The Ohio State Army ROTC Bi-weekly Newsletter


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WHO WE ARE

A Brief Introduction
BY ADAM MANGEN

The Buckeye Battalion

Today’s students, tomorrow’s leaders

The students of The Ohio State University Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program make up the Buckeye Battalion. These Cadets come from many different backgrounds and study many different degree programs but all have the same desire; to become a future leader of the United States Army. While completing their degree program as a normal college student, these Cadets simultaneously participate in military science classes, physical training, and leadership labs designed to enhance Soldier skills. The Buckeye Battalion has over 100 Cadets enrolled and consistently performs above ROTC standards and outcompetes many of the other Army ROTC programs in the country; academically and physically.

These Cadets will graduate with a degree in the field of their choice and, on the same day, commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. These new Lieutenants will go on to perform a vast array of jobs for the army from Quartermaster to Military Intelligence to Infantry and Nurses. These future lieutenants wear their scarlet and grey with pride and, while graduating from one of the top universities in the country, they realize they are a part of one of the top ROTC programs in the country as well and continue to uphold the prestige of this storied organization.

What is that screaming running mob on campus in the morning? Who are those students in fatigues outside of Converse Hall? Here’s where you can find out.

The Future Cadet Mentorship Team

Leader mentors instilling confidence and service in future Soldiers

The Future Cadet Mentorship Team is a new face in the Buckeye Battalion. As an advocate for community involvement, student mentorship, and building confident leaders, the Future Cadet Mentorship Team (FCMT) has created a new direction for Cadet leadership. While engaging members in service and mentor opportunities, this organization focuses heavily on building confident future leaders. Interpersonal communication and public speaking ability are important characteristics for any successful military officer. Cadets do not get enough practice in these aspects through their regular curriculum and that is where the FCMT comes in. Although new, this organization has a bright future and will continue to further the cause of the Buckeye Battalion and area youth and community service organizations.
A Very Important Visit

BY PATRICK BRITO

The Buckeye Battalion was lucky last week to be visited by Brigadier General Gary Brito. As the director of the Force 2025 directorate, an Army program that works to integrate new technology, concepts, tactics, and doctrine for a changing force, BG Brito has firsthand and direct insight on the changing direction of the U.S. Army and serves a pivotal role in making these changes. In this position, he is not in a combat role; he is in a “big-picture” role. He reviews proposals for new technology, new doctrine, and reports on how the Army will still function as it downsizes.

Brigadier General Brito’s visit to the Buckeye Battalion was two pronged. He gave a lecture on transitions in the Army and what the future holds for our forces, along with a presentation of Force 2025 to the senior (MSIV) class. He also shared his top three points of wisdom with the junior (MSIII) class as they train to become future leaders.

His first point for success was; “Find a job, and get damn good at it.” BG Brito emphasized the importance of knowing what you are doing, giving it 100% of your effort, and being all that you can be. This is important because in a few short years, many of us will hold the lives of others in our hands, and will need to be professionals in our chosen fields.

His second point to us was; “Build a relationship with your NCO, and trust him with your life.” As each of us enters the force, we will have a Non-commissioned Officer counterpart. From the platoon level, all the way to the Corps level, we will have an NCO whose focus is on the individual soldier. It is important for us to trust this individual because we need them to help us succeed.

His final point of wisdom was; “No matter what you do, have fun. If you don’t like it, get out.” This may seem contradictory at first because the Army is not something to be taken lightly, or to be taken as anything less than seriously. However, one must love what they do, especially in the Army. In a stressful environment it is easy to want to quit. If you aren’t in it for the right reasons and can’t enjoy your job then your troops around you will suffer for it.

Brigadier General Brito’s visit to the Buckeye Battalion was incredibly beneficial to the program. It is rare to get such personal interaction with a general officer and it is incredibly helpful for our development as leaders to hear advice from someone who traveled the same path we are on now. As we near commissioning, we look forward to future visits from leaders such as BG Brito so we can develop as Leaders, Cadets, and Warriors, and show the world that Buckeyes Lead the Way!
Army ROTC strives to produce bold leaders for the Army and The Ohio State Army ROTC program, the Buckeye Battalion, consistently commission’s officers of a high caliber. Major General Jefforey Smith, Ohio State class of ‘88, took was one such officer.

When he took command of U.S. Army Cadet Command in 2013, he was struck that the core curriculum was essentially the same as it was when he was in ROTC almost 30 years prior. To remedy this problem, Maj. Gen. implemented a program described as a “Bold Transformation.” The changes made had the goal of creating officers adept at handling the rapidly changing circumstances of the 21st century battlefield. More importantly, the revamped program focused on, in the words of MG Smith, teaching Cadets “how to think” not “what to think.” What this means for cadets is more critical thinking instruction and exercises.

