

# THE TOMAHAWK



## MOHAWKS TAKE 2ND IN RANGER CHALLENGE

Ranger Challenge Detachment Cadets Derrick Giggey, Jonathan Ritter, Brian Looney, Adam Huller, Adam Taylor, Ryan Sweet, Michelle Cody, Shaun Looney, Rob Shalvoy, and Gordon Brown ranked 2nd of 44 schools and 1st place in the Rudder Division in a 48-hour test of warrior skills, strength, stamina, and mental grit. Those 44 schools included the USMA, USNA, and Valley Forge Military Academy.

Since before classes started, volunteers from across Mohawk Battalion met every morning at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, Watervliet Arsenal, Siena, RPI, and UAlbany campuses before sunrise.

Selection throughout the training season was continuous. After an initial hell-week, the Detachment conducted fitness and skills training every day of the week for almost two months. The Detachment began with 22 Cadets and ended with 12 after selection, making Ranger Challenge the most competitive and demanding program the Mohawk Battalion offers.

Between morning training and the Ranger Challenge Training Weekend at Camp Smith, the Detachment conducted more than 200 hours of skills training – ranging from one-rope bridge construction to ten-kilometer ruck runs to close quarters combat – in preparation for the 2011 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Ranger Challenge Competition.

The Competition is held at Camp Smith and is continuously timed; moving quickly from event to event counted towards the overall team score. The team began the day by scoring an average of 309 on the APFT. Immediately after crossing the finish line, Cadets scrambled into ACUs, grabbed weapons and rucks, and took off towards the land navigation testing site, an uphill trek 4 kilometers away. Checking in at the site, the team was handed twenty ten-digit grid coordinates and casually told, "Your time starts now." The Detachment split up, briskly coordinating buddy teams' routes and points before sprinting into the woods. An hour later, the team had found all 20 points



2011 Ranger Challenge Team  
Cadets from Left to Right: Derrick Giggey, Daniel Gordon, Gordon Brown, Adam Taylor, Robert Shalvoy, Ryan Sweet, Jonathan Ritter, Michelle Cody, Shaun Looney, Brian Looney, Kevin Downey, Adam Huller

across a square kilometer of ravines, draws, and spurs.

The Detachment then moved to the one rope bridge testing site, was given one minute to ground rucks and prepare to cross, and then handed a rope, a water jug, and a box of ammunition, and told, "begin." In a carefully rehearsed sequence, the far-side man was clipped into the rope and sprinted into the water with the jug. As he swam, the near-side constructed the tightening system. When the far-side was secured on the opposite bank, the pull team took the slack out of the rope, which was then secured to the near-side tree where the first Cadet to cross was already clipping in with his improvised harness. Eight Cadets zipped across the rope to the far side, one towing the ammunition box. The one remaining on the near-side broke down the knots and dove into the water, racing to stop the time on the far-side in four minutes and ten seconds.

Shaking water out of their equipment as they ran, the team moved to the react-to-IED lane, where they conducted a simulated patrol towards a crippled vehicle, pulled a casualty from the vehicle and performed lifesaving hemorrhage-control, and correctly radioed higher with a MEDEVAC request. Meanwhile, Cadets on security identified a secondary IED, adjusted security, and pro-

tected the casualty during extraction back to the Forward Operating Base.

The team then moved back down the hill to the next event, the Leaders' Reaction Course, where it constructed a makeshift bridge over a security wall and extracted containers of gasoline from a simulated enemy compound.

The next event tested Cadets' ability to distinguish between hostile and noncombatants in stressful 'shoot/don't shoot' scenarios on the Army's state-of-the-art Engagement Skills Trainer.

Next, the Detachment ran to the weapons assembly test, where every Cadet was given a plastic bin filled with a completely disassembled M4 rifle, M9 pistol, and M249 Squad

Automatic Weapon. The team completely assembled 30 weapons in less than four minutes before moving to the hand grenade assault course, in which buddy teams had to suppress targets before engaging a bunker, troops in the open, and a second-story window with hand grenades.

The team then completed the Commander's Challenge, a mystery event testing mental agility, and the written test, which tested knowledge of weapons systems and tactics.

Day two of the competition began at 0600 with the ruck march, which took the team across ten kilometers of trails and more than 1400 feet of elevation in just over an hour.

The team dominated the Rudder Division and placed second overall behind Penn State, whose student population is double that of Siena, UAlbany, and RPI combined. Mohawks who volunteer for this highly selective Detachment go above and beyond in their dedication to Mohawk Battalion, sacrificing much for an unknown and receiving little formal recognition. It has been an honor leading this team, and I am proud of all the Mohawk Ranger Challenge Detachment has done this year and will continue to do in the future.

-CDT Gordon Brown  
Ranger Challenge Team Commander  
Union College Senior

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**The Commander's Corner** 2  
*CDT/LTC Patrick Cunningham*

**Army Medicine** 4  
*By CDT Danielle Zsido*

**A Military Family** 4  
*By CDT Katherine Van Maldeghem*

**The Hardest Challenges aren't Found in Textbooks** 5  
*By CDT Ryan Sweet*

**Lessons from Airborne School** 6  
*By CDT Justin Nieminski*

**Tunnel to the Towers Run** 6  
*By CDT Stephen Knapp*

**Why I Joined** 7  
*By CDT Tyler Gleason*

**Freshman on Point** 7  
*By CDT Benjamin Lane*

**Leadership through Service** 8  
*By CDT Robert Shalvoy*

**Becoming a Leader** 9  
*By CDT Kristen Harrington*

**Fall FTX** 9  
*By CDT Stephen Knapp*

**Inspired by a Soldier** 10  
*By CDT Joseph van Essche*

# THE COMMANDER'S CORNER

RECOGNIZING OUR CADETS

## NEW CONTRACTEES

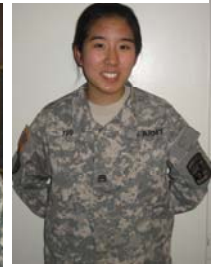


CDT MICHAEL BURKE  
 CDT KEVIN DOWNEY  
 CDT BENJAMIN LANE  
 CDT ZACHARY LARSON  
 CDT JAMES MICHEL  
 CDT THOMAS MURPHY  
 CDT JOSHUA POLLOCK  
 CDT WILLIAM SCHNEIDER  
 CDT MATTHEW SOMMA  
 CDT AMY-LYNN VANACORE  
 CDT JOSEPH VAN ESSCHE



