

THE JOINT MILITARY LEADERSHIP CENTER

2021 NEWSLETTER ■ UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

Special Recognitions

Army ROTC Suncoast Battalion is the 6th BDE MacArthur Award Winner

The University of South Florida Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Program was selected to be the 6th Brigade (BDE) 2020 MacArthur Award winner. This means that the USF Suncoast Battalion is now rated #1 not only in Florida, but in the entire BDE which includes five states (LA, MS, AL, GA and FL). This is a major accomplishment for the university and the cadets/cadre of the Suncoast Battalion. The award recognizes the eight schools, selected from among the 274 senior Army ROTC units nationwide, as the top programs in the country. The awards, presented by Army Cadet Command and the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Foundation, recognize the ideals of "duty, honor and country" as advocated by MacArthur. The award is based on a combination of the achievement of the school's commissioning mission, its cadets' performance and standing on the command's National Order of Merit List and its cadet retention rate. Cadet Command and the MacArthur Foundation have given the awards each year since 1989.



During the award ceremony, the MacArthur Award pennant is attached to the USF Army Suncoast Battalion flag.

Colonel Stephen Ruth of the Army Cadet Command presented the award to **MAJ Tanika Macias**, Army Professor of Military Science and **MSG Christopher Stanifer**, Senior Military Instructor in a ceremony held in the CWY auditorium on 26 April. **Dr. Allison Crume**, Dean of Undergraduate Studies was in attendance to congratulate the Army ROTC cadre and cadets for this prestigious award.

Veteran Student of the Year



At the 5th Annual Honor-A-Bull Awards and Graduation Ceremony, the Office of Veterans Success (OVS) recognized high performing student veterans who have demonstrated success on campus, both academically and personally. **SSgt John Cranston**, a Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) student, was this year's USAA Student Veteran of the Year. "He truly is the epitome of what we expect of our leaders in the community and the military" said Major Larry Black, Jr., Executive Officer and Marine Officer Instructor, Naval ROTC. One of SSgt Cranston's major accomplishments this year was the establishment of the USF Veterans Alumni Society within the USF Alumni Association and his service as its inaugural Chairperson.

Tampa Bay Lightning “Hero of the Game”

Even with all the remaining 2019-2020 NHL Hockey season games being played in a “bubble” far from the Tampa Bay area, the Tampa Bay Lightning remained committed to recognizing local active duty military personnel as the “Hero of the Game” for each game the Lightning played all the way through the playoffs and the Stanley Cup Championship game! The Heroes were recognized virtually at each game with a brief bio, photos of them serving our country and a brief shout out video clip of them rooting for the Lightning – “Go Bolts!”. Marine **SSgt Joshua Marquez**, Naval ROTC, and Army ROTC **Cadet Teresa Munoz** were our Heroes who turned out to be good luck charms as the Lightning were victorious in each of the games they were recognized. Cadet Munoz had the rare opportunity to have her picture taken with the famed Stanley Cup after the team brought it home to Tampa. Cadet Munoz also serves in the Army Reserves as a Light Wheeled Mechanic and Human Resources NCO with deployments to Afghanistan, Kuwait and Jordan. SSgt Marquez is currently a Marine Enlisted Commissioning Program (MECEP) student who previously served and deployed with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Special Purpose Marine Amphibious Group Task Force (MAGTF) Crisis Response in the Middle East.

Live action returned to the Amalie Arena for the 2021 NHL Hockey season. **2LT Kharina Blanco**, Army ROTC Class of 2021 and **MSG Christopher Stanifer**, Senior Military Instructor (SMI), Army ROTC were honored at separate home games at Amalie Arena with friends and family present! 2LT Blanco previously served in the Army as a Staff Sergeant with deployments to Iraq as part of a NATO Battalion and Qatar with the 4th Psychological Operations Group. MSG Stanifer is a Combat Engineer with multiple deployments to Iraq including the 2003 invasion of Iraq.



Cadet Teresa Munoz with the Stanley Cup and Tampa Bay Lightning mascot, ThunderBug.

