

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE



Commissioning Parade

STANDARD OFFICERS COURSE
NUMBER 55

On
Wednesday 2024-10- 09
Drill Square
Base Camp Ayangana



COLONEL ULRIC PILGRIM OFFICER CADET SCHOOL



The Guyana Defence Force commenced training its own Officer Cadets in 1969. After 12 years, the Officer Cadet Division of Training Corps evolved into the first Officer Cadet School in the English speaking Caribbean. It became known as the Colonel Ulric Pilgrim Officer Cadet School (CUPOCS), in honour of Colonel Ulric Pilgrim, the first commander of the Force.

This school was established by Colonel Ulric Pilgrim with a simple ceremony on the 22nd of September 1981. In his feature address, he charged the Cadets of the school to aim for the highest standards in all areas and uphold the school's motto, "I SERVE GUYANA."

A total of 54 Courses have since been conducted at the school, commissioning in excess of six hundred and seventy one (671) Officers for the Disciplined Services locally and from sister CARICOM countries.

The role of the CUPOCS is to train young potential leaders of the various Disciplined Services to serve their country. The training seeks to:

- * Develop good character and powers of leadership.
- * Instill qualities of discipline, initiative and self confidence.
- * Teach the duties of citizenship, loyalty and patriotism.



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF MESSAGE



A NEW GENERATION OF EXCELLENCE

I bid you congratulations in this proud moment as we celebrate the commissioning of a new cohort of officers, the graduates of Standard Officers' Course No. 55, ready to serve with distinction. This parade is a revered tradition, symbolising not only your personal triumphs but also the strength and future of our military institutions.

Your journey through rigorous training has forged in you the resilience, intellect, and leadership necessary for the demands of military service. These qualities are not merely commendable; they are essential to the exemplary standards we uphold.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the dedicated faculty of the Colonel Ulric Pilgrim Officer Cadet School. Your unwavering commitment to developing leaders of character and intellect ensures that our forces remain second to none.

As you, the young officers graduating here today, step forward into your roles, you carry the weight of your nations' expectations. You are the embodiment of discipline, excellence, and professionalism. Your conduct, both in and out of uniform, must reflect the highest ideals of military service and citizenship.

Your duty to uphold constitutional values and foster harmonious civilian-military relations is paramount. This responsibility is a cornerstone of national stability and trust.

I wish you all successful and impactful careers, as you continue to serve with honor and dedication. Your nations are counting on your steadfast commitment. Lead with integrity and inspire those who follow in your footsteps.

Congratulations once again, and may you forge a future that brings pride to your nations and fulfillment to your lives.

Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali
President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana,
and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.



CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF MESSAGE



EMBRACING THE HONOUR AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MILITARY SERVICE

My warmest congratulations to the graduates of the Standard Officers Course No. 55 on reaching this pivotal moment in your journey. Your commitment and dedication have paved the way for a meaningful career in service to your country. You've joined a distinguished group of individuals who share this honorable path, and it is a privilege to welcome you into our military family.

Your accomplishments have brought pride to your family, friends, and nation. As you step forward, however, know that you will face a world filled with challenges and opportunities that will test your determination. You must, at all times, allow your training to guide you through uncertain times.

A military career is a unique one of national service where the reflection on the core Values and Standards of the Guyana Defence Force remains a constant reference to professional conduct. These principles are foundational to your role as a leader. Embrace discipline to inspire and guide those you lead while maintaining integrity to shape your character, and ensuring you act rightly even without supervision.

Your identity as an officer must be evident in your words, demeanor, and actions. Duty to your nation is imperative. Your loyalty to the state and the Guyana Defence Force must be unwavering, with a steadfast love for our country and constitution. These are commitments that cannot be compromised. I urge each of you to fully embody them as you take on the responsibility of leading people and managing resources.

Remember, as officers, you are leaders. Strive to be the kind of leader others admire and aspire to emulate. Live in a way that withstands scrutiny and instills pride in those you serve alongside.

Congratulations once again, and best wishes for a fulfilling and successful career.

Brigadier Omar Khan, MSM
Chief of Defence Staff
Guyana Defence Force



NAVIGATING THE PATH OF LEADERSHIP



HISTORY OF THE COLONEL ULRIC PILGRIM OFFICER CADET SCHOOL

The GDF started training its own Officers in 1969 under the Officer Cadet Division of Training Corps which in 1981, the Division evolved into the first Officer Cadet School in the English-speaking Caribbean – The Colonel Ulric Pilgrim Officer Cadet School (CUPOCS).

At a simple ceremony marking the official opening of the school in September 1981, Colonel Ulric Pilgrim in whose honour the school was named, charged the members of the school to aim for high standards in all areas while upholding the school's motto, "I SERVE GUYANA."