## SEPTEMBER CADETS OF THE MONTH

From Left to Right:  
 A Co: CDT STEPHEN WRIGHTSON  
 B Co: CDT JOSHUA POLLOCK  
 C Co: CDT APRIL YOO



## DISTIGUISHED MILITARY STUDENTS

CDT GORDON BROWN  
 CDT PATRICK CUNNINGHAM  
 CDT LAURA KIRCHNER  
 CDT SHAUN LOONEY  
 CDT JONATHAN RUFFIER

## ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY JOSEPH CRIBBINS SCHOLARSHIP



CDT LAURA KIRCHNER



**About the Mohawk Battalion:**

Siena College Army ROTC, the Mohawk Battalion, consists of over 80 Army Cadets attending Siena College, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, UAlbany and other satellite schools. Our Cadets train while enrolled as fulltime students to commission upon graduation as Second Lieutenants in the US Army or Army National Guard. Army ROTC offers 2, 3, and 4-year scholarships as well as a living stipend and invaluable leadership experience unmatched by any other organization on any campus.

"TRAIN TO LEAD—MOHAWKS!"

# THE COMMANDER'S CORNER CONTINUED

RECOGNIZING OUR CADETS

## FALL FTX



Top Left: The Steely Eyed Killers: A Co: CDTs Troy Amnott and Chris Powers; B Co: CDTs Colton Maher and Josh Pollock; C Co: CDTs Anna Guerrero and Christopher Smith  
Top Right: CDT Michelle Cody Awarded FTX MS-IV MVP

Bottom Left: FTX All-Stars: CDTs Tyler Vorpahl (A Co), William Schneider (B Co), Derrick Giggey (C Co)

## STREAMER COMPETITIONS



Bravo Company is in the lead with three streamers: Land Navigation, Basic Rifle Marksmanship, and the Obstacle Course. Charlie Company is close behind with the Mohawk Day Streamer and the Drill & Ceremonies Streamer.

## SUMMER TRAINING



### 2011 Warrior Forge Graduates

ALIX BROOMFIELD – Platoon Top 5, Honor Platoon; GORDON BROWN – Overall E, Platoon Top 5, Recondo Certificate of Achievement, and the Military Proficiency Ribbon; MICHELLE CODY – Overall E, APFT Physical Fitness Badge of Excellence, the Platoon Leadership Award as the Most Outstanding Cadet in her Platoon; and the Recondo Certificate of Achievement; PATRICK CUNNINGHAM; JASON DUANE; MICHAEL FORSTNER; ERIC KANOPKIN; LAURA KIRCHNER - Overall E, the Platoon Leadership Award as the Most Outstanding Cadet in her Platoon, and the Recondo Certificate of Achievement; STEPHEN KNAPP; THOMAS LEAHY – Overall E, Platoon Top 5; JINKYU LEE; SHAUN LOONEY – Overall E, the Physical Fitness Badge of Excellence, and the Recondo Certificate of Achievement; MATTHEW MANSFIELD; TIMOTHY METZ – Honor Platoon; MICHAEL PARK; JONATHAN RUFFIER; MATTHEW SCHILLER – Overall E, Platoon Top 5; RYAN SWEET; ADAM TAYLOR – the Recondo Certificate of Achievement; FOREST THRUSH; JOSHUA WILLIAMS; YANRONG YANG; DANIELLE ZSIDO



### The Leaders Training Course Graduates

CDT DANIEL GORDON  
CDT SEAN MARTIN



### Cultural and Language Immersion Program and Project Go

CDT KYLA DICKSON – PHILLIPINES  
CDT ADAM HULLER – MORROCO  
CDT BRENT RAGSDALE – TAJIKISTAN



### Special Summer Training

**Airborne School – Fort Benning, GA:** MICHAEL FORSTNER; JUSTIN NIEMINSKI; ADAM HULLER; ANDREW CRONIN; **Air Assault School – Fort Knox, KY:** TYLER PECK; **Army Mountain Warfare Course:** GORDON BROWN; **Cadet Troop Leader Training:** STEPHEN KNAPP; LAURA KIRCHNER; MICHELLE CODY; PATRICK CUNNINGHAM; DANIELLE ZSIDO

"TRAIN TO LEAD—MOHAWKS!"

## ARMY MEDICINE



The Army is full of amazing opportunities to develop leadership skills and see new things. This summer I took advantage of one of those opportunities when I attended a pharmacy internship at Fort Carson, Colorado. By the time I left Fort Carson, I felt even more solidified in my decision to pursue a medical career in the Army. I shadowed multiple pharmacists and immersed myself in as many aspects of the Army medical field as I could.

Before I went to Fort Carson, I had no idea that there were so many different paths that could be taken in the military medical field. My understanding of Pharmacy did not extend past the traditional tasks and responsibilities of dispensing retail medication. In Colorado I spent time in almost every clinic in the hospital, shadowing pharmacists and other medical personnel and providing aid to patients when needed. I made rounds with doctors on every floor, and helped them consult and care for the Soldiers that were staying at the hospital.

I also got the chance to leave the hospital and work in Warrior Transition Units, which are specially designed to help Soldiers that return from war with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. I worked with other units that specifically helped Soldiers who were about to deploy overseas, and helped make sure they were well prepared and taken care of. I was able to get certified in many rescue aid skills, and followed a Combat Medic unit to see how they could help Soldiers who are in the fight now. I learned that pharmacists can work and provide aid in almost every aspect of Soldier care.