Part of the motivation for the reset and significant changes to the ROTC curriculum has been to ensure that officers are prepared to excel in any situation anywhere in the world. The recent conflicts of the past two decades have shown that it is very important for officers to be adaptive, flexible, and critical thinkers. With the new Army ROTC curriculum the next generation will be able to more effectively lead the nation’s Army against any ambiguous and chaotic situation which may arise.

ROTC will continue to evolve, adapt, and become better through the changes implemented by MG Smith in 2013, and under the leadership new Cadet Command Commanding General MG Peggy C. Combs.
American’s Shrinking Army

BY ANTHONY DAVIS

Army active duty personnel strength has dropped below 500,000 for the first time in 10 years, says the Defense Manpower Data Center. The recent drawdown is projected to reduce personnel numbers even further to 490,000 by October 1st this year and as the Army’s fiscal 2016 budget sits before Congress; it lists a goal of 475,000 active duty personnel by the end of next year. These reductions have come mainly from capping recruitment numbers at less than 60,000 new Soldiers and less than 50,000 re-enlistments per year. The Army Reserve and National Guard have approximately 547,000 Soldiers with a goal of a 5% reduction over the next two years.

To accomplish this, the Army plans to cut 11 brigade combat teams by the end of fiscal year 2015. “Many of the reorganizations that we will do this year will involve moving people and equipment from one installation to another,” says Army Vice Chief of Staff General Daniel Allyn. He notes that this is no small task and much of the heavy lifting will be done at the company level.

Another issue concerning Gen. Allyn is the possibility of the return of sequestration in 2016. If sequestration returns next year, the Army will be forced to cut another 70,000 active-duty Soldiers and an additional 10 to 12 brigade combat teams, wrote Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno. Nevertheless, the contemporary operational environment is still “busy [and] turbulent,” and “despite the uncertainty, the Army will continue to respond to known and emerging requirements with well-led and well-trained Soldiers” says Gen. Allyn.

To scope out public opinion on these drawbacks the Army hosted a “listening session” in a town hall meeting style last month in Honolulu, Hawaii. The meeting turned quite rowdy, due to the debate between wanting to keep Soldiers in the state because of their close ties to the community and wanting to remove them to “give the country back to [Hawaiians],” as one testimonier said. There are nearly 20,000 Troops in Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter, and their families make up another 30,000. “Soldiers have become such an integrated part of our community, from education to businesses. It really affects each and every part of the community,” said Governor David Ige. Army representatives closed the meeting stating that the public’s testimony would be taken back to the Pentagon and a decision on changes to Schofield Barracks and Fort Shafter would be set for late summer this year.
Iraq: What You Need to Know

BY ROBERT WEDEBROOK

With the recent escalation in the conflict with ISIS in the Middle East and the Jordanian bombing initiative, lawmakers are debating on authorizing the use of United States military intervention. This could lead to a new deployment of American Soldiers to Iraq in the near future. Such a deployment would have a direct impact on future officers in the United States Army.

Proposed Plan

Currently there are approximately 2,500 Soldiers stationed in Iraq in an advising role to the Iraqi state and military. The purpose of these advisors is to train Iraqi and Kurdish armies so that they could lead the fight against ISIS. The U.S has also launched over 400 air-strikes on militant strongholds since the conflict began. (BBC, 8 Nov 2014) The new draft is based on the 2001 commission which allowed for ground forces to combat Al-Qaida in Iraq and Afghanistan. If approved, it would allow for the use of ground forces in “special circumstances.” (BBC, 11 Feb 2015)

Useful Information

Climate and Terrain:
It is no secret that Iraq is characterized by its hot and dry climate. Temperatures get well over 100°F during the day and not that much cooler in the night with temperatures around 85 degrees. It also goes through droughts often enough to be characterized as a desert. The winters are often mild. Most of Iraq has vast flat lands with mountains along the border with Turkey.

Language:
The Official languages of Iraq are Arabic and Kurdish. Although in some areas the official language is Assyrian due to a large amount of these native speakers.

Religion:
The majority of the populace, approximately 98%, is Muslim with a Shia majority. There has been a decrease in the Christian population by an estimated 50% since the fall of Saddam Hussein.

Government:
The current government is a parliamentary democracy. The system is separated into three branches: the executive branch, the legislative branch, and the judicial branch. The Prime Minister is Nuri al-Maliki.

Military:
The military is divided into several branches: the Counterterrorism Service Forces, Iraqi Special Operations Forces, Ministry of Defense Forces, Iraqi Navy, and the Iraqi Air force.

