

Mighty Hawkeye News

The Official Newsletter of the University of Iowa Army ROTC



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Beyond Uniforms: The True Rewards of ROTC

Cadet John Knepper

When I was 6 years old, I saw a soldier for the first time. He was wearing his uniform, ACU's printed in UCP's. I didn't know what they were called at the time, but I do remember thinking that the guy wearing them was the coolest guy out there. I knew what I wanted to do. I wanted to join the Army. It was an abstract idea at first. Join the army was the goal, but I didn't know how to get there. Years passed and I still didn't know how I was going to be a soldier. All I knew was that I would. In sophomore year of high school, that changed. My mentors in high school were my JROTC cadre. SGM Harder, and LTC Johnson. When I asked them about the different paths I could take to join up, they immediately suggested Army ROTC in college.

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This prompted a search. I looked across the country for universities that had both well established ROTC programs, and an excellent College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The University of Iowa was the first on every list that popped up on the Web, so I immediately applied. At the time, I had no real plan to pay for college. I didn't want to take out loans and get into massive debt before I hit 25, but I didn't have much in the bank either.

I started looking for scholarships. At first, the only scholarships that popped up were ones provided by the University of Iowa. Then I found it. The Holy Grail of scholarships. The National ROTC Scholarship, which offered to pay for my tuition, or my housing, at any university in the US. I applied, and when I received a letter telling me I would be interviewed by a scholarship board, I was terrified. That interview was one of the scariest things I have ever done, but when it was over, I got told I won! A weight was lifted off my chest, and my transition into the MHBN began.

It was a tough transition into ROTC, but I don't regret it. The first thing that caught me off guard were the early mornings. I woke up late in high school, and I was never fully awake until about midday. ROTC doesn't have that. We wake up early for more than half the week, and we train. Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I'm waking up at around 0500 for PT. Every Thursday, I wake up at the same time for Lead Labs. They were tough mornings, at first. I wasn't used to waking up that early or working out so consistently. I stuck with it though. I knew that being an officer was what I wanted to do, and if waking up early is the worst thing I have to live through, I will lead a blessed life. Slowly, but surely, I got into the groove. I woke up easier. I was more alert getting out of bed, and I lost weight. I had more energy. Now I wake up excited for the day ahead, instead of dreading the work that comes with it.

If you were to ask me for my favorite part of ROTC, you'd be surprised by the answer. Although I receive nearly \$30,000 dollars a year in scholarship money, those benefits rarely cross my mind. Instead, it's friends. I don't see a huge pile of cash waiting for me at the gym every morning, and I don't get picked up in a limo. But you know what I do see? My fellow cadets. A group of men and women that always put in the work. They show up every day with a will to improve. The friendships I have formed in the MHBN won't ever fail me, and 30 years from now I will still look back upon my time in ROTC with fondness.



PHOTO BY CADET JOHN KNEPPER

Partnering with Health and Human Physiology

This past semester, The Mighty Hawkeye Battalion, in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Physiology, undertook body composition assessments for its cadets. The utilization of the BOD POD air displacement technology, available at the University of Iowa, facilitated precise evaluations of cadets' body compositions. These tests not only provided accurate measurements but also gave cadets valuable insights into optimizing their nutrition and fostering healthier lifestyles. As a result, our cadets gained a deeper understanding of their physical well-being, enabling them to make informed choices for their overall health and fitness.



PHOTO BY CADET ZION MENESES

Cadet of the Month

CDT Zion Meneses

I am a freshman and I am majoring in business. I am from Bettendorf, Iowa. I joined ROTC to put myself into a leadership position and better my leadership skills. ROTC has also led to friendships which have been a great addition to my first year of my college experience. Currently, I am enrolled in the program but have a 3-year scholarship and will contract next year. I haven't decided what I would like to branch in yet. After college, I want to go to into the National Guard. For fun I like to workout, watch football, and hang out with my friends.

Flyin Irish Basketball Tournemnt

The Mighty Hawkeye Battalion made waves at the prestigious Flyin Irish Basketball Tournament hosted by the Notre Dame Air Force ROTC. Held between February 2nd and 4th, the tournament marked the first participation of the MHBN, leaving a resounding mark with a 3-1 record. The team's journey at Notre Dame's tournament exemplified camaraderie, skill, and the spirit of competition.

CDT Matt Bechtel, the team captain, reflected on the experience, stating, "Participating in the Flyin Irish Basketball Tournament was a rewarding experience for the cadets that attended. We were able to bond in ways that aren't traditionally offered during regular ROTC events. We also got to make connections with other programs across the country."



PHOTO BY CADET COMMAND

Contact us!

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