“Leadership is intangible, therefore no weapon ever designed can replace it.”
- Gen. Omar Bradley

The Lessons of AFROTC

Through the eyes of the AS400’s

This week I wanted to fully understand the benefits of the leadership training that AFROTC offers. When I first joined the detachment, one of my personal goals was to become a strong Air Force leader, but also a leader for my future family. When I first got to speak with some of the POC in the detachment, I began to understand that I had made a great decision joining ROTC. Every cadet who comes through the program seems to have an incredible story of how the program has transformed them into a better leader. So, in this article, I reached out to several of the AS400’s to understand the biggest lesson they learned through ROTC.

Cadet Simcox

The biggest lesson I’ve learned through ROTC has been what it means to lead a team. Not only have I learned self-confidence, public speaking skills and empowerment but also how to take care of people. Thinking back about three years ago as a freshman in college, I can clearly see how this program has changed me as well as my classmates in countless ways. Back then I thought a good leader was one that was loud and up front about being in charge, but now I know how to be the type of leader I want to be, which is one that takes care of people over one who dominates the space. Everyone has different styles of leadership that follow from their personalities, and finding out who I am in college in conjunction with all of the lessons I’ve learned from ROTC allowed me to know for sure how I prioritize taking care of people I lead in the future.
The Lessons of AFROTC

Cadet Joe

I’ve learned a lot through being in ROTC, but the biggest lesson I learned is the ability to believe that I’m capable of anything, even if it’s different and uncomfortable. As an Asian-American female, I was convinced I wasn’t the “military type,” as I never had any role models in the military who looked like me. What kept me confident in my decision to join was that I knew I didn’t want to go through college without at least giving it a try. I’m so glad I made that jump to join because ROTC has changed my life. It gave me the opportunity to be comfortable with the uncomfortable, and that in turn has taught me to believe that I can get through anything.

Cadet Bender

The ROTC program teaches us many lessons and challenges us in many ways as it works to transform us from naïve, wide-eyed college students fresh out of high school into the next leaders of the United States Air Force. From cool topics like expeditionary skills to the sobering history lectures of past Air Force legends to lessons on what it means to be a professional, there is much to be gained from the AFROTC curriculum. For me, the most impactful lesson that ROTC has taught and continues to teach me is the importance of self-discipline. As future military officers we will be bestowed a massive amount of responsibility at a very young age, and there won’t time for us to learn the gravity of our actions after we commission. For that reason, it is crucial that a strong sense of self-discipline be ingrained before we are handed that coveted gold bar. Self-discipline means holding yourself accountable for everything that you can control and choosing to walk down the “right path” instead of the “easy path”, even when no one else is looking. It is the reason that POC will give you a hard time when you miss a greeting or are wearing your ranks 1/16 of an inch higher than you should. Self-discipline never stops developing, but once you’ve added it as a weapon in your arsenal, you become a force to be reckoned with. A person with mastery over themselves is a person that I can trust to get the mission done and is someone that I want watching my back when it really counts. That is the reason that I exercise every week, the reason that I set aside a time to study and a time to work, and yes mom, the reason that I make my bed every morning.

Cadet Mull

Looking back through the past 3.5 years, there have been so many lessons I have learned (sometimes the easy way, sometimes the hard way). When I first started the program in the Fall of 2017 as an incredibly shy freshman, I honestly didn’t think I would be able to stick with it. I was terrified of public speaking and it was even hard to voice my opinions to my classmates. The biggest lesson I have learned from AFROTC is to hold myself with confidence and honestly believe in myself. Through countless marching sessions, GLPs, PT tests, and many briefings, I was able to learn that I could handle a lot more than I first realized. It hasn’t always been easy, but I have learned that you are typically your biggest critic, and the best thing to do is learn from your mistakes and move on. This program gives you plenty of opportunities to learn from your failures but also push yourself to excel in ways you couldn’t imagine, like being able to do push-ups in front of Kenan Stadium (see attached picture)!

Edited by C/3C Townson
# This Week in Det 590

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