



The Revolutionary Guard Battalion's CODEWORDS

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Cadre Corner

by MSG Matthew Dalton, SMI

Greetings Revolutionary Guard Battalion! I'm extremely excited to be a part of this first issue of the current version of CodeWords. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately depending on your point of view, this will be the first, last and only issue that I'll be a part of. More on that later but first I'd like to briefly discuss a few keys to success that I've realized over the past 22 years.

Being a successful Leader requires **motivation**. Discipline is the foundation of motivation. Being disciplined will create character and morals (think Army Values) which will shape an individual's personal and professional identity. Discipline will create the framework for a good Officer/Leader and a good Officer/Leader creates motivation. Motivation supplies the will and initiative to do what is necessary to accomplish the mission. ADRP 6-22 tells us that "a leader's role in motivation is to understand the needs and desires of others, to align and elevate individual desires into team goals, and to inspire others to accomplish those larger goals." The Army will challenge your ability to stay motivated. Realize that and rise above it.

Standards. Leaders must enforce standards at all times. Standards should be published, known and understood by all, and enforced fairly at every level. The

first time you compromise standards for someone, you've lost the high-ground. It is absolutely critical to remember that in order to enforce the standards, you yourself must not only meet but exceed those standards. If you cannot exceed the standards, you will not be an effective leader. If you don't demand that your subordinates meet the standards, you will not be an effective leader.



Positivity. Those of you who have spent more than a minute with me may have realized that I'm not exactly a vociferous, outgoing, ray of sunshine type leader. This does not mean that I'm not thinking positively at all times. Many of you have heard this comment from me, "Sometimes the Army sucks." And it's true. I'll be eternally grateful for everything the Army has given me but to say that it's been all wine and roses would be a lie. You

will face situations that are undeniably not fun. I see no issue with acknowledging the suck, all of your Soldiers will know it anyways. Embrace that suck. Find something good and cling to it. A positive attitude is infectious and it starts with Leaders.

As most of you know, I was selected to attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy this summer. While this tremendous honor is incredibly important for me professionally, it's bittersweet to be leaving the RGB after only arriving last May. Having no experience in dealing with Cadets other than a few CTLT's, I was unsure what to expect. I was told some disheartening stories about Cadets from former ROTC cadre from other programs, as well as LT's who went through ROTC. I can say now that they were wrong. I've been blown away by the overall level of professionalism and the positive, can-do attitudes that I've encountered here. You all are what

makes this program run and from my foxhole, this program is an absolutely first rate organization.

My door (or email) is always open to each and every one of you and will remain so long after I leave here. I've accumulated a lot of experience over the years and it would be selfish to keep it all for myself. It doesn't matter what you branch, leadership is leadership and I want to help.

I'd like to end with a quote by one of my personal favorites, General (RET) McChrystal who said, "Leadership is not a talent or a gift, it's a choice." You all have made the first step in choosing to be a leader, now push yourselves to improve and develop in ROTC so that one day you can take on perhaps the greatest responsibility a person can have, leading Soldiers.

RGB Cadets Compete for Prestigious GAFB

by CDT Eric Svendsen, C Co

During the past Spring 2018 semester, a group of ROTC cadets from the Revolutionary Guard Battalion was given the opportunity to travel to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to compete for the prestigious German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency. The group of cadets was comprised of two cadets from the College of William and Mary, seven cadets from Christopher Newport University, and SFC Ronald McBroom-Teasley, a cadre member from Christopher Newport University. At the end of the two-day event, Revolutionary Guard Battalion cadets came away from the event with two gold badges, four silver badges, and two bronze badges.

The German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency (hereby shortened to GAFB) is a decoration given to soldiers of the German *Bundeswehr*, as well as allied nations. The GAFB is earned by meeting a gold/silver/bronze standard in all six different events.

The badge itself is a German Eagle surrounded by an oval wreath of oak leaves, given in either bronze, silver, or gold, based on the standards met by the participant. The first event is a Basic Fitness test, which is comprised of three parts: a 1,000 meter sprint, a flexed arm hang, and eleven 10m sprints.



The next event for the GAFB is the pistol qualification. This is one of the most difficult events in the GAFB, and is known for preventing people from obtaining the gold. Each participant is given two targets at

25m, a handgun, and six rounds of ammunition. Each participant has to shoot two rounds each from three positions: standing, kneeling, and prone, in under eighteen seconds. To achieve gold, a participant must hit all six rounds in one attempt. A single missed shot will cause a participant to lose the ability to achieve gold at all.

The third event for the GAFB is the Road March. With a 35lb ruck, a participant has to ruck march a certain distance at around a 16min/mile pace.

The fourth event for the GAFB is a CBRN MOPP Gear test. The participant is tasked with putting on and clearing a gas mask in under 9s, followed by putting on all of the MOPP Gear in proper sequence without a time limit. The trick with this is to loosen the straps on the gas mask so that it is easier to pull over one's head, and then mentally walking through a checklist for putting on all of the outfit.

The fifth event for the GAFB is a first aid test. This is a simple multiple choice and short answer test on US Army first aid material. A simple study guide created from the Army Combat Lifesaving information, and TC 4-02.1, will ensure success on the first aid test.