The Standard Officer Course (SOC) was created to provide training not only for new army Officers, but also for new Officers of all the Services, military and para-military, as well as our sister CARICOM states. The SOC therefore provides a solid foundation for the subsequent professional development of all Officer Cadets entering the Defence Force. It is however, only an introduction to the officer training and development systems of all military and para-military services in Guyana and must be supplemented by the appropriate specialist and technical training of the relevant service after graduation.

There are six Latin words that are the guiding principles for Officer Cadets and can be adopted throughout your military career. These words are:

- a. FIDELITAS (Fidelity) - Loyalty, faithful, firm in allegiance.
- b. PROBITAS (Probity) - Honesty, Just, Fair, Upright, Truthful.
- c. DIGNITAS (Dignity) - Elevation of mind or character. Degree of excellence.
- d. AUDACIA (Audacity) - Bold, daring, actively courageous, standing out clearly.
- e. DISCIPLINA (Discipline) - Training or mode of life according to rules.
- f. CONSTANTIA (Consistency) - Not contradictory, firm, of substance, a degree of density.



Remember you are only as good as the men you lead. Serve them well. Be concerned about you as their leader. This is the essence of the team spirit. The "sky" is the limit. Be professional in all your undertakings. There is no alternative for upward mobility" - Colonel Ulric Pilgrim. (1981)



PROGRAMME



1545 Hours



Parade Marches On

1555 Hours



Arrival of The Honourable Prime Minister

1600 Hours



Arrival of His Excellency the President

1635 Hours



Inspection of Troops

1645 Hours



Parade Marches Past

1655 Hours



His Excellency the President Decorates
the Ensigns with Badges of Ranks

1710 Hours



Presentation of Awards

1715 Hours



Address by His Excellency the President

1725 Hours



Parade Marches Off

1730 Hours



Beating Retreat

1735 Hours



Band Marches Off



AWARDEES



SWORD OF HONOUR

999645 Ensign Joshua Paul – GDF



CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF PRIZE

999669 Ensign Kevaun Garnett – GDF



BEST INTERNATIONAL STUDENT PRIZE

999711 Ensign Brion Ghany – TTDF



COLONEL ADMINISTRATION & QUARTERING PRIZE

999313 Ensign Nikkita Andrews – GDF



INSPECTOR GENERAL PRIZE

999711 Ensign Brion Ghany – TTDF



COMMANDANT GUYANA NATIONAL RESERVE PRIZE

999711 Ensign Brion Ghany – TTDF



COMMANDING OFFICER 1ST INFANTRY BATTALION PRIZE

999645 Ensign Joshua Paul – GDF





Course 55

Initially, the Guyana Defence Force Standard Officer Course (SOC) was patterned after the British, with the course lasting for only six months. Eventually, this changed and the course was conducted over 12 months. Beginning in 2017, with SOC #50, the Standard Officer Course was restructured in terms of curriculum and duration. The course is now designed to run over a period of 24 months.

The rationale behind the restructuring is to ensure a more rounded and educated Officer who is prepared to fulfill his role in promoting “Total National Defence.”

The restructuring of the programme has occurred in the context of the “Total National Defence” policy, which stipulates that all the instruments of national power be combined to protect Guyana’s territory. The policy also aims to ensure that the Regular and Reserve Forces are provided with the resources they need to perform their missions.

The restructured SOC extends the range of knowledge and skills training for potential Officers. As such, in addition to receiving their Instruments of Commission, the Officers have also earned an Associate Degree in General Studies from the University of Guyana.

These Officers are the fourth group to completed an entire Jungle Warfare Course as well as Airborne Training as Cadets. They were also privileged, in the context of the restructured programme, to have completed extensive Battlefield Engineering Training as well as Equitation training after an almost 30-year hiatus.

The upgrading of the Standard Officer Course has seen Guyana joining other military academies whose students graduate with an academic degree. This new direction saves time pursuing academic upliftment later and allows the Officer to think and operate at a higher level.



PROFILE OF THE UNDER OFFICER



999642
Ensign Joshua Paul

I am Joshua Paul, born on July 7, 2000, the second of eight children. Though my upbringing was marked by challenges, it was strengthened by the support of a close-knit family. From an early age, I developed a passion for sports such as football and swimming, which fostered in me the values of teamwork, discipline, and perseverance, qualities that would later serve me well in my military

aspirations.

My academic journey began at Kuru Kuru Nursery School, continued through Kuru Kuru Primary School, and culminated at Dora Secondary School. These institutions provided a solid foundation, shaping my personal and intellectual development and igniting a deep commitment to achieving excellence in all my endeavours. From an early age, I aspired to serve as an officer in the Guyana Defence Force (GDF), a goal that I pursued with unwavering determination despite initial setbacks. I remained steadfast in my ambition while employed as an office assistant at the Hauruni/Yarrowkabra NDC. I applied for the Standard Officer Course in 2019 and again in 2021 before being accepted into SOC 55 in 2022.

