improvise a whistle plan to replace the radios in order to initiate fire, and direct my assault element on a bold outward flanking maneuver to catch the enemy off guard.

Once my team is in position, I blow the whistle as hard as I can and the glorious roar of the M240B machine guns echoes throughout the woods. Charging forward, I lead the assault into the enemy's flank and grin as I see the dumbfounded expressions of the enemy faces. Clearing out the area, I call out for EPW (Enemy Prisoner of War) teams to conduct searches of the bodies and prepare the platoon to get off the objective quickly in order to escape an enemy QRF (Quick Reaction Force) that may have heard the commotion of the firefight. In good spirits with our successful attack, we traversed our way back to our base, as silently as we had first arrived.

CDT Neel Aligave



The SFTX CONDOR lane consisted of events such as a Land Navigation exam, CFF, TCCC, and weapon proficiency.

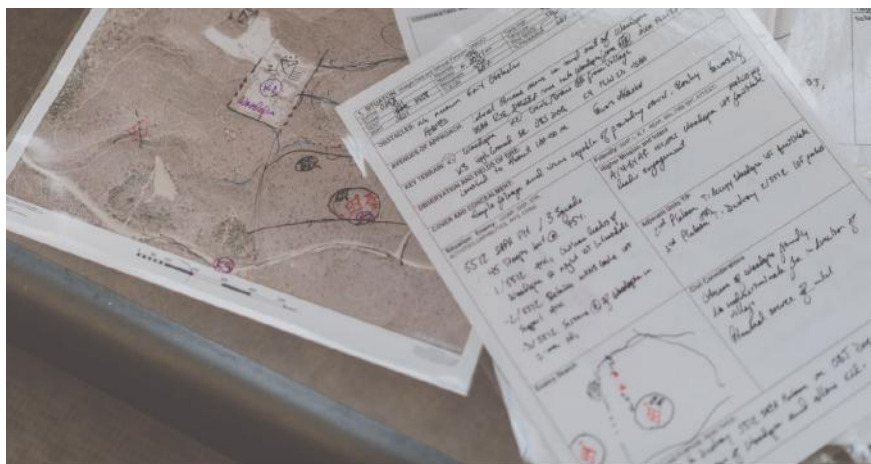
CONDOR Reflection

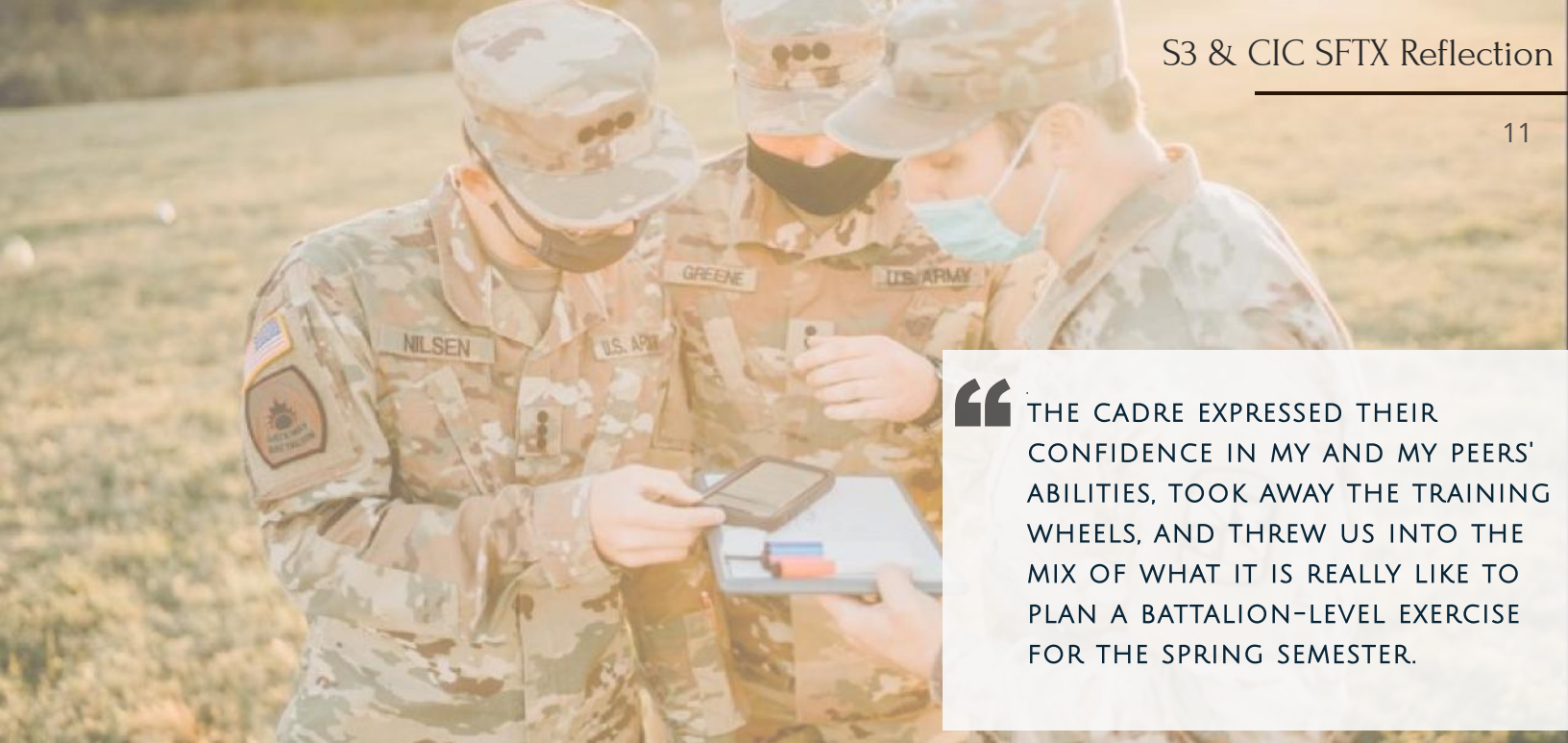
Gateway MSII

I woke up early with my battle buddies on the first full day of the FTX ready to ATTACK the CONDOR events. A flurry of thoughts raced through my mind while I scarfed down a “Toaster Pastry, Frosted Brown Sugar”. What does CONDOR mean? Surely it’s an acronym because it’s always capitalized when I see it written. What does it stand for? Was that somewhere in the OPORD? It was a chance to test my skills, that was all I needed to know. My platoon started at the written land nav test. When I saw the first question I became keenly aware that I had not practiced land nav for months. After spending too long on the first page, my sleepy brain caught on and I was able to finish with a few seconds to spare. Next was the Tactical Combat Casualty Care event. To the delight of the grader, nearly no one from Gateway knew how to call up line 3 of a 9-line medevac request. Everyone I was with missed the CONDOR mark there. Demoralized, I stumbled through Call For Fire and Weapons. I finished off the competition with a half-hearted run through assembly at the Radios lane. I caught myself thinking about my effort in the latter CONDOR events during the missions that day and for the rest of the FTX. I had let the confusion at the TCCC lane get under my skin. I realized that the point of the lanes wasn’t to achieve CONDOR, the point was to check knowledge and reveal what I needed to study at an individual level.