Almost everyone that I met on my internship was helpful and excited to teach me new medical and leadership skills. I never simply sat in a corner and watched others do their job. I pursued hands on experiences and training, and was welcomed by the Fort Carson medical team. I got out and explored Colorado, a state I had never seen before the Army paid for me to spend a month there. All in all, I discovered that learning opportunities are the most fun and provide the most benefit when you take full advantage of them.

My experience was valuable and rewarding because it provided me with realistic insight

into the path I chose to pursue in the Army. Many opportunities that are offered through my ROTC program give Cadets the chance to shadow Officers that work in the specific branch they hope to be in one day. Cadets are provided with the tools they need to find the best branch and job for them in the Army before they commission.

The best thing about the Reserve Officer Training Corps and the Army is that there is a limitless list of opportunities like the one I took advantage of this summer. Many of my fellow Cadets traveled across the nation and the world immersing themselves in different cultural and educational learning opportunities. We have all developed skills that will help us become well rounded Officers in the respective branches we choose. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the opportunities that are surrounding them.

-CDT Danielle Zsido  
Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences Senior

## A MILITARY FAMILY



There are multiple reasons why I joined ROTC. From a young age, I've wanted to join the military. Not because it is expected of me, but because I love the way of life it offers. As a military Officer, so many doors are opened to you, and so many opportunities are available that aren't offered to civilians. Serving in the military teaches leadership skills, as well as inspirational morals, ethics, and values. Some of the people I admire most are my family members who serve in the military. Additionally, it is a great opportunity to see the world and experience different cultures. Ever since I was six years old I've wanted to make a career in the military, and ROTC is the catalyst for making that dream come true.

While growing up, military service was just a part of life. I spent my childhood moving around the United States, and eventually the rest of the world. In my family, there is a long history of military service. Some of my personal idols are my family members who serve in the military, so the chance to be involved in the same great organization that shaped their lives has been a dream of mine for my entire life. Both my paternal and maternal grandfathers, as well as one of my

uncles, are retired from the Army, after 2, twenty-eight, and twenty-six years of service respectively; another of my uncles is retired from the Air Force after twenty years of service; and two of my great-grandfathers served, one in the Navy briefly, and one in the Army for two years. My father has been in the Air Force for twenty-six and a half years, and my mother served in the Air Force for almost eight years. Being surrounded by those in the military has instilled me with a deep sense of patriotism and duty.

Growing up with numerous connections to the military has also imparted values and morals corresponding to those held by the Army. Part of my desire to be in the Army stems from my understanding of these values, which are embodied by each member of the military. The Army Values are in place to guide and develop leaders by helping them make decisions. I believe in all aspects of the morals and values set forth by the Army. I was raised to hold and honor these values, and I believe that puts me in an ideal position to flourish as an Army Officer. Since I grew up with these as my personal values, I believe the military, and more specifically the Army, is the right career path for me.

Being in the Army offers career opportunities which are not open to civilians. There is opportunity for development, advancement, and travel. As an Officer I will constantly be

developing and cultivating my leadership skills. I will have the opportunity to grow and advance in my career through obstacles and challenges to overcome and surpass that will aid in my leadership development. Part of this includes travel. I'll hold various positions throughout the country, and even throughout the world. I've lived in Japan and Belgium, and travelled throughout Europe, and my experiences living in those countries have shown me the possibilities of travel open to me by being in the military.

While I do not see military service as an obligation to be fulfilled, I do believe it is important that every citizen serves their country. Without the military, we would not be the grand nation we are today, so I think it is an important responsibility and a considerable honor to give back and help defend our country, our freedom, and our way of life. I hope that by serving this great country I can live up to the standards set by my forefathers and make them all proud. I hope to become a stronger leader, develop better character, carry on the tradition of service in my family, and travel the world.

-CDT Katherine Van Maldeghem  
RPI Junior

## THE HARDEST CHALLENGES AREN'T FOUND IN TEXTBOOKS



My journey as a United States Army Cadet has been anything but predictable. It has led me down roads I never thought I would confront, and has taught me more about myself than any other engagement in my life. I originally joined this program for two main reasons: to serve my country and to have some sort of job security coming out of college. Nearly four years since I sent my E-mail of interest, I can say that my reasons have not only been sustained, but have expanded as well.

Joining the military had always interested me since my early years in high school. The Army had always appealed to me, however I never really sought out a recruiter or any further information. My focus prior to college was music. I was going to get into a music institution, graduate, and teach. Senior year, however, I had revolted from the performing arts and was accepted into the University at Albany as a human biology major: the beginning of the path towards "Dr. Ryan Sweet." I learned very quickly that I was not by any stretch of the imagination a scientific person. My naïve outlook on college life made me reckless with my time, and in turn my grades plummeted. In short: I made mistakes. So after a semester of college and on academic probation, I began to panic about just what future I was going to have. I was convinced that I would fail out of college unless something major happened.

While at home on winter break, I went to visit my high school swim coach. Tom Ross, a now retired Master Sergeant, who had always been a major influence on me. He had planted a seed within me that gave me the hunger for success, the endurance through struggle and the discipline to see things through. I had mentioned to him about my interest in the Army, and he immediately told me to search for an ROTC host institution. That night, I found the Siena Army ROTC website.

