



# SUMMER 2020

## University of Minnesota Army ROTC "Dig Deep"



# Golden Gopher Battalion



Gopher Battalion Cadets conduct OAL training at Camp Ripley, Minnesota - August 2020

## Operation Agile Leader

By Cadet Joshua Kim

On August 12<sup>th</sup>, Cadets from the Gopher Battalion and seven other ROTC programs from the Midwest region went to Camp Ripley to participate in the Operation Agile Leader (OAL), also known as 2020's replacement for Advanced Camp. This year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this capstone event was decentralized to the ROTC Brigades Task Forces level. Over 150 Cadets went to Camp Ripley to showcase their proficiency in the skills that they have learned throughout their junior year. OAL was split into two companies to allow for the large group to complete the rigorous training simultaneously. While at Camp Ripley, Cadets completed a ten-day course which included events such as a land navigation during the daytime as well as night, basic rifle marksmanship and tactical squad training exercise (STX). In addition to these events, Cadets assumed various leadership positions, where they were evaluated on over 30 different leadership dimensions and attributes. Each group of Cadets was assigned a tactics and counseling officer, as well as a noncommissioned officer that assessed their individual abilities for becoming a second lieutenant in the United States Army. Golden Gopher Cadets completed one to three years of training before going to this culminating event. While on campus, they were trained to excel at the different phases of leadership events to ensure they were well prepared for their Advanced Camp experience.

## Distributed Basic Camp

By Cadet Hunter Mann

On August 12th, Cadets from across the Midwest who are just beginning their experience with ROTC, came together to participate in the Distributed Basic Camp (DBC) at Camp Ripley, MN. I personally attended DBC and had one of the best times of my life with all the other cadets in our platoon. The DBC platoon contained 26 Cadets and led by our very own MSG Troy Hill and Cadre from other universities from Task Force Ripley. At DBC, we covered all the basics of what a Soldier and leader are in the US Army. This included Drill and Ceremony, the Land Navigation course, basic rifle marksmanship, obstacle courses, and STX lanes. All the Cadets were able to assume leadership positions and assist lead and direct the platoon through the many training exercises. My favorite parts of DBC were the obstacle courses, such as the confidence course and the leadership reaction course. This is where each of the Cadets was able to use their physical, mental and leadership strengths to help themselves and others get through the many kinds of obstacles. Some of our training was affected by COVID-19, but it did not really influence our training as the activities and exercises remained the same. The activities were shortened as we only had a small amount of time to complete all the basic requirements for Cadets. The only real big change was the implementation of

social distancing and masks. This did not affect the training at all other than you were a little farther away from the other Cadets and Cadre and wearing a mask. One thing I took away from this amazing experience at Camp Ripley was the amount of resources a young Cadet or Officer has access to. These great resources are the many Army manuals, like the Ranger Handbook, other commissioned officers and the many NCO's that are available to give advice and answer any questions you might have. Honestly, this experience and the many others I will have in the future is why I decided to join and continue with the Army ROTC program at the University of Minnesota.



Basic Camp (DBC) Cadets during the Field Leader Reaction

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## From the Professor of Military Science

By LTC Melissa Hoaglin



Well, HELLO GOPHERS!!! First off, we are so happy to be back this semester. We had a great summer, and it is fantastic to see you all in person again! This summer consisted of several training events and lots of PT! It was great seeing Gopher Battalion Cadets out getting after PT in Afton, commissioning a few more Gophers as 2LTs, conducting OAL and DBC where we were able to see not only Gophers but Task Force Ripley Cadets displaying amazing leadership, and having MSG Hill's Story Time on Zoom during our staff meetings, FYI...he really missed our Cadets! In case you did not know,

the Gopher Battalion earned 3rd Place out of the eight schools who participated in OAL this summer, we also had the Top Cadet and Top Marksman, David Bornstein and had Cadet Joshua Kim recognized for his leadership potential. I would like to brag just a little about the impressive results of the Gopher Battalion Cadets as a whole, OAL resulted in a 100% land navigation pass rates for day, night and written tests, a 93% weapons qualification rate, over 26% of our Cadet leadership evaluations resulted in Excellence rankings, 73 missions conducted during STX, and 5 of our Cadets ranking in the top 20 of over 130 Cadets who completed training. Awesome work Gophers! We are also super proud of our Cadre who were the primary planning and Task Force Leads for OAL and