Sandhurst Military Skills Competition

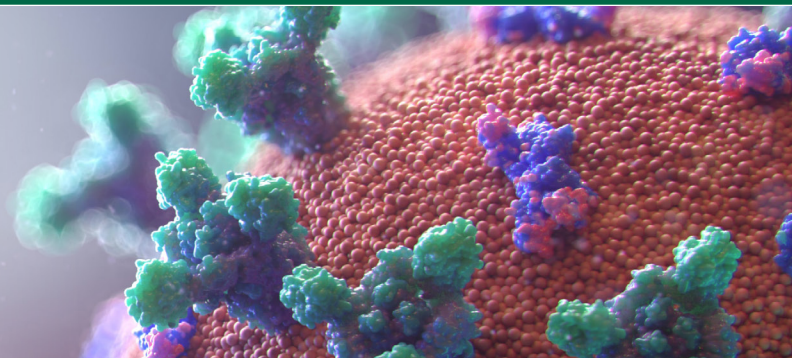


The Army Suncoast Battalion was one of 16 ROTC units nationwide to compete in this prestigious annual event which took place at the U.S. Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, NY on 16-17 April. Since its inception in 1967, The Sandhurst Military Skills Competition promotes military excellence of future leaders worldwide. This year 44 teams representing 25 USMA teams, 16 ROTC programs and three other service academies competed in a rigorous 36-hour course to test warrior spirit, team cohesion, and dedication to mission accomplishment. This was the first year that USF was represented and the Suncoast Battalion finished 17th overall... Well Done!

The Suncoast Battalion team get ready to start the Crucible event during the Sandhurst competition.

COVID-19

Impact of COVID Pandemic on ROTC



The 2020-2021 Academic Year has been unique in so many ways courtesy of the pandemic. For both the Fall and Spring semesters, the university as a whole transitioned to primarily remote instruction but did permit hybrid modes of instruction and some in person classes. For the Army, Naval and Air Force ROTC curriculum, each of their courses were basically taught in a hybrid mode. The majority of classes were in person but the hybrid mode permitted some students to take a class remotely as needed. The ROTC courses easily transitioned to full remote after Thanksgiving to complete the fall semester and after Spring Break to complete the spring semester as required by the university. All on campus classrooms were reduced to 25% capacity with instructors and students required to wear masks and maintain 6 ft physical separation during the class. Even with the reduced classroom capacity, the moveable walls within the CWY ROTC dedicated classrooms gave us the flexibility to permit the majority of ROTC students in a particular class to be physically present.

Recent technology upgrades in the classroom made remote participation possible through the use of Microsoft Teams software and newly installed video cameras in the classroom. Through the use of this technology, students attending the class remotely are able to fully participate along with the students inside the classroom.

Physical training (PT) on the other hand was more challenging for each ROTC unit. For the majority of the year, the university did not permit groups greater than 10 persons to be together for PT in a particular area with all persons wearing masks and keeping 6 ft physical separation. Each ROTC unit had to navigate this requirement in different ways which limited their ability to fully train and conduct PT tests as part of their programs and for some periods of time in the fall were not even allowed to conduct PT on campus at all. Except when performing physically demanding exercises, masks were required to be worn. All university campus events were either cancelled or were held virtually. As a result, events such as the Patriot Day Joint Run, Homecoming Running of the Bulls Parade,

JMLC/ROTC Open House as part of Family & Friends Weekend, Commanders' Cup team sporting events among others were cancelled. Each ROTC unit did showcase a video about their program specifically for Family & Friends Weekend.

ROTC student participation in the annual Salute to Service Football game was planned to include the Joint Color Guard and a limited number of ROTC students in the stands but the game was cancelled due to an outbreak of the pandemic amongst some members of the USF football team. The Army and Naval ROTC Color Guards did participate in other home football games but did not actually march on the field and instead displayed the colors during the National Anthem in the Pirate Cove area located in the northside end zone near the Buccaneers' pirate ship.

