

THE JOINT MILITARY LEADERSHIP CENTER

2022 NEWSLETTER ■ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Special Recognitions

Naval ROTC 20th Birthday Celebration

Twenty years ago on May 13, 2002, the Secretary of the Navy commissioned the nation's newest Naval ROTC Unit at USF. In recognition of this event, the Buccaneer Battalion conducted a Pass-In-Review/Change of Command Ceremony followed by a Cake Cutting Ceremony. **BGen Thomas Draude, USMC (Ret.)** was the reviewing officer for the Pass-In-Review. General Draude has been a mentor for the Naval ROTC unit since its inception. Special guests included **President Emerita Dr. Judy Genshaft, CAPT Richard Dick, USN (Ret.), CDR John Sarao, USN (Ret.), Harold McIver, YNC, USN, (Ret.), Benjamin Palmer, SKC, USN (Ret.)** and **Christine Borgia**. Thanks to the vision and initiative of Dr. Judy Genshaft and the assistance of Congressman C.W. Bill Young, the Navy agreed to stand up a Naval ROTC unit at USF in 2002, the first in many years. CAPT Dick and CDR Sarao were respectively the first Commanding Officer and Executive Officer of the unit while Chief McIver, Chief Palmer and Christine continue to serve on the Naval ROTC unit staff since its inception.



L to R – Christine Borgia, BGen Draude, John Sarao, Richard Dick, Dr. Judy Genshaft, Ben Palmer, Harold McIver)

Brenda Faulk, Air Force ROTC Academic Program Specialist, to Retire

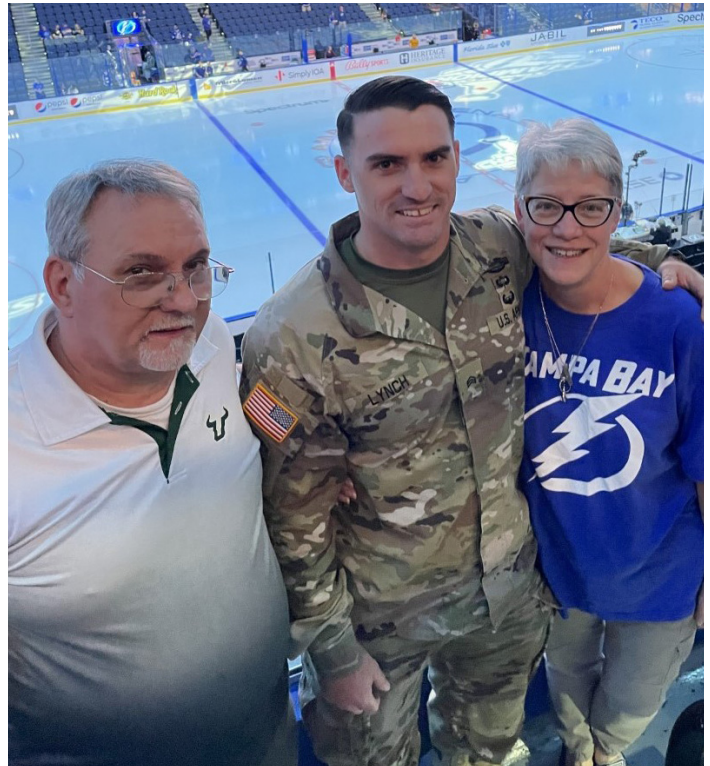


Brenda's 40th Length of Service Award presentation with Col Timothy Sites and Provost Dr. Ralph Wilcox.

After 43 years at USF, Brenda will be retiring in August to embark on a new chapter in her life. She started at USF in 1979 working for the Psychology Department. When the Air Force ROTC unit started in 1982, Brenda interviewed for and was immediately hired as their university administrative assistant. In her 40 years with Air Force ROTC, she has seen 948 cadets commissioned as Second Lieutenants including two officers into the Space Force starting this year. And she remembers them all! This is in addition to the 866 officers commissioned from various Air Force enlisted commissioning programs hosted at USF. She has certainly been like a "mother" to our Air Force ROTC alumni and they all hold a special place for her. She will be greatly missed and we thank her wholeheartedly for her dedication and loyalty to the university and the U.S. Air Force over these many years!

