

# Sun Devil Battalion

## Cadet Newsletter Spring 2024 - Vol. 4

### Upcoming Events

31 May - 22 August '24  
Cadet Summer Training (Fort  
Knox)

28 July - 11 August '24  
Basic Camp (Ft. Knox)

15 - 20 August '24  
Sun Devil Battalion New Cadet  
Orientation

To submit your program photos,  
historic photos, use the following  
link:

[https://militaryscience.asu.edu/  
content/photo-submission](https://militaryscience.asu.edu/content/photo-submission)

To sign up for our newsletter:  
[https://militaryscience.asu.edu/  
node/355](https://militaryscience.asu.edu/node/355)

### Did you know?

ASU Army ROTC  
commissions over 45  
Army Second Lieu-  
tenants (2LTs) every  
year.



**Find out what the Sun Devil Cadets accom-  
plished during the Spring Semester 2024!**

**In this issue:**

- Sun Devil Battalion Program Recognitions!
- MSII and III Contracting Ceremonies (1 Feb – 26 April).
- Sun Devil Cadets Awarded Numerous Scholarships.
- Pat Tillman Run (13 April).
- Spring Commissioning Ceremony (8 May).
- Dean's Medal Recipient (9 May)
- Forging the Leaders of Tomorrow.

**And more!**



# Sun Devil Battalion Recognized With the Prestigious 5th Brigade Geronimo Award

## ASU News Press Release.

**Tempe, Ariz., March 12, 2024** – The U.S. Army Cadet Command's 5th Brigade recently named the Army ROTC Sun Devil Battalion at Arizona State University as the winner of the esteemed Geronimo Award for Best Large Program in 2023.

This prestigious accolade, presented by the 5th Brigade, encompassing 36 schools total within the southwest region of the country, recognizes excellence in fulfilling the mission of the U.S. Army Cadet Command: To recruit, educate, develop, and inspire ROTC Cadets to become commissioned officers of character for the Total Army.

"I am so proud of the Officers, NCOs, Department of the Army civilians, university employees, and our Cadets," said [COL Erich B. Schneider](#), Sun Devil Battalion Professor of Military Science and Department Chair. "The honor of being recognized with the Geronimo Award is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our entire team; especially our Student-Athlete-Leaders."

"At ASU Army ROTC, we are passionate about serving our university, community, state, and nation. We take tremendous pride in producing future leaders of character for the Army and remain grateful to all of those who support our program in the pursuit of excellence."

The Geronimo Award highlights the Sun Devil Battalion at ASU for its outstanding commitment to diversity, both in terms of student demographics and academic disciplines, with a particular emphasis on graduates holding degrees in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics fields. Moreover, the award acknowledges the battalion's remarkable commissioning production, exceeding expectations by producing over 50 second lieutenants annually, surpassing the mission's target of 36.

"In addition to academic achievements, the Geronimo Award evaluates programs based on community involvement and integration, particularly in charitable assistance and Junior ROTC mentorship," COL Schneider said. "It also recognizes programs that have demonstrated exemplary engagement with the local community, and shown strong morale and Esprit de Corps among its members."

The Sun Devil Battalion was founded in 1935 and is one of the oldest Army ROTC programs in the nation. At ASU, the battalion is established as the Department of Military Science within The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Sun Devil Battalion Cadets maintain an average 3.47 GPA with an impressive graduation rate of 95 percent. Other key facts about the Cadets include: 85% receive scholarships, 35% pursue STEM degrees, 21% are women, 29% are minority students, and collectively they log over 5,000 volunteer hours per year in the local community. \*\*

Click [here](https://www.azfamily.com/2024/03/13/asu-rotc-program-receives-excellence-award-southwest/) to watch Channel 3 news' clip (https://www.azfamily.com/2024/03/13/asu-rotc-program-receives-excellence-award-southwest/) and News Channel 12 clip [here](https://www.12news.com/video/news/local/valley/army-rotc-sun-devil-battalion-named-the-best-in-the-southwest/75-15e00ba2-96ae-4df0-99d2-4f3adb4073fe) (https://www.12news.com/video/news/local/valley/army-rotc-sun-devil-battalion-named-the-best-in-the-southwest/75-15e00ba2-96ae-4df0-99d2-4f3adb4073fe)

### Featured in this picture from left to right:

COL Philbert J. Palmore, Cadet Command's 5th Brigade Commander;  
COL Erich Schneider, ASU's Professor of Military Science; MSG Jaime Weaver, ASU Senior Military Instructor and CSM Jesus Robles, Cadet Command's 5th Brigade Command Sergeant Major



# Sun Devil Battalion Wins the Dean's Cup 2023 - 2024 School Year

As a recognition of the hard work the ASU Army ROTC Battalion Cadets perform every semester, the Sun Devil Battalion was awarded with the College of Liberal Arts and Science Dean's Cup. Established in 2016, the Dean's Cup promotes a friendly competition between the three ROTC programs at ASU: Air Force, Army and Navy/Marine Corps.

Through the school year, the three branches are measured against several areas and the branch with the most points at the end of the year brings home the Dean's Cup. These areas are: Blood Drive (twice a year), Fitness Test (twice a year), Flag Football, Food Drive, Fall Semester STEM GPA, Fall Semester non-STEM GPA, Basketball tournament and Pat's Run volunteer attendance. The Army ROTC program scored a total of 31 points!

This accomplishment is a testament to all the effort and great teamwork our outstanding Cadets perform every day.

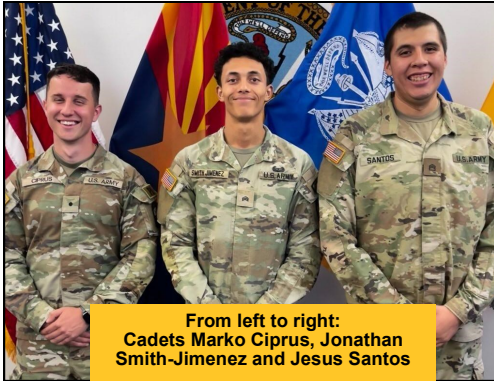
**Congratulations on your achievement Sun Devil Battalion Cadets! Feel the heat!**



From left to right:  
CDT Phillip Jansson (CDT XO), CDT Casey Mihojevich  
(CDT CSM), Dean Paul LePore from the College of Liberal  
Arts and CDT Cayden Wells (CDT BC).

