The Battalion’s Ranger Challenge Team deployed to Camp Smith, New York 22-24 October to take part in the annual 2nd ROTC Brigade Ranger Challenge competition. The Royal Warriors were one of twenty-one universities from throughout the northeast who sent a team to the competition. Teams from the US Military Academy and the US Naval Academy also took part in the event.

The ten member team kicked-off the competition with a 0400 wake up on Saturday followed shortly thereafter by the Army Physical Fitness Test. From there the team moved to the weapons assembly/disassembly site and then on to the orienteering course. As the day progressed the Rangers were tested on their marksman-ship abilities at the Engagement Skills Trainer, tested on their one-rope bridge abilities, asked to conduct a tactical squad lane in an urban environment and finally administered a written exam testing their knowledge on general military subjects.

Sunday morning saw the Rangers set out on the competition’s final event, the 10K ruck-march with weapon, LBE and a 35 lb rucksack. Designed as a Leader Development program, Ranger Challenge is meant to not only test Cadets on their basic military skills but also test their mental and physical toughness. Additionally, the competition is designed to help instill the Warrior Ethos in these young Cadets and help them embrace the seven Army Values.

Team members include the following individuals:

MSIV Chris Meade (Captain)
MSIII Andrew Wycheck
MSIII Coren France
MSIII Emily Rainey
MSIII Evan Dimakas
MSIII Thompson Palmer
MSIII Kevin Lawrence
MSIII Julian Campoli
MSII Brian Robinson
MSI Dominic Loughlin

Team Coach—MS III Ben Slechta
Cadre Advisor—MSG Alex Ortega
Journalism Students and Cadets Partner In Training

Recently students from the University of Scranton’s Communications Department came together with their peers from the Military Science program in order to learn more about one another. Eight students from Dr. Kim Pavlik’s journalism course joined the Royal Warrior Battalion at a Thursday afternoon Leadership Lab. The intent was to allow Cadets to gain an insight into working with the media and hone their communications skills.

For the Media students it provided an opportunity to gain an understanding into working with the military and help them learn what it is the Military Science Department does in terms of leader development.

Some of the journalist observed MS Is –IIs as they engaged in training on land navigation, while others took notes and asked questions as the MS IIIs practiced squad tactics.

This initial pilot test proved successful and now plans are on the way for Communications students to embed with the Royal Warrior Battalion during the execution of the Spring Field Training Exercise in April at Fort Indiantown Gap.

Over the course of the next several newsletters articles produced by these young media embeds will appear. Below is the first in the series.

MS III Cadet Kevin Demko
By - Jeremy Evans
(Guest Journalist/Media Embed)

Kevin Demko spent part of his summer jumping from airplanes and then parachuting back to the ground, but coming from a proud family that has produced several members who served in the military, it seems almost ordinary.

Demko, a sophomore at the University of Scranton, is enrolled in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program. He was one of an elite group chosen to attend the three-week airborne school program.

“Things like this are chosen on an ‘order of merit’ list. I qualified by being the top freshman on the list. I gained so much from the experience that it’s impossible to sum it up in a few words,” he said.

Jumping from planes is just one of the many things that students such as Demko feel others can gain from programs like ROTC. Demko said the experience goes beyond learning to jump from a plane or various other combat skills.

“ROTC strongly implements the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage with in-class instruction and out-of-class tasks and exercises,” he said.

ROTC is a national program found in colleges across the United States that prides itself on cultivating young adults into capable leaders who one day might be valuable members of the United States military. ROTC began in 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson signed the National Defense Act of 1916. Since then, ROTC has proved invaluable to the military. More than 40 percent of current active duty Army General Officers were commissioned through ROTC, according to United State Army’s website.

For Demko, the choice to enroll in the ROTC program came easily to him. Both of his grandfathers served in the military. His maternal grandfather served in World War II, while his paternal grandfather served in the Korean War. Demko’s father joined ROTC while he was at school and later served in the Gulf War. Despite all the background that his family has in the military and his father’s own experience in ROTC, Demko said he never felt any pressure to join ROTC and the decision was entirely left to him.

“It was entirely my decision. Though, my dad was able to give me personal insight because he went through the ROTC program when he went to school,” he said.

Despite his successful exploits at airborne school over the summer, Demko said he has had an interest in dentistry ever since childhood. He said he would ultimately like to become a dentist in the military following college.

“I have desired to become a dentist since I was in middle school. It's been a dream of mine for a while,” he said.

Though his family does have much history in the military, Demko ultimately joined because he felt like ROTC was the right choice for him.

“It boiled down to my desire to serve the greatest country in the world and my dream to one day become a dentist. The stars just aligned for me and ROTC,” he said.

Demko said that although it is difficult to juggle both ROTC and school work, the discipline that comes from ROTC helps one to stay focused.

“ROTC teaches you to effectively manage your time. In the Army everything runs on timelines so you are taught from the beginning of your ROTC education to effectively prepare and execute tasks in a timely manner,” he said.

For Kevin Demko, coming from a family with a proud history in the military, his dedication and hard work come as no surprise. Both his father and grandfathers served in the military and now Demko is continuing that tradition.

For the Media students it provided an opportunity to gain an understanding into working with the military and help them learn what it is the Military Science Department does in terms of leader development.

Some of the journalist observed MS Is –IIs as they engaged in training on land navigation, while others took notes and asked questions as the MS IIIs practiced squad tactics.
October Royal Warrior Highlights

LTC Remley presents 88 year old Mr. Warren Broome with a Royal Warrior Battalion coin at the 40th annual USS Fletcher reunion held on 06 OCT. Mr. Broome served over thirty years in the Navy and saw action in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. The Royal Warrior had eleven Cadets and Cadre join former members of the USS Fletcher to help celebrate this 40th reunion.

MS IV Cadet Jeff Mason conducts final inspections of a Washingtonville High School JROTC Cadet’s rappel harness. Cadet Mason was one of 18 Cadets and Cadre who help support and participate in a day of Rappelling at Camp Smith, NY with over 100 JROTC Cadets from Washingtonville.

MS IV Nursing Cadet Karen Buchheister hones her skills as she delivers annual flu shots to the SMI, MSG Alex Ortega and PMS, LTC Ryan Remley.

MS II Cadets Person, Hanks, Finno, along with MS IV Cadet Devine Leishman take time to smile for the camera after donning their harnesses and before climbing the rappel at Camp Smith.

Members of the Royal Warrior Battalion join U.S. Senator Robert Casey, former Scranton Mayor and Vietnam Veteran, David Wenzel and Ms. Tova Wiess, Holocaust Education Resource Center, at the opening ceremony of the “When Humanity Fails” exhibit in downtown Scranton.

MS I Cadet Hope Oliver is interviewed by Sons of the American Legion Radio Talk Show host Mr. Ken Kraetzer. Cadet Oliver shared with Mr. Kraetzer her experiences as a high school Junior ROTC cadet who transitioned into Senior ROTC in college.