Tampa Bay Lightning “Military In-Game Standing Salute”

As the reigning NHL Hockey Champions for a second year in a row, the Tampa Bay Lightning returned this year for a more “normal” 2021-2022 hockey season. Thanks to the Lightning’s continued support and recognition of the U.S. Armed Forces, USF ROTC was invited to name one of its military members to be recognized at four home games this past season for their traditional “Military In-Game Standing Salute”. This year’s ROTC military heroes who were recognized were **Army Cadets Ian Lynch and Daniel Tribuzio**; Air Force cadre member **Capt Nolan Maynard** and MECEP graduate **2ndLt Travis Lindsay**. The military member is given free parking, four complimentary tickets to the game and is recognized in the Amalie Arena with his family/friends between the 2nd and 3rd game periods. This is truly an awesome event for these individuals and their families. Cadet Lynch is in the Army’s Green to Gold program and an Army combat veteran who served in the Infantry, 82nd Airborne Division with deployments to Iraq and Syria. Cadet Tribuzio, a former Staff Sergeant and Army combat veteran, served in the Military Police deploying to Iraq and South Korea. Capt Maynard is an Air Force Civil Engineer officer who deployed to Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar supporting Joint, Coalition and Special Operations Command counter-ISIS operations in Iraq and



CDT Ian Lynch and family at the Tampa Bay Lightning game.

Syria. 2ndLt Lindsay graduated and was commissioned Spring 2022. He is a former Marine Staff Sergeant and served in a Special Purpose Marine Amphibious Group Task Force (MAGTF) with a Combat Logistics Battalion.



COVID-19

Impact of COVID Pandemic on ROTC

Unlike last year, the 2021-2022 Academic Year has been a welcome change with many classes returned to in-person, classroom sizes returned to normal, masks optional but encouraged indoors and most traditional on-campus events/activities once again taking place in-person. Physical training was conducted as before the pandemic without the mask requirement. Residents living on campus could once again gather in their common areas without restriction. Last year’s first-time students and most ROTC instructors could finally see what life at USF is really like.

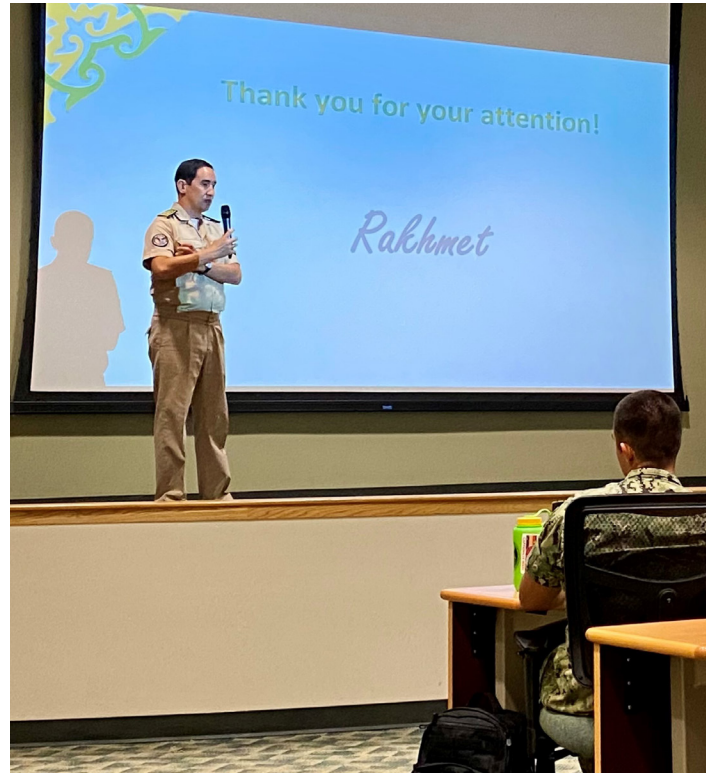
Students hanging out at the Joint Cookout is one example of an activity we missed last year.

Global Connections

Kazakhstan Naval Officer Visit

During the spring semester, the Naval ROTC hosted **CDR Azamat Murzabekov** the Senior National Representative of Kazakhstan who serves on the Combined Strategic Analysis Group in the J5 Strategy and Plans Directorate at U. S. Central Command. His previous duty assignments included one as the Kazakhstan Naval Attaché to Iran. He spoke to the Buccaneer Battalion at a Leadership Lab. His presentation was very informative and provided valuable insight about his country, their national security interests and relationships with the countries of China and Russia. Hosting Senior National Representatives to speak to our ROTC students provides a unique opportunity for them to learn and broaden their perspective on various global security issues.

