



FALL '25 WING COMMANDER: C/COL OKUNO

By: C/Valdes

During the Fall 2025 semester, C/Col Okuno served as the Cadet Wing Commander for Detachment 045, the highest-ranking cadet position. As a student at San Jose State University, majoring in Aerospace Engineering, he is pursuing the desired Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) of 11X, Pilot.

Despite his success in the program, ROTC wasn't in C/Col Okuno's original plan. "I ended up in AFROTC while waiting to reapply to the Naval Academy," he said. "But, I stopped halfway through the application that year because I realized I was happy here." What kept him in the program was the culture: the core values, the cadets' driven nature, and a sense of belonging. "Being surrounded by others with a common goal to be the absolute best at what they do made me want to be a better version of myself."

C/Col Okuno first learned he would be stepping into the role of Wing Commander towards the end of his 300 years. Over the summer, C/Col Okuno, along with C/Col Templo and C/Lt Col Starks, put in countless hours developing the Fall OPLAN, the document that guides the Detachment's training. Their work behind the scenes laid the foundation for a successful semester.

As Cadet Wing Commander, C/Col Okuno described his position as utilizing his POC position to accomplish the mission and leading the POC to accomplish it. His vision statement for the semester captured this mission: "To present a cohesive, proud, and autonomous unit, serve as the premier representative of AFROTC in the community, and inspire cadets to be innovative and tenacious in future endeavors."

During his time, he worked closely with his Deputy and Chief of Staff to assign responsibilities, oversee operations, and ensure clear communication between the cadre and the cadet wing.

Beyond the daily duties, C/Col Okuno saw this position as an opportunity to provide and give back to his fellow cadets. "I've gained a lot from this Detachment, and what this position means to me is that I have an opportunity to leave my mark. I want to leave something behind, something good. If that means pouring in countless hours just so a few cadets are slightly better officers in the future, then I'll give it everything I have."

When asked what advice he has for younger cadets, C/Col Okuno didn't hesitate: "First, sign up for everything. There are so many cool opportunities, scholarships, and networking available,

But you have zero chance of getting them if you never put your name in the hat.

Second, be a good wingman. The cadets I remember and rely on the most are the ones who had my back when I needed it." C/Col Okuno is known as an approachable and friendly leader who will command the room when needed. Whether it's offering advice, sharing a laugh, or checking in, he makes time for those around him. His leadership reminds us that wearing a rank is not only about intimidation or power; it's about trust, humility, and making the team better.



New Cadre Member: Captain Scott Reilly

By: C/Steven-Schneider

Captain Scott Reilly is Detachment 045's newest cadre member. Before his journey with the Air Force began, Captain Reilly was a student and wrestler at Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina. After his first semester, Captain Reilly started considering what he wanted to do after college. That was when his ambition to become an officer in the Air Force came into view. Initially, he was unaware of ROTC or OTS, but he pursued the Air Force Academy. He began his four years at the Academy with an intense summer at Basic Cadet Training, a starkly different experience than his time at Gardner-Webb University.

Throughout the rest of his time at the Academy, he continued wrestling, took a free-fall parachuting course, and completed the powered flight airmanship program. Upon graduation, Captain Reilly received a degree in Management and commissioned into the World's Greatest Air Force.

Coming out of the Academy, Captain Reilly felt an intense cultural pressure to become a pilot.



He was selected for pilot training, but eventually opted for a change. Thus, he was selected for a different AFSC. Due to his degree in Management and the Air Force's needs, he was selected for 65F: Financial Management.

Despite the majority of Captain Reilly's assignments being primarily centered on cost analysis, he has also had many unique assignments across the country, including Hanscom AFB, Fort Meade, & Wright-Patterson AFB. The Air Force also sent him to the Air Force Institute of Technology to work towards his Master's degree.

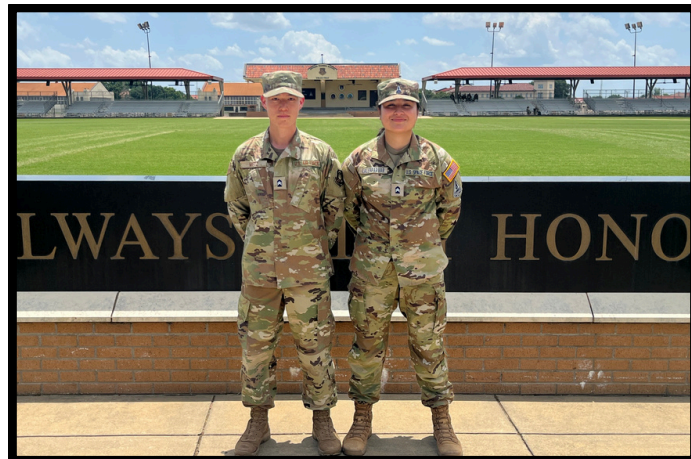
Captain Reilly has always enjoyed roles where he can serve as a mentor/instructor. When one of his best friends decided to join the cadre at the University of Iowa, he became interested in doing something similar, so he applied to become a cadre member as well.