My training was intense and demanding, physically and mentally, testing my limits in every capacity. However, during this time, I formed strong bonds with my fellow Officer Cadets, embraced the principles of leadership, and developed a deep sense of resilience and self-discipline. The challenges of SOC 55 equipped me with invaluable life lessons, shaping me into a confident and capable leader, fully prepared to confront any obstacles that lie ahead.

My journey has been one of determination, and I owe much of my success to the health, strength, and wisdom granted by God, as well as the unwavering support of my family and friends. Their encouragement has been instrumental in pushing me forward.

With the skills and confidence, I gained through SOC 55, I am now ready to take on new challenges and make meaningful contributions to both my personal and professional life. My experiences have instilled in me a profound sense of purpose, and my journey stands as a testament to the power of resilience, hard work, and the relentless pursuit of one's dreams.



999313 **Ensign Nikkita Andrews - GDF**

AGE 26

Embarking on Standard Officer Course (SOC) No. 55 was a transformative experience that tested and strengthened my resolve through intense physical training and rigorous academic study. The first year demanded exceptional physical endurance, with daily regimens consisting of early morning drills, obstacle courses, and military knowledge classes. This relentless pace pushed me to my limits, cultivating a higher level of strength, discipline, and resilience.

In the second year, the focus shifted to in-depth academic study, requiring long hours in the classroom, late-night study sessions, and applying critical thinking in complex, simulated military scenarios. Being away from home presented its challenges, contributing to the mental fatigue. However, the camaraderie among my fellow Officer Cadets (OCDTs) and then Ensigns (ENSs) provided an invaluable support system, helping to overcome the emotional strain.

Despite the physical and mental demands, the knowledge and skills I gained throughout this journey were invaluable. SOC 55 sharpened my physical and intellectual capabilities and significantly enhanced my leadership style. The discipline, strategic thinking, and resilience developed over these two years have profoundly impacted both my professional career and personal life, preparing me to lead confidently and confidently in the Guyana Defence Force.



999649 **Ensign Merissa Carroll Hunte - GDF**

AGE 22

My journey on Standard Officer Course (SOC) No. 55 has been an enlightening and transformative experience. Throughout the course, I was immersed in a comprehensive curriculum encompassing physical training, leadership, teamwork, strategic thinking, and conflict resolution. Practical exercises reinforced theoretical instruction, allowing me to apply what I had learned in real-world scenarios.

The course was challenging. Adapting to the disciplined lifestyle of the Guyana Defence Force required considerable personal adjustments, and the demands of balancing intense physical training with rigorous academic requirements tested my time management and resilience. Working within diverse teams underscored the importance of effective communication and cultural sensitivity, crucial skills for any military leader.

Despite the hurdles, perseverance and determination fostered strong camaraderie among my fellow Ensigns. Being selected for SOC No. 55 has been pivotal in my life. This course has equipped me with essential skills, broadened my understanding of social dynamics within the military environment, and significantly enhanced my personal and professional growth.





REFLECTIONS BY MEMBERS OF SOC 55



999657 **Ensign Pravan Sarjhu - GPF**

AGE 31



Undertaking the Standard Officer Course (SOC) has been one of the most significant experiences of my life. The rigorous training and challenges throughout the course have instilled in me patience, tolerance, discipline, and a deep sense of purpose. My lessons have proven invaluable in real-life situations, particularly in managing complex and critical circumstances and effectively interacting with others.

The course has facilitated my physical and mental development and honed my professional abilities. Despite the challenges in meeting and exceeding the demanding physical standards, I have persevered and, in doing so, have strengthened my resolve. These obstacles did not deter me but reinforced my determination to succeed.

The bonds of unity and camaraderie I have forged with my peers have been a cornerstone of this journey, and I have come to deeply appreciate the role of the Guyana Defence Force as part of the Joint Services. The SOC has shaped my character and enhanced my leadership capabilities. The skills and values instilled through this experience are invaluable, and I am grateful for the personal growth it has afforded me.

This journey, though demanding, has been profoundly enriching. It has equipped me with the tools to face future challenges with confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

999659 **Ensign Jewanram Lall - GPF**

AGE 28



My journey on Standard Officer Course Number Fifty-Five (SOC #55) was unlike any challenge I had faced before. Early morning drills, long marches across rugged terrain, and intense physical conditioning pushed my body to its limits. What initially felt like endless workouts soon led to significant gains in strength, endurance, and overall fitness. These accomplishments instilled a deep sense of pride, reinforcing the value of perseverance, discipline, and hard work.

Throughout the course, we developed a strong sense of teamwork, with the principle of “leave no man behind” becoming second nature. The camaraderie forged during this time will remain with us throughout our careers.