CDR Murzabekov presenting at the Naval ROTC Leadership Lab.



Marine and Navy forming up for the Joint Run.

Joint Events

Patriot Day Joint Run

This year's annual Patriot Day Joint Run was very special. First, we did not have the opportunity to have the run last year due to the pandemic; second, our new Dean of Undergraduate Studies, **Dr. Allison Crume**, was in attendance; and third, **Major Eric DeFelice**, District Commander of the Tampa Police Department and **Captain Keith Evans** of

the Tampa Fire & Rescue with his Truck #13 Team were present. This is the first time we had members of local First Responders join us! **Midshipman Michael Thomas** and **Midshipman Oliver Musser**, Naval ROTC, planned and organized this year's run. It was quite impressive to see a combined formation of over 300 students from all services running to honor and remember on this 20th anniversary of 9/11!

Family & Friends Weekend

The JMLC and the ROTC programs participated in Family and Friends Weekend with an Open House in the CWY building on Saturday, Nov. 6, from 10 AM to Noon. Each ROTC unit welcomed visitors at the main entrance to the CWY building manning promotional tables with information about their respective ROTC programs and gave away swag items representing their service. Students provided tours of the CWY building and the Naval ROTC manned the EST 2000, small arms weapons simulator, so visitors could test their marksmanship skills with military firearms in a virtual environment. The Army ROTC in cooperation with a local National Guard unit provided a HUMVEE on display in front of the CWY building.



One of the families trying out the EST2000.



Army, Air Force, and Naval ROTC tabling in the CWY rotunda for the Open House.

Salute to Service Football Game



Army ROTC Suncoast Battalion formation in the North End Zone for the game's National Anthem.

The 2021 Salute to Service Football game saw USF take on University of Cincinnati on Friday, 12 November. The ROTC units marched on the field and joined the Herd of Thunder (HOT) and the USF Spirit Squads for the National Anthem prior to the game. The Fall 2021 Semester commanders who led their ROTC units on the field were **2LT Thai Nguyen** of Jacksonville, Florida, Army Suncoast Battalion; **2ndLt Kristian Floyd** of Sacramento, California, Naval Buccaneer Battalion; and, **2d Lt Tyler Whitsett** of Waldorf, Maryland, Air Force 158th Cadet Wing. With precision upon completion of the National Anthem, everyone cleared the field and the SOCOM Para-Commandos started their descent from above Raymond James Stadium and glided onto the football field. The stadium erupted in cheers with the descent of each commando. **General Kenneth McKenzie**, Commander, U.S. Central Command, was the Guest of Honor for the game. In addition to performing the Coin Toss before the game, he gave the Oath of enlistment to a number of new military recruits at an enlistment ceremony performed in the Pirate's Cove of the stadium.

USF Athletics also added Salute to Service themed games to Men's & Women's Basketball, Baseball and Women's Softball. In each, one of the ROTC units supported the game with a color guard and students for performing the National Anthem, displaying a large U.S. flag on the court/field during the National Anthem and for various activities in a break during the games.

Joint Cookout at USF Riverfront Park – Friday, 4 March 2022

It was a perfect sunny, Florida winter day as we gathered for this year's Joint Cookout, a week prior to Spring Break almost two years to the day since the last Joint Cookout. In 2020, the Joint Cookout was the last ROTC event held prior to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. This was a great way to celebrate with fellow ROTC students and their instructors/staff of all branches in a relaxing environment away from the main campus and enjoy some classic cookout food. The timing was perfect before the frenzy and packed schedule that occurs the second half the spring semester. During the cookout, the final events of the Commanders' Cup, ultimate frisbee and rope tug of war, were played which provided some extra excitement and spirit for everyone. To conclude the event, the JMLC Director, John Sarao, presented the Commanders' Cup to **2LT Paris Manis**, the Suncoast Battalion Commander and **2LT Danielle Delgado**, Army Ultimate Frisbee team leader. In all, everyone enjoyed the great outdoor weather, camaraderie and food prepared by our grill master, **Major Michael Cooper**, of the Army ROTC and salads prepared by **Lori Matthews**, JMLC.



MAJ Cooper grilling the burgers and hotdogs.