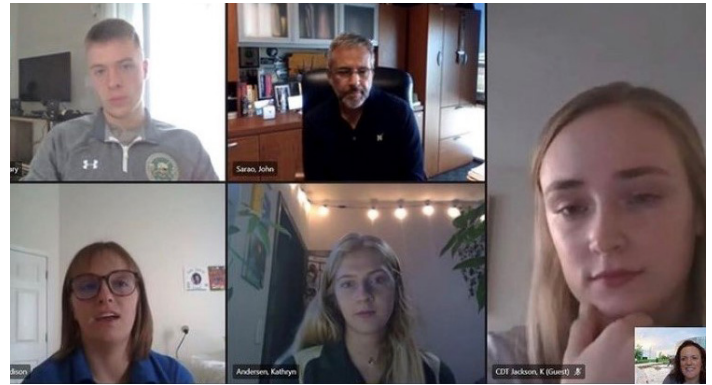


A Naval ROTC Leadership Lab being conducted inside the CWY Kokolakis Auditorium.

Scholarship Recipients

CPT Jason Holbrook Memorial Scholarships

- This year's CPT Jason Holbrook Memorial Scholarship recipients are: Army ROTC – **Cadet Kathryn Andersen** and **Cadet Kaylee Jackson**; Naval ROTC – **Midshipman Zachary Myers**; and, Air Force ROTC – **Cadet Madison Hannon**. Each were selected by their respective ROTC instructors based on their superior performance, demonstrated leadership abilities and potential for assuming positions of greater responsibility. Due to the pandemic, these students will be formally recognized at the 2021 Salute to Service Football game along with next year's awardees. The scholarship will cover the total cost for each student to attend a nationally recognized leadership conference. Past awardees have attended the Air Force Academy's National Character and Leadership Symposium (NCLS); the Naval Academy's Leadership Conference and West Point's National Conference on Ethics in America (NCEA) among others. 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. The scholarship was initially awarded in the spring of 2011. This brings the total number of scholarships awarded to 50 ROTC students!
- Cadet Kathryn Andersen was selected from more than 200 Army cadets due to her physical, mental and professional attributes. She is one of the first cadets to volunteer during physical readiness training and is always eager to learn how to improve performance on the new Army Combat Fitness Test. Mentally, she is far ahead of her peers as she relentlessly works to become more proficient, both tactically and technically, in the Warrior Tasks and Drills while completing both Military Science I and II as a compression cadet. Finally, her professionalism serves as an example for all to follow. Whether it is in class or in her personal life, CDT Andersen always portrays self-control, determination, and self-confidence in everything she does. Her goal is to serve as an Army Nurse.
- Cadet Kaylee Jackson was selected for her outstanding physical, mental, and professional attributes. She is a mentor to her subordinate cadets on all training events and is consistently far ahead of her peers. Cadet Jackson volunteers for the difficult tasks or positions to include being the cadet Company First Sergeant



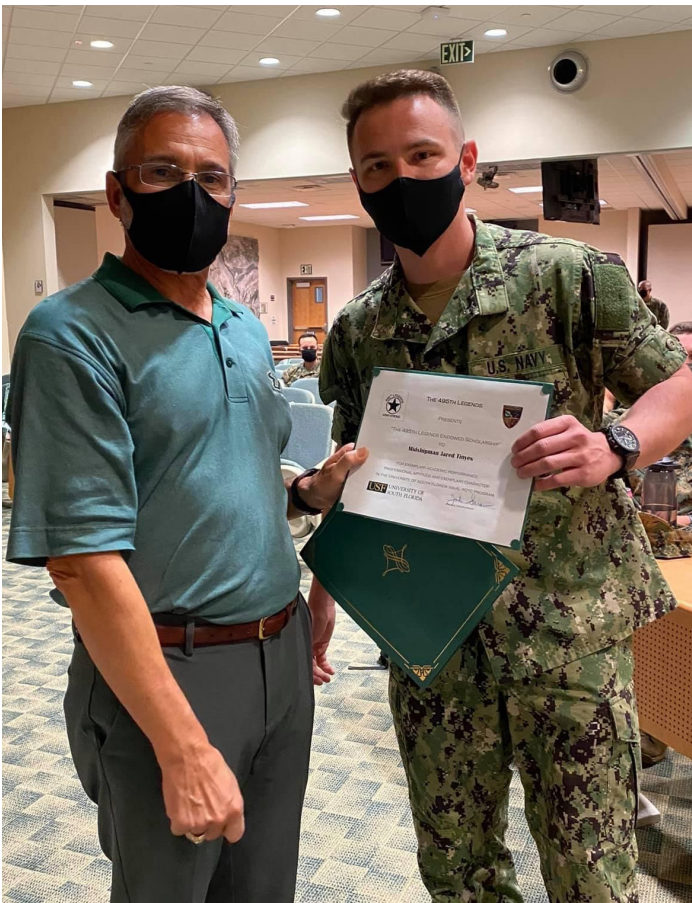
Scholarship recipients meet via TEAMS with Dr. Allison Crume, Dean of Undergraduate Studies and John Sarao, Director of the Joint Military Leadership Center.