Finally, when asked if there was a particular leader he looked up to, Captain Reilly gave an interesting response. He believes in taking bits of advice from all great leaders and combining them to create his own doctrine.

Additionally, he believes that among those pieces of advice, the best ones come from closed-door conversations, where you can truly understand a leader's intent.

He believes the intangibles, such as having a good moral compass and character, are the best characteristics for a successful cadet to have. Captain Reilly points out that although cadets can appear perfect on paper with a good GPA and PFA score, they must have the intangible qualities to make great leaders.

At Detachment 045, most of his job consists of behind-the-scenes administrative duties, but also includes teaching the AS 400 class in the Fall 2025 semester, and he will teach the AS 200 class in the Spring 2026 semester. For the next three years, he is slated to continue his career as a part of the cadre team here at Detachment 045.



2025 Field Training: Lessons from the Summer

By: C/Kaur & C/Caballero

Every AFROTC cadet knows that Field Training (FT) is the final milestone of their GMC years. After completing their first two years in ROTC, cadets are evaluated on leadership, followership, discipline, and the ability to work under pressure. FT is held annually at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama, and typically last three weeks. During their time at the base, cadets are tested on every aspect of their development. This includes physical fitness, drill and ceremonies, military knowledge, and most importantly, the ability to work as a team. Graduating from FT is a requirement to move on to the Professional Officer Course, which is another significant step towards becoming an officer in the US Air and Space Force.

We interviewed our AS 300s, who just returned from FT last summer. When asked about the hardest challenge in FT, answers varied, but many were very similar. Each day, their endurance was tested by the relentless Alabama heat, and a lack of sleep made the experience even more demanding.

Marching in OCPs for hours in 90+ degree humidity was a new experience, and they described it as exhausting. They recalled how quickly heat became a serious issue, especially for those that live in areas with cooler climates. Moments like Reveille & Retreat were sometimes a battle to stay awake. The cadets explained how the constant cycle of evaluations created an immense amount of pressure, especially when it came to holding leadership positions or participating in group exercises, which demanded sensible thinking and quick problem-solving.

In order to train for FT, they trained in warmer temperature beforehand to acclimate their bodies to the heat. Leaning heavily on their wingmen, they reminded themselves that they were not going through the experience alone. They also mentioned that success came from learning to be adaptable. Situations often change and it is up to the leader to adapt and find a solution.

Next, we asked about what they thought were the valuable aspects of FT. They explained that their FT experience has shown them the importance of not only being a reliable leader, but follower as well. Being a dependable teammate not only helps the team to succeed, but boosts morale as well. Success is rarely about the individual's performance but about how well the team functioned as a unit.

Trust and communication were essential, FT cadets had to rely on one another to accomplish even the smallest tasks. Being a good leader meant learning when to step back and let others lead, while being a good wingman often meant taking on extra responsibilities for the benefit of the group.

Another lesson that stood out was adaptability in leadership. The FT cadets realized that some of the procedures they learned at our detachment were not similar to those performed at other detachments. Those differences taught them the importance of being flexible, confident, and decisive. These FT cadets felt like they finished with a stronger understanding of followership and leadership.



2025 Officer Development Training Spotlight: NAVAIR (C/ Steven- Schneider)

By: C/Caballero

Which ODT did you attend, and what was it like?

"I was at the Naval Air Weapons Center weapons division in China Lake, CA. It was a unique setting, as it's right in the Mojave Desert, but its location is appropriate. There are missiles and new secret technologies being tested all the time."

What did you learn about Air Force career fields during your ODT? Is it what you expected?

“Since I was working on the civilian side of the Department of War (DOW), and being with the Navy, I wouldn’t say I learned about an Air Force career field. However, it definitely gave me insight into the differences that the civilian side has, and also naval aviation. I expected to be doing some busy work as an intern, but I was surprised by the project I was given and the experiences I had around the base.”

What advice would you give to someone considering applying for that ODT?

“To anyone else who is applying to the same internship, I would say to really stress during the interview/application what skills you are good at. This allows them to place you in a position where you can thrive and have a meaningful impact.”

Did the ODT change how you view your potential career path in the Air Force?

“I don’t think that my experience at China Lake has changed which AFSCs I will put on my dream sheet, but it definitely has given me insight into the AFSCs I may get selected for. I found there are a lot of similarities between the Navy and the Air Force, especially when it comes to the aviation career fields.”