2021-2022 Commanders' Cup Champions – Army Suncoast Battalion AGAIN

The Army Suncoast Battalion has now made it four years in a row as the 2021-2022 Commanders' Cup Champions after an extremely close yearlong competition. During the annual Joint Cookout, the three ROTC teams competed in Ultimate Frisbee. Army beat the other services in Ultimate Frisbee forcing a 3-way tie in the Commanders' Cup competition. A Tug of War competition followed as the decisive event with Army coming out on top to claim the Commanders' Cup for another year. The winners of the other competitive events are as follows: Basketball – Army; Soccer – Air Force; Flag Football – Naval; 5k Run – Naval.

After a year with only one competitive event held due to the pandemic, everyone was very happy to get out on the field for some good, fun inter-service competition in a variety of sports. A special thanks to **2LT Claire Synhorst** and **2LT Thai Nguyen**, Army ROTC; **Midshipman Michael**

Thompson, **Midshipman Oliver Musser**, **GySgt Scott Boyett** and **Midshipman Haiden Tavekelian**, Naval ROTC; and **2d Lt Jason Daniels** and **2d Lt Chrisalyn Junkert**, Air Force ROTC who carefully planned and executed all the above events and gained some experience with joint planning at an early stage of their careers.



Students playing cornhole at the Joint Cookout.



Air Force vs. Naval ROTC during Commanders' Cup Basketball.



Soccer Trophy presentation to Air Force ROTC students.



Basketball Trophy presentation to Army ROTC students.

ROTC Senior Celebration

An ROTC Senior Celebration reception was held on Friday, April 15 in the CWY building. The "Celebration" recognizes the Army, Naval and Air Force ROTC students graduating and commissioning into their respective service branch during the 2022 calendar year. During 2022, the USF ROTC programs will commission a total of **87 Second Lieutenants/ Ensigns – 43 Army, 14 USMC, 1 Navy and 26 Air Force**. For the Army, these graduates will enter Air Defense Artillery, Armor, Aviation, Chemical Corps, Field Artillery, Finance, Infantry, Medical Service Corps, Military Police, Ordnance, Quartermaster, Signal, and Transportation branches. For

the Navy and one Marine, selection for Naval Aviation. The remaining USMC 2ndLts will attend The Basic School in Quantico, VA before selection into their respective career fields. For the Air Force, their graduates will enter Air Battle Management, Combat Systems Officer, Contracting, Cyberspace Operations, Force Support, Intelligence, Logistics, Logistics Readiness, Missileer, OSI, Pilot, RPA Pilot and Security Forces. The Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) sponsored the event once again. Special thanks to **Jennie Koutrouba**, Branch Manager of Navy Federal's Tampa office for the financial support and Lori Matthews of the JMLC for preparing the delicious appetizers, sandwiches and desserts enjoyed by all!



Some of the attendees at the Senior Celebration.

ROTC Living Learning Community (LLC)

Overview

This year proved to be a more normal one for the residents of the ROTC LLC compared to last year when there were many restrictions in place for residents to meet indoors or participate in large gatherings outside. Special programming for the LLC was allowed to resume and residents were permitted to meet together and quickly bond as a community. As a result, the overall LLC experience had a very positive impact in the lives of the residents. Throughout the year we had ROTC residents representing all service ROTC units: Army – 7; Naval – 15; Air Force – 12 consisting of 22 males and 12 female ROTC students which is the most female residents the LLC has ever had. Returning residents from the previous year were Army Cadet Dawson Boland; Naval ROTC Midshipmen **Glenn Mims**, **Haiden Tavekelian**, **Micah Prewitt**, **Bronson Hall**, and **Alexis Aponte**; and Air Force Cadets **Sierra Aranda** and **Ethan Nguyen-Do**. This is the third year Cadet Aranda has resided in the LLC and continues to assist her junior cadets.

This year's Resident Advisor (RA) was **Midshipman Luke Merriman**, a second year Marine Option student. Midshipman Merriman is a Business major who handled his duties as an RA in a very professional manner. He was very approachable in his relationships with the LLC residents while balancing his responsibilities as the leader of this community. His residents displayed much respect for him and expressed their enthusiasm for being a part of the LLC.

In addition to the activities discussed below, the residents also went kayaking on the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa and enjoyed a dinner catered by Mission BBQ with Dr. Allison Crume, Dean of Undergraduate Studies in the annual Dinner with the Dean event.



Playing beach volleyball at the Welcome Cookout.



New residents and Faculty in Residence, Dr. Richard Kelso, getting to know each other at the Welcome Cookout.



LLC residents kayaking on the Hillsborough River in downtown Tampa.