Finally, the last and arguably most difficult event is the 100m swim in uniform. For this event, participants must dress in uniform (except boots) and swim 100m in under four minutes. Before a participant can get out of the water, they must take their uniform blouse and pants off. The biggest tip for this is to stay calm and keep pushing, there is plenty of time to float on your back and swim the 100m.

A participant is awarded the GAFB after completing all six events to a set of standards. A participant must achieve a gold standard in all events to get a gold badge. Even one event with a silver, instead of gold, will give a participant a silver award even if all five other events were gold.

One notable GAFB recipient with connections to the RGB is COL T.C. Smith (USA, RET) a Vietnam Helicopter Pilot, and a member of the Military Order of the Purple Heart

who works with cadets from the Revolutionary Guard Battalion as a military leadership mentor. After commanding soldiers in Germany, COL Smith had to earn the GAFB one level at a time, earning both Bronze and Silver during his time in service.

Personally, I really enjoyed participating in the GAFB event. I found an event where I could train and push myself harder than I had ever done before, and it paid off. At the end of the event, I was awarded the GAFB at the gold standard. After participating in this event, I took away several important lessons. Preparing for an event like this should be comprised of physical preparation, mental preparation, and skills preparation. When I say this, I mean that training the specific events like the sprints and the swim are extremely important, and pushing to not only meet the standard, but excel past the standard will help overcome nerves on the day of the event.

Mental preparation is also extremely important. Keeping down nerves was one of my biggest struggles during the event. Being nervous will tighten your lungs and chest, and actually slow you down, unless you can calm yourself down and focus on what needs to get done.

Also, keeping a positive attitude despite minor setbacks is also extremely important. When I went to shoot, the cadre started the timer, and as I aimed and squeezed for my first shot, I found that I had forgotten to turn the safety off. Instead of giving up, or complaining that I had made a mistake, I pushed through and surprised myself. Finally, training the specific skills that you will be testing is important. The saying “train how you fight” is extremely relevant in a test like this. Before this event, I would set up cones to train on the sprints, went to the shooting range to practice shooting a pistol, and even took advantage of an opportunity to go to Ft. Eustis and learn from another cadet how to put on and clear the gas mask. Getting these unusual tests not only into your mind, but also into your hands and body is an integral part of doing well when put in a stressful situation.

CDT Sterling at the George C. Marshall Conference

by CDT Nathan Harris, C Co

According to US Army Cadet Command, over 300 cadets gathered from around the nation for the George C. Marshall Conference at Fort Leavenworth, on Feb. 12-14, 2018. This year, the focus of the conference was on, “the application of social and emotional intelligence principles as part of an informed leadership philosophy to effectively lead integrated teams operating in complex environments.” Cadets were able to meet and interact with well-known political and military leaders, including Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa; Gen. David Perkins from TRADOC; Lt. Gen. Stephen Twitty, the CG of First Army; LTG (R) Patricia D.

Horocho, 43rd U.S. Surgeon General and CG of the U.S. Army Medical Command; and MG Christopher Hughes, CG of U.S. Army Cadet Command.

Representing the Revolutionary Guard Battalion, Alpha Company’s Max Sterling attended as one of the top 10% of cadets in the nation. “I was told I would be attending last November. I definitely viewed this as a fantastic opportunity to meet a lot of other Cadets across the country, and of course I was proud and honored to



represent the Revolutionary Guard Battalion.” After Cadet Sterling was notified of his selection to attend the conference, he began preparing for this opportunity through reading and refreshing his knowledge on topics such as emotional intelligence and leadership. “We were sent down a reading list from the Brigade and given the reading material. Additionally, we were asked to complete a self-test of emotional intelligence and to hand carry a copy of our Meyers-Briggs personality test.” It was at this time that Cadet Sterling began to get a glimpse of what would take place at the conference. “I definitely expected to spend a lot of time in the classroom, going over emotional intelligence scenarios.”

As the day of the conference arrived, Cadet Sterling was impressed with the overall professional atmosphere of the conference. “I’d say that the overwhelming majority of Cadets there were motivated and wanted to improve their programs and themselves, so everyone took all the lessons and speakers very well. There was also a sense of humility that even though we were selected to represent our programs, we each had a responsibility to take the lessons learned back to the programs and be an example moving forward.” The Cadets had the opportunity to learn many lessons over the course

of the conference from different speakers such as MG Hughes of Cadet Command, and LTG Twitty of the First Army. Cadet Sterling came away with three major lessons he learned from these powerful speakers. “First, along the lines of the classroom time that we had, I think it’s clear that great leaders have high emotional intelligence. But beyond that, we can all work to improve ourselves in that arena. Second, a common theme throughout the weekend was to always set the example. Multiple speakers talked about how as a leader, you have to do the right thing no matter who is watching. And they emphasized that our Soldiers will immediately pick up on hypocrisy, and a leader will lose all credibility. Finally, it really hit home that it’s important to have passion for what we do. My peers at the conference, our Cadre facilitators, and the speakers all talked about loving’ to be a Soldier and loving soldiering; I definitely came away with a renewed passion for being in the Army.”

