

Mighty Hawkeye News

The Official Newsletter of the University of Iowa Army ROTC



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• ARMY ROTC •

AIRBORNE!

Cadet Battalion Commander Takes to the Skies

One thousand, two thousand...six thousand. Airborne! For approximately three weeks, those aforementioned words will be ingrained into your everyday vocabulary in the Basic Airborne Course at Fort Moore, GA. My experience was probably identical to that of Paratroopers fifty years ago. A Lot of running, falling, and waiting around to do the first two things. Airborne School is split into three phases: Ground Week, Tower Week, and Jump Week, with each phase being approximately five days long. Ground week is where you learn to land correctly, utilizing the Parachute Landing Fall, referred to as the PLF. The typical day during ground week started at 0600 with a run to the gravel pit. Once you arrive you will perform ten chin ups and

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ten push-ups before being allowed to step into the gravel pit. From that point on, besides lunch from 1130 to 1300, you will be falling. You'll do it to get it right, and then you will do it again. Tower week introduces you to combat load and culminates with the Swing Landing Trainer. The typical day during Jump Week starts around 0600, with a run to the 34-foot towers. Once you arrive you will harness up and exit from the 34-foot towers. The first couple times you will do Hollywood exits (no combat gear) and then you'll transition to combat load (consisting of a decent weighted ruck and a weapons case containing a rubber duck). At the end of the week, you will do the Swing Landing Trainer testing your ability to perform PLFs. Best piece of advice I was given was, "Don't let your brain ruin it for you." Jump week is the simplest week in the Basic Airborne School. Run to the harness shed, perform all sustained airborne training, put on your harness, and wait to jump. Then wait some more. You will perform a total of 5 jumps to get the coveted Airborne Wings. Do exactly what the Black Hats (BAC Instructors) tell you to do, ensure your hand is covering the red handle on your reserve parachute, keep your knees and feet together, and smile once you have successfully landed because you are no longer a dirty stinky leg. Airborne, all the way!



CDT DICKSON (RIGHT) HOLDING HIS EARNED PARACHUTE

CST was an experience that I will never forget. It was undeniably a challenging five weeks, but it was also rewarding. Cadets attend CST during the summer following their junior year of college. It is held in Fort Knox, Kentucky, where they are evaluated on the leadership skills they developed in ROTC. They are tested on their physical fitness, marksmanship, land navigation, warrior skills, field tactics, and their ability to work as a team.

One thing I wish I knew before going to CST is how important your role is when you are not in leadership. We are taught that every role is crucial to a successful mission, but I did not fully grasp this concept until camp. While you should prepare yourself to be a platoon leader and platoon sergeant, most of your time at camp will be as a Joe or team leader. The more you do for your team, the more they will do for you when you are put in leadership. I recommend that you practice getting outside of your comfort zone as much as possible. Volunteer to be the medic, RTO, or point man during lead lab. You will find yourself in these positions at CST, and it also gives you a chance to build your confidence. I also recommend packing more bug spray than you think you need.

I developed great relationships with the other cadets in my platoon, especially within my squad. You will endure a lot of hard situations during your time at Fort Knox, but these are the people that will support you and make it memorable. They will be the ones that will still be cracking jokes when it is pouring rain in the field or during a long ruck march, and they will be the ones standing with you on graduation day. I was a different person that final day than who I was when I arrived on day one. There were times when I was pushed to my limit, mentally and physically. By persisting through the toughest moments, I accomplished a lot of things I did

not know I could and have ultimately become a better leader. I challenge the incoming cadets to maintain a positive mindset, work hard, and always keep their eyes fixed ahead on the purpose of it all: to become an officer in the United States Army.



CDT LUNDTVEDT ON HER DAY OF CST GRADUATION

Project GO

CDTs Lambert and Greenwell Explore the World

This past summer CDT Tanner Greenwell and I had the amazing opportunity to travel East Africa under a Project GO scholarship. Both of us had taken a year of Swahili here at the University, in hopes to become proficient in the language. We both believe that the best way to learn a language is to become fully immersed in it. To say we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into would be an understatement. The two months we spent in Kenya and Tanzania will forever be one of my favorite times in my life.

