From April 12th to the 15th, the Military Science Level III Cadets from the Royal Warrior Battalion embarked on a Joint Field Training Exercise. For the first time in our Cadet careers, we were joined by cadets from schools all over Pennsylvania, including Dickinson, Widner, Bucknell, and Lehigh. The final major training event before we attend the Leadership Development and Assessment Course at Fort Lewis, Washington this summer, it served as the final chance to examine ourselves and find out where we need to improve the most.

The JFTX kicked off on Thursday afternoon with an Army Physical Fitness Test in which each cadet was graded on their endurance in push-ups, sit-ups, and the 2-mile run. Although we had taken this test many times before, this time the pressure was on. After passing the APFT, the Cadets returned to their barracks and prepared for the next day's test of our abilities.

We would now be working in squads of 8-11 Cadets, most of whom we had never worked with before. This truly took us out of our comfort zones and forced us to adapt to a new environment. Although most were nervous to be working with new Cadets, MS III Cadet Ian McCaughey from the University of Scranton stated, “It was a great experience to be able to work with people outside of our Battalion. We know that we will have to do the same at LDAC and now feel confident that we can.”

For Bravo Company, the second day consisted of six two-hour Squad Tactical Exercises ranging from assaults and ambushes to reacting to an Improvised Explosive Device. It was a long day to say the least. With no breaks in between and eating on the go, each Cadet had to stay motivated. Cadets were ready to assist each other the entire day, and without a doubt, every Cadet learned new and valuable lessons to bring with them to LDAC this summer. After 12 hours of training, our day was not quite done. Upon returning to the barracks, new leadership positions for the next day were assigned, and preparation began again.

On Saturday, the final day, we woke up at 0430 once again and prepared to return home. With 50 pound ruck sacks on our backs, each Cadet left with new skills and the confidence to move forward this summer knowing that we will be successful. Cadet Demko of the University of Scranton stated however, “[That] it was the integration of schools and campuses, and the new friendships I made that highlighted my weekend.”

After LRC, all Cadets spent the rest of the day and part of the night completing land navigation training. Equipped with a map, compass, protractor, and red flashlight we individually have to navigate through dense forest in order to find at least 5 of 8 points in the day and 3 of 5 points at night.

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The Month In Pictures

Caption (Left) Outgoing Cadet Battalion Commander Jenna Caserta addresses the Royal Warrior Battalion for the final time during the Cadet Battalion Change of Command ceremony held on Thursday, 26 April.

Caption (Right) Mr. Francis Tyson of the Military Order of the Purple Heart presents awards to Military Science Level III Cadets Nathan Daniels and Irvin Anglin during the Battalion’s annual awards ceremony.

Caption (Left) Senior Military Instructor, Master Sergeant Alexander Ortega passes the saber to incoming Cadet Command Sergeant Major, Sean Cogan during the Battalion’s Change of Responsibility Ceremony.

Outgoing Cadet Command Sergeant Major Joshua Soto relinquished his responsibilities following a year in the position.

Caption (Right) MS I Cadets negotiate the rope climb event on the obstacle course during the Battalion’s Spring Field Training Exercise at Fort Dix, N.J.
Driving up to the Mission Command Conference at the United States Military Academy in West Point, we had no clue what to expect. Everyone gets a little intimidated about the West Point mystique, and that held true as we pulled up to castle like buildings and drill and ceremony practices being conducted by hundreds of cadets. We were immediately paired up with a West Point Cadet to follow throughout the two-day conference and stay in their rooms.

Once we got settled in, it was time to eat dinner in the mess hall. Talk about an experience. This mess hall can seat all 4000+ cadets at one time. All the food was already at the table and we stood at a table until the loud speaker announced we could sit and eat.

After chow, the conference commenced. All of the “Firsties” (senior West Point Cadets), 108 ROTC Military Science Level IV Cadets from across the country, and a few mid-shipman from the Naval Academy assembled in a theatre to listen to Lieutenant General William Caldwell, Commander of the United States Army North (Fifth Army) speak about his leadership philosophy and some of the mistakes he has made during his long career as an officer.

He talked about three of his main tenets: 1. Maintain a positive attitude, be flexible, and learn how to get the “Yes”. 2. Invest in your people more than you invest in yourself. Make great leaders of them and don’t focus on your personal career. 3. Define Success. What is it that is important to you, and do not get blinded by ambition.

For each of these he told us a story in which these philosophies played a role, whether it was a learning experience for him or a choice to better his Soldiers lives. He told one story about making his unit go to the firing range on Mother’s Day not really realizing what day it was, and what he had to learn from that experience. In another instance regarding training, one of his Soldiers informed him that the workday began at the same time his daughter’s school, so LTG Caldwell said “fine we will push our start time back to 0900 from now on so families can bring their kids to school”.

After LTG Caldwell’s amazing speech, we had a social in which all the main divisions and units of the Army had big poster boards with their patch on it in order for Cadets to reference where they wanted to be assigned to duty. Each unit patch was accompanied by 4-5 senior enlisted/officers at those respective units to talk to Cadets. It was here that we got to talk to 10th Mountain Division and got a chance to talk to Mr. Ken Kraetzer from the Sons of the American Legion. He introduced us to LTG David Huntoon who is the Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy.

The second day of the conference was slightly different, with “Leader 2 Leader” round table discussions. There were tables set up with 5-6 chairs, one senior enlisted or officer and 4-5 Cadets at each table. We listened to 3 different vignettes, and after each story we discussed them amongst the group. After a 20 minute discussion, the Cadets stood up and went to a different table for the next discussion. All in all each Cadet got the point of view from 3 different leaders and anywhere from 10-15 other cadets.

The conference as a whole was much more rewarding than we expected. As previously stated, we didn’t know what to expect heading into the conference, but after leaving West Point, we both felt much more comfortable heading into our first units as Second Lieutenants.