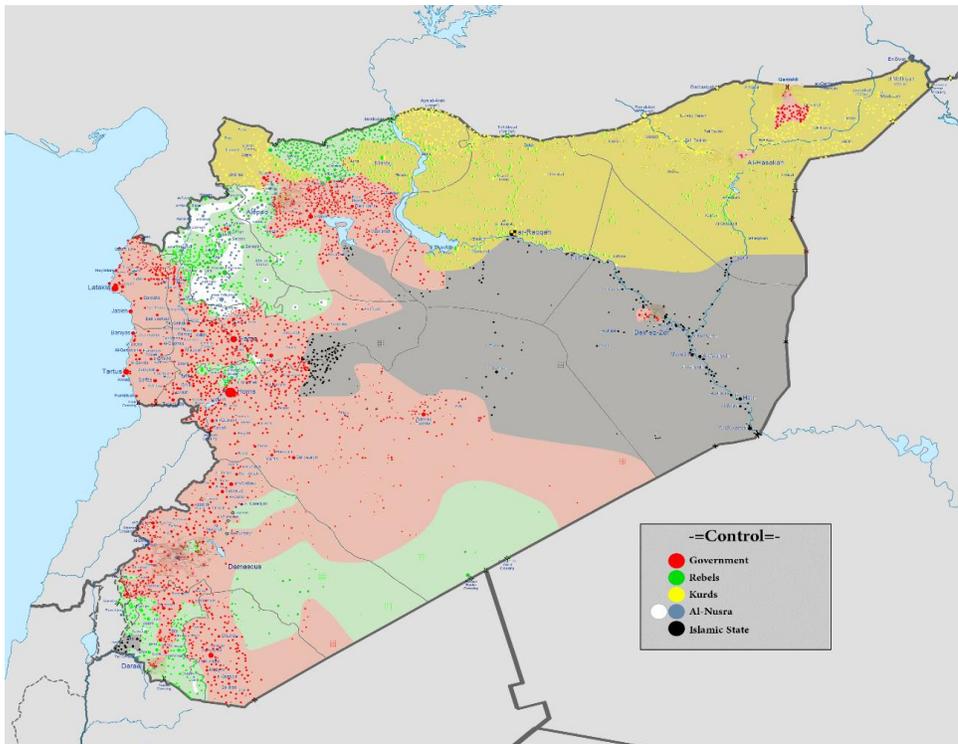
US Involvement in Syrian Civil War

by CDT Erin O'Hara, A Co

The civil war in Syria has raged for roughly seven years, resulting in a complex web of alliances and leaving the United States caught in the middle. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) seeks to establish a caliphate (an Islamic State) that includes Syrian territory. The Syrian government, run by President Bashar al-Assad, was weak but did not want ISIS to take over. Russia then backed Syria, fearing a loss of influence in Central Asia if Syria were to fall. Russia's support for the Syrian government allowed it to get back on its feet, and has weakened ISIS's grip on the country. At the same time, this conflict has been complicated by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a group made up of Kurds and Sunni Arabs who have tried to overthrow the Syrian government. The United States backed these rebels and hoped to eliminate ISIS and eventually establish true democratic rule in the country. Unfortunately, with Russia's help, the Syrian government regained strength and now there is little hope of changing the Syrian government or holding "free and fair" elections. The current stance on the issue from CENTCOM Commander GEN Votel is that US coalition forces are not

fighting Russian forces or the Syrian government, just ISIS. The Coalition remains prepared to fight back against these forces if they attack the SDF or their holdings. To add another dimension to the conflict, Turkish forces see the forces as a terrorist group and have attacked the joint US and SDF forces. The most important recent gain in the conflict has been the SDF liberation of Raqqah in October of 2017 from ISIS.

The current state of affairs sparked the recent comment from President Trump, stating that he wants "out [of Syria] very soon", but other US sources are hoping to maintain our presence in Syria, and eventually hold peace talks between the many groups involved in the conflict. The President's comment has concerned Pentagon sources, because there is a lot to lose if US forces leave Syria prematurely. The US helps the SDF hold the border between Syria and Iraq against ISIS forces, but these could fall upon a US withdrawal. Russian forces could also attack SDF-held territory as soon as the US leaves. Russia would gain from a US withdrawal, and could fill the void left by US forces.



Recently, US Special Forces units have been carefully aiding the SDF, trying to avoid conflict with Turkey, a NATO ally. US Army forces in Northern Syria have decided to remain in Manbij, Syria, despite threats from Turkey, who sees the SDF as terrorists. The US hopes to continue supporting the SDF to "defeat [ISIS] and stabilize liberated territory." Former Secretary of State Tillerson recently said "the United States will maintain a military presence in Syria...ensuring ISIS cannot re-emerge." All signs point to continued American support of SDF forces in Syria. So despite the President's March 29th comment, there looks to be no withdrawal of US troops in Syria in the near future.

SHARP in the RGB

by CDT Gustavo Espinosa, A Co

The month of April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). Both civilian and military communities recognize this time as an important opportunity to educate and empower individuals in order to change our collective culture with regards to sexual assault—with the end state of effectively preventing and responding to sexual assault and eventually eliminating it entirely. This goes hand in hand with the Army's comprehensive Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program—i.e. SHARP. It goes without saying that the Army takes SHARP very seriously. Here, in the Revolutionary Guard Battalion, we are also adamant about preventing, responding, and eliminating sexual assault and harassment in the Army, in ROTC, and on our college campuses. In the spirit of SAAPM, I will be evaluating the RGB's level of SHARP awareness and involvement—more specifically, I will be focusing on Alpha Company and the William & Mary campus at large. This evaluation will allow us to gauge where we are at, where we need to be, and how we will get there.

