

D211 POST: BOARD RECOGNIZES STUDENT-SOLDIER



Pvt. Emily Cantu-Rojas, a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 330th Medical Brigade, was recognized by the Township High School District 211 Board of Education during the board's general meeting Dec. 12 in Palatine, Illinois. Cantu-Rojas, a senior at William Fremd High School, led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the meeting.

The Township High School District 211 Board of Education recognized William Fremd High School senior Emily Rojas-Cantu, who is currently enlisted in the United States Army Reserve during their general business meeting December 12.

Pvt. Rojas-Cantu, a supply specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 330th Medical Brigade, enlisted through the Army's split-option program. The program allowed her to complete her basic combat training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina during the summer between her junior and senior year. After she graduates, Rojas-Cantu will complete her career training at Fort Lee, Virginia.



Pvt. Emily Cantu-Rojas, a supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 330th Medical Brigade, leads the Township High School District 211 Board of Education in the Pledge of Allegiance during the board's general meeting in Palatine, Illinois, Dec. 12.

Rojas-Cantu said she plans to attend either the University of Illinois or Illinois State University where she will pursue a degree in Elementary Education, all while continuing her service in the Army Reserves.

If you are a District 211 graduate or a student currently serving in the Armed Forces, please contact the District's Public Relations office at 847-755-6631 to be recognized by the Board of Education at an upcoming meeting.

SCHAUMBURG HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

MILITARY RECOGNITION



Joseph Zolper (center) with his parents during his Commissioning Ceremony this past December.

District 211 has a tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Second Lieutenant Joseph Zolper, a 2011 graduate of Schaumburg High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its March 17 meeting. Zolper is the 13th alumnus to be recognized for his service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

In 2011, he was granted an ROTC scholarship at Illinois State University. During his time in the program, Zolper studied History Education and graduated from ISU on Dec. 15, 2015. He commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant on Dec. 11, 2015 and will go active duty as military intelligence with a branch detail in infantry. He leaves for infantry training at Fort Benning, Ga., the week of March 21, 2016.

Zolper said he always was interested in joining the military, especially after 9/11, and would speak with recruiters whenever they were at Schaumburg High School. With initial plans to play football at North Central University, he quickly changed his mind while visiting the campus for open house and speaking with a ROTC representative. He filled out the application for the ROTC scholarship that evening with only hours left to make the scholarship's deadline.

"We quickly packed our stuff up and went home. I did the application, which took about four hours," Zolper said. "I eventually got a letter that I received the federal scholarship, which was almost a full ride. Then they actually took away the scholarship because of military funding. ISU said they would give me the scholarship if I went there. It worked out for the best because ISU is a good college for teaching."

Throughout his four years of attending the ISU ROTC program, he has earned many recognitions and accomplishments. In Spring of 2015, he was one of the top 300 Army ROTC cadets from around the country honored to attend the Army Cadet Command George C. Marshall Awards and Leadership Seminar in Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

In July 2014 while attending a Leadership, Development, Assessment Course in Fort Knox, Ky., he was ranked as one of the top cadets. As a senior, he was named the ROTC Battalion commander in charge of all the cadets. As a junior, he was the Color Guard Captain, and as a junior and sophomore he was Ranger Buddy Captain. As a sophomore, he was in charge of organizing the Veterans Day ceremony as the master of ceremonies. Zolper was also recognized at this year's Veterans Day celebration at Fremd High School.

"I was proud to be sitting and standing next to the ladies and gentlemen on the gym floor, and it was intimidating in a good way," he said. "It was great to see the support the students gave to the veterans and those serving. It was a great experience."

Zolper already has experience student teaching at Fremd High School and hopes to continue teaching after being active duty for four years and entering the reserves. As for other students who might light to follow a similar military path, Zolper encouraged students to join the military, but only if they know exactly what type of commitment they are making.

"Look ahead at the future in 10 years," he said. "The military is a great thing but it is a substantial commitment. I know some people that joined not expecting the commitment that comes with it, and they were pretty thrown off by it. Make sure this is the right path for you."

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving in the military. To recommend a District 211 graduate currently serving in the military for recognition, please complete the online Military Recognition form on the District 211 website.

**SCHAUMBURG HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNA
HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION
MILITARY RECOGNITION**



Private First Class Krystal Vezzetti, a 2014 graduate of Schaumburg High School, was honored and thanked for her service by the Board of Education at its July 16 meeting.

