



Paws up

**A Loyola / Towson ROTC
Alumni Newsletter**

Fall 2023

State of the Battalion

The Greyhound Battalion has seen an influx of over fifty new cadets this semester. Coming into the Fall, our total number of cadets was 101, which is a 35% increase compared to the year prior.

With all these new faces, the program has seen an expansion of experience and growth during our lab and PT sessions. Some of the labs the Battalion has held this semester includes Land Navigation, Platoon Attack, and Patrol Base Operations.

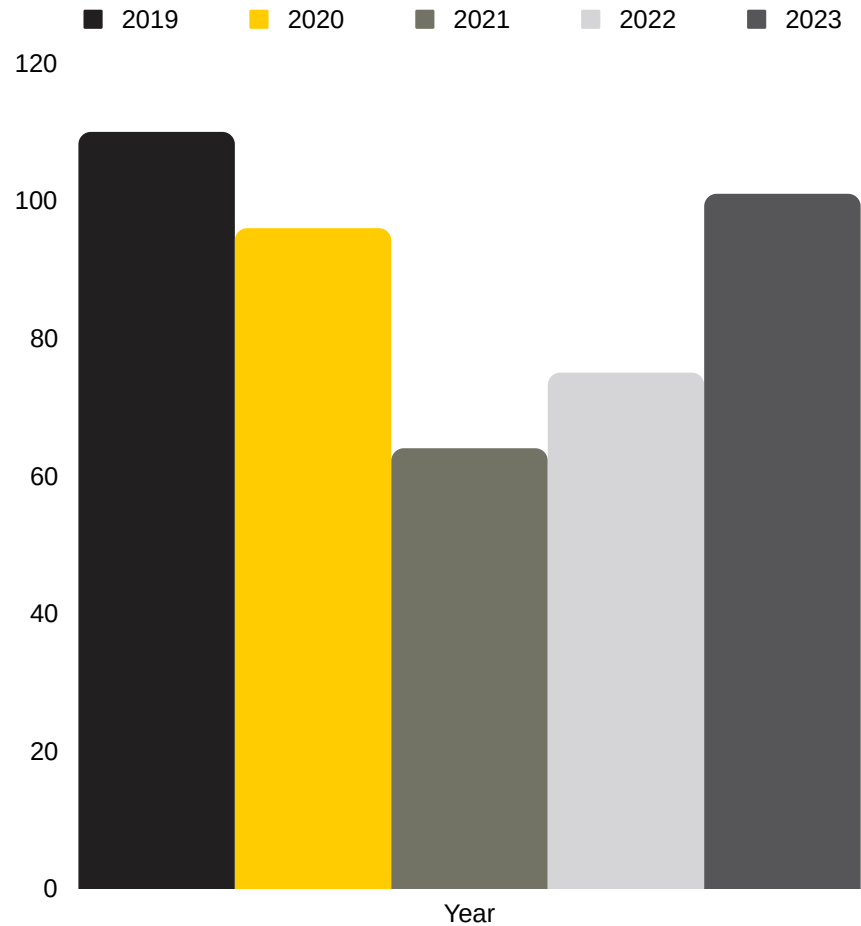


Photo Credits: CDT Nina Huff and 2LT Elle White

Rayyan Saghir: Back from Basic Training

“I still remember writing a blunt “No” when asked whether I’d consider the military in a survey I took in high school,” sophomore Rayyan Saghir mentions to me with a smile as we eat dinner at Loyola. Still in his uniform from lowering the campus’ American flag for the weekend, it’s obvious that his initial answer shifted.

“It was my friend who told me to keep an open mind and see the Army booth at our college fair. If it wasn’t for that I wouldn’t be in the position I am now,” he tells me.

The biology major’s open mind allowed him to take a chance and create a wildly unique story that has been compelling for the entire Greyhound Battalion to witness.

Born a few hours south of London, Saghir spent much of his time playing soccer in the street and moving from one area to another with his family. It wasn’t until 2016, when they relocated to Maryland, where he was able to solidify himself in one spot.

Fueled by a desire to learn, Saghir graduated from high school and enlisted in the Army to help pay for his tuition at Loyola. He spent a semester at the university before heading to Fort Sill, Oklahoma to begin his Basic Training.



In the frigid, unforgiving winter, Saghir's class was pushed to the brink with rucks, physical assessments, and tactical evaluations. The sophomore credits his ability to power through those tough moments with the bonds he forged with those around him, asserting "I considered them family. In those types of environments, you build relationships like none other. It's not easy to say you spent ten weeks of being punished together, being tear gassed together, sleeping in the woods in the freezing weather of Oklahoma together."