DBC. Their efforts ensured quality training, required resources were coordinated, and a safe and conducive environment was achieved to facilitate all of the remarkable accomplishments of our Cadets. Way to set the standard for the entire Task Force! I have also been impressed with the level of professionalism and exemplary behavior of our Gophers during the past 6 month's dynamic environment. Whether we are talking COVID or the societal social environment and engagements that have become so prevalent – your dedication to providing the positive example, unity, equality, and demonstrated leadership through adversity is exactly why you will make great Officers. Proud to be among you and excited to serve with you! Way to Dig Deep and be Gopher Strong!

## From the Commandant of Cadets

By MSG Troy Hill



I am extremely excited to be back at the Armory for the upcoming school year. Although many things have happened and there is a "new normal", one thing that will remain constant is first class Army ROTC training! I cannot express enough how much I am looking forward to the amazing training opportunities we have this semester. This summer was not all masks and social distancing; well at least not doing those things alone; we also executed Operation Agile Leader (OAL) and Distributed Basic Camp (DBC) at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. To make up for our rising seniors not being able to attend Cadet Summer training, Task Force Ripley participated in OAL. Even though we went to virtual instruction for an entire semester and into the summer, our Cadets repeatedly outperformed the rest of the Cadets from the Dakotas and our sister Minnesota

Schools. Cadet Bornstein, aka "Dad" to the Cadets, demonstrated through 10 rigorous days at OAL that he was the top Cadet. We are extremely proud of him and all the OAL Cadets and know that they are going to refine their leadership skills this year and go on to be fine Army 2LTs! I personally had the pleasure of serving as the DBC Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge. With NCOs and Civilians from throughout the Task Force, we planned, resourced and executed training for 26 Cadets on how to be ROTC Cadets. Many of the DBC Cadets have served for a short time in either the National Guard or Army Reserves but for some this was their first "taste" of Army life. I am so proud of how hard every DBC Cadet worked and how much they learned. I feel confident that they will be able to jump right in to this semester without any issues. Things this summer were hectic, to say the least, here in the Twin Cities. I want to thank all of our National Guard Cadets who put their safety on the line to protect

their friends, relatives, fellow Cadets and Minnesotans when they were called upon to do so. In my 21 years and multiple deployments, I have never had to defend our nation from the streets of my hometown. I commend those who did and thank them for their service to this great nation. As I mentioned earlier, we have many new Cadets to the program. Our senior class has a great group of young and talented Cadets to help mold into Officers. I know how much they have invested in this program and have no doubt they will make this a memorable year for these new Cadets. I hope that we as a program are able to assist with the transition to college life, ROTC life and just life for those new Gophers! We have a few traditionally fall events that will be moved to the Spring to ensure it is safe to execute them, but know that we will have quality training while being safe. I look forward to getting to know each and every new Cadet and hopefully their families as well. **Gopher Strong!**

## Summer Virtual Run

By Cadet Kristie Uhren

**Minneapolis, MN** - On July 6th, the Gopher Battalion hosted Minnesota Army ROTC First Annual Virtual Run. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many of the Battalion's physical fitness and educational events were canceled or rescheduled for this upcoming school year. "I had joined ROTC my freshman year of college and I had always been impressed and thought how cool it was when I saw one of the specialty teams train. I know how hard students work to compete in these national events such as the Bataan Memorial Death March.

It's not fair for those to be taken away after all of the hard work put into them. I thought this event would be a good competition for every ROTC program in Minnesota. At the time, as a junior Cadet, my class needed a morale boost. What better morale boost than winning bragging rights over the rest of the state? So I decided to put together an ROTC virtual run. We had 60 cadets participate from across the state and over 700 miles ran total. I was very pleased with the participation and hope to see this continue in the future."



