I had the honor of being a part of the Battalion team that participated in the 2013 2nd ROTC Brigade Ranger Challenge competition at Fort Dix, New Jersey, 08-10 November. Our team, led by Military Science Level IV Cadet Alexander Flynn and myself, consisted of nine Cadets from four different Universities who represented each of the Military Science class levels. The dedication that the Ranger Challenge team showed to improve and compete as a team was incredible. We began to train in August and trained five times a week, up to two hours per session, which is twice as long as regular Physical Training sessions normally run. Training included everything from intense physical workouts to skills training that Cadets would not normally get in the mainstream ROTC program. Practicing unique skills such as weapons assembly, hand-grenade assaults, and tying the infamous one-rope bridge were regular occurrences while training with the Ranger Challenge team.

Slowly but surely a group of individual Cadets began to bond into a solid team. When unforeseen circumstances delayed the competition by four weeks, our team did not falter, but continued to training and remained sharp.

When the long awaited competition finally arrived, our team was prepared and ready to execute. Forty-two teams from all over the northeastern United States assembled to take part in the challenge. It began Saturday morning as we stepped off into a timed, ten-event course that was designed to challenge the body and dull the mind. Events such as the log carry, physical fitness challenge, and obstacle course tested physical strength and mental toughness while, events such as the confidence course, commander’s challenge, and weapons assembly challenged mental agility and decision making under stress. Even between events there was no rest for the competing teams. As we shuffled under the weight of our rucksacks from event to event, the course threw unexpected challenges at us such as transporting simulated casualties, plotting and avoiding biohazard materials and the constant threat of enemy contact. The weekend concluded on Sunday with a 10K road march around Fort Dix. Once again, the required complication of being required to transport a casualty was placed on our team as we neared the finish line. Undeterred, we finished the march and accomplished our mission of completing the Ranger Challenge competition.

Overall, I was extremely proud to be a part of this team. We worked hard and did not fold under pressure. We trained for, started and completed events together as a team, not as individuals. The team cohesion that was displayed did not go unnoticed as we received many compliments from the 2nd Brigade Command Group.

I highly encourage Cadets who are looking to stand out from the crowd to come out next year for the Ranger Challenge team. It is not easy to be apart of Ranger Challenge, but it will make you stand out among your peers. The mental and physical discipline gained from it is, in my opinion, unmatched in the ROTC program.
Royal Warriors Execute Fall Field Training Exercise

By MS IV Cadets Michael Shannon - Wilkes University & Sean McKee—University of Scranton

The Cadet Battalion Operations Officer is in charge of planning all the training pieces of the Fall Field Training Exercise. It all starts with the battalion’s Training Guidance that the Professor of Military Science distributes before the semester. From there, the Cadet S3 meets with Cadre to touch upon the major training events that we will provide for the Cadets of the Battalion based on Cadet Command’s training priorities. From here, MSIVs are assigned to lead these major events and develop a timeline for the entire weekend. While the MSIV OICs work the details out for what they want to plan, the C/S3 provides guidance and makes sure everything is going in the right direction.

The next step is the FTX recon. This past semester, we went to Fort Indiantown Gap (FITG) on a Friday morning. Before we arrived, we had to conduct a map reconnaissance of where we wanted to train within the training areas we reserved. The map reconnaissance is necessary because we’re working as hard as possible once we hit the ground. In a four-hour time frame, I and five other MSIVs walked five SSTX lanes, plotted 30 land navigation points, developed a plan for our tactical operations center, and adjusted plans that we had made from map reconnaissance.

For the month following the reconnaissance, the MSIVs have ongoing In Progress Reviews (IPRs). The Cadet S3 coordinates these IPRs so OICs and Staff can update the Cadet Battalion Commander and cadre on where we are in the planning process. These are vital to creating the FTX Operations Order that will be issued to the Battalion. The FTX OPORD is our final product which drives training for the weekend and is supported by the personnel, intelligence, sustainment, media, and communication information that the staff have produced.

While these constant briefings are very stressful for the MSIV staff, they allow us to make sure everything is accounted for when it comes time to execute the Fall FTX. Our last step before FTX is the Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR) led by the Cadet Executive Officer. Executed the Thursday before FTX, one can think of this as the fast-forward version of FTX, executed on a much smaller scale. The CAR is meant to ensure all training flows before we have first formation at all three campuses. Upon completion of this, the Cadet S3 and Cadet XO fix any shortcomings, ensuring we produce the best training possible for the Cadets of the Royal Warrior Battalion.

