

THREE RIVERS BATTALION

Fall 2022 Newsletter



A GREAT START TO A NEW YEAR

Looking at How Cadet and Cadre Stepped Off on the Right Foot

New Chances To Thrive

Authored by CDT Strong (MS III)

The beginning of the 2022-23 school year is a time for celebration. We welcome back cadets who have graduated from Advance Camp after 41 long days of training at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. We congratulate cadets who passed Air Assault and Air Borne School. Most importantly, we welcome new cadets who have decided that Army ROTC is the right choice for them.



Three Rivers Battalion always kicks off the new year with orientation. A day for paperwork and introductions. The new MSIs meet one another as well as the upper-level students and cadre that will be there to support them over their next four years. The MSIVs welcome these newcomers with open arms and show them the ropes of ROTC (and how to navigate through Bellefield Hall).

At this year's orientation, ROTC-organized clubs, like the newsletter and color guard, presented a bit about themselves to gain new members. Then contracting and commissioning ceremonies were held to celebrate the achievements of cadets and 2nd LT Brian Bonjovi. Afterward, cadets were introduced to new cadre members, who have been fantastic and vital additions to the battalion. In the end, cadets left prepared to begin a great semester.

Upcoming Events:

The end of the fall semester means the start of the spring! Keep your eye out for some upcoming adventures! This spring semester brings new training opportunities and increased preparation for Cadet Summer Training.

- Platoon Tactics Lab - Feb 25th
- MS3 Planned Extended Lab- Mar 17th-18th
- Combined FTX- March 29th - April 2nd
- Run to Fund 5k: TRB Fundraiser- tentatively April 8th
- Staff Ride- April 14th - 16th
- Military Ball- April 21st
- Spring Commissioning- May 19th

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Orientation and upcoming events- 2
Ruff Ride- 3
Cadet Spotlight and Halloween Run- 4
Ranger Challenge and the Summer Schools- 5
Land Navigation and TCCC- 6
FTX- 7
Dining In- 8



RUFF RIDE

A Team Foster Fundraiser

Authored by CDT Meade (MSIV)

On September 17, 2022, the Three Rivers Battalion had the opportunity to support Team Foster for the third consecutive year. Team Foster honors the spirit and sacrifice of Three Rivers Battalion alumni Captain Erick Foster who was killed while engaging enemy forces in 2007 in Iraq. Nick Liermann, also a TRB alumni, is the founder of Team Foster and led the effort to put together a successful 2nd annual Pittsburgh Ruff Ride.



Ruff Ride is a 24-hour spin bike marathon that raises money to provide veterans with service dogs. The event took place in Schenley Plaza right next to the University of Pittsburgh's campus and was full of excitement and competition. An army of volunteers from Team Foster, the University of Pittsburgh, and the community worked together to put the event together.

TRB cadets came out and created two teams and kept both bikes spinning continuously for 24 hours. During the event, the Army, Air Force, and Navy ROTC branches competed in the Armed Forces Cup to see which team could bike the furthest during the 24 hours. Although Navy ROTC took home the trophy for the most miles biked, the two Army ROTC bikes combined fundraised the most out of all 30 participating teams!

The teams were made up of local businesses, student organizations, university club sports teams, and one man even rode the entire 24 hours solo! All together the Three Rivers Battalion raised **\$9,239.94** for Team Foster of the total **\$76,269.94** raised at Ruff Ride Pittsburgh. This event was a great experience for cadets to get involved with the local community, hear about the immense impact that service dogs have on veterans' lives, and raise money and awareness for a great cause.

Ruff Ride Pittsburgh will be back next year, and we hope to raise even more! In order to learn more you can visit teamfoster.org



MS1 CADET SPOTLIGHT



Cadet Mac Kennedy is an exercise science major at the University of Pittsburgh, hailing from Glenn Mills, Pennsylvania. CDT Kennedy is a standout MS1. From Ranger Challenge to being a good friend CDT Kennedy does it all. To take a closer look at what ROTC life has been like for CDT Kennedy we asked him a couple of questions:

1. What led you to join Army ROTC?

ROTC was originally a supplement to my application to West Point. As I did more research about what ROTC was like compared to West Point, it became more evident to me that it was the best way for me to achieve my goal of serving in the Army as an officer. ROTC gives me the chance to belong to something bigger than myself and to eventually serve my country. My grandfather was a captain in the Marines reserves when he re-retired and he always spoke positively of his experiences in the military and always encouraged me to join.