Cadet Vitaly Brown's contribution during the Virtual Run

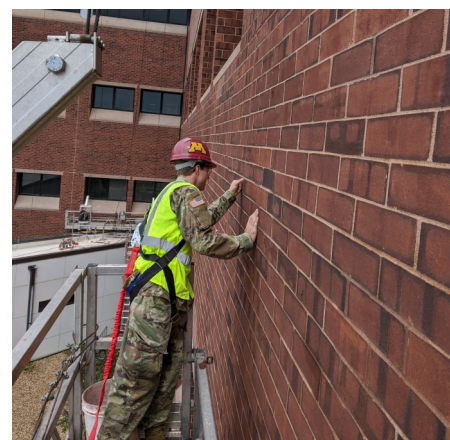
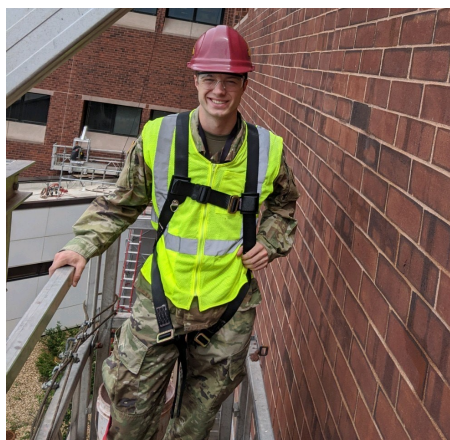
## Cadet Summer Internship

By Cadet Cameron Tomczyk

**St. Paul, MN** - This summer I had the opportunity to work with LTC Sullivan and Mr. Clark from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St Paul District. A lot of my work revolved around duration and financial studies for the many programs that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employs. The goal of these studies was to answer questions such as "Are our processes taking longer than expected for each part of a construction project?" Or "What is the true cost of each delay in a construction project?" I also built a financial dashboard for the St. Paul office that has interest in being adapted for the other 5 districts

on the Mississippi river. That's a hard question to answer because I enjoyed every project I worked on so much. I would have to say the best part of the internship was doing site visits as most of the internship was virtual due to COVID-19. These occasional instances where I was able to safely see the actual construction I assisted with planning, was priceless. In the same way that every job in the Army is done to support the infantry on the front lines, every project I worked on with my team was done so that actual construction and infrastructure could be placed on US soil. It was a really cool feeling to see the

end result of all of the St. Paul districts planning. I am much more open minded about which branch I commission into. I was dead set on Infantry before this internship, but I now realized that I never gave any other branches the benefit of the doubt. The Corps of Engineers does so much cool and diverse work, and it really made me sit down and reconsider my options. I would urge Cadets to get in touch with a mentor that can tell them about branches that aren't sitting at their #1 or #2 slots, because there is always more opportunity in each branch than what meets the eye.



## Cadet Battalion Commander's Corner

By Cadet Jesse Sattler



**Minneapolis, MN-** University of Minnesota Gopher Battalion Army ROTC had a unique, fruitful summer. With COVID-19 causing all summer plans to be changed, Cadets of Gopher Battalion adapted and overcame adversity in order to continue to further themselves as they all take the next step to becoming Lieutenants. Cadets utilized resources from both Cadre and each other to continue to learn while under these new circumstances. As we look forward to this semester, we still must have that desire - that need to learn - in order to overcome this continued adversity. Thank you all for the fire and ambition that you have shown thus far, and I trust that we will continue this mentality and hit the ground running this semester. Throughout the summer we explored new training and competitive opportunities. With online classes offered

to all MS levels, Cadets were still able to become proficient in warrior tasks and skills. Throughout the Virtual Runs, Gopher Battalion proved its prowess and reminded every other Battalion in the Brigade that "Army Strong" is just another word for "Gopher Strong". During Operation Agile Leader (OAL) at Camp Ripley, the incoming MSIVs confirmed their training and tactical skills and are now settling into their positions as the cadet staff members of the Battalion, preparing to deliver a full, fruitful semester to all MS classes. Cadets like Bornstein and Joshua Kim showed the rest of the Brigade that even though our summer training was different and challenging, there is no challenge that cannot be beaten by a Gopher Cadet. Distributed Basic Camp took place simultaneously with OAL, with our cadet underclassmen learning soldiering skills and tactics. I trust that they will use these skills to aid their fellow cadets as the semester goes on. We witnessed civil hardship