**Leading the Leaders**

**BY PATRICK NJERU**

1. Sir, In what year were you commissioned and from which school? 2006, The Georgia Southern University.

2. What were your experiences as a cadet sir? I drank through a fire hose. I did not come into the program until my junior year. During the summer between my sophomore and junior year, I went to the Leader’s Training Course (LTC) at Fort Knox Kentucky and learned the basics that you learned as MS 1s and MS 2s. After that I started my MS 3 year as a junior. I had to learn a lot on the fly, I had to do a lot of self-development and basically studying on my own to catch up to the rest of my peers.

3. Did you regret not joining the program earlier? I didn’t necessarily regret it, I just looked at it as a disadvantage, and it would have definitely been easier for me if I had started as a freshmen. No regrets though.

4. What are the hardest challenges you encountered as a brand new second lieutenant? Well, the unit I showed up to was already deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 5 in 2007. They deployed in February of 2007. I did not show up to the unit until July and then I was on a plane to Kuwait in August. In little under a month I had to go through some individual readiness training and then I sat on a plane to Iraq to meet my new unit there. Initially they took me and put me as a battle Captain in the Battalion operation center, I learned a lot about the AO and what I needed to do as far as what was going on and just trying to wrap my mind around the operations there. The biggest challenge then was after about 4 months my time came and I got selected to be Platoon leader, the challenge was coming to a platoon that had already been in country conducting operations since February of that year. Just taking over the platoon and showing my soldiers that I was ready, after they were already battle hardened being able to come in as a leader and earn their trust was not necessarily difficult but it was a challenge that I faced.

5. Sir, you are the MS 3 class instructor. Has this been a challenging assignment? It’s a different assignment; you have to kind of take a step back from what you were doing. The principles are still the same but here at the ROTC battalion you guys are no longer my Soldiers you are my students so it’s my job to teach you guys in a different way, and it’s also a different audience, I have college students who are in their junior year and have been doing this for the last 2 years so you guys have a different mindset compared to an 18 year old private.

6. Sir, what’s the biggest difference you have seen between the ROTC side of the Army and the ‘big Army?’ The army has its set ways, set doctrine that’s how we learn what we have to do once you get to your unit. I’m not saying doctrine goes out the window but each unit has their own SOP on how they do things.

7. There has been a lot of talk about sequestration and military draw downs. What advice would you give to future officers on how to stay competitive? Foremost, they should still remember it’s about taking care of Soldiers, that should be their first priority. If you are taking care of your Soldiers, they will in turn take care of you and that’s going to take care of your career. Yes, it is getting a lot more competitive out there, force reduction is going on but at the same time don’t worry about that, worry about the people below you and occasionally look up to the people above you and see how things are going. If you are doing the right thing, if you are taking the necessary steps to help your career by staying on the straight and narrow path, and doing your job well, that is going to reflect on your evaluations.

8. The transition from LDAC to CLC is relatively new for both Cadre and Cadets, what impact has this had from an instructor’s point of view? None, we are trying to operate from what we know not what is rumored. I tend to ignore all the little rumors that fly around, I train you guys based off what is in the
9. Sir, where do you see the buck eye battalion in the next three years?
We are ranked among one of the top ROTC programs in the country, where will we be in the next 3 years in terms of recruitment and commissioning rates? I don’t see any big changes in the rankings. I feel like this program has a good source of where they bring the cadets in from. I think recruitment is still priority. This program does a great job of recruitment, we have a good pool of cadets, I don’t see any major changes that would affect a change in our ranking.

10. Sir, a lot of emphasis is been put on combat arm branches and support branches. To a cadet who has not made up their mind yet, what would you advise them to do before selecting a branch?
It has to do with personality; personality plays a big role in it. It’s a matter of figuring out what goes into the branches and what you feel you can contribute to it. You have to do a little research, definitely seek out cadre and maybe contacts that you know that have served in the branch. For combat arms as of right now it is still mostly males only, the army is going away from that and trying to integrate women into the combat arms. So there’s a cultural aspect to it. You have to ask yourself, where do I fit into this culture? Does my personality fit better as an Infantry officer or would I better serve as a medical officer? It depends on finding what you need, finding what you want to do, and doing your best now as a cadet to achieve that outcome.

11. Sir, what is your personal opinion on the crisis in the Middle East?
Where do I start? My take on it is that there will always be bad people out there. For past 35 years or so, the face of evil has been the terrorists in the Middle East. Before that, it was the Communists during the Cold War, before that it was the Nazis in Germany. So there will always be evil out there. The crisis in the Middle East has been going on for thousands of years. It’s not going to change overnight, I think there will always be a war on terror and it’s up to us to make that call and stand up and be able to face it and contain it and not let terrorism rule our lives, rule our societies or harm our people. That’s the biggest reason why we are here.