I have a difficult time thinking of many things that are more gut wrenching than my first day of PT (Physical Training). As I walked into the quiet dark morning I started to wonder if I would regret this decision to come out. I slowly peeked my head into the Cadet Office and sheepishly asked if I was in the right spot. Cadet (now 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant) Matt Smith replied with a simple "Yeah, its 0630. You're late." I was thrown off by this unconventional method of time management. I was told that PT ran from 0630 to 0730. How could I possibly be late? Queue lesson number one: If you're on time, you're

late. I remember awkwardly falling into the formation of silver and black and feeling completely intimidated by their knowledge of commands and execution. My feelings of self-doubt rose significantly. As we began a 3 mile run around the SEFCU track, I had felt in me a type of mental and physical exhaustion I had never felt before. I was completely broken down, and I was surrounded by these bands of students who had their own agenda. Suddenly, a voice came from behind me. Cadet (now also Lieutenant) Cummings ran past me, and slowed down next to me. "Hey man, keep it up. The first day is the worst, but you got this." He then burst lightyears ahead of me, and continued on with his run. Soon after, Cadet Eric Lain came from behind and simply said "Don't let you, beat you.". I appreciated the short words of encouragement, and they were enough to get me through the workout. Little did I know how much that phrase said by Mr. Lain would carry me through the trying times ahead. As I trudged out of the PE building and back to my room to reassess my decision, I heard another voice come out. A tall, lanky looking character ran straight up to me, shook my hand and said a cheerful "Hey dude, come get breakfast with us! My name's Jon Ruffier by the way. Yours?" I know that, until that point, I had never been welcomed or integrated into an organization so quickly. Never before had I wanted to become a part of something so badly.

After many workout sessions, counseling sessions and tablets of ibuprofen later, I found I was holding myself to a new standard. This was no sports team standard or club standard. No, this was the Army standard. This was the Mohawk Battalion standard. I had fallen in love with the United States Army, and wanted to flourish as much as possible in this environment. They had given me the tools to lose 30 pounds, find my self-respect and reinforced the values which I will uphold until my dying day. As the summer drew near, I was asked if I wanted to attend the Air Assault School at Camp Rilea, Oregon. I knew a little about the school, and knew it was one of the more difficult schools a Cadet could attend. Many of the upperclassmen who were my role models and idols had the badge, and told me it was something one most definitely earns. With a little bit of luck, I was awarded a slot and was on my way to Oregon. I once thought I knew what "muscle failure" really was. Then I met the Warrior Training Center Cadre of the Air Assault School. Without spilling too much information out, "Zero Day" was the most difficult confrontation of my physical, mental and emotional boundaries I had ever experienced in my Cadet career.

I had believed that I was physically pre-

pared enough to negotiate the school's high demand of physical fitness; however, I have come to the conclusion that one cannot do enough pushups, overhead arm claps or flutter kicks to not break down. I also personally despise heights. You can dunk me in a pool for hours at a time, but negotiating high altitude obstacles has never been in my domain of confidence. When I was a child back in middle school, our class had taken a trip to a high ropes course. I froze and had a panic attack from 25 feet up. I soon found myself negotiating the "confidence climb" which is approximately 30-40 feet up in the air. There are no safety belts and no harnesses: I was indeed a cat stuck in a tree. Then, something came over me as I tried to throw my body over the top post of the obstacle. "Don't let you, beat you." After 10 Days and 18 miles of ruck marching, I had graduated my first Army school. I felt a pride I had never felt in my years playing sports, and probably never will. I had beaten myself from beating myself.

This past summer, I visited the lovely state of Washington and participated in and graduated from Warrior Forge. I came into the program as a pudgy, weak and insecure college student and was going into Ft. Lewis a physically and mentally tough, confident and determined Cadet. The Camp itself is 29 days long, and for some people it's quite an extensive time to constantly be on your game. This includes me. My APFT event was terminated early; preventing me from staying eligible for the RECONDO award, and I failed the day AND night land navigation courses the first time through. Needless to say, I was low. Lying in my sleeping system one night, I found myself coming to the following conclusion: Don't let you, beat you. The following three weeks, I earned all E's on my tactical evaluations and was ranked first in my squad of 12. We all fall down, but what defines us is just how fast we stand up and fight back. I no longer keep lesson numbers with the ROTC program because I fear I cannot count that high. But perhaps that's not necessarily a bad thing. What IS important, however, is that we remember what those lessons are. Being a Cadet here at the Mohawk Battalion has done more than give me a gateway to a commission. It has given me the internal strength to confront whatever challenges may face me, and the courage to admit when I may not know the right answer. It has given me a level of health that I never thought I could attain. The Mohawks have taught me that where I am now is never good enough. I must continue to develop, learn, try, fail and get back up. These are things not always offered in a 300 level college course.

-CDT Ryan Sweet  
UAlbany Senior

## LESSONS FROM AIRBORNE SCHOOL



"Only the toughest training can steel a man to jump from the clouds and land on his feet." This excerpt is from a famous Airborne video that is shown to soon-to-be Paratroopers right before every one of their jumps. I attended Airborne School this summer and learned the meaning of this quote firsthand. The experiences I gained at Airborne are invaluable, and go far beyond the physical training to become an Airborne Trooper.

Airborne School is a three week course that takes place at Fort Benning, Georgia. The aim for the course is to take Service Members from all branches, Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard, and train them to become Airborne Troopers, fighters from the sky. These Soldiers are trained to jump from a fixed wing aircraft and successfully land, so they can perform their mission on the ground, whatever it may be. The first week of the course was Ground Week, where we were familiarized with the parachute harnesses, how to land, and single mock door exits. The second week we moved into Tower Week, where we worked on mass exits out of the 34 foot tower, used the Swing Landing Trainer, and mass mock door exits to practice and hone our skills before the next week where we would have to count on them. The final week was Jump Week, where we loaded into C-130 aircraft and performed five jumps, three of which were "Combat", which included a rifle and a backpack ruck.

