



MOUNTAINEER NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025



Mountaineer Alumni,

What an incredible start to the school year here in the Mountaineer Battalion!

MSG Sinnott, our Senior Military Science Instructor, and I are excited to share a few highlights from an action-packed fall semester and the outstanding work of our Cadets.

I'm **Lieutenant Colonel Zach Jones**, the new Professor of Military Science for the Mountaineer Battalion. I'm an Infantry Officer with experience in Light, Airborne, and Stryker infantry units, as well as Special Operations. As an ROTC graduate myself, it's a privilege to return to where it all began—and to serve in what I believe is the best Army ROTC program in the Nation. Find my biography here: [link](#)



Training and Events

We kicked off the year welcoming **133 Cadets**, including **60 new Mountaineers** joining us from freshman through junior year. Since August, the Battalion has executed a demanding and rewarding training calendar:

- **Fall FTX at the Mountain Training Facility in Crossnore, NC**
- **Combat Water Survival Training (CWST)**
- **Multiple 6- and 9-mile ruck marches** on the Boone Greenway
- **Dining-In** and team-building events
- **Land Navigation training** at Vannoy Farm
- **Marksmanship training** at the Watauga Gun Club
- **Commandos' Tactical Training of the Individual Soldier (TTIS)**

Fall FTX Highlights (Crossnore Mountain Training Facility)

Cadets began with marksmanship training at the Watauga Gun Club before heading to the Mountain Training Facility, where they honed their tactical and technical skills in radio communications, machine gun operations, grenade employment, land navigation, and tactical combat casualty care. Next, Cadets conducted squad-level battle drills emphasizing tactics, teamwork, and leadership under pressure. The weekend ended with a **three-mile Battalion Run** to the top of the mountain (*top picture*).





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Commando Tactical Training of the Individual Soldier (TTIS)

In early October, the Commandos completed their annual TTIS, a rigorous test of small-unit tactics, endurance, and pure Mountaineer grit. **Twelve candidates completed TTIS!**



Leadership Labs



Our MSIIIs (juniors) have been focused on preparing for **Cadet Summer Training 2026**, emphasizing squad patrolling, mission planning, and planning. At the end of November, we will execute our Super Lab, a continuous 48-hour exercise consisting of platoon patrolling lanes.

Initiatives

Holistic Health and Fitness (H2F) Program – We're enhancing our health and fitness program by partnering with graduate students in athletics and kinesiology to help Cadets perform at their best—both in the classroom and in the field. Beginning in January, MSIIIs will receive **1-on-1 fitness, mental, and nutritional coaching** in preparation for CST.



Looking Ahead

Pershing Rifles (PR)— This week is the PR's blackjack week, culminating with a ruck to the top of Howards Knob! More to follow in the next Newsletter!

Commissioning Ceremony— *Saturday, December 13th* at the Student Union. Five Cadets will commission as Second Lieutenants. If you'd like to attend, please contact **CPT Sam Snelson** at snelsonsj@appstate.edu.

Brigade Ranger Challenge— *February 20–22* at Fort Pickett, VA. Follow our social media for updates and results!

Heroes Week:



Join us for Heroes week! Heroes week will begin with the Veterans Day Ceremony at B.B. Dougherty on *November 11th at 9:00 a.m.*, and includes the **Heroes Day Tailgate** hosted by the Military Affairs Council on *Saturday, November 22nd at 11:30 a.m.* (for details [click here](#)).

Stay Connected

Thank you for your continued support of the Mountaineer Battalion and the future leaders of our Army. Stay in touch through our [website](#) or follow us on **Instagram** and **Twitter** at **@AppRotc** and **#AppStateROTC**.

