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The First Alert

Inside this Issue:

Project Challenge
Page 1

OC Aguilar
Profile
Page 2

Meet a Hero
Page 3

Platoon Leader
Blog
Page 4

Officer Spotlight
Page 5

Candidate
Pictures
Page 6

Platoon Sergeant
Blog
Page 7

Chain of
Command and
Announcements
Page 8

OCS Class 50 Motto: "Together Everyone Achieves More."

NOW on the WEB at www.ocsclass50.com

Project Challenge

On January 30, 2010 the Officer Candidates in Class 50 volunteered with Project Challenge. "Arizona Project Challenge is a preventive "youth at risk" program. We are designed around an intervention model built on eight core components needed for successful living. The eight core components are comprised of Life Coping Skills, Academic Excellence, Responsible Citizenship, Health and Hygiene, Job Skills, Physical Fitness, Leadership and Followership, and Service to Community."

Class 50 participated in team building activities with approximately 80 young adults in Project Challenge.

Project Challenge is especially beneficial for children who grow up in underprivileged homes that lack a stable environment and two parents. I grew up without a father figure in my house and know that having a male/father figure or a parent who can 'lay down the law' is crucial to success. Many times, Project Challenge provides these children with

what their parents never could do, DISCIPLINE.

-OC Hafner



OC Schmidt provides a group of Project Challenge youth with a motivating pep talk.



OC Hafner leads a group of Project Challenge youth in push-ups.

OC Aguilar Personal Profile

Name: Alejandro R Aguilar
Age: 40

Why did you join OCS?

When I was a teenager in high school I was approached by an Army recruiter about joining. I was only 16 and a sophomore with very little ambition or direction other than to have fun. Initially I was interested and continued to meet with him on a regular basis, but when it was time to commit I chose to attend college first. The recruiter let me know about ROTC and we discussed the option of becoming an officer, but the school I chose did not have that program. Therefore, I would have to join the Army after obtaining my degree. Many years passed and several misguided decisions later I was finally able to join and accomplish my original goal of becoming an officer in the United States Army.

Your goals after the completion of OCS?

I would like to continue to develop and grow as a leader through continual training. I understand that after completion of OCS it is very likely that

I will be deployed and I want to be as prepared as possible before going. As far as long-term goals I would like use the leadership skills I've learned in my civilian career to advance into upper management or if possible, get an AGR position so that I can stay working in a military environment.

What are character traits that make a good leader?

Integrity, commitment, forward-looking and the ability to make tough decisions. I find that making decisions is the trait I want to continue to develop, as it is one of the most important ones to me.

What is your favorite quote?

"The object of war is not to die for your country but to make the other bastard die for his."
George Patton

Name a military leader/historical figure that you look up to and why?

Our 40th President, Ronald Wilson Reagan for his efforts in bringing the cold war to an end by building up our national defenses and forcing

the leaders of the Soviet Union into arms treaty negotiations.

Favorite College Football Team?

Notre Dame, Fighting Irish (I grew up Catholic)

-OC Aguilar



OC Aguilar (right) in deep concentration.

"Many years passed and several misguided decisions later I was finally able to join and accomplish my original goal of becoming an officer in the United States Army."

-OC Aguilar

Meeting a Hero

“Knowingly preparing ourselves for the ultimate sacrifice to our country without hesitation is what makes me proud to put on my uniform and stand beside my fellow soldiers.”

-OC Pope



OC Pope, all smiles on drill weekend.



OC Pope (left) and Douglas (right) prepare a movement to contact plan.

In last month’s newsletter, OC Douglas wrote about Lone Survivor author, Marcus Luttrell. This month, OC Pope had the pleasure of meeting him.

University of Phoenix had a very special guest speaker that addressed the Military Department. His name is Marcus Luttrell. You might have heard his name before or even read his book “Lone Survivor”. But to see him in person, hear him recount the events that lead him to become a hero was powerful.

He started out the presentation reflecting on his childhood with his twin brother, and how they had decided to become Navy Seals. With the help of a local legend, Billy Shelton a former green beret their training began at age 14. The brothers enlisted a couple of other friends so they had a small group. The lessons that Marcus learned from Billy Shelton struck a chord as the most important thing he taught them was how to work as a team. Their first day of training they were “late”. To them, on time was 15 minutes

prior. This lesson was hit home with 300 pushups.