The physical demands, mental resilience, and discipline instilled during SOC #55 have prepared me to face future challenges with strength, determination, and a sense of duty. The experiences and lessons learned have been invaluable, equipping me with the skills and mindset needed to confront and resolve obstacles confidently.



999661 **Ensign Anton Maughn - GPF**

AGE 27



SOC #55 has been a transformative experience, defined by demanding military and academic training and intense physical requirements. The daily physical regimen, which included endurance drills, weight training, and long-distance runs, consistently pushed me to my limits, cultivating resilience and unwavering dedication. These rigorous sessions enhanced my physical fitness and fostered a strong sense of camaraderie and teamwork among my fellow Ensigns. Balancing the academic rigours with the physical intensity of training was a challenge, yet it has thoroughly prepared me for the multifaceted demands of military leadership. SOC #55 has sharpened my leadership style, instilling greater confidence and decisiveness and enabling me to make clear, informed decisions under pressure.

This journey has equipped me with the skills, discipline, and mindset essential for effective leadership within the Guyana Defence Force. I am ready to face future challenges with strength and resolve.

999663 **Ensign Boodram Singh - GPF**

AGE 26



My journey through Standard Officer Course (SOC) Number #55 was a transformative experience marked by challenges that tested my dedication and commitment. The course encompassed rigorous training to push me beyond my physical and mental limits, including intense workouts, obstacle courses, and various field exercises across diverse terrains. Embracing this demanding training significantly boosted my confidence and resilience while equipping me with essential leadership, navigation, and survival skills, enabling me to confront challenges head-on.

Over the past 24 months, I have experienced substantial personal and professional growth. I have gained a deeper understanding of the importance of discipline, perseverance, and teamwork, all of which have refined my leadership abilities. This journey has been pivotal in my development, fostering resilience and dedication that have intensified my passion for a career in military service.

SOC #55 has fundamentally shaped my character and professional aspirations, preparing me for the responsibilities and challenges of becoming an officer in the Guyana Defence Force. I am committed to leveraging the skills and values acquired during this course as a solid foundation for future success.



999664 **Ensign Levi I. Coc - International Student - BDF**

AGE 24

Ensign Levi I. Coc – Foreign Student – BDF

Reflecting on my time in Standard Officer Course Number Fifty-Five (SOC #55), I am profoundly aware of the rigorous and transformative nature of this experience. As a foreign national from Belize, I faced the challenge of adapting to a new culture, but I grew significantly as the course progressed.

SOC #55 demanded not only physical endurance but also mental resilience, consistently pushing us to our limits and beyond. We received comprehensive training in leadership, strategic thinking, and decision-making under pressure, equipping us to navigate complex scenarios effectively.

The camaraderie and bonds forged with my fellow Officer Cadets, or “Squaddies,” stand as a testament to the shared challenges we faced and the mutual support we provided one another. Each exercise and lecture contributed to a profound understanding of military principles and the responsibilities of leadership.

As we advance in our careers, the lessons learned and skills acquired during SOC #55 will undoubtedly serve as a solid foundation for ethical and practical command, ensuring we are prepared to lead with integrity and dedication. This experience has truly equipped us to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.



999665 **Ensign Mark Haynes - GPF**

AGE 26

My training during the Standard Officer Course (SOC) was demanding and rewarding. This period was characterized by rigorous physical and mental challenges, emphasizing the importance of building physical fitness, discipline, teamwork, and adherence to military customs.

Throughout the course, I acquired fundamental combat skills, including weapon handling and first aid, while enduring long hours of physical exertion under strict discipline. Pushed to my limits, I established a solid foundation in physical fitness that will serve me well in my military career.

Discipline and teamwork were paramount throughout the program. I learned the importance of following orders precisely, cooperating seamlessly with fellow trainees, and functioning as a cohesive and effective unit.

Overall, SOC training has been a transformative experience that equipped me with invaluable skills, built resilience, and fostered strong camaraderie among my peers. The lessons learned during this journey have not only prepared me for future challenges but also instilled in me a sense of discipline and teamwork that will serve me well in all aspects of life.





999666 **Ensign Trishan Craig - GPS**

AGE 26

Embarking on the Standard Officer Course (SOC) has been a transformative journey and the greatest sacrifice of my life thus far! I was thrilled to be selected for this course, especially as this batch's only representative from the Guyana Prison Service. I knew I had much to live up to and was determined to rise to the occasion.

The road has been rocky, with many ups and downs, but I promised myself I would achieve anything and overcome every challenge with unwavering determination. Reaching the finish line would never have been possible without God's mercies, my family's loving support, and the continuous motivation of my instructors and fellow trainees in SOC #55.

SOC #55 has equipped me for a remarkable career in disciplined services. The opportunities I encountered, both in the classroom and out in the field, have imparted invaluable lessons that will last a lifetime. I am forever grateful for these experiences!