Cadet Spotlight: C/1st Lt Szulc

By: C/Chau

On September 7th, 2025, C/1st Lt Szulc participated in the Ironman 70.3 Santa Cruz, a triathlon that includes a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike, and a 13.1-mile run. She initially became interested in participating 2 years ago, when she witnessed it in person as a volunteer. She has always been interested in running, so completing the half-Ironman became a goal on her bucket list.



C/1st Lt Szulc has worked continuously to improve her endurance. She completed a marathon, then eventually an ultramarathon. This built her confidence to finally participate in the half-Ironman. In the six months prior to the triathlon, she maintained a consistent training regimen and diet. The typical week consisted of strength or endurance training for one to four hours a day for six days of the week. Exercises included push-ups, lower-body exercises, joint-strengthening exercises, and yoga. On weekends, she drove to Santa Cruz to swim and bike along Highway 1, and run along Coyote Creek. Around three months from the race, she increased her mileage, and at the one-month mark, she reached her peak mileage. She persisted and continued to improve. The week before the race, she did a mock race and practiced her transitions to reduce her time.

Her diet throughout the 6-month training period included significantly more carbohydrates, protein, vegetables, and fruits. This included carrots, hummus, rice, fish, broccoli, blueberries, apples, bananas, oranges, and avocados. Since she was constantly active during this time, she was burning through an average of at least 3,000 calories a day. During the triathlon, she made sure to maintain her nutrition by eating dried fruit and visiting the safety stations every 15 minutes during the biking and running portions of the race.

One of the biggest challenges C/1st Lt Szulc faced was incurring a knee injury while training. She had to ice and rest the joint to help with her recovery and stay in the triathlon. When it came to the triathlon, she had to avoid putting strain on it, especially when she felt pain while running. With a strong mindset, she pushed through but decided to take time off afterward to focus on recovery.

In the last stretch of the triathlon, C/1st Lt Szulc focused on maintaining a positive attitude. She emphasized how viewing the scenery during the race impacted her self-motivation and desire to compete until the end. She also felt the support from the community when she passed cheering Detachment 045 cadets who were volunteering at the event. When she finally reached the end, she was able to see familiar faces from the detachment who then celebrated this accomplishment with her.



Embracing Fitness: A Core Pillar of AFROTC Success

By: C/Chavez

In AFROTC, fitness isn't just a requirement—it's a way of life. As future leaders in the United States Air and Space Force, cadets are held to high standards of physical readiness, mental resilience, and discipline. The Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA) is a critical component of our training; however, fitness in AFROTC extends far beyond passing a test.

It's about building habits that prepare us for the challenges of military service, fostering a culture of health, and cultivating excellence within our Detachment.

Why Fitness Matters in AFROTC

The Air Force values physical fitness as a cornerstone of mission readiness. Whether you're striving to become a pilot, a cyber operations officer, or a developmental engineer, maintaining peak physical condition ensures you can handle the demands of leadership, deployments, and training under pressure. The PFA, consisting of a 1.5-mile run, a minute of push-ups, and a minute of sit-ups, evaluates cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength, and core stability. A passing score on the PFA is 75 out of 100.



Scoring well on the assessment demonstrates your commitment to the Air Force's Core Values of "Excellence in All We Do." Beyond the PFA, fitness builds mental toughness and camaraderie. Group workouts, whether during scheduled PT or informal PT sessions, strengthen bonds among cadets. Sweating together through burpees or sprints fosters teamwork and accountability—qualities essential for effective leadership.



Building a Fitness Culture at Our Detachment

At Detachment 045, we're committed to fostering a culture that goes beyond meeting minimum standards. The minimum standards of the PFA for males are 15:50 for the 1.5-mile run, 30 push-ups in sixty seconds, and 39 sit-ups in sixty seconds. The minimum standards for females are 18:56 for the 1.5-mile run, 15 push-ups in sixty seconds, and 35 sit-ups in sixty seconds. Our cadre and upperclassmen lead by example, completing strength challenges, Ironman events, and even creating specialized clubs. These activities not only show us what is possible, it gives us another source of motivation to go even further in our own fitness journeys. This semester, the Special Warfare Club has been making great strides to push cadets far beyond just the minimum of the PFA. These efforts reflect our detachment's emphasis on holistic development—preparing us to lead with strength, both physically and mentally.

Fitness Beyond AFROTC

As future officers, we'll be responsible for the well-being of our Airmen and Guardians. By modeling a commitment to fitness now, we set the standard for those we will lead in the future.

A Call to Action

Whether you're a freshman cadet, nervous about your first PFA, or a senior aiming for a max score, let's embrace fitness as a cornerstone of our AFROTC journey. Challenge yourself to show up, push harder, and support your fellow cadets. Together, we can build a detachment that's not only mission-ready but also united in our pursuit of excellence. So, lace up your running shoes, grab a wingman, and let's get moving. The sky's the limit—literally!