As he reflected on his SEAL training, again the main topic was building bonds as a team. The attrition rate of SEALs was incredible, his class started off with 150 and only about 14 graduated. His brother’s class started out with over 200 and only graduated in the 20’s. He is thankful for the training he received as it fully prepared him for the way Operation Redwing would turn out.

As he was being chased through the mountains by the Taliban with no sleep he recalled “Hell Week” of his training and being taunted by the instructors with no sleep. He said he never once felt the desire to give up or that he could not complete the mission. Telling us how it was, not holding back on the details I learned that no matter what your individual weakness may be,

being a part of a team means there are no weakness. Everyone that is in that team relies on each other equally. The team is one single unit.

When the floor was open for questions, someone asked “How did you have the will left to go on after knowing your comrades were all killed and you were alone.” His response was profound; he said my mind never felt as if I were alone. I still had my team with me the whole time. Even though they were not physically with me, they were still with me.

Another question was asked “What happened to the objective?” He proudly paused and said they got him 3 days ago, and the SOB was wearing Axe’s wedding ring. He then said, no matter what or how long it takes the United States of America will always complete a mission!

There is a special characteristic that makes up each and every service member in uniform. Knowingly preparing ourselves for the ultimate sacrifice to our country without hesitation is what makes me proud to put on my uniform and stand beside my fellow soldiers.

-OC Pope

Platoon Leader Blog



OC Senter, picture top/center, focuses during a sand table lesson.



OC Kim, pulls security during a patrol base exercise.



Class 50 stretches out prior to a ruck march.

The February drill can be wrapped up in one word...rehearsal. The best plan in the world is nothing more than guess work if it is not properly rehearsed for familiarity and to mistake proof execution.

There is not always time to go over the things we want to do, and it seems that there is even less time here in OCS. We have to force ourselves to slow down or to even do without some minor luxuries to identify problems and disconnects in execution.

The army classifies rehearsals in three categories back briefs, reduced force, and full force. Back briefs are very common and should be approached as a bare minimum requirement when it comes to any plan. I learned firsthand how important back briefs are especially, when you and your personnel are tired and fatigued. Fatigue is usually closely followed by stress which leads to becoming so consumed

with an individual task or agenda that you lose focus on outside threats and the overall mission; tunnel vision.

During instances such as these, observant leaders should employ back briefs as a means to draw everyone back in and refocus.

Reduced force rehearsals are the next step up from back briefs and are generally but not limited to the chain of command and or key personnel. Full force rehearsals are the most comprehensive but strain your resources and are very time consuming. Whether you are operating as a squad, platoon or even a task force element, a full force rehearsal of at a minimum, your key/critical tasks will greatly enhance the potential for success.

Proper rehearsing has benefits such as ensuring that everyone on the team thinks and participates, permits the individual in charge the opportunity to receive

feedback and input, and allows the leader to collectively delegate power of the understood plan to all participating. A well rehearsed plan affords the leader the peace of mind of knowing that if something requires them to be absent from directly supervising the task, it will still be carried out as designed; plan your plan not to be there during execution.

-OC Senter

"As a leader, you're probably not doing a good job unless your employees can do a good impression of you when you're not around."

— Patrick Lencioni

Interview with Colonel Montgomery



COL Leslie Montgomery

I recently had the honor to interview COL Leslie Montgomery. With 27 years of service, COL Montgomery possesses a wealth of knowledge and her willingness to share her experiences and advice is more appreciated than she may ever realize.

COL Montgomery was born in Fort ORD, CA. Growing up in a military family did give her some insight as to what to expect, but she feels everyone experiences and adapts to military life on an individual basis. She sensed at a young age that military life would be a good fit for her. She attended the University of Central Oklahoma, where she was an active ROTC cadet. A serious knee injury at a Leadership Reaction Course (LRC) tabled her commission and threatened to permanently end any hopes of a military career. Fortunately, COL Montgomery (then a PFC) also served in the Oklahoma Army National Guard. Although she could not continue on the Simultaneous Membership Program as an SMP cadet, she could pursue her enlisted career with the OKARNG. So, after graduating from UCO with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health in 1984, she left for Basic Training in Ft Jackson, SC, followed by AIT at Ft Sam Houston, TX which eventually led to a commission following completion of OCS in 1986. She completed her Officer Basic Course as a Medical Service Corps Officer in Ft. Sam Houston, TX (across the street from where she had served as a private). She relocated to Arizona in July 1987. Her assignments include Platoon Leader, Company XO, Company Commander, Battalion XO, Battalion Commander (including a year-long deployment in support of OIF), Battalion S3, Regimental S1, Brigade S3, Brigade XO, Deputy Inspector General and her current billet as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G4. She is an Army War College graduate and is highly decorated.

