

MOHAWK ARMY ROTC



Spring 2018



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German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge

By: Cadet Alyssa Griffith

The German Armed Forces Proficiency Badge is one of the many foreign awards U.S. Army soldiers can earn. A cadet must pass several evaluations in order to receive the award and be considered proficient. The levels of qualification include Bronze, Silver, and Gold which are based on the outcome of the different events. Cadets must demonstrate knowledge and ability to perform first aid and their chemical warfare proficiency by donning their nuclear, biological, and chemical gear. Cadets must pass the basic fitness test which consists of three parts. A cadet needs to hold a flexed arm hang, keeping his or her chin above the bar for a minimum of five seconds in order to pass. Cadets then complete a 11 x 10 meter sprint test with a maximum time allowed of 60 seconds. They will also complete a 1000 meter run with a maximum time allowed of 6 minutes and 30 seconds in order to pass the fitness test. Marksmanship is another aspect of the proficiency test. For the 25 meter target shoot, cadets must hit a minimum of ONE target in each group. There are three target groups- each with two targets. Cadets also have to complete a 100 meter swim in the Army Combat Uniform (ACU) in under four minutes in order to be eligible for the award. The last test cadets will participate in is the Foot March. Cadets can march 3.75 miles to reach the bronze level, 5.6 miles for the silver level, and 7.46 miles for the gold level.

Air Assault School



CDT Chevez upon graduation from Air Assault School

By: Cadet Anna Chevez

Air Assault School is one of the many specialized schools that the US Army offers. Over the course of ten and a half days, soldiers are taught air assault helicopter operations, to include aircraft orientation, slingload operations, rappelling and fast rope techniques. It is considered the “ten toughest days in the Army” due to its fast-paced environment, coursework, rigorous physical training, and attention to detail. Although the school is offered mainly to soldiers, cadets are also able to attend the school in limited slots. Qualifying for a spot consists of academic GPA, score from the Army Physical Fitness Test, and extracurricular activities, among other factors.

The course itself is demanding from day zero. Candidates must complete an obstacle course followed by a two-mile run to be considered a student at the school. The course is divided into three phases, which are the combat assault phase, slingload operations, and the rappelling phase. The conclusion of each phase is marked after the completion of a written exam and a hands-on exam. What is taught in the combat assault phase are aircraft specifications, medical procedures, evacuation, and how to orientate an aircraft using hand and arm signals. In the slingload operations phase, students are taught how to rig equipment onto helicopters, as well as how to inspect each load. This phase usually eliminates the most students because of the attention to detail when inspecting for deficiencies on loads in the hands-on test. The final phase consists of learning proper rappelling techniques, starting from a slant wall and working towards a 34 ft. tower, and finally a UH-60 Blackhawk. Students must be able to tie a Swiss seat in under 90 seconds and hook up their rope to their carabiner correctly to avoid a safety violation. Any safety violation would result in immediate removal from the course.

The day of graduation, students conduct a 12 mile road march with 35lbs. in under 3 hours, followed by a gear inspection. Once students have passed, they are considered Air Assault graduates and earn their “wings,” or in other words, the Air Assault badge.

Simultaneous Membership Program



CDT Leonelli during Fall FTX

By: Cadet Clark Leonelli

The Simultaneous Membership Program (SMP) was established to allow ROTC cadets to join, drill, and train with Army National Guard Units. The SMP program allows cadets to train and gather experience with operational units conducting both home station, field training events, and annual training. As an SMP cadet, I have had the opportunity to work with and establish connections within the New York National Guard that will be utilized throughout my career.

The Simultaneous Membership Program offers cadets a unique opportunity to pick the units they would like to join, and if accepted by the commander, will be assigned to. Another distinct aspect regarding training with a National Guard unit is experience earned. cadets have the opportunity to serve in roles ranging from staff duties to specialized maneuver sections. The added benefit for cadets is the mentorship opportunities that comes with working closely with officers. The dynamic of working closely with officers on operational tasks in an apprenticeship capacity is vastly different from that of instruction from the active duty cadre within ROTC.