I used this realization to refocus my effort in the remaining missions on Saturday and Sunday. I made use of the opportunity to practice leadership if I saw a confused MS1 cadet. I familiarized myself with the M249 I had been assigned and took every chance I had to fire it. I watched how the upperclassmen communicated their plans, who they chose to go on the leader’s recon, and how they placed the support and assault lines. The main characteristic I observed that determined whether a cadet leader had a successful mission was their Warrior Ethos. A change in circumstance or a small mistake only defeats a leader if they let it keep them from making forward progress. The CONDOR lanes made me realize that it’s inevitable to encounter the unexpected whether it’s in the classroom or on a mission. Confronting the unknown is not always a reflection of your preparedness as a leader, but it is always an opportunity to demonstrate Warrior Ethos.

CDT Jonah Wright





“THE CADRE EXPRESSED THEIR CONFIDENCE IN MY AND MY PEERS’ ABILITIES, TOOK AWAY THE TRAINING WHEELS, AND THREW US INTO THE MIX OF WHAT IT IS REALLY LIKE TO PLAN A BATTALION-LEVEL EXERCISE FOR THE SPRING SEMESTER.

S3 & CIC Reflection on SFTX Planning & Execution

CDT Austin Greene & CDT Kristian Nilsen

Austin Greene:

I am an MS4 cadet of the 2020-2021 school year graduating from Washington University in St. Louis in about two weeks. I had the honor of being the Cadet S3, or Operations Officer, for the Gateway Battalion this spring semester. My initial impression of the position made me think I was simply in charge of finishing Operation Orders for labs and overseeing execution on those Thursday evenings, but the ever-increasing intricacies of planning for the Spring Joint FTX made me realize I had a much bigger job ahead of me than simply checking a 5-paragraph format.