In the 2017-2018 school year A Co received an initial SHARP training in October, a follow-up SHARP sensing session in March, and a recent Title IX briefing in April. These sessions are essential to our time as cadets and our development as future Army Officers since we will likely have to confront sexual assault and harassment on our campus and in our units; however, these trainings can only be as useful as we make them. Fortunately, I was able to reach out to the sergeants from 4th Brigade who conducted the October and March sessions in order to get an accurate evaluation of where A Co is at with regards to SHARP knowledge and skills. The general consensus is that the cadets of A Co displayed knowledge of the appropriate resources and passion for solving this issue. On top of that, cadets left both sessions even more confident in their ability to prevent and respond to sexual assault and harassment. Those from 4th Brigade who conducted the SHARP Training and Sensing Sessions agree.

SFC Roach—who led the October SHARP Training—says, “the Company seems to be aware of who to report any issues they may have, and some seemed involved on campus with spreading awareness.” Likewise, SFC Frees got an insider look into our program's grasp on SHARP issues during the March Sensing Session. His evaluation reflects positively not only for A Co but also for the greater William & Mary community; he shared, “it became very clear early on during our time together that



your cadets have a good solid grasp of the Army's SHARP Program as well as the programs available on College of William and Mary's campus. You seem well educated regarding options, services, and what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual assault. I appreciate the heavy involvement several of the Cadets in that session personally spoke about.”

That being said, knowledge, education, and awareness can only go so far. A huge part of SAAPM and SHARP focuses on preventing sexual assault and harassment something that requires real action and initiative on the part of individuals. Or, as SFC Frees expertly put it, “SHARP knowledge is only a small part of the progress toward total success; the ability and willingness of people to intervene when they see or experience [problematic] behavior, attitudes, speech, or

actions... is the true measure of a successful SHARP environment/climate. Don't just absorb the knowledge and attend events, put it to good use in everyday life to continually improve not only your program, but your university, the brigade, and society in general." Thus, as we look forward to the rest of SAAPM, the RGB encourages all cadets to not only keep themselves and their peers

informed, but also to maintain situational awareness and look out for our battle buddies. If you see something, say something.

Fundraising Efforts at the RGB

by CDT TJ Riley, C Co

I joined the Revolutionary Guard Battalion in the fall of my MS2 year, and after spending 4 semesters in the program I can say that fundraising is an integral part of the operation of this Battalion. It helps us as a program get our name out to the local community, it helps build our program, it helps with buying any necessary equipment the program needs, and it helps pay for our annual Military Ball. Fundraising is what keeps our organization running and what allows us to get all the gear that we have.

Fundraising is primarily organized by the S9 shop. This semester that is Cadet Lynch for Charlie Company, but everyone in each company is expected to participate. The most common Fundraiser that Charlie Company does is the Panera Fundraiser. Doing a fundraiser at Panera is nice because it's so close to us, and it allows for all cadets to participate, and help contribute to the program. It is also a popular spot for students to go to for a meal away from the dining halls on campus. In the last fundraiser we raised about two hundred dollars for cadets. We do foresee a growth in our fundraising opportunities with the introduction of Chipotle right next to Panera in the coming months. By this time next semester we do hope to be working with them to get a few fundraisers per semester. In the long run, this will help our program immensely. We will be able to get more gear, improve the cadet

experience here in the RGB, and make MilBall even better.

The money that we earn in our various fundraisers is usually put into our Cadet Fund which goes to improving the program, but sometimes we have the ability to work with other organizations on campus to give money to veterans organizations or other organizations. Last semester, cadets Crawford, Lombardozi, Brabson, and myself participated in an event called Anchor Splash, which was put on by the Delta Gamma sorority, and the winning team got to give one hundred dollars to the philanthropy of their choosing. Unfortunately, we didn't win; we came in second place overall, but that helped us foster a relationship with Delta Gamma. Now we are helping them with an event called Hoops for Troops. In this event, various organizations on campus can make 3-person basketball teams and face off against other groups on campus. The winning team of the bracket gets to give \$100 to whatever organization they choose, while the remainder of the money goes to an organization called Joining Forces, which works with veterans who

have suffered damage to their eyesight in the line of duty. This is an important cause because, based on DOD statistics, 13-20% of troops will experience some sort of eye trauma from combat. This organization hopes to help these servicemen and women to recover from that and live better lives.

Fundraising can go to a lot of different things, but it is nice to see that the RGB is now branching out and not just helping out the program but our battle buddies who have been down range and come home hurt. We should be so lucky that someone would do that for one of us if that day comes.

Thank you all for all the support you given, and don't give up now, keep on pushing and we can make some real change in the world.



Army Contemplates Fitness Test Changes

by CDT Ethan Thayer, A Co

The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) may undergo drastic changes in the near future. In 2011, the United States Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) began exploring potential alternatives to the APFT. This could result in the first significant change in the Army's physical standards since the current APFT's implementation in 1980.

The driving force behind this research is the concern that the current standards do not accurately represent the physical demands that Soldiers experience in combat situations. In many ways, the events in the current test- push-ups, sit-ups, and the two-mile run- are not good indicators of combat performance and endurance. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that Soldiers across different MOSs and branches carry out different tasks related to their career. The physical demands of an intelligence analyst will not match those of an infantryman.