and ensures the unit meets and exceeds all standards. Outside of ROTC, Cadet Jackson is a member of the USF Cheerleading team.

- Midshipman Zachary Myers excelled academically and is ranked at the top of his NROTC class. He has held leadership positions as communications officer and operations officer for the Battalion where he was in charge of the overall planning, coordination, and execution of numerous activities. As commander of the Color Guard program, he has participated in 28 Color Guard evolutions. He distinguished himself at the Tulane University national drill meet in March 2019 and 2020, where he received high marks as part of the color guard, personnel inspection, and armed basic drill. His color guard team finished in second place out of 18 teams at the March 2019 competition. His goal is to commission as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps and serve as a Human Intelligence/Counterintelligence Officer.
- Cadet Madison Hannon has consistently ranked as a top performer in the Air Force 158th Cadet Wing. She is known for her positive attitude and service-before-self leadership style. Her excellence in leadership was validated during Summer 2020 Field Training as evaluators described her as possessing "excellent command presence that draws flight members to her" and a leader relentlessly committed to improving herself and her flight. Outside ROTC, Cadet Hannon loves to compete as a member of the USF Women's Rugby Team and USF Weightlifting Club all while routinely volunteering at the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Cadet Hannon hopes to be a pilot in the Air Force.

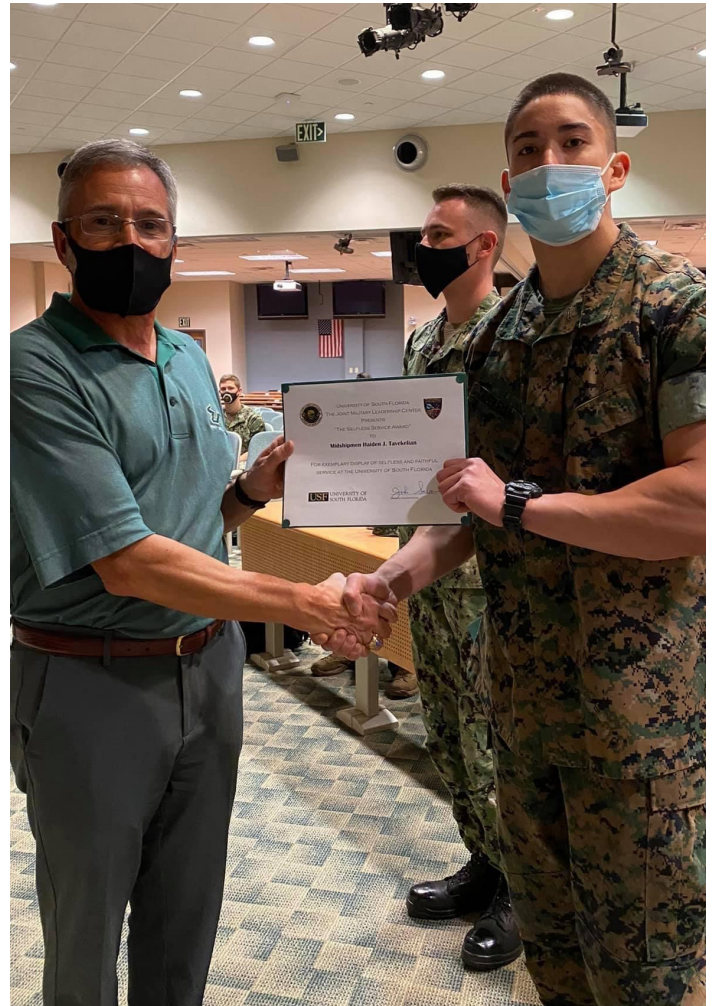
The 495th Legends Scholarship:

This year's recipients of the 495th Legends Scholarship in the amount of \$500 are **Cadet Cyan Rodriguez** (Army ROTC), **Midshipman Jared Tinyes** (Naval ROTC) and **Cadet Nicolas Novak** (Air Force ROTC). Each recipient was selected by their respective ROTC instructors for outstanding performance in academics, physical training, and professional development. **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. The 495th Legends hosts several golf tournaments each year as their main fundraising effort including a Veterans Day Golf Tournament in Zephyrhills. Cadet Rodriguez excelled in both academic and physical fitness. She volunteered multiple hours at a local community food pantry to support families with food insecurities. Midshipman Tinyes excelled academically and stood out among his peers in both maturity and leadership skills. Cadet Novak is a service minded individual who has helped USF International students with their transition and donated multiple hours to the Goodwill organization and Tampa General Hospital.



495th Legends Award presentation to MIDN Tinyes.

JMLC Selfless Service Award:



JMLC Selfless Service Award presentation to MIDN Tavekelian.

The 2021 recipients of the JMLC Selfless Service Award are **Cadet Kathryn Andersen** (Army ROTC), **Midshipman Haiden Tavekelian** (Naval ROTC) and **Cadet Jaylen Lacy** (Air Force ROTC). This award recognizes one ROTC student from each service ROTC program for demonstrating outstanding leadership and exemplifying self to the highest standards of conduct and the respective service's core values. Cadet Andersen is far ahead of her peers as she relentlessly works to become more proficient, both tactically and technically, in the Warrior Tasks and Drills while completing both Military Science I and II as a compression cadet. Midshipman Tavekelian serves his community by organizing and leading multiple service events and has served over 100 hours of voluntary service. Cadet Lacy led her detachment in community service and ROTC volunteer hours including assisting at USF Track and Field Meets and as part of the unit's Color Guard and Arnold Air Society.

Joint Events

2020-2021 Commanders' Cup Champions– Army Suncoast Battalion “Three-peats”

The Army's Suncoast Battalion makes it a record three years in a row and retains ownership of the Commanders' Cup trophy. This year's Commanders' Cup competition was reduced to a single cross-fit team event due to the inability to play any team sports such as flag football and soccer due to the pandemic. The event was called “The Murph” a modified cross-fit competition named in memory of LT Michael P. Murphy a Navy SEAL awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Each team consisted of 3 students from each ROTC unit. The Army team of **Cadets Yovani Cabrera, Mason Orellana and Madelyn Shafer** were the winners. The other contestants were the Naval ROTC Buccaneer Battalion team of Marine **SSgt Julia Cook, Midshipmen Kristopher Ribbecky and Haiden Tavekelian;** and Air Force ROTC 158th Cadet Wing **Cadets Dalton Hongell, Jonathan Villegas and Madison Hannon.** Each team completed a 1 mile run followed by 100 burpees, 200 push-ups, 300 leg squats and another 1 mile run. All the competitors displayed outstanding team work, determination and grit in completing the event. They are definitely some of the most physically fit and mentally tough USF ROTC students.



Cadets Madelyn Shafer and Mason Orellana hold the Commanders' Cup Trophy presented during an Army ROTC Leadership Lab held at the off-campus Joint Training Area.

A special thanks to **2LT Nohely Calle** and **Alejandra (Lozano) Mann**, Army ROTC; **SSgt Joshua Marquez** and **Midshipman Alexander Kennedy**, Naval ROTC; and **Cadets Alexander Bremmer** and **Chrisalyn Junkert**, Air Force ROTC who carefully planned and executed the event.

ROTC Living Learning Community (LLC)



Some of our LLC residents hanging out in the common area.