# MS II & III Contracting Ceremonies

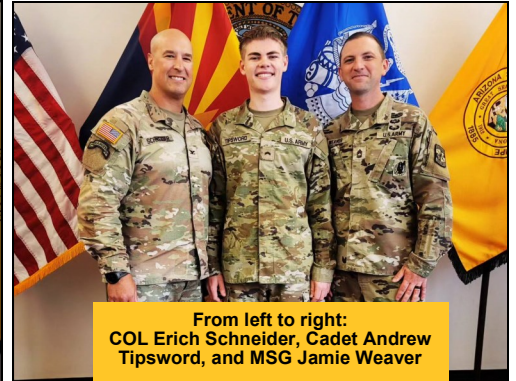
1 February - 26 April



From left to right:  
Cadets Marko Ciprus, Jonathan Smith-Jimenez and Jesus Santos



From left to right:  
COL Erich Schneider, Cadet Ramon Luna and MSG Jamie Weaver



From left to right:  
COL Erich Schneider, Cadet Andrew Tipsword, and MSG Jamie Weaver

## Six Sun Devil Cadets were contracted throughout the Spring Semester '24.

Compared to the Fall semester, this semester was more challenging for contracting. Cadets contracted in the Spring went through a rigorous board process where the "Bar" was set high. These Cadets overcame various personal challenges, rose to the occasion, and completed all additional contracting requirements to move into the next phase of their journey towards earning a commission in the US Army. This milestone unlocks the benefits that allow them to receive their cadet stipend and, depending on the type of contract, their scholarship or National Guard / Reserve tuition assistance.

**Congratulations to all our newly contracted Cadets!**



Cadet Hailey Heinrich takes the Oath of Enlistment during her contracting ceremony.



## Waste Management Open 5 - 11 February 2024 Scottsdale, AZ



The Waste Management Open (WMO) was an eagerly anticipated annual event, during which the dedicated members of the Sun Devil Battalion generously volunteered their time and expertise. Cadets assisted WMO staff in various capacities, including managing foot traffic, welcoming patrons, and facilitating transactions in their merchandise tent.

The Sun Devil Battalion's involvement in the WMO not only serves the community, but also provides crucial financial support for the program's ongoing development, through a generous donation. This donation significantly contributes to enriching the program and fostering the growth of our cadets. It also allows our Cadets to spend more time training instead of continuously fundraising.

We are grateful for the WMO's continued support. The Sun Devil Battalion cherishes this opportunity and remains steadfast in its commitment to providing annual support to the WMO staff and the community.

# LTG (Ret.) H. R. McMaster Visit 19 February 2024 Tempe Campus



Sun Devil Battalion Cadets and Cadre had the honor of meeting the highly-decorated LTG (R) H. R. McMaster, during his visit to the ASU Tempe Campus. LTG McMaster, along with CSM John Wayne Troxell, engaged Army and Air Force Cadets about the most important qualities a military leader should have.

LTG McMaster shared his decades of invaluable experience during his lecture. His deep knowledge and insights on leadership, resilience, and overcoming challenges served as a beacon towards success for the Sun devil Cadets.

LTG McMaster's stellar military career with many accomplishments encompassed over three decades, from 1984 to 2018. Among his high-ranking roles includes being the 25th National Security Advisor from 2017 to 2018 as well as commanding organizations in wartime during the Gulf War, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Additionally, he oversaw the training and education for the Army's infantry, armor and cavalry as the Commanding General of the Maneuver Center of Excellence at Fort Benning (Fort Moore).

**Thank you LTG McMaster for sharing your valuable military experience with our Cadets!**



# Sun Devil Cadets Met With Renowned SEAC CSM (Ret) John Wayne Troxell 19 - 20 February 2024 Tempe Campus

Sun Devil Battalion Cadets had the honor of once again sharing a PT session and gaining leadership edification from Army Command Sergeant Major (Retired) John Wayne Troxell. The day began with physical training at Mountain America Stadium on February 19th, consisting of Company-led circuits with laps around the stadium, and culminated with a leadership lecture on February 20, 2021.

CSM Troxell shared his inspiring words and Invaluable insights with the Cadets during physical training and as a guest speaker with all our Cadets. His profound knowledge and wisdom on leadership, resilience, and overcoming adversity was inspirational to our Cadets. He is a great example of being able to overcome anything that comes our way with persistence, determination and thorough preparation!

CSM Troxell has a distinguished military career that expanded over 30 years of outstanding service. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1982 as an armored reconnaissance specialist and graduated from the One Station Unit Training (OSUT) at Fort Knox, KY. During his 30 years, he served as the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the senior noncommissioned officer in the U.S. Armed Forces, from December 11, 2011 until his retirement on December 19, 2019. He also served in numerous units throughout his career, received several personal awards and participated in five combat tours of duty. The grit and life-long dedication to the military inspires our Cadets.

**Thank you CSM Troxell for investing part of your time with our Cadets!**



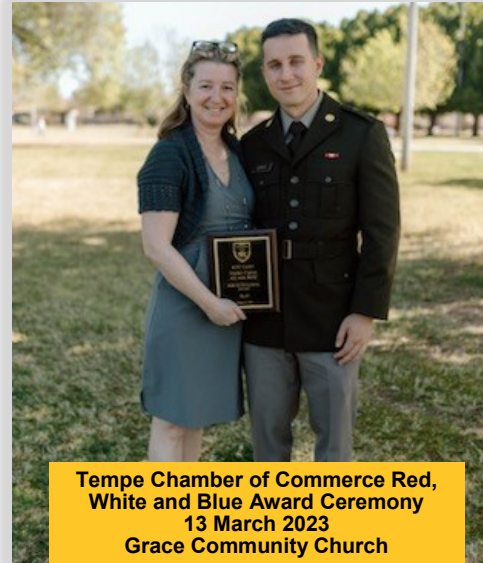
# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets Awarded Scholarships for Their Outstanding Academics and Overall Performance

The Tempe Chamber Military Affairs Committee recently held its 6th Annual Red, White, & Blue Awards Ceremony, which recognizes members of our local military community through scholarships and special recognition awards.

This year the Sun Devil Battalion's Cadet Marko Ciprus was awarded the ASU ROTC Scholarship - Army for his outstanding leadership skills and scholastic accomplishments.

ASU Army ROTC Cadre nominated Cadet Ciprus specifically for his ability to build trust among his peers, subordinates and Cadre members. Cadet Ciprus empowers those he leads, holds others accountable and creates an environment conducive to learning and leadership development.

**Congratulations on your achievement Cadet Ciprus!**



Tempe Chamber of Commerce Red, White and Blue Award Ceremony  
13 March 2023  
Grace Community Church



Sun Devil Battalion Cadets awardees during the Joint National Award Ceremony  
19 April  
NEEB Hall

During the Joint National Award Ceremony (JNAC) 86 Cadets and Midshipmen from Army, Air Force and Navy/Marine ROTC programs were awarded with several scholarships and endowments by civic groups nationally and from around the Valley.

Sun Devil Battalion Cadets received scholarships and awards from different organizations, such as AUSA, USAA, American Veteran Award, Military Order of the World Wars, Reserve Officers Association and Military Order of the Purple Heart among other esteemed associations.

