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Volume 3, Issue 2

# Red Storm Newsletter

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## A letter from the Red Storm Battalion to our esteemed alumni



Another busy semester is now underway at St. John's University. The Cadets reported back to school after a fittingly restful winter furlough, ready to jump right back into training and getting ready for Cadet Summer Training. Our Juniors are preparing themselves for Advanced Camp this summer, and our Seniors are eagerly awaiting graduation, commissioning, and the beginning of their Army careers. Please allow us the opportunity to fill you in on what our Cadets have been up to in the past semester.

The Cadets traveled to Fort Dix, NJ for the Fall FTX. As always, the event was a fantastic opportunity to expose our new Cadets to a field environment, as well as hone the map reading and land navigation skills of all Cadets. The MSIII's were eager for the chance to test themselves on the land navigation course, in preparation for Advanced Camp this summer.

The contracted population in the Red Storm Battalion grew significantly this semester, as ten Cadets were sworn in as contracted Cadets. We will look to them in the year ahead to step up and take charge of the program. We are confident they will exceed all expectations.

We held our annual Dining In on 1 December 2018 in the D'Angelo Center on the St. John's campus. The event was a fantastic opportunity for us to come together, observe the accomplishments of the semester in a relaxed setting, and enjoy one another's fellowship. The event was, as always, a great success.

The Senior class received their branch assignments in November. They all received the component of their choice, as well as one of their top two branches. We are excited to see them move into the next phase of their service. Red Storm!

# Greetings from LTC Fekete

Friends & family of the Red Storm Battalion,

How quickly time flies. We're already in the middle of March, and the Red Storm Battalion accomplished a great deal.

The Cadets jumped right back into the mix after a long semester break, starting with the Occupational Physical Assessment Test, classes, and the MSIVs conduct of a Virtual Staff Ride executed by a team from the Army University Press, focusing on the Battle of Wanat in Afghanistan.

As we continue into the spring, we are focusing our training to prepare Cadets for the rigors of Basic Camp, Advanced Camp, and additional training opportunities that have come available. Our efforts continue to concentrate on development of leaders operating at the squad and platoon level, and will culminate with our combined Field Training Exercise at West Point, where all the NYC ROTC programs will converge for a weekend exercise.

In addition, some of our Cadets were again selected to participate in the Cultural Understanding & Leadership Program (CULP), Cadet Troop Leadership Program (CTLT), and Airborne and Air Assault schools. Following summer training, they will enter into these programs to earn coveted skill badges, be immersed in a foreign culture, and spend time with active Army units to gain a perspective of what the life of a Second Lieutenant is.

On the home front, we've recently moved our department to the College of Professional Studies, where the faculty and staff have been providing exceptional support to the program. In addition, we have received approval from the college to begin offering a Minor in Military Studies to all Cadets that complete the program; another step that helps posture this program to continue to be the premier ROTC unit in NYC. We're grateful for the support of CPS and look forward to a long prosperous relationship.

As we look to the future, we have begun efforts to open a detachment on the Staten Island campus in order to offer ROTC to the students of St. John's, Wagner College, and the College of Staten Island. We're looking forward to beginning a strong relationship with the colleges and high schools there, increasing exposure of the Army and the benefits associated with service, and integrating with the community.

Last, I'd like to give special recognition to our Senior Class. As we relayed in the last newsletter, this is a talented group of individuals, with 6 of our 13 members earning a place in the top 20% of Cadets in the nation; of those 6, 3 were further distinguished as top 10% in the nation; last, of those 3, one of our Cadets, CDT Nick Vanslyke, earned the distinction of being the #7 Cadet *in the nation!* I look forward to the contributions they all will make to the Army and am confident that our Nation's sons and daughters will be led by capable and motivated officers.

We always enjoy hearing from our alumni, so please feel free to reach out and touch bases. You can also follow the weekly accomplishments of the Cadets through our social media platforms on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Red Storm!