2. What fears did you have before the semester began?

I came into my first semester worried about my contracting process. I was still under DoDMERB waiver review in August when I came to Pitt. My waiver process became more and more complicated as time went on and fears of my waiver being denied began to grow in the back of my head.

3. How did you overcome those fears?

Lots of patience and working with DoDMERB and Mr. Perez throughout the semester.

4. What was it like competing on the Ranger Challenge team as an MS1?

It was an eye opening experience to all the different things that we as cadets are expected to know throughout our career in ROTC. A very important takeaway I have from being on the team is the value of a team mentality. There were no individuals, it was a collective unit. No one person was bigger than the team. Every single cadet on that team was held to the same standard and expected to perform at the same level. While competing, if I ever found myself low on motivation, all I had to do was look those to the left or right of me. Everyone on the team gave their all; not for themselves, but for the 11 other individuals standing beside them.

5. What advice do you wish you were given or what advice would you give to the next class?

Advice that I would give to the next class would be to not be too nervous when starting out. You are in the same boat as all the other MS1s and not expected to know everything right away.

CDT Kennedy doesn't know what he wants to do post commissioning just yet, but we know he will continue to do great things



Halloween Run Fun

Alpha company's annual Halloween run does not disappoint. This year was no different. On the morning of October 27th, many Oakland residents were suddenly awoken by the sounds of loud screaming and running. One Pitt student remarked, "I'm such a heavy sleeper and I woke up thinking I was being charged at."



One of Alpha company's most exciting events of the year, the Halloween run allows cadets to dress up in squad costumes, compete in a costume contest, and run as loud as they want. Cadets began planning their costumes in early September, allowing ample time to brainstorm and execute the perfect costumes. Notable costumes from this year include the Ranger Challenge team's Monkey and Bananas, 1st platoon's 2nd squad's Garden Gnomes, and 3rd platoon's 2nd squad's Average Joes. However, 2nd platoon 3rd squad won the overall costume competition. They all dressed as S4 shop head, CDT Cooke. There was a lot of flannel involved.

Cadets ran through Oakland, ending in the Schenley Quadrangle. There, they ran in circles screaming at the top of their lungs to wake their Pitt counterparts. Overall, it was a super fun experience. When asked about the run, 3rd platoon CDT Leemhuis said, "My voice was just about gone by the time it was over. Even though I'm a senior, it was my first time experiencing the Halloween run. It was an awesome morale booster, and I greatly enjoyed reading all the Pitt student's complaints about us waking them up."

Authored by CDT Osterhaus (MSIII)

RANGER CHALLENGE

WHAT IT'S ABOUT

Authored by CDT Howard (MSII)



Ranger Challenge is a decades-long tradition within ROTC. It provides cadets an opportunity to better themselves and represent their battalions in a series of events that focus on vital military and soldier skills. Ranger Challenge cadets are often highly respected among their peers due to their self-discipline, physical fitness, and leadership ability.

This year, **CDT Nathan Howard (MS3)** and **CDT Zachary Marini (MS3)** were given the honor of leading the Three Rivers Battalion Ranger Challenge Team as captains under the guidance of MSG Matthew Young. Twenty-four motivated cadets attended six days of tryouts that assessed their physical, mental, and teamwork abilities. On the 6th day, cadets Howard and Marini selected the ten best-performing cadets: **CDT Mitchell Branscome (MS4)**, **CDT Michael Malsch (MS3)**, **CDT Cameron Snyder (MS3)**, **CDT Connor Rayner (MS3)**, **CDT Luke Barnes (MS3)**, **CDT Abby Aiello (MS2)**, **CDT Madalena Roberts (MS2)**, **CDT Jackson Shea (MS2)**, **CDT Macallister Kennedy (MS1)**, and **CDT Jayden Williams (MS1)**. These elite cadets would represent the Three Rivers Battalion in the 2022 2nd Brigade Ranger Challenge at Fort Dix, New Jersey.