Planning for this joint exercise between Gateway, Southern Illinois University (Edwardsville), and Southern Illinois University (Carbondale) started late in the fall semester. At that time, I was specifically in charge of putting together the Situational Training Exercise (STX) lanes for our MS3 cadets to be tested for their leadership in platoon-level patrolling operations. The STX lanes were exciting to plan and made me think that MS4 tasks were simple to execute and that planning the FTX was going to be easy. The best part about our program at Gateway proved to also be the most challenging part: the cadre expressed their confidence in my and my peers' abilities, took away the training wheels, and threw us into the mix of what it is really like to plan a battalion-level exercise for the spring semester.

Instead of spending a few hours drawing platoon boundaries on a map and making up situations for the MS3's to deal with on STX, I now was working closely with CDT XO Burtelow and CDT CiC Nilsen almost every day on all the different aspects of planning and logistics that allows for two days of STX to actually happen. While I was still in charge of the Operations Order for the JFTX, I was also heavily integrated into details of “time and space,” meaning I needed to know who / what was where / when, a task so daunting at the battalion level that it is hard to describe on paper.

After about 6 months of planning, with two of those months consisting of our cadet JFTX staff spending countless hours at our battalion, the JFTX was executed. It was surreal to be at the different command posts and direct the who / what / where / when details, but I was elated with the sense of accomplishment that washed over me and our staff once all was finished and we went back home.

Kristian Nilsen:

As CIC for the Spring 2021 Joint FTX seeing this event develop over the course of a year to be a penultimate test for our MS4 team and the cadets we were training has been an immensely valuable experience. Starting my MS4 year as S5 I did not fully understand the scale to which this is a Cadet lead FTX. Planning may have started within a small team hashing out details on a SYNCMAT but when it came to execution administering the FTX involved a team of 20 plus MS4s all sharing the responsibility of making this event possible. Looking back it's funny to think how excited we were over an eight-page SYNCMAT with a mess of colors corresponding to concurrent events. Carrying that motivation over to Fort Leonard Wood while aware that on the ground this event would only be more complicated with more concurrently moving parts, set a shared understanding that planning and preparation would be an ongoing phase. I'm really proud of the team we had and the trust we were able to build to keep critical decisions moving fluidly, these characteristics are what made FTX successful during execution. To the incoming MS4s preparing for FTX in the coming year, know that you have a team of motivated leaders excited for the challenges to come and build a network of trust necessary to make agile decisions.



Gateway CDT

INVOLVEMENT, UPDATES & SPECIAL EVENTS

An award visit by MG John R. Evans



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

On March 15, 2021 the Gateway Battalion received the Department of Defense Reserve Officer Training Corps Partnership Excellence Award. This distinct accolade recognizes the ROTC Battalion that has established the strongest relationship with their host university in the nation. The award was presented to our program's cadre and cadet chain of command by MG John R. Evans, commanding general of U.S Army ROTC Cadet Command. At the conclusion of the award ceremony, select cadets of the Gateway Battalion had the opportunity to sit down with MG Evans in a leadership and professional development panel. This meeting provided cadets with a rare opportunity to openly discuss leadership philosophies and the long run strategic goals for young officers with a decorated general officer.

It was a tremendous honor to be a part of the award presentation and leadership panel. It was especially rewarding to stand on the stage as a cadet representing this illustrious program. The Gateway Battalion has come a long way in re-strengthening the civil-military relations within the St. Louis community since May of 1970, when the ROTC building was reduced to ash after protesters set the building on fire in response to tensions regarding U.S involvement in the Vietnam conflict. It is humbling to reflect upon what a difference fifty years can have within our organization. In the years since the burning, the Gateway program has not only continually produced numerous officers who have served with distinction, but has been nationally and publicly recognized by the Department of Defense for having the strongest relationship with their community- the ultimate dichotomy.

As a future second lieutenant and product of our nation's finest producer of young officers, I am proud to say that I will enter my career, like all of my peers, from a city that has experienced sacrifice and success. In the Gateway Battalion, we stand on the shoulders of the giants who have served before us. MG Evans told us in our leadership panel that our ROTC experience is unique and is one that should not be forgotten, that we are all products of the culture from where we came. If there is even a fraction of truth hidden within this statement, then the future of our nation's Army and the city of St. Louis has a lot to look forward to. I for one will never forget the lessons and memories that I have been afforded as a member of this battalion. I hope one day I can serve as willingly and with the same level of distinction as the prestigious alumni of the Gateway battalion. I want to be a role model to future leaders and provide the same impact on others as MG Evans' visit had on my ROTC experience.

Gateway! To The West!
CDT Thomas Kazmierczak

"IN THE GATEWAY
 BATTALION, WE STAND ON
 THE SHOULDERS OF THE
 GIANTS WHO HAVE SERVED
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 AFFORDED AS A MEMBER
 OF THIS BATTALION."