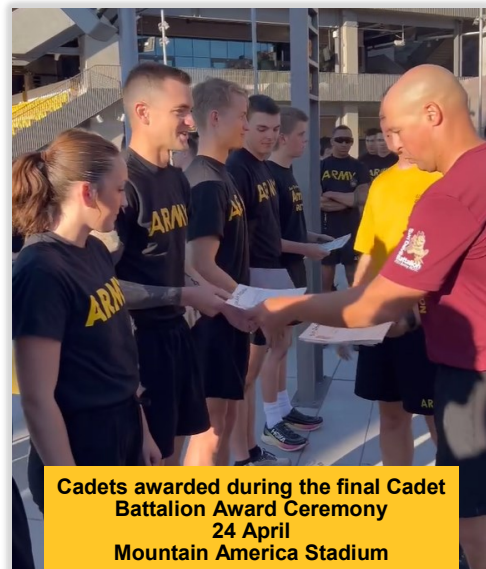
These awards are presented to those Cadets and Midshipmen who demonstrated exceptional performance throughout their academic year.

**Congratulations Sun Devil Cadets for your achievements!**

During our last award ceremony of the Spring semester, we were able to recognize multiple Cadets for their excellence throughout the academic year.

This year our Dr. Donald and Barbara Parks Army ROTC Scholarship recipients were Cadets Will Barrett, Jacob Browne, Cade Garner, Jade Goulet, Yadier Laguna, Brandon Kline, Olivia Mendez, Kyle Kozak, Jalen Johnson, and David Berdeski. Our Sun Devil Battalion Cadet Endowment recipient was Cadet Alexander Mirigian and our Ralph W. Beck Army ROTC Cadet Memorial Scholarship recipients were Cadets Demarco Thomas and Hailey Heinrich. These awards will go into each Cadets student account starting in the Fall and will allow these phenomenal Cadets to focus on training even harder as they continue in their leadership development.

**Feel the heat!**



Cadets awarded during the final Cadet Battalion Award Ceremony  
24 April  
Mountain America Stadium

# 20th Annual Pat Tillman Honor Run 13 April 2024 Tempe, Arizona

Once again, the Sun Devil Cadets were an integral part of the success of the annual Pat Tillman Honor Run. ASU Army ROTC Cadets not only volunteered to help out with the massive task of executing the run, but also ran among more than 24,000 other runners. The 4.2 mile run/walk started at the north east side of the Mountain America Stadium and concluded at the finish line inside the football field.

Sun Devil Battalion Cadets helped with water stations, where they sustained runners in need of a well-deserved cool down. The program also set up a recruiting table to share our story with the public and provide additional information to those interested in the Army ROTC program at ASU. The event was also a great opportunity to showcase our BeaverFit ACFT mobile fitness trailer. This was a major success for the battalion and those who wanted to show-off their physical fitness abilities. Among these fun physical challenges were dead-lifting, push-ups, the plank, bench-press and more.

Several cities around the country host the Pat Tillman's run every April in order to honor and celebrate the legacy of the former Sun Devil, NFL player and Army Ranger. Since it was first organized 20 years ago, the Tempe event has grown to host 30,000 participants and runners that come from different parts of the globe.

The runs/walks are organized by the ASU Alumni chapters and clubs in multiple cities throughout the U.S. The 4.2- mile race represents the number 42 that Pat Tillman wore in his jersey as a Sun Devil scholar-athlete. The funds raised during this event will go to the Pat Tillman Foundation Scholars Program, which provides scholarships to members of the nation's active-duty, veterans and military spouses.

**Thank you Sun Devil Cadets for all your hard work!**





# Cadet Change of Command 19 April Tempe Campus

Congratulations to our new Cadet Chain of Command! We wish you a year full of successful endeavors!

New Cadet Chain of Command for the school year 2024 - 2025:

## Cadet Battalion Commander

CDT Andrew Napier

## Cadet CSM

CDT Ramon Luna

## Cadet XO

CDT Melanie Florez

The Cadet Chain of Command at the Sun Devil Battalion plays an important role in the success of the Army ROTC program, one of the oldest and largest in the nation. At the top of the chain of command are the "Big 3," followed by the 3 companies (Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie) and their respective Company Commanders and First Sergeants.

According to CDT Casey Mihojevich, the Cadet Command Sergeant Major (CSM) for the 2023 - 2024 school year, the main function and responsibilities of the Cadet Command is to provide a range of support to the Battalion to which they are assigned. This includes giving administrative and operational support while also overseeing the functions of their Company Commanders and First Sergeants that ensure missions assigned to the Cadets are being performed in a professional and proficient manner.

CDT Mihojevich opines that in order to support the mission and success of the Sun Devil Battalion, each position must perform to a set standard. She says that in her position as the Cadet Sergeant Major, her roles and responsibilities helped to support the morale, discipline, standards, and coordination of the Battalion and its Cadets. The Command Sergeant Major position serves as the link between the Cadets and the Senior Military Instructor in order to produce the most effective and mutually beneficial products and outcomes.

"In my experience, the most rewarding part of being the CSM of the Sun Devil Battalion has been fostering the connection between the Cadets and the training. Getting to support and directly influence the success of the Battalion is a big responsibility, but is a very rewarding one as well. The CSM position allowed me to set the tone and culture of the Battalion while being able to influence positive change to benefit our Cadets."

**2LT Casey Mihojevich**  
**Sun Devil Battalion CSM, School Year 2023 - 2024**  
**BS in Justice Studies**



# Spring Commissioning and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

## 8 May 2024

### (Armstrong Hall)



COL(R) Brandt Deck receiving HoF Trophy from COL Erich Schneider and former HoF inductee, COL (R) James Bark-



COL(R) Dave Yonkovich joined remotely to give his acceptance speech.



2LT Joshua Hitt along with Mr. Bill Christensen and Mrs. Diane Christensen



#### 2023 Brandt Deck

Colonel Brandt Deck was a Distinguished Military Graduate student, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in 1988, and subsequently commissioned as an Infantry Officer. He later earned a Masters of Business Administration degree from Tuoro University International in 2002 and a Masters in National Security Studies from the National War College in 2011.

COL Deck's first assignment was with the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY where he served as a Rifle Platoon Leader, Motor Platoon Leader, Support Platoon Leader, and Battalion S4 in the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment including a deployment to the Multinational Force and Observers mission, Sinai, Egypt.