Overview

Now in its tenth year, this has been an especially challenging year for the ROTC LLC. The USF Residential Life Education team successfully navigated through the year to provide much needed support and a safe environment to the residents in the face of the pandemic while maintaining a strong sense of community and programming in a variety of ways. Due to the pandemic, housing occupancy for the university was down to approximately 60% but in the ROTC LLC, we were at 75% occupancy. Several students cancelled their housing contracts during the summer when the university announced that a majority of academic classes would be held virtually. Throughout the year we had ROTC residents representing all service ROTC units: Army – 6; Naval – 7;

Air Force – 8 consisting of 15 males and 8 female ROTC students. Returning residents from the previous year were Army Cadets **Trevor Derry**, **Caleb Phelps** and **Nick Trimble** and Air Force Cadets **Sierra Aranda** and **Evan Cabble**.

This year's Resident Advisor (RA) was Air Force Cadet **Jonathan Villegas** who served as an RA for a general population residence hall last year. Jonathan did a great job in engaging and keeping in close contact with the residents throughout the year even with the limited ability to have in-person events or large gatherings. Jonathan's personal goal is to be selected into the Air Force Special Operations community.

During the course of the academic year, the university did not permit the conduct of any in person events other than academic classroom instruction. As a result, all LLC programming was virtual using Microsoft Teams and we were not able to have some of our favorite social events such as the Welcome Cookout or Dinner with the Dean.

Joint Officer Panel



Screen shot of the Women in Military Service Panel.

This was the highlight of the fall semester. Even as a virtual event, this provided the LLC residents the opportunity to hear from commissioned officers with recent leadership of enlisted troops and forward deployed experience. This year's panel was comprised of: **CPT Douglas Davis**, Army ROTC; **Maj Larry Black** and **LT Nore Habib**, Naval ROTC; and, **Capt Marcus Koskosky**, 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.

CPT Davis initially enlisted in the Army but later became a commissioned officer via the Green to Gold program at Texas A&M university and is a Transportation Officer with two deployments in Iraq. LT Habib is a Naval Aviator flying the H-60 helicopter and served multiple at sea deployments. Maj Black initially enlisted in the Marine Corps Reserves and later became a commissioned officer via the Marine Platoon Leader Course (PLC) and is a USF alumnus. He is an Infantry Officer and has deployed to Afghanistan and the Southern Pacific. Capt Koskosky initially enlisted in the Air Force and later was commissioned and serves as an Acquisitions Officer.

Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Discussion

This virtual event featured **Sgt Shannon O'Connor**, a Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program (MECEP) student in the Naval ROTC program. She was a Combat Engineer stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC and deployed as part of the Black Sea Rotational Force to Romania. Subsequent to her selection to the MECEP program, she attended Officer Candidate School at Quantico, VA and graduated in the top 10% of her class. She provided some valuable advice, shared some of her own experiences and gave some good insight from an enlisted perspective to our future officers.

Women in Military Service Panel

We are very fortunate to have three female officers assigned at USF for ROTC. All three were a part of this virtual panel discussion with our LLC residents. **Lt Col Kelley Jeter**, Air Force ROTC; **MAJ Tanika Macias**, Army ROTC; and **LT Ines Hixon**, Naval ROTC. These officers led a very open discussion about the challenges and opportunities they experienced during their service and each shared a unique perspective based on their individual career paths and length of service. Both MAJ Macias and Lt Col Jeter have prior enlisted service and each over 20 years of active duty. Lt Col Jeter is a Public Affairs officer who was stationed in South Korea just before coming to USF and has deployed to different areas in the Middle East, Africa and Europe. MAJ Macias is a Chemical Corps Officer who was stationed at Fort Knox, KY just prior to coming to USF with multiple deployments to the Middle East and served as an ROTC instructor at Howard University. LT Hixon is a USF NROTC 2015 alumnae and a former resident of the ROTC LLC. She is a Naval Flight Officer (NFO) in the E-2C Hawk-eye aircraft and just returned from deployment with Airborne Command & Control Squadron (VAW-116) on the USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) before reporting to USF.





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1. August 2019 First Day of Fall classes
2. August 2020 First Day of Fall classes
3. TBL Hero Cadet Blanco

4. Sandhurst Crucible Finish
5. Air Force ROTC drill
6. AROTC Memorial Day Ceremony

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