

ROTC UPDATE

NEWS FOR THE HALSEY HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY

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Pandemic Pushes JROTC Students To Step Up and Lead

A look at this year's commanders who are inspiring and challenging their cadets

By Zophia Gonzalez

The JROTC program at Halsey took a major hit at the start of the pandemic. Program leaders and staff were not able to teach in their normal way. Slowly but surely, as the school got back to in person learning, the program saw a major increase in what it could accomplish. With two years being taken away from the program, **the challenges of the pandemic pushed people into leadership positions in a rush and forced them to "figure it out" for themselves how to engage and inspire their cadets.**



Christopher De Los Santos, senior, is the Color Guard Commander.

I sat down with several commanders from our drill team to see where their heads were at. First to be interviewed was senior **Christopher De Los Santos**. When asked if he thought he was going to end up with such a leadership position he responded, "Yes, I believed that I was going to get this far because I was dedicated and motivated." Christopher has been on the drill team since sophomore year and is currently the color guard commander.

Next to be interviewed was **Ashley Cuevas**. She has been on the drill team since her sophomore year and has shown resilience and promise by winning multiple trophies for unarmed regulation. To get more of an insight into her thought process, I asked her to tell me what helps her adjust to commanding and putting herself in a challenging situation. "I've always been someone who was able to take a high position. So, being a commander was just something that came naturally to me. **Being in charge is something that I've been used to for a long time.**"



Ashley Cuevas, senior, is the Unarmed Regulation Commander.



Barthelemy Bozieux, sophomore, is New Cadet Commander

Barthelemy Bozieux is one of the program's most promising students. As a sophomore, he's already taken on a leadership role as the program's new cadet commander. He leads a squad of new cadets and recites multiple commands within a small drill deck. I asked him what qualities have helped him adapt to this position at such a young age. "I would say my determination to get things done has helped me become a better leader and my passion for drill. Also, the other commanders have helped me with their guidance."



Senior Marine Instructor Colonel Robert Golden

The program wouldn't be possible without **Colonel Robert Golden** and **Master Sergeant Robert Gerald**s who shape each and every cadet into the best leaders they can be. This year is Colonel Golden's last year teaching at Halsey. What does he plan to do next? "I'm not retiring, I'm transitioning. I will be going to teach Junior ROTC in Georgia."



Senior Marine Instructor Master Sergeant Robert Gerald

With Colonel Golden leaving, Master Sergeant Gerald will step up and become the Senior Marine Instructor of Halsey. How does he feel about taking over the position next year? "I've been the Senior Marine Instructor on three different occasions. I'm turning my job into someone else, I will retire in about 6 years so it's almost my time. I'll just have more phone calls." Both of these instructors show what it takes to give up a part of yourself for a bigger picture and the program will forever be in their debt.

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Muscle Power Fuels Big Wins for Female PT Team

By Zophia Gonzalez

Can you do 100 crunches in 2 minutes? How about 60 pushups in that same time frame? If you answered yes to any of these questions, this is what it's like to be on Halsey's PT team.

Consisting of a male and female team with 6 members in each, the PT, or Physical Training, team has shown where hard work and dedication can take you. Starting their year off with a competition at Redding High School, in Redding, MA, the female team took first place overall, while the boys followed closely behind placing second in their division.

Senior Fabiana Fazio is the captain of the female team. "Serving as the PT captain has taught me how to be a better leader. It is a significant responsibility. I am responsible for leading, supporting, and inspiring the team on both good and bad days."

This year the females have shown that it doesn't matter about gender, it only matters about how dedicated you are to the team. They've won first place left and right and just qualified for Nationals in Little Rock, AR, on May 7th.

What's important about this achievement is that Fabiana and her team qualified for Nationals without the help of the boys' PT team. "I am significantly proud of all the hard work and effort we have put in since the beginning of the school year. We qualified for the nationals due to the team's motivation and direction. **We are eager to win and create a beautiful memory for ourselves.**"

Fabiana, who joined JROTC as a freshman, credits the program with developing her leadership skills. "This organization, its mentors, and cadets members transformed me into the person I am today." She wrote about her JROTC experience for this year's Sons of the American Revolution Jr. ROTC essay contest. **She won second place in the state.**



Seniors of the PT team: Zophia Gonzalez, Fabiana Fazio, Ivanna Sanches, Alicia Flechas, Conception Avila, Wilvner Exalus, Dominic Castro, Christian Carcomo, Nicolas Montanez, Michael Benavedez.

Female Shooters Earn Big Wins for Halsey Gunslingers

By Zophia Gonzalez



Cadet Maria A. Garcia-Cabana

With the season now done, Halsey's JRTOC Rifle Team now sports an unprecedented record, culminating in a **first-place finish at this year's First State Invitational Air Rifle competition in Dover Delaware.** They beat out 13 other teams and 60 shooters. **Halsey junior Maria Garcia-Cabana** had the best record overall, with 254 out of 300 possible points.

The newly rebuilt "Gunslingers" began their season as a rookie team back in December, scoring 1st place in their very first competition at Reading, PA. Cabana and the other female sharpshooters helped the team score some other top placements and wins this season, including second place out of 33 teams in March at the "Fighting Rams" postal match in Florida, first place in December's Keystone Classic Marksmanship Competition, and 2nd place in the annual Halsey Top Guns Competition. **The team is also known to be distinguished from other teams by one defining characteristic. For the first time, females made up the majority of shooters.** We talked to Cabana about her time on the team, what it takes to succeed, and her thoughts on being on a mostly-female team.



Gunslingers win 2nd place in Top Guns Competition and 1st place in First State Competition.

Describe what it is like to be on the Halsey Rifle Team. The Rifle Team is sort of like a second home. We spend close to five hours each practice after school surrounded by each other, which has helped build bonds between the team members, this is not to say that it is an easy spot to hold. During a busy month on average, we will have 2 virtual matches per week and additional travel competitions. There are days when some of our shooters are having a bad score day and it is incredibly painful to see them be frustrated with something that they love so much.

have accuracy and precision when shooting, along with traits such as responsibility and commitment. Given that we spend close to 50 minutes of shooting during competitions and some practices, **The Gunslingers must always remain in control of their rifle, which can be a little difficult due to the weapon's weight.** Being a member of the team takes a toll on the shooters both physically and mentally. The key is to leave all thoughts at the door once you enter the range. The only thought crossing your mind once you are on the firing line should be to hit the bullseye.

How did it feel to have a team that was mostly women? Being in a team mostly made up of females has certainly been empowering. It provides a sense of comfort knowing that they are being recognized for their skills and not their genders. It's even greater to know that our top three shooters are all females.

What skill do you need to succeed on the team? The Halsey Rifle Team demands shooters to be in excellent physical and mental condition. You must

