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Surfrider Battalion ROTC cadets receive gold bars at beachside ceremony

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A sunny and warm Goleta Beach provided a fitting backdrop for the [Surfrider Battalion](#) as 13 graduating UC Santa Barbara Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) cadets were commissioned to the rank of second lieutenant.

The June 14 ceremony, attended by about 150 family and friends, opened with a violin solo of the national anthem by Sergeant First Class Myles Moore. Lieutenant Colonel Joe Ruhl, professor and chair of the Department of Military Science, commended the graduates, calling them “an amazing group” of cadets, students and young men and women.

“Do not fear assignments that may not be in your comfort zone,” Ruhl said, encouraging the cadets — each now bound for officer training or active duty — to find their own leadership styles and to maintain supportive networks among family and friends.

This year's commissioning fell on the 249th birthday of the U.S. Army, noted guest speaker, retired Lieutenant General Eric Wendt, who completed UCSB's ROTC program and graduated with a degree in law and society in 1986.

Each year, graduating cadets swear an oath to defend the Constitution, Wendt said. "They are signing a blank check to the United States for everything up to and including their lives."

Many of the cadets were joined by enlisted family members for administering the oath, pinning the gold bars and receiving their first salute as officers.

The newly commissioned second lieutenants of 2024 are [Karsen Paige Flom](#) (Middle East studies), Mark Raffaele Marino (political science), Joel Richard True (psychological and brain sciences), Mark Anthony Cullen (mechanical engineering), Frank Thien Ho Dang Tran (political science and history), Shane Tyler Herup (sociology with a minor in applied psychology), Daniel Miles Keefe (global studies), Joanna Qiu (mathematics and zoology), Daniel Sang Park (political science), Sammy Medhat Yehia Shafik (political science), Michelle Analeigh Story (biological sciences), Eunice Saehyun Lee (English and psychology) and Daniele Marie Roberts (psychological and brain sciences and exercise and sports studies).

On May 3, the program commissioned Jacob David Bailey (engineering) and Jared Seung Rhee Noh (economics and accounting), both from ROTC partner Westmont College. Later this summer, UCSB students Bryant Le (biological chemistry) and Amgad Sab Hawari (computer science) will be commissioned, as well as Jeremiah Lewis Canada (MBA) at partnering California State University Channel Islands.

Launched in 1947, [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.

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