Interview with PDU Commander: C/Starks

By: C/Le



This semester, C/Lt Col Ian Starks served in two critical roles at Detachment 045. Not only was he the Cadet Wing Chief of Staff for Detachment 045, he also served as the Precision Drill Unit (PDU) Commander. As the PDU Commander, he was responsible for leading, mentoring, and training a dedicated team of cadets in ceremonial drill. Under his leadership, the PDU team represented Detachment 045 and the U.S. Air Force at a variety of events including. In an interview, C/Lt Col Starks had this to say:

What do you like about being a PDU commander?

"I like seeing the people under me grow. I get to watch them enjoy the same things I did when I was in their shoes, and it's rewarding to see them discover the same reasons I wanted to join in the first place. I like how they're finding the same sense of community that I once found. It's great to see the AS200s, AS300s, and eventually, the new cadets who will join, grow. It's really inspiring to see that happening before my eyes."

Did you face any adversities as PDU commander?

"It was hard at the beginning when I was trying to figure things out. You are entirely responsible for an entire organization. There were things I didn't know, and there are things I'm still learning, but one thing that really helped me was trusting my people. Even though I'm the one in charge, I'm not the only one who cares. I've got a whole team of passionate individuals who support me, and I rely on them. You'd be surprised how much work gets done when you rely on those around you. It's been a huge help as I've grown into the role."

How has PDU strengthened your leadership skills?

"From day one, PDU has taught me a lot about discipline, attention to detail, and how to be a good follower. Over time, it has grown exponentially into a variety of skills. "I've learned how to be a team player, how to manage my time, and as a trainer, I learned how to teach, mentor, and guide people constructively. As Commander, I learned about leadership, how to motivate and inspire, and how to set a vision and guide my people along that vision. Joining PDU has given me so many useful skills that it's hard—actually, impossible—to boil it down to just one thing. PDU is something I definitely do not regret in the slightest.

In fact, I'm incredibly grateful for the experience and excited about becoming an active duty officer, which is coming up relatively soon. I believe PDU has equipped me with many skills that I will carry with me, and it will definitely help as I commission and enter the Air Force."



Cadet Success Story: C/Abad

By: C/Tiscareno

What is your greatest achievement, and what did you do to achieve it?

"My greatest achievement (so far) was receiving an alternate EA in the Spring of my AS 200 year. During fall semester, when we submit for the PSP Board, I was taking 17 units with two classes that were some of the most difficult ones I've taken. I worked a part-time job during the graveyard shift, and my initial BFA score was a 79, which was below the 85 detachment standard to be nominated for the PSP board.

I ended up putting more effort into that semester than I ever did throughout all of my years of college, since my freshman semesters were only 13 units and therefore I needed to manage the increased course load. I created my own workout regimen to improve my physical fitness. Ultimately, I ended up with a 3.5 GPA, a 94 on the official PFA that semester, and I received an alternate EA, which was later upgraded to a primary EA after my DoDMERB was cleared."

What point in AFROTC has influenced you to strive for success?

C/Abad has always striven for success through his time in the AFROTC program, however his AS 200 year is when he believes he really dove into the mindset of it all. He emphasized the importance of the AS 200 year, as you compete and prepare to attend Field Training.

“My AS 200 year was when I notably did things that I hadn’t done before to become the best person that I could be, whether or not I would be going to Field Training. I figured that even if I didn’t receive an EA or I was still ineligible to go to Field Training due to DoDMERB, I should work hard so that I would get the most out of my time in AFROTC”

How has achieving your greatest accomplishment changed your life?

“Accomplishing my greatest achievement proved to me that if I put in the maximum amount of effort, I could accomplish a lot more and become a better person.

Even after Field Training, where everything I learned in AFROTC was put to the test, like my work-ethic and discipline, there are a lot of things that I still struggle with. The semester of the PSP board was proof that I was capable of putting the work in, so whenever I find myself in dire times, I always try to look back to when I pushed myself to improve.”

What advice would you give to new cadets entering the Detachment?

“My biggest piece of advice for cadets entering the Detachment is to befriend your flight mates.

Teamwork is essential to not only the military, but also to a lot of things in life. Throughout my time as a GMC, I knew that whenever I was struggling with anything, my wingmen always had my back and I always had theirs. Getting to know your flight mates may seem intimidating at first, but after befriendng them, learning their strengths and weaknesses, and developing good connections, your flight will perform greatly.”