After completion of Special Forces training, he was assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group in Fort Lewis, WA where he served as a Special Forces Detachment Commander with multiple deployments to the Southeast Asia. He then served as an Assistant Operations Officer and Chief, Special Activities Branch at the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, NC. COL Deck later served as the Commander's Inherent Force Company Commander, Operations Officer, and Executive Officer with 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa, Japan that included duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines, Republic of the Philippines. His next assignment was as the Chief of Current Operations, later Chief of Future Operations, 503rd Special Program, Special Operations Command Pacific, Camp Smith, HI. Colonel Deck then commanded Detachment 3, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Vietnam, Laos with the mission to investigate the loss and recovery of Americans missing from the Vietnam conflict. He then served with Joint Forces Special Operations Component Command Iraq as the lead of the advisory teams for the 1st Counter Terrorism Command, Baghdad, Iraq. Colonel Deck's next assignment was as Director, Army Special Operations Capabilities Integration Center, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC. COL Deck then commanded the 137th Infantry Brigade, Camp Atterbury, IN where his unit trained and certified Army Reserve and National Guard units for deployment. COL Deck's next assignment was as Director, Special Operations Planning and Liaison Element, Special Operations Joint Task Force - Afghanistan/NATO Special Operations Component Command - Afghanistan, Kabul, Afghanistan. COL Deck's final assignment of his 36-year career was Division Chief, Concept Development and Integration, J. Joint Special Operations Forces Development, US Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL.

COL Deck's professional education includes the Infantry Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Infantry Mortar Leaders Course, Airborne and Jumpmaster courses, Ranger course, Special Forces Assessment and Selection, Special Forces Qualification Course, Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape High Risk Level C Course, Indonesian Language Basic Course, Joint Special Operations Planners Course, Combined Arms Service and Staff School, the Command and General Staff College, and the National War College.

COL Deck's decorations and awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal (2nd award), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2nd award), Meritorious Service Medal (3rd award), Joint Service Commendation Medal (2nd award), Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal (2nd award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd award), Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal (campaign star), Iraq Campaign Medal (2 campaign stars), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (10th award), NATO Medal, Multinational Force and Observers Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award (4th award), Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Superior Unit Award (2nd award), Honorable Order of Saint Barbara, Noncommissioned General Staff Emblem of Honor, Special Forces Tab, Ranger Tab, Expert Infantryman's Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, and Thai, Philippine, and Venezuelan Parachutist Badges.



#### 2023 Dave Yonkovich

Colonel (R) Dave Yonkovich began his military career as an enlisted Soldier serving as an Air Defense Artilleryman with the 7th Infantry Division at Fort Ord, California from 1983-1985. In 1989 he earned a ROTC commission into the Infantry from Arizona State University, where he graduated with a degree in business.

Upon completion of the Infantry Officer's Basic Course and Ranger School, COL (R) Yonkovich served as a Platoon Leader with the 2/502nd Infantry Regiment at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky from 1991 to 1993. While a Platoon Leader, he deployed to Sinai, Egypt for a six-month tour with the Multinational Force and Observer mission. Following his Infantry Platoon leader tour, COL (R) Yonkovich transferred to the Signal Corps and served as the Executive Officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st Signal Battalion from 1993 to 1995 at Ft. Campbell.

COL (R) Yonkovich applied and was accepted to attend the Special Forces Assessment and Selection Course in 1995. Upon completion of the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1996, COL (R) Yonkovich served in the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa, Japan from 1996 to 1998 as a Detachment Commander. As a Detachment Commander, he and his teams conducted numerous missions throughout Southeast Asia, Australia, and South Korea. Following his assignment at 1st Group, COL (R) Yonkovich served with an Army Special Mission Unit at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, where he served in various levels of leadership.

His final assignment as an Army Officer was with the Joint Special Operations Command at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, where he served as a Deputy Operations Officer from 2014 to 2016, culminating nearly 28 years of active service.

COL (R) Yonkovich served multiple tours in the Central Command area of operations.

COL (R) Yonkovich is married to Angela Martin of Balboa, Panama and they have one son.

Armstrong Hall at Tempe campus was full of energy on May 8 when it held very important ceremonies that celebrated and recognized the hard work and determination of our program over the years. 20 Sun Devils felt the joy of mission accomplishment as they celebrated their commissioning with their friends and family. We also honored two Alumni that represent the leadership and excellence that the program strives to instill in our Cadets. Lastly we honored the Christensen Family and one of our Cadets that embody the hopes that they had for their son, who passed away in 2007.

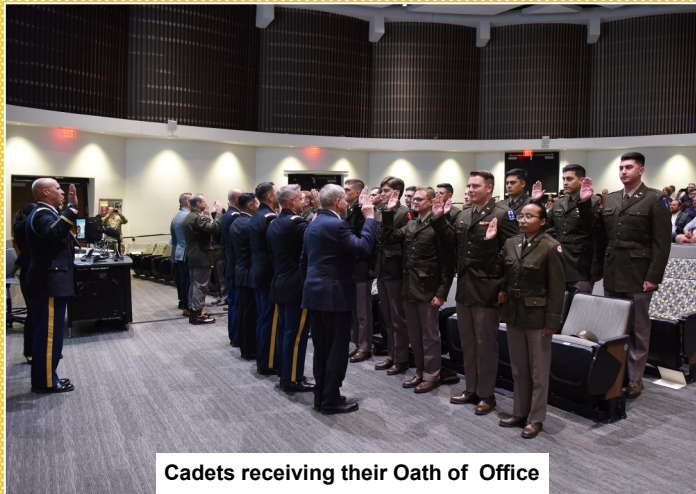
#### Hall of Fame (HoF) Induction Ceremony

COL (R) Brandt Deck and COL (R) Dave Yonkovich were this year's HoF inductees for the academic year 2023. These inductees graduated/commissioned in 1988 and 1989 respectively and enjoyed impactful careers that culminated in the Joint Special Operations community. Their military legacy started in the Sun Devil Battalion and continues today in the US Military as they actively contribute everyday. Each inductee received their own HoF trophy and will have their plaques mounted in the department halls.

#### 2024 Michael J. Christensen ROTC Memorial Scholarship

This year 2LT Joshua Hitt was awarded with the 2024 Michael J. Christensen ROTC Memorial for his demonstrated utmost leadership, scholastics and determination for the ASU ROTC Program. The aforementioned scholarship was established by Diane and Bill Christensen in honor of the memory of their son Michael, who was a Cadet Sergeant at the Army ROTC program at ASU.

# Spring Commissioning and Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony 8 May 2024 (Cont.) (Armstrong Hall)



Cadets receiving their Oath of Office



2LT Torres received her first salute from  
SSG Matthew Lumagui



2LT Mirigian pinned by his Mother and Father



Seniors presented farewell gifts to COL Erich  
Schneider and MSG Jamie Weaver

**20 senior Army ROTC cadets were commissioned as 2nd Lieutenants of the Army.**

**The Commissioning Ceremony** is a long-standing tradition that marks the symbolic first step a young lieutenant takes on the path of being an Army Officer. Family and close friends had the opportunity to participate in and celebrate this milestone. We are grateful for the investment that they have made in their loved one and proud of the persistence and grit that these leaders have shown in our program over the years.