Covid-19 Vaccination Update

Gateway Covid Task Force

As the situation with COVID-19 has continued to change throughout Spring semester, so did Gateway's COVID Task Force. While maintaining priorities such as contact tracing cadet exposures, returning recovered cadets to physical training and labs, spreading awareness about the pandemic, and serving as the COVID experts of Gateway, the Task Force adapted to meet the fluctuating needs of the Battalion. Most notably, when Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson began discussion of their vaccine roll out programs, the Task Force began working on the topic of cadet vaccinations.

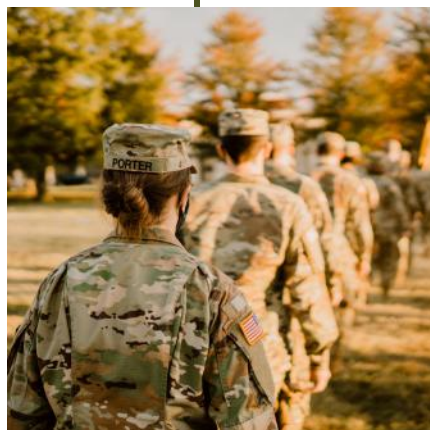
Foremost, I just want to highlight that neither the U.S. Army ROTC program, nor Gateway Battalion requires cadets to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. The COVID Task Force's role in the vaccination process is purely to provide cadets with unbiased, scientific information about all vaccines that are distributed in the country and provide opportunities where they are available. If they choose to pursue one of these options, that is their choice.

The Task Force serves two primary roles in the vaccination process for cadets.

Foremost, we encourage cadets to self-report when they receive their vaccinations. Under current CDC guidelines, Americans are not mandated to quarantine after two weeks has passed since their final vaccination; therefore, Gateway uses these records to accurately determine the details of a cadet's quarantine following an exposure to COVID-19. This has allowed a number of cadets to be safely excused from quarantining and permitted to attend valuable in-person training events. Also, in terms of situational awareness, this provides our Commanders with an accurate indication of how safe our training events are regarding COVID risks and the need for more extensive mitigation strategies.

Perhaps the more important role that the COVID Task Force plays in cadet vaccinations is through information dissemination and spreading awareness about vaccine opportunities. The Task Force has compiled a database of a variety of different locations across St. Louis where other cadets in the program have successfully gotten COVID-19 vaccinations. These resources range from the Missouri Department of Health's vaccine roll-out program to Facebook Groups about vaccine information to programs through CVS and Walgreens. In providing these easily accessible resources to cadets, we hope that all cadets will do their part in expanding our herd immunity and making our community stronger in the face of COVID-19.

While it has been a true pleasure serving as the Gateway Battalion's personal COVID-19 hotline, I am excited to hand the Task Force to CDT Gavin Morse. CDT Morse is a rising MSIII who has been active on the COVID Task Force since September. His experience has allowed him to become an expert at contact tracing, very familiar with the return to PT and medical clearance processes for recovered cadets, and an innovative thinker when it comes to COVID-mitigation efforts. He is excited to continue adapting the Task Force to match the needs of the Gateway Battalion until the pandemic comes to a close... whenever that may be!