District 211 has a tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Private First Class Krystal Vezzetti, a 2014 graduate of Schaumburg High School, was honored and thanked for her service by the Board of Education at its July 16 meeting. Vezzetti is the ninth alumna to be recognized for her service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vezzetti joined the National Guard following high school graduation and left for basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, in August 2014. She completed her Military Occupation Specialty (MOS) training also at Fort Leonard Wood and graduated in January 2015 as a military police officer. In August 2015, she is going on a volunteer mission to Germany to patrol a military base for three weeks.

“You go through everything with the people that you meet at basic training,” Vezzetti said. “You all are struggling through the same things, missing home, and you get to do things that people who don’t join the military never will get to do. It is definitely a hard experience but the benefits, the experience, and the people that you meet make it well worth it. I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”



Krystal poses with her mother at the July 16 Board of Education meeting.

Vezzeti said was interested in joining the military because she was interested in becoming a police officer. After various experiences in her life, she realized she wants to work toward becoming a therapist and hopes to attend University of Illinois-Chicago in the fall to study psychology.

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving in the military. To recommend a District 211 graduate currently serving in the military for a recognition, please email the D211 Post editor with the graduate's information, including which District 211 school they attended.

HOFFMAN ESTATES HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MILITARY RECOGNITION



Private Stephan Bonilla, a 2015 graduate of Fremd High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its June 11 meeting.

District 211 has a tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Private Stephan Bonilla, a 2015 graduate of Hoffman Estates High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its June 11 meeting. Bonilla is the eighth alumnus to be recognized for his service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bonilla joined the National Guard following high school graduation and leaves for basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, MO, in July 2015.

In high school, Bonilla played football, basketball, baseball, and ran cross-country. He recently earned the Scholar Athlete Award, which is awarded to athletes that maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher during the season. During his senior year, he joined student council, which he said was an amazing opportunity because he met new people and was able to contribute to the school.

"If you're not a student at Hoffman, you really don't see how great it is," he said. "I want to thank everyone in D211 for a great four years. I will miss the people and teachers who have helped me become the person I am today."

Bonilla said was interested in joining the military because he has friends who say great things about serving in the National Guard. He hopes to attend Southern Illinois University – Carbondale or Indiana University – Bloomington next spring to study psychology with hopes to become a police officer. He is looking forward to the people he will meet and the experiences he will have while serving in the National Guard.

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving in the military. To recommend a District 211 graduate currently serving in the military for a recognition, please email the [D211 Post editor](#) with the graduate's information, including which District 211 school they attended.

CONANT HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MILITARY RECOGNITION



Sergeant George Rivera, a 2007 graduate of Conant High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its April 30 meeting.

District 211 recently started a new tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Sergeant George Rivera, a 2007 graduate of Conant High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its April 30 meeting. Rivera is the seventh alumnus to be recognized for his service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rivera joined the Marine Corps following high school graduation and went to boot camp in San Diego in June 2007. He completed Marine Combat Training at Camp Pendleton in August 2007 and went Naval Justice School in New Port, R.I., in January 2008. He served in Marine Air Control Group 48, Great Lakes, Ill., from 2008 – 2012 as a Legal Non-Commissioned Officer. He then served as Quality Assurance Non-Commissioned Officer at the Chicago Military Processing Station in Chicago from 2013 – 2015. Currently, he is serving as Marine Representative at Recruiting Sub-Station DuPage South.

He has several medals, including a National Defense Medal, Global War on Terrorism Medal, Marines Corps Reserves Good Conduct Medal, Navy Unit Commendation Medal, and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals.

At Conant High School, Rivera said he did not always know he wanted to join the military, but had contemplated the idea. He said one of the proudest moments in his life was simply earning the title.

“The proudest moment for any Marine is actually making it through initial training and earning the title,” he said. “Being a Marine on recruiting duty is one of the most challenging jobs that any Marine can do, but is also the most rewarding. We change people’s lives for the better and influence many others. It is truly amazing to see the transformation from young students to professionals.”

He advised students considering a military route after high school to look into all options available, including how to get a degree and what branch of service is best for them. He also said students can take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test (ASVAB) which is designed as a placement exam to learn their strengths and weaknesses, as well as the in-depth sports physical.