Saghir was not only able to graduate with his class, but also earn his US citizenship before heading to his Advanced Individual Training in San Antonio, Texas, where he became proficient in intense combat medic instruction.

Now back at Loyola, Saghir utilizes the same open mind that allowed him to learn more about the military to excel in the ROTC program. Continuously inquisitive, the West Yorkshire native can be seen asking questions to MS4s or cadre and expanding his tactical understanding. He finds ways to push himself in both the field and classroom, with the goal of "becoming a better leader" always in mind. Saghir's story presents the unrelenting amount of opportunity that can be found within the Army and importance of taking a chance.



Cadet and Cadre Leadership

Each semester, cadets are selected in leadership positions to challenge their abilities and propel the Battalion forward. The highest assignments that a cadet can hold lies in the “Big Three”, which consists of the Battalion Commander, Executive Officer, and Command Sergeant Major. Those selected for these roles are highly motivated and act as the intermediaries between the cadre and cadets. This fall, cadets Meadows, Coleman, and Ounnarath have been appointed these jobs and have been acting diligently to lead the Battalion. Here is a little more about them:



Nick Meadows Battalion Commander

Hometown: La Plata, Maryland

University: Towson

Major: Criminal Justice



Brian Coleman Executive Officer

Hometown: Hudson, Ohio

University: Loyola

Major: Mechanical Engineering



**Molrakot Ounnarath
Command Sergeant Major**

Hometown: Abingdon, Maryland

University: Towson

Major: Business Administration

Getting It In With CDT Danny Dick



In between the clanging of dumbbells and the humming of treadmills is CDT Danny Dick. Leading the Battalion's Weightlifting Fundamentals group, he goes over the workout of the day in a set of Army PTs and high, black socks. "Seeing people around me getting it in makes me want to get it in too," he echoes to me as he slides onto a lifted bench and takes his next set at the shoulder press, throwing up his numbers with a level of experienced fervency.

In formation, the twenty-seven-year-old's puffed chest and stoic demeanor compliments his Combat Infantryman's Badge well, making him easily identifiable in a formation of restless and, at times, ill-disciplined officers in training. What allows for the seasoned soldier to be in the Battalion is the Army's "Green to Gold" program, which enables enlisted personnel to study at university and commission into an officer role.

When I asked him his motivations on becoming a Green to Gold member, Dick explained how he will not only get an education, but he'll "be able to develop as a leader and be put into a position to better help the soldiers" around him.

As he helps me squeeze out a few extra reps on my exercise, the former Drill Instructor details his beginning in the Army. “I originally wanted to be a cop. The plan was to join the infantry in a combat role and then use that to bolster my chances of getting the job as a police officer.”

Since joining up in 2015, Dick has gone on to attend military training such as Pathfinder and Drill Instructor school as well as be deployed to Afghanistan, where his unit was a part of Operation Green Sword, which strategically utilized U.S conventional and Special Operational forces with Afghan National Security Forces to eliminate members of the Islamic State of Khorasan (ISK). According to General Nicholson in his press briefing to the Department of Defense, these series of operations helped reduce the ISK force by “25 to 30 percent, or roughly 500 Islamic State Khorasan casualties.”



Outside of the Military, improving his fitness has been a consistent part of the Criminal Justice major’s life. “I was a 240-pound kid with low self-esteem,” he describes. “The gym allowed me to work on myself and see real results.” Today Dick works as a personal fitness trainer and utilizes his bodybuilding experience to aid others in their fitness journeys.

Towards the end of our workout, Dick described to me how a “good leader is there for his soldiers” and gets them invested in wanting the overall mission to succeed. “I want to be that kind of leader,” he tells me, getting in his last set of lateral raises.



Photo Credits: CDT Nina Huff and CDT Danny Dick

Alumni spotlight

Recently, two alumni from the Greyhound Battalion, LT Jack Drengwitz and 2LT Grady Kershaw, were recognized with the Expert Infantryman Badge from their units. The badge itself holds a rich history, dating back to its inception by Chief of Staff George C. Marshall in 1944. Candidates for the award must pass an array of requirements which include a day and night land navigation course, earning an “expert” qualification on the range, a twelve-mile foot march, and intensive testing in individual tasks. Drengwitz and Kershaw etch their names into the award’s illustrious backstory and make their former program proud with their work!



Jack Drengwitz

Loyola Class of 2021



2LT Grady Kershaw

Towson Class of 2022