The problems with the current standards have led to Army to develop the Army Combat Readiness Test (ACRT). The ACRT is made up of six events: deadlifts, a standing power throw, T-pushups, a sprint/drag/carry relay, leg tucks, and a two mile run. The test's events are meant to better simulate the situations that Soldiers will face in combat. For instance, the deadlifts and relay simulate picking up and carrying ammunition boxes. All ACRT events are conducted while wearing combat gear.

The introduction of a physical assessment meant to test combat readiness is not a new concept. The Marine Corps introduced the Combat Fitness Test (CFT) in 2008 for similar reasons. Unlike the CFT, which is

administered with the Marine Corps PFT, the ACRT will most likely replace the APFT entirely. These new tests represent a shift in how physical fitness is viewed within the armed forces. No longer is it enough to physically fit. Rather, soldiers must be ready and able to execute their tasks and drills in combat.

While it has not yet been approved, the current goal is to institute the ACRT across the entire Army by 2020. This is significant because many of the Cadets currently

in the RGB will have graduated and commissioned by then. The introduction of the ACRT may prove to be a challenge for some. Cadets have become so used to the standards of the APFT that a sudden change may result in decreased performance. However, it is important for Cadets to understand that Officers must be physically fit and ready for combat. The two areas are not entirely the same, a fact which Cadets should remember throughout their preparation to become Army Officers.

Event	Components Assessed		
	Strength	Endurance	Mobility
400-Meter Run w/WPN	Upper-Body Muscular Endurance & Anaerobic Power		Coordination Speed Stability
Individual Movement Techniques	Upper-and Lower-Body Muscular Endurance		Agility Balance Coordination Speed Stability
Ammo Can Shuttle Sprint	Total-Body Muscular Strength & Endurance		Agility Coordination Speed Stability Power
Casualty Drag	Total-Body Muscular Strength & Endurance		Agility Coordination Speed Stability Power
Agility Sprint	Lower-Body Anaerobic Power		Speed Power

Alumni Profile - 2LT Joshua McMillion

by CDT Chris Duncan, C Co

2LT Joshua McMillion (CNU '17) is currently stationed with Bravo 1-43 ADA, part of 11th BDE at Ft. Bliss, Texas. He works as a Launcher Platoon Leader. A typical day starts at 0630 with PRT, then a formation at 0900 to start the work day. They conduct whatever training they have planned until 1145, when they break for lunch until 1300. They continue with their duties following lunch until whenever they finish, usually conclude around 1730, leaving him the rest of the evening to relax.

He describes his BOLC experience as “awesome” but “challenging” at the same time. He compares it to college, “but with Army stuff”. He spent most of his time studying for tests. The first half of BOLC is like an ROTC refresher course, called Common Core, followed by ten weeks of branch-specific training. In 2LT McMillion’s case, this meant studying the various weapons systems he would be working with. “It was a great way to get adjusted to Active Duty before going to my first unit.”

He offers the following advice for Cadets in the RGB: “lean on your NCO’s and they will teach you what

you need to know.” He also advises being physically fit, as a maxed APFT helps one stand out from the rest of the young officers in one’s unit and establishes credibility. In his unit, a “maxed APFT is the standard”. Cadets should strive early on to develop themselves physically and perform at as high a level as possible before arriving at their unit. Self-development should always be a priority. Outside of PT, he encourages reading often. Personally, he enjoys books on history and leadership in general.

Finally, mentorship is important to 2LT McMillion. He relies on his fellow Lieutenants and Company XO when he needs guidance and support. He would also encourage cadets to seek out a branch mentor while they are still in ROTC. “I found a SFC as a cadet who was ADA and he mentored me”. He also believes that cadets should, “soak in as much information from our Cadre at CNU and W&M as possible. They have a lot of experience, so just try to pick their brain” He feels he left for BOLC very well prepared by the program at Christopher Newport and William and Mary because of the mentorship he received.

Alumni Profile - 2LT Erin Caverly

by CDT Mackenzie Corcoran, A Co

“Even the worst day flying is better than the best day on the ground.” This is the mantra of Second Lieutenant Erin Caverly (WM '16), and what speaks to her love of flying.

During her four years at William and Mary, 2LT Caverly, was not only an ROTC cadet, but also a member of the Tri Delta sorority and an Orientation Aide. After graduating in 2016, 2LT Caverly took her time to travel as much as she could for 7 months before starting her Army career. She spent six and a half months backpacking in Southeast Asia, starting in Myanmar, wandering her way through Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and finishing in Indonesia. She then travelled to Fort Rucker, Alabama, to attend flight school, where she has been for the past two years. She graduated on March 15th, and will report to Ft. Riley in April to start her career as an Army assault pilot, where she flies Blackhawks, her primary task being to carry infantry troops on air assaults.

One of the major lessons 2LT Caverly took from flight school was the importance and prominence of Warrant Officers in the Army. Warrant Officers are the backbone of Aviation, where they make up almost every instructor/pilot position at flight school. Warrant Officers do most of the flying for the Army, while most, but not all, officers do the behind the scenes paperwork. Although 2LT Caverly is an officer, she will be one of the small amount of officers who still fly, as well as completing paperwork.

