

## ***THIS IS WHY WE DONATE TO THE CALIFORNIA BPW EDUCATION FUND.***

*The article below was written by CEF loan recipient, Jordan Bennett.*

*After Jordan completed one year of payments,  
the CEF Board voted to convert her loan to a grant.*

Since graduating from Santa Clara University in June of 2024, my life has been filled with a lot of change. I no longer wear the "student" title, my family moved from California to Oklahoma, and I was preparing to move out of the country for my first duty station. Fast forward to October 2024, I attended the Army Medical Department Basic Officer Leaders Course (AMEDD BOLC). AMEDD BOLC is a three month course that taught myself and other officers what was expected of us as Medical Service Officers and leaders. BOLC consisted of a classroom portion, where we spent time learning about the different medical roles of care that the US Army provides. Additionally, we trained in the field for approximately 10 days, where we practiced what we learned in the classroom, as well as tested our day/night land navigation skills and weapons qualifications. I was also extremely lucky to have met many amazing and intelligent people there, who provided camaraderie and pushed me to do my very best. I remember being excited to find out that four of the people that I met at BOLC were also slotted to go to Korea with me! We have all gotten closer as we have spent a lot of our free time trying Korean food and traveling. Our favorite meal is Dak-galbi! I highly recommend it.



After BOLC graduation in December, I got to spend Christmas with my family before I left for Korea. I was able to say my goodbyes and fly out two days after Christmas. The flight to Korea was long but I made it there in one piece. I spent the first couple weeks in-processing with my unit, 502nd Field Hospital and was placed in the Operations section in Battalion Staff. My role largely consists of planning training and ensuring that the whole Field Hospital runs smoothly. I have learned so much under my supervisors and other leaders. There is something so fulfilling about showing up to work everyday in the uniform I am proud to be wearing. It is incomprehensible how much I have learned during my first 8 months. The best part is that most of the time, it is life lessons I learn. How to be a better manager, how to interact, motivate, and inspire people. One of my favorite memories was learning how to drive some of our tactical vehicles.

I was the Convoy Commander for our last field training exercise, so it was important for me to be knowledgeable on the equipment that we would be using. My NCOs and team encouraged me along the way and they had a few laughs at my expense seeing the Junior Officer behind the wheel of the vehicle.



It's fun that I can say I am licensed to drive certain tactical vehicles! If it wasn't for the Army, I would have never been able to have this experience. I can't think of a better job than working in the military!

I have also been lucky enough to compete in several different opportunities to push myself to be better. I completed my first Norwegian Foot March which is an 18.6-mile ruck march with 25lbs on my back in 5 hours and 15 minutes. That was one of the most physically and mentally challenging things I have done. However, it was absolutely worth it when I crossed that finish line!



This past June, I also competed in the German Armed Forces Badge where I earned Silver. It consists of a physical fitness test, a swimming test, a ruck march, and a shooting qualification. This was a fun three day competition that pushed me to excel.

Throughout my time here I have earned two Army Achievement Medals (AAM), one for my successful work as a Convoy Commander. I oversaw over 800 miles of Driver's Training and training 20 primary and alternate drivers. I was lucky enough to have had such a great team of NCO's who continued to execute the mission with my guidance. The other AAM I received was for my contribution in raising funds for our annual Army Emergency Relief (AER) campaign. My unit was able to beat last year's contribution, which was amazing. This program serves as financial aid for emergencies that service members may face during their time in service. I am proud to be a part of a unit that gives back to amazing programs such as AER.



Not only have I been enjoying work, but I have been fortunate enough to be able to spend a lot of time traveling. In February, I was able to visit Guam, which was beautiful. It was a wonderful break from the freezing snow that I was experiencing in Korea (visiting Lake Tahoe, and Lake Almanor in the Winter did not prepare me for the cold temperatures in Korea). I was able to travel with other Lieutenants and we all had a blast.



We have traveled and explored a bunch of Korea already. My favorites have been Seoul, Busan, and Jeju Island. All of which had delicious food and fun new things to try. We just returned from the Philippines in July. I swam with the Whale Sharks and saw the second largest Sardinie Run in the world. I am currently planning my next trip to Taiwan in October and am hopeful that I will be able to go to Japan in November and meet my sister there. I am so blessed to do something that I have always wanted to do. Traveling has been one of my biggest dreams, and I am so fortunate to have been given this opportunity.

My original tour length here in Korea was only for a year, however, I have decided to extend for another year (December 2026). Once my first year is complete, my goal is to find an opening as a Platoon Leader. One thing that I have missed being on Battalion staff is that I work with many Senior Officers and Senior Enlisted Leaders and so I do not get to work directly with the soldiers. I am excited to take on this next step in my journey and work more directly with soldiers. Allowing me to grow and develop my leadership by really getting the chance to lead others instead of just planning in the background. This new opportunity would allow me to see the planning I am doing currently come to fruition in the field through the execution process. I am looking forward to what's ahead, but also reminding myself to enjoy the moment.

I am truly thankful to all the people who have supported me along the way. To my friends and family, their encouragement and support means the world to me. A very special thank you to my sister, who has made the hard days better and has always been a call away. To my high school volleyball coach, for believing in me and pushing me to always compete at my best. His motivation and drive made me the competitor I am today. To my Army mentors, thank you for helping shape me into the leader that I am today. By showing me how leaders set the expectations, always leading by example. Lastly, thank you to BPW. None of this would have been possible without your generosity, my dream school, D1 athletic career, and of course, my career that I'm excelling in and am absolutely proud to be a part of. You have made my dreams come true. I will never have enough words to truly express my gratitude.

Thank you.

## Jordan Bennett