Cadre Spotlight: 2d Lt Shuaib Khan

By: C/Arun and C/Stephenson

Second Lieutenant Shuaib Khan is a San Jose State University Alumni, local to the Bay Area, and former Detachment 045 cadet. His parents immigrated to the United States from Fiji. He recently commissioned in June 2025 shortly after graduating. Before commissioning, 2d Lt Khan was selected for the Euro-Nato Joint Jet Pilot Training Program (ENJJPT). While waiting for a training slot, he has had the privilege of joining our cadre team. Outside of serving as a cadre member for the detachment, Lt Khan enjoys running, going to the gym, piloting planes, watching good TV shows, and hanging out with friends.

His journey to service began with an interest in attending the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, but his path was redirected to joining his local ROTC detachment.

At first, Lt Khan was focused on securing a spot at the Academy. However, the relationships he made with the people in AFROTC and at SJSU convinced him that Detachment 045 was what he was called to.

When asked about his favorite memory while in the program, Lt Khan explained: "In my AS 300 year, I was an FTP flight commander. That was my favorite year because I was directly involved with all the cadets, and I got to witness their growth. I got to see them get EAs. It was very rewarding, and it was fun developing those close relationships with the people that I worked with. And, it was cool when those cadets became 300s, and I worked with them directly when I was a 400. It was perfect."

Transitioning from cadet life to being part of the cadre team has offered Lt Khan a unique experience. As a cadet, he solely had cadet duties. But as a cadre member, his responsibilities now revolved around making sure cadets had everything they needed. Most of the work done by cadre members is behind the scenes, but the stakes are higher, and there is much less room for error.

Being a cadre member in the same detachment he commissioned from means his relationships and interactions with the cadets had to change as well. Despite having been friends with some of the cadets in the past, he remains cognizant that his role is very different now. He must remain professional and remember that he is now the example of how an officer should behave.

As a newly commissioned officer, 2d Lt Khan explains that he already sees how the skills acquired from his time in ROTC transfer over to his life as an officer. He notes that an officer must understand the importance of being able to build trust with the team and making sure they trust you. In order to build trust, Lt Khan explains "You must be able to take care of your people and give them all you have as a leader."



Cadet Spotlight: C/1st Lt Nguyen

By: C/Kar and C/Marvin

Why did you join AFROTC?

C/1st Lt Nguyen joined out of pure impulse. She believed that joining the military, and specifically the Air Force, was the right fit for her. In the program, she gained valuable skills, imperative for her personal development and the mission of the Air Force.

When she gains her commission into the Air Force as a second lieutenant, she hopes for the Air Force Specialty Code of 11X, better known as a Pilot.

Academically, C/1st Lt Nguyen is studying Aviation Management, which is already difficult with the high workload, but she also works two jobs to pay for her schooling. Balancing school and work is difficult, but the Air Force ROTC program has taught her how to manage her time and make critical decisions within this limited time.

Personal Experience

C/1st Lt Nguyen fell in love with the program immediately, despite the difficulty in adjusting to military life at first. Expectations in the program were high from her first day in the program. Even as an AS 100 cadet, she was expected to perform at a high level. At first, she was a timid cadet, but as time passed, she gained more confidence in herself, slowly making herself more outspoken. Now, she is seen as a leader among her peers. C/1st Lt Nguyen has had to make many sacrifices, but she has persevered and pushed through. During her Basic Cadet Leader (BCL) year, she earned her Enrollment Allocation (EA), and made it through the grueling weeks of field training. This semester, she made it to the Professional Officer Course (POC).

Involvements and Achievements

In the Fall semester, C/1st Lt Nguyen served Detachment 045 as the Foxtrot Flight Commander for AS 100s. This position came with a lot of responsibility. She was responsible for leading 16 cadets through the program, which came with its own challenges. Foxtrot Flight was composed of cadets who were completely new to the program. Therefore, it was her responsibility to make sure they understood how the program worked. Her job was to shape these young men and women into successful cadets and prepare them for the challenges ahead in ROTC, as well as the rest of their lives.

Words of Wisdom

When asked about any advice she would give to new AS 100s, C/1st Lt Nguyen advised cadets to “Stop letting fear hold you back. Although it can be embarrassing in that moment, the more you hold yourself back, the less you’ll do.” She specifically cited that fitness was not her strong suit; she worked hard for hours during multiple physical training (PT) sessions to improve. After months of perseverance, she got stronger. As new AS 100s, C/Marvin and C/Kar agree that there is a very steep learning curve, but they agree that whatever you put into the program, you’ll get out of it.

Thank you, C/1st Lt Nguyen, for being an inspiration to us all and for being such a great leader.



Semester ODT: Beale AFB

By: C/Bohles

Early in the semester, cadets had the opportunity to visit Beale Air Force Base for LLAB 6. This ODT was a two-day endeavor, our detachment’s first ever overnight base visit. For many of the POC, this ODT was their first base visit since graduating from field training and becoming established leaders in the detachment. Those who attended the visit were given immense insight into Beale AFB operations, base life, and what makes this base unique.