The friendships forged, the lessons learned, and the resilience developed throughout this journey have all contributed to my personal growth. While demanding, this experience has been enriching and provided me with the tools I need to face future challenges confidently and enthusiastically!



999667 **Ensign Andrew Reynolds** **International Student - BDF**

AGE 26

Being a member of SOC #55 has been an incredible honour. Transitioning from civilian life, I faced new challenges every day, and each one brought invaluable lessons. Despite the pressures, I was continuously guided and motivated to excel under any condition, quickly achieving new heights in my physical fitness.

There were moments when I could have thrown in the towel, but witnessing my progress made every bit of pain worthwhile. I realized I could never return to a life without purpose. As an international student, I proudly embraced the responsibility to learn and represent my country.

Throughout this journey, I gained extensive military knowledge, developed strong leadership qualities, and experienced the true meaning of unity. I am excited to return to my home country and share my experiences, eager to continue learning and growing in the future. The journey doesn't end here—it's just the beginning, and I can't wait to see what lies ahead.





999668 **Ensign Octavia Walcott - GDF**

AGE 25

I am profoundly grateful to have been part of the Standard Officer Course 55. This experience has far exceeded my expectations and developed every aspect of my life, particularly my mental and physical fortitude. The rigorous physical challenges have pushed me beyond my limits, shaping me into a resilient and multifaceted individual. This journey has also been an eye-opening experience, revealing abilities I never knew I possessed. I have acquired new skills and capabilities that have transformed my outlook on life. Now, I see challenges as opportunities for growth and achievement. Moreover, the course exposed me to the importance of teamwork and the dynamics of varying leadership styles. Working closely with my peers, I learned the value of collaboration and the strength of a united effort. Observing and adapting to different leadership approaches enhanced my own leadership skills and adaptability. Alongside these lessons, I developed a keen sense of time management. I learned to uphold high standards in my conduct and appearance, reflecting the discipline and professionalism expected of a military officer.



999669 **Ensign Kevaun Garnett - GDF**

AGE 25

The Standard Officer Course (SOC) has profoundly shaped my development and sense of achievement. The past two years have been a transformative journey, honing my leadership skills, cultivating discipline, and fostering a deep understanding of camaraderie. The rigorous training and academic challenges often resulted in sleepless nights as I adapted to this demanding environment. However, these challenges equipped me with vital knowledge and practical experience, enabling me to handle various situations with resilience and composure.

My background in sports greatly aided my ability to endure the constant physical and mental fatigue encountered during the course. I forged lasting friendships with my fellow trainees, learning the invaluable lessons of perseverance and dedication in pursuing our goals.

Reflecting on my time in SOC, I am deeply grateful for the opportunities that have shaped me into a more confident and capable individual. This journey has prepared me to face the future with unwavering determination and enthusiasm, ready to embrace new challenges and continue my personal and professional growth.





REFLECTIONS BY MEMBERS OF SOC 55



999672 **Ensign Kureece King - GDF**

AGE 24

Undertaking Standard Officer Course 55 was a transformative journey that required discipline, resilience, and unwavering commitment. From the moment of induction, I recognized that my mental and physical preparedness would be tested throughout this demanding program. The physical challenges pushed me to my limits, while the theoretical lessons in strategy and leadership sharpened my decision-making skills.

This experience has enhanced my capabilities and confidence, instilling a profound sense of duty and honour. I feel well-prepared for future endeavours within the military and beyond, equipped to face challenges with determination and assurance.



999674 **Ensign Oliver Raodi - GPF**

AGE 23

My journey through Standard Officer Course #55 has profoundly transformed my life and opened numerous opportunities within the Guyana Police Force. The knowledge I have gained about myself and my career is invaluable. SOC allowed me to connect with new individuals, enhance my leadership skills, and, most importantly, become a better version of myself.

What I cherish most about SOC are the relationships I have built. Adapting to sleepless nights, rising at 0400 hours, engaging in physical training, attending classes, and participating in regular drills felt overwhelmingly challenging. There were moments when I doubted my ability to persevere and questioned the necessity of maintaining a strict schedule. However, within just a month or two, I witnessed a significant improvement in my physical capabilities.

The discipline and resilience I developed throughout this course have contributed to a sound mind and body. I am grateful to everyone who has played a role in my journey, as every experience and individual shapes who we become. This experience has equipped me with the resilience and discipline necessary for my future endeavours.





999675 Ensign Owen Jones - GDF

AGE 24

Over the past two years in the Standard Officer Course (SOC), I have experienced profound personal growth and development. In the beginning, I found the physical demands and disciplined lifestyle challenging. However, through perseverance and the steadfast support of my peers and instructors, I enhanced my physical fitness and cultivated resilience and determination.