LTC Eric P. Fekete  
Red Storm ROTC PMS



MSG Jonathan  
Alexander, Red Storm  
ROTC SMI



## Red Storm Senior Class

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the ROTC class of 2019, who will be commissioning into the U.S. Army as Second Lieutenants in a few short months, hosted a dinner at the Cobblestones Pub to celebrate the receiving of our component and branch assignments. Of the thirteen Cadets, we all received our component of choice, with twelve being assigned to service in the Active Duty Army, and one being assigned the Army Reserves.

As we return for our final semester, everything we do will set us up for our commissioning, and everything we learn will prepare us for our service as Army Officers.



C/LTC  
Vanslyke,  
Battalion  
Commander,  
Infantry



C/CSM  
Asencio,  
Battalion  
CSM,  
Armor



C/MAJ Dibble,  
Battalion  
Executive  
Officer,  
Field Artillery



C/MAJ  
Horton,  
Battalion  
Operations  
Officer,  
Field Artillery



C/CPT Fenn,  
Battalion S1,  
Quartermaster



C/CPT  
Cheung,  
Battalion S4,  
Field Artillery



C/CPT Yam,  
Battalion  
S5/6,  
Signal Corps



C/CPT Morin,  
Company  
Commander,  
Cyber



C/CPT Luong,  
Battalion AS3,  
Armor



C/1LT  
Johnson,  
Battalion AS3,  
Military  
Police



C/1LT Lei  
Sam,  
Battalion S2,  
Engineer



C/1LT  
McPhatter,  
Battalion AS1,  
Military  
Intelligence



C/1SG Saint,  
Company  
1SG,  
Infantry



*CDT Persaud is a sophomore at St. John's University, and serves as a Team Leader in the Red Storm Battalion. He hopes to serve as a Military Intelligence Officer.*

## Farmingdale Training Fall 2018

The St. John's Red Storm Battalion conducted weapons training at the Farmingdale Reserve Training Center on 3 October 2018. The training consisted of instruction on how to disassemble, assemble, and conduct a functions check on the M249, M240B,



M9A2, and the M4A2. We also conducted training on the SINCGARS radios, learning how to put them into operation, put in the proper frequencies, and conduct a radio check. The final station was the EST 2000 simulator. We were afforded the opportunity to group, zero, and qualify on the M4 weapon

system. It was a great opportunity for us to familiarize ourselves with putting an M4 rifle into operation before conducting live-fire exercises on the range.

This was my second time attending training at the Farmingdale Reserve Training Center. I felt that it was definitely a very fun and informative experience. Even as an NRA-certified marksman, I didn't know everything about the internals of the firearms I used. I feel as if this is also a very good event for the newer cadets because it is engaging, and it really gives them the hands-on experience they need regarding the equipment and weapon



systems that the Army uses to operate. It also gives the people who have done the Farmingdale event before a chance to get some more



practice with the weapon systems in order for them to better remember and perfect the processes needed in order to effectively operate this equipment. All in all, Farmingdale was a fun and engaging experience that gives every cadet, whether MS1 or MS4, a chance to learn new things or sharpen their skills.



*CDT Horton is a senior at St. John's University, and currently serves as the Battalion S3. Upon graduation in May, he will serve as a Field Artillery Officer.*

## Ranger Challenge 2018

On 19-21 October 2018, the Red Storm Battalion Ranger Challenge team made the trip to Fort Dix, New Jersey to compete in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Ranger Challenge competition. It was a three-day tournament that involved ruck marches, an obstacle course, a grenade assault course, and physical fitness events such as the tug-of-war contest. This was my first time at the Ranger Challenge competition; I hadn't tried out for the team any other year.



During and after the competition I wished I had tried out during previous years because the level of camaraderie, physical difficulty, and overall enjoyment I experienced was an exciting and rewarding way to spend my weekend.

The first event was a fitness course with stations where the team was required to complete 300 each of burpees, pushups, and kettlebell swings; 180lbs sled-drags; and air squats. The stations were set around a 2+ mile course, and the team was required to transport an 80lbs stretcher with us to each station. Our time was decent as a team, but just completing it together and to standard was something that made us proud, as that workout alone was more than most people can do. After this, we moved to our sleeping spot in the forest. I've also always enjoyed time in the field, so bivouacking with my friends/battle buddies was an added bonus.



