

UC SANTA BARBARA

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[Keith Hamm](#)

Promoting adaptability and compassion, Army ROTC Surfrider Battalion commissions new officers to ‘serve those they lead’

The sun made a valiant effort to burn through the afternoon gray as 16 UC Santa Barbara Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) cadets were commissioned to the rank of second lieutenant during a graduation ceremony at Goleta Beach.

The June 16 event, attended by more than 200 friends and family, recognized the accomplishments of UCSB’s Surfrider Battalion and praised their adaptability and compassion.

“We need your leadership,” said Lieutenant Colonel Eric Kunak, retiring professor and chair of UCSB’s Department of Military Science. “The learning does not stop when you pin on those gold bars (of a second lieutenant).”

Many of the newly commissioned officers will be attending officer training courses in the fall and reporting to their first assignments in active duty.

“A lot of these military events are kinda ‘strac’ and all that, but this isn’t one of them,” said guest speaker Major General Peggy Combs, using Army slang for a starched and polished proceeding. “This afternoon is a day of celebration!”

Combs, [the president of the Army and Navy Academy](#), told the crowd that this year's graduating Surf Battalion class features six distinguished cadets ranked in the top 5% of 5,000 graduates nationwide. She also praised their volunteer work during the pandemic and [the team's first-ever victory](#) last fall at the Ranger Challenge regional competition held at Fort Hunter Liggett.

"This is quite an accomplished program," Combs said.

"At the foundation of your service to our nation is a four-letter word: love," she added. "You can't commit to something unless you truly love it. The power of love will keep you motivated . . . and strong. If you truly care and serve those you lead, they will truly move mountains for you."

After taking the Army oath of office, cadets called on family members in the audience — many of whom were active or retired military personnel — to join the pinning ceremony and issue a first salute.

The newly commissioned second lieutenants of 2023 are Nicole Anderson (environmental studies); Anna Bound (psychological and brain sciences), Sebastian Bouvier (political science and Russian-Eastern European studies), Gabriel Da Silva (environmental studies), Alexandra Daugherty (biological sciences), Yandrell Holsome (sociology and feminist studies), Lauren Little (language, culture and society), Nicolas Lizarraga (political science), Daniel Marshall (economics), Chance Nelson (political science), Nathan Penner (political science), Remilou Rivera (ecology and evolution), John Rollinson (computer engineering with a minor in history), Nicholas Sanderson (history of public policy and law), Quinn Schroeder (biological sciences) and John Wilcox (anthropology).

[UCSB's ROTC](#) program provides leadership training for students and prospective officers for the U.S. Army, U.S. Army Reserve and U.S. Army National Guard.

Media Contact

Keith Hamm

Social Sciences, Humanities & Fine Arts Writer

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.