The three weeks I was down in Georgia I gained more than just the knowledge to properly exit from an aircraft and land. I gained invaluable experience from being around, training, and conversing with Active

Duty Soldiers of many ranks, from E-1 Privates up to an O-3 Captain. What I learned from this interaction was that it is incredibly important for the Junior Officers that we will become to have interpersonal tact and situational awareness with their subordinates. For many Junior Enlisted Soldiers, they did not know of ROTC and our path to Officer-ship. They did not understand what we do and why, just because we went to college, we would lead them. This is important because it showed to me that when I become a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant I need to know how to interact with my Soldiers to gain their respect, so we can work as a cohesive unit. I gained insight into different backgrounds many Soldiers from Basic had, and their motivations for being in the Army. I also gained knowledge by being around NCOs, as they have a vast array of domain knowledge, from military bearing to real life situations of deployments. I cannot place a quantitative value on this experience.

Working with the Black Hats, along with Regular Army, Marine, Navy, and Air Force Service Members, also taught me even more discipline, from being in the right uniform, to basic military bearing around post. I was given the opportunity to see what happens when subordinates disrespect senior leaders, when Soldiers fail to follow instructions, and when orders are disobeyed. Seeing this happen taught me a valuable lesson of how important it is to be in the right place when you are supposed to, to follow orders, and to show proper respect to those who deserve it.

One thing I will never forget for the rest of my life is the apprehension and adrenaline of jumping from the aircraft. The process we went through tremendously developed my personal courage on levels I cannot explain. From being in a harness for hours

waiting for your plane, to the opening of the door inside the aircraft and feeling and hearing the roar of the winds; I will never forget the sheer excitement and fear of the moment. I learned to control these emotions and stow them away, so when the light turned green, the training was pure instinct and I exited the door without hesitation. This ability is one that all Soldiers and leaders alike need to have. When in situations



Photo courtesy of the US Army

of high stress and intensity, which can happen anywhere from training to deployments, lives can be on the line and the ability to stow emotions can be the difference between the right and wrong decision.

My experience from Airborne School has and will continue to impact my personal and professional career. I am now a more versatile Soldier with experiences that have developed my competencies as a Soldier and a Leader. Personally I gained the skill to overcome full emotion and expand my personal courage. Only in ROTC, only in the United States Army, do I have an opportunity to do this.

-CDT Justin Nieminski  
RPI Junior

## TUNNEL TO THE TOWERS RUN



9/11/11, Washington Park, Albany—To commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11 attacks which claimed the lives of almost 3,000 Americans, the Mohawk Battalion ran in the Tunnel to the Towers 5k Run which honors fallen NYC firefighter Stephen Siller, father of 5, as well as all victims of the 9/11 attacks. Mr. Siller courageously lost his life in Tower 2 after running through a traffic jam in the Brooklyn Tunnel from his fire house to the World Trade Center while wearing his firefighting equipment. Mohawks were bestowed with the honor of wearing the fire jacket of a fallen NYC firefighter on this run. This is the first year that the Stephen Siller Foundation has expanded the run outside of New York City. Local firefighters and members of the Air Force also ran with us. Mohawk Cadets were proud to be able to the honor the heroes who lost their lives on 9/11. For more information on this run and the Stephen Siller Foundation check out their website: <http://www.tunneltotowersrun.org/>

-CDT Stephen Knapp  
S-5 Public Affairs Officer  
RPI Graduate Student

"TRAIN TO LEAD—MOHAWKS!"

## WHY I JOINED



I joined the ROTC program for many reasons, one being that I want to be an Officer in the United States Army. I want to serve our country that has given me so many opportunities to succeed. I greatly appreciate these opportunities and I feel it is my duty to give back to my country. I want to be an Officer in the United States Army. To be able to serve as an Officer and have the chance to make a difference would be an amazing experience. I want to use my leadership skills in an important role, a role that will have an impact on me and my country. That is the role of an Army Officer. An Army Officer gets to make decisions that affect not only him or herself, but will affect our country. The ROTC program will allow me to serve as an Officer and give back to our country.

Another reason I got into the ROTC program is I want to be a better leader, and I

know the training I will receive through this program will help me reach my goals. In high school I tried to work on my leadership skills as the captain of my wrestling team. I used my leadership position to motivate my teammates to train harder and discipline themselves more to make our team stronger. I want to fine-tune these leadership skills. I want to be able to confidently lead Soldiers and know that they have no doubt that I'm the one who they want to follow. ROTC will help me sharpen my leadership skills and bring me to this level that I wish to achieve.

The third reason I got into ROTC is because I want to be a part of a team again. For my whole childhood I was always on a sports team. Whether it was football, baseball, soccer, or wrestling, I was always on a team. In high school, my wrestling team was like my family. I knew that my teammates would always have my back, and I always had theirs. We would always cheer each other on after a win, or pick one another up after a loss. It didn't matter, we were always there for each other. I want to be part of a team

like that again and I know that the ROTC Cadets are a tight team like this. I want to be a part of this team and family. I want to lead as an Officer and be able to count on my Soldiers, and they will know they can count on me.

I joined the U.S. Army ROTC program for these reasons. I don't believe that one outweighs another. I have set goals for myself in life and I believe that joining the ROTC program and becoming an Officer in the United States Army will help me reach my goals and beyond. I respect Army Officers so much and I am ready to become one myself. I look forward to serving my country to the best of my ability and upholding the Army Values. I am greatly honored with my opportunity to serve our country. I will make sure not to waste my opportunity. I will work hard to make decisions that will have a positive impact on me, those around me, and our country.

-CDT Tyler Gleason  
UAlbany Sophomore

## FRESHMAN ON POINT



After moving in to my dorm at the beginning of this school year, I began to remember how lost I felt around the same exact time just a year prior. It was my first year living away from home, my father had just left for the airport, and I still did not know what to expect from school or from the Army. I cannot remember feeling more anxious than I did that night. The year that followed was challenging and packed with mountains of information to retain. All in all, I believe it was a successful year. When I was all settled in this year, I felt like I was at my second home. I was excited to start the year and to participate in all the ROTC events. It's amazing how just one year turned my anxieties about the program into comfort and excitement. I realize the value of the MSI year when I think about how much I know now compared to when I first arrived at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. I believe the most I ever grew in a single day was the day I assumed duty as the "point man" on a patrolling lane. That pushed me further beyond my level of knowledge than any other training event to that point. Because of it, I have a new perspective on the rest of the training we do in the Siena ROTC program.