One of the hardest decisions that a cadet will make throughout the four years of ROTC are their branch preferences. SMP cadets tend to have an easier time making this decision as they have experience working with many different officers from different branches. Having the insight and experience gained from training within an operational unit really allows cadets to see the real-life application of the training received from ROTC. The Simultaneous Membership Program is a great opportunity to better broaden cadets experience and education in the profession of arms within an operational unit.

Cultural Understanding and Language Proficiency - "CULP"



CDT Quinde participating in a staff ride at one of the battlefields in Latvia from WWII.

By: Cadet Kevin Quinde

The CULP program is an ROTC learning opportunity that prepares cadets as future Army officers by immersing them in one of over 40 different countries. It stands for cultural understanding and language proficiency, and there are three main types of venues: humanitarian assistance, host nation military-to-military engagements, and social, cultural and historical exchange. Additionally, the ratio of the teams are 11 cadets to one cadre, which is an opportunity to directly learn from them.

Cadet Command selected me for the CULP mission to Latvia this past summer. After a 4-5-day SRP process, we flew to Latvia. Upon arrival, we traveled by bus to Camp Adazi to start our military-to-military engagement. A Latvian infantry company integrated our CULP group. We learned the similarities and differences between the U.S. and Latvian military in rank structure, organization, weapons, and tactics. The integration allowed us to develop a close relationship with Latvian soldiers. Most importantly, we participated in a NATO operation called Saber Strike. It's a multinational training exercise simulating a potential armored attack on the Baltic states. Training consisted of STX's and a 5-day FTX with certain nations playing the enemy. We interacted and traded patches with soldiers from Italy, Spain, Norway, Denmark, the UK and others.

Our last week consisted of humanitarian assistance and meeting cadets from the Latvian Military Academy. We lent aid to an orphanage by cutting down trees for fuel in the winter, something done by other U.S. units in previous years. The Latvian Military Academy was an eye-opening experience because we saw what requirements Latvian cadets must meet prior to serving in the military. The academy produces new officers for all branches and requires a heavy academic load with a high drop-out rate. The cultural exchange portion of the CULP mission consisted of visiting historical cities including the capital, Riga.

We returned to Fort Knox with an appreciation for Latvian culture and a better understanding of the U.S. role in military operations in the area, and Latvians' viewpoint on our role there.

Preparation For Advanced Camp



CDT Villahermosa briefing a sand table during an OPORD brief.

By: Cadet Michael Villahermosa

As the spring semester is rapidly approaching, it is only a matter of months before the Mohawk Battalion MS3's (college juniors) head off to Ft. Knox, KY for a month of ROTC Advance camp. Advance camp will test cadets both physically and mentally, with cadets making decisions under high stress conditions, running on little sleep. With that in mind, here are some recommendations to our Mohawk Battalion MS3's heading out this summer:

Show Up in Shape: This is key. Advance camp is incredibly physical. No matter how good of shape you are in, it is still going to hurt. It's going to hurt a lot more, however, if you fail to take care of your body prior to arrival. The Mohawk Battalion does a great job in ensuring that cadets are in the proper shape prior to arrival. Everything at Advance camp is done under load, meaning that you will ruck everywhere you go with packs that are roughly 45-60 lbs.

No One Knows Who You Are: It does not matter if you were the number one cadet in the battalion here at Siena, or the last: No one at camp knows, and no one cares. You will be evaluated on your own merits. You have a clean slate coming into camp. Don't mess it up by trying to rest on your past accomplishments.

Cadre is ALWAYS Watching: 2017 saw the return of the "Blue Cards." These are performance evaluations that are given to cadets after they have had a leadership role. They are also given as Spot reports to cadets for positive and negative behaviors. The cadre is always watching. Don't be the cadet that only does the right thing when you think cadre is looking, or when you are in a leadership role.

Everything that you do at camp, from the time that you do your layout on day 0 to marching across the Parade Field for graduation is observed. Good luck to all of our MS3's this summer at Ft. Knox, KY! Go forward and make the Mohawk Battalion proud!

Fall 2017 Field Training Exercise

By: Cadet Michelle Babula

Day 1

On the first day of the Mohawk Battalion's Fall FTX, cadets moved into barracks, settled in, and received their gear for the weekend, including paintball markers and masks. Then, they received PMI (Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction) classes, and some cadets were transported to the range to bivouac (camp out).