After five weeks of grueling physical and mental preparation, the TRB Ranger Challenge team set off for Fort Dix. The 12 cadet team battled against 49 other ROTC battalions in 8 major events: land navigation, tactical combat casualty care, weapons assembly, one rope bridge, the grenade course, the burden, an obstacle course, and a 6-mile ruck march. At the end of 3 days of competition, the Three Rivers Battalion placed **7th overall** and **1st place in land navigation and weapons assembly**.



The TRB Ranger Challenge Team will return to action on March 3, 2023, to compete in the Arctic Challenge hosted by Slippery Rock University.

SNYDER'S SUMMER: JUSMAGTHAI

This summer, I interned with the Joint US Military Advisor Group Thailand. Also known as JUSMAGTHAI, this office supports a wide variety of responsibilities. The Army Foreign Area Officers support Joint exercises with the Royal Thai Military and facilitate military relations with Thailand.

I worked in the Joint Training section of the office, which sends Thai Military Officers to the United States for training. Thai officers attend schools across the country, ranging from Ranger School to Pilot training. The primary goal of the training division is to foster a personal and professional relationship between American soldiers and their Thai counterparts.



Over the year, over 200 Thai Officers are sent to the US, a multi-month process. I met some incredible Thai employees who work tirelessly to operate the office. Additionally was able to watch the English Proficiency test being administered and was able to brief a group of Thai Officers about the expectations and norms in the United States. JUSMAGTHAI brokers deals between the Thai and US governments, so our Indo-Pacific ally can respond to the ever-changing world.

An example is the historic Stryker deal which serves a multitude of purposes. The Thai Royal Army expanded its arsenal, and the United States was able to strengthen its geo-political ally. Not only does the US sell their stryker vehicles, but they have also created a lasting relationship of replacement parts; now, hundreds of Thai soldiers are brought to the States to learn the intricacies of the Strykers.

I have learned many valuable lessons from my internship at JUSMAGTHAI. The Foreign Area Officers' purpose, how they contribute to the Army's global mission, and how cooperation between nations is critical to international security.

OPERATION STEEL THUNDER

In September, Cadets participated in one of TRB's many presented opportunities to practice land navigation, this time in the South Park fairgrounds. We place great importance on these skills as we educate and practice year-round in preparation for cadets going to cadet summer training (CST).

During this specific lab, we replicated the CST method for testing by including a written skills test and a hands-on navigation course. Doing this shows the cadets fully understand and are comfortable using a compass, map, and protractor. The written test had topics ranging from finding back azimuths to intersection and resection, topics that are all covered extensively in class and pre-lab courses.

In the navigation course, the cadets are given a map of the area and random points with coordinates they must plot and then locate within a certain amount of time.

This is similar to a publicly held Orienteering course, working to help people find their way in the wilderness.

Cadets usually go through multiple iterations, receiving new points but allowing them to familiarize themselves with the area. This is especially helpful in labs later in the year when we hold two iterations during the day and end with one at night. During night iterations, they have fewer points to find, but it is more challenging with the darkness and rough terrain.

No skill is introduced or tested without the proper preparation, and all cadets receive the appropriate training from cadre and peers alike. This open and helping classroom environment, along with the abundance of practical exercises in increasingly rugged terrain, allows our cadets to continually produce excellent results in the field.



FOUND A POINT!



Authored by CDT Medved (MSIII)

OPERATION HAT TRICK

The call for fire portion of the lab began with an overview of communication. Next followed the computer simulations of requesting fire support upon a designated target. Finally, cadets participated in their last call for fire exercise that allowed them to request verbally for fire support while launching dodgeballs at their comrades to simulate incoming fire.

Although the lab's primary focus is on TCCC, cadets also had the opportunity to train with live radios. Cadets were allowed to familiarize themselves with the assembly and channeling of field radio systems. Competitions soon followed who would be the fastest to demonstrate their skills on said systems.

Overall this lab has provided cadets with skills that prepare them for any situation, military or civilian. Best of all, this lab was conducted in a sunny and warm weather environment.

