

CADET CORPS PRESS RELEASE September 5, 2022

The following information is a summary of the many accomplishments of our Cadets recently. Please review as we plan to send to local news agencies.

The Cadets of California Cadet Corps, Rosamond High School (RHS) and Tropico Middle School (TMS) , have been very active in recent weeks and months. The following are some of their significant accomplishments:

The Cadet Corps story started in 1911 under the leadership of General Edwin A. Forbes to increase the number of young leaders to serve our nation. A California National Guard Youth program, Cadet Corps has survived every war, pandemic, and national crisis and continues to grow in challenging times.

The Cadet Corps story began in Rosamond in 2019, when a great tradition of AFJROTC came to a close. An internet post of a once troubled young Cadet receiving a full ROTC scholarship to UCLA got the attention of Rosamond administration and a new opportunity came to Rosamond students.

Since then, Cadet Corps has not only filled that space, but excelled beyond our expectations, some accomplishments include:

- More than 250 Cadets have been part of the program, in addition to many more at TMS.
- Cadets performed over 200 hours of community and school service in the past year.
- Cadets received a Superior rating for the second year of their Annual General Inspection
- Cadets went above and beyond to ensure students with special needs and English Learners were fully integrated into the program.

Of special note, 2022 Graduate and Cadet Commander Kaya Cuellar was awarded the 23rd Congressional Merit Award. Kaya navigated and inspired her peers through the end of AFJROTC and the start of Cadet Corps. She moved from Cadet Sergeant, to Executive Officer during Covid and Zoom, to Battalion and Brigade Commander. She was the first Cadet in CACC History to earn the prestigious Recondo badge. Recondo is a new program that Cadet Corps introduced that blends leadership with the physical rigors of the outdoors. She was also awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the second highest award in the program. Kaya carried out her duties while also playing volleyball, leading her Soccer team as their Captain, and taking college courses. Although graduated, she attended summer camp and commanded the 300+ Cadet "Beast" (BST - "Bear, Sword, and Torch") regiment this summer, as well as the Mountaineering unit, which under her leadership was awarded the Encampment Honor Unit. Kaya was also promoted to Cadet Colonel, the highest rank in Cadet Corps. Even with all that, as she prepared to leave for college, she attended the extremely rigorous Survival Training, which includes 20 hours of classroom instruction, 12 hours of field instruction, and 10 miles of hiking, and earned the prestigious Red Beret. She will leave soon for UC Santa Barbara and joins their Army ROTC. She has forever left a high mark and standard for future Cadet leaders to aspire to.

Additional accomplishments from RHS Cadets include:

- More than 50 Rosamond Cadets attend Summer Encampment at Camp San Luis Obispo. Many Rosamond Cadets earned special recognition. Cadets completed Medic training, Drill Instructor Training, Law Enforcement, Marksmanship, Mountaineering, Recondo, Cyber Security and Public Safety. Seven RHS Cadets completed the very rigorous Survival Training and earned the prestigious Red Beret.
- Several RHS Cadets are now serving in our Armed Services, Navy, Army, Air Force and Marines. Others are attending college or working in the workforce using the Cadet Corps principles of servant leadership.
- Our Cadets helped develop the elite Recondo training. Kaya Cuellar was the first ever to earn the award. Elias Luna was selected as the Recondo commander. The training was rigorous and challenging. In the end, they stood proud. Although everyone did not earn the award, everyone was inspired. For example, a young Cadet was having a tough time with many events. She felt like giving up. With the personal attention from leaders, she gained confidence. On the final day, she completed the 65 foot rappel with joyful tears.
- Out of more than 500 Cadets and nine encampment units, three were commanded by RHS Cadets. Drill and Ceremony by Ryan Melchers, who was awarded Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Academy Honor Cadet. Mountaineering was led by Kaya Cuellar and awarded the Honor Unit. Elias Luna was chosen as Honor Cadet Officer for Recondo.
- This summer RHS Cadets completed the very challenging Survival training. For one week, Cadets have a blanket, water bottle, and a meal. They learn survival techniques but also how to overcome mental and physical adversity. They ended the week with a powerful and moving ceremony standing in front of the Pacific Ocean at the Guadalupe Preserve to earn the prestigious Red Beret.
- Kaydon Sjodin and Ryan Melchers and were part of the second year Advanced Survival. They learned advanced techniques such as drying fruit. One of the highlights was teaching the Basic cadets. Some of the Cadets who were struggling early in the week were able to give an outstanding class on Mental Health.
- Cadets also served as Field Medics during camps and events which dealt with many challenging situations. Through the commander and Cadet leadership, they learned skills to deal with emergencies and save lives. These skills not only help as Cadets, but for life. Kaydon Sjodin now serves as the 10th Corps State Security Officer (S2) and oversees more than 100 Cadets and medics in safety and security.

