

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

MSL ARMY ROTC

ROTC Alumni Newsletter Spring 2024



COLONELS PRIDE! *By LTC Jim Plutt Jr.*

Alumni, parents, friends, and Cadets of EKV Army ROTC:

This year has been full of highs for our Cadets. From winning the Mountain Man Memorial March, completing the "Colonels Crucible" 2-person competition, excelling during the Joint FTX, and completing Air Assault school to maintaining a program-wide GPA average of 3.35, we saw our Cadets shine. I would like to congratulate the 15 new 2nd Lieutenants that Commissioned this spring as they begin their careers. Additionally, join me in wishing our 26 MS3's good luck as they head to Cadet Summer Training over the coming months at Fort Knox, KY.

Thank you for all the support throughout the year. The unmatched Cadet experience at Eastern is only possible because of you.

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Your donation to the Military Science and Leadership Cadet Development Fund will help prepare the next generation of U.S. Army Officers.

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Air Assault *By CDT Canada*



This winter I had the opportunity to complete the US Army Air Assault (AASLT) course at Fort Campbell's Sabalauski Air Assault school, "Home of the Air Assault". My intentions were to further develop myself as a leader, a qualified soldier, and prove to myself that I am worthy of completing "The Army's 10 hardest days". I pushed myself and those around me to succeed, all while completing both challenging and fun training. I learned about the capabilities of the different rotary wing aircraft that the US Army utilizes. I also learned about sling load operations used in Air Assault operations. Our final event to graduate was the 12-Mile Ruck, which was directly followed by a graduation. This was my personal record 12-Mile. I am beyond blessed for this opportunity I was given through EKU's ROTC Program. The experiences I had during this school will help me throughout the rest of my career. Air Assault!

CWST *By CDT Muncie*

EKU Colonel's Battalion got the opportunity to complete the Combat Water Survival Test (CWST) in the Alumni pool on campus. CWST is a Commissioning requirement and a great training event to build confidence and capability. Each Cadet conducted the events in full OCP uniform with an M4 dummy rifle and a fighting load carrier (FLC). Events included an equipment drop and a 25-meter equipment swim. The equipment drop required Cadets to jump into the water backwards and then quickly remove all their gear before returning to the surface. Even if you are a great swimmer, the 25-meter equipment swim was a tough challenge. If you find the right technique and breathe you will make it. Overall, this training was great and I recommend it for anyone who strives for success!



12-Mile Ruck March *By CDT Sizemore*



On February 27th, 2024, All MS3 Cadets, Cadets competing for Air Assault Schools (AASLT) slots, and Cadets on the Mountain Man Memorial Ruck March (MMMM) team completed a timed 12-mile ruck march at Lake Reba in Richmond, KY. MS3s and Air Assault competitors rucked in full battle rattle gear (OCPs, ACH, M4 dummy rifle, & 35lb rucksack). MS3s had 4 hours to successfully complete the march to validate their readiness for the 12-Mile ruck at CDT Summer Training (CST). Air Assault competitors had 3 hours to successfully complete the march, since a 12-Mile ruck is the apex to graduate from AASLT. I was a part of the MMMM team where we rucked in appropriate civilian attire with an added 10lbs in our rucksack, for a total of 45lbs of weight. A pop-up storm peaked its head out of the clouds around us, with rain continuing after, yet all Cadets continued to push and encourage each other to complete the ruck march at their best ability. Since starting ruck marches at ECU, they have become some of my favorite physical events to participate in. Despite the storms, this one was still adrenaline inducing and it was great to see the other Cadets out there with us, all trying to finish the distance.

Military Ball *By CDT Devine*

On March 1, 2024, Military Science and Leadership Army ROTC hosted their 85th annual Military Ball. This event allowed Cadets, Cadre, and their guests to formally celebrate and reflect on their accomplishments throughout the 2023 - 2024 school year. Under the direction of the Color and Saber Guard OIC, CDT David Griffith, this event also recognized our 2024 senior class for their dedication to the program and their future dedication to the Army. The event consisted of several activities such as the playing of our senior video, cake cutting, toast, dinner, and fellowship. Special thanks to our distinguished guest speaker, COL(R) Gene Palka, and his wife Mrs. Cynthia Palka for attending our event. Thank you to COL(R) Gene Palka for highlighting the importance of being a lifelong learner and having an open mind inside and outside of the military setting. Additional thanks to event coordinator, Mrs. Claire Jennings.