It was the eve of the second night of the Spring Field Training Exercise (FTX). It was my first ever platoon-level lane and I was in

the Alpha Team of First Squad. My Team Leader knew that I had been the "compass man" for many of the Situational Training Exercises (STX) earlier in the day. He, therefore, decided I was qualified to be the "compass man" in the movement phase of the patrolling lane. That also meant I was going to be the Cadet at the front of the entire Platoon: the point man. I did not have any experience with this role and I made mistakes that hindered the progress of the mission and negatively affected the evaluation of the leaders. Ironically, many of the mistakes were out of fear of making a mistake.

The hardest part in the exercise for everyone was communication. I learned that communication happens on a completely different level for a whole Platoon in the field and that the Chain of Command is ever more important. Being at the head of the formation, I was afraid that I would miss signals that were being passed up. I took the whole "head on a swivel" idea to a few levels above what it meant. I hardly took one step without looking behind for instruction. Also, out of panic and a fear of leading everyone in the wrong direction, I had my compass drawn the entire time and checked it every other second. Primarily because of these two mistakes, I ended up leading the entire Platoon at about one fourth of the pace we should have been moving. As a result, we were behind where we wanted to be and had to pick up the pace half way through the movement phase. The Chain of Command was one of the only reasons I knew what to do for the rest of the lane. It was amazing to

watch how well the Team Leaders, Squad Leaders (SL), Platoon Sergeant (PSG), and Platoon Leader (PL) worked. The PL issued a Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) based on what we found at the objective. From there, all the information that I needed got to me through my Team Leader. We performed our actions on the objective and before I knew it, we were sitting down for our After Action Review (AAR).

That exercise placed many of the other exercises in perspective. Once I experienced how difficult it is to work in a full platoon, suddenly working as squad seemed much simpler. I was able to better understand my role as a team member. One of the most important things I learned through the experience was to act to the full extent of my knowledge. The whole movement would have been much quicker and the patrolling lane could have been a success had I not constantly doubted myself. Part of the comfort I have now that I am back on campus and preparing for upcoming training events comes from realizing how much my peers and I have grown as Cadets in one year. Although I am still in the beginning of my development as an Army Officer, I know I will march forward this year without needing to check my compass or my immediate leader every other step.

-CDT Benjamin Lane  
RPI Sophomore

## LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE

Attending a top tier, private liberal arts college doesn't give me much of a world view. As I sit in the dining hall or walk to class I hear people complaining about their allowances, the cars their parents bought them, what clothes they are going to wear out to the frats or other mundane, unimportant things. It makes it easy for a Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Cadet to forget that those are the people we are serving. However, it is not *just* those people. It is the collective United States of America. We are Cadets and Soldiers, but we wouldn't have jobs if it wasn't for the people of our country. We owe it to them to serve them selflessly.

During the semester I have had the privilege of attending two community service projects organized and executed by fellow members of the Mohawk Battalion. One company went to a Mission in Albany to help the less fortunate. It was a real eye-opener for me. Living in Schenectady, I have the unfortunate displeasure of seeing poverty on a daily basis, but living in the bubble of Union College, it seems to be so distant, despite being all around me. Volunteer work like what we did really brings home the fact of how fortunate I am to have so much positive in my life.

As we sorted through the sweatshirts and jeans—some of which being in waist sizes up to 60—I was amazed that there were people out there that would want those things. However, our liaison (and I am drawing a blank on his name) told us that they would all soon be taken by people trying to stay warm in another upstate New York winter. The small little shop at the Mission also gave me a window into how difficult it is to have to provide for a family under restricted conditions and income. I can't imagine having to frantically tear through shelves for 10 minutes, twice a week, trying to find the best items that people donated.

Perhaps the biggest shock for me came when our guide, while walking us through the complex, somewhat casually mentioned to us that he was once one of the people that had to use the facilities of the Mission. I had just assumed that he, like all of us, was just a volunteer, driving in on a day off from his 9-5 job, leaving his nice house and family, just to lend a helping hand. I actually did a double-take when he said that he had lost his job and had to move into the Mission.

As shocked as I was, it also made me proud—proud that I was helping (if only for a few hours) and proud that there are

selfless people in our community that sacrifice so less fortunate people can have it a little easier. But however proud I felt and feel, it still doesn't take away the feeling of shame I have for taking for granted all of the luxuries and privileges I have. Volunteering at the Albany Mission has made me want to reassess my life and find places where I can cut down on my waste and start helping others more.



Cadets from Charlie Company helped residents of Fleischmanns, NY recover from flood damage from Hurricane Irene

While I sincerely enjoyed my time at the Mission, it didn't compare to the experience I had helping the flood victims in Fleischmanns, New York. I drove straight from Union, by myself, apart from the convoy which departed from University of Albany. My route took me through some areas that were still severely impacted by Hurricane Irene and recent rains. Twice I came to roads that were closed, taking me on detours that lasted nearly a half hour in total. I passed several signs saying things like, "Hurricane Irene can beat us down, but she can't keep us down!" I was amazed that these areas were still as bad off as they were, but it was nice to see how communities had come together and bonded over disaster.



Cadets from Alpha Company volunteered at the Capital City Rescue Mission.

One of the first things that I was told when I arrived was that the house that Charlie Co had worked on the previous weekend, despite their efforts, had been condemned. That helped to hit home for me just how bad the damage was in some of these areas. I remember once about ten years ago my family lost power after a big thunderstorm for a little over ten days. Since we have a creek bordering two sides of our property and our sump pump wasn't working, our basement began to flood. At the time, I had thought that that was bad damage. However, the slight damage caused to our unfinished basement doesn't compare to what I saw at the houses we were working on.