Other than the grueling amount of paperwork that every officer has to endure, 2LT Caverly couldn't find anything she truly disliked about her time so far in the Army as an Aviation officer. She could however list an endless number of things she has enjoyed, number one being flying: “there’s absolutely nothing cooler than flying a helicopter”. While learning to fly has been a challenge, 2LT Caverly says it is the challenge she enjoys the most.

When asked for one piece of advice she’d give

current ROTC cadets, it was to take the opportunities offered and learn from each experience. 2LT Caverly did both CULP and CTLT, and absolutely recommends them to any cadet if they are offered the chance, along with Airborne and Air Assault School. 2LT Caverly feels the

Revolutionary Guard Battalion thoroughly prepared her for being an officer and was happy to have graduated flight school with another William and Mary graduate 2LT Bayer.

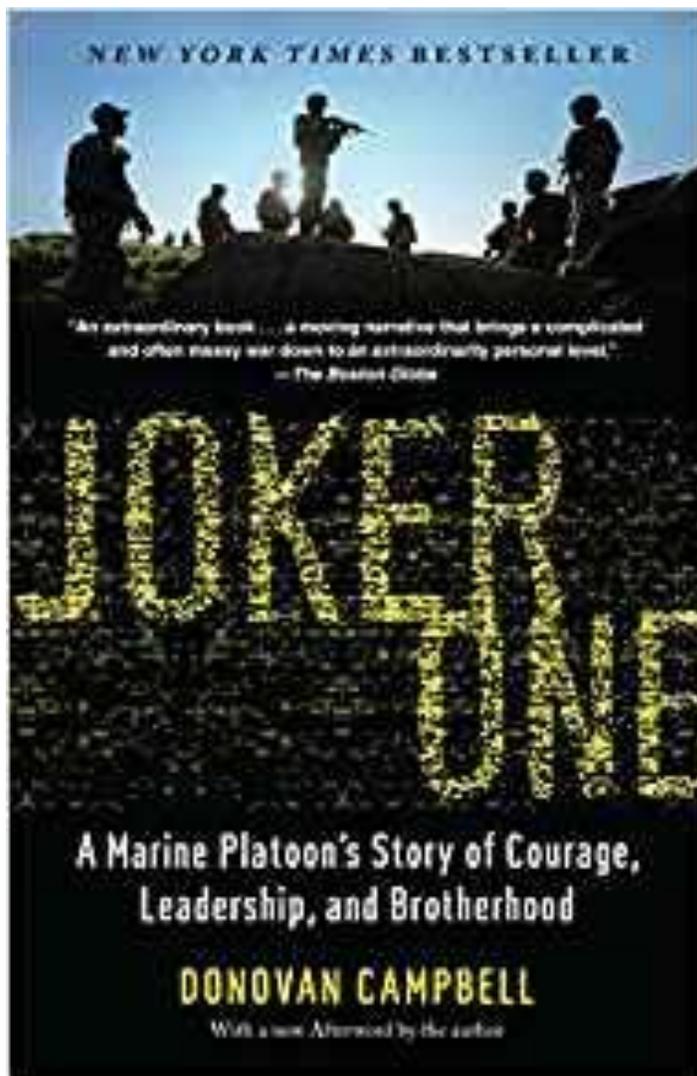
Book Review - *Joker One*

by Anonymous Cadet

Few pieces of military literature in recent history depict life as a platoon leader more accurately than Donovan Campbell's 2009 book, *Joker One: A Marine Platoon's Story of Courage, Leadership, and Brotherhood*. Though Campbell graduated from Princeton University before attending Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, he never fails to put his accounts as a Lieutenant in Iraq from 2004 to 2007 into simple terms easily understood by Marine, Soldier, and civilian alike. The title itself, named after the callsign of the platoon he led, reminds the reader that the entirety of the work serves as a tribute not to Campbell's leadership but to the men who served under him and sacrificed so much so that their comrades would safely make it through the day.

After arriving in Ramadi, a significant Sunni-majority city in Iraq, Campbell and his Marines of 1st Platoon Company G, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment find themselves unprepared for the threat of insurgency in an area formerly believed to be quiet. They are forced to adapt to the unique cultural practices of a city that had been known as a major recruitment ground for Saddam Hussein's armies, now fearful and resentful of the new, Shiite government. His diverse set of Marines are forced to learn not to touch someone with their left hand or show a boot sole unless they are ready to face the consequences. They are also forced to struggle with the local security forces they are supposed to be working with, forces that are rife with corruption and unconcerned with the safety of their communities.

A central theme of *Joker One* revolves around life as a platoon leader, such as comforting the men after they lost comrades in a firefight despite Campbell's own failing composure. Always ringing throughout his mind are the words a Sergeant told him at OCS: "Candidate, the currency in which we trade is human lives. Do you think you can handle that responsibility?" His strengths as a leader are reflected in the ease with which his squad leaders processed orders and carried them out during a firefight. Simultaneously, Campbell reveals his shortcomings, such



as when a breakdown of communication with his platoon sergeant resulted in his Marines taking heat casualties because his platoon sergeant, who had not heard the order to eat their MREs and drink water at their base, ordered the men back into the city to fight while Campbell was meeting with the Company Commander.