During this tour, they learned about the base's various Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) units and the importance of Beale's strategic positioning. One cadet remarked how it was interesting to see how services work together in the ISR capacity. For example, while at the base, cadets viewed U-2s on the flight-line and witnessed the operations of Upgraded Early Warning Radars (UEWRs), which are operated by the Space Force.

Many cadets felt that the highlight of the entire trip was attending the CGO panel. Not only were they able to ask questions about operations at Beale, but cadets were able to learn more about what to expect in the early career of an officer. Huge thank you to Beale AFB for having us!



AFSC Day at Stanford

By: C/Bohles

As has become an annual tradition, the detachment hosted an AFSC day at Stanford University in October. This is an event where officers from around the country come to speak with our cadets. For many in the program, this is the first time they get a chance to talk to an Air Force or Space Force officer aside from cadre.

This year we had a total of 22 officers in attendance with a wide variety of AFSCs.

Cadets had the opportunity to be exposed to the many possibilities that the Air and Space Forces have to offer; hearing from Space Operation Officers, Pilots, Chaplains, and Medical Professionals.

Cadets were matched with officers based on their interests in AFSC, and over the course of the event, they rotated their groups until they were able to speak with at least three officers. Cadets and officers alike remarked at the success of the event. As a detachment we felt everyone was able to learn more about their desired AFSCs and the officers felt excited to inspire the next generation of leaders.



Alumni Success Stories: Lt Col Byung-Suk Choi

By: C/Gamboia and C/Shrestha

Lieutenant Colonel Byung-Suk Choi is a Santa Clara University graduate who majored in civil engineering and was a part of Detachment 045. He was a part of the 2006 graduating class when he was commissioned as a civil engineer. In his career, he has been deployed three separate times and has been a part of operations such as Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Currently, Lt Col Byung-Suk Choi serves at the 10th Civil Engineer Squadron at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he leads over 300 personnel. In his personal life, he enjoys spending time with his 3-year-old child outdoors, going on hikes, and camping.

Engineer Squadron at the U.S. Air Force Academy, where he leads over 300 personnel. In his personal life, he enjoys spending time with his 3-year-old child outdoors, going on hikes, and camping.

Challenges

At this point in his career, Lt Col Choi is bearing more responsibility than ever before. The greatest challenge for him is the lifestyle that comes with being in a high-ranking management position.



This is not a 9-5 job and things happen at the least opportune times. I went into command with a 6 week old without a Deputy and a 100% turnover of our Flight Commanders. It is your job to figure it out," exemplifying the constant tug of war between life in the service and personal life. The persistent work style leads to airmen calling him at sporadic times such as 2 a.m. and having to constantly manage responsibilities related to the mission, people, fitness, and admin. Despite the many challenges, his role has come with its fair share of rewards. He states, "Your ability to influence at the tactical level is during your time in command. At the end of the day, the most valuable, precious reward is the people

Advice to Cadets

As he currently commands around 345 personnel in a civil engineering squadron, he has been able to get his fair share of command experience making him the perfect person to get advice from for leadership. During his climb to the top, he has been able to learn from his many mistakes and grow from them, giving him a wealth of knowledge.

He uses a "Dropping the ball" analogy to explain how to prioritize missions. He states, "As we go through this thing called life, we are always juggling priorities, whether professional or personal. If you drop a rubber ball, it will bounce back. If you drop a wooden ball, it will hurt but not break (hopefully). If you break a glass ball, it will break. Understand what that [dropping the ball] means in your professional/personal life".

He makes it clear that cadets and aspiring officers need to know how to guide around making mistakes in today's military. More importantly, cadets need to know how to "bounce back" by taking accountability and moving forward in a better way.

Valuable Takeaways

When asked what the most important and valuable thing cadets could take away from this conversation, he puts it simply, "Always think about others and how to lower the temperature in the room while raising the dignity of others around you," exemplifying the need for leaders to have quiet professionalism when tensions get high. This can teach us that sometimes you can be the most efficacious leader while not having to be the loudest. Furthermore, it describes how it is important for a commander to value the team members that they are surrounded by.



Arnold Air Society and i5 Space

By: C/Carrozzo and C/Hu

Arnold Air Society is an honorary service organization that focuses on developing strong leadership skills among AFROTC cadets. It's one of the most valuable organizations a cadet can join in AFROTC because it focuses on leadership, teamwork, and professional growth. It's open to all AS 100s and AS 200s for candidacy. The program builds on the foundation of AFROTC by offering additional leadership opportunities. Members plan and execute service projects, lead meetings, manage teams, and coordinate large events, all while learning to communicate effectively and take initiative.