Land Nav at UC *By CDT McCoy*

EKU Colonel's Battalion recently visited our satellite schools Training Area (TA) for a land navigation training. The course is set in mountainous terrain, unlike the flatter, rolling hills that ECU Cadets are used to, which presented a more challenging environment for locating points. Conducted on Patriot Mountain, a gateway to the Appalachian Mountain Range, the exercise took place on 8 March from 0730 to 1000. The primary goal was to prepare M3s for Cadet Summer Training (CST), while also aiding MS1 and MS2s in honing in their land navigation skills. Overall, the training was deemed a success, offering a change of scenery and a good challenge for many Cadets. It served as a valuable introductory experience, with some points being straightforward and the more experienced MS4s assisting the MS1/MS2s in their skill development on the more challenging points.



Perryville Staff Ride *By CDT Gomez*



Our senior class took a trip out to the Perryville Battlefield in Kentucky for our MS4 Staff Ride. Weeks prior to traversing the battlefield, each MS4 Cadet was assigned a specific portion of the battle to study. The purpose of each Cadet studying a part of the battle is so we could proficiently brief everyone at the designated battle stand on the historic Perryville site. On March 29th, we executed the Perryville Staff, where we covered the battlefield, briefed many battle stands, watched a documentary, held discussion, and even got to fire 1800s muskets. We discussed a multitude of leadership, tactics, and how the principles of mission command correlated to the battle at Perryville. Being able to see the importance of asset positioning, such as artillery and infantry units, was incredible. The proper emplacement brought a realization of the importance for capabilities and strength. The Staff Ride was one of our last events together as an MS4 class before Commissioning. It was a great opportunity to delve into our American history and build camaraderie within our class.

Joint Field Training Exercise *By CDT Dawson*

This year for our Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX), ECU ROTC alongside the University of Kentucky and Morehead State University traveled to Fort Knox for our bi-annual field exercise. During this exercise, the MS1/2s conducted day and night land nav, M4 familiarization, group and zero, and a full day of Field Leadership Reaction Course (FLRC). Concurrently, the MS3s conducted a full day of range operations, land nav, and tactical situational training exercises (STX) lanes to prepare them for CST this summer. On the last day of our JFTX, the MS1/2s got the opportunity to fly on UH-60 Black Hawk flights over Fort Knox. The best part about this FTX in my opinion was the day and night land nav. This course was new to me and offered new challenges that I have not faced on other land navigation courses. The weekend was a great learning experience and overall, a great JFTX. This JFTX taught us leadership skills and allowed for several practical applications throughout, that will greatly benefit us in our future careers as Army leaders.



Mountain Man *by CDT Momeyer*

The ECU Mountain Man Memorial Team went down to Gatlinburg, Tennessee to complete a 26.2-mile marathon ruck march for fallen Soldiers who served in the United States military. This is an important event that we do here at ECU that embraces true strength and a test of character. Throughout this process, I was given the opportunity to be the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the team this year and it was a unique series of events. I loved being able to show up with everyone and work hard towards a goal that displays selfless service and to complete a goal that not only means a lot to us, but also to those around us who have been affected by losing a loved one. Overall, this was my second year doing this event, and the thing I like about it most, is when everyone steps over the finish line, waddles over to where everyone is seated, and embraces the suck and pain of a 26.2-mile ruck with a 35-pound pack. Another memory that I will always keep from Mountain Man is knowing that everyone is willing to show up and do the hard things (train) even when their body is sore, and they are exhausted. I always remind myself, that this event is for a cause greater than me, and if it's 26.2 miles or 26 feet, you just have to keep stepping, and that's exactly what the team did this year.



University of the Cumberland's Recap *By CDT Petrey*



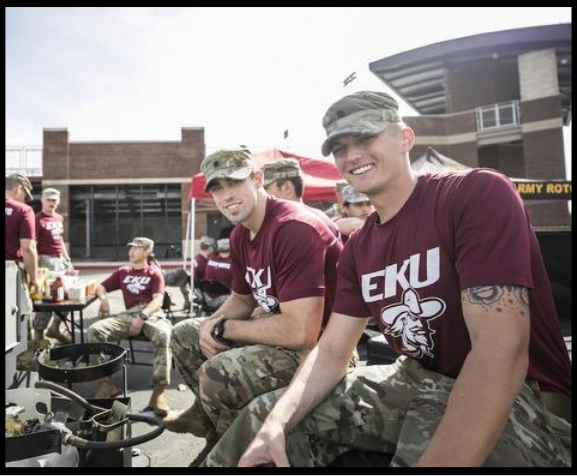
As the spring semester of 2024 comes to a close, I look back at my time in the ROTC program here at the University of the Cumberland's (UC), and I can't help but feel a sense of pride and nostalgia. It's been a whirlwind of experiences, from intense training exercises to memorable events and everything in between. Inspiring, motivating, and just a good ole time. I have learned some quality life lessons, made some good friends, and have great memories and stories to share. The semester began in a routine fashion, which is the way of the military. Our labs were filled with hands-on activities that taught us the fundamentals of ground warfare. We started with Individual Movement Techniques (IMT), Squad Movement Techniques, and the basics of tactical maneuvers. As the semester progressed, we learned how to employ our skills through Battle Drills. We rehearsed various scenarios, including reacting to ambushes, executing raids, and establishing an area defense. A formal event with a casual feel, all Cadets and Cadre from ECU and UC ROTC gathered on 1 March for the 85th Military Ball to celebrate the accomplishments of our Battalion and the MS4s. Joining forces again, UC and ECU met on top of Patriot Mountain on 8 March for a joint land navigation exercise. We practice this so that we can navigate unfamiliar environments confidently. UC met ECU at the Bluegrass Army Depot on 29 March to complete the FLRC. The FLRC allowed the MS3s to refine their leadership and communication skills to prepare them for their rapidly approaching time at CST this summer. Lastly, a handful of our UC Cadets trained up and competed in the 26.2-Mile Mountain Man Memorial March. Events like this build camaraderie among future leaders, which teaches valuable lessons and strengthens the Army as a whole. Looking back, my semester in ROTC was a rollercoaster ride of highs and lows, challenges and triumphs. But through it all, I've grown as a leader, forged lifelong friendships, and created memories that will last a lifetime. As I hang up my uniform for the summer, I can't help but feel grateful for the journey that brought me here and look forward to doing it again in the fall.

