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• ARMY ROTC •

A Different Perspective

SFC Taylor's Path Led Him Back to the Start

My path in Army ROTC started in 2009 when I was a Cadet at the University of Central Missouri, on a national scholarship. As an 18-year-old freshman, my focus was more on parties than studies. While I put effort into ROTC and Cross Country, subjects like Art and Calculus received less attention. Realizing I lacked the maturity for success, I chose to enlist instead of taking loans or relying on my parents.

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A Different Perspective

Originally planning to serve for three years and then return to college, I enlisted as an Infantryman with Airborne training. After completing Jump school, I deployed to Iraq for nine months. Returning to the U.S., I was promoted to Sergeant and discovered my passion for instructing and developing Soldiers. I continued my education using the Army's Tuition Assistance, earning over 220 college credits in Homeland Security and Emergency Management while serving in the 82nd Airborne and as a First Sergeant at Fort Moore, GA.

In April 2024, I returned to the ROTC program as the Senior Military Science instructor at the University of Iowa. This full-circle moment allows me to shape and educate future U.S. Army officers. The Army's unique ethos encourages sharing knowledge to empower others. I can't imagine a better place to do this than the ROTC department at the University of Iowa.



Air Assault!

By CDT Ethan Pierce

To prepare for Air Assault, I talked to many of my friends that have gone before me. Their feedback was to learn the content at the school (don't try to look up quizlets before going) and make sure that I am physically prepared. From their stories, zero day was the event that dropped the most students from the course. With that in mind, I spent lots of time at the gym working on my back and arm strength, as well as getting as many reps as possible climbing the rope at the armory. A typical training day for Air Assault usually started with a first formation around 0500.

To ensure that I was ready for the day, I would wake up around 0400 to prepare for the day. After the morning workout (PT, ruck, or run), we were released to shower and grab breakfast. I found that the most efficient use of time was to shower first and grab food second. After breakfast, the block of instruction began. For Phase I, we were mostly contained to a small classroom, learning about the different specs for the Army's Aircraft. Phase II was a mixture of classroom and hands-on instruction, learning about sling loads. Phase III was all outside in the Georgia heat, rappelling off a 60 ft tower. The block of instruction lasted until 1800 (with a 1-hour MRE lunch break) when dinner chow was ready. Dinner was always rationed out, so you received 1 starch option, 1 protein option, and vegetables. After dinner, the rest of the day was ours. Most days were spent checking my packing list or studying the material until lights off. The best piece of advice I received that I would like to echo is that your effort is the only thing you can control. There were more than a few days in the Georgia heat where I would have rather gone back to my bunk to sleep or get on my phone in the air conditioning after we were released for the day but I told myself that if I would have failed any aspect of Air Assault (packing list, written test, or practical hands on test), I didn't give my best effort. So, during the 10 days of Air Assault, I took advantage of every opportunity to prepare myself for the next evaluation so if I were to fail, I knew that I could leave knowing I gave it my all.

Training for SAPPER

CDT Head's Insight

The SAPPER Leader Course is a demanding 28-day leadership development course for Combat Engineers that reinforces critical skills and teaches advanced techniques needed across the Army," (Sapper website) Sapper is split up into two 14-day phases.

Phase I is known as the General Subjects (GS) Phase and is made up of morning physical training, time in the classroom/learning in the field, and a variety of individual soldier tasks. Phase II is known as the Patrolling Phase and is nearly entirely spent in the field conducting two intense training exercises where you apply the knowledge you've learned in GS to platoon sized missions. Over the length of the course, you're required to pass four written exams, complete a day/night land navigation course, complete a 12-mile ruck in 3 hours or less, collect at least 70% of available points in GS, and receive a GO in 1 of 2-3 missions.

I was eager to begin training, excited to get the experience, and grateful for the opportunity. I cannot thank the MHBN and its Cadre enough for recognizing my application and fighting for me. I understand this is a rare opportunity to attend a premier school like SAPPER as a Cadet. I want to give credit to the people who helped get me here because none of it would have been possible without the support I've had. Initially, my training involved following the SAPPER physical readiness program located on their website on top of the physical training we do as cadets. That routine has morphed into conditioning my legs, acclimating myself to hot conditions, and lots of rucking. SFC Villarreal (Retired) also got me in contact with 1LT Kempema, a former Iowa ROTC Cadet that earned his tab in 2023. 1LT Kempema has been an unbelievably generous leader and reference. In terms of the leadership preparation for the course, I spent the majority of my Sundays in the Cadet office hours with recently commissioned 2LT Blake Misfeldt and Ethan Pierce on top of the usual Cadet curriculum, and even got some repetitions in leadership roles at the Spring Field Training Exercise and Super lab. I cannot stress enough how grateful I am for this opportunity. I've already felt like it's transformed me into a better cadet. I have no doubt this unique training will have a positive impact on my career as an Army leader, and I look forward to growth that I hope to get from this course.



Sponsorship Program

Introducing A New Era

Many years ago, the Mighty Hawkeye Battalion created and fostered a sponsorship program for incoming Cadets to help them navigate not only the transition into college but the program as a whole. Juniors and Seniors work together as a sponsorship team to help introduce the incoming Cadets to Cadre, military regulations, their majors and of course the best places to eat around campus.

How does the sponsorship program work? Incoming cadets are broken down into small groups based off of majors and interests. Before the semester starts students complete a questionnaire, once its complete it goes to our recruiting and retention team, Cadets Thompson and Striegl, they in turn work to place cadets into small groups. The groups meet outside of ROTC and class hour. These small groups help build camaraderie, unit cohesion, and a strong foundation at a pivotal point in our lives that leave lasting friendships and relationships as we grow our professional and personal networks.

Contact us!

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