### **Congratulations to our new 2nd Lieutenants**

2LT Mia DeCesare - Transportation  
2LT Silas Deevers - Military Intelligence  
2LT David Glines - Field Artillery  
2LT Austin Gloyd - Military Police  
2LT Joel Gonzales - Quartermaster  
2LT Mark Habelt - Adjutant General  
2LT Joshua Hitt - Infantry  
2LT Phillip Jansson - Adjutant General (DMG)  
2LT Stone Mendez - Aviation (DMG)  
2LT Casey Mihojevich - Medical Serv. Corps

2LT Christopher Mirigian - Infantry  
2LT Brandon Moreno - Aviation  
2LT Austin Nixon - Adjutant General  
2LT Seanna Roland - Ordnance Corps  
2LT Hayden Shedd - Corps of Engineers (DMG)  
2LT Ruby Torres - Adjutant General  
2LT Keith Verble - Armor  
2LT Bret Weege - Chemical Corps  
2LT Curtis Wilkerson - Medical Service (DMG)  
2LT Gabriel Yozzo - Military Intelligence

# 2LT Phillip Jansson Awarded with the Dean's Medal Department of Military Science

On May 9th 2024, ASU Army ROTC's newly commissioned 2LT Phillip Jansson was awarded the Dean's Medal for the Department of Military Science, along with graduating students from other departments and schools within The College of Liberal Arts at Arizona State University. At the end of Spring and Fall Semester, The College recognizes outstanding students who have demonstrated a continuous commitment to academic excellence.

2LT Phillip was selected by the Sun Devil Battalion Cadre as its nominee for this recognition for his demonstrated leadership skills, his drive to help others and for modeling high levels of stewardship of the Military Profession.

2LT Phillip graduated with a 4.00 with the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts. He joined the program in August of 2022 as an Active Duty Option Cadet and has since contributed to the program's prestige not only through his academic excellence, but also by consistently receiving accolades from external evaluators during the Cadet Command National Competition and demonstrated selfless service by contributing countless volunteer hours to the local community.

As a senior, 2LT Jansson served as a Cadet Battalion Executive Officer where he proved himself as a servant leader, always out front and always willing to put the needs of the Battalion ahead of himself. Upon receiving his commission, he will be going into Active Duty as a 2nd lieutenant and will work as an Adjutant General.

**Congratulations on your academic achievements 2LT Jansson! We wish the best on this new phase of your military career!**



# Forging the Leaders of Tomorrow

## Combat Water Survival Training 23 February (Mona Plummer Aquatic Center)

As part of their rigorous physical training that will help them to become highly-skilled Army leaders, Sun Devil Battalion Cadets along with Army ROTC Grand Canyon University Cadets, participated in the annual Combat Water Survival Training at the Mona Plummer Aquatic Center on the Tempe campus.

The training is meant to challenge cadets and in some cases provide an opportunity to overcome fear. The training consists of maneuvers and exercises designed to prepare Cadets in case of a water emergency. Cadets jumped into the deepest end of the diving pool, fully dressed in their military uniforms, while holding their guns; the test also included 10 minutes of continuous swimming, five minutes of treading water, and swimming 15 meters with a rifle.

Combat Water Survival Training is one of the many forges the Sun Devil Cadet will go through during their preparation to become United States Army Officers.



# Forging the Leaders of Tomorrow (Cont.)

## Basic Rifle Marksmanship (BRM) 29 March 2024 (Florence Army National Guard Range Complex)

Sun Devil Battalion and GCU's Military Science (MS) III Cadets sharpened their shooting skills at the range to prepare for Cadet Summer Training (CST) this summer!

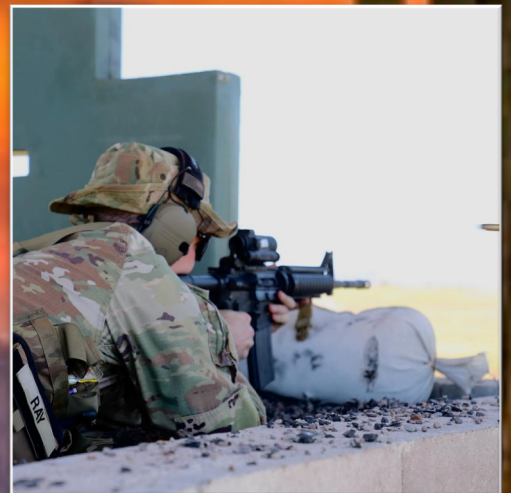
Cadets from ASU and GCU honed their marksmanship skills and trained the next generation of marksmanship instructors in collaboration with Independence Training of Phoenix Arizona and their Advanced Carbine course. At the Florence National Guard Range, 65 Cadets shot a total of 11,000 rounds of ammunition over the course of seven hours.

From PMI (Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction), zeroing their M4 carbines, to practicing Table V and VI qualifications, MS3 Cadets took one step closer to graduation from Cadet Summer Training and earning their commission as an Officer in the United States Army.

In the words of Captain Connor Murray (ASU Army ROTC MS III Instructor), "leaders need "Moxie" or a sense of *Courage and Determination* to effectively function in the increasingly dynamic and stressful battlefield."

By honing their marksmanship skills, Sun Devil Battalion Cadets will carry valuable knowledge and expertise not only into the future of our organization, but also forward to their units as well. Marksmanship is an important part of developing our Cadets' "Moxie" as we educate, train, and inspire the next generation of Army leaders.

**2LT Joshua Hitt**  
**BS in Finance**



# Forging the Leaders of Tomorrow (Cont.)

## Spring Joint Field Training Exercise 04 - 07 April 2024 (Fort Huachuca, AZ)

Cadets from ASU, GCU and U of A practiced their skills and demonstrated their field craft at Fort Huachuca during the Spring Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX).

The Field Training Exercise (FTX) was a 4-day long survival exercise in which Cadets learn the fundamentals and master the basics of shoot, move, communicate and medicate. Cadets learn radio communication, orienteering, how to build improvised shelters out of materials found in the woods or in nature and patrol base operations.

During this exercise Cadets put to practice the skills they previously learned during the semester and in labs, such as tactics, tactical combat casualty care, and troop leading procedures. MS1&2s from the three schools teamed up to practice land navigation, STX lanes, and learn how to be Weapons Squad Leader by employing M240B teams as concurrent training during our live fire range. Our MS3s (and select MS2s) sharpened their land navigation and field leadership skills in preparation for summer camp, while preparing future MS3s for the challenge ahead of themselves.