Joint Officer Panel

A highlight of the fall semester that was well attended by the residents and provided them an opportunity to hear from commissioned officers with recent leadership of enlisted troops and forward deployed experience. This year's panel was comprised of: **1LT William Connell**, Army ROTC; **LT Jorge Gonzalez** and **2ndLT John Cranston**, Naval ROTC; and, **Capt Ryan London**, Air Force ROTC. After self-introductions by the officer panel, the LLC residents posed many good questions on a variety of topics. Each officer on the panel responded on their unique perspective based on their military specialty and deployment experiences. Some good natured inter-service rivalry was also evident in their responses.

1LT Connell served as an Army ROTC instructor and since has transferred to the Army National Guard. LT Gonzalez is a Nuclear Qualified Submarine Officer who served on the USS MISSISSIPPI (SSN 782). He previously transferred to the Navy as a commissioned officer by way of the Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Program (MECEP) from the University of Houston and is a former Marine Security Guard. 2ndLT Cranston was a SSgt in the Marine Corps and recently commissioned from MECEP and graduated from USF. Capt London initially enlisted in the Air Force and later was commissioned and now serves as an Acquisitions Officer.



Joint Officer panel discussion in the common area of the ROTC LLC in the Maple A residence hall.

LLC Residents visit an Assisted Living Facility on Veterans Day

The Discovery Senior Living Facility requested the assistance of some ROTC students to participate in a brief ceremony to be held at their facility to honor veteran residents and their spouses on Veterans Day, 11 November.

Cadet Alexander Boudreaux, a first year Air Force student, led a team of LLC residents to participate. The ROTC students took part in the ceremony which included the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance, presentation of a POW/MIA table, patriotic songs, and individual recognition of each veteran. The students then met and talked with the veterans and family members at a reception following the ceremony. Both the veterans and the ROTC students thoroughly enjoyed the event. The veterans welcomed the opportunity to meet the next generation of military service members while the students enjoyed hearing the many stories of the older veterans and acknowledging the older veterans' service with gratitude.



ROTC students presenting certificates to veterans at the Discovery Senior Living Facility.



Enlisted Panel members left to right – SFC Ellender, 2ndLt Murphy, 2LT Muñoz, SFC Lujan.

Senior Enlisted Panel Discussion/ Women in Military Service Panel

Due to scheduling issues, we combined these two panel discussions by hosting both male and female senior enlisted members on one panel. Our panel members were **SFC Michael Ellender** and **SFC Justina Lujan** (Army ROTC cadre), **Cadet Teresa Muñoz** (former Army SSG) and **2ndLt Shannon Murphy** (Naval ROTC and former USMC Sgt). The main purpose of the panel is to provide ROTC students the opportunity to hear firsthand enlisted personnel service experiences and perspectives especially regarding working relationships with newly commissioned junior officers. Having female members on the panel added another dimension in learning about their unique experiences and challenges in military service. The discussion was very candid and informative for our ROTC residents.

Scholarship Recipients

CPT Jason Holbrook Memorial Scholarships

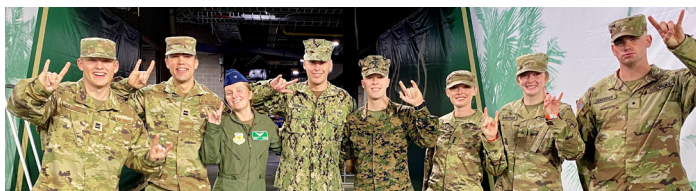
In its 12th year for awarding scholarships, this year's CPT Jason Holbrook Memorial Scholarship recipients are: Army ROTC – **Cadet Miles Tankovich**; Naval ROTC – **Midshipman Michael Thompson**; and, Air Force ROTC – **Cadet Dalton Hongell** and **Cadet Jacob Light**. Each were selected by their respective ROTC instructors based on their superior performance, demonstrated leadership abilities and potential for assuming positions of greater responsibility. The scholarships cover the total cost for each student to attend a nationally recognized leadership conference. Due to the ongoing pandemic, only a few of these leadership conferences were held in person. This year's recipients along with last year's students were formally recognized on

the field during a time out at the annual Salute to Service Football Game. USF Alumni, John and Cindy Harper, set up the CPT Jason Holbrook Memorial Scholarship in memory of their son-in-law, CPT Jason Holbrook, who was KIA in Afghanistan on July 29, 2010.