Alumni Spotlight *By CDT Ruthsatz*

The Alumni Spotlight article highlights standout graduates of Eastern Kentucky University ROTC program and their exceptional military career thus far. The Spring 2024 ECU ROTC Alumni Spotlight is Captain (CPT) Kevin Simpson. CPT Simpson began his military career in 2015 when he enlisted in the Kentucky Army National Guard (KARNG) as an 11B. Shortly after returning home from Basic Training and AIT, CPT Simpson began his college career at the University of the Cumberland's where he played on the football team. He transferred to ECU and began ROTC at ECU's campus in August of 2016. While in the Colonels Battalion he was involved in various activities such as, Ranger Challenge, GAFB, and the SMP with the 20th SFG(A). CPT Simpson graduated from ECU in 2019 with a Bachelor's in Business and Sports Management and commissioned as an Air Defense Artillery and later as Aviation Officer into the KYARNG.

CPT Simpson always aspired to be a pilot in both the military and civilian sectors. After completing Air Defense Artillery BOLC in 2019, he went straight to Army Flight School at Fort Novessel and graduated in 2021. He was placed with the 63rd Tab in the KYNG. CPT Simpson currently serves as an Aviation and ADA LNO with the 149th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. In his civilian career, CPT Simpson is a successful Real Estate Investor and has had various Aviation positions, most recently becoming a First Officer at Delta Air Lines. CPT Simpson serves as a great example of how it is achievable to have a flourishing career in both the military and civilian side concurrently, as long as one is willing to dedicate the necessary effort.

CPT Simpson's words of advice for ROTC Cadets are as follows, "Soak in the lessons and experiences learned and work ethic developed while in college. Most of you are full time students, doing ROTC, and working on the side to get by. Apply that same work ethic to whatever you choose to do in life and use those tools to catapult yourself into successful situations. 'Luck is when opportunity meets preparation'. Additionally, the mistakes you make between 18-22 y/o are inevitable. Don't let those mistakes define who you are. Learn from them and use them to succeed". Thank you to CPT Simpson for your inspiring pieces of advice. ECU ROTC graduates, such as CPT Simpson, continue to surpass our expectations for success and consistently exemplifies the distinguished quality of Officers that our program cultivates. Colonel's Pride!



Spring 2024 Commissioning Ceremony



EKU ROTC Class of 2024



**Spring 2024 Army ROTC
Commissioned Officers**

Fall 2024 Army ROTC Events

Congratulations to the United States Army's newest 2nd Lieutenants!

August 11th-13th- Colonels Challenge

September 28th- Cadet Stakes

October 13th- Homecoming Parade

November 3rd-5th- Military Appreciation Weekend

November 15th- Fall FTX

December 1st- Winter Commissioning

- 2LT Anest, Active Duty, Military Intelligence
- 2LT Carlsen, Active Duty, Armor
- 2LT Cooper, KYARNG, Quarter Master
- 2LT Gomez, KYARNG, Military Intelligence
- 2LT Green, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Kagiraneza, Active Duty, Field Artillery
- 2LT Nkomeza, Active Duty, Ordinance
- 2LT Nzabonimpa, Active Duty, Armor
- 2LT Lammert, KYARNG, Military Police
- 2LT Ritchie, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Reed, Active Duty, Infantry
- 2LT Rutherford, KYARNG, Chemical
- 2LT Ruthsatz, KYARNG, Adjutant General
- 2LT Webster, Active Duty, Engineer

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