Main takeaway: Establishing a bivouac at the range created a training efficiency because less time was needed to transport cadets in the morning.

Day 2

The second day consisted of splitting the battalion into two groups. One group received classes including building a one rope bridge, sending a nine-line MEDEVAC (a request for medical evacuation), and first aid. The other group conducted training at the range. Cadets on the range had to group and zero (align the sights) their weapons prior to qualification. This process took more time and ammunition than was anticipated, so cadets that grouped and zeroed stayed at the zero range and qualified on Alt-C paper targets rather than moving to the pop-up range.

Main takeaway: The utilization of "Alt-C" paper targets was a branch plan executed in order to allow the largest number of cadets to have the greatest training value.

Day 3

On the third day, cadets split into squad-sized elements and conducted squad attack and movement to contact lanes. These lanes were spread out over several objectives, almost all of which were changed on the first day during the reconnaissance.

Main takeaway: selecting new objective locations better facilitated the rotation format of the squad lanes, and were closer together to allow more time for training and less for travel, overall improving the training experience for all cadets.

Overall FTX Takeaway

Conditions change during the execution of a plan, but good leaders must adapt and complete the mission.



CDTs Besch and Brack successfully locating a land navigation point.



CDT Archino demonstrating how to disassemble and reassemble an M4.



CDT Chen teaching a class on one-rope bridges.

“One Team, One Dream”

By: Cadet Jeffrey Chen

Cadets on the Mohawk Battalion Ranger Challenge team competed on October 14th 2017 at Ft. Dix, New Jersey amongst 44 other teams from the 2nd Brigade for the Ranger Challenge Competition. After a weekend of tough physical and mental challenges, the team finished 19th out of 44 teams.

Ranger Challenge is the competitive sport of ROTC where teams of nine cadets and two alternates compete against each other in challenges that require extreme physical endurance, strength, and collaborative problem-solving skills. The season began with a rigorous tryout period that tested each cadet's cardiovascular endurance and physical strength. The top 11 cadets became part of the 2017 Ranger Challenge team. Those cadets are CDT Devon Wentworth (Captain), CDT Camille Valenza (Co-Captain), CDT Jeffrey Chen, CDT Michael Lynch, CDT Aidden Arel, CDT Peter Cariddi, CDT Michael Bult, CDT Justine Guinaw, CDT Tim Cieslak, CDT Jon Peterson, and CDT Emese Dunn. For the next month and a half, the team trained rigorously every morning to hone our physical endurance as well as practice the technical skills we would need to succeed at the competition. These skills included Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC), one-rope bridge, swiss-seats, and crew drills.



Cadets work together to perform machine gun crew drills to standard in the shortest amount of time possible.

Ranger Challenge builds physically and mentally strong cadets, pushing each individual to find their physical and mental limits and surpass them. Ranger Challenge builds comradery, trust, and teamwork, and showed cadets how to approach and solve complex problems in austere conditions. If you're interested in a challenge and in improving yourself as a cadet, fight for a slot on the Ranger Challenge Team. This team has the potential to be one of the elite teams in the 2nd Brigade because of the heart of each of its members.

Be a part of a team that truly works hard. In the words of our team captain, CDT Wentworth, “Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard.”



Mohawk Battalion Ranger Challenge Team poses for a picture after a tough day of competing.

On October 14th 2017, the team set to set the bar at Ft. Dix, and show 2nd Brigade the strength of the Mohawk Battalion. Rucking from event to event, the team worked together to excel in each competition. Out of the 7 events, which included swiss-seat tying and rappelling, crew drills, obstacle course, and weapons assembly to name a few, the Mohawk Battalion Ranger Challenge Team placed top 10 in 4 out of the 7 events and placed top 12 in 2 out of 7 events. In the famed Tug-Of-War competition, CDT's Chen, Lynch, and Bult, crushed UConn and secured a seat for the 2nd round.

By: Cadet Trey Lesiak

This year I have the privilege of being the Joint Service representative for the Mohawk Battalion. My duty as Joint Service representative consists of coordinating numerous events throughout the school year where cadets and midshipmen from the Army, Navy and Air Force ROTC programs interact with one another. So far, in the fall semester cadets have participated in a Run to Remember for 1LT Jon Kohl (an Army ROTC graduate from RPI), contributed to joint service color guards and the joint service choir, attended Military Appreciation football and hockey games, and competed in the annual Taylor Trophy competition.