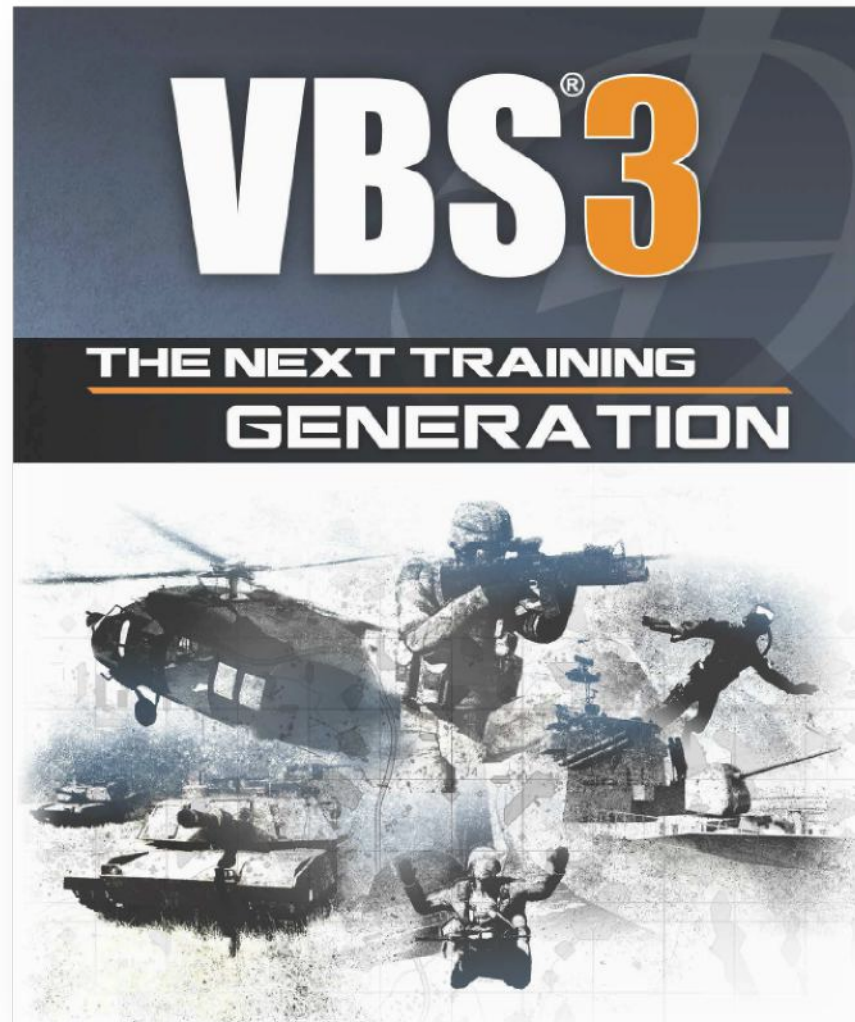


“ The Task Force has compiled a database of a variety of different locations across St. Louis where other cadets in the program have successfully gotten COVID-19 vaccinations.

CDT Kathryn Porter

Gateway's introduction to VBS3

Virtual Battlespace 3, or VBS3, is the Army's flagship training game. It is a tactical training and mission rehearsal, three-dimensional, first-person military training simulation program.



VBS3 or Virtual Battle Simulator 3 is a really cool piece of software that allows its user to do a number of things. With it Cadets and Cadre can create a set of scenarios that allow for Cadets to run through missions or battle drills in a detailed world. There's a large library of detailed maps of many famous places like Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Knox. Not only can you conduct an ambush in these locations but you can even do land navigation and practice your skills on the same course that all Cadets get tested on at Advanced Camp.

This in itself provides a large training value and with the other use cases creates a great learning experience for Cadets. Our hope at the Gateway Battalion is to incorporate this software more into the curriculum. It can be integrated into the classroom by letting Cadets flip OPORDS and run the same mission they just briefed. It can also be used at a lab where every cadet controls a rifleman and joins the same world creating a field environment where everyone can interact and execute missions.

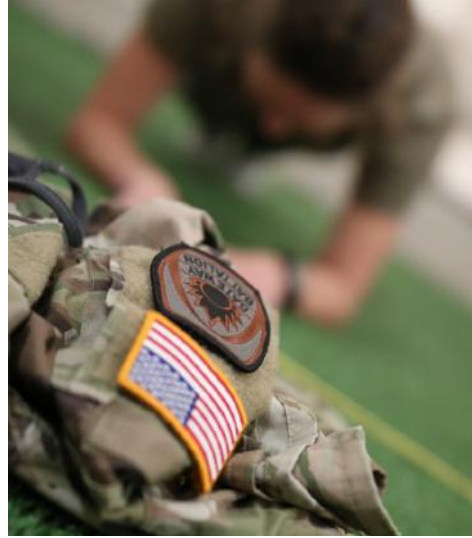
Gateway! To The West!
CDT Brett Morgan

Ranger Buddy Challenge Reflection



On April 10, 2021 Gateway Battalion went to the University of Kansas to compete in the annual Ranger Buddy Challenge. The team this year was led by team captain CDT Grindel and co captain CDT McMahon (myself), our NCOIC SSG French and the buddy teams brought this year included three male teams, two co-ed teams, and one female team.

Like with most things this semester Covid-19 was something new that the Ranger Buddy Challenge Team had to consider. However, this did not stop the Gateway Battalion from conducting valuable training and being given a chance to compete. During the train up these individuals plus the many who tried out endured 10 weeks of additional PT, and waking up early to study tentative army skills.



As with any extracurricular, cadets had much to balance, especially in a time where academics seem to be more difficult. However, even when one of our team members had a double header in baseball and could not get to Kansas until right before midnight, that did not stop him and the rest of our buddy teams from being ready to tackle a 15km ruck march filled with hills and mud, evaluation on standard infantry skills, and a 5k buddy run. All together Gateway did a fine job, with buddy team Wright and Pollman going the farthest in the competition. The morale was high and our minds and bodies were challenged. But what about the future?



