



Staying Ready: CPT Castro on Leadership, Training, and Family

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CPT Castro was commissioned as a 2LT from the ROTC Program at Tiger Company, following a path that taught him valuable leadership lessons from the beginning. Reflecting on his time as a cadet, he emphasizes the importance of taking full advantage of learning opportunities and building strong relationships. For him, success as a cadet is rooted in discipline, fitness, and connection with peers. He notes that commissioning as a Puerto Rican officer carries a sense of pride, as they are rare, and stresses keeping close ties with fellow cadets who will support each other in the future.

CPT Castro's career is marked by attendance at some of the most prestigious and demanding training courses in the Army, including Airborne School, Air Assault School, and the Stryker Leader Course. He reflects that while each school has its unique challenges, they all foster camaraderie among soldiers. His key takeaway is to always stay prepared—both physically and mentally—so that there's never a need to scramble when unexpected challenges arise. His most profound leadership growth, he suggests, came from balancing technical expertise with resilience under pressure.

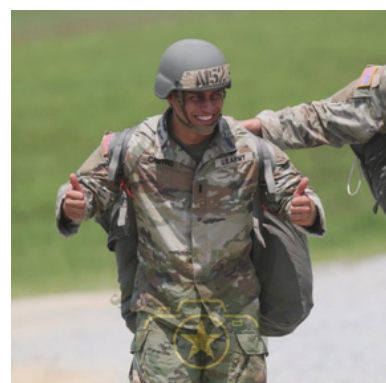
CPT Castro's leadership philosophy is rooted in readiness and respect. He describes his background in the combat arms branch, where lethality and readiness are paramount but equally important to him is treating everyone with dignity and respect. For him, fitness and problem-solving are critical components of leading under high stress, but fostering positive interactions and relationships within the Army is equally essential.

When it comes to developing future leaders, CPT Castro emphasizes mentorship, communication, and accessibility. He believes in the importance of a leader's open-door policy, one-on-one counseling, and the balance between mission focus and personal approachability. He views company command as an officer's milestone and feels strongly that effective leadership involves nurturing junior officers and enlisted leaders.

Balancing his Army career with family life has been a rewarding challenge for CPT Castro. He attributes much of his success to his ability to separate work and home life, ensuring that when he's home, he is both physically and mentally present for his family. He believes that strong family support is a crucial factor in a successful military career, and credits his wife's unwavering support as the foundation of his stability and success. CPT Castro advises fellow soldiers to prioritize communication and mutual understanding with their families, especially when facing the challenges of Army life. For him, maintaining alignment with his family's expectations and keeping them informed of the Army's demands has been key to balancing these two worlds effectively.



"Your goal as a leader is to have an unshakable family core in order to be successful in this career".
- CPT Castro



To current cadets, CPT Castro's advice is simple: enjoy the experience and soak up all the knowledge you can while in this phase of life. He reminds cadets that this time is short and should be cherished as an essential building block for their future military careers. For enlisted soldiers aspiring to commission, he emphasizes the importance of academic dedication. Having the experience of being enlisted provides a unique advantage, but completing school and maintaining high standards is essential. He encourages enlisted soldiers to be subject matter experts in their respective Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) and to lead by example, as commanders expect them to be proficient in their roles.

CPT Castro's mentor, MAJ Elliot Figueroa, has been a key influence in his career, providing the essential advice: "Never stop being ready." conversations with and the biggest advice is "Never stop being ready; Sigue amolando el hacha and you will never have to do it". This mentality of continuous preparation and refinement is something CPT Castro has adopted fully in his leadership approach.

As CPT Castro transitions into the signal branch, his focus is on securing a company command and achieving success within the force. In addition to his military goals, he is pursuing a master's degree in health and sports science, and he is determined to be the best father he can be. Looking forward, his long-term vision is to leave a legacy centered on fitness and readiness. He believes that maintaining physical fitness is not only key to success in the Army but also to a long, healthy life, and he encourages young leaders to take this aspect of their career seriously from the start.