

THE *Current*

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[Keith Hamm](#)

Gold bars on the beach for graduating Surfrider Battalion ROTC cadets

A breezy overcast sky gave way to a sunny afternoon as students, family, friends, mentors and speakers gathered at Goleta Beach for UC Santa Barbara's U.S. Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) Surfrider Battalion commissioning ceremony. Earning their gold bars and first salutes, seven cadets advanced to the entry-level officer rank of second lieutenant.

"These are some of the best young people our country has to offer," said Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Downing, a UCSB military science professor, in his opening remarks. These officers, he added, would take on "the lasting obligation to cherish and protect the country."

The June 13 event featured UCSB alum Marylinda Arroyo, the city of Santa Barbara's assistant chief of police, who addressed the cadets as "stewards of freedom, defenders of the constitution and leaders of soldiers." The success of their path of selfless service and discipline, she added, would not just be measured in battles won but in lives uplifted.

"Your commissioning is not an end, but a beginning," Arroyo concluded. "You are the future warrior leaders of the U.S. Army."

The commissioned second lieutenants of 2025 are Lizhi “Leon” Cen (geography and Japanese), [Alec Garcia](#) (history), Jordan Juceam (sociology), Min Kim (physics), Francisco Romero (history with a minor in applied psychology), Kellen Tressler (sociology) and Ashton Yin (economics). This year’s relatively small group was due to recruiting disruptions during the pandemic.

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.

Before handing out congressional certificates of recognition, UCSB alum and U.S. Marine Corps veteran Congressman Salud Carbajal said that “leadership isn’t a reign, it’s a responsibility.”

This summer and fall, the newly minted officers will attend leadership training at various Army installations across the country.

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