Well as the incoming team captain for next season, we plan to hopefully have a shorter and more aggressive training cycle. Depending on how the Covid restrictions are next year, we would like to conduct the required PT together in addition to the extra PT we conduct for the competition. Plus I would want to spend the time really fostering esprit de corp among all the buddy teams. The one downside is that there were points in the train up where individuals had to conduct training remotely, however, thus is the nature of the beast. All together, we plan to take what we have learned this season, grow, and come back fired up as ever!

CDT Johnathan McMahon
Incoming RBC Team Captain

Northern Warfare Challenge



Northern Warfare Challenge (NWC) is a 30k ruck competition with four skill lanes scattered throughout. It was held in sub-zero temperatures in the mountains of Wisconsin. This was the first year that Gateway has competed in this competition, and we made sure that everyone remembered our name. The competition had 30 five-man teams from all across the country, competing for the title and a massive polar bear trophy.

NWC was honestly the hardest physical competition I have ever done. I had never rucked more than 12 miles and went in just hoping to make it to the finish line. Our team had minimal train-up, and the requirement to make the team was to be the first five finishers on a 12-mile ruck in Forest Park. The five arctic warriors to represent Gateway were: Brett Morgan, Benjamin Pollman, Michael Graham, Tenzin Sherap, and Johnathan McMahon. The five of us, coached by SSG French traveled up to Wisconsin early on a cold Friday morning to check in and begin the competition. Upon arrival, we had to complete a written test over the Army's Mountain Warfare and Cold Weather Operations book. After that we moved to a designated area to complete a layout of the required packing list. Attention to detail was crucial for this event, because if we were missing anything, we were immediately disqualified. After successfully passing our layout, we moved over to the skedco instruction station. Ever heard of a skedco? Yeah, me neither. A skedco is a druggable litter made for snow or mud. We learned the proper steps to evaluate and transport a hyperthermic patient safely, using the skedco and other equipment we had. After this we were done for the evening. The next morning, wake-up was at 0400 where temperatures were at -11°. We had to get our rucks weighed and then we hopped in the van for the short drive to La Crosse, where the competition would take place with two heats.

Our team stepped off in the second heat, and quickly made our way to the front to try and get an early lead and separate ourselves from the pack. We traversed six miles up and down steep hills to the first lane: rifle range. We each had to complete a modified version of the dot 40 rifle qualification using air rifles. We all shot our shot and were quickly off, ensuring our lead in our heat. After another long two miles we came up to the fire building lane. We had to use D batteries and steel wool to start a fire big enough to burn through a suspended string. After a slow start to igniting our flame, we quickly burned through our string and were off to the races headed to the third station. After a cramp filled three more miles, we got to the 9-line/skedco lane. We quickly evaluated our causality and successfully sent up our 9-line medevac request. After that, we loaded up three 45lbs lifting plates into our skedco and began the slow, long and painful journey that was the skedco lane. We began this lane thinking it was a short little drag that would maybe be a mile long and then we would be done. Boy were we wrong. After about a mile of nice, open, compacted snow, we got directed to go into the hilly forest to complete the lane. The width of the path narrowed to maybe a foot wide of slightly packed snow, surrounded by ~12' of fluffy, unpacked snow. This is where the dread began to set in. Lane walkers told us that it was only a half mile trek to the end of the lane where we would then unload the skedco. They lied. We kept going for what felt like forever. Finally, after a mile and a half of steep up and down hills, steep sideways slopes, constant falls and dread, we reached the end of the lane. Hope was regained, morale was boosted tenfold. We took a short snack break to regain our dignity, and after a bit, we were back on the train. Quick tangent, on this lane, in the woods, we passed Mizzou, who was in the first heat. We got back to the main trail and we had two miles left until we could get to the final lane, only there was one major problem: what felt like a mountain was standing between us, and that lane. Muscle weakness and exhaustion began to take over our bodies and this key terrain feature was looking impossible. We slowly trekked up this winding hillside; morale was crumbling, our will to complete this was deteriorating, but nevertheless, we persisted. We finally made it to the top of the hill and eventually stumbled over to the final skills lane. For this lane, we were each given a different knot to tie. This lane was super easy and was a relief to complete, as that meant the finish line was all that was left. We finished this lane and began to range walk towards the finish. It was around a quarter of a mile before we saw the massive flagpole that we had to touch that signaled the finish line. As we neared it, our spirits were lifted, we began to run as one unit, through the pavilion, reaching out our hands in triumph, slapping the pole, and completing the race. We had finished first in our heat and finished well before Mizzou was even close to the knot lane. We all had such relief and finally took our rucks off for the final time.

