Over the past several months the Armor School at Fort Benning, Georgia has made some drastic changes to the Armor Basic Officer Leader Course curriculum. My class is only the second to receive this new instruction that they have designed. I believe the changes have made the training better, as well as more physically and mentally challenging. The course is now divided into three phases. At the end of each phase you must pass a “Gate Event” in order to advance to the next phase. Failure of any gate event could result in a recycle.

The first phase is Basic Soldier Skills. We spent the first week at the range learning Basic Rifle Marksmanship, zeroing the weapons we would qualify on. You fire all day from Monday to Thursday and then attempt to qualify on Friday, needless to say you have the opportunity to fire a lot.

The second week was spent on land navigation skills. You learned everything from dead reckoning to terrain analysis and even how to keep a pace count based solely off how long you have been walking.

The third week was spent certifying on Level One combatives, which was a lot of fun. The next two weeks were spent on dismounted tactics, observation posts, Chemical, Biological, Radiation and Nuclear (CBRN) training and reporting.

Then came the Gate 1 Event. This event kicked-off bright and early with a Physical Fitness Test. Once you started the two-mile run that is when your time for the gate event started. Once a 2LT completed the run you were taken by LMTV (tactical vehicle) to an unknown point and had to self locate using the skills you were taught during the land navigation week. From there you were provided a distance and direction to a point and you were off. Once you found the point a piece of paper attached to a tree gave you another distance and direction.

At the second point there were instructions to set up an Observation Point in the vicinity of a known enemy location and prepare a Blue 1 Report (basically a salute report). From there it was a 5 mile road march to the range where you had 20 rounds to zero your weapon. The catch was that you needed to use whatever ammo you had left to engage steel targets down range from behind a barrier. Students had 5 hours to complete this and it was definitely one of the most difficult things I have ever done.

Phase Two was focused on gunnery and becoming familiar with the tank’s systems. My class was the first class in five years to receive training on the Bradley Fighting Vehicle. We learned everything from loading ammo into machine guns, to fire commands. We spent time in the AGTS simulator working on our fire commands, because that is how they graded us once we went to the range. Continued Pg. 3
Happenings Across The Battalion

Nurse Cadet Earns HPSP Scholarship

Military Science Level IV Cadet Sean McKee was recently selected for the ROTC Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner - Health Professions Scholarship Program. A Nursing Major at the University of Scranton, Cadet McKee will be granted an educational delay upon his graduation and commissioning in May 2014 to attend a graduate level program in Psychiatric Nursing for up to two years. This graduate program will be fully funded by the United States Army.

Cadets of the Semester—Fall 2013

Congratulations to the following individuals who were selected as the Cadets of the Semester for Fall 2013 by the Cadre of the Royal Warrior Battalion:

MS IV Cadet Michael Shannon—Wilkes Univ.
MS III Cadet Jacob Randazzo—Univ. of Scranton
MS II Cadet Tyler Whitecomb—Wilkes Univ.
MS I Cadet Josh Zaback—East Stroudsburg Univ.

Cadet of the Semester selections are based on academic performance, APFT scores, involvement in extracurricular activities, overall performance in Military Science courses and demonstrated potential for Officership.

Top Army Physical Fitness Test Performers

The Royal Warrior Battalion administered the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) on 04 and 05 December with over 111 Cadets testing. Top Scores belonged to MS III Cadet Alexandra Natchman of the University of Scranton and MS II Tyler Whitecomb of Wilkes University. Both Cadets scored 338 points on the APFT. This marks the third consecutive semester Cadet Natchman has held the top APFT score for female Cadets in the Royal Warrior Battalion. A total of twenty Cadets scored 300 or higher on the Record APFT. The Battalion’s overall APFT average was 269, while the Military Science Level III Cadets led the way with a class APFT average of 282.

Annual Royal Warrior Military Ball Set For 22 February 2014

The Royal Warrior Battalion will be hosting their annual Military Ball on the evening of Saturday, 22 February 2014 at the Hilton Hotel in downtown Scranton. The cocktail hour begins at six p.m., with dinner being served at seven-thirty. This year Colonel Patrick Curran will serve as the event’s guest speaker. Colonel Curran is a graduate of the University of Tampa and earned his commission through Army ROTC. He currently serves in the J4 (Joint Logistical Operations) at the Pentagon and has held a number of command and staff positions across the Army’s logistical community. For more information on the event and ticker information please contact Major Kristofer Thompson at 570-941-7457 (3136) or kristofer.thompson@scranton.edu
Our ABOLC class spent two days at the range engaging multiple types of targets and were forced to use our brains when all they did was hand us a CONOP of a situation and told us to “Defend and Report”. We had to fire the main gun and then quickly transfer to a simultaneous engagement with the .50 caliber machine gun and the 240-coax machine gun. We also were able to do night engagements as well. The Gate Two event was basically the same as our first range day, with the exception that multiple targets would pop up at once and we also had to engage a moving target.

Once I return from block leave I will be entering Phase Three so I cannot say too much about it yet. I do know that it is all tactics and we spend a lot of time in the field conducting STX operations on both the scout side and the tank side. We will also have the opportunity to train on the CCTT (close combat tactical trainer), which is several tank simulators that are connected in order to allow for platoon level training. Gate Three is a 10 day field problem in which half of the class is pitted against the other half in a mock battle. We will be utilizing both scout vehicles and tanks.

In all the training at ABOLC is great and the instructors are some of the best. If I could give some of the Cadets in the Royal Warrior Battalion advice it would be this. First, show up to BOLC in the best shape of your life. Second, whatever branch you are make sure you do research and read the Field Manuals associated with your Branch. Finally, and most importantly have fun. You aren’t going to have really any extra stuff to do besides BOLC, so make friends and enjoy wherever you are. I wish you all the best of luck as you close out this year and finish strong. Scouts Out!

Photo (Left): Military Science Level III Cadet Brandon Souryavong of King’s College prepares to execute a controlled water entry and ditch his equipment during Combat Water Survival Training conducted on 03 December. Photo (Top): MS III Cadet Stephen Brynok of King’s College conducts a 15-meter swim with a rifle, one of five events Cadets are required to complete in order to pass Combat Water Survival Training.

Royal Warriors Selected For Cultural Understanding and Language Programs
The following Cadets were recently selected by U.S. Army Cadet Command to take part in the Summer 2014 Cultural Understanding and Language Program. This program allows Cadets to take part in 30 day cultural immersions at locations across the global in order to enhance their language skills, practice cross cultural communications and gain a broader understanding of cultural awareness:

MS I Cadet Kylie Hanlon – King’s College – Cape Verde / MS I Cadet Sarah Thomas – University of Scranton – Burkina Fuso / MS I Cadet Carson Clabeaux – University of Scranton – Dominican Republic / MS II Cadet Alexander Rodino – Wilkes University - Ukraine / MS II Cadet Tyler Whitecomb – Wilkes University – Cape Verde / MS II Dylan O’Keefe – University of Scranton - Congo / MS II Jordan Valori – University of Scranton - Moldova / MS II Patrick Robinson – King’s College – Croatia