**Great job Sun Devil Cadets!**



# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets Participate in Extracurricular Activities

## CADETS COMPLETE SOUTHERN ARIZONA TRIPLE 50



ON DECEMBER 2, 2023, THE SUN DEVIL BATTALION CADETS: CAYDEN WELLS, KYLE MARTINI, AND CHRISTIAN NAVARRO-RUIZ TOOK ON THE COLOSSAL VAIL 50/50 TRAIL RUN. THE RACE COVERED 50 MILES THROUGH THE MOUNTAINS OF THE SONORAN DESERT. THE CADETS SHOWED EXCEPTIONAL STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE, WITH CADET NAVARRO-RUIZ COMPLETING THE RACE IN AN IMPRESSIVE 10 HOURS AND 30 MINUTES, SECURING 16TH PLACE OUT OF 63 COMPETITORS. WELLS AND MARTINI FINISHING NOT FAR BEHIND. THEY COMPLETED THE RACE IN 13 HOURS AND 16 MINUTES RECEIVING 41ST AND 42ND PLACE.

THE CADETS WENT ON TO COMPETE IN TWO UPCOMING ULTRA-RACES IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS, WHICH WOULD EARN THEM THE ESTEEMED TITLE OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA TRIPLE 50 FINISHER.

ON JANUARY 27, 2024 THE AZT ORACLE RUMBLE TOOK PLACE, AND THE CADETS ONCE AGAIN PUT UP AN IMPRESSIVE SHOW OF STRENGTH AND PROWESS. CADET WELLS HAD A NEW PERSONAL BEST OF 12:21:10, WHICH WAS 54 MINUTES FASTER THAN BEFORE, EARNING HIM 25TH PLACE. CADET NAVARRO-RUIZ FINISHED AT 10:56:13 IN 15TH PLACE, AND CADET MARTINI FINISHED AT 14:06:50 IN 46TH PLACE.





# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets Participate in Extracurricular Activities (Cont.)

## JROTC Gallegos Drill Meet - 2 March 2024 (South Mountain High School, Phoenix)

Building the ***One ROTC*** concept, ASU Army ROTC Cadets participated at the JROTC Gallegos Drill Meet, which is an event held annually and is a multiservice drill competition.

JROTC units from the Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force came to participate in the competition. During the drill, participating teams demonstrated their abilities in different categories, such as armed and unarmed inspection, Raiders, color guard team, and rifle team.

ASU Army ROTC Cadets were part of a panel of judges who evaluated the skills of the JROTC Cadets from High Schools around the Valley. Sun Devil Battalion Cadets took this opportunity to talk to different JROTC Cadets that showed interest in the ROTC program at ASU and wanted to know what are the advantages and/or benefits of being a part of one of the oldest and most successful ROTC programs in the country!



# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets Participate in Extracurricular Activities (Cont.)

## Mentoring JROTC Cadets (South Mountain High School)

Despite her busy schedule as a full-time student at ASU and a dedicated Cadet with the Sun Devil Battalion, Cadet Evelyn Garciahernandez still finds the time to mentor JROTC cadets at South Mountain High School.

The drive behind Cadet Garciahernandez's desired to mentor JROTC Cadets is based on her own cultural experience. "Coming from a Hispanic background, I did not know the amount of opportunities the military, ROTC and college could offer me. Being a first-generation college student, Army Reserve Soldier and ROTC Cadet has been a challenging process," she said. Cadet Garciahernandez credits her best mentors, her family and peers for constantly giving her the drive to accomplish her goals and mentor others, especially fellow Latino students that she wants them to know that they have opportunities available for them.

Cadet Garciahernandez visits South Mountain High School on Tuesdays and Thursdays after her morning Military Science class. Once there, the JROTC Cadre assigns students for her engagement. She then shares her experiences with them, providing mentorship and guidance about their futures after graduating.

Cadet Garciahernandez says that the most rewarding part of her mentorship has been sharing her experiences from enlisting in the Army Reserves, being a college student and obtaining an ROTC scholarship. She wants JROTC students to be aware that there are many opportunities beyond high school. She wants to make an impact in the life of these junior Cadets the same way her mentors had a positive impact in her life.

Cadet Garciahernandez believes this experience will help her out once she commissions as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army. "As a future Army officer, learning the value of mentorship allows me to gain an important understanding of how one person's experience can positively contribute to the life of another. Therefore, enabling my future Soldiers with mentorship can provide them with guidance and confidence to develop the skills needed to achieve their military goals and be successful in both the Army and civilian life."

## CDT Evelyn Garciahernandez MSIII - Major in Criminology & Criminal Justice



CDT Evelyn Garciahernandez during one of her mentoring sessions at South Mountain Highschool



CDT Evelyn Garciahernandez during her contracting ceremony in September 2022.

# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets participate in extracurricular activities (Cont.)

## Mock Trials (United States)

As a young freshman, CDT William Barrett is already experiencing what it's like to be a trial lawyer in a courtroom. As a member of the ASU Mock Trial Team, CDT Barrett competed in 6 tournaments around the country in a year period, which included Regionals and the Opening Round National Championship Series in Los Angeles.

A mock trial is a competitive law practice and it's a nationally sanctioned activity. Thousands of teams from all over the country participate each year at the collegiate level. CDT Barrett's team placed 4th in regionals and 7th at the Opening Rounds and missed a bid to the National Championship by one place. He also won 4 individual awards throughout the course of a year, including an All-Regional Attorney award.

A member of the Barrett the Honors College, CDT Barrett is majoring in Political Science. He considers that politics and laws are bound together, and that understanding how law works will help him to understand how politics function as well. CDT Barrett says that he "always wanted to practice law, but with a long history of service in my family, I also wanted to join the Army." CDT Barrett wants to be an officer in the Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) and hopes he'll study law at the University of Virginia Law School, "one of the best JAG programs in the country," he says.

A JAG lawyer is a commissioned officer in one of the U.S. Armed forces that serves as a legal advisor to the command he/she is assigned. The functions of a JAG lawyer include providing legal advice and assistance in a wide variety of practice areas, as well as serving as prosecutors and defense counsel in courts-martial.

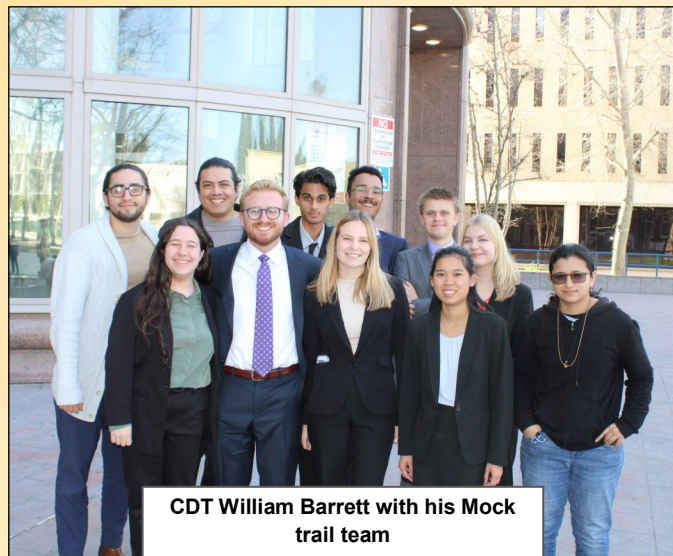
CDT Barrett says that so far the best part of participating in a Mock Trial has been how much he's learned about law in just one year, along with competing, traveling with friends and of course, winning. He feels gratified to have represented ASU and the Sun Devil Battalion in the national mock trial community and he's looking forward to 3 more successful years.