We went into this competition with zero expectations. We were simply hoping to beat the only AFROTC team competing, but we came out way better than anyone could have ever expected. We ended up finishing in 5th place and placed first for the rifle qualification range. This competition was no joke. I was easily the hardest thing I have ever done. The mental and physical challenges we faced were crazy, but with all that, it was extremely fun. It created memories that will last a lifetime, and stories that will never be done being told.

If you have any interest in competing in next year's Northern Warfare Challenge team, please contact CDT Pollman at bpollman01@gmail.com.

CDT Ben Pollman





German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge

Since the beginning of my ROTC career, the German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge (GAFPB) is the award I have strived for, mainly due to being a Germanophile and being of German ancestry. Thankfully, at the end of my MSIV year, this event came together, albeit at the last second, and was hosted by SIUE. I was fortunate enough to be one of the cadets invited to participate. In this year's GAFPB competition, what was traditionally held over two days was condensed into one day. For the competition, the events conducted were the CBRN test, medical test, 25m pistol qual, 100m swim in uniform, 10x11m sprints, flex arm hang, 1000m sprint, and 7.5-mile ruck. Going in, I expected a small challenge to complete each event to the gold standard, however, much to my surprise, each individual event was a true challenge on its own. We were lucky enough to have the esteemed LTC Weinberger of the German Army to preside over the events to certify us.

We started out the day strong at a gun range in the middle of Illinois to shoot the M9 Beretta, and unfortunately due to this difficult qualification, several people failed to continue in this competition. However, it was the next event that dropped the most competitors -- the 100m swim. This event was quite challenging in particular to those not used to swimming at such a physically demanding level. The physical portion pushed everyone and unfortunately, several of my fellow cadets, who were very high speed, were disqualified during the intense portion. That being said, personally, the most grueling event for me was the 7.5-mile ruck. The rules of the GAFPB qualification were that if any event was failed, the competitor was dropped immediately.

In the end, I was able to fulfill my dream that I have had since I joined our program here at Gateway Battalion. In conclusion, my one piece of advice to aspiring cadets is: beware, Deutschland doesn't go easy on the US Army!





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I HAVE AN EXCELLENT SUPPORTING STAFF, CADETS ABOVE ME WHO SUPPORT ME, CADRE WHO ARE MORE THAN WILLING TO HELP, AND A BATTALION OF CADETS WHO ARE WILLING TO TRAIN HARD.

MSIII to MSIV Transition

A reflection from the incoming S3

In February of 2018, I received a phone call from an unknown phone number with a 314 area code. On the other end was Mr. Lee Rodriguez, Admissions Officer here at the Gateway Battalion, informing me of my Army ROTC scholarship, congratulating me, and preparing for the next steps. MSI year flew by. A pandemic halted MSII year. MSIII year and camp prep are whipping by, jam-packed with review and repetition. A little over a week ago, the current Battalion Commander informed me that I would be serving as a Cadet Major and the Gateway Battalion's S3 in my MSIV year. All of this happened in a blurred three years and solidified the statement, "Time flies when you are having fun (or when you are covering yourself in camo and leaves while pulling security in a patrol base after executing two raids, an ambush, and a perimeter defense, looking down at your watch that reads 2334 and realizing you are just a few hundred steps away from 18 miles of rucking on the day)!"

Excitement, pride, happiness, and a few nerves crept into my system upon receiving my position for my last year in the program and my last year of college. It seems like just yesterday, I was moving into my freshman dorm, picking up my uniform, and taking pictures with my cadet rank upside down (at the time, I didn't know any better). However, there is not much time to think about that.

Because now, I am our S3, and my staff and I are responsible for training every aspect of the operations of this battalion. And it is real. With the exception of academics, it is the expectation that my top priority is ensuring that all execution of training exercises is at a very high standard. The bad news is, I have never been a battalion S3 before. The good news is, I have an excellent supporting staff, cadets above me who support me, cadre who are more than willing to help, and a battalion of cadets who are willing to train hard. There will be some long nights and maybe a few mistakes along the way. Still, I am beyond excited for the opportunity to provide my insight and use all that I have learned to help other members of Gateway receive the quality training that those before me offered.

A lot has been thrown at us MSIII's, soon to be MSIV who are not completely in charge of the battalion, but we are ready. The next year will be hectic, stressful, tiring, but it will also be a whole lot of fun. We already have a tight knit class and I am very excited to become even more tight knit over the next year.

That is all from me! Time to get to work. Training is not going to plan itself.

Gateway - To The West!
CDT Zac Styka

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO,

CONGRATULATIONS GATEWAY CLASS OF 2021!