this semester. Throughout the turmoil and unrest in Minneapolis and surrounding cities, many of our National Guard Cadets represented themselves as true soldiers: professional, confident, and ready to serve. I am honored to call those to my left and my right my Family. Throughout this conflict we are - now more than ever - called to come together as one. Without unity among the ranks there is no cohesion in the Army, and that begins now, as future Officers in Gopher Battalion. We are one Army, one team, one fight. We must use respect, understanding, and fairness as the cornerstones of this Battalion. Uncertainty follows us into the semester. We are making a jump, a leap of faith, together, as we get used to the new normal that surrounds us. The summer was made possible through the labor of hard-working, motivated Cadets. This semester will be no different. We must rise to the occasion and take the semester head-on. **GOPHER STRONG!**

## Welcome New Cadets

By Ms. Maggie Marchesani

**Minneapolis, MN** - On September 2nd, 2020 Army ROTC Golden Gopher Battalion hosted the first ever virtual New Cadet Orientation. It was a condensed version of our typical orientation and was attended by approximately 30 new Cadets. Cadre and the Cadet Battalion Commander and Command Sergeant Major answered questions and gave presentations on ROTC and military lifestyle. The following day, Cadets stopped by the Armory to complete an Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and receive their standard issue of U.S. Army ROTC gear. The

University of Minnesota's fall semester began on September 8th, 2020. Despite COVID-19, we were able to welcome approximately 45 new Cadets for School Year 2020-2021. Of those 45, 20 Cadets have already been awarded an ROTC scholarship. They join us from hometowns across the nation, from Washington to Pennsylvania; and they attend schools throughout the Twin Cities metro area, including Augsburg, the University of St. Thomas, Bethel University, Hamline University, the University of Northwestern and the University of Min-

nesota-Twin Cities We are excited to welcome them into our ranks. The school year has started in a very unpredictable and unique way and we know that more changes are forthcoming. The new Cadets have already demonstrated a high level of motivation and an ability to adapt quickly. We have been very impressed with the quality of new Cadets and have every confidence that all will serve as excellent additions to the Gopher Battalion as they work toward the ultimate goal of becoming the next leaders of the United States Army!

## Operation Agile Leader - Top Cadet

By Mr. Alberto DeJesus



**Camp Ripley, MN**  
Out of the 130 plus Task Force Ripley Cadets who completed Operation Agile Leader (OAL) or 2020's Regional Advanced Camp, which is required

for all commissioning Cadets, one was rated outstanding or excellent in all events this summer at Camp Ripley Army Training Center. David Bornstein, a former Sergeant First Class and now a Green to Gold Cadet who will earn his commission from the Gopher Battalion in 2021, earned the coveted Army ROTC Advanced Camp Top Cadet honors. This requires a Cadet to demonstrate the highest levels of proficiency in marksmanship, land navigation, and light infantry tactics. In addition to the Top Cadet Award, he earned the top Marksmanship Award with a perfect score of 40 out of 40. "I was very excited to earn the

Top Cadet Award but I could not have done it without the training from the instructors and my peers at the Gopher Battalion," said Bornstein, who will graduate with a Psychology degree. "I would describe OAL as experiential; professionally and personally rewarding. The stage was set from the beginning - the training is some of the best I've experienced yet in my Cadet career, and the instructors enabled my peers and I to continually improve. The best part about OAL was the camaraderie." Cadet David Bornstein is just one of three OAL Cadets who earned individual recognition; seniors Jacob Czech, from Saint John's University won the Top Land Navigation Award and Konery Klueber, from South Dakota State University won the Top Tactician Award. Cadet Bornstein credits the Corps of Cadets' Leader Development Program (LDP) and the Cadets themselves with the year-after-year success of the Gopher Battalion. "We have a battalion staff and trainer, advisors, counse-