My first task was to take down sheetrock and some wood paneling. The work was fun—who doesn't like to take a crowbar and destroy things? After a while, MSG Larson asked me and CDT Metz to go to the dumpster and break apart anything with depth—dressers, chairs, desks etc—before it was trashed, in order to save space. The work was fun, and a crowd would form whenever Metz and I took our shovels and crowbars to a particularly big item. After a

while however, I noticed an older man watching me. I initially didn't give him much thought, but slowly the realization set in. All of the furniture I was carelessly destroying was his. He was watching me laughing and having fun, while I was breaking apart his possessions.

The fun and enjoyment over what I was doing quickly left me, and I became more serious about this job. Despite his age and the amount of Cadet volunteers that had showed up, the man insisted on helping. My heart broke for him, and I did my best to try to put myself in his shoes, but I couldn't. Try as I may, I just couldn't imagine watching strangers break apart all of my things to make more room in a dumpster, so the rest of the things from my house could be taken out and thrown away as well. To make matters worse, CDT Sweet told me that he and his wife had begun renovations on the house just a few weeks before Hurricane Irene hit.

After that, the work was less enjoyable and more somber. We worked at a good pace, and the property looked completely different by the time we were done. As we left, the man's wife insisted on getting a picture with us, and exchanged email addresses with a few Cadets in order to keep in touch and get a copy of the pictures. As I left I said a prayer that they would be able to salvage the rest of their house and —con't next pg.

con't from previous pg.—that their second story—where I didn't get a chance to go was spared of the damage that affected the ground floor. With winter coming around, I sincerely hope that family gets back on their feet.

Overall, I think the community service project was a great success. I saw Cadets coming together and feeling compassion over things that normally they wouldn't give a second thought about. Our Battalion did a lot of good and helped a lot of families. My

personal opinion is that this project should be conducted twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring.

-CDT Robert Shalvoy  
Service Project Cadet in Charge  
Union College Senior

## BECOMING A LEADER



Based on first impressions, most would not assume that I am a leader in training. Standing at 5'1" and weighing just over 105 pounds is not the usual mental image when thinking about an Army ROTC Cadet. However,

I am more than I appear.

I have just recently turned 18 and am a freshman at the College of Saint Rose. I am an enrolled Cadet at the University at Albany and am a part of Charlie Company. At the beginning of the year I encountered a lot of challenges like transportation issues, military basics, and confusing paperwork that at times made me wonder why I was working so hard to be a part of something so frustrating. Believe me when I say, however, it is worth it.

The first time I woke up at 0500 for my first PT session was nerve-racking for me. Although I run cross country and trained hard over the summer in preparation for the season, I had never focused on upper-body or core strength, and worried that I would not be able to match up to my fellow Cadets. I worried about being the person that dragged the rest of the company down and would be a source of frustration to my fellow

Cadets. Thankfully, however, this turned out not to be the case.

Although upper-body and core were work-in-progress areas, running turned out to be a great advantage that I had over most of my fellow Cadets. Due to my summer mileage of about 350 miles, I was able to keep up with or outrun most of the members in my company, and this didn't go unnoticed. Many of my fellow Cadets complimented and commented on my abilities and that provided a lot of encouragement that kept me motivated.

Soon some of the Cadets asked my advice on form, breathing, shoe selection, and all other aspects of running. I felt like a valued member of a team and tried hard to help each Cadet to the best of my ability. When we had to run, and a fellow Cadet would slip behind, I could call out some advice for breathing or arm placement to try and bring them back up into place. A fellow Cadet and I began text messaging each other back and forth on training. I didn't even realize that these little pieces of advice and gestures were my first steps to becoming a leader.

The reason why I chose to help my fellow Cadets with their running is more than simply helping an individual. The reality is the stronger one person becomes, the stronger our entire company becomes. If I have learned anything from ROTC thus far, it is

that we are a team. Defined in the Soldier's Creed, "I am a Warrior and a member of a team," and the Warrior Ethos, "I will never leave a fallen comrade," are sentiments that I now live my life by: every Cadet matters. All Cadets have to contribute as much as they can to not only improve themselves as individuals, but be willing to help their fellow teammates to allow this Company and program become better and stronger.

All of us are in this together and understand the gratification, as well as the hardships that can be encountered in this program. From early morning PT to in-class assignments, things can go either way. The more support and encouragement a fellow Cadet receives from their company makes all the difference, and could very well could affect their continuing in ROTC. Without this inspiration, the trials and hardships can feel extremely exaggerated.

ROTC is a program that should not be underestimated. As a Cadet you will be physically and mentally challenged, and at times feel pushed to your breaking point. But as future leaders, all Cadets must be willing to (excuse the pun) go the extra mile and do beyond their best, not just for themselves but for their fellow Cadets.

-CDT Kristen Harrington  
College of Saint Rose Freshman

## FALL FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE

10/16/11, Fort Devens, MA—The Mohawk Battalion completed another successful Fall Field Training Exercise (FTX). The Cadet in Charge (CIC) of the weekend Matthew Mansfield did an outstanding job putting together the training with the help of the rest of the MS-IV class. The Battalion MS-Is, IIs, and IIIs were consolidated into a single Company for the weekend with the MS-IIIs serving in demanding 24-hour leadership positions ranging from Squad Leaders to Company Commander.

Cadets arrived Friday night to Fort Devens and immediately began Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction with classes on weapons safety, weapons assembly/disassembly, proper trigger squeeze and breath control techniques. Cadets exercised their marksmanship skills that night on electronic range simulation equipment.

Saturday kicked off with a Field Leaders



Fall FTX Obstacle Course Timed Competition

Reaction Course (FLRC) where MS-IIIs led squad size elements in negotiating obstacles which require innovation, creativity, and quick thinking to complete successfully. After the FLRC lanes were complete, Cadets then marched on foot to the shooting range, the highlight of the weekend. Safety is the

number one priority at the shooting range, but Cadets still had fun expending 5,000 rounds of ammunition.