By the end of the competition on Sunday afternoon, we had rucked through many different sections of Fort Dix. I had seen airfields and massive C-130's taking off, met people from schools I didn't know existed and found a fascination with Edinboro University, the overall winning team, who had a cadet whose job was to wear a kilt and play the bagpipe for the entire weekend. All in all, I hope that any Cadet curious about Ranger Challenge inquires and tries out, as the work you put in both physically and mentally is something to be proud of.



*CDT Rodriguez is currently a sophomore at St. John's University and serves as a Team Leader in the Red Storm Battalion. She hopes to serve as an Adjutant General Officer.*

In the fall semester of 2018, the Red Storm Battalion conducted a three-day, two-night Field Training Exercise (FTX). This FTX was a good experience as we conducted multiple land navigation exercises as well as squad movements through wooded areas. The weather, as always, factored into the weekend's training, but it was a great exercise in conducting a flexible operation.

My experience as an MSII was actually not so bad. I have never been on an FTX with an ROTC program, but I feel that we did imitate an actual field environment as much as we could. We were issued dummy weapons and were given MREs for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. As much as a regular person would completely hate having MREs for every meal, I feel that no one really complained about it and possibly even "embraced the suck" as a whole unit. Camaraderie is really important to me, and being in a field environment with limited resources, everyone was helping everyone as well as sharing their personal belongings with their battle buddies.



As far as training went, I felt that it was challenging, but those who have not been exposed to that type of training or environment definitely learned from it. I have done land navigation before, so it was easy for me, but I had never conducted land navigation in the night time, and that was actually very difficult for me. Not being able to see where you are, or where you are going can really slow you down but as with everything, with practice and repetition, it can be done. Thankfully, my battle buddy and I worked well together and were one of the first groups to finish all iterations. The squad movements were also a good experience. In my squad, everyone was appointed a specific job or task, such as pace man, compass man, etc. As we would move forward, everyone got to switch positions to give everyone a chance to have a leadership role. All in all, being in that type of environment is never really easy, but as a battalion, we handled it well and I enjoyed it.





*CDT Aranda is a freshman at St. John's University. Majoring in Homeland Security, he is competing for an Active Duty scholarship, and hopes to serve as an Infantry Officer.*

# NYC Veterans' Day Parade

In November, the Red Storm Battalion had the unique opportunity to march in the Veterans Day parade to honor the lives of veterans, and



the victims of war. As a first-year student I would have never imagined participating in such an awe-inspiring and proud event. As we marched down 5th Avenue in our uniforms in front of thousands of spectators, I was instantly filled with joy and pride. We marched to represent those that live to

serve us, those that served before, and the countless others that have made the ultimate sacrifice.

This opportunity was a great honor and experience I will never forget. I have been fond of the military from a very young age. There were many groups of Soldiers and veterans present for the parade, representing not just their units but their organizations as well. There were also groups from the Wounded



Warrior Project and Hope for Heroes, two organizations that work very hard to support wounded veterans. Seeing all these



men and women in uniform, and veterans that had served honorably, made me proud to follow in their footsteps. As I progress through the ROTC program and continue to learn about the sacrifices our men and women in uniform make, I have a greater appreciation for those who served. I hope that my own service, upon graduation, will demonstrate the commitment and dedication with which they served. I hope to continue their legacy.

# Swearing In



*Cadet Smith, a 3-year National Army ROTC Scholarship recipient, was officially sworn in as a contracted Cadet at the St. John's University women's basketball game on November 29<sup>th</sup>. He is one of the newest contracted Cadets in the Red Storm Battalion.*

Being part of the United States military has always been one of my life's ambitions, one I've always sought to accomplish. It has allowed me to become a part of something bigger than myself, to see the big picture and live life with a purpose. On a crisp November night, I and some of my fellow Cadets were worn into the United States Army Reserves in front of peers,



friends and family. I felt that all the work and effort I had put into getting where I was standing in that moment had finally paid off and I was on the home stretch. Service means everything to me, being there to be the protector and representative to millions of people is all



I ever need to do to get the most out of life. As I raised my right hand and stated my name for everyone to see and hear I finally took the next step in my life toward practicing what I preach.