12. On a lighter note sir, who do you think would win between yourself and Chuck Norris?
I did give a written statement on that. I am combatives level one certified; however, Chuck Norris has numerous black belts. I would definitely fight dirty; it wouldn’t be a fair fight. In the end, I got to give it to Chuck Norris, he is an excellent fighter, I was a big fan of his as a kid growing up so definitely Chuck.
Story of a Cadet

BY CHRIS WILLIAMS

Like many kids growing up, I was attracted to the military. I specifically found interest in the Army. There was just something about the idea of being on a team with a unique purpose that appealed to me. So I pursued becoming an Army officer.

Sometimes I thought about pursuing another career, but I always came back to the same conclusion. This is what I wanted to do. The only real decision I had left to make was West Point or Ohio State. Both would allow me to commission as a 2nd Lieutenant, but each had its own appeal. I fell in love with West Point the first time I heard about it and subsequently the first time I visited. But I lived only 40 minutes from Ohio State and loved it as well. Long story short, when the time came to make a decision, I ended up here and have not regretted it.

Ohio State and Army ROTC both have a lot to offer. Free time may be somewhat non-existent, but in the end, it’s worth every bit of sweat and stress. I know my fellow Cadets and I will be prepared for our future as leaders in the Army and in the civilian world. We learn to be organized, motivated, accountable, and respectful and every Cadet has something pushing them forward. They are genuinely good people who want to do something important. It makes me excited to show up and see what the future has in store.

It is an unfortunate but true realization that many people do not understand ROTC. They do not know that while some Cadets may be in the National Guard or be former active duty Soldiers, all are full-time students that do the same things as any other college kid. I myself did not know much about ROTC while I was in high school. A major advantage of ROTC is that it can provide undergraduate scholarships as well as a monthly stipend for Cadets. But more than that, it teaches you lessons about yourself and those around you. Granted, ROTC is a major time commitment, but you can still be involved in other organizations on campus. As a matter of fact, you are encouraged to. I currently have a part time job; play intramurals, snowboard, and still find time to do my homework. I was even able to spend some time as a player on the Ohio State football team.

ROTC does not take away from your college experience, it enhances it. As Cadets we may complain sometimes about the lack of sleep, having to worry about shaving, and haircuts; but honestly, we could care less. I can speak for us all when I say there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and we are all looking forward to it.

So if you have ever wondered about what ROTC is or what we do, ask and do the research. It never hurts to learn something new. Military Science, as the ROTC courses are listed, is a no commitment class like any other on campus. So, if it remotely sounds fun, I’d try it out. It’s not for everyone, but it, along with an education from The Ohio State University, will help build a solid foundation for both a successful career and life.

Cadet Chris Williams, MSIII Cadet
What’s Coming Up

BY ADAM MANGEN

In the Battalion

1. Select cadets have the opportunity to train for the German Armed Forces Badge for Military Proficiency. This competition will be held at both the Ohio University from 13-15 February and at Indiana University later on. Cadets must pass all components of the test which includes pistol marksmanship, ruck-marching, swimming, sprinting, and more.

2. The Buckeye Battalion is in the process of establishing the Cadets Against Sexual Harassment/Assault organization, an organization modeled on the West Point cadet organization of the same name. Selection of applicants for staff positions is currently underway.

3. On 20 February 2015, the Buckeye Battalion will hold its annual Military Ball, a ceremony in which Cadets, Cadre, and their guests participate in some of the U.S. Army's time-honored traditions during a formal dining-in. This year the Buckeye Battalion has the honor of hosting Major General Peggy Combs, commander of Army ROTC Cadet Command, as its guest speaker.

4. During the week of 23 February, the Buckeye Battalion will participate in the annual Tri-Service Olympics. This is an athletic competition between Army and Air Force Cadets and Navy Midshipman.

5. On 24 February, Dr. Peter Mansoor (former Executive Officer to Gen. Petraeus) will be giving a lecture to Cadets about officership and the situation in the Middle East.

In the Army ROTC Organizations

Scabbard and Blade
Scabbard and Blade will be receiving instruction in close quarters combat from F.B.I. agents. Cadets will also enjoy a lecture on Army leadership given by Master Sergeant Clifton.

Pershing Rifles
The organization has been training intensely for the National Rifle Drill Convention in Richmond, Virginia.

Ranger Force
Ranger Force cadets will be conducting Squad Training Exercises on the weekends, honing critical tactical and navigational skills.

Officers’ Christian Fellowship (OCF)
On 20 February, the cadets and midshipmen of OCF will go to White Sulfur Springs, Pennsylvania on an outdoors retreat with active and retired military officers.

Converse Guard
Converse Guard will be conducting color guard ceremonies at Heritage College graduation ceremony and will be forming a Saber Arch and a Color Guard at the Buckeye Battalion Military Ball on 20 February.