Cadets then moved to the land navigation course for day and night land navigation. MS-Is and IIs honed their dead reckoning skills on a mini-course while MS-IIIs were let loose on the full course.

Sunday morning involved rappelling down a rope off of 25' and 50' towers as well as completing a timed obstacle course. The obstacle course was comprised of over 15 obstacles including a two-rope bridge, barbed wire low crawl, and vertical wall climbs.

Mohawk Cadets received excellent training this weekend. The operational tempo of this FTX rivaled that of an Active Duty Army unit.

-CDT Stephen Knapp  
S-5 Public Affairs Officer  
RPI Graduate Student

"TRAIN TO LEAD—MOHAWKS!"

## INSPIRED BY A SOLDIER



I remembered hearing that their clothes were meant to make them blend in, something I likened to a chameleon's ability to seamlessly become part of its surroundings; however, that day, the man I saw wearing camouflage and tan boots made an unforgettable impression on me. I saw a Soldier, a leader, and someone I wanted to become.

I was sitting in an airport in Dallas, Texas. Slightly worn out from the previous flight from New York, my brother, aunt and I were waiting for our connecting flight heading to Salt Lake City, Utah to go on an inaugural western ski trip. I had heard the mountains were enormous; that the snow was fluffy and light in comparison to the dense, wet and heavy eastern snow I was accustomed to skiing on. I was eating some roasted peanuts to quell my insatiable hunger, and my aunt was giving me a minor heckling about chewing with my mouth closed, and having a little bit more "respect" for those around me. I was young, and didn't know the first thing about respect. Nonetheless, I always said the common "Yes, Sir" and "Yes, Ma'am," but I didn't really know why; they had just been drilled into my head by my mother and father. Yet, on this day, I finally saw and felt and understood the meaning

of true veneration and respect. I saw a Soldier.

The line for boarding the next flight had just been called, and my aunt, my brother and I were gathering our belongings to head onto the plane and get ready for a short and easy flight to Salt Lake City, Utah. I stood up, made sure none of us forgot any of our belongings and headed over towards the quickly developing line. About three places in front there was a man wearing a camouflage uniform. I had seen Soldiers before, on television and in many other places, but I had never been this close. There was a patch across his left side reading "US ARMY", and an American flag adorning his right arm. As he made his way up the line, there was an amount of self-control and discipline present within his composure that I had never witnessed in my life. I was drawn to it. As he was ready to give his ticket to the person manning the desk for American Airlines, I remember him letting every single person in line (including myself), pass him first. When he finally gave his ticket to the person at the desk, the airline worker looked at him, straight in the eye and said with the utmost respect and admiration, "Thank you for everything you do for this country." They shook hands, and the Soldier calmly responded with a simple, yet resounding "thank you" and made his way onto the plane in a composed manner. I never saw that Soldier again, but every day I

think of how he has clearly affected my life.

This memory in my life has more meaning than almost anything I have witnessed in my 18 years of life. It only took five minutes to see, yet it plays out in my head every single day, and is a huge reason why I decided to become a contracted Cadet and future Officer for the U.S. Army. Of course I joined ROTC for a multitude of reasons: service to country, to pay for college, to become a leader, the need for a challenge, and to be part of something bigger than myself. I want to be part of a team and an entity that is more than me. But it was this one Soldier that made the difference. Every day that I wear the U.S. Army patch across my heart I try to put myself in that Soldier's place. Respect for others can go a long way, but the lesson I took away from my experience in that Dallas airport was that as a Soldier you can have a profound effect on somebody you don't even know. That Soldier showed me something that I want to be. Hopefully one day I can do the same thing that Soldier did to me. Maybe I too will have an effect on a small kid. Even if it only happens once, I'll know, deep down, that I've done my job as both an American, and as a Soldier. HOOAH!

-CDT Joseph van Essche  
RPI Freshman

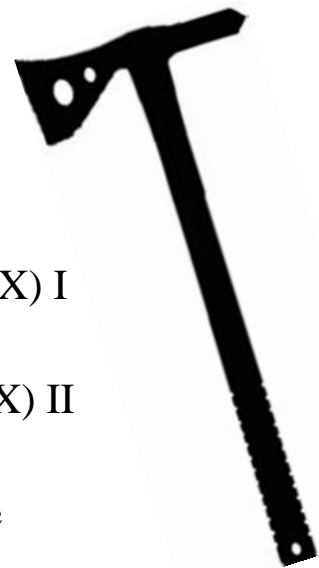
## Photograph of the Semester



From the 2011 Ranger Challenge One-Rope Bridge Competition at Camp Smith, NY

# A SNEAK PEEK AT THE SPRING SEMESTER'S TRAINING SCHEDULE

- Branch Orientation
- Ranger Gateway
- Patrol Base and Battle Drills Lab
- Joint Service Military Ball
- Squad Situational Tactical Exercise (STX) I
- Tactical Training Base (TTB) Ops
- Squad Situational Tactical Exercise (STX) II
- Ranger Qualification Weekend
- Spring Joint Field Training Exercise
- Battalion Run



**More Fall Training**



**Mohawk Battalion  
Army ROTC**

Siena ROTC Offices  
Siena College  
515 Loudon Road  
Loudonville NY 12211

Phone: (518)-783-2477  
Fax: (518)-783-2576  
E-mail: [rotcrecruiting@siena.edu](mailto:rotcrecruiting@siena.edu)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.siena.edu/armyrotc](http://www.siena.edu/armyrotc)  
**Facebook: Mohawk Battalion**

Top Left: Bravo Company tug-of-war team at Mohawk Day  
Center: CDT Colton Maher rappelling down the 50' tower at Fort Devens, MA

Right: CDT Gordon Brown coaching CDT Shaun Martin in Preliminary Marksmanship Instruction

*Army ROTC, the smartest college course you can take!*

"TRAIN TO LEAD—MOHAWKS!"