CDT Barrett says that to him, the best way he can serve in the Armed Forces is by helping to protect and assist his fellow servicemen and women and he's working hard to achieve that goal. "I believe starting to learn about court, law, and trial in my undergraduate education will set me up for success in my career. I don't just want to be a JAG lawyer, I want to be the best at it. I'm trying to do everything now I can to help myself achieve that goal."

**CDT William Barrett**  
**MSI - Major in Politics & The Economy**  
**Barrett The Honors College**



CDT William Barrett (left) with one of his teammates



CDT William Barrett with his Mock trial team

# Sun Devil Battalion Cadets give back to the community

## Brandon's March for Heroes

23 April 2024

(Sunrise Mountain Trail, Peoria, AZ)

20 ASU Army ROTC Cadets represented the Sun Devil Battalion during Brandon's March for Heroes, organized by The Brandon Caserta Foundation. Dozens attended this event that followed a hike trail for 4 miles from the opening ceremony to the end. The hike lasted four hours.

During this event the Sun Devil Battalion Cadets assisted in the coordination of the hike by standing at various points on the trail, handing out water and snacks to hike participants, and connecting with the veterans who attended by hiking with them and discussing their story and how we can connect with them today.

The Brandon Caserta Foundation provides assistance, guidance, education, and resources to active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. Their mission is to stop the suicide epidemic in the Armed Forces and veteran communities. They focus on the mental health of the service members and veterans.

Cadet David Glines, who was part of the hike said it was great to be part of.

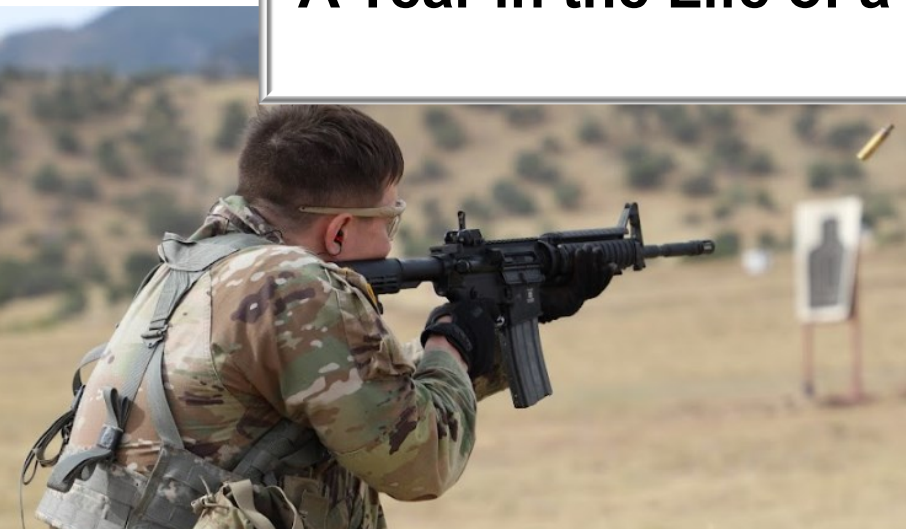
"I believe it's important for Cadets to participate in this hike because it gives us an opportunity to connect with veterans and learn from their experience, as well as honor those Soldiers who came before us. Connecting with the Soldiers from the Army of the past helps us to build a better Army of the future."

**2LT David Glines**  
**BS in Political Science**





# A Year in the Life of a Sun Devil Cadet



# A Year in the Life of a Sun Devil Cadet

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a Cadet in one of the oldest and most successful ROTC programs in the country? It's not a journey meant for everybody, but for sure it's filled with many rewards along the way.

ASU Army ROTC Cadets are college students pursuing a college degree at the same time they're working to commission as 2nd Lieutenants in the Army. The Sun Devil Battalion Cadets are not just Cadets, but they are students first. They have the same lifestyles and academic schedules as any other college student: they attend classes, they participate in group assignments, debate clubs, do extensive research, give presentations, and more. Alongside the student life, they are part of a diverse group of driven individuals who strive every day to be their best, while preparing to serve their country as officers of the U.S Army.

Their busy week starts at the crack of dawn on Mondays when they participate in Physical Training (PT) three times a week. PT regularly includes running, rucking, swimming, push-ups, planks, bench work, squats and other demanding physical activities. A pivotal part of the ROTC program is the Military Science classes which are held Tuesdays and Thursdays. During these lessons, Cadets learn what is to be an Army Officer, the fundamentals of Leadership, the Army Doctrine, and Training Management among other topics. Once a week on Fridays, they participate in Leadership Lab after and sometimes during Friday's PT where they can practice in the field the lessons they have learned during the MS classes.

Their training doesn't limit to the classrooms and the ASU campus: once a year they learn the basics of water survival during the Combat Water Survival Training; twice a year they brave the elements and sleep in the dirt while they take part in Field Training Exercises, and as a requirement to commission into the Army, they will also attend at least once the Cadet Summer Training in Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Sun Devil Cadets who want to expand their ROTC experience can also participate in extracurricular activities. These activities include the Ranger Challenge, where they train up and compete against other skilled ROTC Battalions in the southwest region in the Fall for the chance to participate in the 5th Brigade Ranger Challenge; they can carry on in the Spring with Desert Rangers, where they can further sharpen their tactical skills; they can be part of the Color Guard and present the Colors at different events; they take part in long distance running events in the Road Crew and often participate in different community events above and beyond what is required in the program. They have a combined 5,000 hours of volunteer work a year supporting events such as Tempe Healing Fields, Paul's Car Wash for Big Brothers and Sisters of Arizona, the Veteran's Day Parade, Pat Tillman's Run among others.

All this hard work pays off when Cadets get rewarded for their effort and achievements with special scholarships and endowments. These monies can be used at the Cadets' discretion and provides them with the financial help to pay towards their education and living expenses. But the hard work has also another type of recompense: our Cadets know that some of the most rewarding aspects of being part of the Sun Devil Battalion is leading somebody else and being part of somebody else's journey. It also provides them with a gratifying sense of accomplishment, comradery and a sense of purpose while preparing to serve their country.

With hardly a dull moment during a school year, the Sun Devil Battalion Cadets continue to push and better themselves, always moving forward until they commission as 2nd Lieutenants in the Army and obtain their college degrees. Without knowing it, all these challenges that are freely accepted and fought through result in our 95% graduation rate and become a testament to their hard work!