In all, Campbell shares the lighthearted and dark moments of his leadership, from finding one of his squads at their base horribly bloodied yet laughing from practicing first aid with real needles, to watching body bags pile up for burial outside local mosques. His raw accounts of combat, duty, and connection to his men serve as an inspiration for

the reader to become a superior leader just as it contributed to my decision to join ROTC. The book stands as a testament to what it really means to be a platoon leader in war, hammered home by his quote, “My job description was twofold: 1) save lives and 2) take lives.”

Book Review - *The Unforgiving Minute*

by CDT Jack Whitney, A Co

The Unforgiving Minute: A Soldier's Education is the story of former Army Captain Craig Mullaney's life as a soldier, platoon leader, and teacher. It is centered on his ordeals in combat in Afghanistan, where one of his men is killed in action. Mullaney also tells of his experiences as a young student who deals with family, friends, and romantic life while balancing his duties as an Army officer.

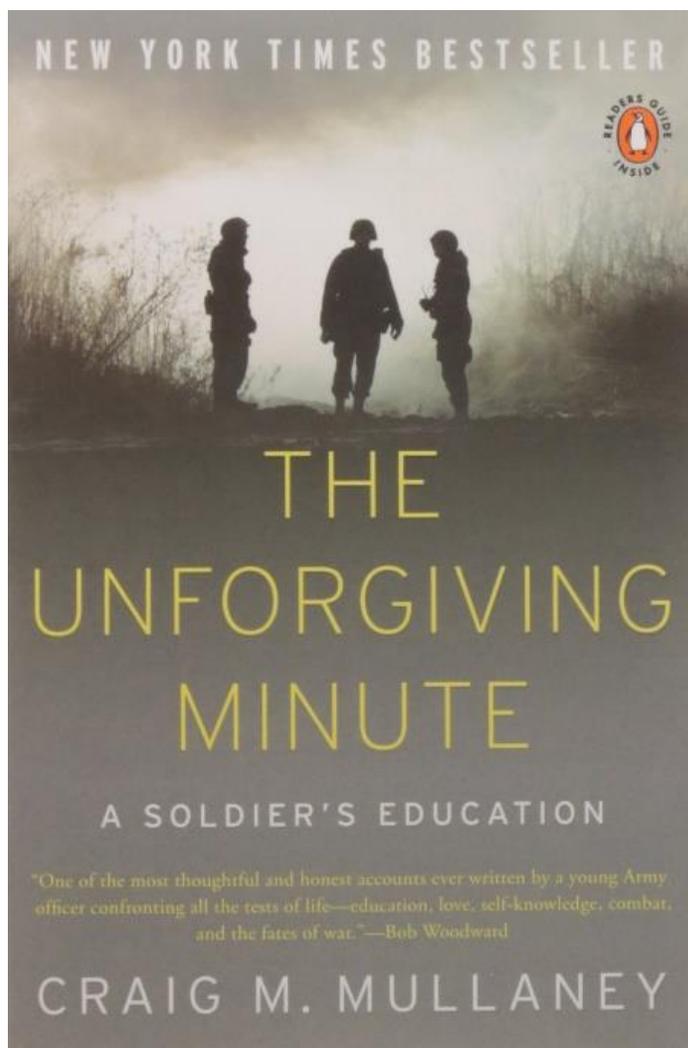
Pushed by a desire to impress his hard-driving father and prove to himself his own worth, Craig Mullaney decides to attend West Point. His experience in Beast summer and Plebe year is a shocking introduction to military obedience and lifestyle. Nevertheless he persists, and learns to love the challenge of cadet life and distinguishes himself from his classmates; upon graduation he commissions as an Infantry lieutenant.

Mullaney applies for and receives a Rhodes Scholarship, forcing him to attend Ranger School the summer after graduation. Here Mullaney is pushed to his absolute physical and mental limit, and persists on willpower alone.

Weeks later, he is on his way to Oxford University, the height of academia and a drastic juxtaposition to the intensity of Ranger School. He spends his days reading, debating, traveling, and drinking, but also thinks critically about the direction of his life and deeper philosophical questions.

After returning to the Army, Mullaney deploys to Afghanistan with a platoon in the 10th Mountain Division, where they face danger and confusion every day. It is here Craig puts all that he has learned to use, and faces his hardest trials. When he returns to the United States, he struggles to put his experiences behind him and relate to those around him.

One of the main themes of the book, which applies well to ROTC Cadets, is the intersection of soldiering and education. Does being an effective Army Officer necessitate having experience in literature, philosophy, and higher thinking? Does this make him hesitate, or does it enhance his abilities to see the big picture of why we fight?



These questions are raised in *An Unforgiving Minute*, and the author would certainly support the side of scholarship. His experience as a scholar was critical to helping him cope with the responsibility of leadership and trials of combat, but at times also set him apart from his men and peers.

Mullaney also writes about balancing duty and personal relationships. A week before his deployment, Mullaney's father, his most important role model, walks out on his family with no explanation. This shakes him to his core, but he must put aside his distress and focus on the

mission. He also struggles to maintain his relationship with his fiancée and then wife, who fears for his life and struggles to understand his experiences.

Written in crisp prose, Mullaney weaves his emotional and intellectual development in seamlessly with

his journey from West Point to Afghanistan and back. While not an entirely unusual path for a young Army Lieutenant, Mullaney keeps the reader engaged and interested by injecting his own personal viewpoints and growth at each step. I would highly recommend this book to anyone hoping to become an Army officer.