“The Marine Corps has something to offer for everyone who is qualified. So whether you are looking for educational benefits, a challenge, financial security, or leadership and management skills, students should remember only a select few get the opportunity as the Marines are the smallest branch in the Armed Services,” he said. “Overall, the Marine Corps enhances life goals, both short term and long. Each Marine uses this opportunity as a stepping stone for their future.”

As for the future, Rivera said he plans on staying in a military career because the Marine Corps has brought him a lot of success at such a young age, which he is grateful for.

“It has given me the opportunity to see many great places, meet amazing individuals, and most importantly, it has given me the chance to find out my leadership style and the ability to grow as a person,” he said. “For that reason, I believe that this is a path that I will stay on.”

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving or have served before each meeting.

FREMD HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MILITARY RECOGNITION



Captain Tae Kim (Photo courtesy Tae Kim)

District 211 recently started a new tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Captain Tae Kim, a 2001 graduate of Fremd High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its April 9 meeting. Kim is the sixth alumnus to be recognized for his service, and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Kim joined the Army following high school graduation and was a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point from 2001 to 2005. He served as an Army Aviation Officer (UH-60 & MQ 1C Pilot) in Alabama, Republic of Korea, Arizona, and Afghanistan (OEF) from 2005 -2013. From 2013 to present, he resigned from active duty and serves in the Illinois Army National Guard as an Army Aviation Officer.

He received honors including the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medals, Korea Army Commendation Medals, Army Achievement Medals, Korea Army Achievement Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, and the 2011 Unmanned Aircraft Systems Unit of the Year Award as Company Commander.

While his career in the military has several highlights, Kim said being a company commander for a new unit was something that defines his career. In 2009, he was instrumental in building a company from the ground up, including recruiting his team, establishing regulations, purchasing aircrafts, and working with civilians. Though it was a challenge, he said creating something from the ground up was something that

many never get to experience in the military. He remains friends with many that were on his team today.



Captain Tae Kim, a 2001 graduate of Fremd High School, was honored and thanked for his service by the Board of Education at its April 9 meeting.

In high school, Kim was on the swim team, the water polo team, and played golf. He credits the commitment and time management skills he learned during his time at FHS for making his transition to West Point easier.

“Those four years were some of the most challenging times that I have had,” he said. “When faced with challenges at West Point or in the military, they seemed not as daunting. When I was on the swim team and going through it, I didn’t think of how hard it was, but looking back I realized what a time commitment that was as a high school kid.”

Kim has talked to many high school students that consider joining the military after high school. He said he shares his experiences and advises them that the military is not for everyone.

“I tell students what my experience was like, and more importantly I tell them about the things that I learned and gained from my experiences,” he said. “I am hard pressed to find another occupation or career path that you have so much responsibility and challenges early in your career. There is no downside to that. You may go to a combat zone, but you are well trained and prepared. It is such a great learning experience, that I find it hard and difficult to pass up.”

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HOFFMAN ESTATES HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNUS HONORED FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MILITARY RECOGNITION



*Hoffman Estates High School Alumnus
and Private First Class Daniel
Vazquez.*

This year, District 211 started a tradition to honor alumni for the service they have given to their country.

Hoffman Estates High School Alumnus and Private First Class Daniel Vazquez was honored and thanked for his service in the National Guard by the Board of Education at its Feb. 12 meeting. Vazquez is the fourth alumnus to be recognized for his service and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vazquez graduated from HEHS in 2013, and completed basic training at Fort Benning in February 2014. He earned an expert marksmanship badge, as well as a blue infantry cord. Additionally, he earned two ribbons – one for completing training and another for joining during a time of war.

As a student at HEHS, Vazquez said he knew he wanted to go to college but was not always interested in the military. However, he said joining the military has afforded him many opportunities.

“Senior year is when I thought about it more and started looking it up and seeing what branch I would join,” he said. “I ended up wanting to go to school, but joined the military first after I graduated.”



Vazquez is the fourth alumnus to be recognized for his service and started the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

He is currently a student at Harper College and is studying to earn a degree in criminal justice. He said joining the National Guard was a way for him to reach his educational goals and better himself in the process. He recommends the military if students are interested.

“If students are interested in the military, they want to still be at home and get an education, the National Guard is the way to go,” he said. “The training is hard, but it is really rewarding when you finish it. You are in better shape, you have more discipline, and you are much better person for doing it.”

The Board of Education will continue Military Recognitions for District 211 graduates who are serving or have served before each meeting.