A little background on Project GO: It is a scholarship that allows ROTC students across all branches to become proficient in languages that the military deems critical. The scholarship is an experience that is offered both domestically and internationally. Project Go offers education in 11 different languages, in countries all

over the world. While I can't personally discuss the other 10 language courses, I can give you a glimpse of the Swahili international program, which is led by the amazing Doctor Jennifer Coffman.

In eight weeks we managed to travel between two countries and stayed in 19 different cities. We traveled by boat, plane, bus, and my personal favorite tuk tuks (three wheeled carriage looking taxis). We went on multiple safaris, visited national parks, partook in four different homestays, and learned all about the culture of East Africa. The friendships I made in Kenya and Tanzania will be ones that last a lifetime. There is something so special about experiencing new places with people and there is an unbreakable bond that is formed.

One of the highlights of the trip was one of the last days we were there. We were staying at Lake Natron and had a few adventures planned for the day. We got to hike to a trail to this massive waterfall that we got to swim in. The combination of the views, the effort from the hike, the celebration of the trip, we truly were all just so happy to be there. There was a smile on everyone's face. I truly cannot speak highly enough about my experience, and time in East Africa. The least I can say is Asante Sana Afrika Mashariki ("Thank You Very Much East Africa").



CDTs LAMBERT AND GREENWELL REPRESENTING HAWKEYE NATION

Basic Camp

CDT Murra Battles Kentucky Heat

Basic Camp is intended to get cadets who are new to the program “up to speed”. I originally was not an Army cadet until the 2024 Spring semester, which was the reason I was required to go train. BC is roughly 30 days long and during it we covered a lot of Army policy that any soldier should know. Many days were spent in auditorium halls for these briefs where engaging speakers and pertinent information piqued my interest. It was sometimes difficult for people to stay awake through the duration of these briefs and that’s where the Drill Sergeants came in. Their main job is to oversee Cadet training and to keep cadets in line. If you fell asleep in an aisle seat you would often be woken up with a knife hand mere inches away from your face.

Other activities during BC included weapons familiarization, range days, rifle qualification, land navigation, tactics, and my personal favorite, night infiltration course. NIC or sometimes lovingly called, nick at night, to my knowledge is one of the few things we do at BC that cadets don’t do at Advanced Camp. We started around 2200 and the LTC gave a brief which was meant to put us in the boots of a soldier who was doing a real-life night infiltration. All of the cadets lined up in a trench parallel to a giant sand pit we would soon be scurrying across. It was cool to see our drill sergeants, acting as guides, pressing their bodies into the trench wall and peeking over waiting for the explosion which signaled us to go. I was in the second wave, so I got to see everyone leap over the wall before I would. My battle buddy Nic Holcomb and I practically speed ran the course. There was M240s firing tracer rounds above us and the intermittent flare would shoot off, you couldn’t miss it, and they were crazy loud even over the machine guns. Holcomb and I would dash across the sand tearing up our elbows and every so often we’d hear a BOOM signaling a flare. We got into a good rhythm of flattening out when the flare was up and counting for three to five seconds before beginning a low crawl until

until the flare would fizzle out and we could high crawl once more. The second wave definitely had some great cadets, but Holcomb and I are convinced we finished first in our wave. The Cadre receiving Cadets on the other side even said we were hauling tail, so I’ll take it. It wasn’t all fun exercises however, especially given the hot and humid Kentucky weather and external stress provided by Drill Sergeants. Some days had a lot more “suck” than others, but that’s where the best part of camp played in: the people. My platoon (Go Dragons!) graduated with 44 cadets, many of whom I would be grateful to wear an officer rank alongside of. On the hard days, I was sure to get back to the barracks and crack jokes with, smile with, and form friendships with my comrades. On the worst days I would think about being back in Iowa City and eating at my favorite restaurant. (Shoutout Miceys Nashville Hot Chicken Sandwich) and I think that a lot of the Advanced Camp cadets would agree with me. Although getting smoked in that Kentucky fried heat was not anyone’s idea of fun (and certainly not mine), I did get a little sad on the bus ride to the Louisville Airport thinking, “man.. I’ll never do pushups with that group of people ever again...”



CDT MURRA WITH HIS BASIC CAMP COMRADES

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