Sun Devil Cadet-life it's not an easy one, but this unique experience will leave a lasting impression on those who were part of it to include Cadets now, Alumni, Cadre, Faculty, and partners!

**Feel the heat!**

# Sun Devil Battalion Alumni Corner

**In this issue, we featured our very own Sun Devil Battalion Alumni LTC Jonathan Reading.**

LTC Reading earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the US Army in December 2004. After branching into the Signal Corps, he completed the Signal Officers Basic Course in October 2005 and took on the role of Battalion S6 for the 301st Military Intelligence Battalion, a Reserve Unit at the Barnes Reserve Center in Phoenix, Arizona.

In early 2007, then First Lieutenant Reading was selected to join the re-activated 338th MI Battalion at Camp Bullis, TX as the Battalion S6 for a Joint Mission to Camp Cropper, Iraq, where he served as the assistant and then primary J6 for the Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center, part of Task Force 134. During this mission, Reading discovered his passion for networking and system administration. After completing his mission in Iraq, he returned in August 2009 to a struggling economy and found that his civilian employer could no longer retain him.

LTC Reading briefly returned to the 301st MI Battalion, but soon volunteered for a US Army Corps of Engineers mission in Afghanistan. He arrived in Kabul in July 2010, where he spent 18 months as the tactical communication OIC and then as a field office OIC as an Engineer. There, he was responsible for \$80 million worth of awarded projects.

After his second tour, LTC Reading returned to Phoenix to resume his role as the Battalion S6 for the 301st MI Battalion. Seeking further advancement, he was selected to command HHC of the 98th Expeditionary Signal Battalion (ESB) in Mesa, AZ. As commander of HHC of the 98th ESB, LTC Reading quickly made an impact, leading the best company in the 505th TTSB (Tactical Theater Signal Battalion). Managing tactical networks for a mobilized force, he furthered his interest in the cyber domain. After a successful command, LTC Reading joined the Western Information Operations Center (WIOC), which would soon become the US Army Reserves' first Cyber Units.

With the transition to Cyber Units, the WIOC was rebranded as the Western Cyber Protection Center (WCPC), introducing the Cyber Protection Team concept to the Army Reserves. LTC Reading was assigned to the Phoenix Detachment of CPT 189, where he spent four years as a Mission Element Lead and eventually became the Operations Officer. In January 2020, he took over as the Team Lead of CPT 188, leading the team to Full Operating Capability as the best in the Brigade. In September 2022, he led the team to Ft Eisenhower (formerly Ft Gordon) for WCPC's first mobilized unit as part of OEF, augmenting the active-duty component with additional cyber forces.

Upon arriving at Ft Eisenhower, LTC Reading was selected as Chief of Staff for the Cyber Protection Brigade. In this role, he served as the right-hand man to the commander, overseeing day-to-day operations. Currently, LTC Reading is writing the doctrine for the 'Cloud-Hunt' mission.

Finally some words of advice from LTC Reading:

- Take care of your Soldier and they'll take care of you. Don't be a pushover, but show them humanity. They're people too.
- Experience is the best teacher. Nothing teaches you better than you doing it.
- Let your Soldiers know what the money is going on (Quote from MAJ Rollins, ASU instructor during OPORD brief as a Cadet). The more they understand, the more they can assist and meet your intent.
- Practice makes permanent: If you practice it wrong, you're going to execute it wrong. Focus on doing it right first.

**Thank you for your service LTC Reading!**



## Sun Devil Battalion Alumni Corner (Cont.)

**Former Sun Devil Battalion Commander, 2LT Leon Westenkirchner**, who commissioned in 2022, recently graduated from U.S. Army Ranger School and is looking forward to becoming an Infantry Rifle Platoon Leader in the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy.

Congratulations to 2LT Westenkirchner for this achievement!



**Congratulations to 2LT Daniel Le** for successfully graduating from Ranger School on January 26th 2024! It's a great accomplishment and testament to dedication and hard work!

Having Major Alavekios who was a past Ms3 Instructor present to patch him adds an even more meaningful touch to this great accomplishment!



**1LT Jackson Garber, ASU Army ROTC 2020 grad, and 1LT Matt McArthur, also a 2020 grad**, together at Joint Training Center, Jordan.

They are both currently deployed to different areas of CENTCOM on different missions but happened to both be at JTC on the same day, and got to catch up after a few years.

Both ASU Army ROTC grads from the same class! Go Devils! Brothers in arms.





# Sun Devil Battalion Cadre and Staff News

## Ms. Marlina Savini-Boggs

Sun Devil Battalion cadre and staff bid farewell to Ms. Marlina Savini-Boggs, one of the dedicated HRAs. Ms. Savini-Boggs served in the position for two years and through her job, she helped out the Sun Devil Cadets with different paperwork required for in-processing, accessions, travel, and commissioning. Thank you for all you did for our great Cadets.

**We wish you the best of luck in your new HR profession Ms. Savini-Boggs!**

## Mrs. DeAnn Johnson

Mrs. DeAnn Johnson was celebrated by Cadets and Cadre for her 30 years of service with the Department of Defense. Mrs. Johnson retired in January 2014 as a Sergeant First Class with 27 years in the Army and Army Reserves. She served as an Administrative NCO, Patient Administration NCO, and a Licensed Practical Nurse. In 2013, she moved from Iowa as a Unit Administrator to the Sun Devil Battalion to be a Human Resources Assistant.

**Congratulations to DeAnn on such a remarkable milestone. Thank you for all that you do for our great Cadets and the Sun Devil Battalion program!**

## Farewell

After a year and a half of performing a great job collaborating with the overall mission of the Sun Devil Battalion, 1LT Nicolas Gonzalez, our Cavasos intern, is separating from the Military service and will pursue his masters degree in Business Administration at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

1LT Gonzalez joined the Army ROTC program at ASU on November 15, 2022 and was in charge of several important tasks such as reaching out to Latino students, recruiting operations efforts, MS2 Instructor, and serving as the cadre OIC for multiple ranges and numerous program events.

**We wish you a world of success 1LT Gonzalez!**



From left to right:  
MSG Jamie Weaver, AROTC SMI, Ms. Marlina Savini-Boggs, and COL Erich Schneider, AROTC PMS



From left to right:  
COL Erich Schneider, LT Nicholas Gonzalez, Cavasos Intern, and MSG Jamie Weaver



From left to right:  
MSG Jamie Weaver, Mrs. DeAnn Johnson, HRA Tech and COL Erich Schneider

## Mission Statement

A Proud History, A Bright Future: Arizona State University's Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) recruits, educates, trains, and inspires cadets to become leaders of character, committed to the values of the United States Army and dedicated to a lifetime of selfless service to the Nation.



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