My family couldn't have been prouder. They have seen me graduate

and pass many things, from specialized service awards to my academy graduation at the headquarters of the New York City Police Department; this was my greatest achievement to date. Once the swearing-in concluded I was met by hugs and congratulations from my family and words of praise and encouragement from my friends and family around the world who watched the ceremony live on Facebook. It was a moment that I will never forget, and the start of something that I dreamed of when I was a child. It proved to me that dreams do come true if you work hard enough, and it signified the start to a whole new adventure for a young man from a small town in Long Island.



*CDT O'Neill is a sophomore at St. John's University, and serves as a Team Leader in the Red Storm Battalion. He hopes to serve as an Infantry Officer following his commissioning in 2021.*

As a Cadet who came into the program a semester late, I did not get to experience last year's Dining In; I did not know what to expect of the event we had on 1 December. I heard from my peers and the upperclass Cadets that it was a very formal event, so dress appropriately; and be ready to drink the grog. I went into the event with no idea what to expect, and left feeling a great sense of pride for the program and grateful for all the hard work the Dining In committee



invested in the event. And a taste in my mouth I won't soon forget, after downing the repulsive concoction that was the grog. In all, it was one of the most memorable experiences from my time in the program. Everyone came together in a more relaxed setting than we are normally used to and the event was a great time.



The event was the result and the Dining In committee who made it all possible. The committee put in the most work and effort, volunteering to plan,



resource, and execute the event while also going to class and fulfilling their personal obligations.

The other classes also put in a good deal of time preparing their skits. The skits were designed to poke fun at the individual classes, the other classes, and the Cadre. It was a fun way to finish off the night and it left most Cadets, including myself, extremely excited for our next Dining In.

Hats off to everyone involved in putting together the Dining In, the MSIVs, all Cadets that helped put together and present their skits, and I'm sorry to anyone that had to drink the grog.



# Army Combat Fitness Test

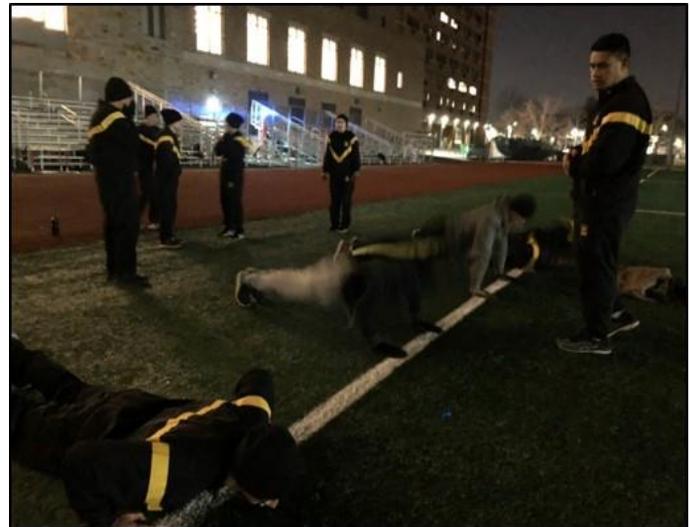
As a part of the Army's initiative to unite physical fitness and combat readiness, Cadet Command is beginning the implementation of the new Army Combat Fitness Test (ACFT). The new test, which will replace the old Army Physical Fitness Test