The lessons I have learned will be integral to my career as I aspire to become a leader who motivates and empowers others through collaboration and dedication. The course offered invaluable opportunities for hands-on learning in navigation, first aid, and tactical manoeuvres, providing me with essential skills for a wide range of real-world scenarios.

As I move forward, I recognize the importance of continuous self-improvement and lifelong learning. This journey has prepared me for future challenges and reinforced the significance of teamwork and perseverance in achieving success.



999676 Ensign Joneka Walcott - GDF

AGE 23

My journey through Standard Officer Course #55 has profoundly transformed my life and opened numerous avenues within the Guyana Police Force. The knowledge I have gained about myself, and this career is immeasurable. SOC has provided invaluable opportunities for personal and professional growth, allowing me to forge meaningful connections, enhance my leadership abilities, and, ultimately, become a better version of myself.

Among the highlights of my SOC experience are my relationships with fellow trainees. The transition to a disciplined lifestyle initially felt overwhelming, including sleepless nights, early morning wakeup at 0400 hours, rigorous physical training, academic classes, and regular drills. I often questioned my ability to endure. However, within weeks, I noticed significant improvements in my physical capabilities. My challenges cultivated mental and physical resilience, enabling me to develop a sound mind and body.

I owe my progress to many individuals who have supported me. Every experience and every person we encounter shapes who we become. This transformative journey has equipped me with the resilience and discipline necessary for my future endeavours.





999677 Ensign Rovin Ramsarup - GDF
AGE 23



My experience on Standard Officer Course #55 significantly tested my resilience and pushed me beyond my comfort zone, enhancing my adaptability and appreciation for a structured lifestyle. Time away from home deepened my capacity to endure challenges and fostered personal growth. I learned to build trust and make critical decisions in various leadership roles, sharpening my command skills. The combat training provided a stark exposure to the realities of warfare, reshaping my perspectives and emotional responses. Leading my peers broadened my understanding of effective leadership and reinforced my capabilities.

Throughout the course, I engaged in enriching cultural exchanges and forged lasting relationships that enriched my experience. By the conclusion of this transformative journey, I emerged with enhanced personal development, unwavering resilience, and a profound sense of purpose in my commitment to serve.

999678 Ensign Odwyn Baird - GDF
AGE 23



During my time in Standard Officer Course #55, my rigorous training fostered resilience, discipline, and leadership skills, consistently pushing me beyond my perceived limits. In the first six weeks alone, I encountered challenges that rigorously tested my physical and mental fortitude, enabling me to overcome significant obstacles. The course also facilitated meaningful engagement with my peers, fostering camaraderie and enhancing my ability to lead in high-pressure situations while upholding discipline. Overall, this transformative journey equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and experience to guide me throughout my career.



999678 Ensign Shain Mark Klass-Francis - GDF
AGE 23

The Standard Officer Course 55 was an intense experience that strengthened my leadership, discipline, and teamwork skills. I built a reliance and a deep sense of responsibility through rigorous physical and mental challenges. The training honed my practical skills and allowed me to immerse myself in a survival environment, making it a truly transformative journey. My experience on SOC 55 was undoubtedly a transformative journey. This experience has been the cornerstone of my professional development, setting the foundation for a fulfilling and impactful career serving my country. The bonds formed have prepared me for the challenges ahead and reinforced the values of perseverance and leadership. SOC 55 has been a life-changing journey, providing me the tools to succeed and lead with integrity and dedication.





999685 **Ensign Travis Adams - GDF**

AGE 22

Please rewrite to sound more professional, "SOC 55 presented numerous challenges and opportunities for growth. The training commenced with rigorous military exercises and sleepless nights, marking a transition from a civilian mindset to a military one. This phase tested my resilience and dedication and laid the groundwork for the journey ahead. The Jungle phase at JATS intensified the training, providing a real-life survival experience in challenging conditions with limited resources. Combined with military drills and lessons in internal security, these experiences and knowledge form the backbone of the course. They have equipped me with invaluable skills and insights to shape my development as a military leader and guide me through future challenges with confidence and capability."



999688 **Ensign Mark Blair - GDF**

AGE 21

Being selected by the Guyana Defence Force to attend the Standard Officer Course represented the fulfilment of a lifelong ambition, as I have always aspired to pursue a military career. However, this journey was challenging; each step required considerable effort and perseverance. Fortunately, I was surrounded by a supportive network of individuals who consistently encouraged me to push beyond my limits, even on the most challenging days. Among the most impactful experiences were the simulation exercises, which vividly demonstrated the practical application of our training in various operational scenarios and provided valuable insights into military conduct. The lessons learned in leadership, sacrifice, fortitude, and discipline have left a lasting impression on me. These teachings have significantly shaped my professional growth and contributed to my personal development, making me a stronger individual. As I embark on my career, I carry these invaluable lessons, which will guide me in becoming a better person and an effective military leader.