Similarly, i5 Space is a national student organization that operates alongside the U.S. Space Force's Space Training and Readiness and Command (STARCOM). This program allows cadets to engage in real-world problem solving, space operations training, and strategic planning exercises. Members often participate in events such as wargames, briefings, and the Azimuth Program, which help develop analytical thinking and decision-making under pressure.



AFSC Highlight: 3E4X1

By: C/McMahan

One of the most under-appreciated yet essential engineering careers in the Air Force is the 3E4X1 Water and Fuel Systems Maintenance (WFSM) AFSC. These Airmen are responsible for keeping bases running by maintaining drinking water, wastewater systems, aircraft fuel lines, and fire suppression networks. Whether it's repairing a burst pipe, inspecting a fuel tank, or keeping a base's water safe and compliant, WFSM is at the center of mission support. They're also heavily involved in emergency response and rapid engineering operations, often deploying with Prime BEEF and RED HORSE teams to restore critical infrastructure during crises.

What makes this AFSC especially interesting is how hands-on and engineering-focused it is. WFSM Airmen work directly with the systems that make daily life and air operations possible, blending technical skills, environmental safety, and mechanical problem-solving.

This AFSC typically works under USAF Civil Engineering. Those cadets pursuing a commission as a Civil Engineering officer may encounter this AFSC in the future!

From an officer's perspective, WFSM highlights what effective leadership in the Air Force really looks like: understanding the mission at the ground level and empowering highly skilled Airmen who execute it every day. Working with these professionals reinforces the officer's role as an integrator and enabler, translating mission requirements into action while fostering a culture of technical excellence, accountability, and pride in work that may be out of sight but is never optional.



Alumni Success Story: 2d Lt Harry Cha
By: C/Kim

Commissioning Background

Second Lieutenant Harry Cha commissioned through San Jose State University's AFROTC program in June 2024 as a distinguished graduate. He currently serves as a Cyber Operations Officer in the combat communications career field and is stationed at Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, where he is assigned the 644th Combat Communications Squadron. Lt Cha values the mission and the people he works with and enjoys traveling throughout the region, staying active, and playing video games in his free time.

Motivation for Joining AFROTC

Lt Cha was introduced to AFROTC through a mentor who explained it as a path to military service while remaining a full-time student. The program became a second home for him, fostering close friendships and providing structure, while developing the physical and mental discipline that helped prepare him for the early demands and responsibilities of military life.

AFSC and Current Responsibilities

Lt Cha entered the Air Force as a 17D, Cyber Operations Officer, and currently works within the Expeditionary Combat Communications mission set. In this role, he supports communications operations in potentially austere and hostile environments, enabling aircraft, coalition ground forces, and joint partners to operate effectively. He noted that expeditionary communications are often the first capability established and the last to leave, making the mission especially critical amid today's heightened global tensions.

Biggest Challenge Transitioning to Active Duty

Lt Cha identified the transition from cadet to active duty as his greatest challenge, particularly adjusting to the operational "battle rhythm." From his first day, he was expected to lead airmen and take charge of real responsibilities, making the transition demanding. He noted that officers are often required to guide and shape how their shop or squadron operates while still learning the job themselves.

Warrior Pride Never Dies!



Lt Cha emphasized the importance of trusting noncommissioned officers and learning from experienced airmen. While ROTC provides preparation, he explained that active duty presents a higher level of leadership responsibility. He encouraged future officers to remain humble, continue learning, and develop leadership skills through experience

Advice for Current Cadets

Lt Cha advises cadets to actively demonstrate commitment and initiative within the program. He emphasized that volunteering, stepping outside of comfort zones, and embracing discomfort as a constant part of development.

Most Rewarding Aspects of Service

Lt Cha shared that the most rewarding part of serving in the Air Force has been the people. He highlighted learning about the Airmen he leads, understanding their strengths and challenges, and working through difficult situations together. He noted that these shared experiences create bonds rarely found in the civilian sector and are a major reason many officers continue their careers. He also described his AFSC as especially engaging due to its hands-on nature, where airmen work directly with critical systems that support daily life and operations while blending technical skills, safety awareness, and mechanical problem-solving.

He also describes the career field as unique for its blend of environmental protection, engineering, and real world application, given he was an Environmental Science major. He noted that the work directly impacts health, safety, and sustainability across an installation, setting it apart from many other AFSCs in the Air Force.



Final LLAB of the Semester:

GamePod

By: C/Curry

For the final LLAB of the semester, cadets spent the day at Gamepod, which is an airsoft facility for an all day leadership training event. Having the opportunity to get off campus into a new environment gave our GMC cadets a chance to train in a new way that was immersive and unpredictable, forcing them to think on their feet and foster their leadership skills. The setting pushed cadets to adapt and work through problems under heavy pressure, making the experience feel more realistic and engaging.