The Taylor Trophy is awarded to the winning service branch at the Joint Service Awards Ceremony held in May. The battle for the trophy consists of a series of competitions throughout the school year, which so far include flag football, soccer, and relay races during each military appreciation game.

In the spring semester cadets will get the chance to lead the Mohawk Battalion to victory in more recreational sports such as basketball, volleyball, and dodgeball as well as tactical events like paintball and a ruck march race. Cadets will have the opportunity to interact with the members of the other services in a formal setting at the 67th Annual Joint Service Military Ball. Held every spring semester, the ball includes a dinner with an honorary guest speaker.

Discussions between representatives have also led to ideas of coordinating possible joint physical training sessions, philanthropy events, and recruiting events during the spring semester in order to strengthen our relationship with and appreciation for one another.



CDT Travers happy to participate in the Taylor Trophy

By: Cadet Daniel Hill

The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) is used to evaluate a soldier's strength and endurance. There are three events: the push-up test, the sit-up test, and the two mile run. For the push-up event, the soldier must perform as many push-ups as they can in two minutes. In order for a rep to count, the soldier must drop down until their elbows are 90 degrees, and push themselves back up. The sit-up event allows two minutes for a soldier to do as many sit-ups as they can. Fingers must stay interlocked and behind the head, and soldiers cannot rest on the ground. The two mile run is simple. Soldiers run out to a one mile marker, turn around, and return within the time allotted.

Each event is scored out of a possible 100 points. FM 7-22 contains charts that detail the scoring standards. Upon completion of the test the three scores are added together and that gives a soldier their overall score. For example, if a soldier scores a 90 on the push-ups, a 90 on the sit-ups, and a 90 on the run they score an overall 275.

To prepare for the APFT, soldiers need to practice the events on the APFT. Soldiers should incorporate the two-minute push-up/sit-up drill into their own workouts. To improve their run, soldiers should practice running two miles at a steady pace. They should then gradually get faster and quicken their pace. In the case of all three events, soldiers must work out on their own to excel.

Doing well on the APFT is critical for cadets in the Mohawk Battalion. For MS1's and 2's, doing well is important to distinguishing yourself when it comes time to award contracts and scholarships. For MS3's, their record APFT scores are posted on their accessions packet to help them get their branch choice. MS4's need to score a 300 on the APFT because they will commission soon and need to be able to set the standard for the soldiers they will lead.



CDT Hile finishing the 2 mile run during the record APFT

By: Cadet Amanda Gundrum

College is a new and exciting experience for many freshmen. For those who have decided to be a part of the Mohawk Battalion, they decided to take on an extra challenge most other students wouldn't even want to try. We expect a lot out of our freshmen, or MS1's; to not only adapt to the college environment but also to adapt to the Army lifestyle. I spoke with CDT Belden, a MS1 at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, coming from Maryland where she participated in JROTC during high school. We talked about the difference between what she participated in during high school and what she's done in the past few months. The biggest difference to her were the priorities of what training we do within our companies, at lab and physical training. In her program, activities such as Drill and Ceremony and Color Guard were much more common than the tactics based training we conduct every week. She also only had to conduct Physical Training once a week, compared to our three days per week.

Already CDT Belden has participated in a Color Guard for the Annual Veteran's Dinner at Siena College, and volunteered with a local JROTC Battalion for a Parade. She is even interested in helping bring back a drill team. She has been working hard and will have a successful future in the program if she keeps up with it!



CDT Belden performing deadlifts during physical training.

By: Cadet Dylan Mannion

Recently, I conducted an interview with Cadet Rhys Jacobson, a Mohawk Battalion MSIII who studies Mechanical and Aeronautical Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The questions I asked Cadet Jacobson focused on his ROTC experiences this semester as a leader, and his thoughts and expectations regarding Advanced Camp. Cadet Jacobson will attend Advanced Camp during the summer of 2018, ending the chapter of his junior (MSIII) year. He will soon be moving on to the home stretch of senior (MSIV) year.