999695 **Ensign Ansel Murray - GDF**

AGE 21

Throughout my journey on SOC #55, I encountered numerous challenges that required my full commitment. However, over time, I adapted and experienced significant growth, both professionally and personally. This rigorous training tested me physically, mentally, and emotionally, fostering resilience and a heightened sense of discipline that has shaped my character. I developed essential leadership skills and learned to make decisive, strategic decisions under pressure. Insights gained from seasoned officers and NCOs greatly enriched my experience, instilling in me a profound sense of duty and commitment to service. The past two years have thoroughly prepared me for the responsibilities of an officer, molding my character and values in ways that will guide me throughout my military career. My time in SOC #55 has been transformative, equipping me with the skills and mindset necessary to lead effectively and uphold the esteemed traditions of the Guyana Defence Force.



999696 **Ensign Nicol Gomes - GDF**

AGE 20

SOC #55 represented a significant transformation from civilian life to leadership within an organization founded on solid values and standards. Experiencing sleepless nights and navigating the challenges of mental and physical fatigue compelled me to exceed my previous limits. The demanding physical and military training regimen became integral to my daily routine, fostering a sense of independence as I spent extended periods away from my family. Throughout the course, I made substantial progress in command, leadership, and physical fitness. Each day, I committed to surpassing expectations and achieving continuous improvement. SOC #55 has instilled in me the importance of consistency, self-discipline, integrity, and adaptability—essential for effective leadership. Overall, this experience has equipped me with invaluable skills and principles that will guide my career and personal growth in the years to come.





999697 **Ensign Akeel Phillips - GDF**

AGE 20

Undertaking the Standard Officer Course was a profoundly transformative experience characterized by rigorous training and strong camaraderie. Each day presented challenges, ranging from demanding physical exercises to intensive academic lessons, all aimed at shaping me into an effective leader. These arduous routines fostered moments of introspection, revealing significant personal growth and resilience alongside my peers. The friendships forged, and the relentless pursuit of excellence cultivated a deep sense of purpose and commitment to my future roles. The course instilled in me essential qualities such as patience, tolerance, discipline, and contentment while imparting valuable lessons in navigating complex and critical situations. Though demanding, this journey has been enriching, leaving me with profound satisfaction and fulfilment. It has equipped me with the skills and values necessary to confront future challenges with conviction and strength—a journey I can reflect upon with pride and a deep sense of accomplishment.



999701 **Ensign Tariq James - GDF**

AGE 20

My experience in SOC 55 was marked by relentless challenges and rigorous training that tested my limits both physically and mentally. Throughout the course, I encountered conflicts and formed strong bonds with my fellow trainees, which significantly enriched my journey. The separation from my family, coupled with limited food rations, the necessity to make decisions under pressure, and the responsibility for the consequences of others' actions profoundly shaped my perspective.

While it is not an experience I would wish to relive, it has left an indelible mark on my life, teaching me the true essence of sacrifice and camaraderie. This journey has instilled in me a deep sense of pride and confidence, along with invaluable lessons that will serve as guiding principles for my personal growth and professional development for many years to come.





**999711 Ensign Brion Ghany
International Student - TTDF**

AGE 25

My journey through SOC 55 was a transformative experience that fully immersed me in a military environment designed to test my resilience and mental endurance. Transitioning from a nine-month cadet course in Trinidad to the rigorous two-year program with the Guyana Defence Force presented significant mental challenges and frustrations. However, as I adapted to the GDF's culture and standards, my mindset shifted towards long-term goals and personal development.

The demanding physical workouts, sleepless nights, and rigorous exercises—such as crawling and rolling—initially felt punishing. However, I quickly recognized their importance in fortifying my physical and mental capabilities. I am profoundly grateful for this career opportunity, which has allowed me to grow as a leader, refine my command and decision-making skills, and cultivate self-motivation while building strong bonds of camaraderie and trust with my fellow officers.

This experience has significantly shaped my character and equipped me to face future challenges with renewed strength and resilience, ensuring I am prepared to excel in my military career and beyond.





999697 Ensign MILTON WILLIAMS - GDF

AGE 20

SOC 55 has been an incredible journey filled with challenges and exciting new adventures. I am genuinely grateful for the opportunity to discover my strengths while swiftly identifying and improving my weaknesses. Adapting to an environment that demands excellence in physical, mental, and academic realms has been both demanding and exhilarating, but the rewards are endless. I've learned that striking a balance is the key to success.

More importantly, this course has ingrained in me the fundamental principles of effective leadership, perseverance, and a positive, can-do attitude. The dynamics and significance of teamwork have become clear to me, and I now understand that they are essential for any successful mission. The skills and knowledge I've gained will not only enable me to lead and manage troops effectively but also to apply these principles in any team setting, allocate resources wisely, and achieve our mission objectives efficiently.