GMC cadets operated in small teams and rotated through leadership roles as scenarios continuously changed throughout the day. The training focused on applying small unit tactics, practicing 9-line casualty procedures, identifying unexploded ordnance, and coordinating movement while situations continued to change.

POC cadets supported the training by running scenarios and acting as opposing forces, which added realism and kept GMC cadets challenged. The constant need to adjust plans and rely on teammates helped build confidence and reinforce teamwork.

Beyond the training itself, the event was a great change of pace and morale boost across the detachment. The airsoft environment kept cadets engaged and energized. After training concluded, cadets engaged in an exciting game of airsoft for fun. This gave everyone a chance to relax, enjoy the experience, and build camaraderie after a full day of training. Overall, the Gamepod LLAB struck a great balance between meaningful leadership development and an enjoyable, memorable experience for the GMC cadets involved.



POW/MIA RUN, Government Shutdown, and Detachment Strava

By: C/McMahan & C/Greim

This past November, Detachment 045 participated in the annual Arnold Air Society Staffebach Squadron's POW/MIA Memorial Run to honor the service members who never made it home. In our POW/MIA run, which occurs over the span of twenty-four hours, cadets take shifts running with the POW/MIA flag so that it never stops moving.

Unlike traditional race events, this run isn't a competition for individual speed or distance, but as a challenge to continuously keep the flag moving for the duration. As cadets team up to carry the flag at all hours of the day and night, the run is dedicated to those who are still missing and honoring their sacrifice and legacy.

Coming together for this run was a way for the detachment to stay grounded to not just each other but to the legacy that our program is meant to uphold. It reminds us why these traditions matter and why community outreach must remain central to our mission, especially as external obstacles arise and test our dedication.

Government Shutdown

With the record-breaking government shutdown that lasted 43 days, C/2d Lt Ramirez faced challenges planning the logistics of the entire event. Military sponsored events like the POW/MIA run, recruiting, and Precision Drill-Unit were all put on hold for the duration of the shutdown. Although the government shutdown created logistical obstacles with reaching out to the community, the hard work of C/2d Lt Ramirez ensured that the endurance of this tradition did not fall through.

Detachment Strava

Detachments in the Southwest region competed in a Det-Dash Strava competition. Strava is a mobile app used to track running mileage and all southwest regions joined the contest in hopes to achieve the highest amount of accumulated mileage.

The POW/MIA run was a display of teamwork and helped boost Detachment 045's mileage in the Strava competition. Over the course of 24 hours, 544 miles were ran by the 45 participating cadets. Some cadets ran their first full marathon distance and others like C/Caballero ran over 40 miles. To all the participants, thank you and wonderful job!



Pictured: C/Singh - Cyber Ops Select

AFSC/SFSC Spotlight: 17X – Cyber Operations Officer

By: C/Rodriguez

Mission & Impact

Cyber Operations Officers (AFSC 17X) are the Air and Space Forces' digital defenders. Their mission isn't just about lines of code or computers; it's about making sure warfighters can communicate, plan, and carry out missions without disruptions.

Whether it's defending networks from attacks or backing missions in real time, they are the quiet professionals making sure everything stays on track. As technology advances and threats grow more complex, these officers adapt and innovate, staying one step ahead in the ever-changing cyber domain.

Training & Requirements

- 1) Commission through AFROTC, USAFA, or OTS.
- 2) Must complete the Cyber Warfare Operations Officer training.
- 3) A Course background in STEM, IT, or Computer Science is preferred but not required.

Opportunities & Growth

For 17X officers, the opportunities are endless. Some start out supporting cyber operations at the base level, while others move on to specialized teams working high-stakes missions.

They might be defending networks, developing new systems, or even planning offensive operations in the cyber domain. What makes the career field exciting is its variety. No two assignments look the same. The best part? The skills they pick up don't just stay within the Air Force. They're the kind of tools that open doors in the civilian world as well.



RAP Overview: The Recruiter Assistance Program

The Recruiter Assistance Program (RAP) is a unique opportunity that allows Air Force members to support recruiting efforts in their hometowns. Participants in the program help recruiters connect with local schools, take part in community and school events, and assist with activities such as Center of Influence programs and Delayed Entry Program Commander's Calls. This program is an invaluable way for Airmen to give back while helping to inspire the next generation to serve. Active duty personnel may participate in the Recruiter Assistance Program to support local recruiting efforts and community outreach. When applicable, RAP participants may engage with AFROTC Detachments, such as San Jose State University, in support of recruiting initiatives. If you are interested in learning more, please scan this QR Code:



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