Most Important Army value?

Honor. Honor demands adherence to a public moral code, not protection of a reputation. In other words, a leader's goal should be to create a learning environment for subordinates, not a zero-defects testing environment. Worry about protecting this learning environment, not your vanity.

What is your most memorable moment?

The death of my father. That may strike some as odd, but it really was a defining moment - the kind when you realize nothing from that point on will be the same again.

Most admired military figure?

Colin Powell. I admire his humility and genuine connection with others. *“Avoid having your ego so close to your position that when your position falls, your ego goes with it.”* (Avoid “falling in love” with your own ideas to the point that they become synonymous with your ego)

Favorite Band and Movie?

Movie: Imitation of Life w/Lana Turner (1959)

Band: After much thought a tie between U2 and Tom Petty (and the Heartbreakers). Creed and Three Doors Down were also finalists.

Advice to Future Officers:

Diversify your assignments. Go after the tough jobs and learn from your failures as well as your successes....and KEEP YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR ☺

In closing, COL Montgomery quipped that she “is fond of lieutenants. They have so much energy and are happily oblivious to the possibility of failure. They tend to get a lot more done because we usually forget to inform them that they can't” -OC Pope



Class 50 gathers around the sandtable for a Instruction by OC Spaulding.



OC Bautista was a notional casualty during a movement to contact rehearsal.



Prior to entering the dining facility each OC must perform 5 push-ups.



Captain Christensen during class instruction.



Captain Rios after class instruction.

Platoon Sergeant Blog

This time around as Platoon Sergeant went a lot better than my prior experience. I learned last time that I needed to use my chain of command to assist me in getting things done, and not try to do it all myself. I also learned that I needed to be confident in what I was doing and make decisions in a timely manner.

As Platoon Sergeant I tried to take what I learned previously and use it. I assigned my squad leaders assignments and then left it up to them to get there squad members to where they were suppose to be and ahead of schedule. This worked out really well as it was just one last thing I had to worry about and the squad leaders did a really good job at getting there assignments completed and making their leadership look good.

Additionally, I tried to project confidence in what I was doing. I believe I accomplished this and it also made

drill go a lot smoother as opposed to my past leadership experience.

There were also some things that did not go as well as I had hoped. One was our in ranks inspection. I failed to have the class fall in with their rucksacks; this made us late for the inspection. Furthermore, many classmates did not have the updated packing list as several different versions were in circulation. It is imperative that I ensure everyone has the same/final document. I also learned how important a packing list is and why we need to have everyone in the platoon know where everything is in their battle buddies ruck sack.

Lastly, if not for a last minute team building exercise, our class would have not passed our barracks inspection. However, our classes' motivation and teamwork helped overcome these shortcomings.

Rehearsing these events will also alleviate a lot of the problems we had I will also learn from these lessons and improve in the future. I believe that this time as platoon sergeant went a lot better than my previous time. I took what I learned last time and used it. I still have a lot to work on but I believe I made progress and hope to in the future.

-OC Andersen



OC Andersen gives the class a brief description of his sand table.



OC Spaulding (left) and Bartels (right) prepare a sand table for instruction.

March Chain of Command

RTI Leadership

MAJ Ross
1LT Munhollon
SFC Kies
SFC Millage
SFC Whitesinger

Class 50 Leadership

PL – OC Bolerjack
PS – OC Bautista
SQ1 – OC Spaulding
SQ2 -- OC Vogler

Administrative Team

S-1 – OC Bolerjack
S-3 – OC Schmidt
S-4 – OC Bautista
S-6 – OC Hafner

Newsletter Editor:

OC Justin Hafner
215th Regiment (RTI)
5636 E. McDowell Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85008
Justin.Hafner@us.army
.mil
Phone: 520.440.4949

This months contributors:

OC Hafner
OC Pope
OC Aguilar
OC Andersen
OC Senter

Upcoming Drill Dates

March Drill April Drill
March 5-7 April 2-4