These core values and skills have prepared me to embrace a life of patriotism and dedicated service to the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. I am excited about the journey ahead and the impact I can make as a leader.





SNAPSHOTS OF SOC 55





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GRADUANDS



999645	ENS	Joshua Paul - GDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sword of Honour• Commanding Officer 1st Infantry-Battalion Prize
999669	ENS	Kevaun Garnett - GDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chief of Defence Staff Prize
999711	ENS	Brion Ghany - TTDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Best International Student Prize• Inspector General Prize• Commandant Guyana National Reserve Prize
999313	ENS	Nikkita Andrews - GDF	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Colonel Administration & Quartering Prize
999649	ENS	Merissa Carroll Hunte - GDF	
999657	ENS	Pravan Sarijhu - GPF	
999659	ENS	Jewanram Lall - GPF	
999661	ENS	Anton Maughn - GPF	
999663	ENS	Boodram Singh - GPF	
999664	ENS	Levi I. Coc - BDF	
999665	ENS	Mark Haynes -GPF	
999666	ENS	Trishan Craig - GPF	
999667	ENS	Andrew Reynolds - BDF	
999668	ENS	Octavia Walcott - GDF	
999672	ENS	Kureece King - GDF	
999674	ENS	Oliver Raodi - GPF	
999675	ENS	Owen Jones - GDF	
999676	ENS	Joneka Walcott - GDF	
999677	ENS	Rovin Ramsarup - GDF	
999678	ENS	Odwyn Baird - GDF	
999679	ENS	Shain Mark Klass- Francis - GDF	
999685	ENS	Travis Adams - GDF	
999688	ENS	Mark Blair - GDF	
999695	ENS	Ansel Murray - GDF	
999696	ENS	Nicol Gomes - GDF	
999697	ENS	Akeel Phillips - GDF	
999701	ENS	Tariq James - GDF	
999713	ENS	Milton Williams - GDF	



NATIONAL ANTHEM



Dear land of Guyana, of rivers and plains
Made rich by the sunshine, and lush by the rains,
Set gem-like and fair, between mountains and seas,
Your children salute you, dear land of the free.

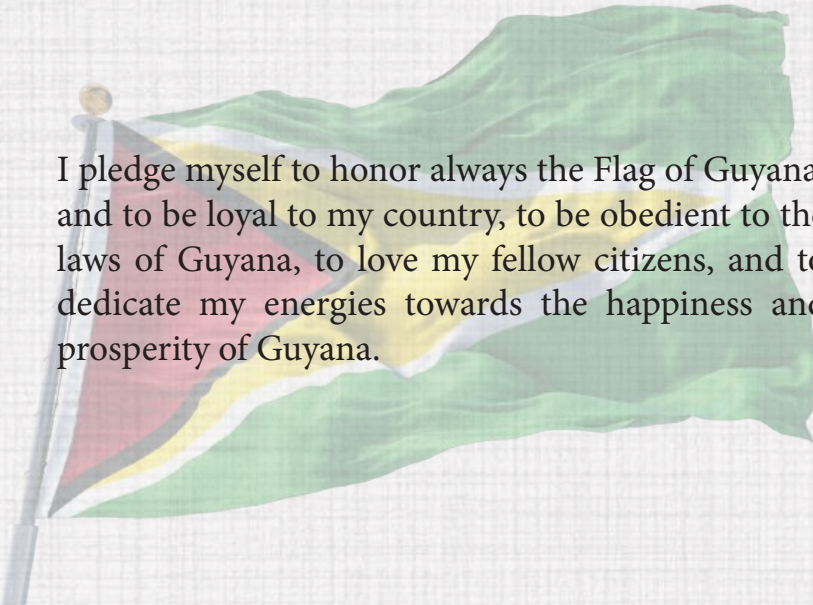
Green land of Guyana, our heroes of yore,
Both bondsmen and free, laid their bones on your shore.
This soil so they hallowed, and from them are we,
All sons of one Mother, Guyana the free.

Great land of Guyana, diverse though our strains,
We're born of their sacrifice, heirs of their pains,
And ours is the glory their eyes did not see,
One land of six peoples, united and free.

Dear land of Guyana, to you will we give,
Our homage, our service, each day that we live;
God guard you, great Mother, and make us to be
More worthy our heritage, land of the free.



NATIONAL PLEDGE

A large, stylized illustration of the flag of Guyana, waving on a flagpole. The flag features a green upper triangle, a yellow lower triangle, a white diagonal band, and a red triangle at the bottom left corner.

I pledge myself to honor always the Flag of Guyana, and to be loyal to my country, to be obedient to the laws of Guyana, to love my fellow citizens, and to dedicate my energies towards the happiness and prosperity of Guyana.