- Cadet Miles Tankovich was selected from more than 200 Army cadets due to his physical, mental and professional attributes. As a freshman, he routinely leads physical readiness training formations and is an active participant on the prestigious Ranger Challenge Team. Cadet Tankovich's professionalism serves as an example for all to follow and sacrifices personal time to execute voluntary tasks in order to be more proficient while also promoting the winning esprit d'corps.
- Midshipman Michael Thompson is consistently rated a top performer within his class who takes on

challenging roles within his Battalion while majoring in Electrical Engineering. Outside of ROTC, he is a mentor to younger students on campus through USF's Male Empowerment Network and works off campus as a NAUI SCUBA instructor and First Aid/CPR instructor.

- Cadet Dalton Hongell has been a top cadet for over two years consistently ranking among the highest in his academic classes as well as the top 17% amongst his 588 peers at Field Training. He is highly recognized for his intellect, insight and dedication to lead his cadet wing through improvements in training. Cadet Hongell has been integral in preparing underclass Air Force cadets for Field Training. As the cadet officer in charge of two large field training events, he completely rebuilt the exercises to maximize the training impact.
- Cadet Jacob Light has been a top cadet for over two years consistently ranking among the highest in his academic classes as well as the top 17% amongst his 569 peers at Field Training. He is highly recognized for his motivation, dedication, and demonstration of excellence as a military leader. As a Professional Officer Course Cadet Flight Commander, he has direct responsibility for the instruction of younger cadets and performs his duties diligently.



2020 and 2021 CPT Holbrook recipients at the STS Football Game. Left to right: Cadet Light, Cadet Hongell, 2d Lt Hannon, MIDN Thompson, 2ndLt Meyers, 2LT Jackson, Cadet Andersen, Cadet Tankovich.

The 495th Legends Scholarship:

The **495th Legends** set up an endowed scholarship that is awarded to three ROTC students per year, one from each service ROTC. The 495th Legends is a volunteer organization created in 2004 as a not-for-profit company by members of the 495th Transportation Company based in Lakeland, Florida, who served together in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM. This year's scholarship recipients are **Cadet Kannon Acocella** (Army ROTC), **Midshipman Tyler Kessler** (Naval ROTC) and **Cadet Jarod Hendrix** (Air Force ROTC). The recipients are selected by their respective ROTC instructors for outstanding performance in academics, physical training, and professional development. Cadet Acocella earned a 4.0 GPA in

the Fall 2021 semester and is ranked number 1 of 50 cadets in his class across all USF campuses. Midshipman Kessler is a member of the Buccaneer Battalion award winning Drill Team and is highly involved in his unit's community service activities. Cadet Hendrix is training for selection as a Special Warfare Officer and was recently competitively selected for an Air Force grant to earn 15 flight hours at a civilian flight school. To raise money for the endowed scholarship, the 495th Legends hosts several golf tournaments each year.



John Sarao presents award certificate to Cadet Echtermeyer.

JMLC Selfless Service Scholarship:

The JMLC Selfless Service Scholarship receives its funds from the JMLC Brick Program which raises financial support through the sale of personalized bricks in the Pathway to Selfless Service. The Pathway to Selfless Service leads to the main entrance of the C.W. Bill Young Hall (CWY) and was originally donated by the J. Kokolakis Construction company which built the CWY building. This award recognizes one ROTC student from each service ROTC program for demonstrate outstanding performance in leadership positions and/or community service participation and exemplifying self to the highest standards of conduct and the respective service's core values. This year's recipients are **Cadet Trevor Uhlmann** (Army ROTC), **Midshipman Alexis Aponte** (Naval ROTC) and **Cadet Eric Echtermeyer** (Air Force ROTC). Cadet Uhlmann volunteered to participate in many events to include color guard, flag detail, and several hours of cemetery clean-up with the American Foreign Legion. Midshipman Aponte maintained above a 3.50 GPA and an outstanding Physical Fitness grade while also volunteering numerous hours of training with the Buccaneer Battalion Drill Team which finished first in Platoon Armed Drill at the highly competitive Tulane Drill Meet. Cadet Echtermeyer was a highly inspirational Flight Leader who demonstrated outstanding leadership in the 158th Detachment Wing.



John Sarao presents award certificate to Cadet Hendrix.





1. NROTC Halloween Run
2. Army cadets waving the flag at the Salute to Service Basketball Game.
3. Joint Physical Training session.
4. Midn Merriman presents a picture of LLC residents with signatures to Dr. Crume
5. Army Cadets cheer on USF women's basketball team.
6. U.S. Space Force Flag Raised for first time.

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