Advice for Air Assault School

by CDT Tina Dittmer, C Co

Air Assault school takes the most prepared cadets and puts them to the test. You are challenged with stress, leadership, agility, mental and physical strength, and other aspects required to determine your abilities. Air Assault consists of three phases after the initial day zero. The first big test is based on physical fitness. Immediately you are being smoked for hours. This is when you are being yelled at while doing push-ups, squats, running and other highly demanding exercises back-to-back until your body cannot physically do more. At that point, after your muscles are aching from hours of continuous work, they send you to do the obstacle course. You must complete every obstacle or you are sent home. No sympathy. This is when a large majority of people are sent home.

After that, you officially begin phase one, which consists of physical training every day and strict memorization of facts about rotary aircrafts, their purpose and the loads they can carry. Phase two is all about inspecting sling loads to ensure the loads are secured and the helicopters are capable of safely moving the load. This is where we lost the second most amount of soldiers. They got complacent and settled for what they knew rather than reaching out to know more. The instructors provide you with the techniques and sequences to pass the inspection and all you have to do is be disciplined and persistent in order to move to the next phase.

Phase three is all about safe rappelling. They throw you right into it. The first day you learn anything about rappelling, you take your first jump. You're rappelling with rucks and a rifle by the end of the day. This all prepares you for the moment you've been looking forward to since you first heard you were accepted to the school. You are then ready to rappel out of a Blackhawk. That feeling is unreal.

This eleven day school demands all of your time and effort in order to pass. The best way to prepare is to make sure you are in great physical shape so you aren't worn out

from the random smoke sessions every day. It is also important to have a studying method for memorizing facts and to use your free time wisely by getting hands on practice with the different sling loads at night. Other than that, arrive with a driven attitude that will allow you to push through even when it gets really tough. Once you are there, it is best to stay strong and persistent. That is the best way to be successful at Air Assault School and earn your wings.



Advice for Airborne School

by CDT Meg Copenhaver, C Co

“Airborne, are you **MOTIVATED**. Airborne are you **DEDICATED**. Airborne, what do you want to be?! What do you **REALLY** want to be? What are you now?! **AIRBORNE, TAKE SEATS.**” These are the words that are shouted at the top of the Black Hat’s lungs at the beginning of every training session at Airborne School in Ft. Benning, GA. About three hundred sweaty and worn-out airborne students shout in return to each question, and wait to receive instructions on the task of the day. There are three week-long phases at Airborne school: Ground Week, Tower Week, and Jump Week. I’m going to share a brief overview of each, and provide some insight that some might not typically think about.

First of all, to make it through Airborne, you need to **RUN**. You actually run everywhere - at PT, to the training sites. Hell, you even have to run across the drop zone after each jump. My main suggestions are to lose some weight (I lost about 12-15 pounds to prepare) and freaking **RUN** every day, because if you’re not concerned about keeping up, you can focus on falling from the sky without getting hurt.

GROUND WEEK: this week separates the men from the boys - in all actuality. You learn how to do a real PLF - parachute landing fall (“even though you will never do one in real life” - any Black Hat at Ft. Benning), and you will jump off a wall, hold onto a zipline and fall about 500x a day. You’re tested every day to execute a front right, front left, rear right, rear left, and left and right PLF. I know this sounds like a lot, and stupid, but you will actually figure out which one you like best, and try to do this on each jump (mine was the front right because I could see where I was landing, and I had control).

TOWER WEEK: this is where most people are either recycled or flat out quit. If you’re afraid of heights, the Black Hats will find out, and you will lose. This week entails 8 hour days in the sun, standing on detail, and catching people that are flying down the zipline with a ruck and weapons case on. It’s a great time to meet people and talk to others about their path, whether they’re Army, Navy, Airforce, Coast Guard, enlisted/NCO/officer, etc. My advice

for **TOWER WEEK** is **TUCK YOUR DAMN CHIN!!** On my first leap out of the tower - and I learned fast - my neck got huge rope burn hickeys on each side from the risers; let’s just say I tucked my chin every single time after that.



JUMP WEEK: the most glorified week of them all. In all honesty, though, this week sucks. You get up at 0200, **SPRINT** a mile down to the equipment shed, do pre-jump (3 hours of making sure you know how to jump and how to land safely), then **WAITING**. Oh my gosh, we waited daily for about 8 hours (total? At a time? Small thing to clarify, but helpful), **IN COMBAT GEAR** for some of it. The jumps are amazing and worth the time in the shed, but just a heads up, you’re going to be sitting on a wooden bench with 300 of your closest friends, waiting for 8 hours, with burning traps because the gear is hanging off you, having to pee and shivering from the sweat and AC mixture. Totally not glamorous, but I will say, taking that first step onto the C-17 or C-130 will wake your ass up, and you will be ready to rock and roll.

Overall, my advice to you is to **RUN** before you go, and take lots of Advil while you’re there. Airborne was a life changing experience for me, and was highly motivating every day that I was there, but there are a few tolls that your body takes from PLF-ing 500x a day, humping a ruck on the front of your harness during tower week, and sitting upright with a very tight harness through all of jump week. Those 5 jumps are so sweet, and make it all worth it, so suck it up, and make it happen. Good luck, **AIRBORNE!**