- Multiple cadets participated in the outstanding marksmanship program. Many have earned the Expert rating. This program emphasizes safety and proper use of firearms. Cadets are also able to compete in state competitions up to Olympic level competitions. Our hope is to develop a competitive marksmanship program at RHS. This program would be conducted in the highest safety standards. We have great resources in CACC to help us move forward.
- Several Cadets completed the rigorous Medic Training. Cadets who complete the Medic training are instructed by some of the best paramedics and EMTs - many of which are prior cadets themselves, now Alumni. Those who qualify are awarded the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) Certification through the American Red Cross and wear the Medic badge. Along with Medic training, we also have CPR and Community Emergency Response Training (CERT) Training. Our plans for the coming year are to incorporate this training into our classes to have more qualified Cadets to assist with school safety and prepare for future career opportunities. In addition, Cadet Corps will be adding a Wildland Firefighter course through CalFire and the California State Guard wildland firefighting unit, Team Blaze.
- Another amazing highlight is one of our Rosamond Cadets, Brian Mateo, was able to participate in a trip to India as part of a cultural exchange among many Cadets from many nations. Over 14 countries participated in this program aimed at promoting a cross-cultural exchange of ideas among the participating youth, promoting understanding of international cultures, tolerance, and developing an appreciation for universal ideals of social cohesion. Cadet Mateo completed Summer Encampment, Survival, and the India trip this summer.

This semester, we will focus on leadership opportunities for Cadets through school and community service. Some events planned are the Armed Forces Day Parade, Xtreme Team Challenge, Color Guard, Veterans Day Ceremony, Holiday Parades, and Wreaths Across America.

When the great tradition of Air Force JROTC came to end in 2019, many young Cadets lost hope. Cadet Hailee Prestidge said, "Cadet Corps become was only hope." Today, more than 300 Cadets are part of the Rosamond High and Tropico Middle School programs.

What makes Cadet Corps work are the Cadets. Cadets like Robert Carter, who struggled early in high school, now serving in the U.S. Navy. Cadets like Angel Rojas, in his own words a "knucklehead" in middle school, now a U.S. Marine. Cadets like Matthew Torres, at one time a trouble maker, now leading and helping other Cadets as an adult mentor.

As you can see, Cadet Corps is much more than leadership and military training. We are training future leaders in the workforce and community. We are excited for the future and thankful for Cadet Corps. We are very thankful for the support of our school district, administration, board, and community. We could not be here today without your support.

Many photos and videos can be found in Cadet Corps Media pages at

<https://linktr.ee/hqcacc>



SUMMER CAMP CADETS

Kaya Cuellar, Commander, Mountaineering, Honor Unit
Kaydon Sjodin, 10th Corps Head Field Medic
Jildardo Corona, Marksmanship, U.S. Navy
Abram Miron, Certified Medic
Elana Williams, Certified Medic
Addison Coy, Certified Medic
Trenton Mackabee, Marksmanship, 1st Sergeant
Ryan Melchers, Drill Instructor, NCOIC
Jeremiah Garrett, Drill Instructor
Jahshua Schaeffer, Drill Instructor
Melanie Foster, Law Enforcement
Ethan Bailey, Law Enforcement
Ezra Rodriguez, Mountaineering
Isabel Taylor, Drill Instructor
Eliias Luna, Recondo, Commander, Honor Cadet
Lance Ambriz, Recondo
Morgan Peterson, Recondo
Micaela Lopez, Recondo
Jacob Powell, Certified Medic
Isaac Guittierez, Marksmanship
Caylen Bryant, Marksmanship
Ace Lopera, Marksmanship
Geronimo Bitolas, Mountaineering
Lanesa Willis, Law Enforcement

SURVIVAL TRAINING

Kaydon Sjodin - Advanced
Ryan Melchers - Advanced
Lanesa Willis - Basic
Ezra Rodriguez - Basic
Kaya Cuellar - Basic
Melanie Foster - Basic
Brian Mateo - Basic
Charles Willis

Respectfully,

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