The MSIV Cadets left the CAR feeling confident that Fall FTX was going to be an excellent training event. An advance party of select MSIV Cadets and Cadre left the University of Scranton early Friday morning to prep the training site for the arrival of the main party (100+ Cadets and Cadre). Immediately upon arrival, the Cadets of the Royal Warrior Battalion began training. MSIII Cadets executed Night Land Navigation, while MSI and MSII Cadets learned the ins and outs of Night Land Navigation and BIVOUAC Sites (sleeping arrangements) through MSIV led classes. The first night of Fall FTX was the most stressful for the MSIV Cadets. Under the cover of darkness MSIV’s (under Cadre Supervision) had to ensure accountability of personnel and equipment, finalize the setup of the Tactical Operations Center (TOC) and fulfill their rolls in executing the training.

The Cadets of the Royal Warrior Battalion fall into two main groups, MSIII Cadets who are preparing for the Leadership Development and Assessment Course (LDAC), and MSI/II Cadets who are training warrior skills to obtain the skill level necessary to perform as MSIII Cadets. During FTX, the training of MSIII Cadets focused on Day/Night Land Navigation, Squad Situational Training Exercises (SSTX), and Platoon Level Operations (Patrolling). MSIII Cadets completed three iterations of Land Navigation Training to increase their confidence and proficiency in that essential task. Saturday Morning, MSIII Cadets took part in multiple Tactical Squad Level Training Exercises. By that point Cadets were proficient in Squad Level tactics, and that training served to validate their capabilities. The final major training event for MSIII Cadets was an introduction to Platoon Level Operations. This was the first time many MSIII Cadets have been given Leadership Roles in Platoon Level Operations, thus the MSIV Cadets and Cadre played a crucial role in both guiding and mentoring Cadets for the duration of the training.

MSI/II Cadets conducted similar training to the MSIII Cadets except their training was focused on teaching, coaching, and mentoring to increase their confidence and leadership skills. MSI/II Cadets executed partner Land Navigation, giving the MSII Cadet an opportunity to increase skill levels by teaching and guiding the MSI Cadet, while the MSI Cadet was able to learn from the guidance offered by the MSII. MSI/II Cadets also participated in SSTX, most MSII Cadets received their first taste of tactical leadership by acting as Team Leaders. Instead of participating in Platoon Operations Training, MSI Cadets executed Casualty Assessment and First Aid Training on Sunday morning. Casualty Assessment and First Aid are essential skills and the training served as an introduction to basic tasks. Cadets trained on how to assess a casualty, perform basic first-aid, call for a MEDVAC (Medical Evacuation) and other critical tasks.

Fall FTX was a very successful training event, as Cadets walked away with increased confidence and leadership abilities. MSIV Cadets benefited from participating in the planning and top-level execution of the training. Every Cadet was able to see just how important their role is to the success each respective event and how crucial teamwork is to executing a successful training event. MSI/II/III Cadets were trained on various essential tasks, they developed personally and professionally through the completion of the training. Although Fall FTX provided excellent training, the MSIV Cadets will continue to work closely with Cadre ensuring Cadets of the Royal Warrior Battalion receive the best training possible.
The Month In Pictures

Photo (Top Left): Mr. Kevin Bremer from the Army War College speaks to Military Science Cadets about the importance of understanding cross cultural communication and cultural awareness. Mr. Bremer is with the International Student Division. Photo (Top Right): Members of the Ranger Challenge Team negotiate the obstacle course at Fort Dix, New Jersey, during the 2nd ROTC Brigade Ranger Challenge competition held 08-10 November. Photo (Left) Members of the East Stroudsburg University Detachment prepare to evaluate Junior ROTC Cadets at the Washingtonville High School JROTC Drill Meet & Competition on 09 November.

Photo (Top Left): Military Science Level III Cadets tackle the Land Navigation Course at Fort Indiantown Gap during the Battalion’s Fall FTX. Photo (Top Right): Cadets of the Battalion Color Guard prepare to step-off at the start of the New York City Veterans Day parade held on Monday, 11 November.