lors, called TACs, who are seniors and they are the primary instructors during Leadership Labs. In my opinion, they are the reason why we do so well," Bornstein said. "We make some minor changes each year to match the current training, but they go out and execute." Having to teach their fellow Cadets reinforces what they are learning, and it replicates the training and professional development they will have to provide their Soldiers when they lead a platoon as a newly commissioned second lieutenant. He also credited the active duty Army instructors at UMN who lead the LDP, with keeping the Cadets on track with the learning outcomes expected by the Professor of Military Science LTC Melissa Hoaglin. Up next for Cadet Bornstein is branch assignment in November; then, he's off to Basic Officer Leadership Course to continue his military career. Officers who commission from the Gopher Battalion are well equipped to start their careers off on the right foot from day one.

## 2020 Summer Commissioning The U.S. Army's Newest Lieutenant

**Minneapolis, MN** - July 2020 was a pivotal month for one Cadet of the Golden Gopher Battalion. It marked the end of his college education, his pursuit of a bachelor's degree, and the beginning of an Army career for Richard Russ. He was born in Accra, Ghana. He moved to the United States with his parents in the summer of 2000. 2LT Russ began his military career in 2015, enlisting into the Army National Guard and served with the 834<sup>th</sup> Aviation Support Battalion, he was then reassigned to the 147<sup>th</sup> Human Resource Company. This was an important period for 2LT Russ in his military career as he transitioned from Cadet to Lieutenant, by commissioning into the Active Army. This moment pointed him in a new direction as an Army officer. He successfully completed all necessary training in an excellent manner. 2LT

Russ will serve as a Platoon Leader in the Minnesota National Guard before attending the Signal Officer Basic Course at Fort Gordon, GA. This special commissioning ceremony was attended by family, friends, fellow Cadets, and Cadre via Zoom meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Human Services Administration from Metropolitan State University; and an Associate Degree in Business from North Hennepin Community College. Awards and decorations received by 2LT Richard Russ include the Army Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Army Service Ribbon. We wish this newly commissioned Lieutenant the best of luck in his career as an Army officer. On behalf of the Gopher Battalion, we congratulate 2LT Richard Russ on a job well done!



## Sights from Summer 2020



OAL Cadets conducting actions on the objective during Squad STX



Cadet Johnson plotting points during OAL Land Navigation Course



Cadet Meurer during STX Lanes at Camp Ripley, MN



OAL Cadets working a Field Leader Reaction Course obstacle



Cadet Mann at Distributed Basic Camp standing by for a weapon's inspection



LTC Hoaglin presenting the OAL Top Cadet Award to Cadet Bornstein

## Sights from Summer 2020



DBC Cadets at the Camp Ripley Engagement Skills Training facility



OAL Cadets verifying their points during the Land Navigation Course



Distributed Basic Camp Cadets during classroom instructions at Camp Ripley



OAL Cadets during Garrison Operations at Camp Ripley training facility



MSG Hill instructing DBC Cadets prior to Basic Rifle Marksmanship



Cadet Mueller during Basic Rifle Marksmanship

**Fall 2020 Events Calendar**

<b>Classes Begin</b>	8 Sep 20	<b>Task Force Ranger Challenge</b>	16-18 Oct 20	<b>STX Mega Lead Lab</b>	14-15 Nov 20
<b>Fall FTX</b>	18-20 Sep 20	<b>Big 10 Patriot Challenge</b>	24-25 Oct 20	<b>Commissioning Ceremony</b>	23 Dec 20
<b>Virtual Army Ten-Miler</b>	11 Oct 20	<b>Veterans Day</b>	11 Nov 20		



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**If you know someone who has the potential to be an Army officer, tell them about us! They don’t have to be from Minnesota!**

We have great opportunities for **high school and in-college scholarships**. Current enlisted Army National Guard and Reserves enrolled at the University of Minnesota are also eligible to participate in Army ROTC and may be eligible for additional scholarship and DoD programs.

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