(APFT), will be the test of record for our Cadets this summer at Cadet Summer Training. In order to prepare them for the new standards, the Red Storm Battalion conducted a diagnostic ACFT on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Cadets completed the new exercises,

which include the deadlift, the standing power throw, hand-release push-ups, and the sprint-drag-carry. The two-mile run is the final event, a hold-over from the APFT. The reduced rest time between

events pushed the Cadets physically, but the new set of exercises, performed in the prescribed order, reduces the stress of continuous exercises on particular muscle groups, thus improving the physical endurance



throughout the test. The event was a great opportunity not only to expose the Cadets to the new exercises and standards, but to identify where individuals need to focus on fundamentals and proper technique to ensure they perform at the top of their capabilities. It was a learning opportunity for us as a program, and the new standards will surely determine physical training sessions in the future as we prepare to execute the ACFT to standard. It was also a great morale booster, as Cadets got to experience something for the first time together, pushing each other to work as hard as they could. It was a great experience for us all.



*CDT Ridout is a sophomore at St. John's University and serves as a Team Leader in the Red Storm Battalion. He hopes to serve as an Infantry Officer upon graduation.*

# Cultural Exchange Trip



Over winter break, I was granted the unique opportunity to go to Ecuador for two and a half weeks on a service and cultural exchange trip with the Ozanam Scholars Program. While in Ecuador, I was able to work with the Ecuadorian and Shuar communities of Valle, Yunganza, Miguel Chiriap and Metsankim. Through Minga, or communal labor, I



was able to take part in community service projects that benefit the town. I spent a majority of my time in Metsankim, where as a Minga, we constructed an outdoor kitchen, a patio and two sets of staircases to help make navigating a large hill easier for members of the community. Each day, my peers and I would do different tasks from building a foundation with rocks to mixing and laying concrete.

Each day, we were able to conduct interviews and gather research on a topic that was deemed important to the community: emotional well-being. Through conversations and interviews, I was able to see how the community of Metsankim dealt with similar issues to those faced in the United States. By the end of the trip, my group proposed a community recreation and workout center and youth program be developed to encourage positive emotional well-being in the community.

Along with my Minga efforts and research work, I was also able to partake in multiple cultural exchange events. Language played a large role in the cultural exchange as I was able to practice what little Spanish I know.

I was also granted the special opportunity to learn Shuar, the native language of the tribes with whom we worked. As well as learning different languages, I was also able to teach the elementary school children in Metsankim English. This was an extremely special opportunity for me, as I struggled with the language barrier due to my lack of Spanish but was still able to connect with them in spite of it.



Other cultural exchanges included learning traditional Shuar dances, teaching American dances, sharing music, sharing homemade meals, exchanging handmade gifts, and more. I was very grateful for the relationships I had created and the stories that I was able to hear from the members with whom I worked. One special interaction I was able to have was with a veteran of the Ecuadorian- Peruvian War. After a long conversation, we ended up exchanging shirts. He gave me one from his unit and I was able to give him one of our St. John's ROTC shirts. This moment was very special because I was able to connect with someone over a topic that meant a lot to us both.

The trip was very special, and a defining trip in my life. I believe this trip to Ecuador helped me gain a new perspective on patience and the ability to live outside of my comfort zone. While it may have only been two and a half weeks, I believe that this trip and the people I met will hold a special place in my heart forever.



*Cadet Simone is a Junior in the Red Storm Battalion, currently serving as a Cadet Platoon Sergeant. Upon graduation, she hopes to serve as a Military Police Officer.*



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## *This Semester at a Glance*

We would like to thank you all for your continuing support of the Red Storm Battalion. We look forward to this upcoming semester and sharing all the great accomplishments of our program.

If you are interested in doing more for the program, please see the contact information below. Please do not hesitate to e-mail us or give us a call, we look forward to hearing from you.

Upcoming events:

27 March: Farmingdale Reserve Center Training (Long Island, NY)

3 April: Combat Water Survival Assessment (Long Island, NY)

6 April: MSIII Range Day (Fort Dix, NJ)

12-14 April: Spring JFTX (West Point, NY)

26 April: Military Ball (Queens, NY)

18 May: Commissioning (St. John's campus)

19 May: Commencement (St. John's campus)

RED STORM!

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