Authored by CDT Nyce (MSII)



Saturday, November 5th, 2022, the cadets of the TRB participated in their tactical combat casualty care, TCCC, and call for fire training exercises during their monthly lab.

TCCC began with nursing cadets providing an overview of medical aid. Followed by hands-on training, where equipment such as tourniquets was used in different injury scenarios. The Pennsylvania Army National Guard provided these medical vehicles for cadets to inspect to see what vehicles would be used in TCCC situations. In the end, cadets were tested individually by MSIVs on what they had learned as they performed TCCC on given scenarios upon a fellow cadet.

OPERATION LONELY MOUNTAIN

3 days and 2 nights in paradise

Authored by CDT Nyce (MSII)

The early morning of Friday, October 7th, 2022, saw the cadets of the Three Rivers Battalion depart from their respective campuses to Camp Dawson, West Virginia, to accomplish their first field training exercise of the semester. Codenamed Operation Lonely Mountain, this field training exercise, or FTX, would be spread over three days. From land navigation to leadership courses and even live fire exercises, these cadets would get a taste of what will come soon.



Day 1 of the operation saw cadets conduct three iterations of land navigation in the Virginian environment, two during the day and one at nightfall. Cadets were tasked with locating different points and copying the codeword upon each one. While the environment contained artificial structures and roads, cadets faced high-elevated terrain and thick vegetation that served as obstacles. Then the night fell upon the battalion, where no stars nor moonlight shined through the darkened sky. All one could see were the red lenses of a cadet, and occasionally heard the scream of one being scared by Cadet Ganten, who roamed the woods silently. The night concluded with all asleep in the woods, on nature's finest bed.

Day 2 oversaw the separation of the battalion, where each MS class was sent on their own training for the day. MSIs and MSIIIs were sent to conduct further land navigation training and squad tactics. MSIIIs were sent to the firing range to practice with their trusty M4. MSIs and MSIIIs, throughout their day, were instructed by MSIVs on proper procedures regarding grenade throwing, ambushes, platoon formations, and much more. Following that, those cadets were transported to the barracks, where they conducted virtual firing simulations, also known as EST or engagement skills trainer. Finally, the MSIIIs returned from the range, and a battalion-wide weapons cleaning commenced until lights out.



The final day saw the most fun out of FTX by many. Cadets had the opportunity to repel from 60ft towers with nothing but a rope. They also completed the obstacle course, where one can reach the height of a bird yet simultaneously be crawling with the worms. Cadets also conducted leadership courses, working as a team to accomplish puzzling objectives. As the sun set on Camp Dawson, the battalion ended their FTX with the recognition of many excellent cadets and a contracting ceremony.



Dining-In:

A Celebration of a Semester Well Done

Authored by CDT Malsch (MSIII)



This year's Dining-In took place on December 2nd at a venue catered by Just In Thyme. In attendance was the entire Three Rivers Battalion as well as Brigadier General Retired Robert Pleczkowski. Cadets enjoyed a cocktail hour followed by a delicious assortment of entrees, a grog ceremony, skits, and a pinning ceremony.

The grog ceremony, an infamous tradition of the Dining-In, consists of a brewing ceremony wherein cadets bring various beverages and substances to represent stories or traditions of the military and mix them to create a grotesque soup of sugar and alcohol. Notable additions to the grog from Dining-In 2022 include Iron City beer to represent the city of Pittsburgh, sprinkles to represent the grass of the PT field, and pre-workout to express the high energy of the battalion. Cadets call upon their comrades to drink from the grog as punishment for various infractions throughout the semester or at the Dining-In ceremony, such as holding a drinking glass with the wrong hand.

Afterward, the battalion showcased its talent in theatrical arts with a skit from each class/company. As always, our class demonstrated superiority to the others in acting and playwriting.

Finally, the battalion watched eagerly as its MS4s were pinned with the insignias of their newly assigned branch, marking the final step for the soon-to-be 2LTs before their commissioning in May. With the closing ceremonies and the singing of the Army Song, the service was concluded, and cadets returned home to finish off another successful Dining-In.





Heres to another semester of memories