The 103rd Class of Gateway Commissioning Officers

2LT KRISTIN BROWN - NURSE CORPS (NATIONAL GUARD)

2LT THOMAS BURTELOW - AVIATION (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT CURRAN CARTER - MEDICAL SERVICES (RESERVES)

2LT GEOFF DAVIS - INFANTRY (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT ELIZABETH DEGROOT - NURSE CORPS (RESERVES)

2LT ROSE FLANAGAN - NURSE CORPS (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT AUSTIN GREENE - CHEMICAL (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT SEAN HARTKE - MILITARY POLICE (RESERVES)

2LT THOMAS KAZMIERCZAK - AVIATION (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT LYDIA KEIPP - MEDICAL SERVICES (RESERVES)

2LT ABBY KOTTMAYER - NURSE CORPS (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT FAITH LLEWELLYN - ADJUTANT GENERAL'S CORPS (RESERVES)

2LT MATTHEW MCCOY - ARMOR (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT SUMMER MCKENNA - MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (RESERVES)

2LT KRISTIAN NILSEN - ENGINEER CORPS (RESERVES)

2LT BRANDEN ROBERTS - MEDICAL SERVICES (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT KODY SIMS - INFANTRY (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT THOMAS SUN - TRANSPORTATION (ACTIVE DUTY)

2LT RYAN VOGT - NURSE CORPS (ACTIVE DUTY)

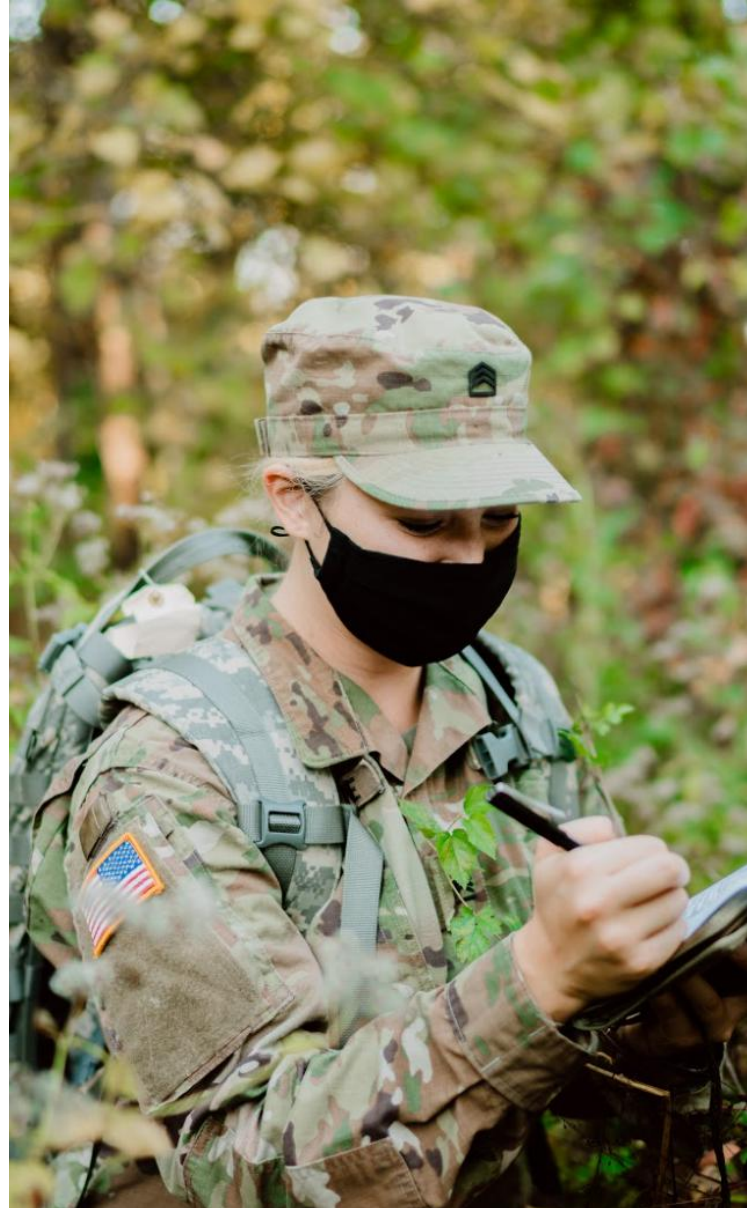
2LT MICHAEL WELCH - INFANTRY (ACTIVE DUTY)



Want To Get Involved?

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.

Please visit our socials & website below.



"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 Rodriguez in the Gateway Recruiting Office can help you schedule an appointment. His contact details are: (314) 935-5521 and lee.e.rodriguez@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

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