In his current role as Bravo Company Platoon Leader, Cadet Jacobson stated: "Being Platoon Leader is an enjoyable role. I am able to interact with all of the cadets in the platoon and get to know them all. A lot of my duties focus on training, and planning things for the platoon, but being able to see the kind of hard work they put in during training and the improvements that they have made is awesome. I am just here to give them direction, all the cadets in my platoon have really pushed themselves, put in the work and gotten better."

When asked of the challenges of executing peer leadership, Cadet Jacobson stated: "I have not found that peer leadership as an MSIII is too difficult. We have all already been through over two years together, so we have all picked up on each others' strengths and weaknesses and can help each other where it is needed. We all understand that this year is somewhat of a competition to get our ranking as high as possible, but at the end of the day, we are all training to be officers in the same Army and we are all friends, so we only better ourselves by making better our peers."

Advanced Camp may seem intimidating. When asked of the upcoming challenge, Cadet Jacobson stated: "I have heard good and bad stories about Advanced Camp. The biggest thing I have learned in ROTC is that you cannot know everything, but if you do a little bit of research, and prepare for what is to come, then you stand a lot better of a chance. I expect Advanced Camp to be an enjoyable experience."

Good luck to Cadet Jacobson and all other MSIII's who will attend Advanced Camp 2018.



CDT Jacobson being awarded the Freedom Tab

By: Cadet Kayla Rissew

In conjuncture with the required Military Science class, senior cadets attend and participate in a yearly Staff Ride. The Center of Military History defines a staff ride by the following:

"A staff ride consists of systematic preliminary study of a selected campaign, an extensive visit to the actual sites associated with that campaign, and an opportunity to integrate the lessons derived from each. It envisions maximum student involvement before arrival at the site to guarantee thought, analysis, and discussion. A staff ride thus links a historical event, systematic preliminary study, and actual terrain to produce battle analysis in three dimensions."

This fall, the senior Mohawk cadets studied the Battle of Saratoga. Due to its proximity to the Mohawk Battalion and its importance in US history, it was a perfect battle to analyze. After the preliminary research stage, in which cadets wrote Battle Analyses focusing on their assigned leaders, senior Mohawk cadets visited the Battle of Saratoga National Park. Cadets walked the very same landscapes that the Rebel and British armies had trekked previous centuries. Recent Siena College ROTC graduate, 2LT Carrillo, organized the event and led cadets and cadre around the park, stopping at each significant destination. Every cadet actively participated in the Staff Ride by aiding in the narration and analysis of battle from the perspectives of leaders from both sides. Despite the changing nature of war and technology, the lessons from the Battle of Saratoga remain incredibly relevant and applicable today.



MSIV cadets pose for a class picture at the Battle of Saratoga during their Staff Ride

By: Cadet Harrison Leinweber

The Mohawk Battalion is headquartered at Siena College. The battalion is organized into three companies: one at Siena, one at the University at Albany, and one at RPI. Siena hosts Alpha Company, which includes cadets from Siena and Union Colleges. Bravo Company, located at RPI, acts as a program extension center for cadets from RPI, Russell Sage College, and the Hudson Valley Community College. The University at Albany has Charlie Company which includes cadets from University at Albany and St. Rose. For the first two years of military science classes (MS1 and MS2 years), cadets conduct physical training and attend Military Science Class at their company's school. Once they move into their third (MS3) year, they attend class at Siena College with all the other members of their age group and fill leadership positions in one of the three companies. In their senior (MS4) year, cadets form the battalion staff and leadership positions. Each company has an officer and enlisted cadre advisor assigned to it. An MS4 cadet acts as the Commanding Officer for each company and serves as a liaison between the MS3's, cadre, and battalion staff. On occasion, an exceptional MS2 will fill a leadership position if a Company does not have enough MS3's. This allows the MS2 to hone their leadership ability before entering their MS3 year.

Companies conduct physical training at their host school twice a week. This includes strength and cardio training designed to build overall physical fitness. One day per week, the Company holds a ruck march (think backpacking) at the Erie Canal Trail in Niskayuna. This allows cadets to build endurance in a critical Army skill. Leadership Labs are also conducted once per week, where cadets refine their tactical skills and practice leading others while in a fast-paced environment. Upon completion, the Mohawk Battalion program prepares cadets to commission and excel as Second Lieutenants in the United States Army.

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